

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?
A: I moved to the Borough nearly forty years ago to begin my career in Hospitality. I am a current councillor and Mayor. I know I have plenty more to offer our community. I owned and ran Athelstane House and McKenzie Ebbels Food store for ten years. I understand what is like to live in such a community and that at some stage you have to give something back. That time is now.

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?
*A: The DAL is one of the most important documents for the Borough possible since the Pt Lonsdale Structure plan. Of course so much has changed since then.
In no order.
It must be a shared vision.
Heritage
Environmental issues
Settlement boundaries of our Coastal villages
We must enhance and protect*

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?
In regards to Heritage Council must finish the heritage review. It has already allocated the funds so therefore in needs to finish it within the next 18 months.

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?
Engage with all of our community with the Climate Emergency Response Plan. Not just the Climate Action Group, but everyone must be heard regardless of their views.

5. Management of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve is especially significant to Borough residents. What do you see as the way forward?
The PLLHR is still awaiting its cultural heritage plan approval. Then Heritage Victoria Approval and also MACA plan approval. The last two cannot proceed until the cultural plan is complete. The site has now doubled in size with the inclusion of the area to Winterley Rd. The real question is of course that Its quite likely it will get National Heritage listing (as it should). Is it time to give it back to the State or Federal Government? The ongoing maintenance for the site will be in the Hundreds of thousands of dollar every year. Previous council took this site on thinking it could receive some income from the site. It never will.

6. My question is to all candidates and is for them to nominate their top priority climate emergency initiative for the Borough?
To many to mention but finish the response plan as that will prioritise these for us.

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?
No I never have and I am not linked to any political party. I will work with any State or Federal Member to achieve what is best for The Borough.

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8. How will you expedite action to implement the plans for the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve?
It is important that Council bring back the reference group and update all concerned about where all the planning applications are up to. As mentioned in another answer concerning the PLLHR council is awaiting on a number of permits, which have to be done in order before the next can start.
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.

As Mayor I have been meeting monthly with both the QCA and PLCA. I also meet with the CEO weekly and prior to Covid19 we would always meet out in the public. I have just started doing this again with the easing of restrictions. I also sit in on the monthly business group meetings and I have always been available to our residents.
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?
Council needs to promote its heritage support fund better, also the offer for heritage advice and of course finish the Heritage review.
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?

I think the biggest problem for council has been the continuation of chasing grants without the resources to implement them causing delays and more delays and eventually costing money. Keep it simple and remember the small things matter.
12. Planning is such an important element of the Borough work. What is your attitude to the current planning controls in the Borough? *The planning dept are hand strung as they are working off a document that is 35 years old. In 2009 council tried to update the plan but it was not finished. Council must give officers the right tools and the backing they require to make the correct decisions.*
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?

You are correct consultation should have and could have been better. I believe council has been doing this badly for many years and as Mayor I am certainly working closely with The CEO and the Comms department to improve this. Examples of better communication are the use increased use of direct mail. ie. Climate emergency response plan, Queenscliffe Hub, Council Budget, Borough Bites. Also the use of Social Media to engage our younger residents.
14. The Borough is unique - Australia wide - for Heritage attributes. Can you commit to a strengthening of Heritage Protections if you are elected?

Please see other answers in regards to Heritage in the Borough.

Questions from the Webinar (unanswered)

Questions for Borough Candidates.

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?

We have seen in the past 6 months that although Council declared a climate change emergency it is well aware that it still has its core operations to fulfil and we never know what's coming next? Of course we must continue those listed above.

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?

As a past business owner and Councillor of The Borough I am in regular contact with tourism operators and fully aware of what the 6 Months have been like. Unfortunately some businesses may never re-open. This is of course a great loss for everyone. All the way during this pandemic council has been assisting our business operators. The State Government recently announced grants to councils to help opening up the streets to more visitors. This may take the form of opening up some parking spots for visitors to use for additional seating with the use of such things as skiplets. Council could place these in the main streets or a couple of side streets. It's really important that we all support our operators. Queenscliff in particular has struggled for many years and apart from a couple of weeks from Christmas to NYE does not run at 100%. People who are not in the industry believe that these businesses are all full from Christmas to Easter. This most certainly is not the case. With The Blues Train not operating this year businesses even when open were struggling. We need to help The Blues train come back on board. It operates from August to May and brings in 200 pax for two night stays over the weekends. I believe that the balance would be ok as we have not seen a huge summer for many years. Lets hope they come in many numbers. The promotion of Intrastate visitors to our shoulder season is the best way to help balance, but also make the most of the Metro Melbourne visitors once they are able to return. Our Regional tourism body TGGB are ready to roll with a campaign once Metro Melbourne is let loose. Melbourne is 85% of our Tourism market.

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

I believe in the past year we have made a lot of improvements to all our residents of the borough including our non permanent residents. I will continue this work into the future.

18. 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?

Great Question. I Met with the CEO and Mayor of COGG at the end of January this year to have an open discussion regarding the realignment of the Boundary. They were open to the idea but wanted more details mainly around financial issues. I spoke to Lisa Neville who was to speak to the Essential Services Commission and the Local Government Minister. The Bushfires arrived and Lisa Neville was somewhat busy. Then Covid19 arrived and again the priorities moved. Then The Local Government Minister was sacked by his own party. So after meeting the new Local Government Minister Leanne I have sent a formal letter to him recently requesting that he engage the essential services commission and provide to the whole 3225 community what the pro's and Cons are. Including financial, environmental and the potential for ratepayers to take council to Court over The Differential rates that are to be applied to all Point Residents sometime soon in the future.. Then we can go the back with full knowledge of what the risks are.

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19. 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?
As Mayor at the time I voted for this.
20. 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?
When any new Council starts under the Local Gov't act they must complete a new Council plan including full consultation with all community members. I feel this is a perfect opportunity to achieve this. Also it is planned for Councils QEDAC advisory committee should play a role as an economic advisory committee to Council.
21. Assuming that you are interested in the heritage issues in Queenscliffe, what are your thoughts on the recently published Heritage Review by Lovell Chen?
There is still a lot of work to be done to complete this properly. The funds are in place and I believe they will be going out to tender shortly.
22. 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?
I disagree. We cannot and should not try and recreate history. The new design will sit quietly and respect the two heritage buildings either side.
23. Would you consider using the talent in our community rather than spending money on consultants who are not actually familiar with our Borough?
Yes and that was the problem with taking on projects that are too big. It was pleasing to see a contract awarded recently to a Pt Lonsdale design team to work on the new amenities and public toilet block in Hesse street south
24. 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?
As my 88 year old father and 84 year old mother in law live in the borough I am well aware of making sure we keep looking after our elderly. As councillor I asked for changes to be made for our extreme heat policy which was not providing enough assistance for the elderly. Nearly a third of Council staff are employed in providing care to our older demographic.
25. A solar park in Murray road ? what is this ? has our local community been consulted?
I have not mentioned a solar park in any of my campaign material. Solar is something we need to do better. Half the houses in the Borough are empty most of the year. We need to look at how we can use the rooftops.
26. What is the one project / cause you will champion if Elected ?
I don't think I could leave it at one. But the most recent is that we need to upgrade the skate park and include a great Bike track so our youth are not riding through our valuable dune systems. This has been a major problem during lockdown and home schooling. I don't blame the kids it has been tough for all. Council is currently designing a new track in consultation with the kids so they have a sense of ownership Best location for the bike track would be beside the skate park.
27. What reporting mechanisms would you put in place to improve accountability and tracking of progress to the community on Council plans and commitments?

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Under the Local Government act council must report every quarter against its budget, Implementation plan also starting in the new council against the council plan.

28. Regarding Swan Bay, What actions would you undertake to prevent it drying up in years to come?
If we could get the boundary changed that would give us control of Swan Bay and our own destiny. Hopefully lakers cutting will be added to the Ramsar wetlands also. I am very concerned about the waterways coming in and out of the Point into Swan Bay.
29. What would be your strategies to provide inclusiveness, and support, to the local LGBTQIA community?
I have taken the pledge to support the LGBTQIA community.

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.