

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Wurundjeri country;

Melbourne, 14 April 2021, 5.00pm, Session 2

Number of participants: 13

Key points raised

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

This was a virtual session, with comments and questions from participants provided on chat. The session was attended by 13 participants and started with acknowledgment of country by Professor Tom Calma who led the discussion. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- In response to a query a co-design member explained that the concept of co-design involves Indigenous people and government working together towards a mutually agreed outcome, with an equal power base.
- Co-design members confirmed members were appointed by Minister Ken Wyatt, but with advice and input from the Senior Advisory Group co-chairs.
- There was some discussion about the importance of bipartisan support in Parliament, and an idea of using \$160m set aside for referendum to set up the Voice through legislation, as soon as possible.

Local & Regional Voice

- There was discussion around the principle of Cultural Leadership, with a strong view from one participant that only clans, nations and tribes should speak for country. That participant also felt that that the Treaty Assembly in Victoria did not sufficiently reflect all Victorian clan groups and nations (only 11 out of 38).
 - A co-design member clarified that existing bodies would not be affected, and that Local and Regional Voices would not manage programs, but work with governments to decide how money is dispersed, with community led decisions the real potency of a Local and Regional Voice.
- A participant suggested regions could be based on local government areas, noting there are over 500 local councils across the country, with 79 in Victoria. Another suggestion was to use 38 nations in Victoria, with power to make decisions for themselves. Gender balance was supported, and it was considered peak bodies are not appropriate as the basis for the voice.
- A participant considered the arrangement needs to support genuinely grass roots voices, for example tribes, clans, nations self-determining their own structure of decision making, in line with UNDRIP, and flagged providing a submission to that end.



National Voice

- There was some skepticism about an advisory only role for the National Voice, with one participant querying if that is strong enough as government can still choose to listen or not to listen.
 - Co-design members clarified that in developing the proposals sovereignty of Parliament was noted, and while there were no guarantees it was an important opportunity to have Indigenous voices heard.
- A participant queried why is treaty not part of the conversation and as part of this allocated seats in Parliament. They felt Indigenous people have been very patient and it was important to continue pursuing this proposition, which they believe would not require a referendum.
 - Co-design members clarified it was not seen by members as a viable way forward, was outside the Terms of Reference, and it was important to be pragmatic, pursue what it achievable and take one step at the time.