

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Barngarla country,

Port Augusta, 22 April, 5:30pm, session 3

Number of participants: 17


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 17 participants and an acknowledgement of country was given by Mr Dre Ngatokorua. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- Participants strongly agreed they wanted government to listen, but also expressed some scepticism as to whether government would deliver on the proposed Voice and a general disillusionment about the process - 'It's the same yarn, will our children's children have this discussion again?'
- One participant expressed disappointment that the Uluru statement had not been accepted in full by government.
- There was some discussion about the need for constitutional change to recognise Aboriginal people as the first peoples of this country. One participant felt there would be no change until there was appropriate recognition.
- One participant noted they wouldn't mind another ATSIC as it provided regional employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. They thought ATSIC had worked well locally and were disappointed when it was shut down.
- One participant didn't like the name 'Indigenous Voice' and suggested it should be called 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice'.
- One participant suggested an alternative model for a Voice that was based on Aboriginal Nations and the formation of an Aboriginal United Nations that would have widespread recognition (including in international forums).
- Three participants were strongly critical of government and the Voice proposals. They pointed to the lack of progress on Aboriginal outcomes, systemic racism, oppression and intergenerational trauma. They felt the proposals were tokenistic and didn't meet their expectations.
- Other participants expressed concerns about current Commonwealth and State government processes underway in the region, including:
 - Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) investigations.

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- SA Government approval of mining exploration on Lake Torrens.
 - While several participants felt there was a general lack of accountability from governments and service providers back to the community, some felt a Voice could offer a mechanism to hold people accountable.
 - Some participants expressed hope at what this process could offer and the change it could lead to. For example:
 - There was some frustration at the pace of progress but also optimism that it was occurring - 'We're all frustrated with the incremental steps we're taking, but things are changing. It takes time. We've got to have some hope that we are moving things forward. Not as fast as we think, but forward no less'.
 - There was hope for future generations and what this proposal could lead to - 'I feel like this is one step closer for us to get empowered. We're a lot closer than we have been before...I'm fighting for a voice for my kids. My nana's fought against nuclear waste and won that. For me, fighting to have a voice is great. It takes us one step forward, closer to something, a part of change.'
 - Another participant shared an analogy of driving in the car and the importance of looking forward: 'You're driving in the car, looking in your rear view mirror. This is where all your issues are behind you. When you look in that front screen you're looking forward, this is where your answers are. We need to look forward instead of backwards'.
 - One participant noted that community have the answers and have to be given the opportunity to speak out, build resilience and strengthen their voices so they can influence governments.
 - There was agreement that people needed to come together locally to influence change and believe in each other.
 - One young participant called on other participants to ask themselves 'what are we going to do to make a change'.

Local and Regional Voice

- A number of participants supported the Inclusive Participation principle and felt there had to be room for different people in community to participate, including those living off country.
- One participant strongly disagreed with the Inclusive Participation principle and felt the Voice should only be based on native title and Traditional Owners.
- There was some discussion about the need for partnerships with local, state and federal government as participants acknowledged a lot of local services were managed by the state.
- There was some discussion about what a region could look like for Port Augusta.
- There was strong agreement that community needs to be the foundation for any local and regional voice arrangements, with participants wanting to see the regional voice structures empowering community with authority and influence.

National Voice

- There was discussion about the priorities a future National Voice could address, including:
 - Education and training e.g. making sure kids get to school, having cross-cultural learning/curriculum and training Aboriginal teachers.
 - ABSTUDY eligibility.
 - Deaths in custody.
 - Mental health, suicide, drugs and alcohol.