



Indigenous Voice Community Consultation

Consultation session details

Giabal and Jarowair country,

Toowoomba, 11 March 2021, 1.00pm, Session 2

Number of participants: 9

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 9 participants. Key issues discussed are summarised below.

- There was strong agreement between participants that Indigenous Voice members would need a mandate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by being chosen/elected by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, not by parliaments or governments.
- Participants discussed that the proposed structure is based on Western frameworks, and there could be significant complexities in fitting the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, including minority groups (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability) into the framework, if it is not based on or allow for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs and frameworks.
- Many participants felt the Indigenous Voice should not be limited to advisory functions.
- Participants strongly agreed the body established to give voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people needed to be durable and be able to withstand changing government policies.
- There was a discussion about the colonisation of Australia. Participants agreed there needs to be a process of truth telling, and recognition of Australia's colonial past, so that the country can move forward in a decolonised environment.

There was a discussion about Local and Regional Voices:

- Participants noted the complexity and diverse makeup of communities that would be covered by Local and Regional Voices, including a myriad of regional bodies, community groups, prescribed bodies corporate (PBCs), people living on country, people living off country, Aboriginal Shire Councils, and many other people and organisations with competing interests.
- There was strong agreement the drivers had to occur from the ground up to ensure voices are filtered up to the decision-making levels, and the problems on the ground are heard.

There was a discussion about the design of the National Voice:



- Participants were generally attracted to the proposal for permanent Youth and Disability Advisory Groups. One participant further suggested there should also be an Elders Group.
- Participants agreed an Ethics Council is a good governance arrangement to put in place. One participant suggested it should be comprised of Elders.
- One participant suggested that the eligibility requirements for membership to the National Voice should not be too restrictive so as to prevent people from communities being able to be selected. In particular, the participant suggested the proposed requirements around criminal history needs to be broadened, given the disproportionate rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contacts with the criminal justice system.

- One participant raised a concern about eligibility requirements for voting (if National Voice members were selected by direct election under mode 2), and needing to ensure only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would be allowed to vote. Another participant further added that this would be an important consideration to ensure people from the Stolen Generations who may not necessarily know their mob are able to be included.
- It was observed that there is considerable complexity involved in maintaining an electoral roll and determining who is eligible to vote and who is not.
- Overall, participants did not feel strongly about either model 1 (selection through Local and Regional Voices) or model 2 (direct election) on the day. Participants were invited to make submissions or respond to the survey on the Indigenous Voice website once they have had time to consider the design in more depth.
- Participants generally agreed that all members of the National Voice should be remunerated for their work. It was agreed the work would be substantial, and highly likely to require members to suspend their other work commitments in order to fulfil their role on the National Voice.
- There was some discussion about what issues and policies would be deemed relevant for the National Voice to be consulted on, and agreement that it should be up to communities to determine what is of interest.