

Questions for Borough Candidates.

Prior to Webinar via email:

1. What skills do you bring to the role of Councillor – skills that would make you a good representative for the Borough of Queenscliffe?

Answer: I have been a Councillor for the last 10 months after winning the seat vacated by Tony Francis. With this experience I will be effective from the start of a new Council.

I have Master of Business Administration (MBA) and have worked as a senior manager across a range of industries and countries. My experiences enable me to be effective when dealing with our community and at all levels of government.

2. In your view, what are the key matters that the Bellarine community want addressed in the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) Statement of Planning Policy, and as a Councillor, how would you support the community in having these matters appropriately addressed?

Answer: If successful in the Council elections for the Borough I will, via offices responsible for the application of the planning scheme be briefed on the importance of the DAL objective and strategies where applicable and be called to make decisions based on the best advise available.

3. The Borough is unique in terms of heritage, its current economic situation, and limits on its income. What do you see as its priorities in the next four years, and how would you work to address these?

Answer: Over my period on Council there has been introduced a new financial reporting process which is more transparent for all interested parties. We must continue to optimise revenue from caravan parks, state and federal government through development grants etc.

A Heritage review, Part 1 has been completed with a recommendation to continue to assess a number of properties and open spaces. This will strengthen our case to be acknowledged as a “special place” and provide an increased level of formal protection against inappropriate development.

The Borough can remain a strong independent place if we are careful not to waste money.

4. What do you see as the key actions which the Borough of Queenscliffe can take to prepare the community for the impacts of climate change and sea level rise?

Answer: Council has an obligation to work with the Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to deliver a Coastal Marine Management Plan that looks at the issues of coastal degradation, sea level rising, inundation, habitat loss on our coast. This will give us a full understanding of actions we can take in conjunction with state and federal governments to mitigate the effects for residents.

5. Management of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve is especially significant to Borough residents. What do you see as the way forward?

Answer: Council had been slow to apply to Aboriginal Heritage for permits in the PLLHR that would allow major works. The reason a permit is required is that there are

Questions for Borough Candidates.

considerable artefacts in the PLLHR area. Once the permit is approved (9-12 months) works that were taken to the residents of the Borough can proceed. Work to improve the visual amenity have been actioned this quarter.

6. My question is to all candidates and is for them to nominate their top priority climate emergency initiative for the Borough?

Answer: My top priority is to see the Climate Response Plan is finalised and endorsed by the residents. This will set the commitment for all parties (Council, Officers, Residents and Business) and the actions and targets for the future.

7. We like councillors to provide an independent, locally based commitment to matters in the Borough. We also do not want our council to be used as a training opportunity for aspiring State and Federal party politicians. We seek assurance from you on these points and then ask: Are you or have you ever been a member of or are you in any way linked with any political party?

Answer: I am not now nor have I ever been a member of any political party.

8. How will you expedite action to implement the plans for the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve?

Answer: Yes. This matter is very important. Council must wait for approval of a application to Aboriginal Heritage before proceeding with ground works. This approval takes a minimum of nine months and was not made until the second half of this year. The application is very important as it deals with disturbance of the ground. There is a high likelihood of aboriginal artefacts in the area. Council will then restart the process for the area.

9. A number of candidates reference the importance of the 'community' and listening to the community. What specific ways or forums will you involve and actively engage the community in a participatory democracy setting that promotes good community interaction and decision making?

Answer: The new Local Government Act 2020 recently passed by the state government sets out areas and processes on how local governments MUST engage with the community. The minimum is in the development of the Council plan, financial plan, asset plan and community vision.

I feel very strongly about this and have published my view and contacts in the local press. This has been very effective for me to stay in contact with resident and business views on important local matters.

Questions for Borough Candidates.

10. What do candidates see as the important heritage issues in the Borough and what specific heritage support or programs will you provide in your role as councillor?

Answer: refer to answer to question 3 above.

11. In a rate capping environment where do you see council making efficiencies and savings and in particular whether you have a set of financial skills or understandings of the budgetary processes?

Answer: Waste in resources and money has occurred in the past when projects are announced developed but not proceeded with. I believe there are significant savings to be made if we are more accurate with our planning, documentation and scoping of projects. I also believe there is additional income available if our caravan park facilities are improved. I have a Master of Business Administration (MBA) which gives me a high level of financial literacy.

12. Planning is such an important element of the Borough work. What is your attitude to the current planning controls in the Borough?

Answer: We must progress the recent Heritage Review to ensure we move it through to a Planning Scheme Amendment that will recognise the Borough as a "Special Place". This will then ensure better support for planners when confronted with inappropriate development applications.

13. Council seems to not have community consultation 'not quite right' - ie. Destination Queenscliff, R.V Dump point . The result being much community angst and ultimately wasted finances that could have been put to better use. What actions can you commit to better Community Consultation?

Answer: I look to have the community involved earlier in the processes on major projects thus avoiding costly delays, costly changes and reworks on plans.

14. The Borough is unique - Australia wide - for Heritage attributes. Can you commit to a strengthening of Heritage Protections if you are elected?

Answer: refer to answer of question 12 above.

Questions from the Webinar (unanswered)

15. I would like to know if your focus as a councillor would be on global warming and climate change? Or on traditional council achievement targets such as management of rate spending, our beaches, roads, parks and gardens and delivery of community services?

Answer: Your question would indicate a binary proposition - this or that. The traditional work of Council must be done to

Questions for Borough Candidates.

the best of our ability but there are opportunities to include benefits to the community on emissions and lower cost energy, street trees, negotiating a good solar power packages etc. We have implemented LED lighting that saves ratepayers money. We can do more across a range of options if the cost benefits are there and residents want us to act.

16. As COVID restrictions ease, hopefully in the coming weeks, we can expect many more Victorians visiting and holidaying our coastal areas. We expect the numbers to be far higher than past years as travel restrictions will continue for some time. This may create an opportunity for local businesses to recoup from the harsh economic year 2020 has delivered. The flip side of this is increased pressure on the environment and community, especially our beautiful beaches. Respect for by-laws by locals and visitors alike is essential to protect the fragile environment we all adore. Would candidates like to comment on how they would approach the balance between respecting and protecting local coming and environment while at the same time encouraging visitors to the area?

Answer: You are correct there will be more people looking to holiday at the seaside. Council is obliged to implement State and Federal laws pertaining to the current issues surrounding Covid-19. We have a finite number of visitor sites and hotel rooms so whilst they will come it cannot be in overwhelming numbers. The summer is also predicted to be wetter than last year which may have a dampening effect (no pun intended) on visitor behaviour. The police as usual will be on the lookout for inappropriate behaviour as in past years.

17. Non-resident ratepayers contribute a large proportion of rates. How will candidates improve communication and involvement with this important sector of our community?

Answer: A new communications strategy is being developed and non-resident ratepayers will be catered for by improved digital communications. We understand this can be potentially invasive but a balance can be found.

The ONE3225 - a boundary change - has been discussed on and off for several council terms. It is not being mentioned tonight. Where will it come in the list of priorities?

Answer: The new Council will need to assess what priority it gives all major plans for their term. Given the challenges of Covid-19 and the mandatory plans that require work in the first phase of the new Council it is difficult to determine at

Questions for Borough Candidates.

this point in time the priority the community will place on ONE3225.

18. Given that the council has declared a Climate Emergency and have committed to developing a climate Emergency response plan in partnership with the community after receiving a petition signed by over 1000 residents, would you if elected fully support this process?

Answer: As a sitting Councillor I spoke in favour of the motion and voted for the motion. Yes.

19. We need a collaboration between the past and future _ we need a long term vision to stimulate our local economy and engage the community .How do you plan to achieve this ?

Answer: Queenscliff Economic Development Advisory Committee QEDAC is a group of businesses and council representatives which is looking at the future direction of business in the Borough. In addition the Council officers in the Economic Development area are working for the Borough and in concert with G21 Councils to develop proposals for consideration by the community and Council.

20. Assuming that you are interested in the heritage issues in Queenscliffe, what are your thoughts on the recently published Heritage Review by Lovell Chen?

Answer: I see the Heritage Review as a first step to something more important. The recognition of Queenscliffe as a “Special Place” that will give the Borough more planning protection under the planning scheme against inappropriate development.

21. Major strength of Queenscliffe is it’s Heritage. The proposed Hub does not seem to feed into this objective. The site is such a pivotal opportunity to enhance Heritage. What are your views?

Answer: Under the planning guidelines new commercial precinct buildings are not meant to mimic surrounding buildings. The site was vacant until the current museum building was constructed so there is no heritage building to replace. I am not an architect with a Heritage background but the state government review indicated as it was set back 15 meters it would not compete with neighbouring buildings and it was a good building. It is said there is no one era that makes up Hesse Street. The materials used in the street of timber, brick and cement render on the church provide a patchwork.

The other aspect is that The Hub will house the Queenscliffe Heritage Museum which stores the heritage information for the area from pre-white settlement, maritime and military history. It is also a very valuable source of primary data for research.

Questions for Borough Candidates.

22. Would you consider using the talent in our community rather than spending money on consultants who are not actually familiar with our Borough?

Answer: I believe there are many talented people in the Borough and the new consultation guidelines in the Local Government Act 2020 will ensure Council can benefit from their involvement in projects. There will be many opportunities to participate in planning, finance and heritage matters as these appear to be issues of importance to the community.

23. You all talk communityour largest demo group, and pay the most rates, what then is there is a priority for our + 65 year old rate payers?

Answer: The residents and particularly the older residents are very important and significant in Council thinking. The lack of waiting lists for support and Councils annual performance ranking in this area is very high. I can assure you this will continue to be a priority if I am re-elected to Council.

24. A solar park in Murray road ? what is this ? has our local community been consulted?

Answer: I have not been involved in any discussion on this.

25. What is the one project / cause you will champion if elected ?

Answer: Sorry but to answer with only one project would be like choosing between your children. In no particular order I believe managing post Covid issues plus ageing in place and support for older residents are important. The Climate Response Plan, The Coastal and Marine Management Plan and the Heritage Review leading to a Planning Amendment can all be achieved in 4 years. This should provide the basis for progress.

26. What reporting mechanisms would you put in place to improve accountability and tracking of progress to the community on Council plans and commitments?

Answer: Council produces an annual progress report on objectives in the Council Plan. Perhaps more publicity to alert residents of this report is needed?

27. Regarding Swan Bay, What actions would you undertake to prevent it drying up in years to come?

Answer: Any action would be based on the Coastal and Marine Management Plan which will look at inundation, coastal degradation, effects on flora and fauna etc. The community will be fully informed of the findings and any proposals.

Questions for Borough Candidates.

28. What would be your strategies to provide inclusiveness, and support, to the local LGBTQIA community?

Answer: Within Council all employment is the sole responsibility of the CEO. The appointment of the CEO is the only one carried out by elected Councillors. In my short time in Council I cannot recall an issue raised by the LGBTQIA community or individuals on inclusiveness or support. My recommendation would be if there are issues in the community make them known to the new council so they may get on the agenda.

Thanks-you for attending the Webinar. The answers you provide will be posted on the relevant community Associations websites, and social media sites.

We would appreciate your answers by Friday the 16/10/20 – so we can post them up for voters.