

OCHRE Evaluation | Stage 1: Implementation and early outcomes

Illawarra-Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation Local Decision Making

Evaluation Plan

April 2018

*The research team from the Social Policy Research Centre acknowledges
the traditional custodians of the land we will be working on and
pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.*

Research Team

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The Social Policy Research Centre is based in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at UNSW Sydney. This report is an output of the *OCHRE* Evaluation, funded by Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

1 Introduction

The Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia (the research team) have been contracted by Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Department of Education, to conduct an evaluation of *OCHRE* including the Illawarra-Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation (IWAAC) – Local Decision Making (LDM). *OCHRE* is the community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs in NSW.

The evaluation will be based on the principles of decolonising research, consistent with the underlying philosophy of *OCHRE* to facilitate the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples in NSW. For more information on the approach see Section 3.1 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

This plan sets out how the first stage of the evaluation of the IWAAC LDM will be conducted. This data collection plan has been developed with and approved by IWAAC. For more information on this stage of the evaluation, see Section 5 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*. This plan identifies key stakeholders, what local community view as success and how it might be measured (where identified), method and timing of data collection.

2 About IWAAC

A number of Aboriginal communities applied to be part of the Local Decision Making initiative under *OCHRE*. As part of the initiative, communities agree priorities for community-based regional self-governance in the form of an Accord. IWAAC was selected to be part of Local Decision Making in December 2013.

Regional areas represented by IWAAC include the Local Government Areas of Wollongong, Kiama, Shellharbour and Wingecarribee. Close to 7,240 people who live in the region are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with 13% of this group being under 5 years old.

IWAAC entered the formal Accord negotiations in June 2017. The Accord has not yet been finalised.

More information can be found here <http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/ochre-a-continuing-conversation/about-the-communities-involved>.

3 Ethics and permissions

On 9 August 2016, ethics approval was received from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council Human Research Ethics Committee (AH&MRC HREC) for the *OCHRE* Evaluation. This was extended to cover IWAAC Local Decision Making in 2017. For further information, see Section 5.3.3 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

4 Gathering information

The core evaluation questions are outlined in Section 4.3 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

4.1 Focusing the evaluation through co-design

This plan is built from co-design conversations that occurred with IWAAC on 14 March 2018. For further information on co-design see Section 5.4.1 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

During the co-design process, the criteria against which IWAAC would assess success of Local Decision Making focused on:

- Government, NGOs and community knowing what LDM is and understanding their role in LDM
- Self-determination – ongoing communication and negotiation with government to bring about policy change for the benefit of Aboriginal people
- In the long-term, seeing changes in government policy to better meet the needs of community (and government in terms of resources) and changes in government and NGO services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal communities having control of policies and services which affect them.

4.2 Who will participate in the conversations

There are many different people and organisations who have been or are involved in implementing Local Decision Making in the Illawarra and Wingecarribee area. During co-design, IWAAC identified ten key stakeholders to have conversations with as part of this evaluation. The key stakeholders are from the following groups:

- Representatives of the local Aboriginal communities through their position on IWAAC
- Local partners and service providers
- Other stakeholders suggested by the ten stakeholders.

Note that many NSW Government representatives and the independent facility and expert advisor to the negotiation of the Accords have already been interviewed as part of the Accords process evaluation.

The evaluation team has already met with most stakeholders face to face and it was agreed during co-design that more detailed conversations one-to-one can occur by telephone. IWAAC has provided contact details of ten key stakeholders (eight individuals and two organisations) and each will be contacted and invited to participate.

During co-design, IWAAC said not to talk to Aboriginal community members at this stage as they do not know enough about LDM. IWAAC sees the importance of talking to community members, but it first needs to do some work about communicating what LDM is. IWAAC is concerned that without

talking to the community at this point, this is an internal evaluation. However, IWAAC advises that the range of stakeholders identified should stop this being the case.

4.3 Collecting data

Data will be collected by an Aboriginal researcher from SPRC between April and first week of May 2018. As agreed with IWAAC during co-design, these will be telephone interviews. The participant information statement and consent forms will be provided to all interested persons to inform their decision to take part.

Further information on data collection can be found in Section 5.4.2 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*.

4.4 Analysis of data collected and validation of findings

The overall analysis approach is detailed in Section 5.4.3 of the *OCHRE Evaluation Plan: Overview and Stage 1*. Data that will be analysed include data collected in the community (through conversations with IWAAC as a group during co-design, and individual conversations by phone), LDM policy, procedures and guidelines, any program monitoring data, and other administrative data. Analysis will be undertaken over the period April-May 2018.

Once findings are available, the SPRC researcher will meet with IWAAC to validate findings and discuss any recommendations that the Aboriginal community consider appropriate. This is expected to occur in May 2018.

4.5 Reporting findings

The research team will deliver the final report to IWAAC at the subsequent IWAAC meeting and seek their permission to share their report with the NSW Government. Note that SPRC must provide an embargoed copy of the report to Aboriginal Affairs NSW to meet the terms of their contract.