



Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Wiradjuri Country,

Wagga Wagga, 16 March 2021, 2.00pm, 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 session was attended by 8 participants who were welcomed to country by Aunty Isabel Reid. Key points discussed are summarised below.

- Participants discussed the importance of an Indigenous Voice putting the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Parliament and Government.
- Participants looked at the proposals in the context of what came before. They reflected that previous structures such as ATSIC that had benefits in their community, and that the Murdi Paaki Assembly was working well.
- There was a general view that principles seem right but it was important to focus on what a voice would mean in practice, not just the concept.
- It was clarified that under the proposals community could design their own structure and processes, and principles would underpin this but not dictate. It will come down to community leadership and getting relationships right between community members, and with governments.
- Participants put forward a strong view that Local and Regional Voices should have proper resourcing. Participants discussed the way community members are often asked to volunteer their time and knowledge and the importance of honouring and properly recognising that contribution.
- Participants discussed equity in representation at the national level. There was a view that two representatives from NSW wasn't enough, given that it has the largest population of Aboriginal people.
- There was a strong view that the voice should not be restricted in what it is able to do.



- Participants discussed how the National Voice could be a culturally appropriate structure. This included exploring how the structure could be set up at the national level to engage with Parliament and Government, for example an embedded statutory authority. They also saw the opportunity at the local and regional level to set up structures differently, in ways that reflect communities and culture.
- It was noted the power of the collective Indigenous voice should not be underestimated, as government will respond differently to it, as was seen in the Murdi Paaki region. It was also acknowledged this will take time.
- Participants discussed some of the challenges and opportunities in their local community. There was a view that greater community involvement was needed in land management in the Murrumbidgee River area, and that funding for land management disappeared. Participants discussed how involving the community in land management provided opportunities for education and employment, and had benefits for the health of the community. There was also a view that services should be delivered by Indigenous organisations. Participants discussed how the Indigenous Voice could speak on those issues.
- A view was expressed about opportunities for non-Indigenous land owners to work together with Indigenous community from ground up, demonstrating value of understanding Indigenous peoples connection to land. It was noted the Local and Regional Voice would provide opportunities to partner with business and land owners as well as governments.
- Participants agreed that the voice of youth was an important element of the proposal, but also raised the importance of the voice of Elders.
- Participants reflected on how other processes such as Closing the Gap and Local Decision Making would relate to the voice proposals. They were concerned about creating too many overlapping structures, but noted that the Indigenous Voice would not displace existing structures, and would build on what is already working.