

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

**Dharug Country,**

**2.00pm, 10 March 2021, Mt Druitt (Western Sydney), Session 3**

**Number of participants: 14**

## 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 14 participants and Professor Tom Calma AO gave an acknowledgement of country. Key points discussed are summarised below.

General discussion included:

- There was an acknowledgement that the Mt Druitt community is very fragmented.
- There were queries about how co-design members were chosen, and why consultation is occurring if the proposals have already been developed. These issues were clarified, including that proposals are not yet finalised and consultation is a genuine opportunity to inform co-design members about communities' views so they can be reflected in final proposals.
- There was a discussion about how to best reach people to advertise session and acknowledgement that some people don't have access to a computer or the internet.
- Some concerns were raised about government being reluctant to listen to Indigenous Australians.
- There was a view that it will take a long time to come together for a common cause.
- There was also a suggestion of doing a pilot of the Indigenous Voice to see if it would work.

Discussion about the Local and Regional Voice proposal included:

- One participant commented that everything needs to be working at the local level in order for it to feed up into the regional and national levels. They also felt there needed to be healing first.
- The thinking behind the 25-35 regions range was clarified, including learnings from ATSIC, and how smaller areas/regions could come together to form a larger one.
- One participant expressed a sense of optimism stressing it was critical to engage in a dialogue. The community knew the issues and it was important for people to help design solutions in collaboration with governments. The need for local people to start talking to each other and importance of communication and connections within communities were also acknowledged. This would need to include leaving egos and individual or organizational agendas at the door, with the Indigenous Voice being a potential platform for healing, better outcomes and positive change for future generations' sakes.
- The need for resourcing of local and regional voices was emphasised, to support bringing people together.
- A view was expressed that young people are important at all levels of the voice, and there is need for succession planning.



- The land council model was brought up, with some participants expressing concerns with the model due to not being recognised by land councils.
- Participants stressed the need for this to be their voice and not just a voice, and how important it is for people to listen.
- One participant felt that the (federal) electoral boundaries could be used for Local and Regional Voices.
- It was stressed that each Local and Regional Voice would look different and it would be up to communities to design what this looks like.
- It was clarified that Local and Regional Voices wouldn't manage money or programs, but would be able to influence where funding is allocated and how programs are run.

Discussion around the National Voice proposal included:

- One participant brought up the difficulties of representation as there are issues of proportionality across different states.
- A view was expressed that youth need to be at the decision-making table, not just as an advisory group at the national level. There was an idea of youth representation forums at local and regional levels that could feed up to the youth advisory group.
- One participant felt that the National Voice is too large of a challenge. The same participant felt that you could hold elections at the same time as state and territory elections in order to maximise on participation.
- It was acknowledged it would be a massive change, which can't be done half-heartedly, and people will need to find it in themselves to get involved.
- There was a general consensus among participants that drawing members from Local and Regional Voices was the preferred model, as they would be across the issues. One participant preferred direct election model for the National Voice, with a suggestion that the members could be nominated or self-nominated to be eligible for a potential election, noting there would need to be some criteria.
- There was also some discussion about the need for transparency and integrity for members.
- Some participants expressed concerns around the potential impact of a change in government for the process and the National Voice.
- There was a question on what will happen if and when the National Voice does not agree with a piece of legislation and it was clarified that the Parliament would not have to listen to advice but that the advice would be tabled.
- There was a view that if this is a strong voice government will engage with it.

Other issues raised included:

- Lateral violence issues in the community were acknowledged.
- The need for a treaty was raised.
- The issues of drug use in the community and the impact on youth was discussed, specifically the use of Ice.