



# OCHRE Review Report Recommendations

## **OCHRE Review Report – Recommendations**

### **Chapter 2: The evaluation of OCHRE**

1. The Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Treasury should jointly develop, in collaboration with OCHRE implementing agencies, an overarching outcomes and reporting framework for all OCHRE initiatives.

### **Chapter 3: Healing**

2. In partnership with the Healing Foundation, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should develop a state-wide healing framework, having regard to the outcomes of the regional healing forums held in 2017-2018 and the observations and recommendations in this chapter. In developing the strategy, consideration should be given to:
  - a. funding the Healing Foundation to support initiatives that provide education to Aboriginal communities about trauma, its impacts, and strategies and services that can assist with healing and recovery
  - b. supporting the Aboriginal community-controlled organisation sector to build its capacity to develop models of trauma-informed practice and deliver more services to Aboriginal people, including by enhancing the role and funding of the Education Centre Against Violence to support this work
  - c. articulating relevant whole-of-government commitments and clarifying the obligation on public sector agencies to adopt healing and trauma informed approaches
  - d. developing a comprehensive cultural capabilities framework for NSW public sector employees, which applies from recruitment onwards and is supported by ongoing training and professional development delivered by the Education Centre Against Violence
  - e. ensuring that place-based approaches to service planning and delivery address the impact of intergenerational trauma, including through the establishment of healing places
  - f. supporting ongoing opportunities for truth-telling by and as determined by Aboriginal communities
  - g. building the evidence base for healing by investing in the evaluation, co-designed with Aboriginal people, of relevant programs, policies and initiatives, and in doing so, giving consideration to:
    - i. the cost-benefit analysis of the Murri School healing program by Deloitte Economics
    - ii. the Healing Foundation's forthcoming discussion paper on policy and practice issues related to addressing intergenerational trauma
    - iii. closer monitoring of the delivery and impact of healing and wellbeing initiatives in Connected Communities schools (Chapter 9)
    - iv. information contained in the online healing portal hosted by HealthInfoNet.
3. The Department of Premier and Cabinet should work with Aboriginal Affairs and relevant Regional Leadership Executive groups to develop local plans for assisting 'high-need' communities to implement the healing priorities they identified at the regional healing forums in 2017 and 2018.

### **Chapter 4: Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests**

4. The Department of Education should:
  - a. consider establishing a salary structure for Nest Teachers which recognises the different levels of experience and skill brought to the role by individuals
  - b. clarify its policy on the teaching of Aboriginal languages to students 'on Country' and provide appropriate guidance about this issue in the Language and Culture Nests Guidelines



- c. consider what opportunities could be leveraged to promote a collaborative approach by the government and non-government education sectors to Aboriginal language teaching in schools and pre-schools
  - d. consider, in consultation with the NSW AECG Inc. and Department of Communities and Justice (Youth Justice), what resources and infrastructure are needed to allow the North West Wiradjuri and Gumbaynggirr Nests to engage with juvenile justice centres in their communities, if the relevant Local Reference Groups consider this a priority.
5. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should ensure that language teaching workforce capacity is considered in the strategic plan developed to guide the work of the new Aboriginal Languages Trust.
6. The Department of Education should work with the NSW AECG Inc. to:
  - a. ensure that the changes to the employment of Nest Tutors, including the rationale and operational implications, are communicated to Nest stakeholders, for example, Local Reference Groups, Nest Teachers and Principals
  - b. monitor whether the new employment arrangements for Nest Tutors effectively address the issues discussed in this chapter that are impacting on the language tutor workforce.
7. The Department of Education should collaborate with the NSW AECG Inc. to:
  - a. provide support for regular professional learning workshops for Nest Teachers and Tutors
  - b. require schools that participate in the Nests to access the AECG's *Connecting to Country* immersion program, or another appropriate cultural awareness program, and monitor compliance with this requirement.
8. The Department of Education, in consultation with the NSW AECG Inc. and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs), should:
  - a. clarify who is responsible for providing the human and financial resources needed to support a functioning and sustainable Keeping Place in each Nest and reflect this advice in the Language and Culture Nest Guidelines
  - b. ensure that, as part of any future funding to extend or expand Language and Culture Nests, consideration is given to the different characteristics and preferences of communities in relation to the establishment and maintenance of Keeping Places
  - c. give consideration to developing a remuneration package for Elders and other community members who provide expert endorsement of language and culture content and teachers for schools, whether in Nest locations or elsewhere.
9. The Department of Education should:
  - a. ensure the Language and Culture Nest Guidelines include clear guidance about the initiative's scope and funding for community-based (as opposed to school-based) language and culture activities, including whether Nest Teachers can be paid for these activities
  - b. ensure the State-wide Steering Committee for Language and Culture Nests develops a plan for monitoring the Nests' engagement with communities.
10. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs), in consultation with the Department of Education and the AECG, should consider whether the Nests require additional funding/resources to meet the demand for community access to language and culture activities and if appropriate, develop a business case for consideration by the NSW Government.
11. The Department of Education and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should:
  - a. provide advice about the funding status of the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests, including whether additional funding/resources will be provided in response to the capacity issues raised in the SPRC's Stage 1 evaluation reports and this chapter

- b. ensure that prior to any expansion of Nests to other locations, an adequate assessment of community capacity, including a sufficient number of language speakers, informs the selection process – with consideration given to a staged approach to implementation if appropriate
  - c. consider alternative strategies for supporting the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in locations where the establishment of a Nest is not currently viable.
12. The Department of Education should:
- a. review the operational needs of the Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate in relation to effectively leading and monitoring the Nest initiative and if necessary, take steps to enhance the Aboriginal Education and Communities Directorate’s capacity
  - b. in consultation with the AECG, ensure that the State-wide Steering Committee includes appropriate representation by key stakeholders, including (but not limited to) Aboriginal Affairs, NESAs and TAFE and identify ways of strengthening the linkages between the Steering Committee, Local Reference Groups and other local Nest stakeholders
  - c. review and enhance the *Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest Guidelines*, having regard to the observations in this chapter about the need to provide greater clarity about a range of issues
  - d. in consultation with the NSW AECG Inc. and having regard to success measures identified by Local Reference Groups, establish a set of performance indicators for monitoring and reporting on the Nest initiative’s progress and a systematic plan for collecting the required quantitative and qualitative data needed to facilitate this.
13. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should:
- a. consider the merits of preparing a business case for consideration of additional funding of language and culture centres and other Aboriginal community organisations that provide practical support for the implementation of Nests
  - b. liaise with the Commonwealth Department of Communication and Arts to identify ways of ensuring ensure closer alignment and coordination of key Commonwealth and state government initiatives to support Aboriginal language revitalisation.
14. The Department of Education should ensure Nest Teachers are supported to undertake their role as members of the Languages Trust Advisory Group.

## Chapter 5: Local Decision Making

15. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs NSW) should:
- a. enhance the ‘Accord readiness’ self-assessment process by requiring each agency with responsibility for a priority area to individually confirm that issues for negotiation fall within its scope; consider and assess its readiness; and seek feedback on this assessment from the relevant Alliance
  - b. work with Alliances that have not yet struck Accords to identify and address their capacity-building needs; and ensure that Accords include details about governance mechanisms and capacity building support.
16. The Department of Premier and Cabinet should ensure that:
- a. agencies improve their readiness for outstanding Accord negotiations, and have robust internal governance arrangements in place to effectively negotiate Accords in a timely fashion
  - b. the authorising environment established to negotiate Accords (governance arrangements driven by senior executives, including the Executive Sponsor role) is maintained to drive Accord delivery and monitor results.
17. The Department of Premier and Cabinet and NSW Treasury should, in partnership with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances (NCARA), examine how service needs, capacity and outcomes can be mapped at a local community level within LDM regions, and implement the agreed approach as a matter of priority. This work should involve examining approaches such as

the Maranguka Just Reinvestment project in Bourke and the Inner Sydney Empowered Communities joint decision-making process for federal funding.

18. The Department of Premier and Cabinet and NSW Treasury should:
  - a. establish mechanisms to enable Alliances to share decision-making with agencies about regional service planning and commissioning once Accords are struck
  - b. ensure agencies work jointly with community leaders to 'co-design' key performance indicators for service contracts – taking account of the observations in this chapter.
19. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs NSW) should:
  - a. progress the development of enhanced data collection and analytics systems to better capture outcomes from Accords and the Local Decision Making initiative as a whole
  - b. ensure that line agencies are capturing and tracking outcomes data in relation to:
    - i. government and funded service delivery at the regional level in the portfolios/sectors that Alliances identify as important
    - ii. how Alliances are being engaged for advice on policies and services, and how policies and services have changed (or not) as a result
  - c. provide regular reports on the outcomes achieved through Local Decision Making to Alliances to their local communities and the NSW Parliament.
20. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs NSW) should:
  - a. develop a business case for adequate funding for Alliances and the Local Decision Making initiative over the full forward estimates, taking into account comparative programs and experience to date in estimating the required investment
  - b. provide specific guidance and relevant practical examples to Regional Alliances about the NSW Government's expectations relating to probity standards for individual representatives.
21. The Department of Premier and Cabinet should consider renaming the Local Decision Making initiative to reduce confusion about the level at which decision-making with Aboriginal communities is intended.
22. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs NSW) should ensure that other mechanisms are in place and promoted to Aboriginal community leaders to engage directly with the NSW Government about local matters that are not suitable to be addressed through Accords or the LDM initiative, and receive an appropriate response.
23. The Department of Premier and Cabinet and relevant agencies should expedite work to implement service redesign, devolved budgetary control, and supporting legislation, having regard to the observations in Chapter 5.

#### **Chapter 6: OCHRE Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework**

24. The NSW Public Service Commission should consider, as part of implementing the next sector-wide *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*:
  - a. providing guidance to agencies about encouraging funded services to increase their employment of Aboriginal staff
  - b. supporting agencies to target Aboriginal employment strategies to locations with high unemployment and/or strong demand from Aboriginal people for government services but a shortage of staff to deliver them
  - c. working with the Office of Local Government and sector representatives to support the adoption of Aboriginal employment strategies by local government.
25. NSW Treasury, in coordinating the implementation of the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy (APP) and Aboriginal Participation in Construction (APIC) policy, should:
  - a. effectively track Aboriginal participation outcomes
  - b. provide clear guidance to agencies, including practical case studies, to encourage consistent application of the policies

- c. examine the use of incentives and consequences by agencies where targets for Aboriginal participation are exceeded or not met by contractors, and promote these mechanisms to other agencies where compliance or outcomes are poor
  - d. with relevant agencies (including Education), assess what capability support is required to facilitate the increased participation of Aboriginal people and businesses in jobs and supplier contracts generated through the APP and APIC
  - e. ensure agencies publish and adhere to all aspects of their Aboriginal Participation Strategies required under the APP
  - f. with relevant federal government agencies, strengthen the coordination of Aboriginal procurement policies in NSW, including by exploring mechanisms for sharing data about the performance of contractors in meeting relevant targets
  - g. develop, with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) and relevant Aboriginal stakeholders, a consistent and robust process to confirm Aboriginal identity for the application of the Aboriginal procurement policies, and ensure its implementation by agencies and contractors.
26. Treasury should develop targets and strategies to achieve the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* commitment to address barriers to Aboriginal employment in NSW.
  27. The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should include in the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* the targets within the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy; targets for achieving Aboriginal employment and supplier contract outcomes through regional Industry Based Agreements; and targets within the NSW public sector *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*.
  28. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should work with human services agencies and Aboriginal leaders to identify additional strategies to support Aboriginal people to complete apprenticeships and traineeships.
  29. The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) and the NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should develop and include in the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework*:
    - a. a target for improving the employment outcomes for Aboriginal apprentices and trainees, and related strategies to achieve this, including stronger partnerships and collaborative planning with Aboriginal leaders, the vocational education and training sector, and industry representatives to target training to future industry need
    - b. a target for improving attendance at quality early childhood education, and related strategies to achieve this, particularly in remote areas and high needs locations.
  30. The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment should develop with Aboriginal stakeholders, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, periodic reports to the Economic Development Committee about:
    - a. the implementation and outcomes of strategies within regional and district plans to promote Aboriginal economic aspirations
    - b. the periodic reports referred to in recommendations should feed into the related reporting by the Economic Development Committee in connection with the development of the Economic Blueprint.
  31. The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should, in consultation with Treasury, clarify the Aboriginal enterprises target in the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework*, and ensure appropriate strategies are in place to achieve the outcomes sought through the provision of support services.
  32. NSW Treasury should:
    - a. develop and publish an annual 'state of the NSW Aboriginal business sector' profile, based on relevant data and advice from the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and other sector representatives

- b. ensure business advisory programs and services are culturally competent and well connected to their Aboriginal-specific counterparts, and informed by regular advice from Aboriginal business sector representatives
  - c. track the NSW Aboriginal business sector's support needs, capacity and diversity, and develop and implement supports to meet the needs of the NSW Aboriginal business sector where existing state/federal government and/or market options are insufficient.
33. The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) and NSW Department of Communities and Justice should:
- a. retain the social housing target in the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework*, and test new strategies in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders to enhance the number of positive exits
  - b. consider adding a target focused on supporting Aboriginal home ownership beyond the social housing context in the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework*.
34. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Corrections) should:
- a. pilot a model to connect Aboriginal inmates to pre-release targeted skills training and post-release wrap-around support accompanying employment on government infrastructure projects
  - b. expand the approach if positive outcomes result from the pilot.
35. NSW Treasury and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should ensure the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Outcomes Framework* captures all relevant outcome domains are actively used by agencies to drive policy development, commissioning and funding decisions
36. NSW Treasury, as chair of the Economic Development Committee, should request that the committee:
- a. examine the effectiveness of the strategies being used by implementing agencies to pursue the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* targets, as well as the outcomes being achieved
  - b. consider how each *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* target and related strategies are fostering economic inclusion for specific cohorts including:
    - i. Aboriginal people with disability
    - ii. current and former detainees/inmates in prison
    - iii. people with low levels of financial literacy and financially excluded communities
  - c. directs implementing agencies to better address the needs of these cohorts where necessary; and develops new *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* targets focused on the economic inclusion of these and other vulnerable cohorts where appropriate
  - d. establishes a process of regular review for the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework*.
37. The NSW Government should establish an advisory board comprising senior Aboriginal leaders, public sector executives and private sector experts, to provide strategic advice to relevant Ministers on the implementation of the *Aboriginal Economic Prosperity Framework* and related social impact investment.

## Chapter 7: Solution Brokerage

38. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should develop and implement a targeted and multifaceted communication strategy for Solution Brokerage that includes:
- a. engaging with Aboriginal community governance structures (including Regional Alliances), to encourage Aboriginal communities to bring forward issues for Solution Brokerage
  - b. promoting Solution Brokerage to key local, state and federal government agencies to encourage awareness of, and support for future engagement with the initiative.

39. Having regard to the observations in this chapter, the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should amend the Solution Brokerage Framework to strengthen the initiative's governance arrangements by including the following:
  - a. more meaningful selection criteria for Solution Brokerage which address the significance and impact of issues on Aboriginal communities, and can accommodate flexible responses
  - b. the feedback (including timeframes) and alternative resolution process that will apply when a nominated issue is assessed as not suitable for Solution Brokerage
  - c. a requirement that when an issue is declared for Solution Brokerage, in consultation with the relevant line agency, it will nominate an appropriately senior officer in charge, together with a suitably senior back up delegate, from within that agency
  - d. clear requirements for detailed reporting against approved milestones and to a suitably authoritative body (such as the Secretaries Board).
40. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should seek global funding for Solution Brokerage to enable resources to be provided to implementing agencies when they are responsible for leading a Solution Brokerage project and cannot meet resourcing requirements from within their own or another agency's existing budget allocations.
41. The Department of Premier and Cabinet should require lead agencies to:
  - a. provide Solution Brokerage response plans, which include the composition of project teams and sustainability measures, to the Secretaries Board for approval
  - b. require agencies to report on the implementation of individual Solution Brokerage projects, at significant milestones, to the Secretaries Board
  - c. jointly declare issues, with Aboriginal Affairs, for Solution Brokerage.
42. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs) should:
  - a. seek advice from NCARA and/or individual Regional Alliances about where Solution Brokerage can be used to resolve multi-agency issues and how Regional Alliances can best contribute to Solution Brokerage projects
  - b. monitor and report to the Secretaries Board on the overall progress of Solution Brokerage, including analysing and communicating to agencies the critical factors for success, and incorporate these into guidance documents
  - c. enhance public reporting about the implementation of, and outcomes achieved through, Solution Brokerage, including through providing communities with regular feedback about performance and outcomes relating to projects involving their community
  - d. ensure that Solution Brokerage is included in the ongoing independent evaluation of OCHRE.

## **Chapter 8: Opportunity Hubs**

43. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should:
  - a. use the strategies suggested in section 8.3.1 to encourage government and non-government schools to take up the services provided by the new Liverpool Hub (and any further Hubs established in future)
  - b. continue to work with Hubs to support the establishment of local governance models that involve government and non-government schools and regional executives from both sectors in service mapping and planning
  - c. provide guidance to Hubs and schools about the factors it will consider when assessing the merits of any request to include additional schools or locations within a Hub's Service Area.
44. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should:
  - a. monitor compliance with the requirement for Hub providers to coordinate services, provide links and avoid duplication of existing programs, particularly in relation to culture and wellbeing activities



- b. promptly finalise arrangements to ensure that Hubs and government and non-government schools in Hub Service Areas are consistently developing coordinated learning and career plans for students engaged with a Hub, and that data about these plans and related outcomes are captured and monitored accordingly
  - c. continue to ensure that Hubs can work with Aboriginal young people who have left school without finishing their studies, as well as those who have completed their studies in the past 12 months, and closely monitor the requirement for Hubs to focus their efforts on emphasising outcomes for these young people
  - d. support Hubs to focus on servicing highly disengaged Aboriginal students and other students with complex needs by ensuring that at a local/regional level, appropriate arrangements, including partnerships with schools, OOHC agencies, juvenile justice centres and juvenile justice community officers are in place to help Hubs to identify, access and provide these students with coordinated services.
45. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should:
- a. ensure Hubs are engaging with a range of Aboriginal, community and government organisations in their Service Areas to increase their knowledge of relevant local services and resources available to Aboriginal students
  - b. actively support and monitor Hubs' efforts to build partnerships with local employers, training and further education providers to help generate or identify employment, training and work experience opportunities for Aboriginal students
  - c. ensure that data about the number and outcomes of each Hub's partnerships with employers, training and further education providers is collected, monitored and reported on, including data about the number of opportunities 'banked' by each Hub and the number of 'banked' opportunities resulting in outcomes for young people.
46. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should:
- a. in partnership with Infrastructure NSW, provide Hubs with ongoing strategic support to effectively leverage regional and state-wide infrastructure investments and industry initiatives that can provide employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal students
  - b. support Hubs by brokering introductions to key industry associations and stakeholders; exploring and brokering options for corporate partnerships; and connecting Hubs with Aboriginal employment initiatives developed by NSW and federal public sector agencies
  - c. ensure that Hubs are actively identifying and helping Aboriginal school leavers to apply for Jobs of Tomorrow scholarships, and that associated data including the outcomes of applications are collected, monitored and reported.
47. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should:
- a. establish governance arrangements that bring together appropriately senior representatives from the relevant business units of the Department of Education, non-government school sector, the Department of Industry, Planning and Environment, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs), with Hub providers, to collectively plan and drive a targeted and coordinated strategic framework
  - b. establish clear escalation and resolution processes for Hubs and schools at a local and strategic level
  - c. once the new strategic governance and contractual arrangements have been settled, develop, in partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Aboriginal Affairs), an overarching strategy and program guidelines for Opportunity Hubs, including (but not limited to) the contract management arrangements that will be used by the Department of Education and clear information about how Hubs' compliance with their Services Agreement will be assessed.
48. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should consider the substantial benefits of maintaining a decentralised approach to the contract management arrangements for

Opportunity Hubs and how Education's regional structure can be utilised to facilitate this, while ensuring that clear lines of reporting to and from the regions and head office are established.

49. Having regard to the observations contained in Chapter 8 (especially section 8.3.5), the NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW), as part of developing its digital platform for recording data and measuring outcomes for Aboriginal training programs (including Opportunity Hubs), should:
  - a. consider whether the key outcomes for Opportunity Hubs are sufficiently defined and make adjustments as required
  - b. consider whether the current key performance indicators for Opportunity Hubs strike the appropriate balance between Hubs providing adequate coverage of Service Areas and targeting the highest need schools and students
  - c. settle baseline data to measure progress (by individual Hubs and the Hubs initiative overall) against the key performance indicators for Opportunity Hubs and the necessary arrangements to access this data
  - d. settle the sources of data that will be used to monitor school engagement and post-school outcomes for students engaged with Hubs and the necessary arrangements to access this data
  - e. ensure that the digital platform is simple and practical for Hubs to use and contains clear definitions of key data terms
  - f. ensure that the student-level data Hubs are required to collect can be disaggregated (at a minimum) by gender and Aboriginality.
50. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) should annually monitor the continuing appropriateness of the key performance indicators and make relevant adjustments as data trends become clearer.
51. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) and Aboriginal Affairs NSW should:
  - a. having regard to the refreshed Closing the Gap strategy, implement the SPRC's recommendation in relation to building long-term outcome indicators into planning and reporting for Opportunity Hubs
  - b. on an annual basis, publicly report outcomes data for individual Hubs and the overall initiative in a consistent way that is aligned with the key performance indicators for Opportunity Hubs.
52. The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW), in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs NSW, should:
  - a. communicate information about successful Hub practices to other schools, particularly those participating in the Connected Communities strategy, so that these practices may be adopted more broadly
  - b. as part of the OCHRE refresh process, give specific consideration to the further steps that are needed to enable Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to operate Opportunity Hubs in future.

## Chapter 9: Connected Communities

53. The NSW Department of Education should consider ways to develop and extend the culture of collegiate leadership that has benefited Connected Communities to reach principals of schools in other high-need Aboriginal communities, and conversely, connect other schools delivering innovative approaches that have achieved success, with Connected Communities schools to create a community of practice.
54. The NSW Department of Education should:
  - a. consider further enhancing its *Rural and Remote Human Resources Strategy* to offer customised incentive packages that involve enhanced support to meet the relocation and adjustment needs of the partners and children of teachers

- b. monitor the success of the *Rural and Remote Human Resources Strategy*, particularly in relation to which aspects of the strategy appear to lead to improved teacher retention at Connected Communities and other remote schools, and adapt it as necessary.
55. The Department of Education should:
  - a. identify factors contributing to particularly successful SRGs and whether and how these factors could be encouraged in other locations
  - b. in consultation with the NSW AECG and school principals, promote the School Reference Group model to other schools in high-need communities with a significant Aboriginal student population
  - c. consider expanding the Senior Leader/Leader Community Engagement role to other targeted schools in high-need communities with a significant Aboriginal student population, having regard to additional strategies needed to strengthen and promote school and community partnerships in these locations.
56. The NSW Department of Education should promote the use of Personalised Learning Pathways (PLPs) at Connected Communities schools and ensure that schools have quality assurance mechanisms in place to track the development of PLPs and monitor their implementation.
57. The NSW Department of Education should consider ways to further increase the teaching of Aboriginal language and content at Connected Communities schools, having regard to the circumstances of individual schools and the professional learning needs of teachers.
58. The NSW Department of Education should:
  - a. ensure the attendance, suspension and educational outcomes of students participating in specific healing and wellbeing initiatives at Connected Communities schools is tracked to help build an evidence base for what is working well and providing 'value for money'
  - b. provide teachers at Connected Communities schools with practical, context-specific training about the impacts of trauma on children and young people; the link between trauma and challenging behaviours; and strategies for engaging effectively with students affected by trauma.
59. The NSW Department of Education should:
  - a. explore how the Instructional Leader model can be extended to all Connected Communities schools, and assess whether participating students are engaging more effectively in school and getting better results
  - b. consider opportunities to support targeted research, similar to the Seeding success for Aboriginal primary students collaborative research project between the University of Western Sydney, the Department of Education and the NSW AECG, to identify strategies that promote improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal secondary students.
60. The NSW Department of Education should continue to closely monitor NAPLAN literacy and numeracy outcomes for students at Connected Communities schools using the methods adopted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation as part of its overall evaluation of Connected Communities.
61. The Department of Education should:
  - a. continue to strengthen Connected Communities' focus on facilitating school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and vocational training aligned with local opportunities
  - b. liaise with Training Services NSW about the potential for expanding the Opportunity Hubs model to build the capacity of other Connected Communities schools to support students' post-school transition.
62. The Department of Education should:
  - a. continue to closely monitor attendance data for Connected Communities schools, including trends and variations within and between participating schools

- b. provide advice about whether it has undertaken work to review the factors contributing to improved Aboriginal student attendance rates achieved by some Connected Communities schools, and other schools with significant Aboriginal enrolments, with a view to identifying effective strategies that could be trialled elsewhere.
63. The NSW Department of Education should:
- a. review the key deliverables for the Connected Communities strategy, in consultation with the NSW AECG, having regard to the CESE's final evaluation report and the observations in this chapter
  - b. require each Connected Communities school to identify specific, measurable indicators against each deliverable, and report their progress against these indicators via existing performance monitoring processes
  - c. consider extending the key deliverables to other public schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students given how beneficial they have reportedly been for the Connected Communities Executive Principals.
64. The NSW Department of Education should:
- a. identify the factors influencing the successful retention of Executive Principals at three schools and whether and how these factors might be replicated to encourage leader retention at other schools
  - b. consider further options for attracting and retaining Executive Principals to Connected Communities schools, having regard to the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review of Regional, Rural and Remote Education (2018)
  - c. review its capacity to recognise and reward principals of schools who are not participating in Connected Communities, but who are leading schools with substantial numbers of Aboriginal students or students who are living in low socio-economic locations, and with reference to measurable outcomes, are making a strong and sustained contribution to improving educational outcomes for these cohorts.
65. The Department of Education should resume publication of an annual report about Aboriginal students in NSW public schools, including data (disaggregated by grade, region and school) which shows:
- a. literacy and numeracy attainment
  - b. retention rates
  - c. enrolment numbers and rates
  - d. attendance rates and levels
  - e. suspension rates
  - f. the number of students who have been suspended and the number of suspensions for each student during each year
  - g. the number of students who missed 30 or more days of school each year, together with a breakdown of the reasons for their absence.
66. The Department of Education should:
- a. consider amending the key deliverables for Connected Communities to include a specific reference to the objective of reducing exclusionary suspensions
  - b. review the strategies that have been used at the Connected Communities (and comparable non-Connected Communities) schools which have achieved success in reducing suspension rates, with a view to identifying opportunities to replicate good practice in other schools
  - c. as part of its current suspensions review, consider how to support schools, particularly in high-need Aboriginal communities, to provide 'in-school' suspension alternatives tailored to local needs
  - d. actively monitor data about the suspension of students with disability at Connected Communities schools and take steps to identify and address the reasons for rate variations between schools.



67. The Department of Education should:
- a. prioritise completing data migration work with FACS to facilitate accurate identification by Education of children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC)
  - b. having regard to models in other jurisdictions, including Victoria, consider how existing resources, including OOHC Teachers, school counsellors/psychologists and Networked Service Centres, can be better utilised to address the underlying causes of poor attendance by individual children in OOHC, in collaboration with FACS and OOHC service providers
  - c. provide advice about how it will ensure the educational outcomes (including attendance and suspensions) of children and young people in OOHC are closely tracked, both locally by schools and centrally by Education.
68. The Department of Education should:
- a. ensure the implementation of its new Disability Strategy includes an appropriate focus on Connected Communities schools. In particular, Education should:
    - i. audit the professional learning needs of teachers at Connected Communities schools in relation to trauma-informed practice and effective behaviour management, and prioritise the roll-out of appropriate training accordingly
    - ii. review the adequacy of specialist support classes at Connected Communities schools.
  - b. provide advice about how it will ensure the educational outcomes (including attendance and suspensions) of children and young people with disability are closely tracked, both locally by schools and centrally by Education.
69. The Department of Education should work closely with the Stronger Communities Investment Unit in relation to:
- a. defining a clear role for Connected Communities schools as part of the Stronger Communities Investment Unit system transformation work
  - b. developing a student wellbeing data template for systemically capturing the attendance and suspension patterns for individual students, combined with data about their disability and/or OOHC status
  - c. establishing governance processes at a local community level to ensure that student wellbeing information of the type described in recommendation 69(b) is systematically tracked and shared with local government agencies and NGOs in Connected Communities school locations; and analysed alongside key child protection, health, and policing data, to develop a collective picture of those vulnerable students (and their families) most in need of support.

