



Ministerial Taskforce on
Aboriginal Affairs



Getting it right

**The findings of the Round Two Consultations for the NSW Ministerial
Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs**

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Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities and is intended to provide the results of the Round Two Consultations undertaken for the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs. The views expressed in the report cannot be taken in any way as expressions of government policy or the views of the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs.

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Round Two Consultations for the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (the Taskforce).

The Round Two Consultations involved nine community forums and four targeted workshops, with around 900 people participating. A survey was also developed to gain community feedback on three of the initiatives being considered by the Taskforce. More than 400 people completed the survey. This report summarises the feedback received from the forums, workshops and surveys.

Focus

The Round Two Consultations sought community feedback on the ideas and reform directions outlined in the Taskforce Progress Report released on 6 August 2012. In particular, comments were invited on the following three initiatives:

1. *Opportunity Hubs (Hub)*: aimed at coordinating and supporting pathways from education to training and employment opportunities for young Aboriginal people.
2. *Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative (Language and Culture)*: aimed at establishing clear pathways for learning language in communities, schools and higher education institutions so that language is used and preserved.
3. *Local decision-making model (LDM)*: aimed at supporting community led governance and decision-making bodies to allow communities to direct and better co-ordinate services, at a local level.

The consultations focused on the design, planning and implementation issues impacting on these proposed initiatives.

Key overall findings

The consultation process found that support for all three initiatives was high. The initiatives with the highest level of support were the Language and Culture initiative and the Hubs (almost equal levels of support). There was less support for the LDM, as compared to other proposals.

No initiatives were considered easy to implement. The Opportunity Hubs followed by the Language and Culture, were viewed as being easier to implement compared to the LDM model, which was considered significantly harder to implement.

For Language and Culture and the Hubs, the beliefs and attitudes related to each initiative were strongly held right across the community and there appeared to be a general consensus on key issues. In terms of the LDM, however, beliefs and attitudes about the representativeness and functionality of existing Aboriginal community organisations were divided and there was no general consensus.

From the survey analysis, there were notable differences in responses from those who were members of an Aboriginal community organisation, and those who were not. This needs to be considered, especially in terms of the scope and approach of any localised Aboriginal community consultation undertaken in relation to the design and implementation of the initiatives.

Key findings for each initiative

For each of the key proposed initiatives participants provided a range of suggested strategies for implementation and design.

Language and Culture

The consultation process found that the initiative was supported. More than 82 per cent of survey participants thought the initiative was a really good idea and a further 14 per cent thought it was worth a go. Participants agreed that speaking an Aboriginal language strengthens cultural identity. The strong support for the initiative was reinforced by comments made at the forums.

Key issues that need to be considered in the design and implementation of the initiative included:

- Offering the program in schools (95% of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed), however overall it was highlighted that teaching language needs to be culturally appropriate, use traditional ways, not be restricted to the indoor classroom, and be offered to adults through language classes and TAFE courses.
- Flexible and locally driven design of the initiative was seen as key, with the local Aboriginal community determining key elements of the Language and Culture initiative to meet the needs of the local community (94% of survey participants).
- Survey participants felt that Aboriginal language learning should be offered to everyone (90%), with forum participants expressing that priority should be Aboriginal children and young people.
- The forums strongly expressed the view that appropriate remuneration and recognition should be given to Elders and other Aboriginal community members who teach and share their knowledge of language (89% of survey participants agreed).
- Focusing only on Aboriginal languages where there were lots of speakers was *not* supported (72% of survey participants disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) with suggestions at the forums that some attempt should be made in revitalising some aspects of all languages.
- The view that only Aboriginal people should teach language was debated. The survey indicated that people had mixed views on the issue (53% agreed it should be only Aboriginal people, while 37% disagreed). At the forums it was expressed that at a minimum non-Aboriginal people that teach languages need to be adequately trained, be culturally competent and should team teach

with Elders or other local Aboriginal people, and that local protocols must be agreed and followed.

Opportunity Hubs

The consultation process found that the initiative was **supported**. Eighty per cent of survey participants thought the initiative was a really good idea and a further 17 per cent thought it was worth a go. The strong support for the initiative was reinforced by comments made at the forums.

Some forum and survey participants, however, expressed the view that there was no point having a Hub if Aboriginal children did not have strong numeracy and literacy skills. Forum participants said it was also important to address other issues such as mental and physical health and general disadvantage, which impact on schooling. Participants supported the view that keeping Aboriginal young people in employment and education was the best way to increase well being.

Key issues that participants felt need to be considered in the design and implementation of the initiative included:

- Local and flexible design of the initiative with each local Aboriginal community adapting the Hub to suit local conditions (96% of survey participants agreeing or strongly agreeing) and building on existing initiatives. Forum participants also stated that a community should nominate if they wanted a Hub or not. Survey participants felt that delivery should also be determined by the local Aboriginal community (79%) with forum participants emphasising the operation of the Hub should be undertaken, as much as possible, by local Aboriginal community members, as mentors, co-ordinators, teachers and volunteers.
- The forum and survey participants also agreed that young Aboriginal people should have a say in how the Hub was developed (76% agreeing or strongly agreeing in the survey).
- The forums identified that local businesses and industry, as well as local and State government agencies who are major employers in remote and rural areas, must be involved in the program. This was supported by the surveys (83% of survey participants agreeing or strongly agreeing). Seventy two per cent of survey participants believed that young Aboriginal people want to work to help their own communities and as such the Hub needs to support young people to connect with local opportunities.
- The survey indicated that the Hub should be accessible to all young people, including non-Aboriginal young people (72% of survey participants agreeing or strongly agreeing) but forum participants had differing views, with most stating Aboriginal young people should be the priority.

- Location of the Hub, whether school or non-school based, was a key issue at the forums. Survey participants did not support the idea that only children and young people attending school should take part (80% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). Overall it was widely agreed that local communities need to decide where the Hub is to be based.
- The need for mentoring was repeatedly raised as an essential design element.

Local decision making model

The consultation process found that the initiative was supported. Sixty one per cent of survey participants thought the initiative was a really good idea and a further 28 per cent thought it was worth a go. The intent of the model, to ensure Aboriginal communities have a real say in what and how services are delivered to their communities and to strengthen community leadership and governance, was supported at the forums. However, there were differing views as to whether the LDM is the best way to achieve this.

Key issues that need to be considered in the design and implementation of the initiative included:

- Inclusiveness, including transparency to ensure all Aboriginal people within local communities were represented on any new governance committee/board was a key issue at the forums. Survey participants also saw this as a key issue with 96 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the LDM must run in a way that means everyone can be involved.
- Real partnership with government, ensuring Aboriginal communities are given a genuine decision-making role, was also identified as a key design issue. Survey participants agreed (95%) that Aboriginal communities and government must work together as partners for the LDM to succeed. Related to this was accountability, with forum participants keen to see greater accountability from government at the local level.
- Ninety three per cent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that the way the LDM should work within local Aboriginal communities must be decided by local communities, and that a one size fits all model would not work. Participants at the forums also felt that the way the LDM should be set up should largely be resolved at the local level by each community. This included building on existing local Aboriginal community structures.
- The geography, operation and scale of the model was questioned, in particular whether the scope should be local or regional. This was a key issue for regional and urban locations.
- Forum participants identified the need to map existing services and how much money is spent in local communities, to be followed by a process of determining local community priorities.

Implications

The overall implications arising from the Round Two Consultation include the following.

- **Endorsement.** While support for all the initiatives was high, no initiatives were considered easy to implement in a local community. The proposed approach of the Taskforce of initially commencing implementation of each of the proposals at three or four locations, rather than across many Aboriginal communities at once, appears well justified.
- **Localised and flexible place based approach.** A common element to all initiatives was ensuring place based, flexible and localised design and implementation – how the initiative should be designed and implemented must be developed in partnership with the local Aboriginal community, taking into account local circumstances and the strengths of the local community. A one size fits all approach will not work.
- **Real partnership with communities.** Investment in careful implementation, and meaningful dialogue and engagement with the Aboriginal communities at both the design and implementation stages of the initiatives needs to occur in order to gain real community support and partnership. This approach also supports the Taskforce’s proposal to only trial the initiatives in communities who volunteer or agreed to be involved, rather than government imposing new proposals on communities who do not want them or are not ready for them.
- **Build on existing strengths.** Building on existing strengths within local communities, including successful programs already in existence in relation to the three initiatives as well as building on existing Aboriginal community governance bodies and NGOs, was identified as a key implementation issue
- **Realistic resourcing by government.** Government commitment for the long term and sufficient government resourcing is required. Government needs to build relationships and trust with local communities, which takes time, so there is community confidence that government will stay invested long enough for outcomes to be delivered.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluating implementation of the proposals at the trial sites, and using the lessons learned when implementing the proposals elsewhere, needs to be incorporated into the implementation of the initiatives.
- **The need for broad and inclusive local community consultation and participation.** The scope and approach of any localised Aboriginal community consultation, which is undertaken in relation to the design and implementation of any of the initiatives, needs to be broad and

inclusive, in order to ensure people who are members of Aboriginal community organisations, as well as those who are not, are properly consulted.

The major implications for each initiative from the Round Two Consultations include the following:

- **Language and Culture:** At all the forums and in the surveys, participants emphasised that Aboriginal language was inseparable from culture and community. Participants reinforced the importance of language for cultural renewal and connection to country, and how this is reinforced through speaking and communicating in language and through experiencing culture. The strong link between culture, language and community was reflected in the implications that arose out of the Round Two Consultations about how the initiative should be designed and implemented.
- **Opportunity Hubs:** Employment, including, where possible, sustainable jobs within local communities, was seen by Aboriginal people as fundamental to overcoming chronic disadvantage and improving the lives of young people. Survey participants strongly believed that getting Aboriginal people into jobs was the best way for them to take control of their futures and being employed increased young Aboriginal people's wellbeing. These views have implications in terms of how the Hubs should be designed and implemented including where Hubs should be located and at what age Aboriginal children should commence involvement.
- **Local decision-making model:** The intent of the model, to ensure Aboriginal communities have a real say in what and how services are delivered to their community and to strengthen community leadership and governance, was supported. However, there were differing views expressed in both the surveys and forums as to whether the LDM model is the best way to achieve this. The variety of views on the issue of the LDM proposal is in part reflected by the differing views and beliefs both within the forums and from the surveys in regard to the representativeness and functionality of existing Aboriginal community organisations, and there appeared to be no consensus view. Both issues need to be considered in the design and implementation of the LDM model.

Chapter one: Introduction

Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs - a new Aboriginal affairs strategy for NSW

In August 2011, the NSW Government announced the establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (the Taskforce). The Taskforce was established to develop a new Aboriginal affairs strategy by the end of 2012. The strategy will include concrete reforms around the following Terms of Reference:

1. to improve service delivery and accountability in Aboriginal affairs across NSW, with particular consideration of the recommendations of the Auditor General's report on *Two Ways Together*, and other arising reports;
2. to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW; and
3. to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW.

The NSW Government believes that effective reform in these areas is central to addressing Aboriginal disadvantage.

The NSW Government is committed to bringing the voice of Aboriginal people to the core of Government. As a result, the Taskforce membership includes both senior Ministers and senior Aboriginal leaders, who will be making recommendations together.

A full list of the members of the Taskforce can be found at Appendix A.

Round One Consultations

As part of the development of a new Aboriginal affairs strategy, the Taskforce conducted an initial round of community consultation between December 2011 and March 2012 (Round One Consultations). This round of community consultations was comprised of fourteen community forums held across the State and a written submission process in response to three Community Discussion Papers.

During the Round One Consultations over 1,700 people attended the fourteen community consultation forums. In addition, a total of 201 written submissions on the Taskforce's Terms of Reference were received, including the detailed written records of each of the community consultation forums. The total number of responses or comments in relation to the Taskforce Terms of Reference arising from the submissions was 4,145.¹

At the end of the Round One Consultations, a report was prepared which summarised all the information and data that arose out of the consultation process. This report, the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs Community Consultation Report (Aboriginal Affairs) June 2012 is available on the Aboriginal Affairs website at www.daa.nsw.gov.au/taskforce/yoursay.html.

¹ Each submission was reviewed and particular comments or responses coded and categorised. The total number of identified responses or comments was 4,145.

Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs Progress Report

The findings of the Round One Consultations were used to inform and guide the Taskforce proposals contained in the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs Progress Report that was released on 6 August 2012 (available on the Aboriginal Affairs website at www.daa.nsw.gov.au/taskforce/yoursay.html)

The Progress Report reflected some clear themes that emerged during the Taskforce's Round One Consultations, particularly regarding the way government works with Aboriginal communities. These include the need to:

- Enable greater Aboriginal control in decision making, service design and delivery;
- Ensure greater accountability for delivery of services to (and by) Aboriginal communities;
- Create connections between training, employment and careers to support transition to real jobs;
- Enable greater flexibility and local responses;
- Embed Aboriginal culture and understanding in government and non-government organisations (NGOs);
- Better support and celebrate Aboriginal language and culture;
- Give young people access to culturally appropriate mentoring and support systems;
- Support greater employment and retention of Aboriginal staff across all sectors;
- Recognise the importance of Aboriginal identity;
- Recognise the impacts of and address trans-generational trauma;
- Provide longer-term funding and programs to address complex and intergenerational issues; and
- Improve service delivery in general, including in areas outside the Taskforce Terms of Reference.

In response to the above, the Progress Report outlined some key new proposals and policy directions which were being considered by the Taskforce. The new proposals and policy directions directly arose from the issues and ideas generated from the Round One Consultations. The Progress Report included the following reform directions:

1. Strengthening the connection between education, training and employment through establishing Opportunity Hubs to coordinate employment and training opportunities for young Aboriginal people. Other initiatives included developing industry agreements and strengthening Aboriginal employment in the public sector.
2. Strengthening support for Aboriginal languages and culture through establishing a new Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative, as well as refocusing the NSW Aboriginal Languages Policy and looking at ways to assist Aboriginal communities to undertake healing and wellbeing initiatives at the local level.
3. Strengthening accountability including accountability at the local and state-wide level, independent reporting and auditing and public reporting of performance.
4. Strengthening the capacity of communities to better direct and co-ordinate services by establishing community led governance and decision-making bodies at a local level (the Local Decision-Making Model).

5. Other proposals included building the capacity of Aboriginal non-government organisations (NGOs) to deliver services to local communities and increasing young Aboriginal people's access to mentoring and leadership capacity building.

The Progress Report indicated that the three major new initiatives (Opportunity Hubs, the Language and Culture initiative and the Local Decision-Making Model) would not be rolled out immediately to all Aboriginal communities across the State. Instead, two or three locations for each initiative would be selected, in consultation with local Aboriginal communities and key Aboriginal stakeholders, to trial the proposals. The lessons and experiences of the initial trials would then inform the expansion of the programs across other areas of the State.

During the Round One Consultations many issues were raised by communities outside the Terms of Reference of the Taskforce. These issues were referred to the relevant portfolio Minister for consideration. The Progress Report also outlined a range of existing or proposed government reforms and programs aimed at addressing those issues.

The Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs Progress Report was promoted and/or distributed in the following ways:

- Advertisements in the Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Tracker and Koori Radio.
- Ministerial media releases sent to relevant local media including print, radio and regional television, which resulted in extensive coverage in local and regional media.
- Information on the websites of Aboriginal Affairs and the Office of Communities.
- Information emailed to community forum participants from the Round One Consultation process, and to individuals/organisations who made submissions during Round One.
- Information mailed to all Local Aboriginal Land Councils.
- Information and/or hard copies distributed by Aboriginal Affairs staff to contacts and networks, including regional/local Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations.
- Information and/or hard copies distributed by Aboriginal Affairs staff at any Aboriginal community meetings/get-togethers they attended.
- Hard copies were distributed to all participants of the Round Two Consultation forums.

Round Two Community Consultations

The Round Two Consultations were specifically aimed at getting community feedback on the ideas and reform directions outlined in the Progress Report. Feedback was purposely sought on the three major new proposals outlined in the Progress Report:

- *Opportunity Hubs* (Hubs) which will be aimed at co-ordinating and supplying pathways from education to employment and training opportunities for young Aboriginal people.
- *Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative* which will be aimed at establishing clear pathways for learning language in communities, schools and higher education institutions so that language is used and preserved.
- *Local decision-making model* (LDM) which is aimed at supporting community led governance and decision-making bodies to allow communities to direct and better co-ordinate services at a local level.

The Round Two Consultations sought feedback on how the three initiatives should be designed and planned, how the initiatives could be implemented, including any new and innovative ideas that could be put into action, and general community attitudes in relation to the proposals. The Round Two Consultations were therefore much more tightly focused than Round One Consultations where the views and ideas of the community were sought on all the issues associated with the Taskforce's Terms of Reference more broadly.

The Round Two Consultations consisted of three major consultation strategies:

1. A series of community consultation forums;
2. A series of targeted consultation forums; and
3. A Community Survey.

Chapter two: Profile of participants

This chapter presents the overall profile of the population of people who participated in the Round Two Consultations of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs held in August and September 2012.

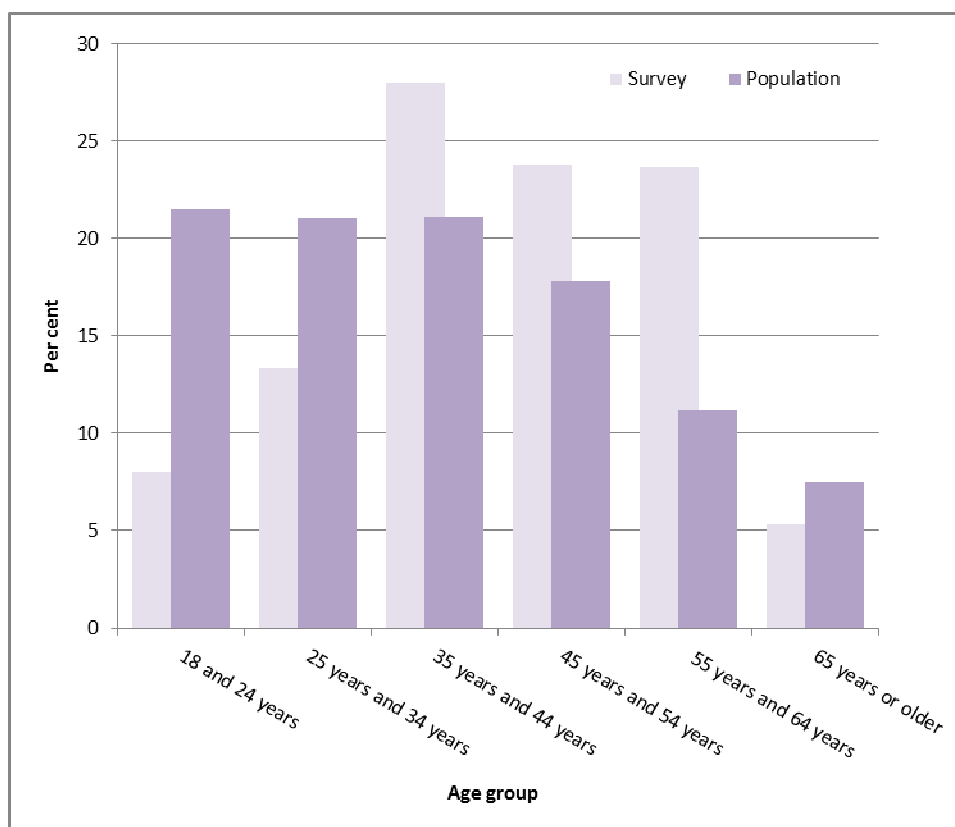
A description of the demographic profile and the means of participation are provided below.

Survey participant characteristics

At the time of analysis 427 surveys had been received by Aboriginal Affairs. The majority of participants were Aboriginal people (71.5%). The greatest proportions of Aboriginal people were Wiradjuri (22.7%), Gomilaroi (11.6%), Dhungutti (9.2%) and Yuin (7.7%).

The greatest proportion of Aboriginal participants were in the 35-44 year age group (28.0%) followed by the 45-54 (23.8%) and 55-64 year age groups (23.7%) (Figure 1). Figure 1 also shows the proportion of each age group in the population. It is clear that the survey population is skewed to the older age groups.

Figure 1: *Aboriginal survey participants and Aboriginal population by age group*

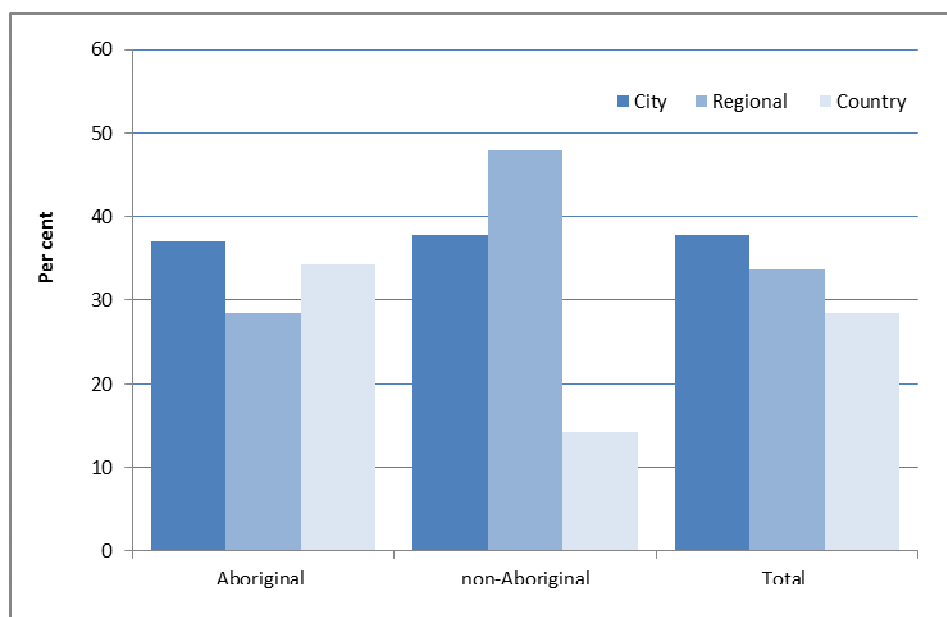


Note: The six participants who did not provide their age group are excluded from this figure.

Sources: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

The majority of participants lived in the Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong areas (37.8%) followed by regional² and then country areas.³ The geographic distribution was different for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants. While the greatest proportion of Aboriginal people also lived in city areas (37.1%) the next greatest proportion lived in country areas (34.6%). The greater proportion of non-Aboriginal participants were living in regional areas (47.9%) followed by city and country areas (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Survey participants by place of residence



Note: The nine participants who did not provide their current place of residence are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Many of the participants were involved in a range of activities. The greater proportion were working followed by studying and looking after children.

Just over three quarters (75.4%) of Aboriginal participants were members of an Aboriginal community organisation.

Similarly 75.5 per cent of the survey population were working for⁴⁵ a not-for-profit agency (like the Smith Family or Greening Australia), an industry group that represents businesses (like a retail or manufacturing business) or a government agency. A greater proportion of non-Aboriginal participants compared with Aboriginal participants were working for one of these groups (83.3% compared with 72.4%).

²Such as Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Lismore or Coffs Harbour.

³Such as Inverell, Macksville, Nambucca, Ulladulla, Wilcannia, Tabulum.

⁴This includes the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, NSW Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council/Aboriginal Medical Services, NSW/ACT Aboriginal Legal Services, Link Up NSW, NSW Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat, or other local Aboriginal community organisations

⁵ This includes either in a paid or unpaid capacity.

Community forum participant profile

Nine community forums were held at locations across NSW including Batemans Bay, Newcastle, Kempsey, Lismore, Riverina, Tamworth, Dubbo, Cobar, and Campbelltown and four targeted workshops were convened. In total approximately 900 people participated. Participants included community members as well as participants from Aboriginal community controlled organisations, local business representatives, non-government organisations and government (including Local and Commonwealth Government).

Chapter three: Aboriginal Language and Culture

This chapter provides information on the Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative. It describes the idea and provides details on the level of acceptance of the idea, how it should be designed, issues for implementation, general attitudes and beliefs about it and some positive ideas for implementation.

Description of the idea

The Language and Culture initiative is a community-led model to enhance access to language and cultural knowledge. The project would establish clear pathways for learning language in communities, schools and higher education institutions so that language is used and preserved. The project would build on existing knowledge and work, and would operate through schools in partnership with the Centre for Aboriginal Language Coordination and Development (CALCD) and other community organisations.

Initially, the approach would focus on a few key locations where Aboriginal languages are currently spoken, are able to be documented with a full language catalogue and are strong enough to build a community of speakers. This would ensure that effort is first concentrated where there is the strongest foundation. It is intended that the Language and Culture initiative would initially be implemented in select communities which over time would be used as an example for adoption in other areas across the State.

Support for the Language and Culture initiative

The community forums repeatedly identified language as very valuable in teaching culture and respect, building confidence and strengthening a sense of identity.

Many felt that learning language was the number one priority and needed to happen now before further language is lost. This was supported by the survey results with 95.7 per cent agreeing it was either a really good idea (82%) or worth a go (13.7%) (Figure 3). In the words of one survey participant

Aboriginal language is a very important part of our culture and is being lost!

Having knowledge of your Aboriginal language and capacity to engage in conversations would make me proud.

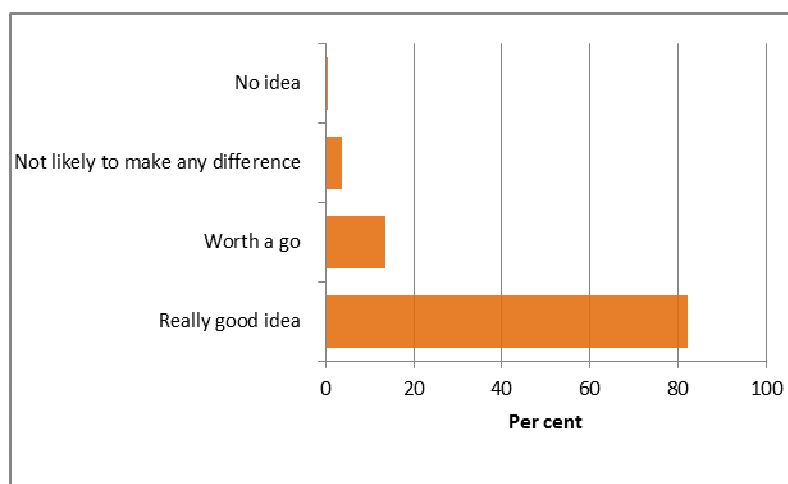
However, there were challenges to the view that it should be a priority. For a minority, the priority was helping children achieve at least standard numeracy and literacy levels, getting skills to get a job and through steady employment having a good standard of living. In the words of survey participants:

Learning an Aboriginal language and conserving culture are very important but I believe there are more urgent and immediate priorities such as housing, health and employment that must be addressed first. I think it would be of intense interest in certain fields but how would knowing an Aboriginal language help young Aboriginal people to get a job that is not linked to academia; or improve service delivery to all NSW Aboriginal people regardless of geographical location. On the other hand while I envy Aboriginal people and communities

who still have their language and culture intact, I would not want to learn a language that was not from my Country.

Language is important but other aspects of culture such as rituals, stories, respect and role of Elders is vital too. After all a person may speak "Italian" but that does not make an Italian!

Figure 3: Support for the Language and Culture initiative



Notes: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered this question and were sure of their view. The four participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the idea. No statistical significance differences were found ($p < 0.01$). The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative.

Service design

Table 1 and Figure 4 shows the responses of survey participants to the elements of design presented in the survey. Considering these with the forum responses the following key design elements emerged:

1. School as a key location
2. Flexible and local
3. Available to all
4. Payment for services
5. All Aboriginal language should be saved
6. Who should teach language.

These six design elements identified for a successful Language and Culture initiative are discussed below.

School as a key location

It was noted repeatedly that language teaching should begin in pre-school and continue through high-school as a part of the school curriculum.

Many people felt that the way language was taught needs to be culturally appropriate and use traditional ways, for example telling stories by the river, doing dancing, going hunting. People also said that language should not be restricted to the traditional indoor classroom.

People indicated that language learning should also not just be offered to school children but be offered to adults through community language centres or TAFE courses. This way language can be reinforced in the home with all family members participating and learning. Having older generations also learn language was identified as a way to revitalise Aboriginal culture, build pride and contribute to healing.

Language defines identity and identity comes from family.

Over 95 per cent (95.2%) of survey participants agreed that a key design element of the Language and Culture initiative was offering Aboriginal languages in schools. In the words of survey participants:

Language in a school would bring confidence back to the kids and make them proud of their culture giving them confidence they can do anything.

Language should be taught in school from preschool to secondary and for all kids not just Koori. This should be taught in conjunction with community Koori program and should be linked with culture and language (should be taught together).

Flexible and local

Recognising that different Aboriginal communities may have a different response to the issue of language learning the community consultations identified a locally led and owned Language and Culture initiative as a key to success of this initiative. This included which language or languages should be taught, how they should be taught and how the community could participate.

Just under 94 per cent (93.8%) of all survey participants agreed that the initiative must be able to adapt to each local community and 89.8 per cent agreed that the initiative should be mobile so it could come to local communities. In the words of survey participants:

Local community needs to be able to tailor their programs to their community - we are not all the same and programs need to be flexible enough to allow this to happen. Aboriginal people need to be the teachers of language and culture.

Aboriginal language is different in every community.

Language is intimate and should not be overseen by government or so called "Peak Representative Bodies" - it needs to be implemented and overseen by Traditional Owners / custodians / Elders.

Available to all

There was a diversity of views across the community forums on who should be able to learn an Aboriginal language. Some participants felt that language should be shared only with Aboriginal people while others believed that non-Aboriginal people should also have the opportunity to learn language. The latter view was seen to break down barriers and reduce racism through increased understanding.

All other languages of the world are shared.

I think it would be good to be open to all people not just Aboriginal people as it helps to build the language skills in the community and an appreciation for Aboriginal culture. It would be good to connect language more.

Generally, participants identified Aboriginal students and families as the priority groups

Aboriginal people need to be taught their languages first - it should be then up to the community if they want to share and include non-Aboriginal people.

Language training for adults as a priority so they can then teach their own kids and community.

Just under 91 per cent (90.8%) of all survey participants agreed that the Language and Culture initiative should be available to everyone.

Many people felt that parents should be able to choose whether or not their child learns an Aboriginal language and it should not be compulsory.

Some attendees were concerned that language would be used by non-Aboriginal people for fraudulent purposes and financial gain.

Payment for services

Most forum participants agreed that appropriate remuneration and recognition was vital for Elders and Aboriginal community members that share their knowledge through teaching language.

Close to 89 per cent (88.8%) of all survey participants agreed that language instructors should be paid for their services. In the words of survey participants:

Elders in school to teach language, where available, being paid.

People who teach Aboriginal languages should be paid for their work - if the person wishes to be paid.

The pay rate for an Aboriginal Language Tutor should reflect the importance and responsibility of the job they do, the necessary time they will spend on community consultation and lesson preparation and long travelling times to teach, and incrementally increased with hours of teaching experience.

All Aboriginal languages should be saved

The community forums provided a range of views on what languages should be given priority. Some felt that there were so many languages that it would be difficult to get agreement from communities regarding which words to use and therefore the Language and Culture initiative would not work.

I think this idea is wrought with problems. Rarely is an Aboriginal community of all the same mob. We have numerous people from different mobs/languages. I think it's almost too late on the East Coast.

Others felt saving words and phrases were important.

Yet others felt that with the appropriate permission there was potential to expand a little known Aboriginal language that only has limited words remaining by 'borrowing' words from another Aboriginal language group.

Because practical language usage isn't a daily exam of being absolutely correct...it's real and it's how we communicate and it changes because we are using it. How often have we heard people say "I got to go Jillawa"? But if we got an instructor who was being rigid about language he/she could dismiss this word usage, because it comes from a different Aboriginal language...and the danger in that is we suppress the language we commonly use.

Another view was that one language should be adopted and taught through the schools in the region.

Often times there are words/ways of saying things that are common to several neighbouring languages and even across entire regions. If we concentrate on the similarities we could transcend some of the conflict that exists between different groups.

This variety in view was also evident in the survey results. While 22.5 per cent agreed the initiative should focus on language groups where there were a lot of speakers, the majority did not.

The importance of capturing the words, meanings and pronunciation of languages before they are lost was a constant theme. In this regard many people felt that, in addition to the few main languages in NSW where there is still a community of speakers, there needs to be resources put into recording and revitalising the numerous languages that are no longer complete, through word dictionaries, developing children's songs and working with linguists/looking at archives.

I can't wait for the Bakandji language (my father's language) to be digitised for audio; as many cannot pronounce the words without having heard it. However wish it was being done for my mother's language; Ngyiampa.

Who should teach language

Discussion in the community forums about the focus of language revitalisation inevitably led to a discussion of who should teach Aboriginal languages, with differing views. At one end was the view that teaching should be limited to Elders (who have the knowledge and cultural authority) and other

local Aboriginal people only. At the other end was the view that linguists and other non-Aboriginal people such as teachers who have received adequate training in how to teach the language and are culturally competent, should be able to do so. This approach would likely require local and culturally appropriate protocols.

This range of views was also evident in the survey results with less agreement about who should be allowed to teach Aboriginal language than all other design elements (53.4% agreed and 37.4% disagreed).

Whatever the view of forum participants there was a widely voiced belief that at a minimum, non-Aboriginal people should always be team teaching with Elders or other local Aboriginal people.

This is a good idea, Aboriginal people could lead it and teach the languages but until they see it in action they may not realise they have the skills. A process of starting with non-Aboriginal staff but providing traineeships and mentoring on the job.

In an ideal situation you would want Aboriginal people to be teaching Aboriginal languages. I think though at this stage it is more important to have Aboriginal language taught by people trained in the language. It is always shame when the non-Aboriginal knows more about your mob than you.

Aboriginal children learn differently than white children, they MUST be taught by Aboriginal teachers or Elders for it to work. I feel this way also due to the rapport that they need to feel with their teacher. I also feel that the teacher should be someone from their own community.

Table 1 : Service design elements – Language and Culture

Response statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
	%	%	%	%	%
It must be mobile so it can come to local communities	53.3	36.5	5.1	0.6	4.5
It must only focus on the language groups where there are a lot of speakers	5.3	17.2	54.6	16.9	0.3
The program must be available to everyone	61.1	29.7	5.3	0.9	3.0
The program should be offered in schools	62.4	32.8	3.3	0.3	1.2
Only Aboriginal people trusted by the Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage it	31.9	29.8	27.4	3.3	7.5
Only Aboriginal people from the local community should be allowed to teach Aboriginal languages	30.1	23.3	33.6	3.8	9.1
The people who teach an Aboriginal language have to be paid for their work	59.7	29.1	5.9	0.6	4.7
The way things work must adapt to each local community	57.6	36.2	3.2	0.3	2.6
The time it takes to get this idea up and running must be agreed by everyone before any work begins even if this means delaying the start	40.4	38.9	15.0	1.8	3.8
No work should happen on recording the languages without local language speakers (if they exist)	49.3	31.4	11.1	2.1	6.2

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the design elements. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistically significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$).

Aboriginal community organisation membership:

- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were not members to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people trusted by the Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage [the Language and Culture initiative]* (73.1% compared with 55.9%);
- Participants who were not members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people from the local community should be allowed to teach Aboriginal languages* (69.7% compared with 39.6%).

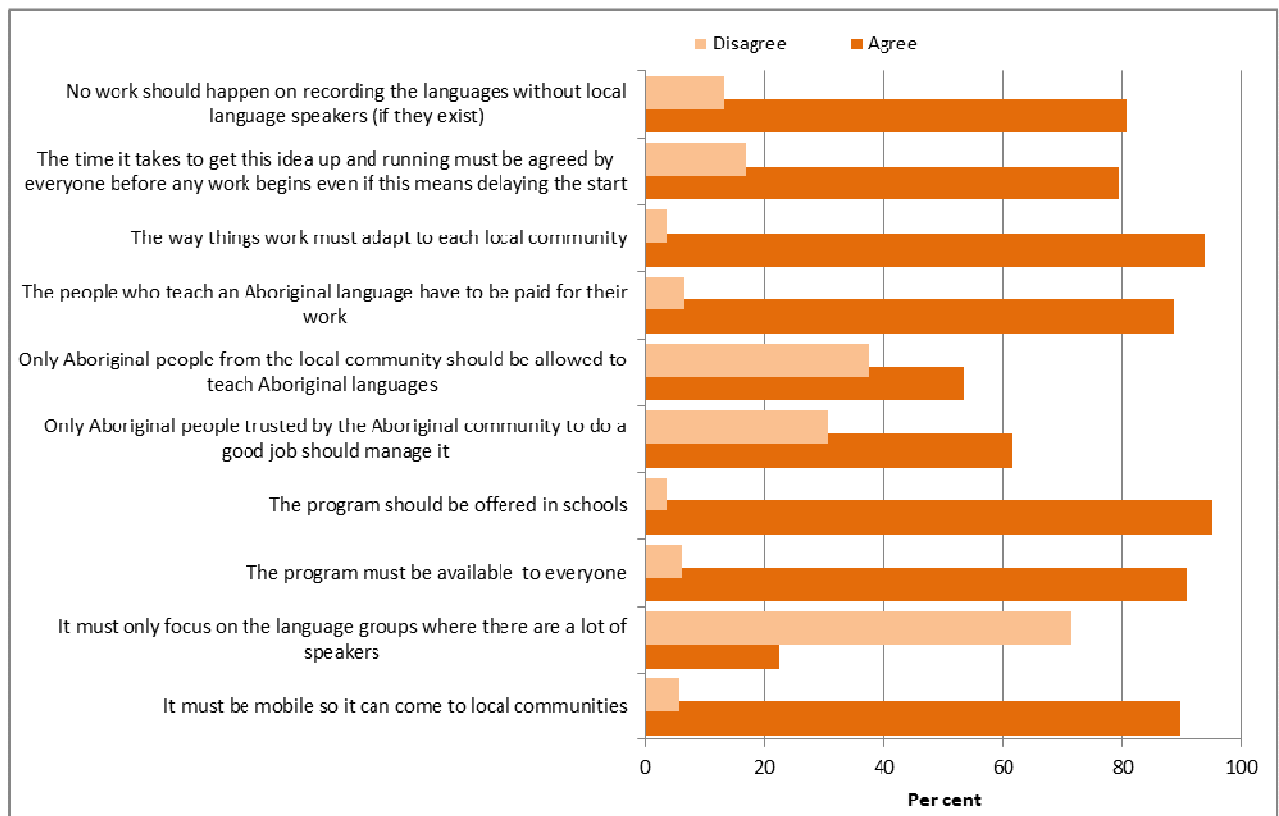
Working in either a paid or unpaid capacity of a government agency, a not for profit organisation or a representative of business:

- People not working in either a paid or unpaid capacity compared with those who were more likely to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people from the local community should be allowed to teach Aboriginal languages* (75.3% compared with 53.5%).

Aboriginal status:

- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people trusted by the Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage [the Language and Culture initiative]* (71.8% compared with 48.6%); *Only Aboriginal people from the local community should be allowed to teach Aboriginal languages* (67.6% compared with 27.0%); and *The time it takes to get this idea up and running must be agreed by everyone before any work begins even if this means delaying the start* (85.5% compared with 71.6%).

Figure 4: Service design elements – Language and Culture



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

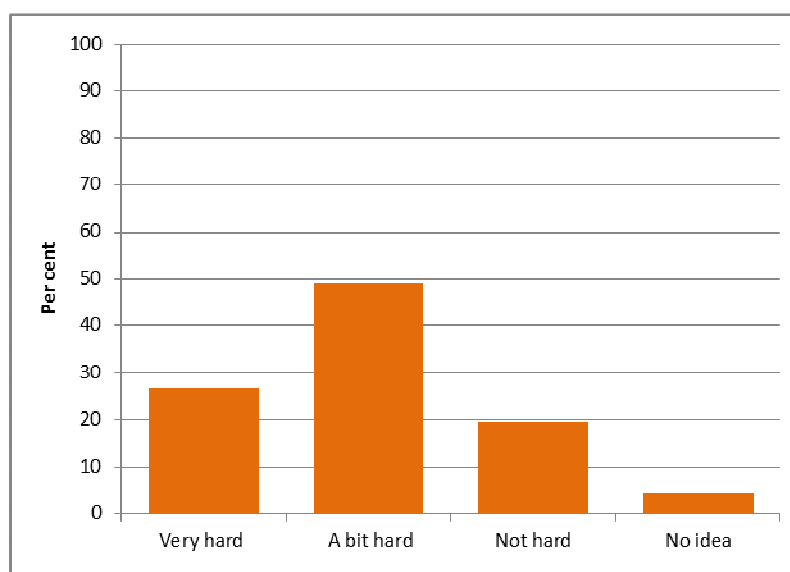
Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Implementation considerations

Participants were asked about how hard they thought it might be to get the Language and Culture initiative working in their area. Just over three in four participants (71.9%) felt that this initiative would be either very hard (26.7%) or a bit hard (45.2%) to get working in their area (Figure 5).

It will be very hard to get something like this working in my area - too many tribal (language) groups where I live.

Figure 5: *Implementation difficulty – Language and Culture*



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. Thirteen participants did not provide this information and are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Table 2 and Figure 6 show the responses of survey participants to the implementation considerations presented in the survey. Taking these into account along with the forum responses two key considerations emerged:

- Continued and sustained government funding
- Getting everyone to work together

A discussion of the two issues to consider in implementation follows.

Continued and sustained government funding

A lack of time and resources for teaching languages needs to be considered when implementing the Language and Culture initiative in a community. Some households may not have the capacity to work with their children on language and culture. They may need additional support and resources to learn the language offered.

Resources, both financial and practical, are also needed to fund language and cultural centres and to pay Elders or other people nominated as teachers. The resources include access to archives and resources such as those held by the State Library as well as books and CDs, and current technology such as iPads to broaden language knowledge. Many participants were also concerned that they would not receive the resources and time needed from the government in order to succeed. Given the time it takes to train language teachers the need for this to be a long term program was highlighted.

The issue of continuing Government funding was identified by 89.9 per cent of survey participants as the greatest barrier to implementation. In the words of survey participants:

Resources and funding for Aboriginal people to be paid to develop resources that are appropriate for Aboriginal kids to learn.

Connection to Culture is a threefold connection that happens through land, language and community. When language is not a part of the connection a part of culture is missing. This is a great Idea, if only governments would fund it long enough to see real results. This can't be a four year project. It needs an ongoing project that lasts for generations. As in New Zealand, Maori language is taught in schools, so should Aboriginal languages to Aboriginal children.

Getting everyone to work together

It was mentioned by numerous participants that different Aboriginal languages may be known and spoken in an area, as Aboriginal people from many Aboriginal groups may live in regional towns and historic settlement areas. Getting local agreement on what the local language is, pronunciation and even meanings of words is a key issue to be considered in the implementation of language and culture programs.

A high proportion of survey participants felt that getting everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together would be difficult (86.4%):

Giving Aboriginal people the opportunity to learn language is a huge step for many in regards to not only discovering their personal identity but also in grounding themselves and maintaining their connection to who they are as an Aboriginal. I believe there will be a need for a great many discussions before things can get started. Having community onsite is imperative and not just one community; you'll need to have genuine consultations with many communities.

Table 2 *Implementation considerations – Language and Culture*

	Really difficult	A bit difficult	Not at all difficult	Not sure
Statement	%			
Finding people who can do the job and who are respected by the local Aboriginal people and community	21.9	54.3	18.7	5.1
Getting everyone in the local community believing this is a good idea whether they are Aboriginal people or not	26.1	52.2	18.4	3.3
Getting the word out to local Aboriginal people that it exists and how they can be involved	8.2	38.7	49.6	3.3
Getting everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together	36.3	50.1	9.0	4.6
Getting Aboriginal young people to be part of it	16.8	44.2	33.9	5.0
Checking regularly with local people to see if it's working like it's supposed to	9.7	41.2	44.8	4.3
Getting Government to fund it long enough for it to work	69.4	20.5	5.3	4.8

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: *Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012.*

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any difference in what different groups of survey participants thought about the implementation considerations. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit or government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significance difference was found ($p < 0.01$):

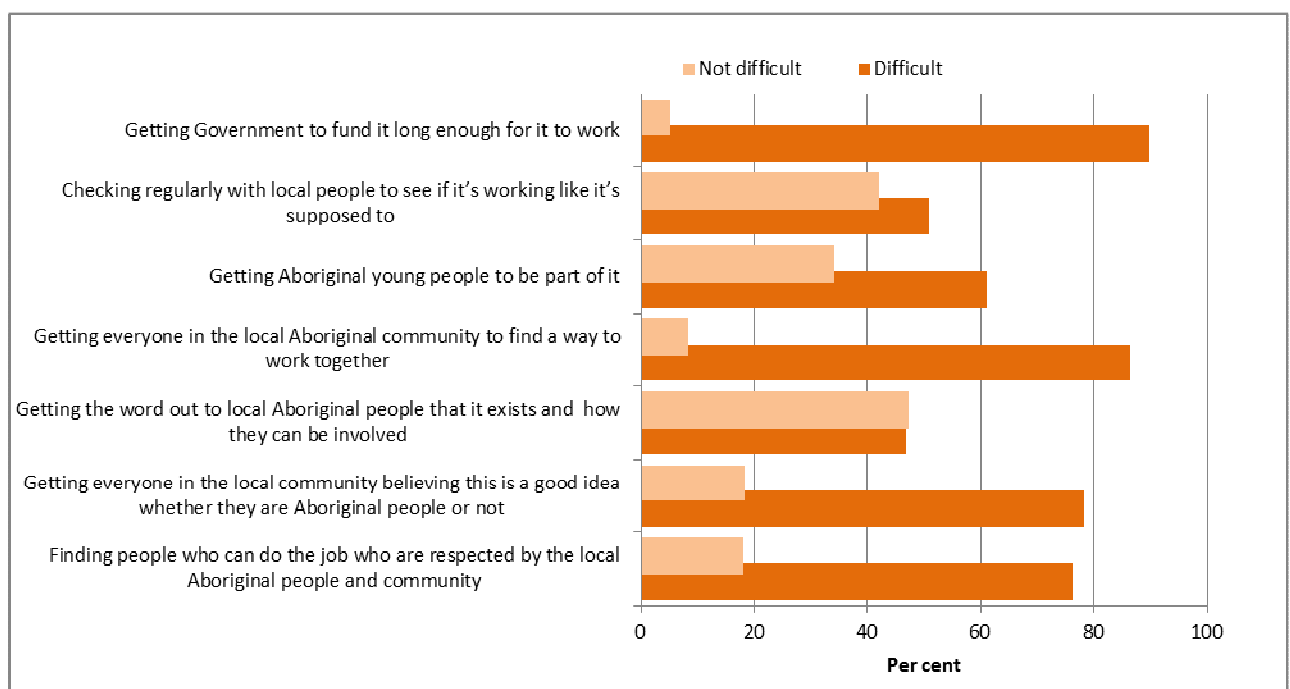
Working in either a paid or unpaid capacity of a government agency, a not for profit organisation or a representative of business:

- People who were not working were more likely to believe the following would be difficult: *Getting Aboriginal young people to be part of [the Language and Culture initiative]* (76.8%) compared with those who were working (57.6%).

Aboriginal status

- Aboriginal participants were less likely than non-Aboriginal participants to believe that the following would be difficult: *Getting everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together* (86.7% compared with 98.1%); and *Getting Aboriginal young people to be part of it* (42.0% compared with 73.1%)

Figure 6: *Implementation considerations – Language and Culture*



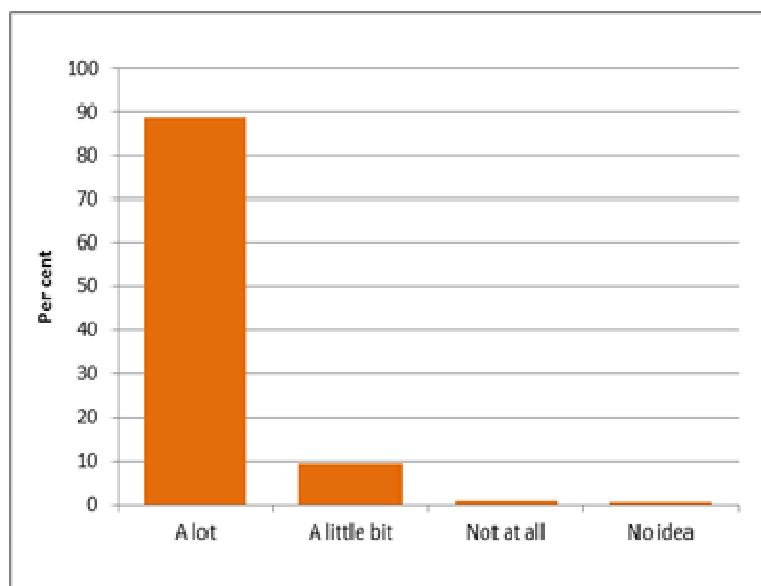
Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

As noted earlier 71.9 per cent of survey participants felt the Language and Culture initiative would be difficult to implement in their local area. If these implementation issues were addressed the level of support for the proposal increased (98.3 per cent of survey participants supported – 88.8 per cent

saying they would support the idea “a lot” and 9.5 per cent saying they would support it “a little bit”) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Support post resolution of implementation issues – Language and Culture



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The 18 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Attitudes and beliefs

Survey participants were asked to provide their opinion on a number of statements relevant to the Language and Culture initiative (Table 3 and Figure 8). The greatest agreement was achieved for:

- Speaking an Aboriginal language strengthens cultural identity (96.1%)
- Connection with Country is the most important way to solve loss of cultural identity (84.2%)
- Government making a commitment to Aboriginal languages demonstrates that it cares about Aboriginal culture (83.2%).

Many of the forum participants felt strongly that the place/Country where the language was taught should determine what language was taught and only the language from that Country should be taught on-Country. However there were differing views on this issue due to a number of factors, including:

- some Aboriginal languages would be difficult to teach due to the limited number of speakers and resources available;
- if the language of the Country could not be easily taught should that preclude students learning another Aboriginal language?; and
- Aboriginal people often do not live in their traditional Country and if only one language is taught they would be unable to learn their traditional language.

The differences in viewpoints on this issue were more prevalent in settlement areas where, due to historic colonisation, Aboriginal people from different areas were forced onto former missions and

reserves, resulting in towns and centres with large Aboriginal populations from a wide range of language groups.

Table 3: *Attitudes and beliefs – Language and Culture*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Statement					%
Government making a commitment to Aboriginal languages demonstrates that it cares about Aboriginal culture	46.5	36.7	10.1	1.7	5.0
Learning any Aboriginal language is better than learning no Aboriginal language at all	42.3	32.0	13.7	3.4	8.7
Speaking an Aboriginal language strengthens cultural identity	72.7	23.4	2.2	0.5	1.2
Aboriginal language instructors and their students must be from the same language group	20.0	20.2	41.6	6.5	11.7
It is more important that Aboriginal languages are taught by Aboriginal people than by trained teachers	44.6	26.5	17.1	3.4	8.4
All Aboriginal children should have to learn to speak the language of their nation if it still exists	35.2	27.4	23.3	4.6	9.5
Aboriginal people are connected to their culture	47.5	29.2	10.6	4.1	8.7
Connection with Country is the most important way to solve loss of cultural identity	57.6	26.6	6.5	1.2	8.2

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any difference in the attitudes and beliefs about the Language and Culture initiative from different groups of survey participants. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit or government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistically significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Age group:

- People aged 35 years and over were more likely than those who were aged 18-34 years to agree that *Aboriginal language instructors and their students must be from the same language group* (48.3% compared with 30.1%).

Aboriginal community organisation membership:

- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were not members to agree that: *It is more important that Aboriginal languages are taught by Aboriginal people than by trained teachers* (84.7% compared with 68.7%); *All Aboriginal children should have to learn to speak the language of their nation if it exists* (80.2% compared with 52.8%) and *Connection with Country is the most important way to solve loss of cultural identity* (95.0% compared with 85.7%).

Geographic location:

- Participants living in a small country town were more likely than those living in Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle or a regional area to agree that: *Aboriginal language instructors and their students must be from the same language group* (63.4 % compared with 37.3% and 39.3%).
- Participants living in a small country town or Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle were more likely than those living in regional areas to agree that: *It is more important that Aboriginal languages are taught by Aboriginal people than by trained teachers* (83.2% and 81.7% compared with 68.3 %).
- Participants living in a small country town were more likely than those living in Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle or a regional area to agree that: *All Aboriginal children should have to learn to speak the language of their nation if it exists* (79.8% compared with 68.8% and 60.5%).

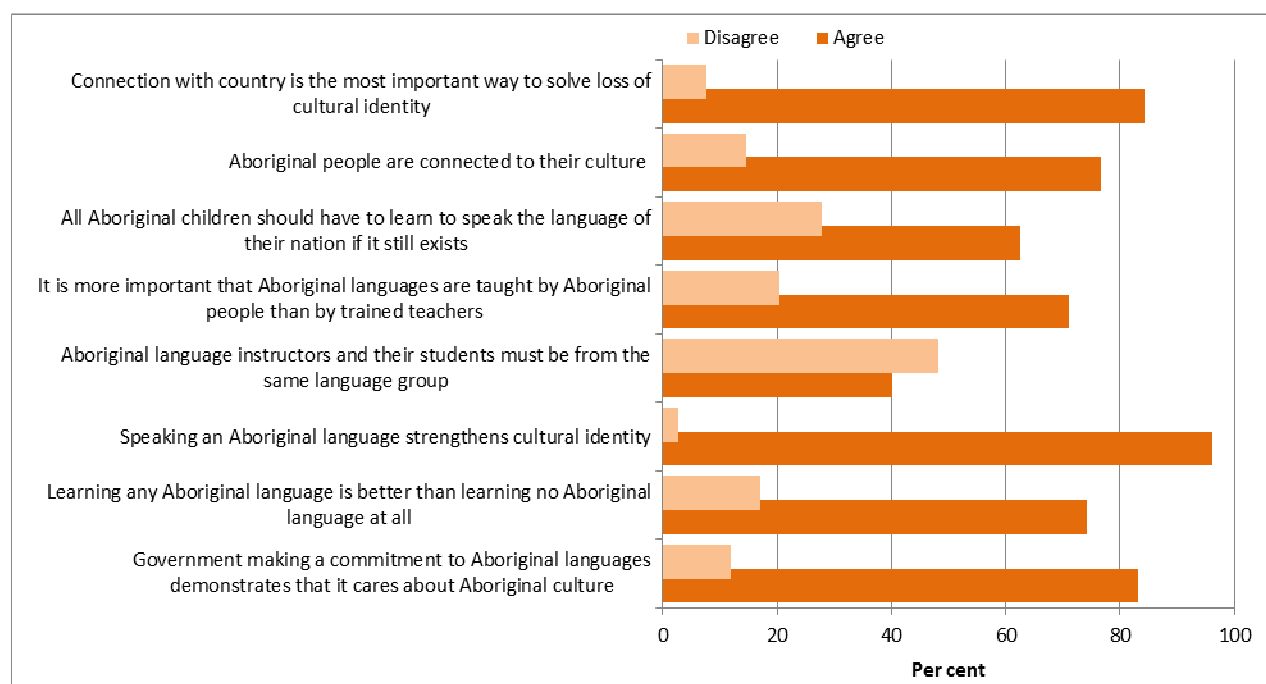
Working in either a paid or unpaid capacity of a government agency, a not for profit organisation or a representative of business:

- People not working in either a paid or unpaid capacity compared with those who were working were more likely to agree that: *Aboriginal language instructors and their students must be from the same language group* (60.4% compared with 39.6%).

Aboriginal status:

- Non-Aboriginal participants were more likely than Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Government making a commitment to Aboriginal languages demonstrates that it cares about Aboriginal culture* (94.7% compared with 84.4%).
- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Aboriginal language instructors and their students must be from the same language group* (50.4% compared with 28.0%).
- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *It is more important that Aboriginal languages are taught by Aboriginal people than by trained teachers* (82.2% compared with 63.7%).
- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *All Aboriginal children should have to learn to speak the language of their nation if it still exists* (75.5% compared with 50.0%).

Figure 8: Attitudes and beliefs – Language and Culture



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Some positive ideas

Participants provided a wealth of suggestions to help deliver a successful language and culture program. A number of these, with appropriate resourcing, could overcome issues such as learning the appropriate language even if you live off Country and engaging young children in language. Some could also provide the cultural recognition and learning that helps break down prejudice in the non-Aboriginal community.

The suggestions include:

- Engagement strategies for young children like developing the Aboriginal “Wiggles” and “Dora the Explorer”.
- Working with local councils to increase cultural recognition through dual place naming or renaming key features (rivers, hills) with their Aboriginal name.
- Have an Aboriginal language as an option as a part of compulsory language classes in school.
- Develop language through modern life tools, for example through phone apps that translate language.
- Collection Project – collect traditional stories which are then presented in English and in their traditional Aboriginal language and supplied as ‘readers’ for kids.
- Look for opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal languages at TAFE when young Aboriginal people who haven’t attended school for 2-3 years go to TAFE to obtaining Cert 1 (Year 10 equivalent).

- Use current technology so children around the State living 'off-Country' can learn their traditional language – have a common timetable across schools so students can join in via teleconference/social media/You Tube. Other ideas include uploading language lessons to the internet.
- Languages Other Than English (LOTE) could be recognised as including Aboriginal languages (as they do in Western Australia).
- Culture camps for Aboriginal students in school term.
- Partnerships between city schools and schools teaching Aboriginal languages (for example Menindee and Lindfield East and Randwick sharing languages their community languages of Korean, Mandarin and Barkindji).

Chapter four: Aboriginal young people planning for their future – Opportunity Hubs

This chapter provides information on the Opportunity Hubs (Hubs). It describes the idea and provides details the level of acceptance of the idea, how it should be designed, issues for implementation, general attitudes and beliefs about it and some positive ideas for implementations.

Description of the idea

It is proposed that Hubs be developed, trialled and evaluated initially in targeted locations to coordinate employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal young people. Opportunity Hubs would also broker partnerships with local businesses, industry leaders, NGOs and local government to coordinate training and employment opportunities to create career pathways for young Aboriginal people. This includes establishing stronger links between local schools and TAFEs, universities and Aboriginal communities. If the right support is provided, by mapping out clear pathways that lead to real jobs, there will be incentives for Aboriginal students to stay, and perform well, at school.

Support for the Hub

Close to 97 per cent of participants (96.9%) supported the Hub initiative – 79.7 per cent thought that the Hub was a really good idea and a further 17.2 per cent thought it was worth a go (Figure 9).

In the words of survey participants:

Fantastic, well over due!

The ideals of encouraging all youth, especially Aboriginal young people to have a good education and a chance at full and long time employment is a challenge that is well worth the efforts.

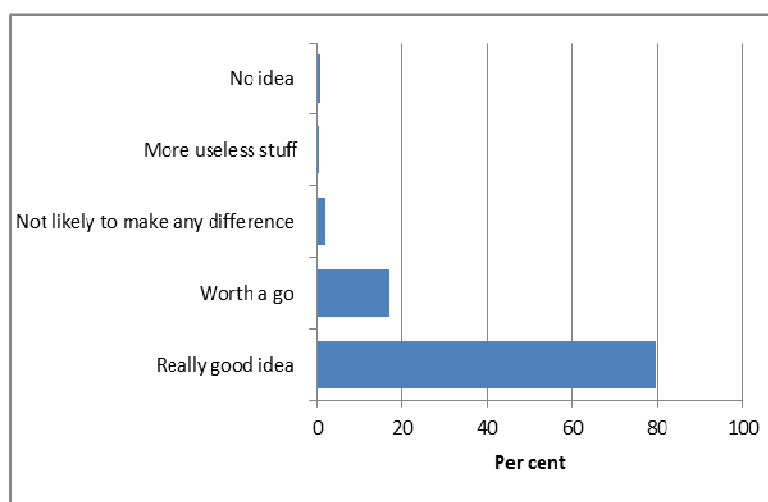
Dissenting views included:

Generations of dysfunction, incarceration, welfare, violence, victims of abuse needs to be addressed too, cultural disconnection and healing required.

The dissenting views were supported by the findings from the community forums with some participants expressing the view that there was no point having a Hub if Aboriginal young people entering the program did not have numeracy and literacy skills. Others noted that while schooling and training were important in getting a job, that a range of other factors also impact on young Aboriginal people getting a job such as general disadvantage, physical and mental health, and family and community well-being.

The forums participants repeatedly identified that the Hub should be integrated into other programs that aim to build Aboriginal students cultural pride and self-respect. Suggested ways to achieve this included introducing language and cultural practices as part of the Hub for example campouts on country, linking Hubs with the Language and Culture initiative and recognising and encouraging the role of Elders.

Figure 9: Support for the Hub



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. Participants who did not provide a response are excluded, 13 participants did not provide this information.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any difference in what different groups of survey participants thought about the idea. No statistical significance differences were found ($p < 0.01$). The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership and whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative.

Service design

Many forum participants saw the program as a positive initiative which looked towards a “brighter future” and believed the Hub should be designed and framed in the same way, rather than as a place to shame Aboriginal students or a program just for “problem kids”.

Table 4 and Figure 10 show the responses of survey participants to the elements of design presented in the survey. Considering these with the forum responses the following key design elements emerged:

1. Flexible and local
2. Respect and understanding of Aboriginal young people
3. Involvement of local employers
4. Accessible to all young people
5. Operation decided by the local Aboriginal community
6. Mentoring

These findings are consistent with the previous research into successful programs in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage including a flexible approach to design and funding, culturally competent

service delivery, culturally appropriate services, community development approach, and long term program time frames.⁶

The four design elements identified for a successful Hub are discussed below.

Flexible and local

Overwhelmingly forum participants emphasised that the Hub should be flexible and designed in partnership with the local Aboriginal community. This included the view that communities should nominate if they wanted a Hub rather than having the initiative imposed on them.

The result would be a Hub that would be different in each community including its location (e.g. school or community based). Many participants emphasised that the Opportunity Hub should be co-ordinated through existing Aboriginal NGOs, or through existing services for Aboriginal young people. The survey findings supported this with a large proportion of respondents (93.9%) agreeing that design flexibility was important and 95.9 per cent agreeing that the Hub should adapt to each local community. In the words of survey participants:

Engaging young people has proven to be a challenge in my local area and a lot of the time engaging young Aboriginal people is the hardest.

Programs again need to be flexible to suit the needs of the community and young people and their families

For some forum participants flexibility included recognising gender differences, with Aboriginal males having differing needs and issues than with Aboriginal females.

Respect and understanding of Aboriginal young people

Just over 90 per cent (90.2%) of those who took part in the survey agreed that respect for and understanding of Aboriginal young people was a key design element. Forum participants noted that there needed to be a cultural awareness component in training people to work with young people especially Aboriginal people. Forum participants strongly recognised that a successful service would need people who were skilled and experienced in working and dealing with Aboriginal students and young people, and working within Aboriginal communities and families.

Don't be paternalistic - leave the kids with some sort of responsibility

Involvement of local employers

Participants highlighted that design needs to ensure that local businesses and industry, local government and State and Commonwealth agencies are involved. Local government especially in

⁶Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW, AIFS) 2011. *What works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage: key learnings and gaps in the evidence*. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

rural and remote areas was seen as a major employer. This was supported by survey participants with 82.8 per cent agreeing that the local businesses must be involved.

It was recognised that without local business support many young Aboriginal people who want employment and a career in their local community would be denied this. This is an important issue given the survey found that almost three quarters of participants believed that Aboriginal young people want to work to help their own community.

Get business people and employees into schools to tell their stories, promote education as being a lifelong activity (doesn't mean it's all classroom based), take hold of any opportunity, broaden kids horizons on what they can do in life - even diversity in careers (e.g. huge range of opportunities - a nurse, electrician, policemen, etc).

Creating opportunities for jobs and further education in the local community needs public and private involvement and funds.

To achieve this, the Hub needs to support Aboriginal young people and students and local business, industry and local councils. Incentives and opportunities need to be offered to local business, industry and local government. To be successful employers would require training and support in understanding reconciliation and cultural awareness. The idea of Aboriginal mentors for local business and councils was raised as a way of providing cultural training to industry and business, as well as giving support. Some participants identified the need for local businesses to have affirmative action employment plans in areas where the Hub would be trialled.

The need to avoid “training for training sake” was continually raised and the link with local business and industry to ensure training leads to a real job and career was seen as a way of avoiding this. Where potential candidates for employment opportunities did not have the complete qualifications required, on-the-job training was identified as meeting the gap:

Get on with educating young people and provide support for real jobs not just an endless training regime.

Accessible to all young people

Just under 73 per cent (72.8%) of survey participants agreed that the Hub should be open to all young people, including young people who were not going to school (80.5%):

These are issues for youth in general and should not only be targeted for Aboriginal people. If this type of support is offered, it should be for ALL youth.

For some access to all people regardless of age was identified as important:

Every young person has a mature age person in their life. I recommend that 40+ people to be given same opportunities and access to business and work opportunities.

Everything is aimed at youth or Elders - what about the generations in between - they need help too.

This finding is at odds with the responses at the community forums where many participants believed, given the unemployment rates among Aboriginal communities, that the program should either be exclusively for Aboriginal students and young people, or if the program was offered more widely, that Aboriginal students and young people should be the priority. However, some participants argued that it should be for all students who need assistance, and that in some families there were Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Many participants put forward the view that this was an issue that should be decided on by each local Aboriginal community where Hubs would be established and a blanket rule was therefore not required.

Operation decided by local Aboriginal people

Participants at the forums repeatedly emphasised that the Hub should be operated and implemented as much as possible by Aboriginal people from the local community, either as mentors, co-ordinators, teachers or volunteers. This approach would build on the strengths and resources already within communities, including existing community organisations (e.g. NGOs, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups) rather than starting something completely new and losing things that are currently working.

This view was supported by the survey findings with 78.9 per cent agreeing that decisions on how the Hub works needed to be made by local Aboriginal people. (Interestingly 78% felt that finding people who can do the job who are respected would be difficult).

There is Aboriginal talent beyond local organisations. The risk can be not attracting the best person due to perceived or actual nepotism.

There was a divergence of views expressed at the forums about whether Hubs should be located within schools, at an Aboriginal NGO or co-located at another independent service provider (eg: with existing Aboriginal cultural centres or Aboriginal Child and Family Centres). Some participants believed it should be school based and existing links between schools and TAFES/universities be further developed and formalised. However, a school based program would need to overcome impediments such as some Aboriginal families' reluctance to visit schools as they feel alienated and intimidated (as Aboriginal students and families may have experienced racism at school) and the need for schools to open after hours for activities such as homework programs to allow students to access computers for CV writing. Others argued that many young Aboriginal people who need to be involved in a program like this were not attending school or disengaged from it, and a school based program would therefore not reach them. A program based in a non-school based location could be more culturally appropriate and make the students and Aboriginal families feel more "welcome and comfortable", and be more flexible. People also suggested non-school based Hubs could also incorporate suspension centres.

Mentoring

The need for mentoring was repeatedly mentioned as an essential design element. This includes encouraging and paying successful Aboriginal people in local communities to be mentors and role models for young people, and promoting a wide range of Aboriginal people to be involved in mentoring, not just Aboriginal sporting stars:

Mentors are essential as the role models at home/family/friends may not be suitable to provide support and encouragement and entice respect. The lure 'back' is too easy without the right mentor who understands the clash of 'culture' (all in together) and progressing one's self, prosperity, fulfilment and personal gratification.

Programs that offer mentoring need to meet the benchmarks as outlined by the Australian Youth Mentoring Network, a federally funding initiative aiming to build capacity in youth mentoring programs.

Almost all (97.4%) survey participants agreed that it is important for school students to have a mentor or role model at their school.

Other design elements

Early engagement of students in career planning and learning goals was frequently identified, with some participants stating that engagement at Year 10 was too late, and that engagement should commence in year 7, with late primary school the preferred commencement age (though some participants suggested early primary). The issue of up to what age the program should cater for was also raised with an upward age of 25 being suggested.

Table 4: *Service design elements - Hub*

Response statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure %
It must be flexible so it can suit each young person	54.9	39.0	4.4	0.3	1.5
Young people have to have the support of their families before they take part	30.7	35.1	24.9	2.6	6.7
It must adapt to each local community	50.6	45.3	1.8	0.9	1.5
People helping the Aboriginal young people don't need to be Aboriginal but they must respect and understand them	51.6	38.6	6.1	1.7	2.0
How it works must be decided by the local Aboriginal community	37.0	41.9	12.0	2.9	6.2
Only young people who are going to school should be able to take part	5.8	10.5	59.6	20.9	3.2
Young people at school must have a big say in how it works	22.2	10.5	59.6	20.9	3.2
It must be available to all young people – not just Aboriginal young people	33.3	39.5	15.9	3.5	7.7
The time it takes to get this idea up and running must be agreed by everyone before any work begins even if this means delaying the start	29.2	42.4	19.3	3.2	5.8
Local businesses have to be involved	47.5	35.3	11.1	0.6	5.5
Only Aboriginal people who the local Aboriginal community trust to do a good job should manage it	23.8	28.1	31.3	5.8	11.4

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any difference in what different groups of survey participants thought about the design elements. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significance differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Aboriginal community organisation membership:

- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were not members to agree that: *Young people have to have the support of their families before they take part [in the Hub]* (77.6% compared with 58.2%); *How [the Hub] works must be decided by the Aboriginal community* (89.2% compared with 70%), and *Only Aboriginal people who the local Aboriginal community trust to do a good job should manage [the Hub]* (66.7% compared with 43.3%).
- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were less likely than those who were not members to agree that *Local businesses have to be involved [in the Hub]* (87.7% compared with 100%).

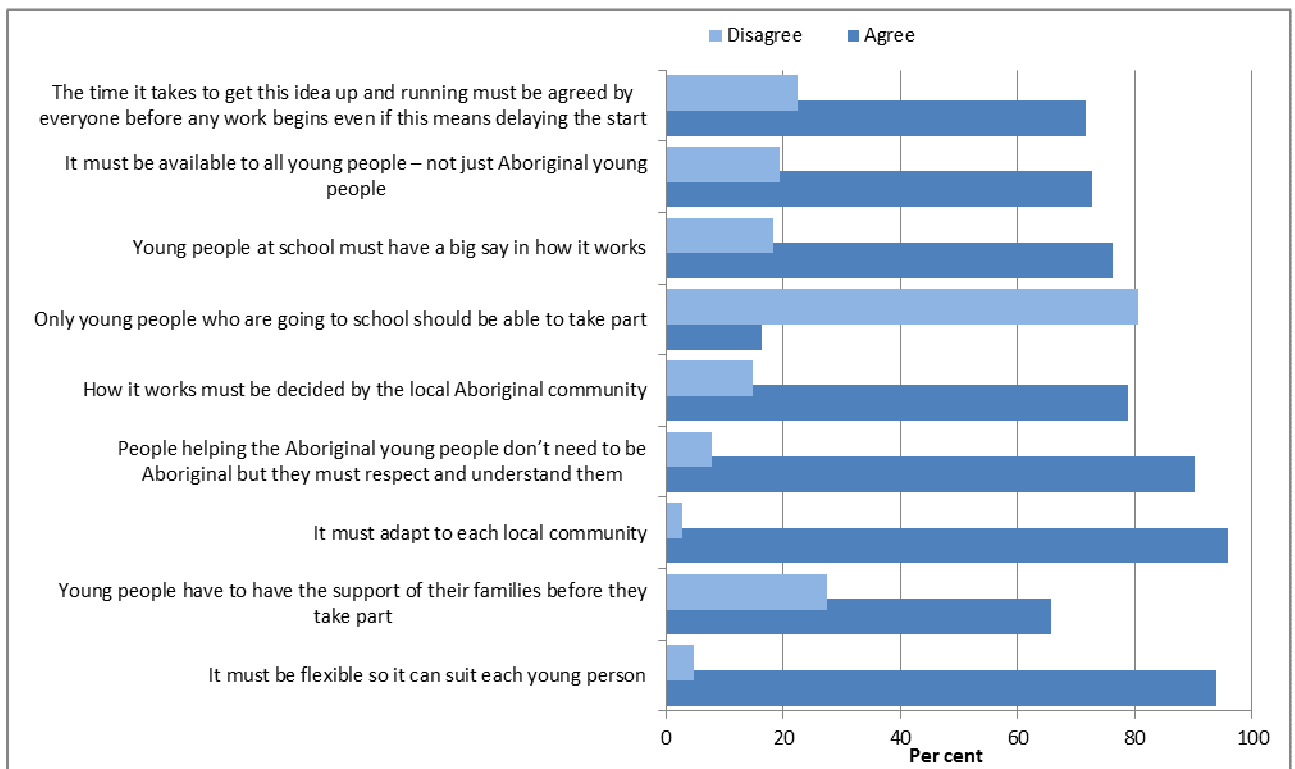
Working in either a paid or unpaid capacity of a Government agency, a not for profit organisation or a representative of business:

- Persons working in either a paid or unpaid capacity compared with those who were not working were also more likely to agree that: *Local businesses have to be involved* (96% compared with 82%).

Aboriginal status:

- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Young people have to have the support of their families before they take part [in the Hub]* (77.0% compared with 47.2%).
- Aboriginal participants were less likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people who the local Aboriginal community trust to do a good job should manage [the Hub]* (36.5% compared with 38.2%).

Figure 10: *Service design elements - Hub*



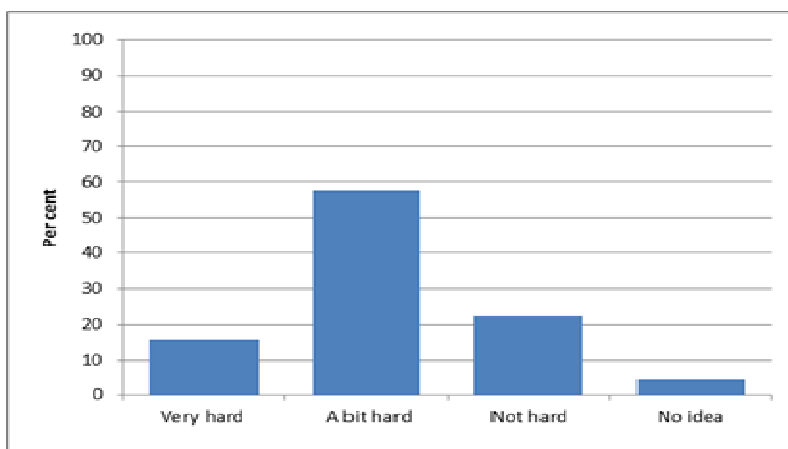
Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Implementation considerations

Survey participants were asked about how hard they thought it might be to get the Hub working in their area. Seventy-three per cent felt that this initiative would be either very hard (15.7%) or a bit hard (57.6%) to implement in their area (Figure 11).

Figure 11: *Implementation difficulty - Hub*



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The 19 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure. Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the implementation considerations. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significance differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Aboriginal status:

- Non-Aboriginal participants were more likely than Aboriginal participants to believe the following would be difficult: Getting the families of the young people to support them to take part (91.1% compared with 77.2%); and *Changing the ambitions of many Aboriginal young people who don't expect to go to university* (93.4% compared with 79.1%).

Table 5 and Figure 12 show the responses of survey participants to the implementation considerations presented in the survey. Taking these into account along with the forum responses four key considerations emerged:

1. Overcoming issues at home
2. Continued and sustained government funding
3. Getting everyone to work together
4. Changing the ambitions of young people

The key issues are discussed below.

Overcoming issues at home

The role of the family was uniformly seen as important, including heavily involving the student's family in encouraging and inspiring the student to think and plan for a career, and study and train to achieve it. The family environment was seen as key to a student's success and it was highlighted a non-supportive family environment needs to be addressed through programs such as homework centres and Aboriginal mentors and role models. Many people suggested a community and family led model was important, and that involving the community, family and student was important.

This was supported by survey respondents who identified that overcoming the issues at home would be a challenge for some young Aboriginal people (88.9%). In the words of one survey participant:

The most important people to take part and help the young people are their parents as all children love and look up to their parents as role models. Because all parents show by example even if they do not think they are or should.

Participation and support from parents needs to be strengthened.

Continued and sustained government funding

People attending the forums were concerned that real resources would not be invested in the program (e.g. new funds or re-direction of existing funds) and that current staff and resources would simply be expected to do more. Alongside this was the issue of longevity, with people identifying the requirement for a long term commitment.

This was supported by the survey results with 88.6 per cent identifying that it would be difficult to get government to fund the Hub long enough for it to work:

Need to be very aware of the local Aboriginal politics and not just fund what has always been funded.

Something similar was held in our town but funding was the main issue for it to finish.

With funding came accountability, with forum participants wanting a system of clear accountability of funds spent and outcomes achieved – at the local level so local Aboriginal communities can easily see where funds were spent, where, by whom, on what and the outcomes achieved.

Getting everyone to work together

Forum and survey participants identified local community issues as a factor that may influence implementation. Forum participants noted that issues include the level of community cohesion and whether there were existing well-operating representative local governance mechanisms (e.g. local Aboriginal Educational Consultative Groups (AECGs), community working parties and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)).

I believe that the best way forward is to get government, NGOs, schools, business and training organisations to work together.

Just over 83 per cent (83.2%) of survey participants thought it would be hard to get everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together:

While this is a great idea, the implementation in the community I live in would be difficult due to factions and a seeming difficulty being able to put personalities (including personal views of others) aside to work toward a common goal.

Nearly four in every five survey participants (79.3%) thought that creating jobs and further education in the local community would also be an issue to address.

Changing the ambitions of young people

Close to eight in every 10 (78.8%) survey participants felt that it would be difficult to change the ambitions of young people. Many forum participants talked about the need for the Hub to be designed to get Aboriginal students and youth thinking about a long term, realistic, sustainable and satisfying “career”, not just getting “a job”. Early engagement of students in career planning and learning goals was also emphasised, with some believing that engagement should commence in late primary school. Continuing services and support to 25 years was suggested, regardless of employment status, to ensure long term outcomes.

We need to get teachers to raise their expectations of Aboriginal students. More cultural awareness for teachers

The expectations of the community about young Aboriginal people were also raised:

Young Aboriginal people must have a future to aim at achieving, even though the general community expect that young Aboriginals will not do well, both with education and employment.

Other implementation considerations

Other factors were identified in the forums as impediments to implementation including access to both private and public transport, financial support for books, computers and other teaching and training aids such as tools.

Table 5: *Implementation considerations - Hub*

	Really difficult	A bit difficult	Not at all difficult	Not sure
	%	%	%	%
Finding people who can do the job who are respected by the local Aboriginal people and community	16.4	61.6	18.2	3.8
Getting everyone in the local community believing this is a good idea whether they are Aboriginal people or not	26.9	50.3	21.1	1.8
Checking regularly with local people including the young people to see if it's working like it's supposed to	7.6	46.0	44.9	1.5
Getting everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together	30.0	53.2	13.5	3.2
Getting the families of the young people to support them to take part	14.7	62.8	18.6	3.8
Overcoming the issues at home that will make it hard for some young people to take part	35.2	53.7	8.5	2.6
Getting local businesses or services involved	23.8	53.2	17.9	5.0
Creating opportunities for jobs and further education in the local community	27.1	52.2	16.8	3.8
Getting Aboriginal young people to take part	11.5	56.9	28.9	2.7
Getting Government to fund it long enough for it to work	64.6	24.0	6.4	5.0
Changing the ambitions of many Aboriginal young people who don't expect to go to university	24.8	54.0	15.3	5.8

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

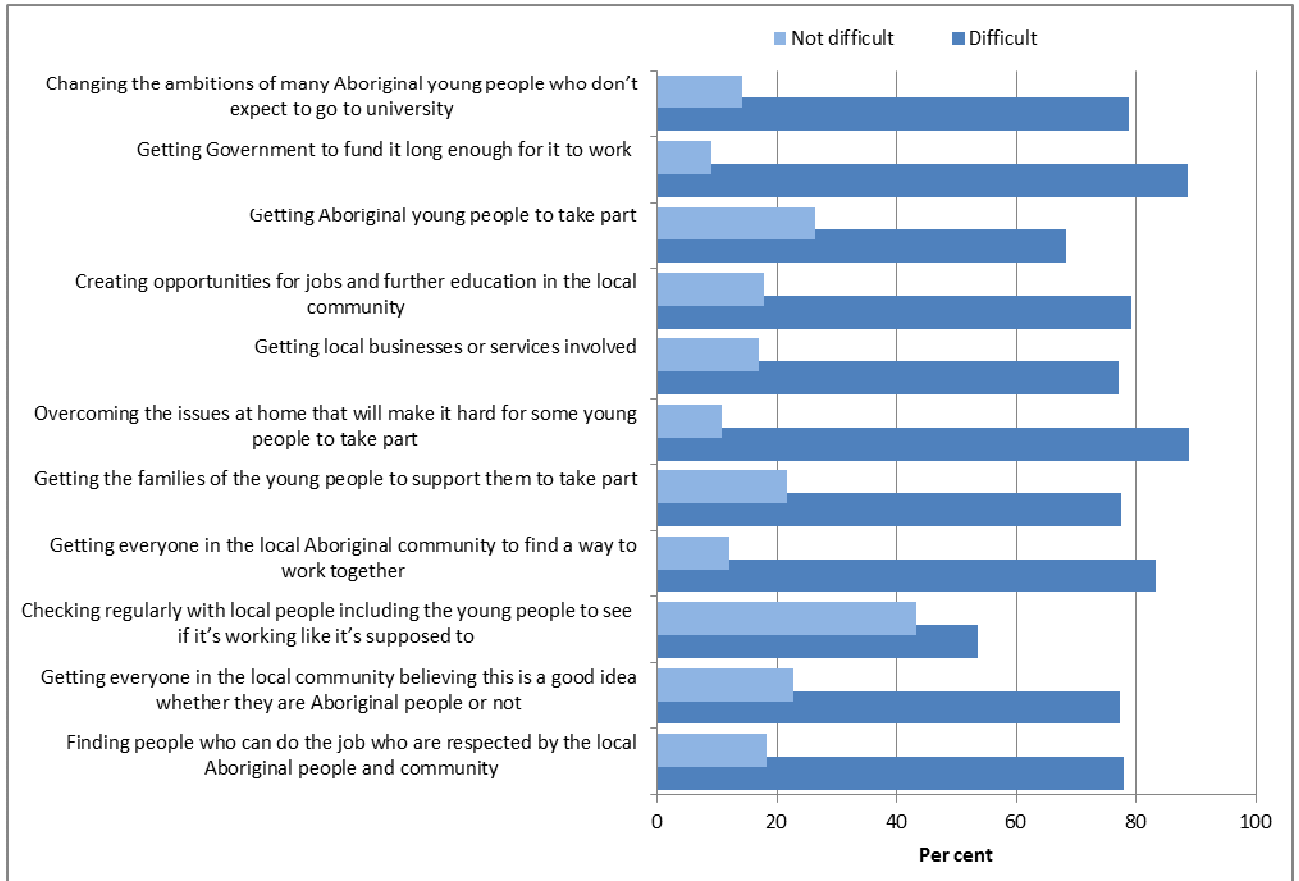
Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the implementation considerations. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significance differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Aboriginal status:

- Non-Aboriginal participants were more likely than Aboriginal participants to believe the following would be difficult: *Getting the families of the young people to support them to take*

part (91.1% compared with 77.2%); and *Changing the ambitions of many Aboriginal young people who don't expect to go to university* (93.4% compared with 79.1%).

Figure 12: Implementation considerations - Hub

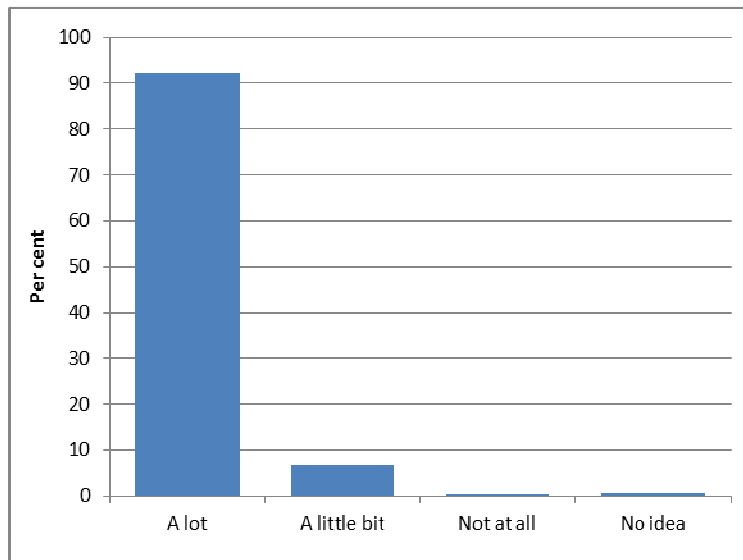


Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

As noted earlier 73.0 per cent of participants felt the Hub would be hard to implement in their local community. For participants addressing the implementation issues resulted in 99 per cent support for the idea – 92.3 per cent said they would support the Hub “a lot” and 6.7 per cent said they would support it “a little bit” (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Support post resolution of implementation issues - Hub



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The 23 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

General attitudes and beliefs

Survey participants were asked to provide their opinion on a number of statements relevant to the Hub (Table 6 and Figure 14).

The greatest agreement was on the issues of:

- Getting Aboriginal young people into jobs is the best way for them to take control of their own futures (94.2%)
- Being employed or in education is the best way to increase the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people (87.7%).

Table 6: Attitudes and beliefs - Hub

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Response statement	%	%		%	
Getting Aboriginal young people into jobs is the best way for them to take control of their own futures	59.9	34.3	2.7	1.0	2.2
It's challenging for Aboriginal young people to balance cultural responsibilities and a job	20.3	39.1	30.4	3.9	6.3
This type of thing already happens for example the School to Work Program and it doesn't work	8.6	26.0	28.7	4.4	32.4
Being employed or in education is the best way to increase the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people	56.6	31.1	6.5	0.5	5.3
Aboriginal young people want to work to help their own people and community	33.3	38.8	10.7	1.2	16.0

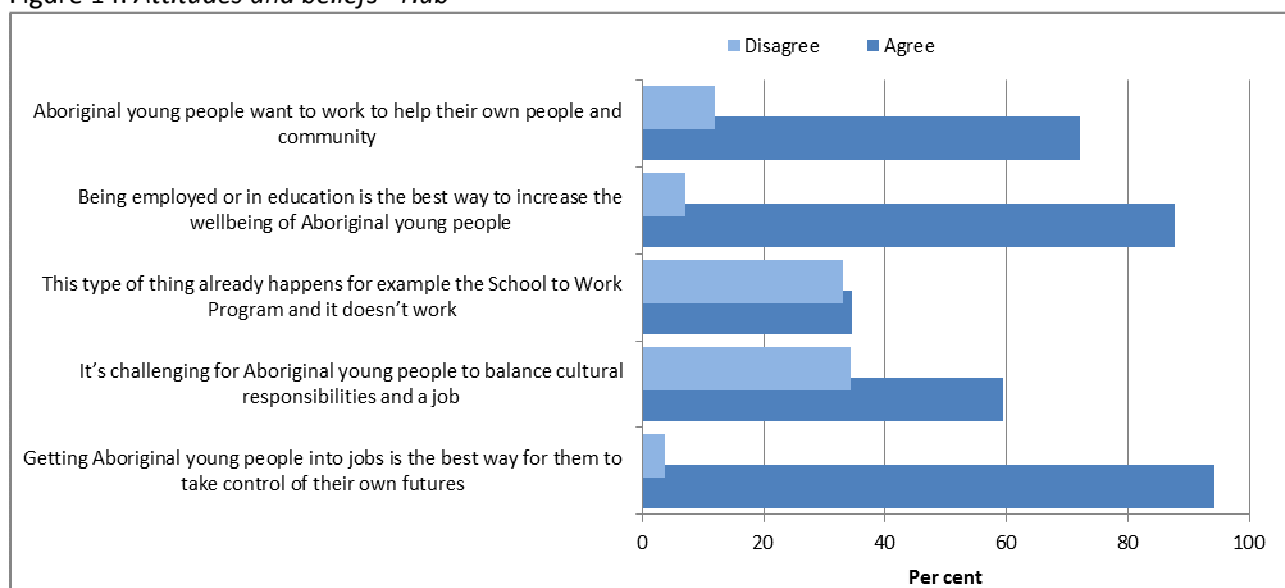
Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the implementation considerations. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit or government organisation or was a business representative. A statistical significant difference was found for geographic location ($p < 0.01$):

- Participants living in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong were more likely than those living in regional or small country town to agree that: *Aboriginal young people want to work to help their own people and community* (92.9% compared 82.9% and 79.2%).

Figure 14: Attitudes and beliefs - Hub



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Some positive ideas

Some of the positive and innovative ideas suggested to make Opportunity Hubs work included:

- Developing an Opportunity Hub mobile unit or team that travels around to different schools/locations within a regional area.
- Providing public transport options for students for work experience and further training.
- Presentations, recognition ceremonies and awards for students who have achieved their training/career goals.
- Local businesses and industry providing sponsorship of initiatives e.g. providing computers to Aboriginal homework centres.
- Providing community based training and practical opportunities such as young people being involved in Men Sheds, volunteering to work with Elders and Aboriginal NGOs and involvement in leadership opportunities e.g. assisting in organising NAIDOC week activities.
- Establishing virtual Hubs in isolated communities through web and digital technologies.

Chapter five: How to make services better – Local Decision Making Model

This chapter provides information on the local decision making model (LDM). It describes the idea and provides details of the level of acceptance of the idea, how it should be designed, issues for implementation, general attitudes and beliefs about it and some positive ideas for implementations.

Description of the idea

It is proposed that a new community-led approach to guide and coordinate service delivery at the local level be established. It would enable local Aboriginal communities to better influence and control services being delivered at the local level, build local capacity, link investment to community goals, establish accountability with both government and local communities, and monitor outcomes. Government would become more accountable to the Aboriginal community. Through continued investment in building the capacity of participating Aboriginal communities, in time Aboriginal communities would become more involved in, and accountable for, local service delivery.

The model would initially be trialled in targeted locations across NSW (an urban, a regional and a remote location) that volunteer to participate. The model is intended to build on the strengths of existing Aboriginal community networks including Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. It would also build on the work of other community governance structures, including community working parties established under the Partnership Community Program. The model is different from the Partnership Community Program because it is proposed to be underpinned by legislation, compelling government agency participation, and would involve staged devolution of decision making and authority to communities around local service delivery, based on community capacity. Training and community development support would be available to participating communities to build governance and leadership capacity.

Support for the LDM model

Just over 88 per cent (88.7%) of survey participants felt the LDM model was either a really good idea (61.2%) or worth a go (27.6%) (Figure 15):

Don't give up. It will not be easy but it can work. Very good start. Good luck.

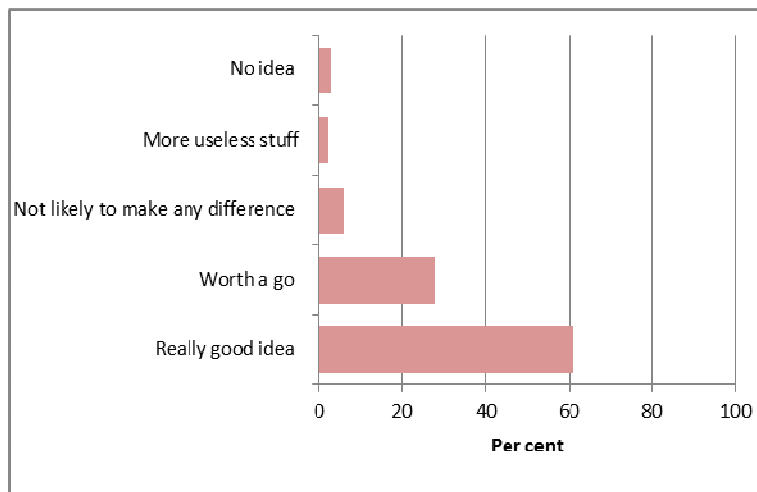
Be positive, change makes change and strength enforces it alongside support, leadership, mentoring and belief

Those who did not support this view included the following:

The description provided at the Sydney workshop didn't convince me that this idea is going to be any different to other previous ideas regarding empowerment of communities to make decisions. I still don't see how it will achieve real empowerment. It still sounds like Government are decision makers, or at least will set unrealistic standards for communities that are to be met prior to decisions being made.

...we are never consulted - just told!

Figure 15: Support for the LDM model



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The result is that 28 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any difference in what different groups of survey participants thought about the idea. No statistical significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$). The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative.

Service design

Table 7 and Figure 16 show the responses of survey participants to the elements of design presented in the survey. Considering these with the forum responses the following key design elements emerged:

1. Inclusive of all Aboriginal people
2. Local Aboriginal community and Government partnership
3. Decisions about what is important are made by local Aboriginal community
4. Not one size fits all

These four design elements are discussed below.

Inclusive of all Aboriginal people

How to achieve broad representation and therefore inclusiveness on the proposed new local decision-making committees/boards was discussed at the community forums. Some people suggested that the boards should be “local CAPOs” with representatives drawn from existing community governance bodies, while others stated that existing community bodies did not “speak for” or represent the whole community.

Concerns regarding nepotism, favouritism, corruption and lack of cohesion within communities were also raised. Some participants suggested formal nomination and appointment through voting by

Aboriginal community members may be the best way to decide representatives. Other participants emphasised that whatever the process for determining representation, it must be transparent and open.

The survey responses highlighted the importance of inclusiveness with 95.5 per cent agreeing that LDM model must run in a way that means everyone in the local Aboriginal community can be involved, including young people. In the words of participants the challenges to this included:

Need to ensure systems are firmly in place to ensure all community are represented and reduce one faction/ one family taking control.

Many community forum participants also raised the issue of ensuring Elders participated on any new committees/boards established, as well as recognised Traditional Owners. Other people were keen to see Aboriginal youth represented, and having both Aboriginal men and women represented equally as much as possible.

Local Aboriginal community and government partnership

Many forum participants were keen to see local Aboriginal communities have a genuine decision-making role in what government services were being delivered, how they were being delivered and by whom. Participants expressed a desire that the initiative lead to “a real partnership” and “collaboration with government”, and that “real change” and “self-determination” was achieved.

This view is supported by the survey results with 95.2 per cent agreeing that the LDM model needs the local Aboriginal community and Government to work as partners:

The local Aboriginal community and the Government need to do this together as partners - most times we can't agree on what needs to be solved.

Governments need to support local interests for community solutions.

Forum participants were keen to see roles and responsibilities, of both government and any LDM committees, clearly articulated for each stage of the proposed model, so communities clearly know what they were signing up for.

Related to this issue was accountability. Many emphasised the lack of government accountability, especially to delivery, and asked how government would be made accountable, at the local/regional level, to the new committees/boards. People frequently stated that while good policy and programs may exist at a head office level, local/regional managers within government resisted change, did not implement programs and were not accountable. Some participants were keen for the boards/committees to have the ability to nominate local agency staff, with whom they had previously worked with and trusted, to be the government representatives to work with the committees/board.

The decision about what is important must be made by local Aboriginal people

Issues were raised in the community forums about what process would be used to support the community in setting priorities. Many participants said that the first step should be a commitment

by government to map/audit all government services, including services that were being delivered in their local community. This would include identifying who auspices the service and the funding received (including government funding to Aboriginal and mainstream NGOs). This information would then need to be communicated to the local community. It was noted that successful programs identified through the audit needed to be maintained and not have funding cut just because a new system was being implemented. It was highlighted that government needs to learn from what is, and what has been, successful locally.

Some participants suggested a broader consultation or community engagement process to set community priorities and long term goals to guide decision-making.

The importance of local communities setting priorities as a key design element was supported by the survey participants, with 90.4 per cent agreeing that the local Aboriginal community must decide for themselves what the most important things are to solve in their community.

The local Aboriginal community must decide for themselves what the most important things are to solve - depends on the dynamics of community.

....start making choices about our own futures. Instead of this constant parade of specifically designed programs for Aboriginal people which only make you feel worthless.

Not one size fits all

Aboriginal communities need to have more say in how their community is run.

Aboriginal communities DONT HAVE POWER.

Just over 93 per cent (93.4%) of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that the way the LDM should work within a local Aboriginal community must be decided by the local community, and that a one size fits all model would not work. Participants at the forums also felt that the way the LDM should be set up should largely be resolved at the local level by each community. This included building on the role of existing local Aboriginal community governance bodies.

At the forums questions were also asked about determining the geographic operation and scale of LDM boards/committees, and whether it would be at a local or regional level. This was a particular issue in regional and urban locations. Some participants suggested postcodes should be used, while others suggested a broader regional model could be adopted.

The majority of participants wanted these critical issues to be resolved at the local level in real partnership and dialogue with each community. In this way the resolution of these issues may vary from community to community and the design of the LDM would need to be flexible and respond to local circumstances and need. Participants also highlighted that considerable effort and time would be needed to work with local communities to come up with a suitable localised structure and design.

Table 7: Service design elements – LDM model

Response statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not sure
It must run in a way that means everyone in the local Aboriginal community can be involved including young people	57.8	37.7	2.7	0.3	1.5
The way it works must adapt to each local community – a one size fits all won't work	59.1	34.3	4.5	0.9	1.2
The time it takes to get this idea up and running needs to be agreed by everyone before any work begins even if this means delaying the start	38.7	38.1	14.4	1.8	6.9
The local Aboriginal community and Government need to do this together as partners	64.7	30.5	2.4	0.3	2.1
The local Aboriginal community must decide for themselves what the most important things are to solve in their community	53.3	37.1	5.4	0.6	3.6
Only Aboriginal people trusted by the local Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage it	31.0	25.6	30.7	3.3	9.3

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the design elements. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Aboriginal community organisation membership:

- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were not members to agree that: *The time it takes to get [the LDM model] up and running needs to be agreed by everyone before any work begins even if this means delaying the start* (87.4% compared with 70.4%); and *Only Aboriginal people trusted by the local Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage [the LDM model]* (72.3% compared with 46.3%).

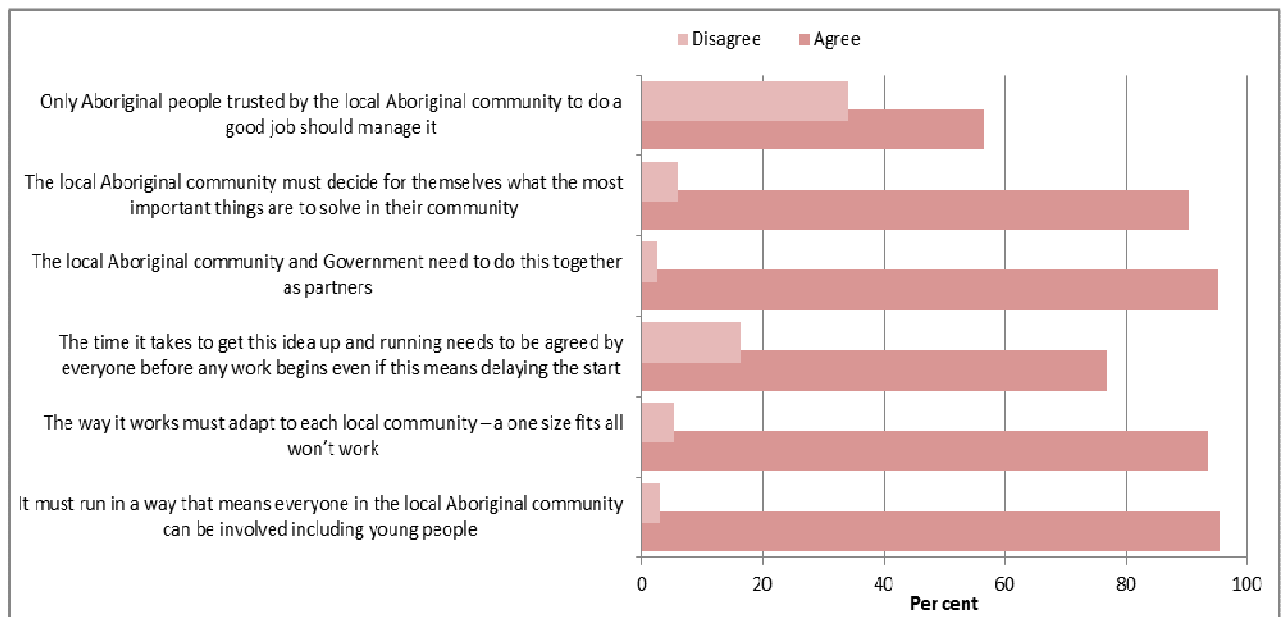
Geographic location:

- Participants living in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong and those living in country towns were more likely than those living in regional areas to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people trusted by the local Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage [the LDM model]*.

Aboriginal status:

- Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to agree that: *Only Aboriginal people trusted by the local Aboriginal community to do a good job should manage [the LDM model]* (67.4% compared with 43.9%).

Figure 16: *Service design elements – LDM model*



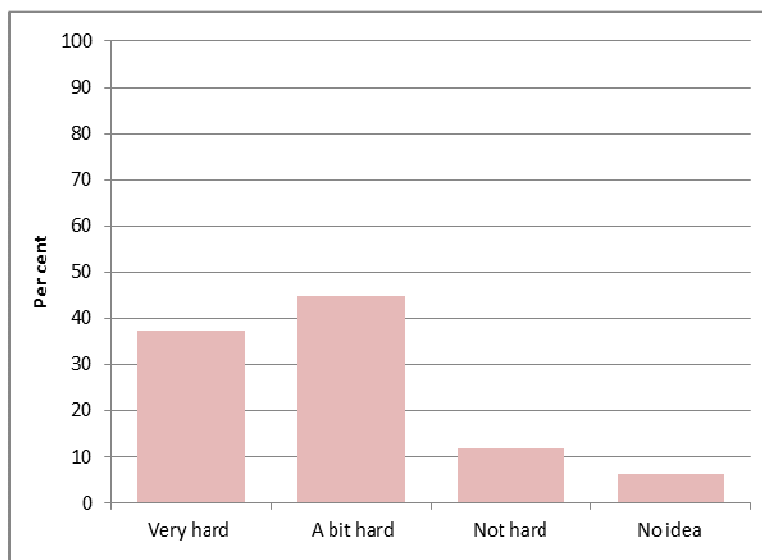
Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Implementation considerations

Survey participants were asked about how hard they thought it might be to get the LDM model working in their area – 82.0 per cent felt it would be either very hard (37.3%) or a bit hard (44.7%) (Figure 17).

Figure 17: *Implementation difficulty – LDM model*



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The 41 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Table 8 and Figure 18 show the responses of survey participants to the implementation considerations presented in the survey. Taking these into account along with the forum responses three key considerations emerged:

1. Government remaining involved for as long as it takes
2. Continued and sustained government funding and support
3. Getting everyone believing it is a good idea and working together

These key issues are discussed below.

Government remaining involved for as long as it takes

Many people at the forums expressed cynicism and doubt that the Government would actually deliver on the proposal, stating that proposals in the past for improved community governance and decision making had either not been implemented or had been “set up to fail”.

Participants questioned government’s long term commitment to the idea and whether government was truly committed to moving towards increased accountability to local communities, investing in Aboriginal community capacity, leadership and governance and actually giving Aboriginal communities greater control over service delivery.

This was also found in the survey with 91.6 per cent believing that it would be difficult to get government to hang in there long enough for this to work. One survey participant offered this reflection:

Each journey begins with a single step. Whilst it would be difficult to implement and maintain, it will have a great outcome for Aboriginal people if government persist and allow it time to see beneficial outcomes. Only when other Aboriginal people see it advantages will a flow on effect begin. "Patience" is the key.

Continued and sustained government funding and support

Support for the boards/committees was uniformly raised as an issue. This included practical support such as meeting venue and secretariat/administration support, as well as payment (such as sitting fees and transport reimbursement) for board/committee members. Real support, training and investment to strengthen leadership and governance both directly for committee/board members as well as in the community more broadly was also raised frequently.

The difficulties in achieving sustained funding was noted by survey participants with 91.2 per cent stating that it would be difficult to get government to fund the LDM long enough for it to work:

It will all take increased funding and training of Aboriginal co-ordinators.

Others noted that funding may not be a solution:

Outcomes are not linked to funding levels, linked to structure, communication, accountability, transparency etc. "Aboriginal funding" drives a wedge - equity of access / service!

I think that money does not solve all problems.

Others believed that current funding could be reallocated:

The amount of money set aside for services and programs needs to be utilised better. Build on existing programs/services that are working! Stop funding programs that don't work.

The money that is currently in Aboriginal communities is only putting band aids on problems and not addressing the deeper baseline issues. The money out there needs to be used more effectively and strategically.

Need to be very aware of the local Aboriginal politics and not just fund what has always been funded.

Getting everyone believing it is a good idea and working together

Close to 85 per cent (84.6%) of survey participants thought that it would be difficult to get everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together and 84.9 per cent felt it would be difficult to getting everyone in the local community to believe this is a good idea. Concerns included:

I am not sure how you'll bring all the community groups together. I'm not sure there's the skill or key drivers in our community to make this happen. Our community needs someone who can bring all the groups together to make this work.

For things to work everyone has to work together and be on the same page for change.

Some organisations have to be cleaned out. There are many that bring us down. Factions, nepotism, poor management, reward those individuals who have a go, responsibility as well as rights.

Not all Aboriginal organisations are supported by 100% of the Aboriginal people.

Related to this was the issue of Aboriginal identity. There were concerns expressed at the forums that people were claiming to be Aboriginal when community members believed they were not. Some participants asked “what is government going to about this” while other participants believed firmly that issues in regard to Aboriginal identity needed to be resolved by, and within, Aboriginal communities.

Other implementation considerations

The issue of overcoming inter-generational trauma, and healing and well-being, especially in the context of achieving a community which is cohesive, functioning and working towards a common goal, was raised in a number of forums. Some participants questioned whether any community decision-making model would work effectively unless these underlying and fundamental issues were acknowledge and addressed in some way.

Table 8: *Implementation considerations – LDM model*

	Really difficult	A bit difficult	Not difficult	Not sure
		%	%	%
Getting everyone in the local community believing this is a good idea whether they are Aboriginal people or not	29.2	55.7	12.3	2.8
Finding people who can do the job who are respected by the local Aboriginal people and community	18.3	55.6	22.6	3.6
Getting everyone in the local Aboriginal community to find a way to work together	33.6	51.0	12.6	2.8
Getting Government to hang in there long enough for this to work	65.2	26.4	6.8	1.6
Meetings, meetings and more meetings for Aboriginal people to attend! There are already a lot	32.1	45.1	11.0	11.8
Getting Aboriginal people to be part of it	13.1	52.8	30.2	4.0
Checking regularly with local people including the young people to see if it's working like it's supposed to	10.4	45.8	41.0	2.8
Getting Government to fund this idea long enough for it to work	69.1	22.1	6.4	2.4
Providing Aboriginal people the practical training and guidance they may need to meet the challenges of working like this for as long as they need it	18.5	52.6	26.1	2.8
Making sure that everyone can be part of it including people who aren't normally involved in this type of thing	24.0	57.6	16.0	2.4

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in what different groups of survey participants thought about the implementation considerations. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit, government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistical significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Member of an Aboriginal community organisation:

- People who were not members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were members to believe the following would be difficult: *Finding people who can do the job who are respected by the local Aboriginal people an community [to be involved in the LDM model]* (86.1% compared with 74.7%).

Geographic location:

- Participants living in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong were more likely than those living in a small country area to believe the following would be difficult: *Getting government to fund this [LDM model] long enough for it to work* (98.5% compared with 89.0%).

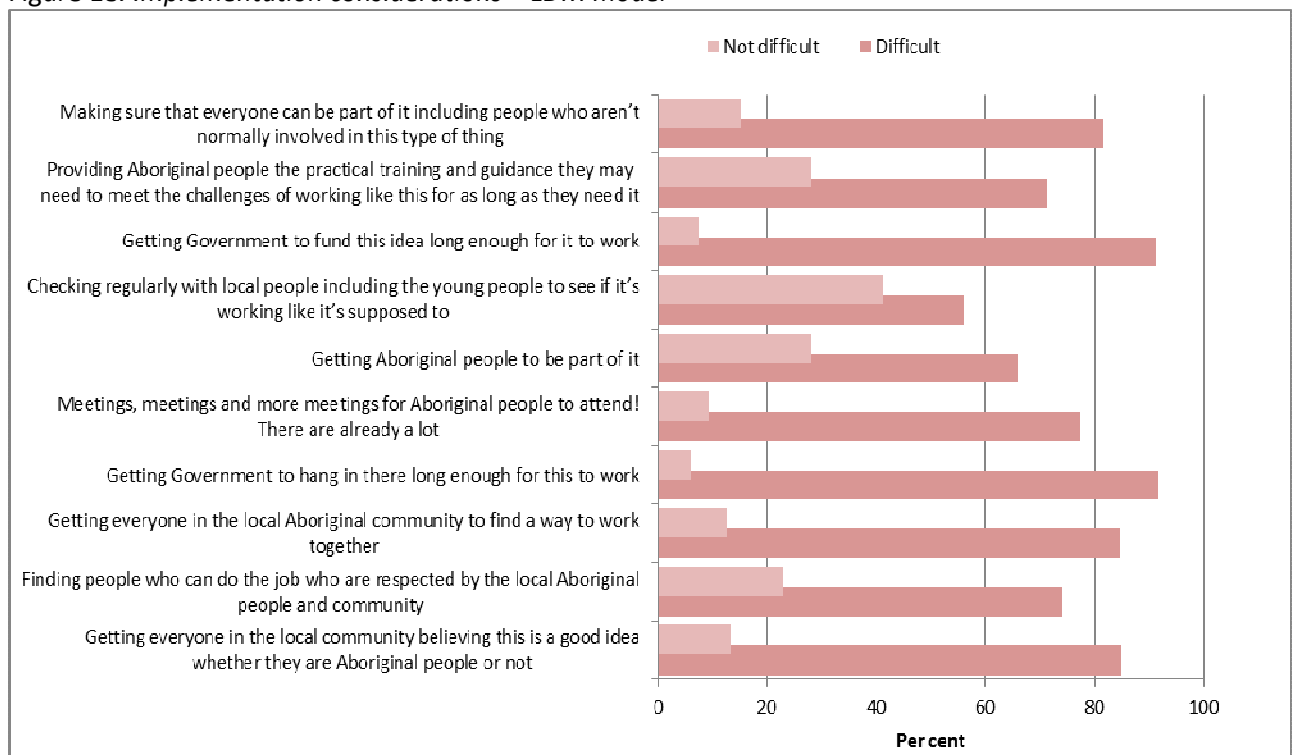
Working in either a paid or unpaid capacity for a Government agency, a not for profit organisation or a representative of business:

- Participants working in either a paid or unpaid capacity were more likely than those not working to believe that the following would be difficult: *Finding people who can do the job who are respected by the local Aboriginal people and community* (82.8% compared with 67.9%).

Aboriginal status:

- Non-Aboriginal participants were more likely than Aboriginal people to believe that the following would be difficult: *Finding people who can do the job who are respected by the local Aboriginal people and community* (91.2% compared with 75.0%); *Getting everyone to find a way to work together* (97.0% compared with 86.9%), *Meetings, meetings and more meetings for Aboriginal people to attend! There are already a lot* (97.7% compared with 85.2%); *Getting Aboriginal people to be part of it* (81.1% compared with 66.4%); and *Making sure that everyone can be part of it including young people who aren't normally involved in this type of things* (92.2% compared with 80.5%).

Figure 18: Implementation considerations – LDM model

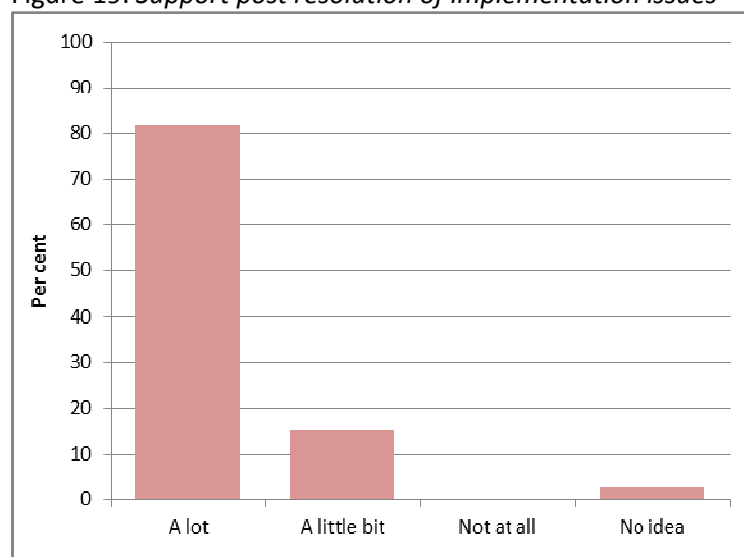


Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

As noted earlier 82 per cent of participants felt the LDM model would be hard to implement in their local community. As was the case for the Language and Culture initiative and Opportunity Hub, addressing the implementation issues resulted in increased support for the idea (97.2%) - 81.9 per cent said they would support the idea “a lot” and 15.3 per cent said they would support the idea “a little bit” (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Support post resolution of implementation issues – LDM model



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question. The 41 participants who did not provide this information are excluded from this figure.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Attitudes and beliefs

Survey participants were asked to provide their opinion on a number of statements relevant to the LDM model (Table 9 and Figure 20). Over three-quarters believed that:

- What Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people mean by community is different (81%)
- Laws are needed to make agencies give Aboriginal communities their power back (72%)

Critically, there was nothing approaching a consensus view on the following statements: *The ways that local Aboriginal communities work now are good and should be built on* and *Aboriginal organisations in the local community represent the views of most of the Aboriginal people in the community*.

Participants in the community forums discussed the role of existing community governance bodies. Some participants highlighted that in their community they had functioning and well developed local governance bodies which were contributing to real and positive community outcomes, and were concerned that the proposal may undermine these existing bodies and may make them obsolete. Local Aboriginal Land Councils were frequently highlighted as the only legislative based Aboriginal community body with a guaranteed, however small, funding stream, and were established state-wide.

Other community members noted that LALC membership did not represent the whole community and many land councils are insolvent and either in administration or swing in and out of administration regularly.

Consistently, the question was asked why establish a new governance body instead of supporting, funding and strengthening existing successful Aboriginal community governance bodies. Emphasis was also placed on the initiative not creating further divisions but result in greater community cohesion. Views on the same issue identified through the survey included:

Aboriginal organisations in the local community do not necessarily represent the views of most of the Aboriginal people in the local community...they are bound by rules that they themselves may not agree with or have the power to change. They may not have the power to do all they can to help Aboriginal communities in the way they need help.

Table 9: Attitudes and beliefs – LDM model

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Response statement			%	%	%
Laws are needed to make agencies to work together	38.6	31.1	19.4	2.3	8.6
Laws are needed to make agencies to give Aboriginal communities their power back	39.9	32.1	16.0	3.3	8.7
Aboriginal organisations in the local community represent the views of most of the Aboriginal people in the community	14.4	23.4	32.5	13.9	15.9
The ways that local Aboriginal communities work now are good and should be built on	12.9	29.4	26.8	9.9	21.0
The amount of money set aside for services and programs that are just for Aboriginal people should increase	44.1	26.4	11.6	4.8	13.1
What Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people mean by community is different	38.7	42.3	8.6	1.3	9.1

Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Analysis was undertaken to determine if there was any variation in the attitudes and beliefs about the LDM model of different groups of survey participants. The different groups considered were age, geographic location, Aboriginal community membership or whether the person worked for a not for profit or government organisation or was a business representative. The following statistically significant differences were found ($p < 0.01$):

Member of an Aboriginal community organisation

- Members of an Aboriginal community organisation were more likely than those who were not members to agree that: *Laws are needed to make agencies give Aboriginal communities their power back* (86.3% compared with 67.6%); *Aboriginal organisations in the local community represent the views of most of the Aboriginal people in the local community* (50.2% compared with 31.9%); *the amount of money set aside for services and programs that are just for Aboriginal people should increase* (89.2% compared with 68.4%).

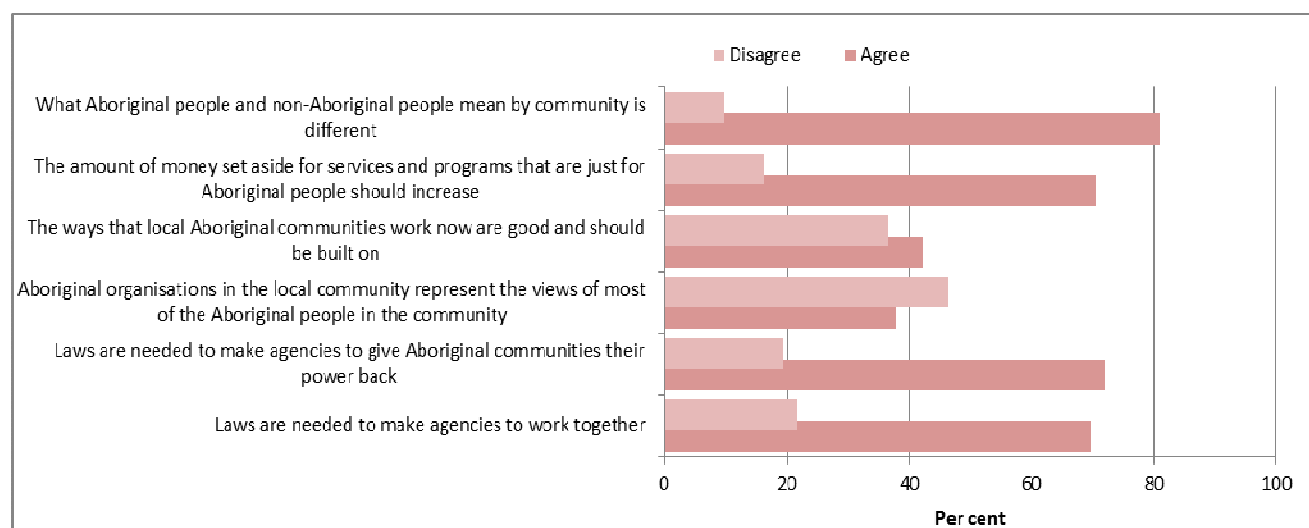
Geographic location

- Participants living in small country towns were more likely than those living in Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong or regional areas to agree that: *Laws are needed to make agencies to work together*
- Participants living in country areas were more likely than those living in regional areas to agree that: *Laws are needed to make agencies give Aboriginal communities their power back*
- Participants living in Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle or small country towns were more likely than those living in regional areas to agree that: *the amount of money set aside for services and programs that are just for Aboriginal people should increase.*
- Participants living in Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle were more likely than those living in small country towns to agree that: *What Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people mean by community is different.*

Aboriginal status

- Aboriginal people were more likely than non-Aboriginal people to agree that: *Laws are needed to make agencies work together* (83.4% compared with 63.6%); and *Aboriginal organisations in the local community represent the views of most of the Aboriginal people in the local community* (48.1% compared with 30.6%); *The amount of money set aside for services and programs that are just for Aboriginal people should increase* (87.2% compared with 62.9%); and *What Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people means by community is different* (92.0% and 81.1%).

Figure 20: Attitudes and beliefs– LDM model



Note: The per cent is the number of responses in each category as a proportion of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Source: Language and Culture, Careers, Decisions survey, Aboriginal Affairs, Department of Education and Communities, 2012

Chapter six: Implications

This final chapter discusses the overall implications arising from the Round Two Consultation process as well as the specific implications for the three initiatives proposed.

Overall implications

- **Endorsement.** Support for the initiatives was high, with the greatest support for the Language and Culture initiative and the Opportunity Hubs (almost equal levels of support). There was less support, however, as compared to the other two initiatives, for the LDM model. No initiatives were considered easy to implement in a local community. The Opportunity Hubs, followed by Language and Culture, were viewed as less difficult to implement as compared to the LDM model, which was considered significantly harder to implement. However, when surveys participants were asked if the difficulties in the design and implementation of the initiatives were resolved, support for all three initiatives rose significantly. Given these views, the proposed approach of the Taskforce of initially commencing implementation of each of the proposals at three or four locations, rather than across many Aboriginal communities at once, appears well justified.
- **Localised and flexible place based approach.** A key element common to all initiatives was ensuring a place based, flexible and localised design and implementation – initiatives should be designed and implemented in partnership with the local Aboriginal community, taking into account local circumstances and the community's strengths. This indicates a one size fits all approach will not work, and how the proposals may be designed and implemented will vary from local community to local community. Taking a place based localised delivery approach is also consistent with research into best practice for location based initiatives (see Closing the Gap Clearinghouse AIHW,AIFS 2012 and Australian Social inclusion Board, Commonwealth of Australia, 2011).
- **Real partnership with communities.** Universally getting Aboriginal community support behind the proposals and getting the Aboriginal community to agree and work together on the proposals were seen as key implementation issues. This indicates that investment in careful implementation, and meaningful dialogue and engagement with the Aboriginal communities at both the design and implementation stages of the initiatives needs to occur in order to gain real community support and partnership. This approach also supports the Taskforce's proposal to only trial the initiatives in communities who volunteer or agree to be involved, rather than imposing new proposals on communities who do not want them or are not ready for them. The

extraordinary high level of community involvement and participation in both the Round One and Round Two community consultation processes also indicates that Aboriginal communities are willing and to engage with government. It is government who must now step up to the challenge and achieve real partnership with communities.

- **Build on existing strengths.** Building on existing strengths within local communities, including successful programs relevant to the three initiatives, as well as building on existing Aboriginal community governance bodies and NGOs, was identified as a key implementation issue. The level of cohesion within a local community and whether there are existing, well operating, local Aboriginal community organisations and governance bodies needs to be considered when implementing the initiatives. Taking into account these considerations is also consistent with research into best practice for location based initiatives (see Closing the Gap Clearinghouse AIHW, AIFS 2012 and Australian Social inclusion Board, Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). In terms of the LDM model, issues associated with the role of, and relationship with, existing Aboriginal community governance bodies are critical.
- **Realistic resourcing by government.** Another common implementation issue identified in the surveys and forums was the attitude and commitment of government, including government commitment for the long term and sufficient resourcing. These attitudes were reflected at the community forums where participants felt generally that governments had made promises previously but not delivered. This indicates that government needs to build relationships and trust with local communities, which takes investment in terms of time, so there is confidence that government will stay invested long enough for outcomes to be delivered.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluating implementation of the proposals at the trial sites, and using the lessons learned when implementing the proposals elsewhere, needs to be incorporated into the implementation of the initiatives.
- **The need for broad and inclusive local community consultation and participation.** Survey participants were asked for their age, geographic location, whether they were members of an Aboriginal community organisation or not, and whether they worked for a government agency, not for profit or were a business representative. From the analysis of the survey responses, it appears that these factors did not greatly influence a respondent's answers and statistically significant differences were only found in a few instances, as outlined in the main body report with one exception. Uniformly across the survey there were many instances of significant statistical differences when comparing results from respondents who said they were members

of an Aboriginal community organisation, compared to those who said they were not members. It appears then that the opinions, views and beliefs of Aboriginal people who are members of Aboriginal community organisations, compared to those who are not, differ significantly. This needs to be considered, especially in terms of the scope and approach of any localised Aboriginal community consultation which is undertaken in relation to the design and implementation of any of the initiatives, to ensure people who are members of Aboriginal community organisations, as well as those who are not, are properly consulted.

Implications by initiative

The proceeding discussion outlined the major implications common to all the proposed initiatives arising from the Round Two Consultation process. The following discusses the additional implications arising specifically for each initiative from the Round Two Consultations.

Language and Culture

There was strong support for this initiative, with 82% of survey participants identifying that they thought it was a really good idea. This strong support was reinforced by comments made at the forums. Some forum and survey participants, however, questioned whether learning an Aboriginal language should be a priority for their families and children, as compared to gaining a good education, including learning basic numeracy and literacy skills, and getting qualifications and training to gain employment. These views in terms of the relative priorities for Aboriginal people, lends support to establishing not only the Language and Culture initiative, but other initiatives such as Opportunity Hubs and strengthening the educational outcomes of Aboriginal children through programs such as Connected Communities.

At all the forums, participants emphasised that Aboriginal language was inseparable from culture and community. Participants reinforced the importance of language for cultural renewal and connection to Country, and how this is reinforced through speaking and communicating in language and through experiencing culture. This was supported by the survey results, where participants very strongly indicated that language strengthened cultural identity as well as connection to Country. The recent research conducted by Dr Shayne Williams on behalf of the Taskforce (Williams, 2011) reiterates the links between language, culture and community, as well as the importance of learning an Aboriginal language in terms of general educational engagement.

The strong link between culture, language and community was reflected in the messages that came out of the Round Two Consultations about how the initiative should be designed and implemented. In terms of who should learn language and where it should be taught, survey participants agreed

that the program should be offered in schools (over 95% of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed). However, many participants at the forums emphasised that language revitalisation should involve the whole family and community, as part of broader cultural renewal and pride. It was therefore suggested that language learning should not be restricted to children in schools but should be offered to all community members through language classes offered through TAFE or community language centres. In terms of whether Aboriginal language learning should be available to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, survey participants strongly felt that it should be offered to everyone but this view was not shared by all forum participants. Some people believed Aboriginal language learning should be restricted to Aboriginal people, or at the very least, the priority should be Aboriginal children and people learning their language.

Implications in terms of how Aboriginal languages should be taught and who should teach them were also strongly related to culture and community. It was highlighted at the forums that language needs to be taught in ways which are culturally appropriate, using traditional methods, and should not be restricted to indoor classrooms but taught on Country as much as possible. Developing locally based protocols for the teaching of language which must be agreed upon by the local community was also deemed important.

Who should teach Aboriginal languages, whether it be only Aboriginal people from the local community or non-Aboriginal people, was a critical issue at all the forums. The survey indicated that people had mixed views on the issue (53% agreed it should be only Aboriginal people, while 37% disagreed). At the forums it was expressed, that at a minimum, non-Aboriginal people should team teach with Elders or other recognised local Aboriginal community members. In addition, any non-Aboriginal people teaching language should also be adequately trained and culturally competent. At the forums it was strongly expressed that appropriate remuneration and recognition should be given to Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal community members who teach and share their knowledge of language (89% of survey participants agreed).

At the forums the issue of what Aboriginal language(s) should be taught in local communities was a key issue, whether it should be the Aboriginal language of the local area exclusively or the language of a person's nation or Country (if they did not live on Country). It was clear from the forums that there was no clear consensus across communities on the issue of which language(s) should be taught within a community. The issue was particularly complex in "settlement areas" where, due to historic colonisation practices, many Aboriginal people from different nations and language groups now live. However, what was clear was that the proposal to focus only on the four or five

Aboriginal languages where there continues to be a community of speakers was *not* supported, either by survey (72% of survey participants disagreeing or strongly disagreeing) or forum participants, with suggestions at the forums that some attempt should be made in revitalising some aspects of *all* Aboriginal languages. This could be addressed by a review of the existing NSW Aboriginal language Policy.

As can be seen, issues associated with the design and implementation of the Language and Culture initiative are complex, varied and need to be community and culturally based. This reinforces one of the key messages of the Round Two Consultations, as outlined previously, that flexible and localised design and delivery of the Language and Culture initiative will be vital, with the local Aboriginal community determining key elements of the initiative so it meets the needs and desires of the local community.

Opportunity Hubs

Like Language and Culture, Opportunity Hubs was strongly supported. Around 80 per cent of survey participants thought the initiative was a really good idea and this level of support was reinforced by comments made at the forums. Employment, including where possible sustainable jobs within local communities, was seen by Aboriginal people as fundamental to overcoming chronic disadvantage and improving the lives of young people. Survey participants strongly believed that getting Aboriginal people into jobs was the best way for them to take control of their futures and being employed increased young Aboriginal people's wellbeing. Forum and survey participants emphasised the importance of Aboriginal children and youth receiving a good education, expressing the view that there was no point having a Hub if Aboriginal children did not have good numeracy and literacy skills. These views again lend support to establishing not only the Hubs, but other initiatives such as Language and Culture to strengthen educational outcomes of Aboriginal children generally. Forum participants said it was also important to recognise other issues, such as mental and physical health and general disadvantage, which impact on schooling.

The implications that arose out of the Round Two Consultations in terms of how the Hubs should be designed and implemented reflected the views of both forum and survey participants that sustainable employment including localised jobs, was critical for improving the lives of young Aboriginal people. In terms of who should be able to access the services of a Hub, the survey results indicated that the Hub should be accessible to all young people, Aboriginal or not (over 70% of survey participants agreeing or strongly agreeing) but forum participants had differing views, with most stating given the high level of unemployment among young Aboriginal people, that they should be the priority. The forum and survey participants agreed that it was critical that young Aboriginal

people should have a say in how the program is to be designed and run, to ensure its success and young people should be engaged at implementation. This approach is consistent with research which supports that young people are more than capable in engaging in decision-making on issues and programs that effect them (NSW Commission for Children and Young People, September 2012).

Survey participants felt that delivery should be strongly driven by the local Aboriginal community with forum participants emphasising the operation of the Hub should be undertaken, as much as possible, by local Aboriginal community members, as mentors, co-ordinators, teachers and volunteers. Forums participants also highlighted that in many Aboriginal communities there are existing successful career development and employment programs, and the Hub should learn from and build on these.

The forums identified that local businesses and industry, as well as local government and State government agencies who are major employers in remote and rural areas, must be involved in and support the Hub for it to be successful. This view was strongly supported by the survey results. Both survey and forums participants believed that young Aboriginal people want to work within their own communities and as such the Hub needs to support young people to connect with local opportunities.

Location of the Hub, whether school or non-school based (eg co-location with an existing Aboriginal cultural centre or Aboriginal Child and Family Centre), was a key issue at the forums. Related to this, survey participants strongly did not support the idea that only children attending school should take part (80% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing). Some participants believed it should be school based and further develop and formalise existing links between schools and TAFES/universities. A school based program however would need to overcome impediments identified at the forums such as some Aboriginal families reluctance to visit schools as they feel alienated and intimidated (as Aboriginal students and families may have experienced racism at school) and the need for schools to open after hours for activities such as homework programs and to allow students to access computers. People also argued that many Aboriginal children who needed to be involved in a program like this were not attending school or disengaged from it, and a school based program would therefore not reach them. It was widely agreed at the forums that each local community needs to decide where their Hub should be located, again supporting the need for flexible and localised design and delivery as outlined above.

The age at which students should become involved in the Hub was frequently discussed at the forums, with many people arguing early engagement of students in career planning and learning goals was essential, with some participants stating engagement at Year 10 was too late, and engagement should commence in year 7, with late primary school the preferred commencement age. The need for ongoing mentoring and support to be included in the initiative was also repeatedly raised at the forums as an important design element and this is supported by the survey results. Recent research into increasing Aboriginal employment rates also emphasises the importance of mentoring and role models (Closing the Gap Clearing House, Issues Paper No 3, March 2012).

The role of a young Aboriginal person's family was seen as critical at the forums and this was supported by the survey results. This viewpoint is backed by recent research which emphasises the importance of family support in terms of young Aboriginal people finding and retaining employment (ibid).

Local decision making model

Support for the LDM model was strong, but not as strong as the support for the Opportunity Hub and the Language and Culture proposals. Over 61% of survey participants thought the initiative was a really good idea and a further 28% thought it was worth a go. In addition, the LDM was perceived as harder to implement than the other proposals, with over 80% of survey participants believing this initiative would be very hard to get it to work in their local area. The intent of the model, to ensure Aboriginal communities have a real say in what and how services are delivered to their community and to strengthen community leadership and governance, was supported. However, there were differing views expressed in both the surveys and forums as to whether the LDM model is the best way to achieve this.

The variety of views on the issue of the LDM proposal is in part reflected by the differing views and beliefs both within the forums and from the surveys in regard to the representativeness and functionality of existing Aboriginal community organisations, and there appeared to be no consensus view. Survey participants were almost evenly split on whether they believed or not that existing Aboriginal community organisations represented the views of the community as a whole. In terms of whether people thought the existing local Aboriginal community organisations were operating well and should be built on, again the views were almost even in terms whether people supported or did not support this viewpoint.

In light of the above, a key implication arising out of the Round Two Consultations is the role and involvement of existing community governance bodies in terms of the LDM model. Both survey and forum participants agreed that the way the LDM model should work within a local Aboriginal community must be decided by the local community, and that a one size fits all model would not work. This included how existing local Aboriginal community governance bodies would be incorporated into the LDM model.

In addition, the geography, operation and scale of the model was questioned at the forums, and whether the scope should be local or regional. This was a particular issue in regional and urban locations.

Again reflecting the diverse views on existing Aboriginal community governance models, the need for inclusiveness as well as a transparent process, in terms of choosing representatives to sit on any new decision-making committee/board, was a key issue at the forums. Survey participants also saw this as a key issue with 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the LDM model must run in a way that means everyone can be involved.

At the forums, participants strongly felt priorities for a local community, in terms of identifying issues and how to resolve them, must be resolved by the local community themselves (survey participants also strongly agreed). Forum participants identified the mapping of existing services, and then going through a process of determining local community priorities, were a key task for any new decision-making body established under the LDM model.

Lastly, the need to support any new decision-making body established under the LDM model was uniformly raised as an issue. This included practical support such as meeting venues and secretariat/administration assistance, as well as payment (such as sitting fees and transport reimbursement) for board/committee members. Real support, training and investment to strengthen leadership and governance both directly for committee/board members as well as in the community more broadly was also raised frequently. This emphasis on capacity and leadership strengthening programs is also supported by recent research (Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, Resource Sheet No 10, January 2012).

Chapter seven: Method

Aim of the research

The aims of the Round Two Consultations were to:

1. To obtain the views of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and organisations in NSW on the policy initiatives proposed by the Taskforce, to inform the Government's final strategy, specifically:
 - Aboriginal Language and Culture initiative.
 - Opportunity Hubs and Industry-Based Agreements (incorporating mentoring).
 - Local Decision Making Model (incorporating capacity building and mentoring).
2. To identify issues for implementation for particular groups.
3. To continue Government's dialogue with Aboriginal communities about key reforms.

Research methods

The methods included face to face meetings and a self-administered survey.

Community consultation forums

Nine community forums were held in urban and regional locations in August and September 2012. The meetings were open to any members of the local community to attend. The dates, location and number of people who attended each forum are outlined below.

Date	Location	Approximate number of participates
24 August 2012	Batemans Bay	50
27 August 2012	Newcastle	90
28 August 2012	Kempsey	105
29 August 2012	Lismore	120
29 August 2012	Riverina	50
30 August 2012	Tamworth	120
31 August 2012	Dubbo	130
31 August 2012	Cobar	35
3 September 2012	Campbelltown	105
Totals	Forums: 9	Participates (approx): 805

Ministerial Taskforce members, including the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, attended as many community forums as Ministerial and parliamentary commitments would allow. As a result, all but two consultation forums had Ministerial attendance. Non-Ministerial Taskforce members, as well as representatives from CAPO, also attended each forum.

A standard agenda was developed for the community forums to ensure consistency (see Appendix B). The Minister or the General Manager of Aboriginal Affairs gave a presentation at each forum which provided an overview of the three key proposals. Participants then broke into groups to discuss the three proposals, with discussions facilitated by Aboriginal Affairs staff. The groups were then rotated so participants had the opportunity to discuss all three proposals. Key points,

comments and ideas which arose in the facilitated discussions were recorded by scribes and then transcribed to provide a comprehensive record of each community consultation forum. All comments on each of the policy proposals were then collated.

Attendees of the forums were provided with copies of the Progress Report and the community survey, and were encouraged to complete the community survey.

After the forums some individuals and community groups also submitted additional written comments/submissions and these were considered in the drafting of this report as part of the outcomes of the community consultation forums

The community consultation forums were promoted in the following ways:

Advertisements in the Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Tracker and Koori Radio.

Ministerial media releases sent to relevant local media including print, radio and regional television, which resulted in extensive coverage in local and regional media.

Information on the websites of Aboriginal Affairs and Office of Communities.

Progress Reports, flyers and information emailed to community forum participants from the Round One Consultation process, and to individuals/organisations who made submissions during Round One.

Progress Reports and information mailed to all Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Progress Reports, flyers and information distributed by Aboriginal Affairs staff to contacts and networks, including regional/local Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations.

Targeted consultation forums

Four targeted consultation forums were organised by Aboriginal Affairs NSW to:

- get the views of a particular sector of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community on the three proposed new initiatives (eg Aboriginal youth and NGOs); or
- discuss a particular initiative with relevant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community organisations and peak groups.

The Survey

The survey *Language and Culture, Careers and Decisions* was developed to obtain the views of people in NSW to meet the following principles:

1. As the recipients of the Government's future strategy, priority was given to obtaining the views of Aboriginal people and communities.
2. Local Aboriginal culture was respected with questions that may have made people feel ashamed or offended omitted.

3. The communication style of Aboriginal people was respected with the wording of questions and response options informed by Aboriginal people.
4. Time limitations and literacy levels were acknowledged with questions short and simple and writing kept to a minimum.
5. Unnecessary intrusion in the lives of those completing the survey was avoided.
6. Only questions that directly relate to the research aims were included.

A draft was developed with reference to published and unpublished information and then tested with a small number of Aboriginal staff at Aboriginal Affairs. The redrafted survey was reviewed by Aboriginal people who had knowledge of Aboriginal communities, services in NSW and represented some of the larger Aboriginal organisations in NSW including all members of the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO). Where there was a difference in the views identified in the testing phase, preference was given to the views of the CAPO members.

Survey sample

The target population for the survey was people in NSW who had an interest in Aboriginal affairs in NSW. All persons who were involved in the Round One Consultation were invited to participate, as were those attending the face to face Round Two community forums.

To meet the considerable time and resource constraints the survey was marketed through the following methods:

- Advertisements in the Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Tracker and Koori Radio;
- Ministerial media releases sent to relevant local media including print, radio and regional television, which resulted in extensive coverage in local and regional media;
- information on the websites of Aboriginal Affairs and Office of Communities;
- information emailed to all community forum participants from the Round One Consultation process, and to all individuals/organisations who made submissions during Round One;
- information and/or hard copy surveys were distributed by Aboriginal Affairs staff to contacts and networks, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, regional/local Aboriginal community stakeholders and organisations; and
- hard copy surveys were distributed to all participants of the Round Two Consultation forums, as well as follow-up emails. In addition people were asked to pass on the survey to others.

Data analysis

Data analysis were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Stata/MP version 12 was used for the analysis of quantitative data collected through the survey.⁷

⁷StataCorp. (2011). *Stata Statistical Software: Release 12*. College Station, TX: StataCorp LP.

The data collected through the survey and forums were analysed to identify categories or themes relevant to the conceptual elements under study:

1. Service design
2. Implementation considerations
3. Acceptance of the initiatives
4. Attitudes and beliefs

In addition the forum data was analysed to identify interesting practical ideas.

Data analyses of the quantitative data were carried out on STATA using the *prtest* command for two groups. This tests the equality of proportions. Age group; Aboriginality; membership of an Aboriginal community organisation; and working for a not for profit, government agency or a representative of a business group were examined. The effect of geographic location was examined using Pearson's chi-squared. This allowed for the independence of the three locations of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong; regional centre; and small country town to be tested. Through this it was possible to determine if there was any difference in the responses for geographic location.

Calculation of significance

A difference was determined to be statistically significant (that is the difference found was not due to chance) if the p-value was <0.01 (that is there was one chance in 100 that the difference could have happened by chance). This p-value is conservative, set to account for the uncertainty and reduce the possibility of making claims about things unless they were there. The trade-off was between the certainty that a difference exists verses assurance that a difference does not remain unidentified when it does exist. The former was chosen. This approach may have resulted in significant differences not being found.

Methodological limitations and cautions relating to the survey sample

The limitations arise from the dataset. The first arises from the exclusion of persons aged less than 18 years:

Working within the time and resource, the survey was designed to obtain consent via a series of statements on the cover page of the survey. This approach was not appropriate for persons under the age of 18 years where ethical standards require the permission of an adult who is responsible for the child or young person and the child or young person themselves. As a result the survey did not capture the views of this younger group.

The second arises from the way the sample was drawn:

The sample was not drawn using a probability sampling method. There was no control over the sampling and the representativeness of the sample cannot be assumed. In addition

some bias in the sample is likely to have resulted from both initial approach strategy and any subsequent action of this group in inviting others to participate. The latter method, known as Snowballing, sampling can result in people approaching others they know well and because of this sharing the same traits and characteristics.

The third arises from the variation in information about the Taskforce initiatives held by participants:

The survey was completed at different points in the Round Two Consultation period. For some the Taskforce initiatives were well understood and the implication of various approaches, for others the Ministers description was their first introduction. The impact of this is unknown.

Finally, the statistical approach:

Statistical techniques have been used to analyse and interpret the information collected. There are limitations in any statistical technique and in the end no technique can prove or disprove anything but rather the results allow for us to infer things. Statistical techniques are also subject to error including Type I (rejecting something that might be true) and Type II error (finding something to be true when it is not).

Appendix A – Membership of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs

The Hon. Victor Dominello MP (Chair)
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP
Minister for Health

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education

The Hon. Mike Baird MP
Treasurer

The Hon. Greg Smith SC MP
Attorney General and Minister for Justice

The Hon. Pru Goward MP
Minister for Family and Community Services

The Hon. Kevin Humphries MP
Minister for Mental Health, Healthy Lifestyles and Western NSW

Mr Stephen Ryan
Chair, Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations NSW

Professor Shane Houston
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) University of Sydney

Ms Maydina Penrith
Youth member

Mr Danny Lester
Chief Executive, Aboriginal Employment Strategy

Mr Chris Eccles
Director General, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Professor Michele Bruniges AM
Director-General of Education and Communities
Managing Director of TAFE NSW

Mr Jason Ardler
General Manager, Aboriginal Affairs

Appendix B – Standard Agenda: Community consultation forums

10.45am	Refreshments and registration
11.00am	Welcome to Country and Introductions
11.05am	Taskforce progress report – Minister’s presentation
11.35am	Overview of the day and attendees break into groups
11.50pm – 12.20pm	Workshop 1
12.20pm - 12.55pm	Lunch
12.55pm - 1.25pm	Workshop 2
1.25pm - 1.55pm	Workshop 3
1.55 – 2.55pm	Plenary Session
2.55pm	Closing words from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (if in attendance) or the General Manager, Aboriginal Affairs
3.00pm	Meeting concludes

References

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