



# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

**Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara country,**

**Coober Pedy, 4 May 2021, 10:30am, session 1**

**Number of participants: 10**

## 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 10 participants who were welcomed to country by George Cooley, Elder of the Umoona community. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### *Overarching points*

- One participant commented that they were supportive of the Indigenous Voice, but there was a need to work through what it meant practically, and how it would work locally and nationally.
- There was a question about the impact of the Voice proposals on current representatives in Federal Parliament, including Indigenous parliamentarians, and whether they would work together with the Voice. The Co-design member indicated the Co-design Co-chairs had been engaging with Members of Parliament to keep them informed of the proposals.

### *Local and Regional Voice*

- A view was expressed that the Voice could be an opportunity to give Aboriginal people a better sense of identity and ownership.
- It was noted it would be important for the Voice to give the community more power to design activities to address what is needed in the region. It was also felt there was a need for people to stop assuming they knew what was required and to start listening to Aboriginal people, for example in areas such as education and health.
- One participant noted the importance of ensuring that existing Indigenous organisations understand that they needed to engage with Aboriginal people, rather than saying it is too hard and choosing not to do it.
- One attendee raised the need for the Voice to work with the mining and tourism sectors to ensure that local Aboriginal people have a voice in decisions being made in the region.

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- There was a view that the proposed 2-3 regions for SA was not sufficient and would make it hard to ensure representation, given the diversity of the regions and the Indigenous people across the state. A participant reflected on their previous experience in a representative role, highlighting that one of the biggest challenges was being able to engage and communicate with all communities across a large region – and that funding and resources would be needed to allow continued engagement across the whole region.
  - A question was raised about the set-up of Local and Regional Voices and who would be responsible for overseeing this, including managing any disputes, noting that there would likely be community tension over who is selected. It was clarified that each Local and Regional Voice would develop their own protocols and there would be secretariat and resources to help with this.
  - A suggestion was put forward to prepare community profiles, including population numbers, and then a profile of the region to really drill down into how communities could best come together to form a Local and Regional Voice. It was also noted that multiple communities within a region would need to be supported to come together, and funding and resources would be required for that.
  - Participants felt that communities across each region would need to get together to nominate 2-3 people to represent them on the Local and Regional Voice, and then maybe select people to go up to the National Voice (if that was the agreed process). It was suggested communities form a committee and then agree on who should represent them, and that it was important to ensure everyone is engaged and buys into the process.
  - There was a view that capacity and capability building would be needed to support local people to represent their communities at the regional and national levels, as most people would be comfortable talking for their families, but needed support to step into broader representative roles.
  - It was also noted that motivation for becoming a representative would need to be the desire to work and advocate for their communities, rather than remuneration.
  - Participants felt that Local and Regional Voice proposals are the opportunity for greater representation, strong connections between local and regional levels, and that every region must have their own voice.
  - There was a view that the Local and Regional Voices would mean a local voice, local issues, local solutions, and local commitment to change, while the challenge would be bringing everyone together.
  - One participant commented that for ‘too long a voice has been from the top down, while this is from the bottom up – which is what is needed’. A view was also expressed that people would like for it to happen soon.

#### *National Voice*

- There was a question about whether the existing federal electoral boundaries would be used as a basis for selection of National Voice representatives, noting that these boundaries don’t always work for Aboriginal people and communities.
- There was a view that the representatives to the National Voice should be chosen from a mix of both Local and Regional Voices and directly elected/appointed, with a concern that the pure elected model could result in an election of someone whom the majority of the local community people in the region would not know, and therefore would not trust.
- There was general agreement from the group that there should be a remote voice at the National Voice level.
- Concern was raised about how the two representatives from the state would ensure that they are communicating effectively and feeding back to the communities whom they represent, noting this requirement should be made clear and also appropriately resourced.