# Communique

# Meeting of the First Nations Consultative Committee

## Meetings in April and May 2023

The First Nations Consultative Committee (the Committee) met in Cairns and via MS Teams on 14 April and 25 May 2023 to continue its important work designing an Indigenous Voice model for consideration by the Queensland Government.

**Engaging with First Nations Stakeholders on the proposed model**

On 14 April 2023, the Committee met online to finalise its approach to engaging with First Nations stakeholders on the draft model via a series of Design Yarns in April and May. The Committee considered and finalised a Design Yarn Paper, which summarises the Design Principles for a Queensland First Nations Voice as agreed to by the Committee to date. Key principles included that the Queensland Voice should be enabled in standalone legislation, underpinned by key principles, be independent, able to advise Queensland Parliament and Executive Government, and should establish regional voice entities and a state voice body. The Design Yarn Paper also makes clear that existing First Nations entities will not be duplicated, usurped or replaced by new Voice entities.

The Committee’s design methodology in formulating its Design Principles, included examining the following resources:

* Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017)
* Interim Report and Final Report of Indigenous Voice Co-Design Process (2021) (Langton/Calma Report)
* Interim and Final Report (2018) of the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition
* Existing reforms in Queensland such as Local Thriving Communities, Path to Treaty and Closing the Gap
* Former representative structures such the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (1990-2005)
* The Masig Statement towards regional sovereignty in the Torres Strait
* Voice models from other Australian jurisdictions
* First Nations Voice models from overseas, including New Zealand, Scandinavia and North America.

The Committee also finalised the calendar of Design Yarns for April and May 2023, noting that any stakeholders who are not available for a yarn at this time will be captured in the next stage of the codesign process.

**Design Yarns through April and May 2023**

During April and May 2023, the Committee hosted Design Yarns with the following stakeholders:

* Local Thriving Communities Joint Coordinating Committee
* Interim Truth and Treaty Body
* Government Treaty Readiness Committee
* Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition
* First Nations Council, Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs
* Queensland First Nations Ambassadors for Change, Public Sector Commission
* First Nations departmental staff.

During the Design Yarns, there was substantial stakeholder support for a legislated First Nations Voice in Queensland, including establishing Regional Voices and a State Voice. Stakeholders sought clarity on how many regions would be established and regional boundaries would be set, calling on the Committee to consider Songlines when setting boundaries. Some stakeholders also sought clarification on how any new Voice entities will interact with existing bodies and reforms in Queensland, and any entities established by the Commonwealth Government. Stakeholders also supported the need for further grassroots consultation in the next phase of work.

**Delivering the Final Report to Government by July 2023**

The Committee met in Cairns on 25 & 26 May 2023 to further refine its Voice model, considering the Design Yarn feedback. The Committee re-affirmed its intention to explore ways to ensure the Queensland Parliament and Government is ready to engage with the new Voice entities. Actions arising out of this meeting include seeking advice from Queensland Treasury about funding the proposed model, and advice from Electoral Commission of Queensland about proposed Voice elections. The Committee will continue formulate a model and commence drafting its Report in June 2023.