

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Manbarra country,

Palm Island, 20 April 2021, 11.00am – 2.00pm

Number of participants: 74

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 74 participants who were welcomed to country by Alan Palm Island. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- Many participants expressed the view that there needs to be a Local Voice for the community, embedded within the community to help direct decision making from the ground up.
- One participant commented that there needs to be recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution.
- Participants commented there needs to be adequate resourcing to enable an Indigenous Voice to genuinely be set up from the grassroots.

Local & Regional Voice

- Participants agreed there needs to be a Local Voice for the community on Palm Island, and that the initial focus should be to set up this Local Voice before considering how it could fit into a Regional Voice, and link to a National Voice.
- One participant stressed that Palm Island is a unique, discrete community with a very different history to other communities in Australia, and there is a risk that the voice of Palm Island might get lost in a Regional Voice structure. The participant commented that the Local Voice needs to be able to make differences on the ground in the community in terms of social outcomes, but also in terms of building Bwgcolman knowledge on the Island, enabling truth telling, and building the community's young people to be future leaders.
- There was some discussion about how the Palm Island Council could fit into a potential Local Voice structure. Participants expressed support for the Council, and commented that the Council would need to be substantively involved.
- One participant noted that it would be important to have each person's voice included, but in particular young people and elders were identified as needing to be accommodated.
- Another participant commented that there needs to be transparency around how funding decisions are made, to ensure funding is allocated appropriately according to need.
- One participant commented on the importance of data and evidence-gathering, to ensure decisions, particularly in relation to resource allocation, are well-informed and effective.



National Voice

- Participants felt the focus should initially be on setting up their Local Voice, and the conversation was therefore primarily dedicated to the Local and Regional Voices proposals.
- Insofar as representation at the national level, one participant commented that confidence would be the issue – being able to ensure people know the person representing them is carrying their views to the National Voice. The participant expressed the view that this would also be very difficult given the diversity of priorities within different communities that would need to be taken into account by the National Voice.