

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

Anangayth, Alngith, Peppan, Thanakwithi, Wathyn and Wik Waya,

Napranum, 14 April 2021, session and meeting

Number of participants: 55

## 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.*

There were 55 participants in the consultation session and meeting. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### *Overarching points*

- Participants spoke of being on this land for thousands of years but “our voices are still not recognised. We are the last ones to be heard. It’s like they are not worried about us. How is this going to change that?” One participant spoke of other consultations happening down in Cairns but never seem to happen on the Cape, “we need a voice here, from community. We need to trust that this [Voice Co-design] process will lead to a voice.”
  - Co-design members responded that this is the driving reason why they are working on the Voice Co-design process, to ensure people have the opportunity to have a voice and be heard – at the local level, as well as the regional and national levels. A lot of the changes we are embarking on are generational changes and will take many years. This process is about designing from the bottom up.
- Participants highlighted the importance of certainty, reflecting on the termination of ATSIC. Co-design members also reflected on some of the lessons from ATSIC and how this has informed the proposals, including the proposal for an ethics council and that the proposal is that a Voice would not manage funding.
- Participants asked the Co-design members about the political landscape – if the Indigenous Voice proposals are being supported by state governments and by the major parties in the Australian Parliament?
  - The Co-design members explained that this co-design process came out of a recommendation from a parliamentary committee, which was co-chaired by the two major political parties. In addition, the Government went to the last election and committed to this co-design process. In relation to state governments, they have been consulted throughout the co-design process.
- A participant asked about Closing the Gap, and how governments are addressing this.
  - Co-design members spoke of the Closing the Gap agreement with the Coalition of Peaks as a good illustration of the change that is occurring, as governments have taken on shared decision making and responsibility.
- One participant spoke of the history of Mapoon, which she had experienced through her parents. “We need our history heard”.

### *Local & Regional Voice*

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- Participants discussed how and when the Local and Regional Voice would be implemented. They were concerned it would be centred on Cairns, or at least not centred on Napranum. Participants discussed existing arrangements such as Local Thriving Communities<sup>1</sup>, and Pama Futures<sup>2</sup>. The participants expressed a need for a guarantee their voices will be heard. Participants also spoke of the need for the Local and Regional Voice to be a voice of the community
  - One participant asked if the design and establishment work for the Local and Regional Voice will be funded.
    - Co-design members responded that the co-design groups have included the importance of resourcing in the report, and have noted this feedback during consultations.
  - A participant also spoke of the need for capacity building for local people to participate in the Local and Regional Voice.
  - Participants discussed how there are missed opportunities with contracts in the community, noting that if local people don't have the right qualifications, people are flown in to undertake low skill level jobs. Another participant gave an example of management positions being routinely given to non-Indigenous people, but the managers required training by the Indigenous junior staff. It would be important for a Local and Regional Voice to work in partnership to ensure local employment opportunities eventuate.
  - Participants wanted to make sure the Local and Regional Voice region for their community and the Cape would work, as it would be a hard task to set up. One participant asked if the local councils will have the opportunity to have a say as well.
    - Co-design members explained that the proposal is for the Local and Regional Voice to work with all levels of government, including state and local governments. A Voice could give community the opportunity to make sure programs have input and agreement from Indigenous people before decisions are made.
  - A discussion was held on the Data and Evidence based Decision Making principle of the Local and Regional Voice proposal. Co-design members spoke to how governments use data and evidence for shared decision making, such as health, housing, education, justice data. However, for community to get access to that data, there is difficulty in navigating the bureaucracy to gain access. This data could be used by community to design responses and develop early interventions and prevention programs on the most critical matters for a community.

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<sup>1</sup> A Queensland Government regional governance initiative.

<sup>2</sup> A Commonwealth Government regional governance program on Cape York.