

Steering Committee

Steering Committee members met on 19 August 2016. There were two main areas of business.

Evaluation progress

Professor Ilan Katz briefed the Committee on the progress of the evaluation. Professor Katz is the Chief Investigator on the team at the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia contracted to undertake the evaluation.

The Committee noted that the plan for the first phase of the evaluation has been finalised and will be published on the Aboriginal Affairs website shortly. The Committee noted that the plan will be periodically updated in response to Aboriginal communities' needs.

Professor Katz identified the following as continuing issues:

- Tension between Aboriginal and Western ways of knowing and understanding as this relates to research methods and data collection, particularly to quantitative data.

The Committee suggested that the independent evaluators use the community workshops to engage with Aboriginal communities on the benefits of quantitative data for government deliberations.

- Tension between maintaining the independence of the evaluation where Aboriginal Affairs' regional staff are responsible for supporting the evaluation in Aboriginal communities.

The Committee recognised that the success of the evaluation is depended in part on Aboriginal communities being fully briefed and prepared prior to field work and supports the current approach.

- Tension in achieving an evaluation focused on supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal communities within the parameters of a government funded contract.
- The balance between focusing on specific sites and on OCHRE as a whole.

The Committee recognises the impact of budgetary constraints and continues to encourage the NSW Government to ensure investment in the evaluation is commensurate with the need for a continuing conversation with Aboriginal communities.

The Committee noted that ethics approval has been granted by the NSW Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council's Human Research Ethics Committee.

The role and responsibility of the NSW Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs)

Mr Danny Lester and Ms Julianna Demetrius briefed the Committee about the roles and responsibilities of the NSW Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs). Mr Lester is the NSW

OCHRE Evaluation

Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) with overall responsibility for overseeing and monitoring *OCHRE*.

The Committee noted that the Deputy Ombudsman oversees and monitors how *OCHRE* and its components, including the independent evaluation, are being implemented by government agencies. He also monitors the outcomes achieved across all of the initiatives and sites; tables public reports in Parliament and tracks the government's response. To date three reports have been tabled.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to talk with the Deputy Ombudsman about his role in monitoring and reporting, and the common goals of the evaluation. The Committee also welcomed the Deputy Ombudsman's intention to work collaboratively and flexibly with Aboriginal Affairs and the independent evaluators to minimize the burden on Aboriginal communities, government officials, and other stakeholders, and to achieve the best possible outcomes from *OCHRE*.

The Committee was pleased that the Office had met with the independent evaluation team and with their offer to share the key insights and themes arising from the Offices' ongoing engagement with the communities.

The Committee has extended a standing invitation to the Deputy Ombudsman to attend future meetings.

Dr Wendy Jarvie, Independent Chair

