

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

Gunaikurnai country

Bairnsdale, 31 March 2021, 12.30pm

Number of participants: 3

## 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 3 participants who were welcomed to Gunaikurnai country by Sandra Patten. A number of members of the community were not able to attend the session due to unforeseen circumstances. Key points discussed are summarised below.

- Participants discussed how young people are disengaged from the justice system, which is sometimes seen as excessively punitive. Discussion focussed on how crime and violence can be driven by low self-esteem and exclusion. Participants set out a range of ways they thought the system could be improved, including:
  - Justice reinvestment that takes a preventative, community-based approach.
  - Therapeutic justice, drawing on examples of therapeutic services being co-located with legal services.
  - Restorative justice that allows perpetrators to recognise the impact of their actions on those impacted.
- Participants reflected on the importance of connection to culture in this context. For example, if young people are brought up to respect Elders, then bringing Elders into the process may be a more effective strategy.
- Participants discussed the way that the voice proposals are about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. There are different levels of cultural awareness in the Australian community. Sometimes this relationship can be characterised by harmful deficit language and negative generalisations, rather than on the incredible strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- Participants reflected on the importance of leadership, including from non-Indigenous Australians, in breaking down barriers and making change. Making change requires active effort. The journey towards better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures is ongoing.