

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Dharawal Country,

1.00pm, 9 March 2021, Campbelltown (Western Sydney), Session 2

Number of participants: 8

Key points raised

Please note, this is a summary of the discussion and the views and opinions expressed by participants in consultations sessions. It is not intended to be an exhaustive summary of all points raised, but draws out the key points.

The afternoon session was attended by 8 participants who were welcomed to country by Aunty Glenda Chalker. Key points discussed are summarised below.

There was a general discussion on the consultation process:

- The importance of communicating to as many people as possible was discussed so that there can be more engagement with the process.
- A suggestion was put forward about using social media pages that aren't linked to Government, given a historical distrust of government by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as to local networks such as LALCs, AMSs and the Higher Education Network.
- Participants emphasised the need for the Indigenous Voice to be listened to in order to work well.
- One participant felt that there was a need for an evaluation on the effectiveness for the Indigenous Voice, once established.

Discussion around the Local and Regional Voice proposal included:

- Participants discussed what a 'local' area would be that would fit into a larger region. One participant expressed concerns about large regions that lump people in together as one homogenous group. It was commented that NSW is not a homogenous group. It was clarified that local people would nominate representatives for regional panels.
- There was a discussion on how representatives for Local and Regional Voices could be chosen and if it would be based on local elections.
- A number of participants felt that regions should not be too big and that connections were needed for areas to be put together. For example, the Macarthur region could be a Local and Regional Voice (which would include Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and surrounding areas). Kinship and cultural ties were discussed as important, and distinct from links created by government systems.
- The issues of identity and eligibility were discussed, including who would determine if a person is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and the challenges posed by lateral violence in communities.
- There was an acknowledgement that people who don't belong to organisations need to have their voices heard as well.



- One participant felt the voice represents a chance for unity as there is a lot of division in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.
- One participant favoured the flexibility of the approach and noted that it provided an avenue for contextualised healing and represented a positive change for communities.
- There was a consensus that principles of inclusive participation and non-duplication were crucial.
- Some participants felt it would be challenging to come together as different communities have developed differently and have different structures.
- Participants felt that outcomes need to be clearly communicated and easy to find, for example a community report card. There was a general view that while much work is ahead, this is an important opportunity that needs to be acted on. It was noted that from the older generation's point of view action on it was needed now, so it can be sustained into the future and younger generation can benefit. One participant noted the proposal was similar to cultural heritage reforms they have been working on.
- There was a question on what the financial commitment of the Government is towards this process and the discussion about the importance of adequate resourcing.
- Participants supported the principle of data and evidence-based decision making.

Discussion on the National Voice proposal included:

- One participant felt that National Voice members should come from Local and Regional Voices, and there was some discussion on how LRVs would be decided. The idea of an expression of interest process was proposed by one participant, with community to have a say how local members are selected and who represents them on the national level. This would help to determine if their motive for wanting to be on the National Voice is correct.
- Existing structures such as CAP and NCARA were discussed. It was stated that additional representatives from outside these networks were needed (eg youth).
- There was support for gender balance, and a clarification that it would be guaranteed for the National Voice membership.
- There was a question on term lengths of National Voice members and it was clarification staggered terms of varying length are currently proposed.
- Participants stressed the importance of youth representation.
- Some participants felt that an advisory body was not enough as the Government would not take the advice.
- Some participants were concerned that people of influence with agendas would be in the roles, but other highly qualified people might stay silent.

Other issues raised included:

- Some participants were concerned about the voices that work against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including non-Indigenous organisations and business that profit off Indigenous Australians.
- One participant felt that it was important to retain ideas as the intellectual property of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Some participants felt that there needed to be greater accountability for services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are not performing and not delivering outcomes.