

# OCHRE



## OPPORTUNITY HUBS

## FACT SHEET

### **OCHRE is the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs. It stands for Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment and is symbolic of Aboriginal communities' deep connection with Country.**

The plan is a Government commitment to developing a genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities through a number of key initiatives including Opportunity Hubs, Connected Communities, Language and Culture Nests and Local Decision Making models.

#### **What are Opportunity Hubs?**

Opportunity Hubs aim to provide Aboriginal young people with the confidence and knowledge to follow a supported pathway between secondary school and further education and/or employment, by:

- partnering schools with local employers and training providers;
- coordinating local opportunities including employment, mentoring, scholarships, internships and volunteer work;
- matching local opportunities to Aboriginal students' career aspirations that lead to jobs;
- mentoring and supporting Aboriginal students each step of the way;
- engaging Aboriginal students and their families early on at school; and
- tracking Aboriginal students' progress including once they have transitioned to employment.

#### **Why Opportunity Hubs?**

Opportunity Hubs respond to feedback from Aboriginal communities emphasising the need for supported pathways to assist Aboriginal young people in the transition from school into tertiary education, training and/or employment.

#### **Community Consultation**

As part of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs consultations, the Opportunity Hub concept was specifically tested.

The consultations found that:

- There was strong support for the Hub among survey respondents and in the community 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 the futures and being employed increased young Aboriginal people's wellbeing.
- It was repeatedly identified by forum participants that the Hub should be integrated into other programs and aim to build Aboriginal students cultural pride and self-respect.
- Of the survey participants close to 97 per cent (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.

Elements seen as essential for the development of Hubs were:

- Flexibility and designed in partnership with the local Aboriginal community;
- Operated and implemented as much as possible by the local Aboriginal community;
- Continued and sustained government funding;
- Involvement of local employers;
- Respect and understanding of Aboriginal young people;
- The role of the family and need to overcome issues at home; and
- Mentoring, including encouraging and paying successful Aboriginal people in local communities.



## Criteria for the establishment of Hubs

As part of the Hub consultations the following criteria for the identification of locations was developed:

- strong Aboriginal leadership;
- significant or growing proportion of Aboriginal students in school populations;
- real and sustainable employment opportunities;
- real opportunities for NGO and business sector buy-in;
- available career champions and mentors; and
- VET or tertiary education providers.

A number of regions were measured against this criteria and it was recommended that Hubs in the Upper Hunter, Campbelltown, Dubbo and Tamworth would have a good chance of success as trial sites because of their local employment prospects, the strength of local Aboriginal community engagement, significant populations of young Aboriginal people and schooling and tertiary education options.

Community members that participated in consultations in all four locations welcomed the implementation of the Hubs.

## How are Opportunity Hubs different to existing services?

Opportunity Hubs are networks which will facilitate local management strategies to develop personalised transition planning from school into tertiary education, training and/or employment for Aboriginal young people through the use of existing services.

## What is the role of the Service Provider?

The coordination of services for each Opportunity Hub will be contracted to a non-government organisation with strong links to Aboriginal community organisations, local businesses, regional industries and services for young people at-risk. The organisation or service provider will be responsible for coordinating and brokering support for Aboriginal young people from the community, business and other programs operating in the service area and as required delivering services directly to students.

The Service Provider will be responsible for:

- building career aspirations and strengthening understandings of career pathways for Aboriginal students in Years 5 to 8;
- working with schools to deliver personalised career and transition planning for Aboriginal students in Years 9 to 12;
- engaging the local Aboriginal community and parents in support of the work of Opportunity Hub;
- linking key local education and training providers and youth services into the Hub and coordinating student pathways in accord with their career plans;
- engaging local employers and industry to work with the Hub to assist the delivery of industry grounded career advice, work experience and employment opportunities;
- delivering personalised support services for students at serious risk of disengagement from education and training; and
- arranging wrap-around support from relevant agencies and the community as required.

## Resources and Contacts:

### Upper Hunter Opportunity Hub

Aboriginal Employment Service  
Leanne Ellis, T: 0417 037 481  
[leanne.ellis@aes.org.au](mailto:leanne.ellis@aes.org.au)

### Dubbo Opportunity Hub

TAFE Western Institute, Dubbo College  
Jamie Sampson, T: (02) 6883 3699  
[jamie.sampson@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:jamie.sampson@tafensw.edu.au)

### Tamworth Opportunity Hub

Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council  
Fiona Snape, T: (02) 6766 9028  
[tamworth.lalc@bigpond.com](mailto:tamworth.lalc@bigpond.com)

### Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

MTC Australia  
Laura Bradburn,  
T: 1300 232 663 / 0434 603 311  
[lbradburn@mtcaustralia.com.au](mailto:lbradburn@mtcaustralia.com.au)

### Aboriginal Communities

**please contact:**  
Aboriginal Affairs  
Lou Anne Lind, T: (02) 9561 8260  
[Lou-Anne.Lind@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Lou-Anne.Lind@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au)

### Schools please contact:

Public Schools NSW  
Sharon Ford, T: (02) 9266 8916  
[sharon.ford@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:sharon.ford@det.nsw.edu.au)

Catholic Education Commission NSW  
Gerard Delany, T: (02) 9287 1549  
[gerard.delany@cecsw.catholic.edu.au](mailto:gerard.delany@cecsw.catholic.edu.au)

Association of Independent Schools NSW  
Veronica Niessen, T: (02) 9299 2845  
[vniessen@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:vniessen@aisnsw.edu.au)

### Tertiary Education Providers

**please contact:**

Department of Industry  
David Michaels, T: (02) 9244 5010  
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