



Voice Secretariat  
Voice Co-Design Process  
National Indigenous Australians Agency  
[voice.niaa.gov.au](http://voice.niaa.gov.au)

Dear Voice Secretariat,

**RE: Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process**

The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Indigenous Voice co-design process.

WANADA respectfully supports the proposal for an Indigenous Voice to the Australian Government and Parliament, as recommended by the *2018 Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

WANADA's Strategic Plan 2020/21-2022/23 includes a strategic priority in support of Aboriginal self-determination. In line with this priority, WANADA has supported Aboriginal staff engagement in the Indigenous Voice co-design process.

Our submission is structured to respond to the consultation questions outlined on the Indigenous Voice website.

**1. What would be the benefits or challenges of a proposed Local and Regional Voice for you?**

The benefits of the Local and Regional Voice proposal are that it will support the inclusiveness of local communities, and their engagement in identifying, prioritising and addressing their local needs. This inclusive process provides an opportunity for local and regional cultural autonomy.

WANADA believes that there are a number of engagement considerations that will inform the sustainability of the proposed model. We note that these have been identified within the Interim Report to the Australian Government (Interim Report).

- The scope and timeframes for consultation needs to support extensive community engagement. Consultation should ensure the broadest possible community engagement across Western Australia (noting geography and population distribution across the State), and the identification/mapping of local and regional networks.
- Consultation methods should support a diversity of views and community needs, while establishing a shared vision. These can include agreeing upon shared objectives, mechanisms that support whole-of-community engagement, and provide opportunities to build the systemic engagement capabilities of all participants.

**2. Do the Local and Regional Voice principles seem right to you?**

WANADA supports the proposed principles outlined in the Interim Report.

3. How could the framework improve local partnerships and relationships between communities and governments?

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WANADA supports the need for a process that recognises and builds upon local partnerships and relationships between communities and government.

The Interim Report outlines an informed principles-based framework for the Local and Regional Voices. WANADA strongly supports this framework, noting the importance of the below elements:

- A strengthened and shared vision that is inclusive of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities nation-wide.
- Information sharing/exchange is done respectfully and considers local cultural protocols.
- Equitable, transparent and accountable processes are in place to build and maintain the trust of participants.
- Self-determination is a core principle within the framework to support the achievement of empowerment.
- Allows for flexibility and adaptability to enhance and sustain the Indigenous Voice at all levels, by progressively reflecting change when needed.
- Is informed by, and builds upon, relevant advisory structures, which reduces the potential for duplication.
- Captures and communicates examples of achievements to demonstrate outcomes.

4. Should the number of Local and Regional Voices across Australia be a greater number of smaller regions, or fewer larger regions (within the proposed 25 to 35 range)?

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WANADA has no comment regarding the number of voices, as we acknowledge that this question will be determined through direct discussion with Aboriginal communities.

5. What support do you think would be needed to establish or transition to a Local and Regional Voice?

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A respectful, flexible and robust implementation process is essential to meet the diverse needs of all Voices.

WANADA believes that the transition to a Local and Regional Voice requires genuine support and resourced mechanisms for engagement, with a holistic focus on continuous capability building of both the system and participants.

A clear communications strategy on how engagement will be appropriately and respectfully operationalised with Aboriginal communities, ACCO's, government agencies, peak bodies, and other required subject matter experts in a culturally safe manner will strengthen the transition process.

6. How do you think the proposed National Voice could support you, your organisation or your community to have your voice heard on issues of national importance?

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WANADA has no comment regarding support, as we acknowledge that this question will be determined through direct discussion with Aboriginal communities

7. Do you think the scope of the proposed National Voice would empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a national level?

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WANADA believes the current scope of the proposed National Voice would empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at a national level.

8. What are the benefits or challenges for drawing National Voice members directly from Local and Regional Voices? / What are the benefits or challenges for drawing National Voice members through a direct election?

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WANADA fundamentally supports community negotiation to determine “election/selection” processes that enable the representation for both local/regional and national Voices.

9. What would be the impact of an Indigenous Voice for you, your community or organisation and Australia more broadly?
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WANADA believes the proposed model shows great promise, and strongly supports the process of self-determination and empowerment. We are open to being guided by the Voices and support the ongoing informed and progressive process indicated by the Interim Report.

10. What features of the Local and Regional proposal are most important and why? / How would the proposed Local and Regional Voice work for you, your community or your organisation? / What features are most important in the proposal for a National Voice and why?
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WANADA has no comment regarding the most important features, as we acknowledge that these questions will be determined through direct discussion with Aboriginal communities

## About WANADA

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The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) is the peak body for the specialist alcohol and other drug education, prevention, treatment and support sector in Western Australia. WANADA is an independent, membership-driven, not-for-profit association.

WANADA represents 95 alcohol and other drug services across Western Australia, of which 37% are located in regional, rural and remote areas.

WANADA is driven by the passion and hard work of its member organisations, which include community alcohol and other drug counselling; therapeutic communities; residential rehabilitation; intoxication management; harm reduction; peer based; prevention; and community development services.