

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

Wardandi within Noongar country,

Bunbury, 8 April, 12:30, Session 1

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 who were welcomed to country by Ms Lera Bennell. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### *Overarching points*

- One participant was interested in how the Voice would be funded. Specifically,
  - Where the funding would come from.
  - Whether it would be sustainable,
  - How it would be protected to ensure a change of government won't affect it.
- Participants agreed that they all have to come together to have a stronger voice.
- One participant noted the challenge of bringing Noongar people together.
- It was acknowledged that getting the Voice right will take energy, heart and mind.
- One participant did not like the term "Indigenous Voice" and another participant suggested "First Nations Voice" or "First Peoples Voice" as alternative options.
- A couple of participants were doubtful that Government would take action on these proposals and noted that they have heard too many empty promises from politicians before.
- One participant expressed hope that the Voice would give a stronger voice to non-metro areas and improve regional funding and support for justice programs. They reflected that they often hear about all the funding provided to city programs, while the regions are overlooked (e.g. initiatives such as drug courts and alternatives to prison).

### *Local & Regional Voice*

- There was strong interest and discussion about having an Aboriginal seat on the local Bunbury council to ensure community voices were represented.
- One participant asked whether the Voice proposals could lead to more Aboriginal Mayors and provide opportunities for Aboriginal leadership pathways.
- It was agreed that significantly more discussion is needed about Aboriginal representation on local governments.

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- One participant asked whether the 25-35 region proposal was based on population and whether the boundaries for the regions had been decided.
    - It was clarified by co-design members that boundaries will be decided within each state through further co-design processes with state governments and community.

#### *National Voice*

- One participant reflected on the pressure facing National Voice members and the necessary qualities of members, stating:
  - We don't want people to sit on the fence.
  - We need people who will speak for everybody.
  - People need to think bigger beyond their immediate group and about Aboriginal people as a whole.
- It was noted by co-design members that there is capacity to engage an expert panel to provide particular expertise and there will be permanent youth and disability advisory groups. One participant noted that these groups are not usually made up of 'community people'.
- It was acknowledged that the Voice will have a two way advice flow: being asked for advice and choosing to give advice to government.
- Participants raised a number of issues they would like to see the National Voice address including:
  - Reducing the eligibility age for the aged pension to reflect the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the mainstream population.
  - Addressing the barriers to unemployment including practical steps such as getting drivers licences.
  - Incarceration and remand, including improving access to support services and getting more black voices into the justice system (e.g. courts, judges, lawyers, and police) to help reduce incidents of racism and prejudice.
  - Homelessness and housing.

#### *Co-design process*

- Participants raised the lack of opportunity for prisoners to give feedback on the Voice proposals. They agreed that prisons are critical service users and their voices need to be captured as part of this process.