

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Ngarrindjeri country

Murray Bridge, 11 March 2021, Session 1

Number of participants: 23

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 twenty three participants and were welcomed to country by Harley Hall, Chairperson, Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority. Key points discussed are summarised below.

- There was general agreement among the group that Constitutional Recognition is important to help ensure that the Voice does not get abolished. There was support for mechanisms to protect the Voice.
- One attendee noted that while it is good to have non-Indigenous people involved in the co-design process, this should be for advice only. They felt Indigenous people should be the only ones involved in making decisions on the design, as it went to self-determination.
- One comment was that for the Voice to work well it would need community engagement officers located on the ground in community and not based in Adelaide.
- A common theme was the need to ensure all levels of government are on board. There was a comment that even if the federal and state government agree to the Voice, it was also important for the local government to be on board as well given that they influence a lot of matters in this region.
- The group noted the importance of ensuring that the voice is something that their children take on and run with— noting that this is an opportunity for their future.
- The group felt it was important for them to be in control of how funding is allocated within the region and for government to trust the community to deliver programs and activities that will achieve the best outcomes for the region.
- The group agreed that if there are only three regions in South Australia, there would be a risk of the Murray Bridge community missing out on funding and resources as everything is done by numbers and data. The group noted that work is needed to ensure that the Voice from South Australia is not dominated by the higher numbers of people living in some of the other states/territories at the national Level.
- The group supported the notion of the Voice, and wanted the Voice to work. However, participants also noted that they did not want the Voice to be seen as a band aid for all the issues in the region. They felt that there are local community issues that need to be worked through and resolved to ensure that the community can come together as one, and not get distracted by issues that are causing divisions.



- One attendee noted the importance of working out a process to ensure that Indigenous people are heard and that what they say will mean something. It was also noted it was important that mechanisms are in place to ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard, not just of those with jobs and education.
- It was noted by the group that there are already governance structure/s within the region, e.g. the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority as a representative body, and Ngarrindjeri Regional Empowered Communities. Participants felt that it was important that under the Voice work is done to empower these structures and build on them. They noted that if the Voice is a new structure it will be important to ensure that all existing organisations and bodies are on the same page so as to not cause community divisions.
- One attendee noted the importance of young people having a voice, and seeing how the Voice can work to support their empowerment. It was noted that young people in the region are underestimated, and it is important that they can see themselves in the Voice and can see that they have a key role to play in it.
- The group generally felt that even though they are the First People, they get left out of discussions and decisions affecting them as Indigenous people are made without their involvement. It was noted that under the Voice arrangements it will be important that there is an understanding about how government decisions affect Indigenous people, and that the best way of doing this is by talking to the local community.