

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Whadjuk within Noongar country

Perth, Monday 6 April, 6:00pm Session 3

Number of participants: 9

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 session was attended by nine participants and were welcomed to country by Ms Geri Hayden. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- There was strong agreement among participants that there needs to be a collective voice so that Government will listen.
- There was a general view that governments are failing Aboriginal people and that community feels like they are not being seen, heard or validated.
- The importance of rebuilding trust between governments and community was emphasised.
- One participant called for 'local solutions to local problems' and greater support for self-determination and self-management.
- One participant discussed the importance of maintaining a sense of cultural identity and spirit in all this work, particularly for local youth.
- One participant acknowledged that there are lots of strong, powerful women in the Noongar community who can help drive change and seek better outcomes for the community.

Local & Regional Voice

- Participants were generally supportive of the nine principles.
- There was discussion on the principle of inclusive participation and it was noted that:
 - The most marginalised and vulnerable people are always overlooked.
 - Prisoners need to be part of the conversation.
 - The Voice will not be representative if these voices are not heard.
- The importance of the accountability and transparency principle was discussed:
 - There was agreement that there needs to be a clear standard of behaviour and an effective process to support this.



- One participant made a general comment that there is not enough accountability for Indigenous organisations - “Our own people need to be accountable to us”.
- One participant commented that protecting the Voice against corruption should be a key priority.
- There was some uncertainty about how the Local and Regional Voice would be designed and whether it would be up to local people to decide on the detail. It was clarified that there will need to be a further co-design process within each region to determine the design.
- One participant expressed strong views about not wanting to ‘join up with other mobs’.
- One participant asked whether there will be funding available to support the Local and Regional Voices.
- One participant noted that there are strong existing language and cultural ties in WA. They felt that some regions might need to cut across state boundaries to keep groups together.

National Voice

- One participant was concerned by the advisory nature of the proposal and said it risked becoming a ‘tick box exercise only’ if there was no mandatory requirement on government. The general sentiment was that they wanted to see something stronger.
- One participant asked whether the Voice would ever evolve into a third chamber of parliament. It was clarified by co-design members that it would not.
- The same participant noted that they would like to see an Aboriginal parliament as part of the executive of government.
- There was some discussion about whether a National Treaty process (as advocated for by Greens Senator Lidia Thorpe) was also being considered as part of the Voice. It was clarified that this is out of scope of the current co-design process.
- One participant noted that there is already the Coalition of Peaks who speak to government on Aboriginal policy.
- A couple of participants agreed that they don’t want to see another advisory body that no one listens to.
- There was general interest from participants about how the ethics council would work.
- There was agreement from participants that capacity building around racism and the *Racial Discrimination Act* is needed to ensure parliamentarians and government have better awareness of these issues and experiences.
- Member eligibility was briefly discuss with reference to prisoners and people with criminal backgrounds. It was acknowledged that they offer lived experiences of the justice system and that they would be best placed to speak on these issues.

Co-design process

- Participants called for a consultation session to be organised in WA prisons.
- One participant commented on the deadline for submissions and this work generally – noting there is lots of complexity, dialogue and ground work required to have all this come together cohesively.