

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Pitjantjatjara country,

Amata, 6 May 2021, 11:30am

Number of participants: 79

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.


The session was attended by 79 participants who were welcomed to country by Mr Owen Burton, Deputy Chairperson of the Amata Community Council. A senior Amata lady started the meeting with a prayer in Pitjantjatjara. The session was conducted in language, with interpreters supporting the co-design member. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- There was a general view that participants did not know enough about the Voice proposals to decide whether they would be good for the APY Lands and the Amata community. It was clarified that this meeting was about listening to the community views, and, if the final proposals were supported by the Government, there would be more discussions and a process of communities designing their local arrangements.
- Several participants felt that the funding going into the Amata community was not sufficient, and expressed a view that while local organisations go and talk to the Anangu APY Board (who manage land for the APY Lands region under the APY Land Rights Act), they [APY Board] do not talk with Anangu on the ground – and so Anangu voice is not heard in funding and servicing decisions.
- There was a view that the Government, through elections, may change every 3 years, and that after a change the Voice may not be supported anymore. Having an Anangu Voice in the Constitution therefore would help ensure that it cannot be thrown out based on changes of government.
- Several participants reflected on the history of the APY Lands, including that in the past the APY Lands were strong and had effective leadership, with strong lore and culture and one voice. However, a number of these leaders have now passed away and Anangu were getting weaker and poorer.
- It was also noted that there was a need to have a next generation of leaders to look up to and know that Anangu have a voice. There was an understanding that the only way to do this is to come together and to work in harmony as one voice instead of fighting each other. This would ensure that Government hears what Anangu are saying.

Local and Regional Voices

- There was a view that the voice proposals were very important and everyone needed to speak up, noting that under the Land Rights Act, APY Board was only looking after the land related issues.

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- It was felt that currently there was no overall voice for Anangu, the young people had nothing to do and leaders were not taking responsibility for sharing the stories and making decisions.
 - A participant reflected on the fight for land rights and the land Anangu got in 1981. They noted that there were a lot of organisations working on the Lands but the community was not always getting the benefit from them.
 - There was a strong view that APY Lands should be a distinct region, as, if they had to join with other regions, Anangu risked not having a voice that can talk nationally about their issues. It was also noted that APY could be part of a broader NPY region, as they are the same people and share the same culture.
 - Some participants were concerned that if APY Lands become part of a broader region they would no longer have access to the existing levels of funding and support, as they would have to compete for funding with other communities in the region and struggle to get their voices heard.
 - It was suggested APY Lands needed their 'money story' so it was clear both to the community and to government where all the funding goes and who receives it, including when looking at any new requests. It was also clarified that under the proposals the Local and Regional Voice would not manage funding or services.
 - Concerns were raised about funding being taken away from the APY Lands, resulting in community assets such as housing not being looked after, and no chair for the Amata Community Council.
 - A participant commented that the community needed to say they wanted the voice for the APY Lands as otherwise they may miss out. They said that one APY region was needed, with someone selected to speak on behalf of the APY Lands in Canberra.

National Voice

- There were questions about how many people would be selected/elected to sit on the National Voice. It was noted that, as APY Lands may not be a region on its own but a part of a larger region with other communities, they may not have a specific Anangu voice on the National Voice.
- There was a view that, if there were only two representatives from SA, it would be difficult for people not from the APY Lands to talk for Anangu, as they would not understand Anangu culture, and therefore may not be able to raise Anangu issues on the national stage.
- A participant expressed a view that the proposals were for Indigenous people in the cities, not for Anangu, and that people who had never been the APY Lands were talking about Anangu, but not speaking for them.
- It was noted good leaders were needed to help the community address the issues they identified, and that the proposals were about representing all of the APY Lands and all of SA.
- A participant noted that the community needed to come together as a group and make decisions about who Anangu trust to talk on behalf of Anangu at the national level. They noted that this was a big decision which required a lot of thinking and consideration by the whole community as well as the whole of the APY Lands.