

Steering Committee

Steering Committee held its fifth meeting on 28 July 2017. The focus was on the progress of the evaluation and next steps.

Evaluation progress

Professor Ilan Katz, Chief Investigator from the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), University of NSW Australia, briefed the Committee on progress over the last six months. The Committee noted the progress made in identifying the local Aboriginal communities involved, the development of localised evaluation plans including the measures of success and methods for the collection of the data, and the planning underway to collect data over the next six months. The Committee encouraged Professor Katz to ensure that the views of stakeholders and community members who have chosen not to engage in *OCHRE* initiatives, as well as those who have, are collected.

The Committee agreed that delivering a local community-driven evaluation is complex and requires considerable effort to realise this across the more than 30 Aboriginal communities involved. Engaging local Aboriginal community members as researchers and building their capacity represents both a major step in achieving de-colonising practice while requiring a significant time investment. The Committee reaffirmed the centrality of this approach, and commends the continuing commitment of the SPRC and AANSW to achieving this.

The Committee discussed the emerging challenge in delivering on Aboriginal communities expectations within budget and time limitations including the June 2018 reporting deadline. The Committee noted that:

- Negotiation with some Aboriginal communities will be required on what can be reasonably achieved in the data collection and analysis phase, including the number of communities the evaluation team can physically visit.
- AANSW will provide an additional staff member to help co-ordinate the extensive fieldwork required in over the next six months and to support the continuing engagement of local Aboriginal communities in the process.

As the localised evaluation plans developed for each *OCHRE* initiative will soon be available, the Committee will now turn its attention to providing specialist advice on the operation of these.

Maintaining the separation of accountability responsibilities

The Committee reiterated its commitment to reducing any overlap in the activities of the SPRC and the NSW Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) as they exercise their responsibilities. The Committee noted the productive meeting between the Professor Katz, and the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman in June 2017. The Committee holds the view that six monthly meetings enable the continued sharing of observations in the lead up to the publication of the findings of the Deputy Ombudsman's comprehensive audit of *OCHRE*; and reduce the potential burden on Aboriginal communities to participate in similar activities.

Dr Wendy Jarvie, Independent Chair

