# Communique

# Meeting of the First Nations Consultative Committee

## Cairns – 30 March to 31 March 2023

The First Nations Consultative Committee (the Committee) met in Cairns and via MS Teams on 30 and 31 March 2023 to continue its important work on designing an Indigenous Voice model for consideration by the Queensland Government. The Committee acknowledged the apology of Mr Joshua Gorringe who was unable to attend. It was the sixth time the Committee has met in person since it was established in July 2022.

**Reviewing the reform landscape**

The Committee began with a review of emerging developments on Voice, Treaty and Truth reforms across Australia. Members discussed progress on the Commonwealth Government’s commitment to enshrine a voice in the constitution, noting the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Amendment Act 2023* (Cth) received assent on 27 March 2023. The Committee also noted that the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) Bill (Cth) 2023 was introduced in the House of Representatives on 30 March 2023, including the proposed referendum question.

The Committee continued its examination of the *First Nations Voice Act 2023* (South Australia) which received Assent on 26 March 2023. There was also discussion around the progress of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023 in Queensland. All these developments were identified to be important for the Committee to continue to monitor in designing a preferred Indigenous Voice model for Queensland.

**Refining the features of a preferred Voice model for Queensland**

The Committee continued to discuss and refine the core elements and principles for a Queensland First Nations Voice model. Some key themes discussed included the need for a Queensland Voice to be enacted in legislation; underpinned by principles; independent of direction or control by the Crown; able to address both the Queensland Parliament and the Executive Government on issues that affect First Nations peoples; accountable and transparent; and fully resourced. The Committee also confirmed that new regional and state-based Voice entities should not replace or duplicate existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decision-making bodies and leadership groups. The Committee acknowledged that Queensland’s parliamentary and bureaucratic systems must introduce mechanisms to ensure it can capture and enact the Voice’s advice to government.

**Design Yarns on Voice in April and May 2023**

The Committee is hosting a series of Design Yarns with First Nations Stakeholders in April and May 2023. The purpose of the Design Yarns is to bring forward First Nations views and aspirations to any proposed Queensland Voice model. The Committee discussed and finalised engagement materials to inform the Design Yarns and agreed to the calendar of engagement sessions with agreed stakeholders.

The Committee acknowledges that for any model to succeed, further engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities at a grass roots level is essential. The Committee is proposing that this be its first recommendation.

The Committee discussed the writing up of the final report back to Government. It was agreed to form a sub-committee to focus on this task in June 2023.