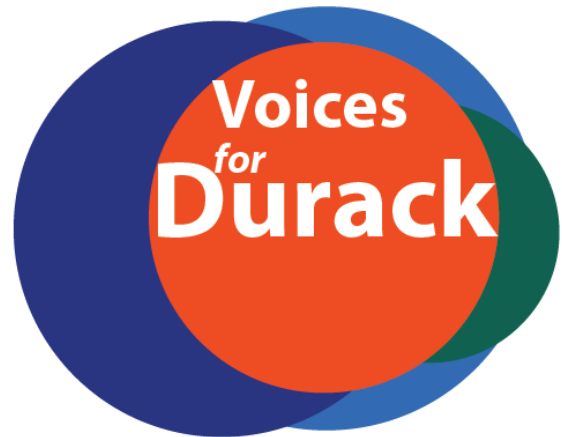


# Durack Deserves



Voices for Durack  
Interim Report  
2021





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Voices for Durack is an incorporated association registered in Western Australia - IARN: A1041886J.  
We are volunteers and receive no donations or funding.

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

*We acknowledge and respect the world and people that existed and will exist beyond our own lifetimes.*

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# Introduction

Voices for Durack Inc<sup>1</sup> is a grassroots volunteer community group in the federal electorate of Durack in Western Australia.

To **help enable healthy communities in the long term**, we raise spirits, ambition, and action for good representation, governance, and citizenship.

We've been inviting people in Durack to share their views, in friendly, facilitated conversations, about community, representation, and what they care about.

People have enjoyed relaxing and reflecting, together, on what they value, admire, and would like to see more of. People know that healthy democracy and ethical representation can help enable healthy communities and positive progress.

We thank everyone who has participated so far. The *Durack Deserves: Voices for Durack Interim Report 2021* summarises what we've heard.

*It was clear from these conversations that people in Durack know that they deserve better representation.*

We offer this interim report and subsequent report/s as a resource for all candidates seeking to represent Durack in the 2022 federal election.

Voices for Durack will continue to invite Durack's voters to share their thoughts with us and each other. Be heard!<sup>2</sup>

Here's to many more fruitful, enjoyable, and empowering conversations in our communities, in service of healthy communities!

Yours sincerely,  
The Voices for Durack Inc Committee

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<sup>2</sup> <https://voicesfordurack.com/be-heard/>

# About us

Voices for Durack Inc committee members are long-time residents of Durack who are frustrated by the neglect of Durack residents and Durack interests by successive federal governments.

One founding member, ex-President of WA Farmers, **Dale Park** said: *'It seems like Labor people won't do anything for Durack because Durack doesn't vote for them, the Liberal Party doesn't do anything for Durack because Durack always votes for them.'*

In 2016, **Christie Kingston**, as part of a delegation of farmers to federal parliament calling for action on climate change, met Independent MP for Indi, Cathy McGowan AO. Christie was impressed. She saw a caring, well-informed, community-backed MP who was 100% focused on her electorate's wellbeing, unconstrained by a political party, and keen to involve and empower people in her electorate in the democratic process. In 2021, Christie started Voices for Durack to find out if people in Durack want to pursue and support excellent, community-minded political representation.

Voices for Durack has been grounded in the direct experience of ex-MP **Philip Gardiner**. *'Parliamentarians get caught up in their party's position,'* he says. Phil was elected to the WA Upper House on a platform of addressing social inequity and climate change. To his distress, and despite his objections, his party decided that neither of these critical matters would be a focus for them in government. Philip wants to see Durack's parliamentary representative be independent and thus free to be responsive to Durack's electors and to advance Durack's best interests.

Other key volunteers include **Sue Monks, Hamish Maclean, Jo Jackson King, Elizabeth McLellan, Richard McLellan, Lara Sampson, John White,** and **Angela Park**.

# What we've been doing

Late in 2021 we began inviting Durack voters to *kitchen table conversations (KTCs)* to share their thoughts with us and each other.

Were they happy with their current federal parliamentary representation? What did they value in their community? What did they want the Australian government to focus on nationally and internationally? What were their ideas for addressing the issues they care about?

We listened to people: from 20-year-olds to people enjoying their ninth decade; women and men; people across different occupational groups; people living at opposite ends of the vast electorate of Durack; and from a range of ethnic backgrounds, including Indigenous people.

We have only interviewed ten percent of our goal number of people so far. However, to our astonishment, what participants have said to us has been so unexpectedly congruent (despite the diversity outlined above) that we felt it had to be shared now. We will continue to update this document so that more thoughts and ideas from Durack voters enter the public realm.

One clear direction emerged from these conversations.

*People wanted a new model for engaging with their representative, and they wanted that representative to honour their needs above those of political parties or donors. They know they deserve better.*

Confident that the feelings expressed at our kitchen table conversations are felt elsewhere in Durack, too, we are now searching for an independent candidate who seeks to meet Durack voters' expectations as our federal representative.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://voicesfordurack.com/seeking-durack-independent/>

Quotes from our kitchen table conversations appear inside quote marks in blue throughout this report:

*'Country voters do the worst job for ourselves as we vote for the same people with a safe margin and their politicians just turn up... rub their hands... it's happy days.'*

*'The idea of a mandate from a vote is something I find very difficult... and I find it hard to agree with everything a party says, and then they seem to believe that if you've voted for them, you agree with everything they've said and they have a mandate on that basis.'*

*'It's fairly evident that our representatives represent the political parties and not the electors.... and this means whoever gives money to the parties gets representation.'*

*'The two major parties riff off each other and as they only differ on minor points (that seem big to them and they hyperfocus on those points), there isn't space for community issues to really break into the political process.'*



# Engaging with other Durack voters

Like many other Voices groups<sup>4</sup>, we have used the Victorian Women's Trust model of civic engagement called *kitchen table conversations*<sup>5</sup>.

We hold kitchen table conversations to encourage and inspire respectful, positive and down-to-earth political conversations across differences.

People enjoy being heard and hearing other people's views in a comfortable, friendly environment. Comments from participants include:

*'I feel more connected with these people now.'*

*'I feel refreshed. I feel like I've unloaded some \*\*\*\*.'*

*'That was excellent.'*

So far, we have held 12 conversations. We ask three groups of questions: about living in Durack, representation, and people's concerns.

Participants gave us hundreds of answers to these questions.

We analysed each response. Our general findings to each question so far are presented in this *Durack Deserves: Voices for Durack Interim Report 2021*. Responses are anonymised to respect the privacy of contributors.

Before sharing those results, we want to talk about Durack itself.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voices\\_groups\\_in\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voices_groups_in_Australia)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.vwt.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/KTC-Guide-2021-DIGITAL-v11.pdf>

# About the Durack electorate

The sheer scale and complexity of Durack – land area, diversity and inequity – was something that every participant mentioned to us. As it was front and centre in our kitchen table conversations, in this first iteration of *Durack Deserves* we are also putting it front and centre.

Covering about a fifth of the Australian landmass, the Durack electorate is bigger than most countries, sitting between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> largest nations ranked by size. It is considered the third largest single-member electorate in the world.

The variations in climate, landscape, living things, and human occupations within Durack is greater than it is in other Australian electorates and, indeed, greater than within many nations.

The unacceptable differences between the opportunities – eg, education, health, safety, housing, and occupations – available to people is greater in Durack than it is in many other Australian electorates.

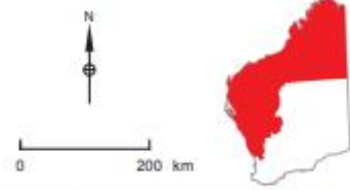
So, is there anything people in Durack have in common? We share the experience of distance. The barriers, freedom, and requirement for self-reliance created by distance give us a great deal in common.

*'Distance is a badge of honour in the newbies... distances test your commitment, toughen you up, ensure that you make those treks worth something and meaningful when you arrive.'*

In so many ways the Durack electorate is 'an Australia within Australia.' This makes achieving good governance doubly challenging: however, the general feeling among interviewees was that possible solutions to improving governance in Durack have not even been attempted.

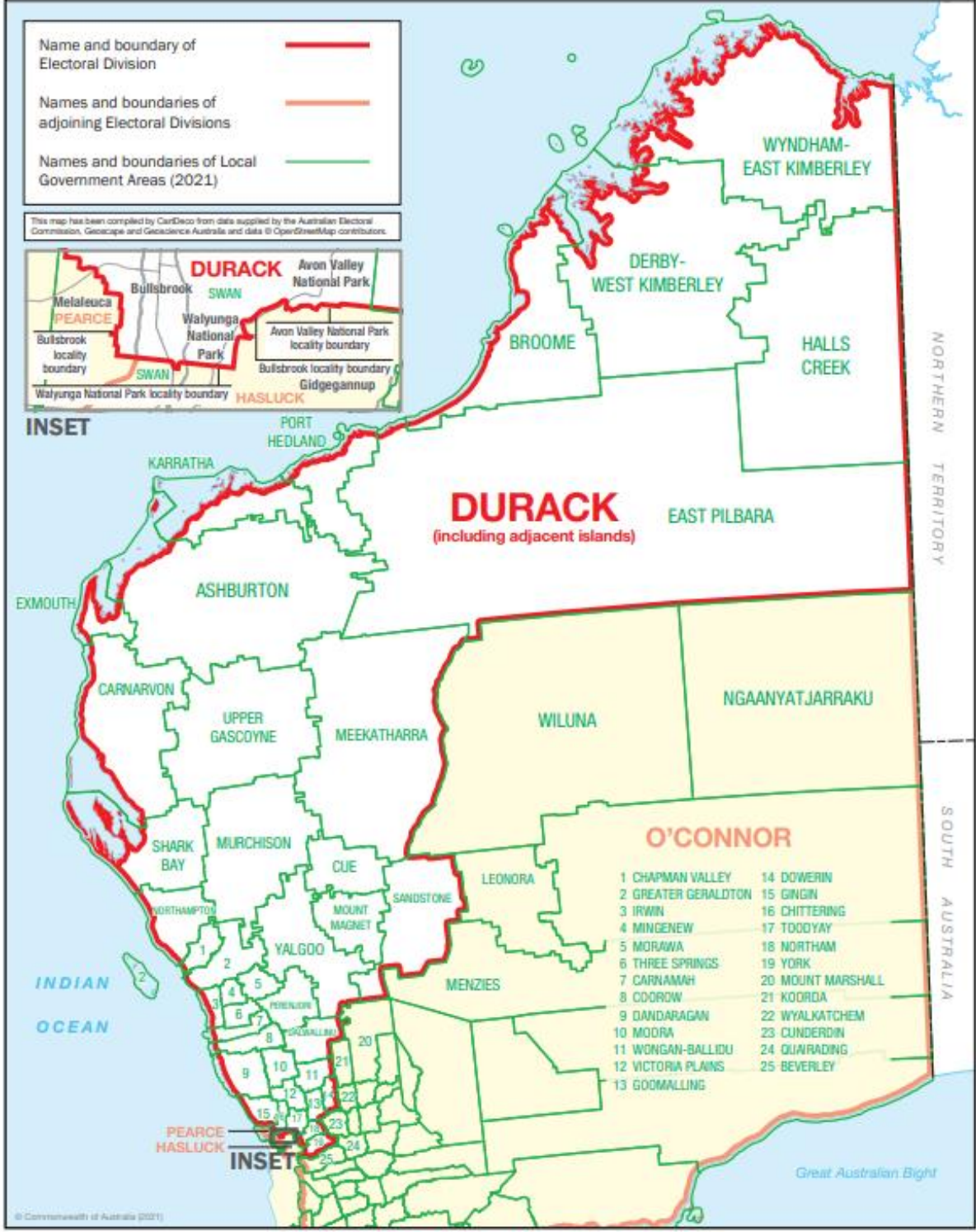
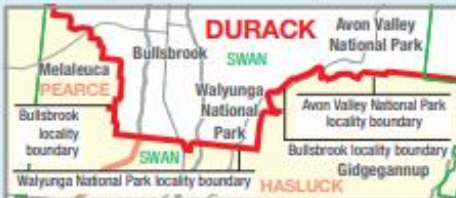


**August 2021**  
**MAP OF COMMONWEALTH**  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION OF**  
**DURACK**



Name and boundary of Electoral Division	
Names and boundaries of adjoining Electoral Divisions	
Names and boundaries of Local Government Areas (2021)	

This map has been compiled by CardGeo from data supplied by the Australian Electoral Commission, Geoscape and Geoscience Australia and data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 CHAPMAN VALLEY    | 14 DOWERIN        |
| 2 GREATER GERALDTON | 15 GINGIN         |
| 3 IRWIN             | 16 CHITTERING     |
| 4 MINGENEW          | 17 TODDYAY        |
| 5 MORAWA            | 18 NORTHAM        |
| 6 THREE SPRINGS     | 19 YORK           |
| 7 CARNAMAH          | 20 MOUNT MARSHALL |
| 8 COOROW            | 21 KOORDA         |
| 9 DANDARAGAN        | 22 WYALKATCHEM    |
| 10 MOORA            | 23 CUNDERDIN      |
| 11 WONGAN-BALLIDU   | 24 QUARADING      |
| 12 VICTORIA PLAINS  | 25 BEVERLEY       |
| 13 GOODMALLING      |                   |

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# What we heard from Durack voters

The hundreds of responses we heard from Durack voters to our questions about living in Durack, political representation, and their concerns, are summarised on the following pages.

The views and quotes contained and summarised in this report belong solely to the individual people who came to our kitchen table conversations. Their views reflect their life experiences and do not necessarily reflect the views of Voices for Durack Inc.

# *Living in Durack*

The answers to the two questions about living in Durack revealed the inequity that has never been successfully overcome. This includes not only the inequity between many Durack residents and the rest of Australia; but also, inequity in Durack itself.

Some Durack residents lead less safe lives, are offered fewer opportunities, and experience much poorer health than others.

Our participants wanted equity to be seen as a top priority for all levels of government.

## What makes for a strong community?

This first question elicited strong opinions. Many people had lived in different parts of Durack and had experienced communities that functioned well and communities that were functioning poorly.

People who had lived in communities that functioned poorly emphasised the need for safety, shelter, food, water and services; as well as the need for ethical behaviour, empathy, and inclusion.

People who had only lived in communities where that was a given were less likely to express that need.

Responses to <b>'What makes for a strong community?'</b>	Frequency
Ethical behaviour and broad representation in all community-based committees including on shires. Not just one person or 'always the same people' and no factionalism, but rather accepting differences and diversity.	24
Empathy for others including elderly, and a culture of volunteering and giving back including offering, trusting in, and accepting care.	18
Equity – making sure the community is a good place for women and children – knowing your family is safe, that you can afford food and services, and that those services are available in the community. <i>'Not everyone has equal opportunity and that impacts our community quality.'</i>	17
Inclusive, appealing, fun events, groups, festivals delivered creatively with appropriate use of community resources – <i>'days that bring people together and into our communities'</i> .	15
A pay-it-forward community culture; and people who know how to, have the capacity to, and are supported to contribute to the community.	14
People having enough time and confidence to have multiple interactions with others who live in the community: <i>'People knowing each other outside of their roles and outside of their place of work. We all work harder for everyone else when we know each other as people.'</i>	12
Transparency and good communication across the community including by the local Shire. <i>'If you don't know what's going on, you can't join in.'</i>	11

Sensible regulations so that community is not prevented from meeting its own needs: <i>'Things just need to be fair, safe and so you can have a go.'</i>	8
Connection to the natural world: <i>'knowing your flora, fauna and fishies!'</i>	5
Availability of accommodation/facilities.	6
Proper employment, opportunities for entrepreneurship.	2

## What do you value the most about living here?

After the first question about community where people chose to say a great deal – KTC participants generally answered this question quite simply and quickly.

It was clear that although the great distances make life challenging, the distance also rewards residents with a sense of awe and intimate engagement with nature; and gives them the space they value, with plenty of diversity to keep life interesting.

*'It is so diverse, the ways of life here from the top to the bottom. It makes this a pretty cool place to live, although sometimes you don't feel connected to the top half.'*

*'I like living in a country town as I can do anything without getting in a car!'*

*'Don't need big developments and growth: we should be happy to plateau, protect and preserve.'*

*'The millennia of cultural heritage.'*

Responses to <b>'What do you value the most about living here?'</b>	Frequency
The people. Inclusiveness, being generously welcomed by others, <i>'knowing and interacting with people that I wouldn't normally get the chance to cross paths with'</i> ; having long term bonds despite the isolation.	15
The space.	10
The safety. <i>'Safe to be yourself, too.'</i>	9
The isolation.	7
The power and beauty of the landscape, with particular mentions made of the ocean and the ancientness of the land.	6
Feeling a connection to Indigenous people and culture due to where I live and work.	4
The quiet.	4
Living in a community of self-reliant people	4
The freedom.	2
Having everything you need nearby.	2



However, some respondents did not directly answer these questions but instead emphasised that the factors they value, and that make for a strong community and good place to live, are not always present where they live:

*'This community is disconnected unless you do sport.'*

*'There is a them and us mentality: Indigenous / non-indigenous and farmers / non-farmers.'*

*'In smaller communities, people are time poor, and distances can be a barrier to contribution. People want to help, but can't always.'*

*'It comes down to the fundamentals - controlling law and order, having good governance so that things like the swimming pool stay open.'*

*'Too often shires just pay lip service to the councillors in decision making, and the broader community blames the councillors rather than the CEO, and it promotes division within the community.'*

# *Political representation*

These questions also elicited long, complex answers and it was clear participants felt that Durack people and environments were being neglected at all levels of government.

Participants saw the scale of the electorate as an obstacle to good representation. Most participants, however, felt that this was surmountable, and offered ideas towards improving engagement between the electorate and their representative.

## What do you think makes for a really good political representative?

Durack residents said a good political representative needs to put their electorate first, be accountable and advocate courageously. They also believe that it is important for a representative to be honest.

The conflict between the party system and the needs of the electorate were top of mind for our participants:

*‘With the residential college the local rep told us what the party thought; he was not interested in taking what we thought back to the party room. The party dis-endorsed the politician who actually took our views back to the party.’*

Responses to <b>‘What do you think makes for a really good political representative?’</b>	Frequency
Puts their electorate first, has the energy and courage of their convictions, delivers for the electorate and is accountable for failures (doesn’t blame ‘the party’ or only vote on party lines), works across party lines.	49
An upstanding citizen: truthful, transparent, genuine, real – does not hold fake community consultations, does not seek to escape responsibility, answers the question, doesn’t use ‘motherhood statements’ (not rehearsed, no spin, no evasion, not just about getting re-elected), calls out bad behaviour.	31
Listens to experts, prepares, researches, has good analysis skills, articulate, provides detailed plans well before elections (eg. Germany has a transition plan for fossil fuel workers, Australia hasn’t), thinks long term.	20
Communicates frequently and is accessible – knocks on doors, is in the community, understands they are working for you. Has innovative processes in place for developing relationships with us.	11
Accepts feedback and makes changes, no ego, submits to the electorate, can say ‘I don’t know’, humble.	8
Empathic, thinks of the needs of others, has a spiritual framework, understands First Law, respects others (eg. women) and shows this in their actions so they are not ‘just talk’.	8

Helps you practically with your issue – replies to letters, takes issues to parliament: <i>‘a working representative who goes the extra mile and actually does the work. Someone who will take on government agencies.’</i>	4
Cares about nature and the beauty and health of the natural world.	4
Tough, thick-skinned.	3

## ***Do you feel you have an adequate voice in the way you are represented?***

All of the Durack voters said 'no'. When asked 'why not' they gave two types of answers.

Firstly, they gave answers in regards to the lack of action on matters important to Durack voters. They said things like:

*'With the inequity that even a cursory view of country WA reveals, it's clear we're not getting our entitlements, and while we could perhaps try to do more ourselves, our representative should have a sharp eye to the dynamics that stop people being the best they can be.'*

*'The rail safety issue has not been heard by state or federal governments. It's been such a long battle. You get disillusioned when fixable things don't get fixed and people's lives are unnecessarily at risk.'*

*'No understanding by people who live in the cities about what it's like to live out here, when you're losing resources, eg hospital.'*

*'WA doesn't get a say.'*

Secondly, they gave answers relating to the Durack representative, other politicians, and their experience of participating in their democracy in general:

*'It has never occurred to me to even try to contact my MP.'*

*'It is hard to know what our [federal] rep actually does. She sends out a circular quarterly. Contrast this with our State MP, who is active and turns up and seems to care.'*

*'I have written her letters and not got a response.'*

*'I do get regular emails and visits and discussion.'* (NB. Despite this, the interviewee didn't feel well represented due to the lack of action on climate and integrity.)

*'Someone more visible and engaged would still go a long way even in such a huge and diverse electorate.'*

*'They need to tell us what they are doing - and it can't just be that highly curated rubbish. We're on red dirt, we're all working very hard, and our representative needs to be doing the same thing.'*

*'You could have a joke and a laugh with him [a previous state politician]. He fought for the regions. You saw him.'*

Responses to <b>'Do you feel you have an adequate voice in the way you are represented?'</b>	%
No	100%
Responses to <b>'Why/why not?'</b>	Frequency
No action on climate change despite the science and the polls: <i>'They keep saying "we won't do anything to hurt the regions" but they are ignoring the fact that the majority of the people in the regions want action on global warming.'</i>	30
<i>'There doesn't seem to be anything I can do to make our MP act on the inequity in our electorate in some areas.'</i> People in Durack often have to fight for basic services (eg. education) and/or occupational health and safety issues (eg. unsafe rail crossings), but still go unheard.	16
Our MP doesn't seem engaged/able to be visible.	15
Our MP toes her party's line – and the party listens to its donors and the Murdoch media rather than the electorate. In addition, country WA generally is poorly represented.	14
Our region is perhaps too big and too complex for any MP to do a good job.	11
I receive party material - flyers, robocalls, emails, robo-texts but I don't feel heard.	10
There isn't enough diversity – including enough women – and I don't feel properly represented by any party.	10

Some participants felt that Durack was an extremely challenging role for any MP:

*‘With Durack it is exceptionally difficult for any representative to feel connected with every community.’*

*‘The huge electorate means that probably 90% of us don’t get adequately represented. The difference between the needs of people in the Kimberley and us, 3,000 kms away, are completely different. For one person to be expected to take all that on is absolutely crazy.’*

## ***What would make for a stronger relationship between people and elected representatives?***

This question was answered with great energy and conviction, and there was general unanimity in what was said. Overwhelmingly, people felt a strong relationship was only possible if parliamentarians consistently put the electorate first over time; behaved with integrity; put a great deal more effort into communicating with the electorate, and if there was sensible donation reform.

*'Most of them go in there thinking that they're going to achieve something, but then they get to the party machine and have to toe the line.'*

*'The money that politicians get for slush funds, for trips, and travel allowances, pork barrelling - all of this is beyond the pale.'*

*'Some belief you actually could continue to have a say would improve the relationship. You get a party in, and then you are stuck with those policy settings.'*



Responses to 'What would make for a stronger relationship between people and elected representatives?'	Frequency
Put electors ahead of their party – <i>'our member should represent our interests'</i> . Parliamentarians should dissent from their party when necessary and vote according to their electorate's wellbeing and be honest with (no spin/evasion), and fully accountable to, the electorate for their voting record.	42
Establishing systems for improving democratic participation in the electorate including use of technology and a role for both the shires and the shire councillors in communicating local issues to federal (and state) reps. Lots more personal contact and dialogue with your representative. Politicians to knock on doors, conduct public forums, use citizen juries, strong team including community volunteers. <i>'There is no perfect way but there are LOTS of ways to do this.'</i>	32
All sides of politics to run only on public money (ie no donations) – to do their job in the same way the rest of us do: to actually work for the people paying them (the electorate).	25
A sense that they are just another person and that they respect and care for you as another person, too.	9
They are known to do the work for you even if they don't politically agree with you.	6

# *Issues and concerns*

Equity for people in Durack, including intergenerational equity, topped the list of concerns.

The need for ethical governance that is able to effectively and efficiently address issues in a timely manner, and reforms to help achieve ethical governance, are high priorities.

*'Care and govern for future generations, and people today.'*

## ***Are there any particular issues within the Durack electorate that you feel should be focussed on in the run up to the 2022 election?***

Participants gave many different answers to this question reflecting just how great the need for equitable services is in Durack. Indeed, the top issue for Durack was equity (which is shown as a string of individually expressed concerns, then mentioned as an ‘overall’ problem) followed by environmental issues.

*‘Australia is our wide-open spaces and the people who live in them: we are only as good as those places and their custodians.’*

*‘Everyone drains to Perth... because there is the need to do so after primary school. Most education is in the metro area and it’s then hard to come back.’*

*‘I believe local government should be a power but it has power groups within it that do not consider the majority.’*

Responses to <b>“Are there particular issues within the Durack electorate that should be focused on in the lead-up to the 2022 election?”</b>	Frequency
Inequity in Durack as a result of insufficient, not-fit-for-purpose services in the following areas:	108, comprising...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All levels of education: early education and childcare, primary, secondary and tertiary education – and removal of education money spent in the bush eg. taking year seven out of primary school. Not having education that is medically and culturally suitable for Durack kids.</li> </ul>	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health services in communities eg. medical care, allied health, telecommunications to help enable health services.</li> </ul>	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing.</li> </ul>	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation – unsafe passive level railway crossings, roads in disrepair for months, lack of public transport.</li> </ul>	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic violence.</li> </ul>	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telecommunications – access, reliability, affordability.</li> </ul>	12

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community support for children and young people (leading to unruly behaviour, reducing community safety).</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality food and water.</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous disadvantage.</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole of life care – age in place/on country.</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment and business opportunities.</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inequity due to FIFO.</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inequity overall.</li> </ul>	2
Environmental issues including preventing deforestation, promoting biodiversity, phasing out industrial practices that lead to global warming and environmental damage (eg. plastics proliferation), replacing with clean energy and circular economy industries to create jobs in regions, and climate action in order to care for future generations.	46
Dysfunctional local government that is both damaging to the community and/or misses opportunities to be a better advocate.	15
Government agencies that are not fit for purpose – too much outsourcing of the work of government, eg. job agencies, to private agencies.	13
Lack of empathy in political leadership and business culture – currently happy to exploit people and the environment.	6
Lack of sustained funding for solutions that are working.	5
Not enough people in the bush for community/innovation hubs.	3

## What are the most important issues to you beyond the Durack electorate that you feel should be focussed on in the run up to the 2022 election?

KTC participants expressed concern about a wide range of national and global issues.

While the Covid-19 pandemic was mentioned, generally it was referred to as having ‘unmasked’ existing issues.

Issues of integrity and governance were high priorities, but the highest was taking action on climate change, which is seen as an existential threat.

*‘Update our climate target and action to reverse global warming, not increase it.’*

*‘What is going on with Porter? What’s the system, the culture, the boys club that’s allowed him to stay? Why is the PM protecting him? Who donated to his ‘blind trust’?’*

Responses to <b>“Are there particular issues beyond the Durack electorate that should be focussed on in the lead-up to the 2022 election?”</b>	Frequency
Climate change and the environment including eliminating the current inappropriate politicisation of these issues.	20
The dishonesty by some politicians. Behaviour such as non-merit-based allocation of public monies in hopes of buying electoral support (eg. sports rorts). A seemingly bigger focus on winning elections than on governance.	16
Lack of social equity in Australia - uneven education, uneven telecommunications coverage, big corporate salaries, uneven distribution of health services, uneven GST distribution, not taxing big corporates but taxing small enterprises, treatment of Indigenous people – <i>‘recognising that what we have in the moment isn’t bridging the gap between the haves and the have-nots, and that this is going to cost more in the long run’.</i>	15
The lack of empathy by politicians and in our government – not just words but actions: <i>‘The PM lost me when he left during the fires’</i> – and the culture of institutional cruelty they have created in	10

government departments eg. treatment of asylum seekers, veterans, people with a disability, carers.	
International relations: <i>'we are becoming disrespected internationally... we need to be firm but polite... if we did international relations smartly, we would be a middle power'.</i>	10
Lack of support/too much bureaucracy for small businesses.	8
Loss of funding for the arts.	8
Unaffordable education, particularly tertiary – <i>'it is getting harder for people to get educated and there will be societal costs from that'.</i>	5
Inappropriate treatment of women, including in politics.	3
Insufficient funding for public broadcasters.	2
Denial of the fact it costs more to live rurally and remotely, and lack of support for the people doing so when it is to the benefit of Australia as a whole.	2
Housing is not affordable for young people.	1
Job insecurity and the gig economy.	1
Global inequity.	1
Supply chain insecurity.	1
Following US and UK into wars.	1
Sale to foreign interests of Australian land and other assets	1

## Any ideas as to what you think could be done that might deal with these issues effectively?

Many of the solutions suggested fit within a 'multi-solving model' – an action that has positive impacts in a range of spheres. In order to have fidelity to the number of times an idea is expressed, multi-solving ideas are only placed beneath one heading, even when applicable elsewhere.

*'In the Shire of Halls Creek there are only seven ratepayers: the Shire has to do a sausage sizzle as a source of income! Clearly, we haven't got the affluence to ask for help from private citizens, we have to have access to public funding.'*

*'Address inequity as the core problem across the board.'*

*'We are full of assets here in Australia, tidal, geothermal... there's no reason for us not to invest there and stop investing in non-renewable energy.'*

*'We have to empower local government.'*

Responses to <b>'Any ideas as to what you think could be done that might deal with these issues effectively?'</b>	Frequency
To address protection of nature - our life-support system	
Act on climate change in accordance with science. Develop regions into hubs for clean energy generation and renewable industries.	14
Do a much better job of communicating the economic benefits of sustainable development to people. Find ways to help the public access accurate information (eg. return funding to the public broadcaster).	8
Take good ideas wherever they come from rather than politicise (eg. covid management by State Premiers; management of climate change in light of the science). Ungag public servants so their expertise is part of the public debate.	5
To address ethical behaviour	
Federal ICAC. Public funding only for elections. Address donations to political parties. Some participants mentioned the ideas to stamp out corruption, end cash for political access, and level the playing field in elections from <a href="https://www.ourdemocracy.com.au/the-framework/">https://www.ourdemocracy.com.au/the-framework/</a> .	25

Stop unethical, immoral, corrupt etc. behaviour: Address tax havens, make big companies pay tax. Stronger courts as balance for legislators so unfair laws can be removed.	13
Re-establish lines between traditional reporting and opinion and improve education in this regard via better funding for public broadcasters. Prevent monopolisation of the press by commercial interests.	8
Provide cultural balance via better funding for the arts.	8
To address social equity in Durack	
Increase the ability of Australians to be heard by all levels of government via better communication with all representatives achieved by empowering and funding local government to funnel local concerns/solutions upwards or address in place if appropriate. Improve local government processes to ensure they deliver increased equity and support diverse voices to be heard.	18
Ensure locally controlled community-based services and adequate telecommunications to better support parents, provide positive occupations for children and teenagers, address housing needs WITH the people who will live in them.	8
Increase regional and rural population so more community needs can be met. This could be achieved via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative tax policy which is postcode dependent.</li> <li>• Subsidised housing.</li> <li>• Attracting business and tradespeople including overseas arrivals.</li> <li>• Improving enablers to wellbeing and health such as telecommunications.</li> </ul>	7
Be aware that historical lack of good representation in early decision-making means many policies are a poor fit for people in Durack. If a policy isn't working, discard it or modify it. <i>'For example, NDIS money is totally useless to many people in Durack due to the lack of services... the planners etc. are all employed [mostly in urban areas] ... but the actual people with disability have no help.'</i>	6
To address social equity in Australia	
Ensure equitable support for people (eg. unemployed, veterans, people with mental illness, DV victims, carers, asylum seekers) delivered in a way that preserves dignity and eradicates barriers to access in Australia eg. NDIS, Centrelink, Borderforce. Release the asylum seekers in detention who have already been granted refugee status. Consider Universal Basic Income.	12
See young people as an investment - we need to create and work for them. Ideas included making houses affordable, stop	9



universities being businesses, make uni and TAFE more affordable, making boarding school fees tax deductible, reduce voting age to 16.	
The <a href="#">Uluru Statement from the Heart</a> needs to be central. Respect the resilience and achievement of Aboriginal people, and acknowledge and address intergenerational trauma. Support whole families and the local leaders and role models. Listen to and elevate the Elders.	5
Decentralise to shift the authority (and the departments) to regions. Let decisions be made in regions rather than losing time and money developing grant applications for city authorities. Give remotely located people freedom to institute community-led approaches.	3
Address lack of safety and security for transport. For example, on the rail crossing safety issue, legislate for appropriate safety measures.	3

# Conclusion

Kitchen table conversations offer a refreshing opportunity for people to relax and reflect, together, on what they value, admire, and would like to see more of.

They offer a chance to celebrate and focus on what healthy democracy and ethical representation can help achieve – healthy communities.

In our kitchen table conversations held in 2021, people told us that governance and representation can, and should be, ethical, effective, equitable, and responsive to current and future needs.

People know that good ideas can come from anywhere, and that representatives let us down if they are constrained by outdated ideologies, divisions and ‘sides’.

Policy ideas, implementation, and review must match the current and future needs of people in diverse communities – this is where local listening is paramount!

Every voter in Durack has the opportunity to be heard by their MP, and not just at elections. We are all free to use that opportunity. If we don't feel heard or represented, we can do something about it, like search for an independent candidate.

Our *Durack Deserves: Voices for Durack Interim Report 2021* barely scratches the surface of the deep listening we want Durack's candidates and representatives to do.

Voices for Durack will keep listening, noticing common ground, and seeking representation that puts Durack's people's needs first.

*Feeling more connected to other people, and feeling safe to talk about politics in a friendly, respectful way, is what we and some participants are loving about kitchen table conversations. It's not just about the content!*

Please gather a few friends, family, or colleagues and have a chat about what you all love here, what you're grateful for that government has enabled, what you think good representation looks like, and what positive progress you think is needed next in Durack and Australia.

*Even better, if you live in Durack, you're invited to join or host a Voices for Durack kitchen table conversation.*

It's our democracy, and it's our shared future that we can help shape - for us, and today's babies' future grandchildren, and beyond.

Live in Durack? You're invited to get involved. Please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Voices for Durack

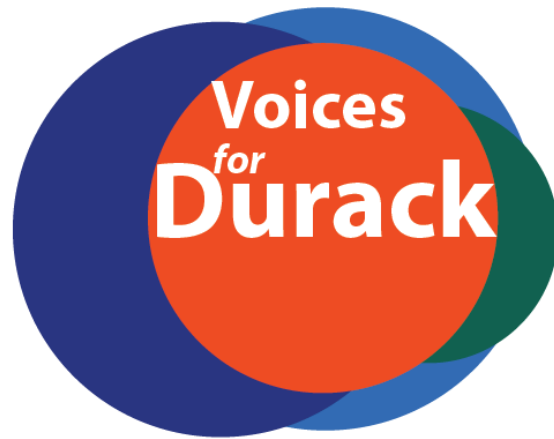
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# **Live in Durack?**

## **You're invited to get involved!**

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