

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Launceston, 11 May 2021, 6.00pm to 8.30pm, session 2

Number of participants: 9

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 9 participants who were welcomed to country by Rosetta Thomas. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- Past issues around Aboriginal election rolls were raised by participants. This was seen as one of the biggest issues that would need to be considered in relation to Tasmania.
- The need for children to receive support in schools was raised and how problems with families being able to be recognized as Aboriginal could impact on this.
- One participant felt that ‘we need to be one community’ and that recognition as being Aboriginal shouldn’t be because ‘one group says so but because all of us say so.’
- There was a comment about how Aboriginal people had rights over 50 percent of northern Australia but still remained Australia’s most disadvantaged people.
- A representative from Local Government said they were here to ‘listen, learn and to respect Aboriginal opinions.’ They said that local government is a place where ‘change can happen – and is happening.’

Local & Regional Voice

- A participant thought that a Local and Regional Voice could be ‘a space for people to be heard’ at the local level.
- Participants thought that the process of establishing a Local and Regional Voice would be ‘a bit rocky to start off with because we have to work things out’ but said ‘it will have to grow’.
- Participants felt that one region made sense but wondered how to go about ‘incorporating all voices when some voices are louder than others.’
- A participant said that they had been working to that goal for 25 years but haven’t found anything yet which worked.
- There was discussion on lateral violence and its connection with powerlessness – ‘the first thing groups without power do is to fight each other.’

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- A participant felt that a big difference with what is being proposed for a Local and Regional Voice is that Aboriginal people get to design it themselves against the principles. Most participants felt that the principles were good.
 - A person said that recognition does not work unless we have a voice – ‘it is like we are speaking behind a pane of glass. They said ‘we have to get the relationship with government right and we need the voice to work it out.’
 - One participant recommended a staged approach but said it had to be resourced properly. There was also support for decisions to be made locally – ‘the closer decisions are made to where the impact of those decisions will be felt, the better the decisions are.’

National Voice

- There was discussion on the idea of an ethics council. A participant stated ‘we have issues, but if we do the right thing and give it time we can achieve good things for our communities.’ They said it would be ‘good to share some good news.’
- Participants supported the idea of a youth committee but said it was also important to talk to children and that ‘youth and children are very different.’
- A participant said that they could not afford to ‘wait for perfect policy. We have to get it out there so we can make it better.’