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OCHRE Review Report assesses Aboriginal programs

The NSW Ombudsman, Michael Barnes, today tabled the *OCHRE Review Report* in Parliament. OCHRE – Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment – is the NSW Government’s plan for Aboriginal Affairs, which commenced on 5 April 2013.

The intent of OCHRE is to address the challenges facing Aboriginal communities, issues to be addressed, and what else is needed to drive better cultural, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW. The *OCHRE Review Report* provides a comprehensive assessment of the OCHRE programs over the past five years.

“This report is the work of Danny Lester and his team. Mr Lester, an Aboriginal man respected across business and government has extensive connections with Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal communities,” Mr Barnes said.

“His extensive field work, which has informed the report, means the assessments in the report are based on first hand evidence as to how the OCHRE programs are impacting the lives of Aboriginal people.

The government officials who administer the programs, the private providers involved in service delivery, and the Aboriginal leaders in the regional and remote communities respect Mr Lester’s judgement because he has gathered the necessary data, and seen how these policies play out on the ground,” Mr Barnes said.

The *OCHRE Review Report* follows on from our 2016 special report to Parliament, *Fostering economic development for Aboriginal people in NSW*.

“We have also published our progressive observations about the implementation of OCHRE in four NSW Ombudsman annual reports.

“In undertaking this review we have applied a methodology that we have used consistently across all the initiatives. This included conducting 77 visits to 35 different Aboriginal communities across NSW over five years.

“Most importantly, the most valuable source of both evidence and innovative solutions came from Aboriginal people living in locations where OCHRE initiatives were operating, who generously gave us their time and insights during our visits to their communities”, said Mr Barnes.

The NSW Government has announced its intention to review OCHRE next year.

“We have made 69 recommendations in this report with the intention of informing the future of OCHRE.

“The recommendations are aimed at strengthening the accountability, transparency, delivery and impact of each initiative, and the governance structures for the overall plan”, said Mr Barnes.

The [report](#) is available on the NSW Ombudsman’s website.

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