# Community consultation

Community consultation is not just a procedural step; it is a fundamental aspect of responsible program design and implementation. It involves engaging with community members, listening to their voices, and understanding their unique needs, challenges, and aspirations. This process is essential because it lays the groundwork for developing programs that truly address the issues faced by the community.

Undertaking genuine community consultation can lead to more relevant and impactful solutions. Instead of imposing preconceived ideas or solutions onto the community, consultation allows us to identify the most pressing issues and co-create strategies to address them. By actively involving community members in the decision-making process, we empower them to take ownership of the solutions, fostering a sense of pride and investment in the outcomes.

Community consultation helps us to understand the cultural nuances and sensitivities of the community. Each community is unique, with its own traditions, values, and ways of life. By engaging with community members directly, we can gain insights into cultural practices and preferences, ensuring that our programs are respectful, inclusive, and relevant.

**Programs developed through meaningful community consultation are more likely to be successful, sustainable, and positively received by the communities they serve.**

## Consultation in First Nations and discrete communities

When working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and discrete communities, respectful, intentional, and meaningful consultation that follows [protocols](https://aiatsis.gov.au/publication/94687) is essential for program success.

Here are some key steps to follow:

By taking these steps and respecting First Nations voices, you can foster strong partnerships with discrete communities and co-design programs that are responsive to their needs and aspirations.

## Practical steps for seeking community consultation

Community consultation can take various forms, each with its own benefits and considerations. Here are some common types of community consultation and practical steps you can take.