

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

Launceston, 11 May 2021, 2.00 to 5.00pm, session 1

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.*


The session was attended by 13 participants who were welcomed to country by Helen Vagnon and Daisy Allan. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### Overarching points

- The Co-Design members set out the key features of the proposals for an Indigenous Voice including
  - That it would have gender balance
  - Would not manage funds but could comment on funding and guide decisions on funding.
  - Local people could design their own structure for their Local and Regional Voice but there would be a principle of Transparency and Accountability – this will go both ways, not only for community but for Government as well.
  - Needs to be one voice, and state and territory and national government need to work together with it.
- A Co-Design member said that the most important part of ATSIC was the Regional Councils and their Regional Plans – the biggest differences could be made by influencing policy not just controlling the discretionary Indigenous funding.
- There was discussion on the Bourke Justice Reinvestment project as an example of how if you have enough people get involved you can make things happen and achieve real change.

### Local & Regional Voice

- A number of participants felt that the principle of Inclusive Participation was important, particularly in Tasmania.
- Another said that ‘every state has its own issues – and they will need time to work through this.’
- A participant said it would be good to recognise ‘the things that are working well.’ They said that it was great that the proposals have looked at the learnings of what has come before – ‘love that we are not going to go back to stage 1.’ They also said it would be important to share stories across regions about what they are doing and what is working.
- One person said that any legislation for a voice must be ‘enabling legislation not prescriptive, enabling conversations to happen.’

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- There was discussion about how representatives for a Local and Regional Voice would be determined. There was a view from some that representatives didn't just have to come from organisations. A person said the most important thing 'was to get the right individuals involved.'
  - Co-Design members said there are initiatives already happening in a lot of jurisdictions but governments need to work together through the same approaches, not have different ways in which they each work with, and partner with, communities.
  - There was strong support for Local and Regional Voices to have access to evidence and data to underpin their decisions.
  - People also said that there would be a need for local public servants to have more authority to make decisions 'If this proceeds then it needs government reform to go ahead – 'this will be hard, as hard for the public sector as it is for community.'
  - One participant pointed out the possibility of regions moving at different paces – 'How will a National Voice speak for everyone before all the Local and Regional Voices are established?'
  - Another participant said it would be important to make sure that smaller communities were fairly represented, not just large population centres.
  - One person said that was a fantastic concept but it would not be easy to get the engagement from community you will need for it to work. They thought that a nomination option might work and were 'excited to see what comes out of this.'

#### *National Voice*

- People felt that it was essential that the National Voice would be able to advise on matters that it believed to be significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- There was also discussion on how to ensure that people living 'off country' also have a voice. There was debate over to how to balance the role of traditional owners with responsibility for land and culture with the needs of people who are long term residents living off country. A participant said that local traditional owners should have 'all the say about culture and country. But people living off country should have a say about the services they use.'
- A participant noted that identification with tribe/nations is becoming stronger and that people are using generic terms like Koori less often – most people referring to their specific clan group when identifying themselves.
- Participants said that it is essential that the voice is sufficiently resourced to undertake its role.
- A participant said that Indigenous recognition is an issue. Some family members are recognised and others are not - 'need to find a way for Tasmanian Aboriginals to deal with this.'
- People felt that access to good data will be essential for both the National Voice and the Local and Regional Voices.
- A participant asked whether the Final Report will be made public. The Co-Design members said they don't know as this will be a decision of government. However they hoped that it would be made public and did note that the Interim Report was publically released in fall.
- People asked about what they could do now while the Final Report was being completed and while government considered it? Co-Design members said it would be good to keep these local conversations going and raised whether NIAA might have a role in supporting these ongoing discussions.