

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Wirangu country,

Ceduna, 20 April, 5:30pm, session 2

Number of participants: 11


Key points raised

Please note, this is a summary of the discussion and the views 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 11 participants and were welcomed to country by Mr Peter Miller. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- One participant stated that although there were only a small number of participants at the session, it should be considered 'a given that every Aboriginal person in this community wants a voice to Parliament and Government'.
- One participant noted the need for truth telling.
- A few participants expressed a general lack of trust in government and agreed that government needs to rebuild relationships and respect with community.
- Another participant felt community was fatigued and drained. They noted that Aboriginal people had stopped providing their views due to lack of action and lack of visible change on the ground.
- One participant expressed frustration that Aboriginal voices 'were never heard'.
 - They referenced the introduction of the Cashless Debit Card in Ceduna and noted many people had voiced their concerns but weren't heard.
 - They felt disempowered as a result.
- One participant expressed concern about how the Voice would ensure it represented majority views and that it got 'the right Indigenous voice'.
- One participant stated they were disappointed in the proposals and felt they were being asked to compromise. They suggested the proposals were not based on culture and traditional boundaries, and asked people to compromise their identity ('a modern day version of mission days'). They noted that Aboriginal people are achieving things with their own voices and there are real demonstrations of people exercising self-determination without government involvement.
- One participant noted that community has changed as a result of COVID 19 – it's brought people together again and 'reinforced connection between mob':
 - Community are wanting to create a voice.


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- The country as a whole has been moving towards this.
 - There is momentum and a good appetite for change.

Local and Regional Voice

- Participants supported a larger number of regions within the proposed range, and one participant felt three regions wasn't enough for South Australia.
- Another participant noted that the 'source of empowerment is acknowledging cultural boundaries'.
- There was some discussion about whether Ceduna would be in a regional grouping with Port Lincoln and Port Augusta in a far west coast region, similar to the previous ATSIC region.
- One participant acknowledged the diversity of language groups in the region and the challenge of bringing groups together. It was also noted that cultural obligations are very different in remote communities compared to metropolitan areas.
- There was agreement that young people need to be included in the Voice arrangements.
- One participant suggested "creativity and innovation" should be included as an additional principle in the framework. They noted:
 - Young people have different perspectives on priority issues.
 - There are certain cohorts and people who are creative. They might not realise they have a voice (e.g. non-workers, and people living on the homeland).
 - "If we keep doing the same thing, we will keep getting the same outcomes".
- Participants strongly supported the inclusive participation principle, noting it will help increase local ownership of the Voice. There was support for individual voices to be involved in the arrangements, not just organisations, noting the need to educate the grass roots community people about the proposals to overcome apathy and lack of trust.
- It was clarified that the voice won't deliver services, it will just focus on agreeing priorities.
- One participant felt there was a lack of transparency from the service providers and program delivery organisations in Ceduna and felt the local system was very siloed. The importance of ensuring accountability back to community was raised.
- The importance of the three minimum expectations was emphasised – 'accountability within the region is necessary to ensure there is cultural leadership, inclusive participation and transparency'.
- Another participant felt that some existing structures need to be 'wiped clean and start fresh' to have a true conversation about what would work. It was acknowledged that not everything can be remodelled and some change would be needed.
- Co-design members noted transitional arrangements will be important and that if something isn't working, than it should evolve. One participant supported this and felt that the Voice needed to build something new, that won't repeat the mistakes of the past.

National Voice

- Participants discussed the potential challenges of an elected model (model 2). It was noted that:
 - Many people aren't enrolled to vote and don't want to be.
 - There is often low voter turnout.
 - A young voter roll would allow young people to participate (e.g. 16 years old and above).
- There was general support for the structurally linked membership model.
- One participant felt it offered the best opportunity to build capability and support up-and-coming leaders.
- There was also support for grassroots people participating in the National Voice.

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- One participant questioned how the National Voice would ensure adequate coverage if there are only two representatives from each state.
 - Another participant suggested there should be more members on the National Voice to ensure they can cover the workload. They also discussed whether there would be resourcing to support members
 - Co-design members clarified that resourcing was considered in the total number of members and that the intention was for members to be supported appropriately.
 - Participants acknowledged that the priority issues at the national level will be very different to the local issues. They felt the relationships and skillset of the individuals will be critical to the way members engage across the states.
 - Another participant suggested skill set and formal education should not be the only criteria for selecting members. They suggested passion, confidence and enthusiasm to advocate for community were also needed.
 - The eligibility of incarcerated people or people with a criminal background was discussed and there was general agreement that their voices need to be included in the National Voice.
 - One participant sought clarification on the how the Aboriginality of members would be validated.
 - Co-design members clarified that the three-part Commonwealth definition would be used (being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived).

Co-design process

- Participants discussed how to get young people and older people to come and have a say in these consultation forums.
 - There was agreement that people need to be more creative to get different people to the table.
 - It was suggested organisations could come together and consider how they can filter the information out into community.
 - Participants were disappointed at the low turnout and noted the community is ‘fractured and people need to come together’.
- One participant felt the online registration process did not encourage people to attend. It was clarified by Co-design members that people could also register at the door but that the registration was a COVID 19 requirement.
- There was some discussion about the accessibility of resources and information dissemination.
- Co-design members clarified that this is only the first step, there will need to be further consultation and co-design if government decides to proceed.