

# Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

## Consultation session details

**Ngukurr, 29 April 2021, 10am**

**Number of participants: 20**

## 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.*

A Traditional Owner welcome was held at the Ngukurr Oval prior to the session. The session was attended by 20 participants including directors and members from the Millwarparra Aboriginal Corporation and the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation. The session was conducted in both English and Kriol with the assistance of an interpreter. Key points discussed are summarised below.

### *Overarching points*

- Participants expressed strong support for the concept of an Indigenous Voice. There was a strong feeling that government should talk to Ngukurr about policies, programs and laws that impact the community. Participants felt that the voice proposals needed to allow a direct voice from Ngukurr to Canberra.
- There was a feeling that, under current arrangements, it can take too long for feedback to flow through to the Commonwealth Government. There was a strong emphasis on people from the community putting forward the views of the community, not people coming from outside.
- The participants supported an Indigenous voice however expressed that it must include the regional voice participation at some level in Canberra. They put forward the “Yugul Model” (see below).
- Culture was a significant theme. Traditional Owners, Lawkeepers and Elders present talked about the strength and longevity of Aboriginal culture, and the need for this to be respected.
- Participants talked about programs being designed with a cultural voice and delivered by the community themselves.
- Participants also discussed how cultural protocols should be reflected in the voice proposals. Inclusion of Elders and gender balance were identified as culturally important elements.
- Participants identified what they thought were the biggest challenges in the community which included education, housing, and health. Participants emphasised the importance of government understanding their needs and working with the community to address problems. One participant discussed their experience trying to provide support to members of the Ngukurr community to deal with police and medical systems. The participant felt that they “hit walls” when trying to address issues. The participant felt that this highlighted the need for stronger partnerships between service providers and the community.



## *Local & Regional Voice*

- Participants expressed that the Regional Voice proposal reflected their local cultural governance models.
- The participants at the session put forward a clear message about the strength of the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation (YMDAC) as a voice for the Ngukurr community. Participants explained how YMDAC practiced cultural governance, including by representing the seven tribal groups in the community.
- Participants strongly supported the principle that the local & regional structure should “come from us”. One participant emphasised that “it can’t be decided in Canberra what region you come under”. Another outlined the importance of building on a cultural and tribal foundation, saying “we set what our cultural boundaries are”.
- Participants deliberated and put forward a regional boundary of 5 communities with 3000 people that are culturally connected. Participants felt this would be the strongest regional voice where true cultural authority to talk on behalf of the Yugul people could be carried to the National Voice.
- Participants discussed possible regional boundaries, for example a region including the communities of Ngukurr, Urapunga, Numbulwar, Minyarri and Jilkminggan.

## *National Voice*

- Participants did not agree with having only two representatives from the NT and felt those representative may not have any connection to their region. They highlighted the importance of the link directly from Ngukurr to the national level.
- The Traditional Owners, Lawkeepers and Elders at the meeting emphasised that someone that was not culturally connected to their region could not speak on their behalf.
- Participants deliberated and put forward a structure for the National Voice that they saw as inclusive and that would connect the Local & Regional level with the National Level. The proposed “Yugul model” has nine parts:
  1. Culturally connected regions would be formed, reflecting cultural groupings. These would bring together a number of communities.
  2. Each community in the region would send a few representatives to discuss what the biggest problems are and write them down.
  3. Two regional representatives of opposite gender would be chosen by the community representatives.
  4. These regional representatives (perhaps around 100) would attend a forum in Canberra.
  5. At this forum, the biggest problems would be collated, discussed, and prioritised
  6. The forum would elect 20 members to form the National Voice, with gender balance.
  7. The forum would meet twice per year to monitor progress.
  8. There would be discussion and feedback between Government and the National Voice on policy and achievements, which would be reported back to the forum.
  9. There is a feedback loop from the national level to the regional level to the community level on how input has been used and what progress is being made.
- The main reasons put forward for this model included:
  - Participants said that 2 people for NT could not talk for their region if they were not connected to the region.
  - Participants felt that two people would not have cultural authority to talk or know the issues across the Territory
  - Participants wanted the model to emphasis the voice of the grassroots, including with feedback coming back down to the community.
  - Participants felt that it was important that the community could feel as though they had someone in Canberra that they knew.