

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee held its twelfth meeting on 8 November 2019.

Evaluation of OCHRE - Local Decision Making

The Committee is pleased to receive a draft of the Blueprint for the evaluation of OCHRE - Local Decision Making. The committee noted that the Blueprint provides a description of the methodology and principles that will be brought to the production of localised evaluation plans in the five Local Decision Making sites.

The Committee commends the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) in delivering a Blueprint that is built on the learnings from the first three years. These include an emphasis on innovation; working with Aboriginal and Western knowledges with co-design, co-production, and co-learning; and communication. The Committee believes the Blueprint provides a robust base to guide the development of localised evaluation plans.

The Committee looks forward to receiving the finalised Blueprint in early 2020.

NSW Deputy Ombudsman's (Aboriginal Affairs) special report to Parliament on OCHRE

The Committee notes the release of the NSW Deputy Ombudsman's (Aboriginal Programs) OCHRE Review Report on 28 October 2019 and congratulated the Deputy Ombudsman on delivery of the report.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations with the Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs). The Committee was particularly pleased to see recommendations aimed at improving program monitoring and reporting and the general alignment of the evaluation findings and the Deputy Ombudsman's conclusions. The evidence highlights that the NSW Government's unwavering commitment to co-designing policy solutions with Aboriginal people has been OCHRE's greatest strength and success. The independent evaluation found that OCHRE has been "*remarkably successful*" and the Committee is pleased to note the Ombudsman's view that "*OCHRE has amplified Aboriginal voices, and encouraged creativity, innovation and behavioural change amongst public servants*". Both reports also highlighted areas for improvement such as project governance, communication and data collection.

At the same time the Committee considers the report's conclusion that commencement of the OCHRE evaluation and reporting findings were delayed is incorrect. The OCHRE evaluation, with its commitment to community ownership, had to ensure the pace of Stage 1 aligned with community requirements and resource availability. Its approach was supported by robust ethics approval from the University and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC), and provided necessary forward planning once the evaluator was engaged.

The Committee looks forward to further discussions with the Deputy Ombudsman at its next meeting.

NSW Treasury representation on the Committee

The Committee welcomed the appointment of Alison Weaver as the NSW Treasury representative following the departure of Alex Tosh. This appointment maintains critically important mutual understanding and support for the evaluation.



Dr Wendy Jarvie, Independent Chair