



OCHRE

Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment

OCHRE Healing Forums Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 16 December 2016

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1. How has OCHRE made a commitment to healing?

Healing was incorporated into OCHRE following extensive Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal affairs community consultations that found healing was a major priority. NSW is the first Government in Australia to incorporate healing in its Aboriginal affairs policy. Healing is a complex and sensitive issue and communities and individuals approach healing in different ways. OCHRE acknowledges that healing activities already occur under the leadership of Aboriginal people.

The state-wide OCHRE Healing Our Way Forum held in July 2014 was the first step in a formal healing dialogue between Aboriginal people and government. The Healing forum report released in March 2015 led to a government commitment to continue the dialogue to understand how agencies can operate to support healing with Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deliver six OCHRE Healing Forums in NSW during 2017.

2. What are the aims of OCHRE Healing Forums?

OCHRE Healing Forums are one-day events that will provide an opportunity for interested Aboriginal communities in NSW to engage directly with government and non-government agencies to:

- Provide a culturally appropriate, safe space for discussions between Aboriginal communities and government and non-government agencies on healing;
- Identify local/regional issues and opportunities to improve the way government and non-government organisations work with communities;
- Increase understanding of intergenerational trauma and healing; and
- Build local partnerships and support for healing.

3. Where will the forums be held?

Following an Expression of Interest process held in 2016, the following six sites were selected to host OCHRE Healing Forums:

- Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation (Mid-North Coast)
- Clarence Valley Aboriginal Healing & Support Service (Mid-North Coast)
- Three Rivers Regional Assembly (Central Western NSW)
- Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation (Greater Western Sydney)
- Barang Regional Alliance (Central Coast)
- Riverina Murray Regional Alliance (Riverina / Murray)

Dates and venues for the forums will be announced as the site plans progress in 2017.

4. How were OCHRE Healing Forum sites selected?

OCHRE Healing Forum sites were selected via an Expression of Interest (EOI) in 2016 for Aboriginal communities. EOIs were advertised via Indigenous media, the Aboriginal Affairs website and the Healing Foundation website.

All applications were assessed by an Evaluation Committee comprised of a nominated representative from both Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation and an independent Aboriginal person.

Following the EOI process, all applications were assessed by an Evaluation Committee. Successful EOIs demonstrated readiness against specific criteria, within the available timeframe.

All applicants have been notified of the outcome of their applications.

5. What are Local Planning Committees?

Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation will work in partnership with Local Planning Committees (LPCs) to co-design healing forums in successful sites. LPCs will assist with local organisation and logistical coordination of healing forums and engagement of their local community.

The Committees will be responsible for engaging their local communities and will assist the organisation and logistical coordination of healing forums. The format and design of each LPC and healing forum will vary.

6. What will be discussed during the forums?

Local Planning Committees for each site will develop an agenda in consultation with an independent facilitator engaged by the Healing Foundation. The themes of the forum will be developed jointly based on community readiness.

7. Are the forums for Aboriginal communities only?

Applications to host OCHRE Healing Forums were invited by Aboriginal communities, which were either geographical or interest-based as defined by communities themselves.

Applicants were asked demonstrate broad community support to host a forum, however, the local community including the LPCs will determine attendance at the local forum during the planning process. Aboriginal communities will lead the discussion on trauma informed approaches and healing within government service delivery.

All discussions will be documented during the forums and forum outcomes will be made publically available.

8. Is there funding available for OCHRE Healing Forums?

The forums are not a grants process. Funding will not be provided directly to sites or LPCs in order to host the forums.

Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation will work with LPCs in selected sites to develop the event and will provide resources, usually suitable for a one-day event (e.g. independent facilitator, venue hire, catering). Additional resources (e.g. travel and accommodation) must be met by individual participants.

9. Which NSW Government agencies will be involved?

Each site will be different in its design and discussion topics, however, the forums will be designed to focus discussions on healing and trauma informed government service delivery. During the EOI process, applicants were asked to identify NSW Government agencies in their respective locations to participate in the forums.

Aboriginal Affairs will help coordinate each forum in partnership with the Healing Foundation and Local Planning Committees.

10. Are NSW Government agencies required to participate in the forums?

OCHRE, the NSW Government's community focused plan for Aboriginal affairs, commits to continue the discussion and understanding of Government's role in healing. That commitment encourages agencies to participate in the forums and to understand healing and trauma informed approaches in the context of their agency business.

There is an expectation that NSW Government agencies that participate in forums will follow up on any commitments made during discussions.

11. What will happen after the forums?

A forum report will be produced following each forum. Each report will outline the discussion themes and issues, including any commitments made by government and non-government organisations.

Following the conclusion of all six OCHRE Healing Forums, an overarching report will be produced including recommendations for government agencies to consider in their approach to working together with Aboriginal communities and in a healing and trauma informed way.

All reports will be made publically available via the Aboriginal Affairs website.

12. What is community readiness?

OCHRE Healing Forums will only be conducted where interested Aboriginal communities are ready. EOIs will be required to demonstrate readiness by including:

- broad community support and readiness to engage in a conversation with government about healing;
- community healing is led by Aboriginal leaders;
- readiness and ability to develop and sustain local partnerships to support healing;
- experience in safe and supportive healing dialogue;
- availability and capacity to engage and to co-design healing forums in partnership with the Healing Foundation and Aboriginal Affairs; and
- Availability to host the forum in the timeline for the OCHRE Healing Forum project.

13. What is government readiness?

For sites to be considered ready to host OCHRE Healing Forums, Aboriginal Affairs will work with government agencies to build readiness to participate in forum discussions by:

- Ensuring agencies have an existing awareness of the commitment to healing under OCHRE; and

- Developing accountability arrangements with agencies to ensure that undertakings made through the forums are delivered.

14. How will it be determined if a site is not ready?

Indicators that a site will not be ready for an OCHRE Healing Forum will include:

- for community, a culturally safe healing 'space' is not ready yet within community (there is a specific significant issue, a crisis or unresolved conflict or contentious issues impacting across community) and/or;
- for government and/or non-government service providers, there is a specific significant issue or business continuity situation impacting on the capacity of service providers to engage in the forums in this timeframe; and/or
- A process to satisfactorily resolve these issues is expected to take longer than six months and will extend beyond the timeline for the OCHRE Healing Forum project.

15. What is the role of Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation?

Aboriginal Affairs and Healing Foundation are working in partnership to deliver OCHRE Healing Forums. Our respective roles include:

- Aboriginal Affairs will promote the forums with community and government stakeholders with the support of the Healing Foundation.
- Aboriginal Affairs will coordinate the EOI process to select OCHRE Healing Forum sites with support from the Healing Foundation.
- The Healing Foundation will coordinate six OCHRE Healing Forums, co-designed with LPCs and Aboriginal communities in selected sites, with support from Aboriginal Affairs. This involves managing the practical arrangements for the forums including venue hire and the engagement of an experienced independent Aboriginal facilitator.
- The Healing Foundation will develop a report following each event and evaluate the overall OCHRE Healing Forums project.

Aboriginal Affairs and the Healing Foundation will work with Aboriginal communities in NSW selected to host OCHRE Healing Forums. Each forum will include a community engagement strategy and a partnership to build local leadership on healing.

16. What support will be offered beyond the OCHRE Healing Forums?

For healing to be sustainable, healing informed approaches must be embedded into government business to ensure that agencies work in ways that support healing and respectful dealings with Aboriginal people.

- Forum outcomes and undertakings will be reported and monitored;
- Forum discussions will inform a government policy approach to healing;
- Continuing dialogue to inform government agencies on healing;
- Evaluation of OCHRE Healing forums; and
- Stimulate and support further on ground healing work within communities.

Further information regarding healing and trauma including support for healing initiatives in Aboriginal communities is available at the Healing Foundation website:

www.healingfoundation.org.au

Alternatively, please contact the Healing Foundation directly on (02) 6272 7500.

For further information on the OCHRE Healing Forums, please contact the nominated Aboriginal Affairs contact officers:

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