

Steering Committee

Steering Committee members met on 7 February 2017. There were five main items 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 (SPRC), UNSW Australia contracted to undertake the evaluation.

The Committee noted that the co-design workshops have commenced with Aboriginal communities to identify the measures of success and methods for data collection and that the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan* will be updated to include this information; the tension between Aboriginal and Western views about measures and methods; and community-driven requests for field visits outside those contracted.

While not dismissing the importance of the approach taken in co-design, the Committee encourages the SPRC to continue to discuss both qualitative and quantitative methods with attendees so that the needs of different audiences for the evaluation have the best chance of being met.

Monitoring and evaluation data

The Committee noted that data on project activities, inputs and outcomes are being collected as part monitoring for each initiative site. Data collected through evaluation activities are pending agreement on measures of success.

The Committee supports the involvement of Aboriginal communities in the implementation of the *OCHRE* policy and the design and operation of the evaluation but notes that this affects the timing of data collection. The Committee encourages Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AANSW) to consider publishing a progress update in mid-2017 about the work undertaken including preliminary data where this is assessed as robust.

Industry-Based Agreements

The Committee noted that AANSW is trialling a regional approach to Industry Based Agreements in two Local Decision-Making sites. To capture this and other policy change that would be expected over the 10-year evaluation period, the Committee supports the inclusion of an additional evaluation question that focuses on the rationale for policy change and the timeliness of response. The Committee noted that the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan* will need to be updated to reflect this change.

Strengthening evaluation practice with Aboriginal communities

The Committee noted the significant learnings emerging on the conduct of evaluation with Aboriginal communities as the *OCHRE* evaluation progresses and supports the commissioning of research studies that strengthen evaluation practice with communities. The Committee supported AANSW's proposal to commission research studies over the next 12 months focusing on how to build Aboriginal community capacity, how to undertake co-design, how to

nurture Aboriginal community researchers, and how to change the working relationship between staff in government departments and Aboriginal communities.

Assessment of the OCHRE Evaluation: NSW Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs)

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to talk with the NSW Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) about his concerns expressed in the *NSW Ombudsman's 2015-16 Annual Report*, including the delay in engaging an independent contractor, and the time taken to report on the initial findings.

The Committee noted these concerns, and the Deputy Ombudsman's intention to undertake a comprehensive audit of OCHRE and publication of the findings in late 2017.

Dr Wendy Jarvie, Independent Chair

