

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

Wongatha Country

Kalgoorlie, 19 April 2021, 10:30 – 1:30pm, Session 1

Number of participants: 24

## 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 24 participants who were welcomed to country by Gary Cooper. Host facilitator Jamie Lowe also acknowledged country and traditional owners past, present and future. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### Overarching points

- Participants talked about the complex situation in the goldfields and local issues around native title, government funding and service delivery. A few participants said native title needs to be sorted out and that the Native Title Act doesn't always work in the interests of Aboriginal people.
- There were strong feelings and frustration around having another conversation around voice given *"we have been talking about this and running in the dust for a long time"*. One participant said that governments are not always honest with Aboriginal people and he felt history kept repeating itself. The same participant said *"Government still has a big foot on us today. Nothing has changed!"*
- Participants expressed a strong view the voice should be 'Aboriginal' not 'Indigenous' as the latter carries other meanings.
- There was some concern this is about government wants, not Aboriginal people are *"we are being corralled towards a government aspiration for us"*. Another participant said *"I have 20 years' experience working in community. I am always begging to others to listen to our cries, but it falls on deaf ears. Government are shaming us out. I am worth millions but I'm going down to a place of no-return."*
- One participant suggested *"things must be interpreted to grass roots people"* and another participant added *"some of us don't understand politics but try to raise concerns and then get shutdown by people in the game."* Another participant said *"some of us are not literate in whitefella and government ways."*
- Others felt more optimistic and saw this as an opportunity – *"I'm listening here to money, money, money but what about the kid's future – it's the kid's future we are talking about – get it right for the kids – you can get it right for yourself as well – these issues are what we can put to the voice."*
- One participant said *"Laverton has a voice and this voice is giving me hope."*
- There was a general feeling among participants that the Goldfields are *"fragmented and stagnant"* but *"need to look at future generations."*

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- There were some conflicted feelings about government funding and service providers – *“we want to get off this gravy train and start fixing and healing our land.”*
  - Another participant said *“We will never advance while government still in control”*.
  - The inclusion of Local and Regional Voice in the proposal was seen as a good thing.
  - Participants said grassroots need to be part of the Voice.
  - At the end of the session, one participant shared his story of the citizenship tag from 1905. He held it in his hand and said *“it’s a symbol of how far we’ve come – now we have a voice let’s not waste it.”*
  - Generally, participants also wanted the Minister to spend more time in community.

#### *Local & Regional Voice*

- Local voices were seen as particularly important to the voice proposal - *“you get nothing without local voice.”*
- One participant said care needed to be taken with the nomination and selection process to ensure representatives are trustworthy.
- A few other participants said the role of elders was important and having people who *“understand lore and custom.”*
- A couple of participants noted the different responsibilities between state and federal governments and how you need to look at the laws of both the commonwealth and the state.
- One participant said *“There is this constant of who is responsible? The State versus the Commonwealth”*
- A few participants noted the regional aspect of the voice model was a bit like ATSIC but could be improved upon. Participants were keen to ensure the voice could be maintained into the future and not easily dismantled.
- Sharing of data and transparency was noted as a key principle.
- One participant reflected *“this is giving me some hope – because it’s got local and region – this is good – to support us from what we are here – the people from the region should take our story to the national.”*

#### *National Voice*

- Representation was the main issue discussed in relation to National Voice.
- As a big state, participants felt Western Australia might need more than two representatives on the National Voice.
- Participants agreed there should be gender balance.