

Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Whadjuk within Nyoongar country,

Perth, Tuesday 6 April, 9:30, Session 1

Number of participants: 20

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 20 participants who were welcomed to country by Mr Olman Walley. Key points discussed are summarised below.

Overarching points

- Participants acknowledged the interim report was progressive and thanked the co-design members for their work.
- Participants all agreed that they want to see youth and young people involved in this process – “We’re here for the next generation and need to support their future”.
 - One participant felt there was a lack of existing opportunities for youth to learn and participate in community decision making processes. They advocated for young people to be emphasised in the proposals.
- One participant commented on the large number of Government reports that have never been actioned or followed up on.
- One participant welcomed the opportunity to have a collective voice.
- A couple of participants were sceptical about the proposal and reflected on past experiences engaging with governments.
- Another participant expressed frustration that Government often ask what communities want, but then don’t do anything differently.
- There was a general concern that the Voice (at both levels) would be advisory/advocacy only.
- One participant expressed concern about the potential for lateral violence and perceived nepotism. They commented that the Voice needs to be transparent and have appropriate mechanisms to manage these risks.
- Participants discussed the funding for the voice and were interested in:
 - How secure the funding will be.
 - How long the funding would last.
 - What the level of funding would be.



- Whether the Voice process will include funding for local governments to support this work.
- One participant noted the similarities between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Voice proposals being presented. They felt it was all ‘the same old thing’.
- One participant advocated for specific references to the inclusion of members of the stolen generation in the proposals.
- Another participant noted that the voices of Aboriginal women are often lost.
- Participants generally agreed that people should be given opportunities to skill up through the Voice.
- One participant called on Government to show leadership - “We've been asking for this for a really long time and we're stuck in a cycle”.
- Another participant saw the proposals as an opportunity for change and to have something designed by Aboriginal people.

Local & Regional Voice


- Participants acknowledged there was some division and animosity between Noongar communities.
- One participant discussed the NSW Murdi Paaki model and suggested it was a good example of what can happen at the local level.
- There was interest in having Noongar people represented on the local council.
- The role of state governments in the Local and Regional proposal was discussed.
 - Regional groups will come together to meet with the state government.
 - It was agreed that complementary state government legislation would help support this.
- One participant challenged the use of the word ‘partnership’ in the Local and Regional proposal and felt it didn’t mean anything. “We never see true partnership, I’d like to see how this will be different”. They suggested the focus should be on relationships, which come with cultural protocols and would include aspects of the cultural leadership and community led design principles.
- One participant spoke about the importance of safeguarding grassroots people and the need to move away from dominant families to ensure some independence.

National Voice

- Participants agreed that the National Voice proposal offered an opportunity for Aboriginal people to influence the highest levels of politics.
- It was agreed that the Voice needs to have access to the opposition and the minority parties to be effective.
- There was some discussion about the possible issues the National Voice could address including:
 - Deaths in custody
 - The age of criminal responsibility
 - Domestic violence.
- One participant spoke about the obligation and expectation to consult, commenting that all policies affect Aboriginal people and should pass through the Voice.
- One participant was interested in the linkages between the National Voice and the Local and Regional Voices and advocated for ‘ground up’ approaches.

Co-design process

- There was some discussion about the consultation process.
 - Participants felt there should be more people attending the consultations.

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- Some participants wanted assurances that ‘the message was getting out’ and that there were alternative ways people could participate/share feedback.
 - Other participants called on those in the room to promote this work across their networks and families.
 - One participant suggested involving local Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) groups in the process.