

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Anathangayth, Alngith, Peppan, Thanakwithi, Wathyn and Wik Waya,

Weipa, 14 April 2021

Number of participants: 8

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 8 participants. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- The participants supported the proposal for an Indigenous Voice and said this would be a good opportunity to have a good, close relationship with those in decision making positions.
- Participants spoke on the importance of empowerment. Leaders in community encourage people to participate and have a say, particularly when government people come to town or have a say with local council. However, there are struggles with community participation because cultural lore dictates participation with families and clans, and this can act as a barrier to full participation. In addition, it can be hard to empower people because some people's life experience creates social dysfunction, and a minority in community will be opposed or cynical when new things are proposed. To counter this, the participant spoke of working with those who have a sense of purpose in life, who are engaged with community, to get progress in community.
- A participant spoke of the positive stories happening in community, such as the increasing number of school graduates and a recent university graduate, and those who are creating career paths through apprenticeships and jobs with mining companies. He reiterated that education needs to be a priority for their children. They gave an example of jobs in town that could be done by local Indigenous people if they have the education.
- One participant spoke of the many health challenges in community and that it is hard to measure wellbeing when there is little engagement. More resources for health, particularly specialist services, is critical for community. Participants spoke of how health programs are being designed and delivered without anyone first speaking to people in community. "People are still dying, there are no screening programs, people are still getting diabetes. People just tell us how we will receive the program. People fly in and fly out and don't stay in community."
- One participant spoke of the need for the Torres Strait to have its own voice.
- A participant spoke of the need for community to be business conscious. Particularly when it comes to their traditional lands, and would encourage people to establish pastoral businesses. There are a lot of young people who go and work on cattle stations, but there is a need to build a strong pathway for people to also develop businesses and improve economic development opportunities.
- Participants spoke to the need for capability building for members of the Local and Regional Voice, and the National Voice to ensure people are able to participate and contribute fully.



Local & Regional Voice

- A participant supported the principle of transparency as that is required in community between leaders and all levels of government.
 - One participant asked what would happen if the Local and Regional Voice say they are not happy with an existing organisation?
 - Co-design members clarified that there is a principle of non-duplication of existing bodies and arrangements. So the Voice will not replace any existing organisation, or statutory authority or bodies with existing contracts or agreements. The Voice would work together with these bodies.
 - One participant spoke about how it is hard when there are too many organisations to know who to approach for a particular matter. They noted it appears that the different organisations don't speak to each other and it would be more efficient if there was one structure in place. The participant noted there may be opportunities for all the existing bodies to come together to become the Local and Regional Voice.
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