

OCHRE

The Continuing Conversation

Evaluation | Stage 1: Implementation and early outcomes

Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

Stage 1 Final Report

Prepared for members of Campbelltown Aboriginal communities

June 2018

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This report belongs to members of Campbelltown Aboriginal communities.

The Opportunity Hub operates on Dharawal Country.

The research team from the Social Policy Research Centre acknowledges the Dharawal people as the traditional custodians of the land we are working on and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future and all Aboriginal people in the region.

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Glossary

AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
MTC	MTC Australia (formerly Marrickville Community Training Centre)
NCARA	NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances
NSW AECG Inc.	NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.
<i>OCHRE</i>	Opportunity Choice Healing Responsibility Empowerment
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
TAC	Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation
Tharawal LALC	Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
UNSW	University of New South Wales

The OCHRE Campbelltown Opportunity Hub: What we have found

What is working	What needs further work
• Children and young people involved in the Opportunity Hub and members of the Campbelltown Aboriginal community value the Hub and believe it is making a difference to student engagement with school and transition from school to employment and further education. • The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group has a guiding influence and oversight on the Hub activities and has networks throughout the area support the work of the Hub. • MTC has existing services and training facilities and builds on their networks with employers to provide opportunities for young Aboriginal people. • Campbelltown Opportunity Hub have good relationships with schools and with students. They adapt and are flexible in program delivery and facilitates access other support programs. Important messages to NSW Government • The Opportunity Hub has been successfully implemented in Campbelltown and the model has worked well.	• The Hub would like flexibility to provide services to other nearby schools outside the Campbelltown areas where they have relationships and have identified a need. • Relationships with NSW Government, especially a need for clear lines of responsibility in government agencies. • Increased support from local businesses for training opportunities. • Holistic approach to young people's wellbeing – encourage government services to support and liaise with the Hub. • The Hub, through their Advisory Group continues to develop their relationships with local Aboriginal peak bodies. Important messages to NSW Government • Secure and long-term funding is important for Aboriginal communities to trust Government is serious about supporting young Aboriginal people. • Better transport is needed in the area so that young people can access opportunities. • Long-term capacity building for local Aboriginal organisations to benefit the operations of the Hub.

About the Continuing Conversation

Over the past two years, SPRC evaluators have continued the conversations with Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown about the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub – part of *OCHRE*. The evaluation team have used culturally appropriate methods as much as possible, facilitating community-control of the research.

Community-controlled research involves co-design – this is a way of conducting research with, and not on, communities. The evaluation team asked communities how they would like information collected, what they think would be a measure of the program's success, who the team should talk to, and what is the best approach to contact people to be a part of the evaluation. We trained local community members to be researchers to have conversations. As part of co-design we also returned a draft report to evaluation participants in communities and asked for feedback (validation of findings – see Appendix A), which have been added to this final report.

The evaluation team have sought to address any concerns about the draft report to ensure participants are comfortable with what has been written, without compromising the independent findings of the report. Members of Campbelltown Aboriginal communities involved in the evaluation have reviewed and accepted the final report for presentation to the NSW Government. The report will be provided to Aboriginal Affairs NSW (30 June 2018) and then be presented formally to the Minister on 15 August 2018.

We have drawn lessons from *OCHRE* sites being evaluated and presented a Synthesis Report to the NSW Coalition of *Aboriginal* Regional Alliances (NCARA).

Opportunity Hubs are funded by the NSW Government; they were established under *OCHRE* by Aboriginal Affairs NSW and State Training Services (now Training Services NSW) and are managed by Training Services NSW (NSW Department of Industry). The Opportunity Hub model was developed in consultation with community members specifically for *OCHRE*, drawing on experience of career education and vocational education placement programs funded by both Commonwealth and State agencies.

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. To achieve this outcome, Opportunity Hubs are building partnerships between schools, employers, education and training providers and the local community to coordinate and match employment, training and further education opportunities to individual students' aspirations.

Non-government Opportunity Hub service providers have been contracted to coordinate and broker links with schools, employers, training providers, support services and Aboriginal communities, to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal young people, including increased:

- Participation and retention at school
- Aspiration and expectation of career pathways for Aboriginal students
- Post-school enrolment in further education and training, and
- Placement in sustainable jobs. (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, n.d.)

Summary of the *Continuing Conversation*: *OCHRE* Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

This is a summary of what we heard about *OCHRE* and the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub. We had conversations with members of Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown.

 Direct quotes from what we heard from Aboriginal communities are highlighted.

What people told us about the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub has support from community, students, schools and the Advisory Group.
- Hub activities are well attended and well regarded.
- Students (most) are positive about their engagement with the Hub.
- Schools and community members look to the Hub for advice and support for local young Aboriginal people.
- The Opportunity Hub:

 Not only effects the child that you're working with, it's those kids around them, it's the community around them, it's the support.

- The Hub is building good local relationships, is well organised and staff are working well together.
- Hub organisation is transparent and seeks to build on established and developing relationships with employee and training services, the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, and people in the Aboriginal communities of Campbelltown.
- Staff are committed, well-supported and working well.
- Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group is made up of members who strongly support the work of the Hub for Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown.
- The Advisory Group has a guiding influence and oversight on the Hub activities.
- Advisory Group networks throughout the area support the work of the Hub.
- MTC has existing services and training facilities and builds on their networks with employers to provide opportunities for young Aboriginal people.
- Campbelltown Opportunity Hub adapts to the needs of the students and the schools in flexible program delivery and facilitates access to other support programs.

Challenges to the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub:

- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is run by a non-Aboriginal organisation, which has created challenges to relationships with Aboriginal communities and organisations in the Campbelltown area.

- The Opportunity Hub is funded for 65 schools but is unable to access all of these. The Hub would like to provide services to other nearby schools outside the Campbelltown areas where they have relationships and have identified a need.
- Relationships with NSW Government, especially a need for clear lines of responsibility in government agencies.

How can the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub be improved?

- Increase capacity building through the Opportunity Hub for Aboriginal communities and organisations to have more involvement with Hub operations and planning.
- Ensure long-term sustainability through secure long-term funding.
- Promote Campbelltown Opportunity Hub more broadly and more publicity about the Hub activities.
- Increase access to Campbelltown Opportunity Hub and increase the number and range of programs.
- Increase access and more programs in schools, including a focus on Aboriginal wellbeing, culture and knowledge programs with Aboriginal Elders.
- Increase transport support and provision for students to attend Campbelltown Opportunity Hub activities.
- Geographic context means that increased access to local jobs is critical as there is no public transport in the area.
- Include **social, cultural, education and career pathways** for local Aboriginal young people. For many Aboriginal students:

other factors need to be addressed before they can even think about a career. Jobs are the last thing on the mind, they need to get healthy.

Community views of success

The success of the Opportunity Hub is understood differently by different stakeholders who participated in the evaluation. We heard that short-term and long-term outcomes are part of the expectations of the Hub.

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, which includes a cross-section of Aboriginal organisations and representatives, school staff, AEOs, NSW AECG Inc. and Hub staff identified the following measures of success:

- Better student engagement with programs.
- Improved transition for Aboriginal students to high school, and from high school to further education or training and employment.
- Students have access to adults who will support them.

Opportunity Hub should fill in the gaps of other services. Success is also seen through effects on the broader community. We heard the Opportunity Hub should lead to:

- Improved individual and community wellbeing.
- Improved self-confidence in young Aboriginal people.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on what we heard was working well and what could be improved.

Recommendations for NSW Government:

Theme	Recommendation
Tendering process for <i>OCHRE</i> program contracts	Change the tendering process for <i>OCHRE</i> programs to a collaborative capacity building and co-design approach to program operation and commissioning rather than a competitive process.
Governance - Aboriginal ownership and determination of <i>OCHRE</i> Programs	Explore and include options for greater Aboriginal participation and capacity in the operations of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub and long-term sustainability of the Hub.
Capacity building of Aboriginal organisations	Provide capacity building support and resources to local Aboriginal organisations.
Governance- clarity on government lines of responsibility	Improve clarity regarding government lines of responsibility and decision-making about the Opportunity Hub.
Sustainability of the Hub	- Ensure commitment to financial certainty of the Hub for long-term planning. - Secure long-term funding arrangements.
Continuing Professional Development and career pathway support for Aboriginal staff	Establish career pathways and continuing professional development for Aboriginal staff within the Hub.
Expand the access to the Hub	- Identify and activate strategies to ensure equitable access for all local Aboriginal young people to participate in Campbelltown Opportunity Hub programs and activities. - Increase transport support and provision for students to attend Hub activities. - The Hub would like to provide services to other nearby schools outside the Campbelltown areas where they have relationships and have identified a need. - Hub area boundaries should respond to need and be flexible. - Schools with identified needs outside the designated Campbelltown region should be able to access the Hub.

Theme	Recommendation
Need to address wider and systemic barriers of access	- Address the wider barriers to employment in the Campbelltown area, including providing transport options and support for young Aboriginal people in Campbelltown trying to access work and education. - TAFE to establish more free trainee programs and short courses.
Transport	Increase transport options and support for participants to attend Hub activities, education opportunities and connected services.
Training and education pathways for Aboriginal youth in Campbelltown	- Support local employers to work with young Aboriginal people and provide local opportunities. - Establish, support and resource local employment, training and education pathways in the Campbelltown local areas.
Inclusion of Aboriginal Cultural and Wellbeing outcome indicators into HUB planning and reporting	- Increase programs and activities that focus and support Aboriginal wellbeing, culture and knowledge programs with Aboriginal Elders. - Data should be expanded to address areas such as family relationships, peer relationships, self-esteem and connection to country.
Include long-term outcome indicators into Hub planning and reporting	Follow up Hub participants in relation to long-term as well as short-term outcomes.

Recommendations for Campbelltown Opportunity Hub programs:

Theme	Recommendation
Expand access to the Hub	- Increase presence in schools, more programs, more often. - Provide weekend activities and programs for children and young people.
Expand range of support services provided by the Hub	- Maintain an understanding and recognition that for many Aboriginal students, many factors need to be addressed that effect their opportunities for education and employment. - Explore options and mechanisms for the Hub to either provide broader services that include counselling and wellbeing support or to develop MOU s or partnerships for referrals and outreach youth services with primary health providers such

Theme	Recommendation
	as the Aboriginal Medical Service, Primary Health Network, Local Health District and headspace. • Provide more Aboriginal social and cultural programs. • Provide more education and career pathways for local Aboriginal young people.
Include service co-ordination	• Need to include service and connected referral pathways development into Hub support for participants. • Explore options as to best staff/site/organisation to provide this. • Most of the young people at the Hub have multiple issues and or needs including family, mental health and substance issues and these needs are integral to Hub support for participants.
Need to incorporate and follow local social and cultural Aboriginal protocols	• Develop a cultural competency framework for all organisations working with the Hub incorporate.

Directions for next conversations

There are two more stages to the evaluation:

- Stage 2, from July 2018 to June 2021 will identify changes experienced by communities, outcomes and make recommendations for improving the initiatives.
- Stage 3, from July 2021 to June 2024 will assess the contribution the initiative has made in meeting long-term goals and make recommendations for improving the initiative.

Based on the conversations to date (including co-design), we propose the next conversations include and discuss:

- What long-term data should be captured and how?
- What Aboriginal cultural and wellbeing programs could be made available as part of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub?
- How can staff Opportunity Hub staff be best supported? Both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal staff.
- Process for more Aboriginal community control and partnerships in the operations and governance of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub whilst respecting and incorporating the strengths of a collaborative governance approach with MTC, Tharawal LALC, and Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Medical Services.

Part A:

The Continuing Conversations

1 The *Continuing Conversations*

University researchers from UNSW's Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) have been employed by the NSW Government to continue the conversations that commenced with the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs to see how *OCHRE* – the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs – is working. The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is part of *OCHRE* and has consented to be a site for the evaluation.

The NSW Government wants to know:

- Is the Opportunity Hub being implemented as intended? What aspects are working well, and which could be improved?
- Do the outcomes from the Opportunity Hub continue to reflect what the community wants to achieve?
- What improvements to the design of the Opportunity Hub could be made to better meet outcomes in the Aboriginal community, and for the future development of *OCHRE*?

It will also contribute to the later goal of answering the question about the overall *OCHRE* plan:

- Do the *OCHRE* policies and practices respond to emerging evidence and practice learnings? Is change to policy and practice timely?

1.1 Summary of the evaluation process

The evaluation teams have followed Aboriginal culturally acceptable methods and protocols to ensure Aboriginal community-control in this research.

Community-controlled research involves co-design – this is a way of conducting research with and not on communities. The evaluation team asked communities how they would like information collected, what they think would be a measure of the program's success, who they should talk to, and what is the best approach to contact people to be a part of the evaluation. We trained local community members to be researchers to have conversations. As part of co-design we also returned a draft report to participants in communities and asked for their feedback (validation of findings – see Appendix A), which has been added to this final report.

The evaluation included the following steps:

- Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation provided permission to have a *continuing conversation* on country.
- Evaluation teams worked with Aboriginal communities of Campbelltown to co-design the evaluation, what it would look at and how it would be carried out.

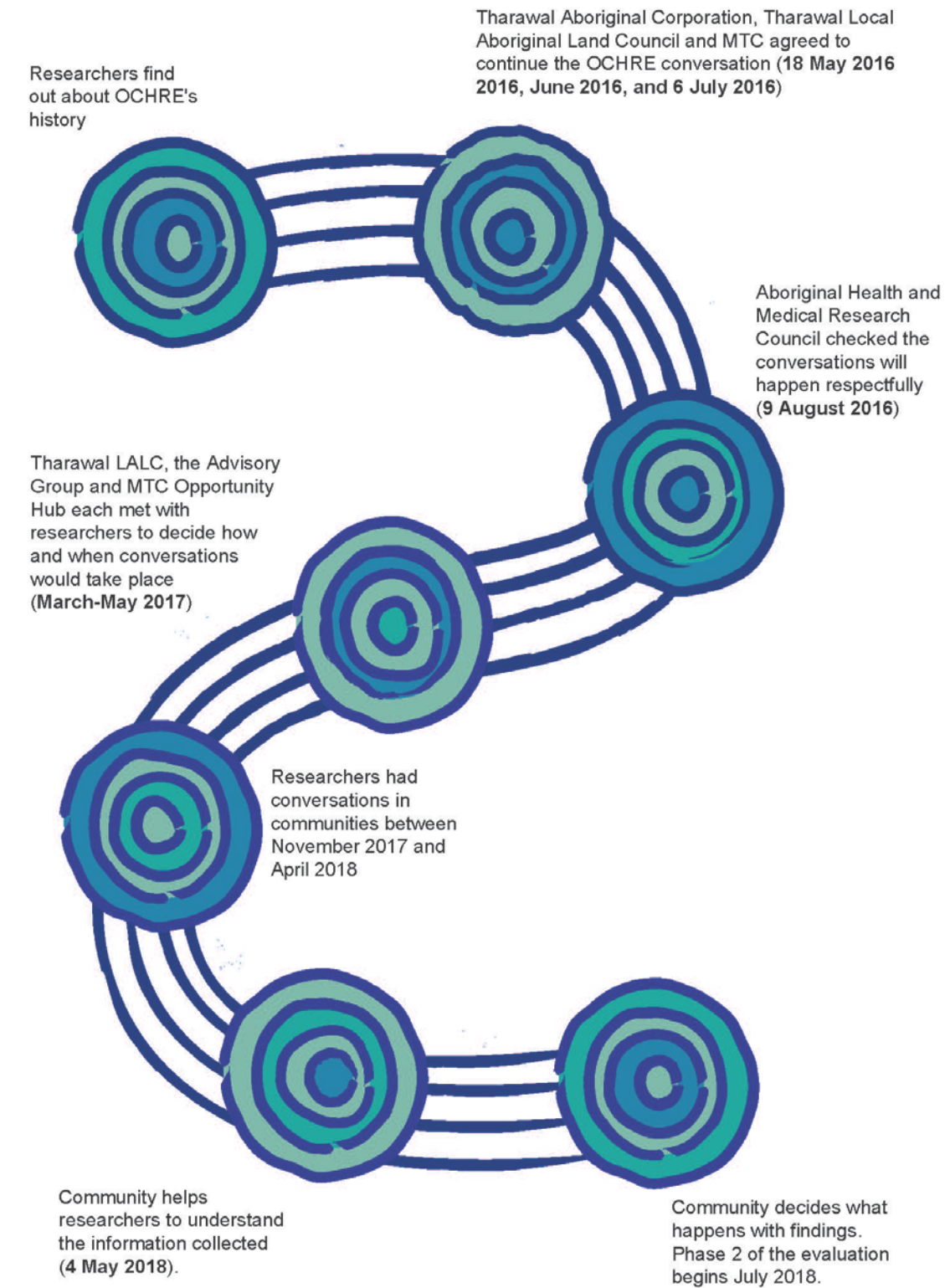
- Michael Barnes trained four local Aboriginal people to be community researchers to have conversations with local research participants.
- MTC Australia, as managers/operators of the Opportunity Hub, supported the conversation and evaluation process.
- We (the evaluation team including community researchers) listened to people in the community about their experiences with the Opportunity Hub.
- We listened to students, parents, Principals, teachers, Aboriginal Education Officers, local partners and service providers, Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council representatives, Opportunity Hub coordinators, staff, and the Hub Advisory Group.
- We heard from 52 students. There were 49 students who could access a Hub and of these 42 had participated in Hub activities, and 7 did not. (3 did not answer this question).
- We heard from 20 parents, carers or community members.
- Additional conversations were held with government staff to understand how the Opportunity Hub model was established and discuss the oversight process.
- We analysed administrative data from the Opportunity Hub.
- The evaluation team returned to Campbelltown communities (3 May and 14 June) to check the findings and recommendations. Feedback from these conversations is incorporated into this final report.
- Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown own the report and members of Aboriginal communities involved in the evaluation have approved it for publication.

The conversations were led by Aboriginal researchers – BJ Newton, a Wiradjuri woman and SPRC staff member, from Sydney, and Michael Barnes, a Ngunnawal man from the Canberra region, working with four local community researchers. Aboriginal research advisor Wendy Jopson has supported the writing of the report.

During the evaluation the role of Aboriginal Affairs NSW has been to provide information, resources and support as needed.

See Figure 1 below for a summary of the conversation process.

Figure 1 Summary of the conversation process



1.2 Measures of success

The success of the Opportunity Hub is understood differently by different stakeholders who participated in the evaluation. We heard that short-term and long-term outcomes are part of the expectations of the Hub.

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, which includes a cross-section of Aboriginal organisations and representatives, school staff, AEOs, NSW AECG Inc. and Hub staff identified the following measures of success:

- Better student engagement with programs.
- Improved transition for Aboriginal students to high school, and from high school to further education or training and employment.
- Students have access to adults who will support them.

Opportunity Hub should fill in the gaps of other services. Success is also seen through effects on the broader community. We heard the Opportunity Hub should lead to:

- Improved individual and community wellbeing.
- Improved self-confidence in young Aboriginal people.

1.3 Strengths and limitations to the evaluation methods

There are many **strengths** to the evaluation method, including:

- Aboriginal control of the research through co-design.
- Measures of success of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub being determined by local community members.
- Listening to local community members including students, parents, carers, teachers and others.
- Checking the findings with community members.
- Conversations with members of Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown have increased knowledge of the Hub. Some participants who previously did not access the Hub will now access the Hub.
- Campbelltown Aboriginal communities have control of the final report. For example, whether the report is presented to NSW Government or published, or just retained by the Aboriginal communities.

Limitations of the evaluation method:

- The evaluation team had difficulties accessing Principals in schools.
- The resources available for the evaluation limited the time we had to listen to people in community.

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- There are other activities for young Aboriginal people in Campbelltown in schools; attribution of findings to the Opportunity Hub will be difficult.
- Program data provided to the evaluation from the Opportunity Hub did not measure or describe outcomes.

2 Findings

This report is focused on the implementation and early outcomes of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub.

Participants, including students, parents, carer, community members, the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, school representatives, AEOs and NSW AECG Inc. members all told us about the positive effects of being involved in the Opportunity Hub. However, it is too early to tell if there have been community-wide or long-term impacts. These will be studied during the next stages of the evaluation.

2.1 Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Implementation

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is operated by MTC Australia (MTC), a social enterprise entity that 'provides pathways for people of all backgrounds and life stages to create new life opportunities'. MTC Australia is a non-Aboriginal organisation; it was established in 1989 and operates in 20 locations with a staff of over 200 people across NSW. The MTC website states that the organisation offers 'high impact employment, learning and youth programs'.¹

MTC was awarded the contract to deliver the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub through a competitive tender process. MTC employs Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal staff to deliver its services (2 Aboriginal staff and 2 Non-Aboriginal staff). The tender process is discussed further in Section 5.3. NSW Government representatives told us:

At the time [of the tender], there were no specific capability building initiatives in relation to applying for tenders. However, community consultations were undertaken in each location to ensure that Aboriginal communities living in the identified location wanted an Opportunity Hub.²

As part of the tender process MTC Australia was required to establish Memorandum of Understanding with Aboriginal communities and organisations in the Campbelltown area.

We were told by Campbelltown Opportunity Hub staff:

-  The Opportunity Hub in Campbelltown does things quite differently [from other Hubs].
-  We focus on getting young people ready [for work] and so looking at transition, making positive relationships with local employers and I guess employment providers so that we can then refer these young people to them.

¹ About us, MTC Australia <https://www.mtcaustralia.com.au/about/> Accessed April 9, 2018

² OpHub Q and A - Policy staff responses to questions 18/2/2018

Our main focus is our Year 9s to 12s for case management and then the transition for these young people. I believe that that's something we've done quite successfully.

We heard that the MTC acknowledges that '*our main focus is not culture*' particularly as a non-Aboriginal organisation. However, Campbelltown Opportunity Hub staff told us that they do work with existing Aboriginal peak organisations to provide Aboriginal cultural programs:

... we encompass culture but it's not our main focus because we don't believe we're the most appropriate people to do that. There's people we know at TAC [Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation] and the Land Council and I guess community members that are in schools doing that themselves. So, we utilise those people as a part of our workshops to do that but it's not the be all.

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub operates with the support and advice from an Advisory Group, discussed in Section 2.1.2 below.

2.1.1 Challenges to the implementation of the Hub

- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is run by a non-Aboriginal organisation, which has created challenges in developing relationships with Aboriginal communities and organisations in the Campbelltown area.
- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is funded for 65 schools but is unable to access all of these. The Hub would like to provide services to other nearby schools outside the Campbelltown areas where they have relationships and have identified a need.
- Relationships with NSW Government, especially a need for clear lines of responsibility in government agencies.

MTC is a non-Aboriginal organisation

Several participants raised the issue of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub being managed by a non-Aboriginal organisation and that this is viewed as a challenge to implementation and Aboriginal engagement. Representatives of Aboriginal organisations participating in this evaluation have different views about how this came about. One participant from an Aboriginal organisation outlined the history of the tender process and how MTC came to manage the Hub.

When it first started there was no Aboriginal organisation that was in a position to actually take it on [at that point].

They also explained how this has influenced some community views of the Hub.

I find that's one negative that you'll find in this community and I'd say that probably a lot of - when this went out to tender in the first place, the Opportunity Hub, there was Aboriginal organisations that wanted to run it.

Another participant from a different Aboriginal organisation explained that by awarding the tender to a non-Aboriginal organisation, Aboriginal Affairs NSW overlooked Aboriginal expertise and relationships within the communities in the area.

I don't understand why we throw a lot of money and funding at people and ask them to reinvent the wheel. I don't understand why the Opportunity Hub originally was given the funding and Aboriginal organisations were bypassed that were already entrenched in the organisation. They had the community. They had the know-how.

Campbelltown Opportunity Hub staff members told us they consistently work to acknowledge the issues related to coming from a non-Aboriginal organisation delivering programs for Aboriginal students. One Hub staff member explained how this has shaped their operations and influences local relationships:

One of the biggest issues that we initially faced, and I think we'll continue to always face is that MTC Australia is not an Aboriginal specific service.

... I think that that was an initial issue and I think it will always be something that we have to really work hard [at] ...

Relationships with Aboriginal communities

Campbelltown Opportunity Hub staff told us relationships are critical for delivering programs for Aboriginal students. Hub staff explained they focus on developing and maintaining consistent relationships with members of Aboriginal communities and organisations and with students and schools.

Hub staff stressed the importance of establishing and supporting relationships across the community. They understand the success of the Hub is dependent on them working with Aboriginal communities and organisations in Campbelltown, schools and employer agencies and employers. We heard that it is important in these relationships to work with the students '*so that the community will get on board and support us*'. One participant told us:

... you know that trust is massive in our community and it's something that we've always endeavoured to do is to be that one trusting non-Aboriginal service – that's providing to the Aboriginal local community, so it's always been a focus.

The Hub is supported by a local Advisory Group. We heard that the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group meetings are a way of sharing information and support the work of the Hub. Hub staff explained they need the Advisory Group to:

... feedback and tell us that's not the right thing, you're not doing the right thing here or that's working really, well, do more of that.

For the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group to work well, Hub staff work to strengthen and develop relationships in the local community and seek out local Aboriginal people who would work with them:

... we went out to the community ... the people that we're working on the ground with, we really continued that relationship and tried to get their trust and support so that they would join our Advisory Group.

Campbelltown Opportunity Hub availability and access

Young Aboriginal people can access Hub activities depending upon various factors of availability. Access to the Opportunity Hub is '*based on limited availability and spots and not offered to all schools within area*'. However, not all schools within area with access to the Hub, use it. We heard from Opportunity **Hub staff**:

We've got funding for 66 schools where we're really only going to be able to reach 50 or 55 because some of those schools are high need schools that we don't have staff trained to access those schools.

Further, Opportunity Hub staff and the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub **Advisory Group** told us some schools have identified a need for the Opportunity Hub program and cannot access it because they are out of area. One Hub staff member explained:

Since 2014 that we've been in practice with the Opportunity Hub. Twenty minutes away is Camden. They've shown a lot of support to have us out there. They've got roughly 30 to 40 students that they've identified need support, but we're bound by a need to access the Campbelltown area. So, a school that's 20 minutes away and a school that's 30 minutes away who has 100 students in Picton we can't access.

So, there's two key schools that have mentioned to us that they'd really like us to go out there and support it.

Some schools in area choose not to participate in the Opportunity Hub and use other programs. We heard there were many 'Aboriginal programs' in schools in the Campbelltown area. One school had six programs for Aboriginal students.

One member of the Advisory Group noted however, programs are:

... all working to get the kids' needs met ... As long as the kids' needs are getting met then - we're all working towards the same goal, you may as well just work together and achieve that together.

One **community member** participant expressed concern that access to programs and resources:

...all comes down to availability ...

...and some schools and particular organisations are offered and targeted more Indigenous funding or programs than others.

Staffing the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

Another challenge at the implementation stage was staffing. We heard there was some staff turnover in the first couple of months. After that, we heard that the Hub:

- really hit the ground running.
- With four staff we've covered up to 45 schools providing 10 - week workshops and intensive case management to these people.

Staffing is discussed again in Section 2.3.4 in relation to improvements to the Hub.

Relationships with government

We heard communities are apprehensive about government programs. We heard there needs to be more clarity from NSW Government about decision-making and department responsibilities regarding the Opportunity Hub. For example, who should decide if the Hub can expand out of area?

One member of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub **Advisory Group** expressed concern about the process of implementation and government responsibility. They explained that clear lines of departmental responsibilities are important. One staff member of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub describes how relationships with government impacts on their work and affects how the Opportunity Hub is viewed in the community.

- We're [the Hub] a face of (technically) the government because we're funded by State [NSW] Government.

Another member of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group said:

- I think too this program's gone through a few sets of hands, in who manages it, from the different agencies.
- It was initiated by [Aboriginal Affairs NSW] Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and it was handed in to another government agency; they then changed their names, changed their priorities.
- So, I think that transition out of Aboriginal Affairs [NSW], into those other departments... It's kind of lost its focus. Not lost its focus, its focus remains, because of the work that the guys [Hub staff and advisors] do, but it's lost its priority as part of that bigger machine.

One member of the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group explained programs set up for Aboriginal people do not receive enough funding for long enough to ensure their success. One example was given of Commonwealth Government funding, where the program appeared to be doing well yet funding was cut. They said governments claim the success of the program and at the same time are:

- Funding us to failure. That's the whole thing.
- This approach means that... as a rule, no one trusts the government because they change their socks and underwear as soon as they're elected. But that's just normal because people play politics however they want.

They argued that governments need to:

Prove it to the community, [as a whole] no we're not going to close it down in 10 years because we know it's a 10-year pilot, it's not a 10-year program, it's a pilot and that's it.

2.1.2 Positive factors of the implementation

- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group has a guiding influence and oversight on the Hub activities.
- Advisory Group networks throughout the area support the work of the Hub.
- MTC has existing services and training facilities and builds on their networks with employers to provide opportunities for young Aboriginal people.

Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub works with Aboriginal leaders and organisations and other key stakeholders through the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group.³ In 2017 the membership included representation from:

- Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW AECG Inc.)
- Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation
- Muru Mittigar
- The Benevolent Society
- Aboriginal Employment Services (AES)
- MTC Employment Services
- MTC Youth and Community Division
- NSW Department of Education
- TAFE NSW Aboriginal Pathways Centre Campbelltown
- James Meehan High School
- Campbelltown City Council
- AFL Sports Ready NSW
- Ability Options VTEC.

We heard the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group is a key strength of the work of the Opportunity Hub. MTC staff together with the Advisory Group continue to make changes and adapt to meet the needs of their communities' (school, Aboriginal communities, students) concerns. We also heard that addressing some challenges that arose during the implementation of the Hub have led to strengths.

We heard the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group is active in providing community knowledge and support for the Opportunity Hub team. They also provide '*workforce planning knowledge*'. When schools request cultural programs, the Opportunity Hub

³ OCHRE Opportunity Hub Campbelltown Newsletter Edition 5

look to the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group together with MTC Aboriginal staff to facilitate these. Advisory Group members participate in a voluntary capacity and are not paid sitting fees to attend.

Members of the Advisory Group explained they see their role with the Opportunity Hub as supporting young Aboriginal people and their communities in Campbelltown. One member of the Advisory Group described their role:

- ☞ I suppose it's advising MTC on what we're seeing as what's happening with our young people ...
- ☞ ... by making sure it operates correctly and that's why I like to be in the Opportunity Hub here because from day one I've been a part of it and we've got great outcomes and I believe we're going to create even better ones working within the schools. It's not just the Opportunity Hub, it's the schools also.
- ☞ Our role as the Advisory Group is to arm them with information of what's coming up in the future, and to make sure that it's not a reactive model, but more a proactive model, at the front end.

Another Advisory Group member explained:

- ☞ ... the Opportunity Hub and this forum was simply a good opportunity to make industry and education sector and the agencies themselves ... the job compacts committee and interagency services that can all come together once, [every] two or three months.

An Opportunity **Hub staff member** outlined how the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group has made a positive contribution to the running of the Hub.

- ☞ We're trying to tie in with the Aboriginal community ... We have relationships with some really, fantastic people that have been really, consistent from the beginning.

The Opportunity Hub has worked with local Campbelltown council representatives, youth groups run by the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation (TAC). We heard:

- ☞ Those things help build credibility, but equally what builds credibility from my understanding is when you actually get some kids into jobs as they leave school or help them transition into some courses or further education.

We also heard that the Opportunity Hub makes use of the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, which includes members of the Aboriginal communities of Campbelltown, and their networks, along with other resources to provide cultural knowledge and training when requested from a school.

One member of the Advisory Group explained:

- ☞ All of us here, we've got maybe two or three hats, you know? And we're all here for the same reason. We're here for our community, and for our Koori people. We want the best for them, and that's why we're here.

Opportunity Hub staff told us that:

☞ I think we've been successful with the Advisory Group and having community buy-in of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations.

An **Aboriginal organisation** has a different view of the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group. They said they prefer to develop relationships through direct communication. A representative said:

☞ There are interagency meetings. The Aboriginal community will not link in there. That is a white thing. We don't want to rock up and just have a chat. We're on the ground. We are making the changes. We don't need to meet, sit and greet and talk about, "What are you doing in the zoo and what are you doing?".

☞ But merely opening the lines of communication with the Opportunity Hub, having that open dialogue on the phone between two managers or two staff members or open dialogue between emails is very passionate. That's powerful these days. That does it all, forming that kind of bond in a relationship.

MTC structure and organisation

The Opportunity Hub builds on the already existing service structure at MTC Australia and this is seen as a strength of the implementation. Relationships with schools, training programs, some higher education providers and employers together with the Advisory Group were part of these.

The **Advisory Group** told us:

☞ ... I think the competency of MTC as an organisation to put the right people in the right roles, and have the right connections, and the right respect for community in rolling out the program, is a key to its success, particularly in this community, because different communities have different heartbeats, and the community in Tharawal is one.

☞ And I think having the resources at MTC could bring to the table from its experiences in that employment space and the services that they've delivered outside of the Opportunity Hub, has helped the Hub in its delivery, in how they work with our kids.

They explained that MTC facilitate programs for the Opportunity Hub. When local Hub staff cannot fulfil Aboriginal programs in schools they need to employ an Aboriginal worker to carry out the training. We were told that:

☞ ... we [the Hub] also have a budget for bringing in external parties, for example [Aboriginal worker], who does some cultural stuff. He comes in when we do things like... Sometimes we do Sista Speak or Bro Speak, and obviously (Hub Aboriginal workers) can do Sista Speak, but if we don't have an Aboriginal worker, then we have to sort of contact that service.

Relationships with schools

MTC has existing relationships with the schools in the Campbelltown area. One Opportunity Hub staff member explains that it is important for Opportunity Hubs to have good relationships with schools for the programs to work.

- One of the reasons we went with [tendered for] the program [the Hub] is because we have been operating in schools a long time, and over the years have built up a level of trust in the schools with MTC.
- So that's a really, important one that you can't underestimate, because if you don't deliver, the schools won't deal with you. If you don't turn up on time, and they don't see legitimacy in what you're doing, then schools won't really work with you.
- We've now maintained that since 2014. Occasionally we have ups and downs with schools; but, generally speaking, they're still supportive, and it's going very well in that sense.

2.2 Opportunity Hub – strengths and improvements

The central focus of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is to support young Aboriginal people in the Campbelltown area, primarily in transition from primary school to high school and then from high school to employment training and/or higher education. We heard from members of the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group that:

- The biggest thing at community's heart is our kids. So, we're dealing with a really, valuable commodity to all of us; everyone that lives here, has kids here, delivers services here.
- So, if part of your evaluation process is giving advice back as to how this is going to roll out in the future, I'd really like that to be something that's noted.

2.3 Strengths of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

Strengths of the Hub reflect the positive aspects of the implementation including:

- The guiding influence and oversight of the Hub by the Advisory Group.
- Advisory Group networks throughout the area support the work of the Hub.
- MTC's existing services and training facilities, their networks with employers, that support and provide opportunities for young Aboriginal people.
- The capacity for the Hub to adapt to the needs of the students and the schools in flexible program delivery and facilitates access other support programs.

2.3.1 Support from students, community, schools and the Advisory Group

We heard that there is widespread support for the activities at the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub. The Opportunity Hub Advisory Group, students, carers and parents mostly said the Hub was contributing in positive ways.

Young Aboriginal **students** who participate in the Hub told us they appreciate the opportunities and support networks. They are positive about the relationships they had with staff and enjoyed Opportunity Hub workshops. We heard that the Hub is important because:

- 💬 They give me great support ... I've come a long way since being involved with the Op. Hub. I'm more motivated and think more about my life choices.
- 💬 They help us with school and employment/TAFE courses and not everyone gets that opportunity.

Some **members of Aboriginal communities** in Campbelltown who participated in the research had not heard about the Opportunity Hub. One participant said there was 'definitely' a need for Aboriginal services and cultural activities. Another participant thought the Hub is a good idea, although prior to participating in the research did not know anything about it. They said:

- 💬 Until today I had not heard of the Hub, but I believe a service like this is what young Aboriginal children need to plan their future.

Community members who participated in this research and knew about the Opportunity Hub told us they thought the Hub has been helpful for their child. We heard that the Hub had supported confidence, self-esteem and respect for young Aboriginal students. It was a place where Aboriginal culture is respected. Another participant told us:

- 💬 Yes [the Hub has helped] My child was disengaged from school and the Opportunity Hub helped to stay at school.

A member of the Opportunity Hub **Advisory Group** explained that Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown are generally supportive of the Hub:

- 💬 ... community are involved, because the kids go home and talk to their parents, and if it wasn't working, they'd all be here.

One **school stakeholder** explained:

- 💬 Probably a testament to the success of the program is that from my experience dealing with the girls [Hub staff], they don't get blowback from families and parents, because it works, and they know that they have the trust and the faith in the guys that are delivering the service on the ground.
- 💬 But more importantly, that the service is there.
- 💬 I think were you would get a lot of community cry-out if it stopped and then what would happen?

A representative of an **Aboriginal organisation** told us they:

- 💬 ... are strong believers in Opportunity Hub, because of the programs that they run.

We heard from **staff members** and the Opportunity Hub **Advisory Group** that a key strength of the Hub is communities working together. We heard:

- 💬 ... it's about having that centre where we all come together about the betterment of our community, as a whole, and that betterment is that young

person. If we can improve them, or their thinking, into the future, then we're improving the whole of the community. And that's what it is. I can't do it, but everyone here can't do it on their own, but we come together in this type of format.

It's not just supporting one, it's sometimes supporting those around them as well to make sure that you can get those outcomes for that one young person.

One member of the **Advisory Group** explained the Opportunity Hub is working and should be maintained:

I don't care who runs it as such, but why break the template? Or something that's working. It's like, alright, let's get rid of the car and go back to the horse and sulky, and we'll start again. No, it doesn't work.

It takes too many years to get going. We're getting outcomes; we've got students – and I'll tell you now – students are leaving school, going to university. Not just going in for an arts degree or something simple. They're going in and they're studying medicine, then become doctors, RNs ...

2.3.2 Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Activities

Education, training and employment pathway support

Activities conducted by the Opportunity Hub, include supporting young Aboriginal people to continue in education, find work or training and education activities. The Hub works with students to stay engaged with school, develop their passions and interests and long-term career goals, including going on to further education.

- Transition from primary school to high school, drop-in and outreach centre, including support for one year after students leave school.
- Organises a Career Expo, helps students participate in Army camps, and workshops in schools.
- One to one career planning, mentoring and other support.
- Finding work experience placements and local employment opportunities.
- Transition from high school to employment or further education or training.
- The Opportunity Hub facilitates Aboriginal Cultural programs for schools when requested (with Aboriginal Hub staff and other local Culturally accepted providers).

We heard from 42 **students** that they participate in Hub activities. They told us they received support through the Hub:

to find opportunities for work experience

to get an L (drivers licence)

for after school tutoring and homework

writing resumes, cover letters and how to do job search

- 💬 to look and apply for jobs
- 💬 look and apply for training programs at TAFE and university
- 💬 for career building and guidance – There was goal setting - they helped me with that and to try find apprenticeships.

We were also told that the Hub facilitates:

- White card (card enabling work on construction site) courses
- Traineeships
- Workshops and activities that build confidence and self-esteem.

They support Aboriginal students and schools, and conduct workshops to develop goals and future planning. For older students staff work one to one and to support student transition to work. Opportunity Hub staff told us they:

- 💬 ... often do basically reverse marketing on behalf of the young person; i.e. ringing up employers to try to get a connection or an interview. They did a bit of training in that, and they do it on a needs basis.
- 💬 ... brokering opportunities for kids that might not have been able to do that on their own.

Mentoring support

One **student** told us they felt very supported through mentoring and Hub activities.

- 💬 Coming up this year my mentor will be taking me to Kapooka in Wagga Wagga for an army program which will be great for me and we stay over-night and get treated like soldiers or new recruits.
- 💬 I'll absolutely love this, and she is taking me to the army base in Holdsworthy. **She supports me in anything I do, my mentor is so hectic.**

Another student said:

- 💬 I was part of the Sista speak program that we had going on here and I have done some of the university days - the heartbeat programs and the VIP performances.

Cultural programs and Aboriginal Wellbeing

The Opportunity Hub has a flexible approach to providing services in schools. As mentioned earlier, we heard the Hub focuses on employment, education and transition periods, primary to high school. However, we also heard the Opportunity Hub facilitates cultural programs through culturally accepted local Aboriginal services. One Hub staff member told us:

- 💬 ... they came to me and said, 'we can't continue to have Opportunity Hub exactly how it is, what can you tailor differently to make it fit with what we need?'

So, now we run cultural workshops in there and bring in external facilitators and that works. So, if these guys come back from out at the schools and say these are issues schools are having, we just have to be flexible around that because ultimately, we don't want the young person to miss out.

Opportunity Hub staff outlined that their program is a preventative one and targets children in primary school:

...it takes them before they've even thought about getting off the rails, or getting off-track, or making bad decisions, and that's something that the services that are currently around doesn't address...

We heard Opportunity Hub staff also support and listen to young Aboriginal people. Staff recognised the needs of students coming to the Hub:

... when you tap into these students, they've got so many needs before they can even think about a career. Jobs are the last thing on the mind, they need to get healthy.

A lot of these kids are stuck, either with mental health or stuck with just wanting to be a teenager. Their mind is not on career; that's the last thing they're really thinking about.

But with our sessions, we might talk for 15 minutes about the personal struggle, and then we follow on 15 minutes about what goal we're going to have this week, or what goal are you going to set for this month. It always brings it back to setting goals for the future, rather than just being stuck in the position that they're stuck in. I think without someone doing that in the school... Because not all the career advisors get one-on-one with the students; not all welfare see the kids, unless they ask to see them.

I think that these kids would have been struggling a lot on their own.

At the first community feedback session to the initial draft report, Opportunity Hub staff and other Aboriginal community advisors stressed the reality that an Aboriginal model of care is a holistic one. They emphasised that they could not just only support education and employment needs of Aboriginal youth at the Hub, but also that as a trusted support they are also aware of other psycho-social and mental wellbeing needs and situations of most of their students.

We have kids who have been referred to the school welfare worker but have to wait three weeks. So where else do they go - Opportunity Hub is there only one afternoon a week- so by the time the Hub comes around we have twelve kids lining up needing welfare support. We are helping the school, we are helping the welfare officers.

Hub staff spoke of the need for support coordination and referral pathways for their students, and the demands on them that require a form of case coordination that is beyond their capacity and also, in some cases, expertise.

Of most concern is the reality of an increasing number of youth suicides in their communities and their concerns for youth who they recognise as being at risk of suicide. We heard:

☞ We have had so many suicides in the last twelve months, just in our community. That's in every Aboriginal community across Australia

☞ In this community alone, just Campbelltown, at this moment there are teenagers, there's six of them, that are going to commit suicide in the next six months. That is a fact. We do not have the services to cover it. And guess who is the biggest support to help us deal with that? [It] is actually one of the funeral directors here, because he is sick of burying our young. The government won't pick it up, and you talk to the politicians about it and they go – 'well you're the community, come up with an answer to it'.

2.3.3 Impacts and success

We heard in our conversations with students, carers, parents and community members summed up here by an Aboriginal member of the Opportunity **Advisory Group** that:

☞ It's been a pretty successful program.

Students who participate in Hub activities and **community members** who know about the Hub are mostly positive. They enjoy the activities, the opportunities and relationships with Opportunity Hub staff. One participant said the Hub '*opens your eyes to opportunities*'.

Many students said the Opportunity Hub supports and motivates them to stay at school; Hub staff help them to make plans for employment and are:

☞ super helpful.

When asked if there was anything the Hub could improve, another student said:

☞ It's great because they are all about the child's needs and that's what it is all about.

Students told us that through the Hub they access information about courses while they are at school and after school, which helps them to look to the future. Students' views of participating in activities at the Hub are reflected in a comment by one student who said:

☞ ...my mind [is] more open now and [it has] made me think more of what's out there and what I want to do and the opportunities that are out there.

Another student told us:

☞ I had no clue what I wanted to do. I was just coming to school to learn and then go home ... But now I am focussing on getting good grades and getting out of school.

We heard from many students about their relationships with Opportunity Hub staff and about participating in activities. Students explained the benefits of the Hub. One student commented that:

It helps us Koori kids, helps with confidence and being proud of yourself

Another explained:

I feel I have more opportunity with my future from the support and guidance the Op Hub gives me.

We heard from **community members** that their child/children had benefitted from support through the Hub at the homework centre, through help to focus on career planning and networking with Aboriginal services in Campbelltown.

One **parent** participant said:

The Opportunity Hub filled some of the gaps and provided critical support and guidance when he completed Year 12.

[It] also helped me as a father to support my son and understand life skills.

Another community member said they had heard about the Opportunity Hub because it works closely with a lot of Aboriginal services across Campbelltown.

We heard Campbelltown Opportunity Hub staff also look after the wellbeing of young Aboriginal people, who feel they are listened to and looked after. They feel it is important for these students and their families. One participant said:

Knowing they have somewhere to go when they need to, someone to yarn to that understands and respect them no matter what.

One **school stakeholder** told us they could see the benefits of participation in the local Opportunity Hub activities as they support the work already happening in schools. They explained:

Virtually within the first 12 months of starting, we've seen a big change in the students, who are happy with their... staying as long as possible, either Year 10 and moving into traineeships or apprenticeships, or going to Year 12 and looking at further studies, and that. So, we've seen that starting to happen.

..... the benefits for the work that the girls [Hub staff] do, and MTC does, is it addresses the problem from a young age, not only for decision-making and what could be termed as bad behaviour, but also guiding them into what they're going to do when they leave school. So, what is your career path?

It's finding the passion within that child and developing that so they're not walking out of the school gate and into Centrelink.

There's jobs that we've never even thought of that might be available in 10 years' time for these kids, and inspiring them to sort of follow their passion, rather than be told what to do all the time. Because when they go home, their

parents sometimes don't have those skills or experience, to be able to guide them.

- So, it's just great that programs like the Opportunity Hub can support the services that are already delivered in schools. They're working with those curriculums, with their personal development plans, and things like that; so, they're not reinventing the wheel.

We heard additional support from the Hub connects young people to support services where other services don't. We were told:

- ... with the Department of Education our priority for every kid in New South Wales schools is connect, thrive, succeed.
- Opportunity Hub [staff] are doing the connection. Not just connecting them to the community that they're in, to their culture and things like that as you said a little bit less, but you still are connecting them. But you're connecting them to the future of their life which is the world and, in that connection, you're allowing them to succeed ...and thrive for their future.
- I've been lucky enough to work with [Hub coordinators, managers and staff] and being an Indigenous teacher myself as well and having been at the school for quite a while, gone away, come back et cetera I can see every day the difference that it's made.
- The difference for these kids is connecting so that they count, that they can move forward in their life. They can make a decision. They can make a choice that's going to benefit them.

We heard from Opportunity **Hub staff** they viewed their success through student engagement and community reputation. One Hub staff member explained:

- We're a name that people tell other people about. "Have you tried the Opportunity Hub? Maybe they will help."
- I think that we've grown just from somebody that people didn't really trust, to someone that they can rely on.
- I think we really work hard on professionalism and communication with community and schools, and I think that's been our biggest difference – that the kids know that we're at school on the Monday, from this time to this time, what we help with.

Benefits for the broader community

We heard from the **Advisory Group** that the Hub has impacts beyond the student. Several members of the Advisory Group explained how they saw the Hub working. One said:

- We have got to remember, while I'm [not a Hub worker], working with an Aboriginal student in the school, as soon as they walk out the gate, they're mixing back with the general community, so the general community tag onto it... 'oh, well, little Mary or Freddie can do this; I can do it too'...they sit and listen on the sidelines and the whole community is growing.

Another Advisory Group member said:

- ... we call the ripple effect, because it not only effects the child that you're working with, it's those kids around them, it's the community around them, it's the support.
- Not necessarily the parents, because a lot of these kids don't have parents – they have carers, or they have interested people that keep them off the street of a night, and it's those people the ripple effect that the Opportunity Hub really is making a difference.
- As a Koori woman myself, I've never seen this kind of support in all my training, in all my years I've worked with kids. It's 40 years I've been a high school teacher.
- I've never seen it. Never. So, it's absolutely crucial.

We heard friends and family of young Aboriginal people are also supported through the Hub.

- Or even last Friday one of the girls that you've been working with over a long period of time brought her boyfriend who's not Aboriginal but is still a student within the community... he had to go back to school and he hasn't been to school for eight months maybe, not quite that long. Yet she brought him to [the Hub] to do some youth work...

Relationships, organisation and staff

Hub staff told us they continue to build on, maintain and develop their relationships with students, stakeholders and Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown. We heard members of the Advisory Group support and facilitate networking and that the Hub is viewed as a centre for sharing information and improving opportunities for young Aboriginal people.

The Hub is:

- ... a united support base for the kids, without being overwhelming for them. They get support from four people, and they've got structure. They know that there's four people working on them to get them into something.

An **Advisory Group** member explained that the MTC and Hub work well to provide services for young Aboriginal people in the Campbelltown area and is well-received. One participant noted that one of the strengths of the Hub was that it set up to support for young Aboriginal people at an important stage.

Additionally, the **Hub staff** look out for the young Aboriginal person, and for people around him or her.

- It's not just supporting one, it's sometimes supporting those around them as well to make sure that you can get those outcomes for that one young person.

One **Hub staff** member highlighted the value of the Advisory Group in supporting the work of the Hub. They said:

☞ The structure [of the Hub] at the moment is working well but it's because of the support services and our Advisory Board that help us and assist us with that.

Additionally:

☞ We're very transparent. We want the Advisory Board and the community to come banging on the door if we're doing something wrong and be open with it. So that's the biggest goal...

One stakeholder explained that the Hub takes their role seriously.

☞ Yeah, they are forever facilitating and hosting community meetings and asking for community feedback... This community in particular can be difficult, but they seem to be able to manage it and bring people in...

We heard the Hub has signed MOUs with civil contractors, organised the Careers Expo, Army, builders and Muru Mittigar, and networks with local employers to provide opportunities for young Aboriginal people. Staff explained:

☞ ... in Campbelltown we work closely with Badanami, which is an alternative entry pathway to the Western Sydney Uni, as well as Aboriginal Pathways Centre that's at Campbelltown TAFE. So, we normally tap into them, as well as other local initiatives for training and things like that.

☞ Recently we've sent six students through to the Statim-Yaga program through Hutchinson Builders, which is an Aboriginal-specific training program. It's a pre-apprenticeship, and out of the six students, we have five placed in full-time Aboriginal-specific apprenticeships.

They also said:

☞ ... we've made some really, good connections with Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation. Look [one member of the Advisory Group] has absolutely supported us the whole way. We've got some really, good relationships with parents too

We heard many positive comments about the staff and how they work in the community, including at schools and with students. The **Advisory Group** explained that:

☞ ... community feedback and the goodwill if you like, that MTC provides the program. They do over and above what they're written down in their contracts. That may attribute to their success.

One Advisory Group member said:

☞ I think it's the dynamics of the staff, I think it's the way the structure is currently placed. As I say, this advisory board, I've never... I've been president of AECGs, and all kinds of things. I'm not backward. The difference is huge.

2.3.4 Improvements for the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

Participants in the evaluation told us what they thought could be improved in the Hub.

- Increase local capacity of Aboriginal communities and organisations including through the Opportunity Hub.
- Secure long-term funding which will ensure the long-term sustainability of the Hub.
- Promote Campbelltown Opportunity Hub more broadly including more publicity about Hub activities and what they can do for young Aboriginal people.
- Increase access to Campbelltown Opportunity Hub and increase the number and range of programs available at the Hub.
- Increase access and more programs in schools, including Aboriginal culture and knowledge programs with Aboriginal Elders.
- Increase transport support and provision for students to attend Campbelltown opportunity Hub activities.
- Geographic context means that access to local jobs is critical as there is 'no local transport.
- Include social, cultural, education and career pathways for local Aboriginal young people.
- For many Aboriginal students, other factors need to be addressed before they can plan a career or further education.

Capacity building

One aim of *OCHRE* is to 'Grow local Aboriginal leaders and communities' capacity to drive their own solutions' (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2013: 5). This connects to the operation of the Hub by a non-Aboriginal organisation and adding capacity building for local Aboriginal organisations.

One member of the **Advisory Group** suggested areas for improvement could be in capacity building within the Aboriginal communities and organisations providing services for Aboriginal peoples.

They could possibly look at **building capacity**. So, in five to seven years' time, a Land Council could, actually have its own Opportunity Hub of sorts, because it's not like there's not enough work to go around.

There's so much work, and not enough skill to fill those roles. There's no point fighting over it; you may as well just **build the capacity of every organisation that contributes**.

Security and long-term planning for the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

The **Advisory Group** agreed about the need for support for young Aboriginal people in the area. One [Aboriginal] member of the Advisory Group said:

There's always going to be a need for it, here; but the more it's done, especially by the same organisation that's doing it well, the more refined it's going to be, and the better those resources are going to be used, regardless. And the more expansion can be made from the small amount that they've got.

Challenges for the ongoing success of the Hub include:

- NSW Government commitment and long-term security of the Hub.
- Retaining staff, developing more roles at the Hub, maintaining relationships with Aboriginal communities and schools, and networking with employers.

The **Advisory Group** were concerned about the long-term stability of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub. We heard that, historically, governments have set up pilot programs in Aboriginal communities and these have then been transferred elsewhere. A member of the Advisory Group to the Hub told us:

... government agencies who will run a pilot, run something on a pilot scheme. We prove that it works so they'll move it away from us, and they'll run it somewhere else as a continuing service and we'll never ever see that again.

So, you will find a bit of apprehensive about what's going on because, you see what everyone keeps saying, it's a pilot, it's a pilot. Well to us it's not a pilot, it's part of our community now because in the first 12 months it really gave us the shits. They made us take notice of what they were going to achieve, not what they wanted to achieve, and they started achieving it and you could see something.

But there's still that feeling in the back of your mind that I know it's working so we're going to go now and move it to Wagga and run it because we've proved that it works. Then you're not going to have it anymore.

Every government agency like State [NSW] Government especially has tried it with us.

We heard from **Hub staff** members and members of the Advisory Group that the long-term security of the Hub was necessary if long-term goals were going to be met. We heard:

It [the Hub] does need to be sustainable, and it needs to have some longevity.

The government in the past has sort of divided and conquered and made sure there wasn't a bank of intellectual property, or skills, or a network that lasted long enough. This is a 15, 20, 30- year plan. If we can keep that IP and that momentum together, we actually will get something done, particularly in a generational sense with young kids.

... It should get a lot more investment. It [the Hub] is under-invested, someone has made that point as well. They do a lot with not a lot, I think, to provide big value.

One Advisory Group member suggested insecurity about government funding could be addressed through industry partners, who are '*incentivised*' to support the Hub. They said:

- Invest in it, but industry out there is apparently 52 billion dollars' worth of spending out here, and here we are operating off a quarter of a million dollars. It's absolute... It's actually an embarrassment, how little is being funded to how much they're doing. Should be the top 200 corporates...
- They have their so-called raps; they should just chip in 0.01 per cent of what they spend, just on Aboriginal engagement, and it will be 10 times what these guys get funded per year. That's the reality.

Hub staff and local employment opportunities

Hub staff were one of the strengths of the program. With a secure Hub, improvements retaining staff, including promotion and job security, and supporting new staff positions could be made.

- We heard that the Hub can support more staff to carry out the program and could support more workers. We were told staff:
- ... are extremely time poor and our resources with staff are I think in that way quite limited.
- ... the Opportunity Hub can be a creation of more roles for Hub team. Aspiring roles that these kids can fill. We need about eight or 10 or 12 of these roles, to be perfectly honest.

We heard experienced staff are:

- A sought-after commodity in the communities that we work at, and it's a tough market to keep staff. We don't like holding staff back to go to bigger, brighter areas, but that's sort of part of our model, so we kind of encourage it at the same time.
- Barriers to the success of the Hub include access to local employment opportunities and public transport. We heard that although there are some industries booming there is not always the commitment from local industry to support local people.
- We'd like more community and more local support because a lot of restraints on our kids travelling to the city or to even Parramatta is a big fear for a young person who's never had to take the responsibility of catching transport locally. So, it's really [important to] start small, which is a huge step for these kids.

Hub Staff told us:

- ... we've got opportunities that Lendlease and local - Campbelltown's booming in construction but you approach these people to take on a few of our students and nothing comes from it.

More Aboriginal culture programs, access and publicity about the Hub

We heard that members of the Campbelltown Aboriginal communities and organisations, students and parents and carers had ideas for how the Hub might be improved.

Some **members of the Aboriginal communities** in Campbelltown, who participated in the evaluation had not heard about the Hub. They wanted more information and thought the service could be more widely promoted. They also said that now they knew about it they did would access the Hub or encourage their child to. One participant told us:

☞ I am struggling to get my child within the workforce. Until today I had not heard of the Op Hub but am willing to get my son involved.

Some **community member** participants were concerned that the Hub did not provide the help their child needs. Several talked about their child/children needing additional support for learning. One member of the community told us that their child was need more specific support from the Hub. They said:

☞ He is involved with the Hub at school, but they are not doing anything for him at all and he needs a lot of help, especially with his learning difficulties. He wants to go on to year 12, so they need to give him more help support and assistance to help him stay in school.

Other participants would like more weekend activities for children and young people in the Campbelltown region. They told us:

☞ [There are not] many activities for our kids in our area too. There needs more for kids to do specially on the weekends. This is why they get into trouble they get bored so easily.

☞ More access to the Hub, more tutoring, more Hub workers, more activities and workshops, more visits through the week, more camps/Army camps, expanding Sista speak to year 11 and 12.

Students who took part in the evaluation said about the Hub:

☞ It's great.

☞ I think they should have psychologist or people that can help kids with personal issues whether it be drug and alcohol related or abuse at home and feel they can't talk to anyone.

Representatives from an **Aboriginal organisation** told us that the issue of cultural competency framework remained. They said it was important that all organisations:

☞ black or white, practise culture, teaching culture [should follow] local protocols.

We heard from one **member of the community** that:

☞ I would also like to see more cultural activities offered especially around learning traditional language, traineeships offered, free short courses from TAFE or free TAFE in general to prepare them for working as well as give them options if the school system is not working for them.

☞ As well as more cultural knowledge and understanding especially around Closing the Gap programs within school and training for teachers around this.

Several **students** would also like more Aboriginal culture in the program. One student told us:

 I would like to see Elders come to the school and talk to us about our culture and stuff do some activities with our Elders.

3 Discussion and recommendations

3.1 Has the Opportunity Hub been implemented as intended? What is working well? What could be improved?

Overall the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub is working well with Aboriginal communities in the area. We heard the Opportunity Hub engages with students, schools and members of Aboriginal communities and organisations. The Hub provides much needed support for young Aboriginal people in the area through their programs and networks. They fill in the gaps of other services and are flexible in program delivery adapting to the needs of students and schools.

As intended, the Opportunity Hub has reached most of schools in the Campbelltown area, but there was a strong wish by community stakeholders that the reach should be expanded geographically to include the Aboriginal communities of Picton and Camden, and to access schools in Campbelltown that are currently not being served.

In terms of implementation itself, the most important factor has been that the Hub is run by a non-Aboriginal agency. The findings indicate that there were various reasons for this at the time, and that MTC has done its best to work with the Aboriginal community and has been largely successful in doing so. Nevertheless, this has been accepted by many but not all members of Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown. The Opportunity Hub is a key component of *OCHRE*, which is the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal employment and enterprise, and it is important for *OCHRE* and the Opportunity Hub for the program to create the opportunities for the Aboriginal community to eventually manage the Hub.

3.1.1 What is working well?

We heard the strengths of the Hub are in their relationships with schools and students, finding opportunities for young Aboriginal people in employment, education and training, along with staff reliability and perseverance.

An important strength of the Hub is the role of the Advisory Group, the relationships between the members and Hub staff including the management and the deep links between the Advisory group and the Aboriginal community.

We heard that the activities of the Hub are well-attended and well-regarded. This is in part due to the already existing structure of MTC, which has programs and support networks in place. It was also connected to the strength of Hub relationships with schools.

3.1.2 What could be improved?

Improvements for the Hub include capacity building for local Aboriginal community to manage the Hub, ongoing security for funding and resourcing the Hub, staff support and increased access for students (i.e. more than once a week). Community members and students would like increased publicity and more Aboriginal cultural programs.

One issue outside the control of the Hub or any associated organisation is that of local public transport. Young Aboriginal people need ready access to public transport to access employment. Without public transport access to employment and other training opportunities is compromised. This is a systemic problem for the Hub, who are trying to place young Aboriginal people in work and or training.

Many young Aboriginal people accessing the Hub need a holistic approach to their wellbeing, before they are able to access the education, training and employment opportunities available. There needs broader support, particularly in areas of mental health for young people in Campbelltown region.

Data collected by the Opportunity Hub needs to better reflect this more holistic approach and should account for the range of activities undertaken by Opportunity Hub staff to support Aboriginal children and young people.

Increased support from local businesses would provide local employment opportunities for young Aboriginal people. Hub staff continue to network to find employment locally because of the transport issue.

There could be some improvements in the lines of communication between the Opportunity Hub and peak Aboriginal organisations in the area.

3.2 Are *OCHRE* policies and practices responding to evidence?

In 2016, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs approved the extension of the agreement for Opportunity Hubs until 31 March 2019. This extension was given to align with the first stage of the *OCHRE* Evaluation, allowing for evidence to be reviewed before any decisions are made and to allow time for consultation with Aboriginal communities on implementing evaluation recommendations.⁴

The only changes noted by the research team has been minor changes to the reports submitted to the Government in terms of students reached and programs delivered.

⁴ Source: Correspondence with Training Services NSW.

3.3 Do outcomes continue to reflect what the community wants to achieve?

At this stage it is not possible to measure the community-wide benefits of the Opportunity Hub. From what we heard the Hub is performing as the community would like it to. There is strong evidence that young Aboriginal people who do access the Hub are better engaged in school, and that the transition from school to work is easier for them.

Aboriginal communities of Campbelltown would like services provided for all young Aboriginal people.

The ongoing conversation with communities through the *OCHRE* Evaluation can support community participation and involvement in the Opportunity Hub. For example, through the co-design, conversations and feedback processes, there are opportunities for communities to express their views and to 'talk back' to policy makers (Walden et al., 2014).

3.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on what we heard was working well and what could be improved.

Recommendations for NSW Government:

Theme	Recommendation
Tendering process for <i>OCHRE</i> program contracts	• Change the tendering process for <i>OCHRE</i> programs to a collaborative capacity building and co-design approach to program operation and commissioning rather than a competitive process.
Governance - Aboriginal ownership and determination of <i>OCHRE</i> Programs	• Explore and include options for greater Aboriginal participation and capacity in the operations of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub and long-term sustainability of the Hub.
Capacity building of Aboriginal organisations	• Provide capacity building support and resources to local Aboriginal organisations.
Governance- clarity on government lines of responsibility	• Improve clarity regarding government lines of responsibility and decision-making about the Opportunity Hub.
Sustainability of the Hub	• Ensure commitment to financial certainty of the Hub for long-term planning. • Secure long-term funding arrangements.

Theme	Recommendation
Continuing Professional Development and career pathway support for Aboriginal staff	Establish career pathways and continuing professional development for Aboriginal staff within the Hub.
Expand the access to the Hub	- Identify and activate strategies to ensure equitable access for all local Aboriginal young people to participate in Campbelltown Opportunity Hub programs and activities. - Increase transport support and provision for students to attend Hub activities. - The Hub would like to provide services to other nearby schools outside the Campbelltown areas where they have relationships and have identified a need. - Hub area boundaries should respond to need and be flexible. - Schools with identified needs outside the designated Campbelltown region should be able to access the Hub.
Need to address wider and systemic barriers of access	- Address the wider barriers to employment in the Campbelltown area, including providing transport options and support for young Aboriginal people in Campbelltown trying to access work and education. - TAFE to establish more free trainee programs and short courses.
Transport	Increase transport options and support for participants to attend Hub activities, education opportunities and connected services.
Training and education pathways for Aboriginal youth in Campbelltown	- Support local employers to work with young Aboriginal people and provide local opportunities. - Establish, support and resource local employment, training and education pathways in the Campbelltown local areas.
Inclusion of Aboriginal Cultural and Wellbeing outcome indicators into HUB planning and reporting	Increase programs and activities that focus and support Aboriginal wellbeing, culture and knowledge programs with Aboriginal Elders.

Theme	Recommendation
	Data should be expanded to address areas such as family relationships, peer relationships, self-esteem and connection to country.
Include long-term outcome indicators into Hub planning and reporting	Follow up Hub participants in relation to long-term as well as short-term outcomes.

Recommendations for Campbelltown Opportunity Hub programs:

Theme	Recommendation
Expand access to the Hub	- Increase presence in schools, more programs, more often. - Provide weekend activities and programs for children and young people.
Expand range of support services provided by the Hub	- Maintain an understanding and recognition that for many Aboriginal students, many factors need to be addressed that effect their opportunities for education and employment. - Explore options and mechanisms for the Hub to either provide broader services that include counselling and wellbeing support or to develop MOU s or partnerships for referrals and outreach youth services with primary health providers such as the Aboriginal Medical Service, Primary Health Network, Local Health District and headspace. - Provide more Aboriginal social and cultural programs. - Provide more education and career pathways for local Aboriginal young people.
Include service co-ordination	- Need to include service and connected referral pathways development into Hub support for participants. - Explore options as to best staff/site/organisation to provide this. - Most of the young people at the Hub have multiple issues and or needs including family, mental health and substance issues and these needs are integral to Hub support for participants.

Theme	Recommendation
Need to incorporate and follow local social and cultural Aboriginal protocols	• Develop a cultural competency framework for all organisations working with the Hub incorporate.

4 Future focus – next steps

4.1 Stage 1 of the *OCHRE* Evaluation

This is community-controlled research. The evaluation team listened to community feedback on the draft report and amended it, without compromising the independent findings.

Members of the Campbelltown Aboriginal Communities involved in the evaluation have accepted this report. The report will be provided to Aboriginal Affairs NSW (on 30 June 2018) and will then be presented formally to the Minister on 15 August 2018.

The evaluation team have drawn lessons from all *OCHRE* sites evaluated and will present a Synthesis Report to the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances (NCARA), with recommendations for the NSW Government. The evaluation team has conducted the same process of validation with NCARA about the Synthesis Report.

4.2 Direction of next conversations – Stage 2

There are two more stages to the evaluation:

- Stage 2, from July 2018 to June 2021 will identify changes experienced by communities, outcomes and make recommendations for improving the initiatives.
- Stage 3, from July 2021 to June 2024 will assess the contribution the initiative has made in meeting long-term goals and make recommendations for improving the initiative.

Based on the conversations to date (including co-design), we propose the next conversations include and discuss:

- What long-term data should be captured and how?
- What Aboriginal cultural programs could be made available as part of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub?
- How can staff Opportunity Hub staff be best supported? Both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal staff.
- Process for more Aboriginal community control and partnerships in the operations and governance of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub whilst respecting and incorporating the strengths of a collaborative governance approach with MTC, Tharawal LALC, and Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Medical Services.

Part B:

About *OCHRE* and the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

5 OCHRE Opportunity Hubs

5.1 About OCHRE

POCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment) is a community-focused plan for Aboriginal people in NSW. *POCHRE* was developed by the NSW Government in response to conversations with over 2,700 Aboriginal people in NSW who identified Aboriginal language and culture, education and employment, and accountability as priorities for Aboriginal communities.

POCHRE includes several different programs and supports:

- **Connected Communities** where schools work in partnership with Aboriginal leaders in the local community to improve education outcomes for young Aboriginal people
- **Opportunity Hubs** which provide young Aboriginal people with clear pathways and incentives to stay at school and transition into employment, training or further education
- **Industry Based Agreements** with industry to support Aboriginal employment and enterprise
- **Language and Culture Nests** to revitalise and maintain languages as an integral part of culture and identity
- **Local Decision Making** where Aboriginal communities are given a progressively bigger say in what services are delivered in their communities, and how they are delivered
- An **Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework** that drives the long-term and sustainable economic prosperity of Aboriginal people and their communities across NSW
- A **Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs)** to improve transparency and accountability in the provision of services to Aboriginal communities and the outcomes they deliver.

The overall objective of *POCHRE* is to transform the NSW Government's relationship with Aboriginal communities in NSW, allowing Aboriginal communities to increase ownership of the policies and programs that affect them, and to ensure that government services are coordinated and effective.

The aims of *POCHRE* are to:

- Teach more Aboriginal language and culture to build people's pride and identity
- Support more Aboriginal students to stay at school
- Support more Aboriginal young people to get fulfilling and sustainable jobs

- Grow local Aboriginal leaders' and communities' capacity to drive their own solutions
- Focus on creating opportunities for economic empowerment
- Make both government and communities more accountable for the money they spend (Aboriginal Affairs, 2013: 3).

Evaluation is a key component of *OCHRE*, providing ongoing evidence to improve the effectiveness of *OCHRE* projects and outcomes into the future, and informing the NSW Government about the future expansion of *OCHRE*. This evaluation includes Opportunity Hubs, Local Decision Making (including Regional Industry Based Agreements), and Language and Culture Nests. Two sites for each program are part of the evaluation.

5.2 What is an *OCHRE* Opportunity Hub?

As stated above, Opportunity Hubs provide young Aboriginal people with clear pathways and incentives to stay at school and transition into employment, training or further education.

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. To achieve this outcome, Opportunity Hubs are building partnerships between schools, employers, education and training providers and the local community to coordinate and match employment, training and further education opportunities to individual students' aspirations.

Non-government Opportunity Hub service providers have been contracted to coordinate and broker links with schools, employers, training providers, support services and Aboriginal communities, to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal young people, including increased:

- Participation and retention at school
- Aspiration and expectation of career pathways for Aboriginal students
- Post-school enrolment in further education and training, and
- Placement in sustainable jobs (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, n.d. a).

Opportunity Hubs are funded by the NSW Government; they were established under *OCHRE* by Aboriginal Affairs NSW and State Training Services (now Training Services NSW). Opportunity Hub contracts are managed by Training Services NSW (part of NSW Department of Industry) due to their experience in delivering similar pathway programs across the state and their work in Aboriginal employment and training. While other pathway programs look at re-engaging young people in education or employment, Opportunity Hubs focus on retaining young people in school and directing them towards further education or employment through clear pathways. The Opportunity Hub model was developed in consultation with community members specifically for *OCHRE*, drawing on experience of career education and vocational education placement programs funded by both Commonwealth and State agencies.

The four pilot areas were established to fit within the allocated funding.

While the initiative has overall objectives, and there are expectations of basic activities the Opportunity Hub delivers, how each Hub meets the objectives is not prescribed and is determined locally based on need. The program was conceived as something where:

□ The organisations managing it would be outside the school 'reaching in' and the organisation 'had the relationships with the community and with industry and were reaching into the schools'.

The program is available to students in government, Catholic and independent schools. However, as one government stakeholder noted:

□ It became a challenge for each of the service providers to get out, identify the schools they need to work with, and to ensure their active participation.

Opportunity Hubs were initially established in four locations: Upper Hunter, Campbelltown, Dubbo and Tamworth. In March 2018, the Australian and NSW Governments announced the expansion of the Opportunity Hub model as part of the Western Sydney City Deal (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2018) – establishing a new Opportunity Hub in Liverpool and an expansion of the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub. It is important to note that whilst the Western Sydney City Deal refers specially to an expansion of the Campbelltown Hub, this expansion relates to all four existing Opportunity Hubs including Tamworth, Dubbo and Upper Hunter.⁵

5.3 How Opportunity Hubs were established

The information in this section was sourced from information provided by Training Services NSW, conversations with other government staff, as well as publicly available reports on the consultation and reporting process related to *OCHRE*.

5.3.1 Tender process

The NSW Government had a two-stage tender process to contract a suitable Opportunity Hub provider. The first stage was to seek expressions of interest (for Campbelltown, this was completed at the end of 2013); suitable applicants were then invited to submit a detailed proposal which was then assessed against a number of criteria (for Campbelltown, this was completed in March 2014).

5.3.2 Selection of sites

Opportunity Hub sites were identified and selected because they have strong Aboriginal leadership, a significant number of Aboriginal students, employment opportunities, non-government and business sector support, career champions and

⁵ Source: Correspondence with Training Services NSW.

mentors, as well as Vocational Educational Training or tertiary education providers. Community members were consulted to ensure they wanted an Opportunity Hub.

5.3.3 Duration and nature of the agreement

The '*commitment to Opportunity Hubs is ongoing for the period of the pilot with a renewal on an annual basis*'. That is, Opportunity Hub contracts last three years, with annual funding; however, the contracts from March 2015 to March 2017 were renewed in 2016 by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs until end of March 2019 – well ahead of the contract expiry. This extension was given to align with the first stage of the OCHRE evaluation, allowing for evidence to be reviewed before any decisions are made and to allow time for consultation with Aboriginal communities on implementing evaluation recommendations.

5.3.4 Monitoring, evaluating and reporting

All Opportunity Hubs provide quarterly reports to Training Services NSW, and additional reports as required. Reporting requirements were developed based on the conversations had with communities in each of the Opportunity Hub locations. This information is reported in the OCHRE annual reports (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, n.d. b).

Quarterly reports are provided to Training Services NSW on progress with service implementation (a written report against the plan) and against six performance indicators (numerical data):

1. Establish and enhance close and productive working relationships with schools supporting growing participation by Aboriginal students.
2. Establish and enhance productive partnerships with relevant employers, universities and other post-school education and training providers, government agencies, and community groups and other non-government organisations.
3. Develop, co-ordinate and broker programs and opportunities to raise the motivation, aspiration and participation of Aboriginal school students in the later years of primary school and the early years of high school.
4. Develop, coordinate and broker sound individualised career planning, work experience and mentoring for Aboriginal students and integration within the students' learning plans.
5. Accurately monitor and track young people in Years 9-12 and following the completion of secondary school.
6. Provide frank and accurate reports in accordance with the contract requirements.

Quarterly reports are made on templates provided by Training Services NSW. The data is used to monitor activity to ensure the Opportunity Hub is delivering on the range of activities under the agreement. They enable Training Services NSW to seek

clarification if needed before making payments. Data is also reported back to Aboriginal Affairs NSW as part of overall reporting for *OCHRE*. The Opportunity Hub may produce other information to Training Services NSW as required.

One government stakeholder commented that while the reporting had been simplified from the original requirements, it is still input driven. They noted, *'there may be some limits to the extent to which the good outcomes that are being achieved are being seen'*.

Opportunity Hubs provide information to Training Services NSW on both the programs delivered, as well as detail of intensive one-to-one support provided to students. This is captured in an Excel spreadsheet. Students engaged intensively by the Opportunity Hub are tracked using their NSW Government student number. Information collated includes:

- School attended and current year of enrolment (updated each year) and their current educational status.
- Whether the student has participated in any Opportunity Hub coordinated activities.
- Whether there is any career transition planning in place.
- Whether there is an Opportunity Hub Career Plan in place and whether this is linked to a learning plan (responsibility of the school).
- How involved their parent or carer is in their career and learning planning.
- Whether the Opportunity Hub provides mentor support, and who it is provided by.
- Whether they receive additional academic support.
- Whether they have received work readiness preparation (from the school or the Opportunity Hub).
- Whether they have had work experience.
- Whether any employment, apprenticeship or training has been secured independently or through the Opportunity Hub.
- Whether students have been referred to wrap-around services.
- Any comments on the students' progress.

Note that information is not captured about the intensity or frequency of support, when the student joined or left the Opportunity Hub services, or any characteristics that would identify impact the program has had.

The information captured currently, and the way that it is captured, is not able to identify or attribute outcomes for students. Therefore, this evaluation has relied on conversations with students, families, school and Opportunity Hub staff to identify the impact the program has had to date. We understand that Opportunity Hubs have regular conversations with Training Services NSW about the data that is and isn't captured and we would recommend a process of co-design to ensure that the data

captured meets the needs of the community, the Opportunity Hub team, and the NSW Government.

5.3.5 Governance of Opportunity Hubs

Opportunity Hubs operate within the *OCHRE* Accountability Structure. Twice a year, Training Services NSW convenes a meeting attended by staff from all four Hubs. Training Services NSW manages the contracts of Opportunity Hubs.

Each Hub has a slightly different governance structure depending on their individual circumstances.

6 The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub

The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub opened its doors in March 2014 and is run by MTC Australia, based at Queen Street, Campbelltown. The Opportunity Hub coordinates and matches training and career opportunities with Aboriginal students, providing incentives to finish school and transition into tertiary study and sustainable jobs. The Opportunity Hub works closely with community, schools, industry and employers, tertiary institutions and other non-government organisations to deliver career aspiration, education and planning; resilience and confidence building; and life skills programs and activities. MTC work with other organisations to deliver cultural programs and activities. As at April 2018 there are 53 schools participating in the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub.

6.1 How is Campbelltown Opportunity Hub organised?

The overall design of the Opportunity Hubs was part of a broader community consultation in 2012 (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2012). Local adjustments are made through local governance structures – each of which is tailored to the local community and environment. In Campbelltown:

- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub currently has four employees, two Aboriginal and two non-Aboriginal
- The Campbelltown Opportunity Hub Advisory Group (a governance group), made up of key stakeholders in the local community (schools, government and non-government organisations), meets every two months (see Section 2.1.2 above for more detail).

6.2 How is the Opportunity Hub resourced?

The Opportunity Hub is resourced under the contract on an annual basis, increases are based on indexed costs advised by NSW Treasury. The funding is managed by Training Services NSW.

The contract funding does not include in-kind support from volunteers or staff working more hours than they are paid, or contributions made by other stakeholders in terms of either time, resources or other financial assistance

6.3 How is the Opportunity Hub being used?

6.3.1 Campbelltown communities

A *Community Portrait for Campbelltown Local Government Area* (LGA) has been prepared by Aboriginal Affairs NSW, using the most recent 2016 Census data (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2018). This provides an overview of the local population, households, income, education (participation in school by age), and disability for the Tamworth area. Just over 3.8% of residents in the Campbelltown LGA area identify as

having Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origins, of which 96% are Aboriginal. Unemployment is higher for the Aboriginal workforce (14%) than the non-Aboriginal workforce (8%). In 2016, of 5,971 Aboriginal residents, 13% (765) were under five years old, 18% (1,070) were aged between 5-11, and 14% (850) were aged 12-17. School attendance for Aboriginal children between the age of 5-14 is 93% - similar to non-Aboriginal children of that age.

6.3.2 Schools participating in the Opportunity Hub

In terms of the number of schools participating in the Opportunity Hub since 2014, the quarterly reports show:

- An increase in Government Schools participating (from 15 to 40 Government Schools per quarter), with an increase in engagement from early 2015 and sustained at 40 schools for the duration of 2017.
- Low participation of Catholic and Independent schools (both increasing from 1 in the first month of operation to 2 schools in the final quarter of 2017).

6.3.3 Students participating in the Opportunity Hub

In **Government Schools**, this varies between 5 and 721 Year 5-8 students per quarter, 18 and 129 Year 9-10 students per quarter, and 19 and 143 Year 11-12 students per quarter, and between 9-169 school leavers across the period. However, in each period of reporting, there is some engagement across each age group in Government Schools.

For both **Catholic and Independent schools**, students in Years 5-8 did not access the Hub, other than one student in the last two quarters of 2016 and the first two quarters of 2017.

In **Catholic Schools**, while services were provided to Year 9-10 students in 5 quarters across 2015-2016, they received no services in 2017. Services to Year 11-12 students have reached between 6-15 students per quarter from 2015-2017, and between 4-11 school leavers from the last quarter of 2015. Independent schools show a similar pattern, with Year 9-10 students engaged across most quarters (from 1-13 students), Year 11-12 students engaged from 2016 on (2-12 students per quarter), and between 7-20 school leavers in each quarter of 2017.

There are a large number and variety of programs offered by the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub which may affect the age group of students engaged over the period and the number of students in each age group reached. Appendix A provides an example of programs delivered in Campbelltown, and their reach, extracted from their June 2017 Opportunity Hub quarterly report.

As noted in Section 5.3.4 above – reporting is largely input based and fails to capture the value of the Opportunity Hub to individuals involved in terms of increasing

This report belongs to members of Campbelltown Aboriginal communities.

confidence, cultural identity and participation. Reporting also does not account for the significant additional contribution of staff, other organisations and volunteers.

7 About the conversations

7.1 Who did we have conversations with?

BJ Newton had conversations with stakeholders between October and November 2017, and Michael Barnes and four Community Researchers had conversations in community in March 2018. The online survey, which replicated the conversation guide, was left open until the end of term 1 to ensure everyone who wanted to could tell us what they think.

- Community researchers heard from 52 students, 42 who had accessed Hub activities, 7 had not accessed Hub activities (3 did not answer this question).
- Community researchers heard from 20 parents, carers or community members.
- BJ Newton and Michael Barnes had conversations with key stakeholder groups in the area, including with members of the Advisory Group.
- We held additional conversations were held with government and opportunity hub staff to understand how the model was established and discuss the oversight process.
- In addition, 20 parents/community members and 3 stakeholders completed the online survey.
- The SPRC evaluation team held three Co-design workshops and meetings to discuss the evaluation. The first co-design workshop was held with a range of community stakeholders including Aboriginal community members involved in the hub, representatives from MTC, Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council, NSW TAFE, the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Department of Industry. The findings of this co-design were then discussed with Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council to gain their input. In addition, the evaluation team met with the Opportunity Hub Advisory Group who also supported the outcomes of the first co-design workshop. The evaluation team also met with Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation who decided not to participate in this evaluation.

7.2 What sort of information did we collect?

The research collected different sorts of information:

- What people told us in conversations either face to face, by telephone, or anonymously through an online survey
- Information (data) about how the Opportunity Hub is used (reported to Training Services NSW)
- Other publicly available information about the community (ABS data).

This gives us the most up-to-date information about the Opportunity Hub.

7.3 How did we come up with these findings?

The evaluation team collected community views to answer the research questions. This involved looking at each conversation and identifying common themes and, in some cases, unique differences. The themes, and examples of what people told us, are presented in the findings – in text in italics, or as indented text.

7.4 Checking and confirming findings

SPRC evaluation team returned to community (4 May 2018 and 14 June 2018) to check our findings and recommendations reflect what the community told us. The draft report was circulated prior to the first meeting (4 May) and again with some changes for the second meeting (14 June). These meetings were opportunities for community representatives to tell us if we misunderstood anything, or if they agreed with what we had written. Feedback from both meetings has been incorporated into the final report, without compromising the independent findings.

8 References

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Appendix A Summary of report validation process

Date	Action	Comments
April 2018	Draft report and draft summary sent to Campbelltown	N/A.
3 May 2018	Draft presented to communities	The findings were presented to communities in Campbelltown. Suggested an additional meeting to ensure a second opportunity for local Aboriginal organisations and members of Aboriginal communities in Campbelltown to provide feedback on the report.
May/June	Revision to report (content)	Updated to reflect community feedback – including some language and text changes highlighted in blue. Some changes from external reviewers.
14 June 2018	Revised draft presented to communities (content)	Second validation meeting. Some minor language changes. Purpose to: • Confirm changes requested at community meetings • Approval for report to be published
15 June 2018	Updated and revised report sent for confirmation from community members involved in the evaluation	
26 June 2018	Approval for publication	
30 June 2018	Report to Aboriginal Affairs NSW	
15 August 2018	Presentation to the Minister	

Appendix B Examples of Opportunity Hub programs

Examples of programs delivered by the Campbelltown Opportunity Hub, reported Quarter end June 2017. Note this is a snapshot of activity and does not show participation in the entire program – only for the 3-month reporting period. This extract shows the number and diversity of programs run by the Opportunity Hub.

Program	Schools participating	Students Years 5-8	Students Years 9-10	Students Years 11-12
1. RAGE program – Students participate in activities which assist to manage their anger and stress and provide strategies to help them with positive ways of dealing with their anger.	3 government	36		
2. Introduction to culture. Gaining a brief understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal Culture, exploring both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands flags including the history and significance of each flag.	1 government	35		
3. Managing the bull – helping building resilience by understanding how a bully operates.	5 government	77		
4. Coaching young people for success Module 1 – helping to develop career aspirations and the process of setting goals	2 government	54		
5. Cultural awareness – through the medium of art. Students discuss the art of Aboriginal weaponry and painted ornamental	5 government	115		
6. Work Readiness – Participants engaged in The Step Up Program.	0 government	0		

Program	Schools participating	Students Years 5-8	Students Years 9-10	Students Years 11-12
7. Sista Speak 8 week program: A program designed for Aboriginal females to come together, learn and share. The program is designed to build confidence and self-esteem through knowledge.	5 government	44	22	
8. Tharawal Youth Group. Aboriginal young people attend weekly session to receive support with employment and cultural identity. The participants will attend the step up program which will assist them with interview skills, resume and cover letter development and confidence building. - 4 workshops facilitated	2 government	3	10	
9. Career Aspirations – Career wage game developed for primary students to develop career aspirations through looking at different career paths to identify interest for future aspirations.	1 government	27		
10. Traditional Indigenous Games – developing knowledge of how Aboriginal people used games to train their own skills	5 government	40		
11. Rock and Water – exploring self-control through physical activities that focus on using passive communication before aggression	2 government	25		
12. Mob Mapping: Students discovering their heritage	4 government	69		
13. Bro Speak – A program for Aboriginal males to develop skills about their culture and	0 government			

Program	Schools participating	Students Years 5-8	Students Years 9-10	Students Years 11-12
build connections while learning skills.				
14. Identity – Mental health and welfare, building awareness and engaging in support for depression and anxiety.	1 government	8		
15. Connecting to culture; Bush Tucker, Students learnt about traditional foods and how they were prepared, eaten and other uses for them.	3 government	36		
16. Graduation; Students celebrated the completion of the 10 week program and received certificates.	1 government	12		
17. Transition - developing skills around the transition to high school and learning what high school is all about	1 government	4		

For the same period, 310 Year 9-12 students developed a Career Plan linked to a learning plan, while 89 Year 5-8 students, 72 Year 9-10 students, and 55 Year 11-12 students received mentoring.

For the same period, 15 employers were providing mentoring support, 87 employers were providing work experience opportunities and 43 employers were providing other forms of support.

