



OCHRE

- a continuing conversation

INDUSTRY BASED AGREEMENTS

LOCAL DECISION MAKING

OPPORTUNITY HUBS

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS

Frequently asked questions



Aboriginal
Affairs



OCHRE

stands for:



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www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/conversations/ochre

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1. What is OCHRE?

OCHRE is the community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs in NSW.

In 2012 and 2013 some 2,700 Aboriginal people in NSW stated that Aboriginal language and cultures, education and employment and accountability are important priorities for Aboriginal communities. The NSW Government responded with OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment). OCHRE recognises the importance of healing, and commits the NSW Government to ongoing dialogue with communities to progress healing. OCHRE supports:

- Connected Communities – where schools work in partnership with Aboriginal leaders in the local community to improve education outcomes for young Aboriginal people
- Opportunity Hubs – which provide young Aboriginal people with clear pathways and incentives to stay at school and transition into employment, training or further education
- Industry-Based Agreements – partnerships with peak industry bodies to support Aboriginal employment and enterprise
- Language and Culture Nests – to revitalise and maintain languages as an integral part of culture and identity
- Local Decision Making – where Aboriginal communities are given a progressively bigger say in what services are delivered in their communities, and how they are delivered
- An Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework – that drives the long-term and sustainable economic prosperity of Aboriginal people and their communities across NSW
- A Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) – to provide independent oversight over Aboriginal programs.

OCHRE commits the NSW Government to a different way of working with, and in support of, Aboriginal communities by building strong working partnerships that have at their heart respect for local Aboriginal culture, leadership and decision making. Further information can be found [here](#).

Further information on all OCHRE initiatives can be found [here](#).

2. How do I find out where the OCHRE initiatives are up to?

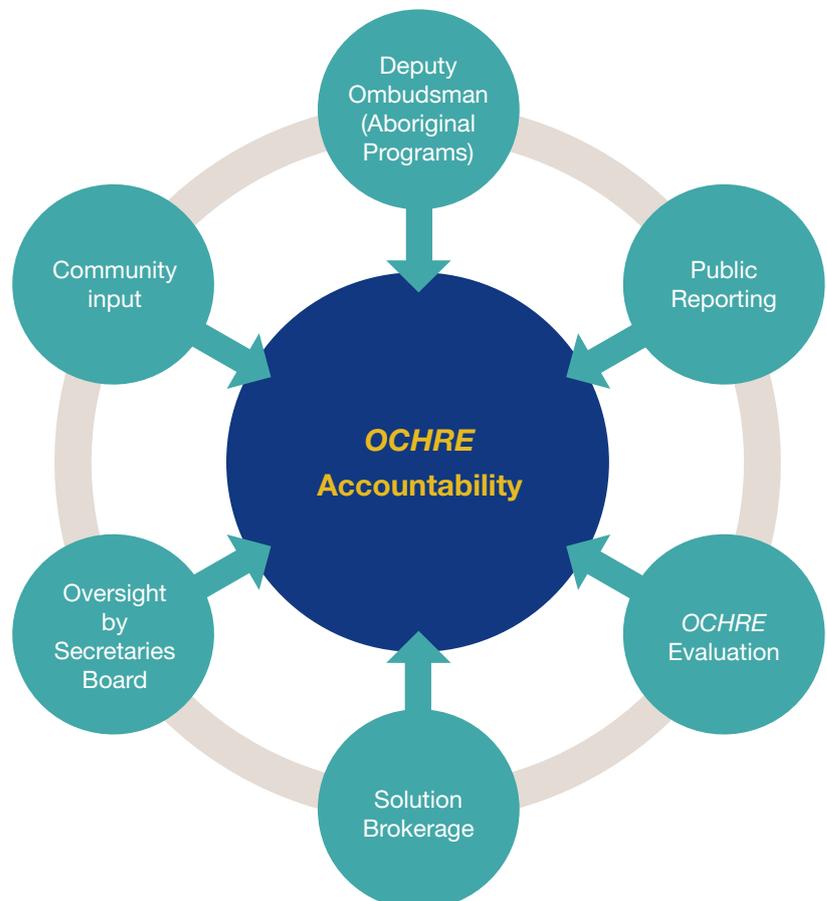
Every year the NSW Government reports on what the OCHRE initiatives have achieved. The OCHRE annual reports can be found [here](#).

You can also contact the managers for Local Decision Making, Industry Based Agreements, Language and Culture Nests and Opportunity Hubs directly for further information. Contact details can be found [here](#).

3. How is government accountable to Aboriginal Communities for OCHRE?

There is a robust accountability process for OCHRE to make sure that it develops as community intended. This includes a Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs. The Deputy Ombudsman can make independent recommendations about the implementation of OCHRE along the way so that issues are identified and resolved early. More information about the Deputy Ombudsman can be found [here](#).

All the parts of the process are shown below.



4. Why continue the *OCHRE* conversation?

In 2011, the NSW Government and Aboriginal communities started a conversation that resulted in the *OCHRE* initiatives. An important conversation is now underway to work out what the key issues are and to solve them, so that each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub develops with local Aboriginal communities' views in mind.

These conversations form part of the accountability process set up to make sure that *OCHRE* operates and develops as intended.

The NSW Government will grow *OCHRE* based on these conversations.

The Connected Communities initiative is being evaluated by the Department of Education. Information on this evaluation and relevant contact details can be found [here](#).

5. Who will continue the conversation?

To help local Aboriginal communities to take part in the continuing conversations about *OCHRE*, it is important that someone leads the process who is independent of the NSW Government – or any government department.

A team from the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW has been appointed to maintain the continuing conversations about *OCHRE* with local Aboriginal communities and all those involved. The Social Policy Research Centre was chosen after a competitive process in which each proposal received was comprehensively assessed to find the best group. Aboriginal researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre will be engaging communities in these conversations.

Further information about the Social Policy Research Centre's team can be found [here](#).

6. Are all the Local Decision Making models, Industry Based Agreements, Language and Culture Nests and Opportunity Hubs involved in the conversations?

Unfortunately, no. The eight most established *OCHRE* initiatives, including Local Decision Making processes, Industry Based Agreements, Language and Culture Nests and Opportunity Hubs in 2015 are involved:

- the Industry Based Agreement with the NSW Minerals Council
- the Industry Based Agreement with the Master Builders Association
- the Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest at Coffs Harbour
- the North West Wiradjuri Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest at Dubbo
- the Opportunity Hub at Campbelltown
- the Opportunity Hub at Tamworth
- Local Decision Making operating in the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly in Far Western NSW
- Local Decision Making operating in the Three Rivers Regional Assembly in Central West NSW.

This doesn't prevent a conversation continuing about each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, or each Language and Culture Nest or each Opportunity Hub.

Lessons learned in the conversations about the implementation and outcomes from each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub will assist others as they develop.

7. Is the Connected Communities initiative involved in the conversations?

No. Finding out how the Connected Communities are going is the responsibility of the Department of Education. Aboriginal communities interested in sharing their views can contact the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation [here](#).

The Centre of Education Statistics and Evaluation has released a mid-term evaluation of the Connected Communities initiative. A final report is expected in 2018.

Further information about the Connected Communities evaluation can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

8. How will Aboriginal cultures, leadership and decision making be respected?

The conversations about *OCHRE* will occur in ways that respect local Aboriginal cultures, leadership and decision making. This means that the conversations will occur according to local Aboriginal knowledge and ways of doing things.

The local Aboriginal communities will make the decisions along the way about what the success of each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest, and Opportunity Hub looks like, how information is collected and how it is understood.

9. How will Aboriginal communities benefit from the ongoing conversations?

There are many benefits to Aboriginal communities from taking part in the conversations.

Those local Aboriginal communities that agree to take part will lead the conversations. Aboriginal communities can set their own agenda and determine the shape of each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub. This means that each continues to meet the needs and expectations of local Aboriginal communities as they change and grow.

The ongoing conversations also provide the local and most up-to-date evidence from local Aboriginal communities about what works and what doesn't work and how to go about improving things. There will be less reason to rely on evidence that comes from other Aboriginal peoples such as the New Zealand Māori people, or Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

It's a great opportunity to let the NSW Government know about how the Aboriginal affairs plan is working. This is the first time that government has given Aboriginal communities this opportunity.

10. How long will the conversations continue?

OCHRE does not make bold statements about changing the world overnight, or even within a generation. *OCHRE* deliberately acknowledges that it will take time to reach the destination where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in NSW achieve an equal footing.

That is why the conversations are planned to continue for 10 years – long enough to learn about what works and doesn't work and some

of the outcomes that have been achieved.

The NSW Government will grow *OCHRE* based on these conversations.

11. When will the conversations begin and end?

These conversations will build on what Aboriginal communities have already said during the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs and *OCHRE* consultations already undertaken.

The conversations cannot begin without the consent of local Aboriginal communities. Once this is given it will take a few months to get approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW. The committee will assess the proposal and ensure all activities are conducted ethically. It's likely that conversations will begin in July 2016 and continue until mid-2024 – or earlier, if an Aboriginal community withdraws its support.

12. What are the conversations going to be about?

It's important that conversations cover a range of aspects of each Local Decision Making process, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub so that everyone can get a good picture of what is happening.

Importantly, the conversations will continue over 10 years. Information from the conversations will build up over that time and will inform decisions about how to develop each Local Decision Making process, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub.

Initially the conversations have focused on implementation and specifically on how each Local Decision Making process, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest or Opportunity Hub has been set up and how each is working. The findings and recommendation can be found [here](#).

Over the next three years, in addition to looking at how each Local Decision Making process, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest or Opportunity Hub has been set up and how each is working, the conversations will cover what has been achieved in the short, medium and longer term. Further information can be found [here](#).

In the final three years the conversations will focus on the impacts.

13. What form will the conversations take?

The conversations can occur in many different ways. The Social Policy Research Centre's team will ask each local Aboriginal community how they would like the conversations to take place. Some ways might be: in a group, individually, or in writing such as a survey.

In 2016, there will be two opportunities for local Aboriginal communities to talk face to face with the Social Policy Research Centre's team and up to four phone conversations in between visits.

Taking part is voluntary. It's not necessary for individual participants from local Aboriginal communities to be involved in all the conversations over the 10 years. If any Aboriginal communities choose not to participate, the services already provided by the NSW Government will not be affected.

14. Who owns the information provided during the conversations?

All the information collected during the conversations with the Social Policy Research Centre's team and any information that the team develops from this is owned by the local Aboriginal communities that provided it. Unless someone is being harmed, the Social Policy Research Centre's team cannot provide information to anyone, including government, without the permission of Aboriginal communities.

15. Will the information given in the conversation be kept private?

Yes. The identity of those who take part in the conversations will only be known by the Social Policy Research Centre's team and will not be shared with anyone. Individuals or organisations will not be identified in any publication without their permission.

16. Who is in the driver's seat?

The local Aboriginal communities are in the driver's seat. This means that communities have control over all parts of the conversations with the Social Policy Research Centre's team. The role of government is to assist, including providing the information, resources and support as communities require.

Being in the driver's seat also means that the local Aboriginal communities involved will determine what the success of each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub looks like – both at the beginning and as they develop and grow.

17. What assistance will Aboriginal communities be given?

Regional staff from Aboriginal Affairs are ready to help local Aboriginal communities in whatever way the communities identify to take part in the conversations. Their full support will be available for the 10 years the conversations are planned to last.

Support could include passing on information about what the conversations might cover, what forms the conversations could take, and when they might be held. Regional staff could also provide opportunities for local Aboriginal communities to think about what might be important, and how to pass their experiences to the Social Policy Research Centre team.

Contact details for Aboriginal Affairs staff who can assist are available [here](#).

18. What if the conversations find that some things are not working?

This is expected, and it's OK. The conversations are about finding this out – so that problems can be spoken about and solutions found. This process is all about learning as things go along – rather than leaving problems to the end when they might be harder to solve.

The information will not be used by the NSW Government to dismantle Local Decision Making, or Industry Based Agreements, or Language and Culture Nests or Opportunity Hubs – or *OCHRE*.

19. How will Aboriginal cultures be respected?

The Social Policy Research Centre team would like the local Aboriginal communities involved to consider the researchers as the way their experiences and views will be communicated.

The researchers will follow the Aboriginal communities' lead on how to carry out the conversations on each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub in their area in a way that meets cultural standards and protocols.

The conversations will also be held at a time that suits each Aboriginal community, so that the process is as convenient as possible for those taking part.

If someone changes their mind about taking part in the conversations at any time, that is OK. There are no consequences.

20. What will happen during the conversations?

The Social Policy Research Centre's team has been asked to find out first what local Aboriginal communities think a successful Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest or Opportunity Hub in their location would look like – so that the team can focus conversations on this.

Members of the team will visit local Aboriginal communities twice a year to continue the conversations, and will talk with Aboriginal communities and others involved in between visits.

The team will also talk to local Aboriginal communities about the information they have collected to check their understanding. The team will also talk to local Aboriginal communities about any reports they prepare to get approval for any publication.

21. What if taking part leaves me out of pocket?

Everyone who takes part will be reimbursed for any costs that relate to travelling to or from the conversations, or to fully participating in them – such as having someone to support them.

For Aboriginal Affairs staff, this is part of their professional role. They will not receive any additional reimbursement.

22. Will the reports of the conversations be shared publicly?

Yes. Every year the NSW Government reports on the achievements of *OCHRE*. Information on what has been happening in the conversations will be included in this annual report.

When it comes to letting others know the findings of the conversations, local Aboriginal communities will guide how the information collected by Social Policy Research Centre's team is interpreted and how the findings are published. The team's approach recognises that there is no one truth and that there are different ways of looking at the world. Aboriginal people's interpretation takes precedence.

With the approval of local Aboriginal communities, the findings of the conversations about how each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub has been set up and how it is working, and any early outcomes will be made available in August 2018. Findings about the short, medium and longer-term outcomes will be available in August 2021 and the impact of each Local Decision Making

process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest, and Opportunity Hub will be available in August 2024.

23. Who checks that the conversations are carried out as Aboriginal communities expect?

A steering committee oversees and supports the work of the Social Policy Research Centre's team so that the best possible approach is taken. Its work includes providing advice on plans and reports, and helping to solve issues. The steering committee makes recommendations to government when it believes improvements are needed. Further information about the steering committee can be found [here](#).

The Ethics Committee of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW advises on how the conversations take place, including how information is collected, to make sure that all activities are conducted properly. They have a continuing interest in how things are going. Further information about the Ethics Committee can be found [here](#). Each Local Decision Making process, Industry Based Agreement, Language and Culture Nest and Opportunity Hub has a committee or group that manages how they operate in each location. These committees or groups can raise concerns directly with the steering committee, the Social Policy Research Centre's team, the Ethics Committee of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW, or with Aboriginal Affairs. Aboriginal communities and individual participants can do the same. Further information can be found [here](#).

24. How can I find out about what is happening in the conversations?

Aboriginal Affairs provides regular updates about what is happening on its website, including the contact details for the Social Policy Research Centre's team and Aboriginal Affairs regional staff. This information can be found [here](#).

25. Who do I contact if I want to take part?

You can contact either the Social Policy Research Centre's team or Aboriginal Affairs' regional staff. Contact details can be found [here](#).

