McPherson Listening Report

**MCPHERSON · MATTERS ·**

Contents

The McPherson Listening Project is an initiative of McPherson Matters, Pty, Ltd. A Not-For-Profit established in 2023 to facilitate community democracy conversations.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather and work. We pay respect to their Elders' past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples and their enduring connection to land, waters, community, and culture.
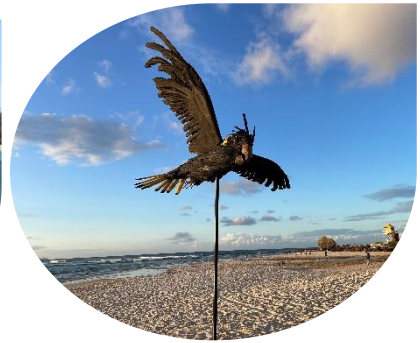
Electorate

The McPherson Electorate is located in the southern end of the City of Gold Coast.

Named after the McPherson Range for the range which runs north-west from Mount Glennie.

Population: 163,608 (2021, Census*) and is 229 sq km.

Local Government Division: Includes parts of Division 11 & most of 13, 14.

State Seats: Currumbin, Burleigh, parts of Mudgeeraba

Suburbs: Bilinga, Bonogin, Burleigh Heads, Burleigh Waters, Clear Island Waters, Coolangatta, Currumbin, Currumbin Valley, Currumbin Waters, Elanora, Merrimac, Miami, Mudgeeraba, Palm Beach, Reedy Creek, Robina, Tallebudgera, Tallebudgera Valley, Tugun and Varsity Lakes.

https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census data/quickstats/2021/CED322

https://www.aec.gov.au/Elections/federal_elections/2022/profiles/qld/mcpherson.htm

About the Listening Project

The McPherson Listening Project was inspired by the community democracy movement happening in Australia and a curiosity about the interest for community involvement in the democratic process within the McPherson electorate.

Change was also happening in the electorate, with the long-term Federal Representative for McPherson announcing their retirement at the end of the term. There was an opportunity for community voices to inform candidates about what matters to them.

For the project, we used the Kitchen Table Conversations model for community engagement and listening, developed by the Victorian Women's Trust. McPherson residents were invited to participate in these conversations to share their views, with the understanding that their insights and opinions would be anonymously collected, compiled and presented in a report for the community and future candidates.

This report is the synthesis of 49 conversations involving 250 community members over seven months.

We thank the 250 community members who generously participated in the McPherson Listening project.

Disclaimer

This report represents an earnest effort to capture and synthesise the sentiments expressed during the kitchen table conversations. We aimed to reflect the opinions of the participants to the best of our ability. However, this document should not be considered an exact or comprehensive representation of every viewpoint shared. While we have strived to do justice to what was said, there may be nuances and perspectives that were not fully captured. This disclaimer acknowledges limitations of the process. We appreciate the contributions of all participants.

Kitchen Table Conversations

A Kitchen Table Conversation, more commonly referred to as KTC, is a group of around 4 to 8 people sitting around a table talking about issues that are important to them. The conversation is guided by a facilitator and another person takes notes.

The conversation is respectful with participants invited to respond to a series of questions. Responses to these questions inform the content of this report.

The questions are arranged into three themes:

Living in the McPherson Community

1. What do you value most about living in McPherson?
2. Thinking about community in a general sense, what makes for a strong community?

Political Representation

3. What qualities do you expect to see in your federal representative?
4. Do you feel that your voice is adequately represented by your Federal Representative?
5. What would make for a stronger relationship between people and their elected representatives?

Issues and Concerns

6. Are there any local issues in the McPherson electorate that concern you?
7. Are there any State or Federal issues within and beyond our electorate that concern you?
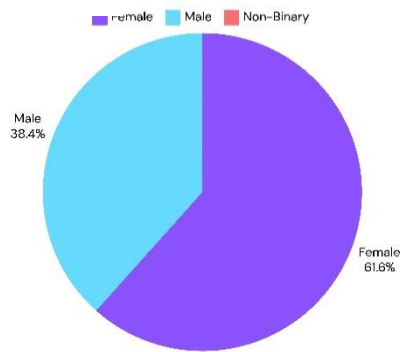8. How can these issues be addressed effectively?
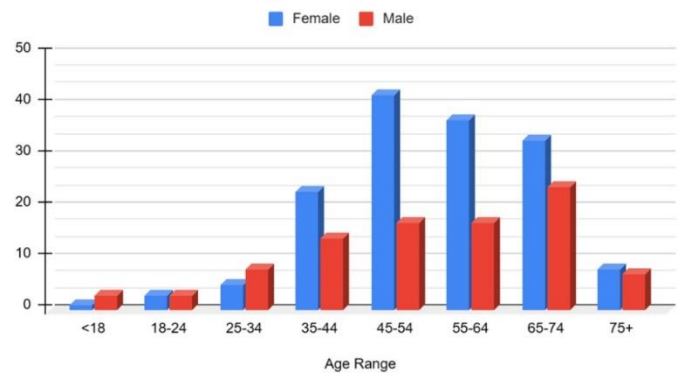
Who Were Our Participants

We asked each participant to fill in an anonymous form and provide the following information:

1. Gender
2. Age Grouping
3. Postcode
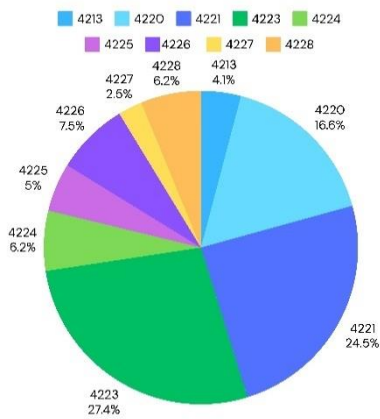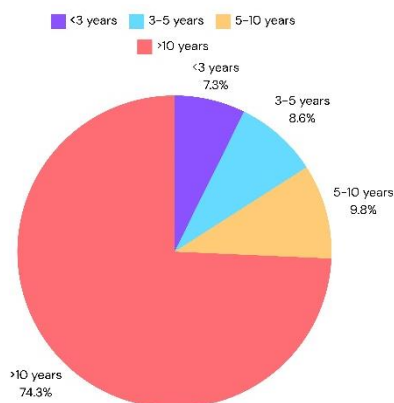4. Length of time lived on the Gold Coast
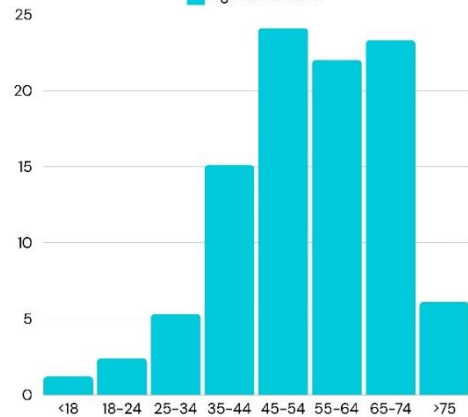
Gender

Gender Breakdown for Age Groups

Postcode

Years on the Gold Coast

Q1.   What Do You Value Most About Living in McPherson?

Responses highlighted the unique blend of natural beauty, lifestyle, community, and amenities that make the southern Gold Coast a desirable place to live.

The Natural Environment

- The natural beauty of the area,
- including the beaches, hinterland,
- rainforests, and wildlife.
- Proximity to nature and surf beaches

Lifestyle

- The relaxed, laid-back lifestyle
- Beach culture, outdoor activities
- Good for families

Sense of Community

- Friendliness
- Local connections and village-like communities

Access and Amenities

- Convenient access to amenities such
- as hospitals, schools, universities, shopping centres, airports, and cultural attractions
- Balance between natural surroundings and access to necessary services and infrastructure

Cultural and Artistic Offerings

- Music, festivals, and nearby HOTA, add to the vibrancy of living in the area

Safety and Family-Friendliness

- Safe and family-friendly environment
- Children can grow up in a healthy, outdoor-oriented setting

"Physical beauty, love it every day, the environment is to die for. Climate is wonderful."

"Lifestyle, grassroots economy, community, and creativity,"

"Being able to know your neighbours, feel safe because you know each other, and can reach out for help."

"Relaxed lifestyle we lead, sense of community and can connect with down-to-earth, authentic, people."

"Extraordinary & unique environment, beaches, wide demographics of people and the surf is great."

"Proximity to great jobs and also live in a beautiful part of the world."

Q2. What Makes for a Strong Community?

Many responses emphasised the importance of connection, shared spaces, diversity, a sense of belonging and access to amenities.

Connection and Participation

- Places and spaces for people to meet, socialize, and connect such as community centres, parks, libraries
- Gatherings and events that bring people together
- Opportunities to participate in community organizations, clubs, and activities

Sense of Belonging and Inclusivity

- Feeling accepted, respected, and valued regardless of differences
- Celebrating diversity in culture, age, and backgrounds
- Shared values, goals, and a common purpose

Safety and Trust

- Feeling safe within the community
- Looking out for one another, especially the vulnerable

Access to Amenities and Walkability

- Access to essential services -education, healthcare, transportation
- Walkable neighbourhoods

Leadership and To Be Heard

- Strong and effective leadership from community representatives
- Ability to voice concerns and be heard

Community Identity and Environmental Connections

- Sense of place and shared history
- Preserving local traditions and cultural heritage
- Opportunities to connect with and protect the environment

"Connection is what makes a strong community, places to gather, reasons to gather, and spend time together."

"Volunteering and having hubs where people can gather and have contact with other people e.g. the gym, swimming pool and clubs. Need street interaction facilitated through design."

"People coming together, is about everything, not apathy, becoming more engaged."

"Feeling a sense of belonging; having beautiful outdoor places, pathways along the beaches and concerts and council events that invite people in, like carols by candlelight."

Q3. What Qualities Do You Expect to See in Your Federal Representative?

Integrity, transparency, deeply engaged with community issues, and committed to inclusive, and accountable governance were emphasised as paramount.

Strong desire for

- Honesty, integrity and transparency
- Accountable for actions

Would also like

- Actively seek to listen & be responsive
- To understand and advocate for the community's needs

Desirable

- More visibility and accessibility
- Two-way communication between politicians and the electorate

Emphasis on qualities

- Compassion, empathy, courage
- Commitment to public service over political life

Preference for

- Evidence-based, decision-making
- Prioritise long-term planning, especially regarding environmental policies and community development.

"Transparency, someone with the electorate at heart"

"Not following political party line, strong advocate for community, and speaking up for the community and be true to their word."

"A listener, engaged with the local community, stays connected, not just sits in an ivory tower."

"Someone who makes decisions for the longer term, considering global best practice, rather than taking short term actions to suit the election cycle."

Table Reflections

Numerous participants recognized the challenges faced by the Representative in being connected with local issues, maintaining visibility, and being accessible to constituents, while also spending significant time in Canberra.

Q4. Do You Feel Your Voice is Adequately Represented?

On balance, participants did not feel adequately represented.

Majority of participants said No

Comments included:

- Did not feel **listened to or engaged** with effectively
- **Specific concerns ignored**, such as climate and environmental issues
- Party politics overshadowing community concerns

"No, reflecting on the Koala issue, we weren't being listened to, especially as the representative was minister for science and could have done more for koala corridors with bush fires."

"Emailed local federal member, didn't get response, even after a chase up."

"Not listening even if we participate in surveys"

Small proportion of participants said Sometimes, Depends, Don't know

- It was dependent on a specific request
- Unsure of how to be heard or representative's role

"I don't know the avenue to have my voice heard right now"

Smaller proportion said YES

Comments included

- Felt alignment with the representative's view
- Had successful interactions around an issue or request.

"Yes, I had a very positive interaction where my concerns about a problem for uni students were listened to, she spoke to the education minister and attempted to influence around this concern."

Table Reflections

This question prompted participants to reflect on how they engage or could engage with their representative. Many admitted to being uninformed about the workings of the various government levels.

Q5. What Would Make for a Stronger Relationship Between People and Their Elected Representatives?

A desire for a more participatory, transparent, and accountable relationship between the electorate and their representatives, with a significant emphasis on direct engagement, clear communication, and genuine representation of community interests was expressed.

Representative Having More Direct & Meaningful Engagement

- Being more accessible and visible
- Offering a range of opportunities for constituents to meet with the representative such as at schools or parks, outside office hours including a return to town halls
- Utilizing technology to have more personal and direct communication e.g. using online zoom sessions.

Changing How Politics is Done

- Greater community involvement in policy and decision-making through processes such as deliberative democracy forums, round tables or citizen juries.
- Representative to vote in alignment with their electorate rather than political party.

"Walking alongside the community."

Political Literacy in the Community

- Education on the roles of different level of governments

"Technology enables people to have more direct say. Ask the community on a regular basis. Tech can provide more regular interaction."

" The system was designed for a time when the internet didn't exist."

"Ongoing engagement with the community, not before the election but monthly community hall meetings."

"Small gathering on a smaller scale you see the person, hear them speak, get a feel for them, examples of what they have achieved, so you can rebuild trust"

"Deliberative democracy and community budgets get people involved and having a say."

Table Reflections

Many tables reflected that we need to have better informed and educated constituents to have a better engaged electorate. With representatives having a stronger relationship, it would then be easier to bring the community along on difficult issues that may not be popular.

Q6. Are There Any Local Issues in the McPherson Electorate That Concern You?

- Participants raised concerns about transportation on the southern end of the Gold Coast, including growing traffic congestion, public transport access, and criticised the extension of the Light Rail extension to Coolangatta.
- Housing affordability and rising rents also pose challenges for residents. Overdevelopment in beachside suburbs is a concern.
- There is a need for more medium-rise vertical housing developments so as to accommodate population growth while preserving green spaces.
- Participants highly prioritized preserving the natural environment and preparing for the impacts of climate change.
- Participants emphasized the need for greater local attention and services to address social issues of youth crime, homelessness, mental health, and domestic violence.

Getting About

The **extension of the light rail from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta is controversial.**

While a few participants commented positively, many were critical and opposed to the project. Concerns included:

- Excessive cost

- The narrow highway in Palm Beach

- Lack of parking near proposed stations

- Prioritizing the light rail may stop a preferred heavy rail connection to the airport

- More authentic community consultation and better communication was recommended

"To much confusion about the light rail – no one knows what's happening."

"I live on the western side of the highway; how do I access public transport?"

"We need more bicycle paths, not bicycle lanes. To cycle from where I live to the beach is only via street and it feels dangerous."
"You don't feel safe if someone is flying past you on the pathway."

Participants also identified a need for improvements in active and public transport systems, such as:

- Increasing transport options for residents west of the highway

- Expansion of heavy rail to Coolangatta airport

- Better cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to promote active transport

- Completion of the Oceanway project

Safety concerns were raised

- With the electric scooters and bikes on walkways and footpaths

- Need for separate, designated paths for pedestrians and faster-moving active transport
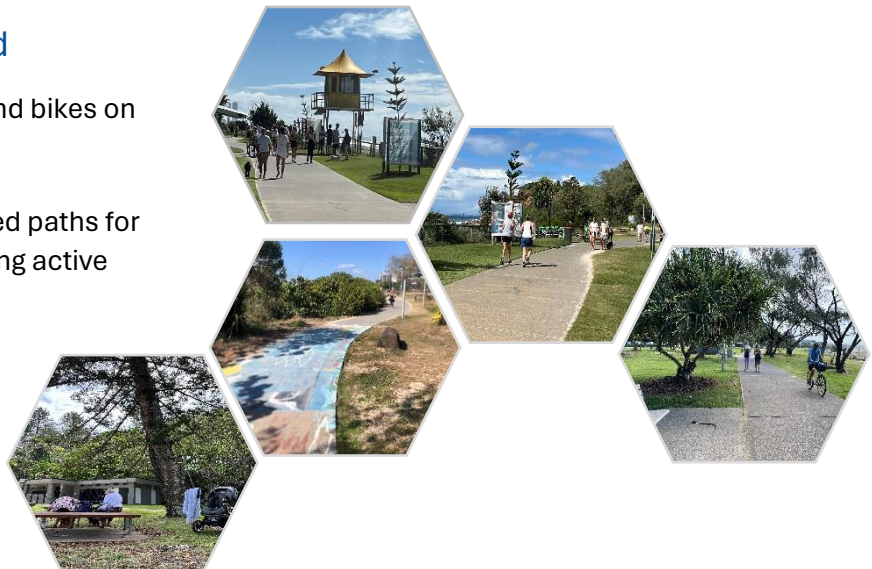
Housing Stress, Development and Planning

Several participants were finding:

- **Housing affordability** and **rising rents** personally challenging and making it difficult for them to remain living locally

- Housing stress is also contributing to increasing **homelessness**

There was a general agreement that there is a lack of planning for more affordable housing.

Some suggested

Airbnb rules be reviewed to open more long-term rental accommodation and tiny homes approved

> *"Losing the cultural integrity and lifestyle of the Gold Coast because of lack of planning."*
>
> *"Our population growth is one of the fastest and where do we put these people?"*
>
> *"Every apartment that is being built is advertised as ultra-elite, this is not affordable housing."*

> *"We need to avoid expanding developments into green spaces, rather we need to go up with more medium rise developments."*
>
> *"We've moved three times in the last five years due to rent increases."*

Many questioned if current planning for future population growth is adequate, with concerns that infrastructure is not keeping up with the current influx e.g. the Tallebudgera sewerage plant.

Comments were made about development

- Many recent developments predominantly catering to wealthy occupiers and will not alleviate housing stress

- Overdevelopment and apartment buildings exceeding regulated height limits are a concern, with Palm Beach often cited as an example where lack of regulation is detrimentally impacting the suburb

- There is a perception that developers' rights trump community rights

- Despite criticism of high-rise developments, the need for vertical medium-rise housing developments was identified to accommodate expected population growth while preserving green spaces and avoiding further habitat destruction

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Practices

A strong sentiment was expressed that more needs to be done to preserve and ensure the resilience of the Gold Coast's natural environment and species.

Frequently mentioned is how McPherson's exceptional bio-diversity needs to be protected and the importance of balancing human expansion with the protection of natural assets. In particular, the importance of protecting koalas and their habitats was highlighted.

The issue of invasive species and biosecurity was frequently raised. In particular, the response to fire ants has been underfunded and greater collaboration between local, state and federal governments is needed to address the problem effectively.

Water quality and pollution was a significant concern. Mention was made of how Tallebudgera Creek is being polluted by sewage works overflowing during heavy rain and Currumbin Creek from farming and water usage. There is a need for better stormwater management and water quality monitoring.

Waste management concerns included how single-use plastic continues to pollute beaches, the need for more recycling and composting infrastructure, and adoption of circular economy principles.

"We're living in a federally listed biodiversity area, and our federal minister, needs to make representation to protect it".

"On koala front, we have tributaries going into the creek. Why aren't we encouraged to plant koala trees through the valley?"

"The fire ant problem in Robina"

"We need to think 7 generations ahead. Will we have clean water and our natural flora and fauna in the future?"

"The sewerage problem in Tallebudgera Creek is more than a health issue, it's a tourism issue."

Climate Impact and Resilience

Participants were seriously concerned about the area's vulnerability to climate change, and it's impacts which included:

- Increasing frequency and severity of cyclones, storms, floods, fires, and drought

- The threat of sea level rise

- Migration of stingers down the coast due to ocean warming

The Gold Coast's lack of preparedness is a source of anxiety for some.

The impact of recent climate events like the Christmas storm and blackouts highlighted the need to be better prepared for future disasters.

A comprehensive adaptation strategy is needed as well as building community resilience.

"My biggest local concern is impacts of climate change. cyclones, floods and fire."

"Gold Coast is the canary in the coal mine with water rising and we need to address this as an extreme local issue but it also about adaptation and the protection of nature."

"Fingers crossed; we can survive a 10-year drought."

" If we have a meter water rise in the next 50 to 60 years ,the city is not viable."

"In the recent blackout, my wife had to ship to another house with power, due to her medical treatments for diabetes one and kidneys."

Further concerns were raised about the economic and social implications of climate change including uninsurable properties and the devastating effect on the tourism industry.

A few questioned the long-term viability of the Gold Coast, given the sea level rise projections in the coming decades.

Youth and Community at Risk

Many commented on the issue of youth crime and their perspectives varied.

- Some feared for their personal safety, others commented it is a problem in some suburbs and others question if it had increased.

- The link between drug use and youth crime is a concern as well.

- To address youth crime, some advocated for greater police presence and the greater sentiment is the need to tackle the underlying causes.

"Need more clarity on statistics and accurate information on crime and drug use."

" We're under resourced for mental health services."

"Domestic violence is huge. Gets called out but not a lot of action happening here."

"We need to address the root causes of increasing youth crime."

"The community is relying on the kindness of volunteers, such as Rosie and Orange skies to support the homeless. We need investment in on the ground systems."

- Many called for more local mental health services and more services to address and support those experiencing domestic violence.

- There are grave concerns about the increasing number of people who are homeless and how to remedy this.

- The valuable work volunteer organisations are doing to support vulnerable community members is recognise but more local and state government solutions are needed.

Additional concerns about youth issues include:

- The rising rates of youth suicide and the need for greater support for young people and vulnerable families.

- The establishment of safe spaces for youth was recommended and more activities during school holidays, and affordable recreational and sporting facilities outside of schools.

Q7. Are There Any State or Federal Issues Within and Beyond Our Electorate that Concern You?

- The urgency to address climate change emerged as the most pressing concern.
- Issues related to government transparency, accountability, and defence spending were highlighted.
- More needs to be done address housing affordability, cost of living, and inequality, including tax reforms.
- Concerns raised about the education sector and health system include equitable education opportunities, more access to mental health services and addressing an overburdened public hospital system.
- There are also calls for better integration of refugees and meaningful action to address inequalities faced by First Nations people.
- There is deep concern about the challenges younger generations of Australians face.

Climate Change: Impact On Our Environment and Lives

Addressing climate change and its impacts was overwhelmingly the greatest concern.

Climate change was the greatest concern raised by participants, noting its damaging effects through **fires, floods, storms and ecological harm**.

There is alarm about the worsening trajectory and broad impacts beyond just the environment, including negative consequences for the economy, social cohesion, and community displacement.

As a responsible nation, Australia is seen as having an **obligation** to address climate change for its own citizens and neighbouring countries.

Participants expressed frustration with Australia's continued support and subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

There is a desire stronger leadership and government policies to tackle the issue, **transition to renewable energy**, and stop new coal/gas projects.

Community engagement and education are seen as important to build understanding and support for necessary climate action.

"Why can't Australia be a beacon of change for climate and the energy transition?"

"We have a climate emergency and we're opening coal mines. No one is activity addressing it."

"We live in a global community and Australia needs to take greater responsibility for climate change."

"Climate change and the constant state of anxiety I feel because of it."

"The climate crisis is an existential threat in our lifetime. The trajectory is frightening, and the government is actively making the problem worse."

Q7. continued

Government

There is strong sentiment that greater **transparency** and **accountability** is needed in government. The influence of money in politics, through **donations** and **lobbying**, is seen as a **corrupting influence** undermining democracy. Positive support was expressed for the **National Anti-Corruption Commission**.

Concerns were raised about Australia's defence spending, particularly on **nuclear submarines**. The country's close relationship with the US, through initiatives like AUKUS, is seen as compromising Australia's autonomy in international affairs.

As a South Pacific nation, participants called for more engagement with our **neighbouring Pacific countries**. Discontent with the government's approach to the conflict in Palestine, was raised in conversations in January and February 2024.

Better integration of refugees into Australia is called for with further planning needed for future climate **refugees**, particularly displaced Pacific Island communities. Many advocate for whole-of-government approaches to critical social issues like **housing crisis, homelessness and domestic violence. Veterans'** needs are still not being adequately addressed.

"Political donations need real time reporting."

"Kirabati will be going under in 10 years so Australia needs to be proactive and ready for climate refugees."

"Not a fan with the way, Australia engages with the world. There's a gap between our values, what we say and how we behave."

"The war in GAZA, makes no sense that children are dying."

"The obsession with nuclear submarines which will be no defence against China."

"People need a roof over their head and food on the table. This needs a whole of government approach,Federal and State."

Housing and Cost of Living

Serious concerns were raised about housing affordability, the cost of living, and growing inequality in Australia.

- Participants worry about the stress many Australians face due to rising living costs.

- Social cohesion is seen as threatened with the widening gap between rich and poor and economic policies favouring older generations.

- Investment properties and financial incentives like negative gearing are seen as affecting housing prices and availability, turning housing into a financial commodity rather than a basic human right.

- Young people particularly struggle to enter the housing market.

To address these issues:

- Participants call for comprehensive tax reform and policy adjustments,

- Including changes to superannuation, negative gearing, and ensuring the wealthy pay their fair share.

- A coordinated state and federal approach are needed to tackle the housing crisis and affordability, along with reductions in state stamp duty.

"I'd like to see more for younger and poorer people and less for us type of people - it's too easy for us."

"The wealth gap is widening. A lot of people doing well and many not doing well, partly due to cost of housing."

"Change the tax models, address superannuation."

"Housing has become a stock exchange. It's about making money rather than a community need. "

"Tax policies have incentivised and created this situation (housing affordability) and it's difficult to change now."

"Rising inequality, ensure people have what they need to live a dignified life. This climate crisis is accelerating this issue, and the poor are the most exposed to these impacts.

Q7. continued

Education Sector

Participants expressed broad concern about the education sector, particularly the funding disparity between public and private schools. Many feel public education is being neglected while private schools receive more support, leading to inequity in educational opportunities.

The current school curriculum and teaching methods are regarded as not effectively engaging students or preparing them for future challenges. Participants called for a greater focus on critical thinking, life skills, and education on sustainability and climate change issues.

Strong emphasis was placed on supporting and empowering teachers with better pay and resources to handle students' diverse needs. Concerns about inequity in higher education were also raised, including affordability and the burden of HECS debt.

"Why does Australia subsidise wealthy schools. More money is needed for public schools."

"Public education not being supported, state government push for private schools in new developments but not state schools"

"For money we spend, our school results are average when compared to other developed nations.".

"Need to implement the Gonski report and individually fund each child."

Health Sector

Significant concern was expressed about the accessibility and affordability of mental health services, particularly for young people. The public hospital system is regarded as overburdened, with long waiting lists, ambulance ramping, and an aging population adding to the load. Participants mentioned the need to include dental care in the Medicare system and for more bulk billing doctors.

Concerns were also raised about privatization of health services and the erosion of community health services, such as early childhood intervention.

Participants navigating the aged care system with elderly relatives commented that more needs to be done to improve aged care services, including reducing wait times for ACAT assessments.

"Even with Mental Health care plans, people still aren't able to access psychologists."

"The hospital system is overloaded".

"Our children's mental health is a real concern."

"Waiting 6 months for an ACAT assessment is too long."

Age care workers need a salary they can live on.

It's hard for GP's to balance profitability and affordability.

First Nations

Widespread concern was expressed for the inequalities faced by First Nations people in Australia, including issues of social justice, health disparities, and the need for truth-telling and reconciliation. The recent referendum on the Voice to Parliament was seen as a missed opportunity to address these issues.

Participants highlighted the ongoing concern of racism towards First Nations people and the need for more awareness in the broader Australian community about the impact of colonization. There was general support for greater recognition of the rights and experiences of First Nations people and more meaningful action to address systemic issues.

"The continual plight of First Nations people."

"Voice to Parliament Referendum was poorly sold, electorate not prepared, and the community should have been better educated."

"We continue to have an issue around not respecting our First Nations and this deep hurt is manifested in them and intergenerational".

Despair for Younger Generations

Many participants expressed deep concern and despair about the current and future prospects for younger generations in Australia. They highlighted a range of challenges young people currently face, such as housing affordability, economic and job security, and the burden of debt through education.

Participants also worry about the future financial load of supporting an older generation and the impending climate crisis that younger generations will have to grapple with.

"My 15-year-old said 'what's the point mum, it's all going to shit anyway."

"Little future for children due to the pipeline of employment opportunities,"

"20-40 years old, carrying everything, mortgages, families & HECS debt - feels like they are loaded onto this generation. Cycle of debt and destroying hope." Maybe not use this quote and use the next one.

"Very concerned for the next generation which have hopeless prospect of owning a house, the world is burning and they have the burden of aging population to look after. How can next generations cope with these burdens."

Q8.   How Can These Issues Be Addressed Effectively?

People found question eight challenging to contribute to after having discussed at length their issues and concerns in the previous questions.

However, contributions focused on improving politics and combating misinformation; improved policy and leadership, environmental responsibility, and social equity issues; better community education and engagement and greater commitment to long-term planning.

Attract the "right people" into politics

- With appropriate experience, background, and emotional intelligence.
- Not merely career politicians but have diverse life experiences and can bring compassion, insight, and effective governance to their roles.

Combating Misinformation

- Implementation of better laws to prevent misinformation.
- Independent media.

"Truth in political advertising."

"Hold social media to account as a publisher."

"Better media laws to deal with the current media monopoly."

"Stop the revolving door between Mp's and fossil fuel business."

"There's need to be a nationally coordinated coastal adaption plan rather leaving it to the LGA."

"Housing and homelessness. People need a roof over their head and food on the table. This needs a whole of government approach."

Environmental Responsibility and Sustainable Development

- Leadership that prioritizes climate issues, sustainable urban planning to ensure that communities can house people.
- Shift away from fossil fuels towards innovative and renewable energy sources.

Improve the Political System

- To reduce the influence of money and lobbyists.
- To have greater transparency in government processes.
- To have more independent candidates who can represent local interests without party biases.
- To increase local engagement and ensuring that politics are more community oriented, to make political discussions more accessible and grassroots.

"Encourage citizens juries and remove the barriers to participate and pay people to show up."

"Progressive welfare system to address poverty. Makes more economic sense to support people to not be living below the poverty line."

"Artist will always build community - love to get 4 billboards to paint every 3 months to bring the community together."

Social Equity and Inclusivity

- Ensure diverse perspectives are included in policymaking.
- Have compassionate policies that address social inequalities and foster a more equitable society.

Education and Public Engagement

- More public forums, better funding for public broadcasting, and educational initiatives that help the public understand and engage with complex issues like climate change and economic policy.

Long-term Planning

- Long-term strategic, rather than short-term electoral-cycle driven fixes.
- Better planning in healthcare, education, and urban development, emphasizing sustainability and long-term benefits over immediate gains.

In Closing...

We started this process with a sense of curiosity as to whether community members in the McPherson electorate were interested in being involved in a community democracy process.

We found that community members actively participated and were energised by the KTC process.

They told us they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss our democracy in a meaningful way and were surprised and pleased that such conversations could occur. Furthermore, they really appreciated being part of the project.

In all, 250 community members participated. We can confidently assume the McPherson community is interested in being involved in a community democracy processes such as the McPherson Listening Project.

We would like to express our gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all the participants, whose invaluable contributions were essential to realizing this report. A special thank you goes to our hosts, facilitators and scribes, who rallied their friends, provided welcoming spaces, complete with delicious platters of food.

Thank you to the Community Independent Project who provided valuable guidance and resources throughout this project.

Thank you for your time and support.