

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?
Listening, facilitation skills, teamwork process skills, understanding constraints in BoQ finances, some understanding of many local issues.
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?
Identifying and retaining the key characteristics of our Bellarine towns and villages, and ensuring development does not continually invade the land between them.
Supporting that intent in our own planning scheme, and advocating with state government for Point Lonsdale, Queenscliff and the Bellarine.
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?
Maintaining a financially viable independent Borough – in light of the loss of income from Covid we should review BoQ costs and reduce waste, consider reinvesting proceeds from the sale of Murray Rd, look again at ways to improve revenue that have community support and without exceeding the rate cap.
Caring for community wellbeing in navigating health and economic impacts of Covid – connect with and support people, including vulnerable and impacted business people; promote activities through our sports, arts and interest groups.
Acting on Climate Change with our community – supporting the development and implementation of the Queenscliffe Climate Emergency Response Plan.
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?
Involve the community in interpreting the data, examining the risks, exploring options, then working out what best to do.
5. Management of the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve is especially significant to Borough residents. What do you see as the way forward?
Make the improvements we can do now while awaiting the DELWP review of heritage values and the BoQ Coastal Management Plan. Seek funding for agreed elements of the improvement plan and involve stakeholders in advising Council on that plan.
6. My question is to all candidates and is for them to nominate their top priority climate emergency initiative for the Borough?
Further reduce emissions and help our local economy by encouraging/incentivising more rooftop solar PV, explore community batteries (eg with Powercor), encourage fuel switching to electricity (eg solar hot water, electric heat pumps), improve energy efficiencies in public and residential buildings and equipment, enable active and public transport, planting.
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

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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?

Never ever been a member of any party. But at different times I have lobbied or assisted local politicians from most main parties.

8. How will you expedite action to implement the plans for the Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve?
See 5.
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?
Return to open Council meeting, with questions from the community.
Return to Council advisory groups for each function: planning and heritage, environment, etc.
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?
Subdivision of titles and development proposals for heritage buildings have been an on-going problem. I support the incorporation of "must" in our heritage overlay to provide more clarity about planning requirements. I intend to visit contentious sites and understand the issues so I can support the essential characters of Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff in planning decisions.
11. In a rate capping environment where do see council making efficiencies and savings and in particular whether you have a set of financial skills or understandings of the budgetary processes?
We can review BoQ costs and reduce waste (time, effort), reinvest proceeds from the sale of Murray Rd, look again at ways to improve revenue that have community support and without exceeding the rate cap. I understand budget processes and have some knowledge of BoQ.
12. Planning is such an important element of the Borough work. What is your attitude to the current planning controls in the Borough?
We need to tighten our heritage overlay and consider how best to apply inundation controls. We desperately need an updated Coastal Management Plan as well as a Significant Tree policy and register.
We do need to get better at the continuous improvement cycle of "Plan – Do – Measure – Improve" – we have been weak at measuring and then there is no systematic improvement.
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?
Return to Advisory Groups. Communicate with key stakeholders before acting.
14. The Borough is unique - Australia wide - for Heritage attributes. Can you commit to a strengthening of Heritage Protections if you are elected?

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Absolutely.

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?
Both. We need to, and can, do both – it will be good for our community and environment to do both as local action on climate change can be good for our local economy, improve our beaches and parks as well as enhance community services such as local transport.
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?
We create the Borough and its culture through our local institutions and our own deeds. If we set a good example others are more likely to follow. If we show care for our people and environment others will be more inclined to do the same. Much of our local economy, including many people's livelihoods, depends on visitors coming here and returning. Each of us can contribute to and benefit from a thriving local economy, and each of us can contribute to and benefit from our coastal environment. Our local institutions and laws should support this.
17. Non-resident ratepayers contribute a large proportion of rates. How will candidates improve communication and involvement with this important sector of our community?
While it may not yet be perfect I think BoQ communication is improving. Non-resident ratepayers and business owners can become better informed and involved if they tap into the BoQ website and social media, our local newspapers, our civic groups or the social media and newsletters of our many local organisations. I encourage your involvement through these platforms and groups.
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?
For me it is not top three. The issue has been complicated by The Point development – where do you now redraw the line! In recent times there appears less enthusiasm for boundary change as the water and landfill risks of The Point seem to outweigh any benefits.
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?
Absolutely.

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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 ?
I expect the Climate Response Plan to be one vehicle for doing just this. I also believe we can do more for our local economy by each of us caring for our beaches, parks and gardens, and by each of us buying a bit more from our local shops and local services. There are more opportunities in business cross promotion and partnering with our region. Just as we can explore provision of community batteries with Powercor for power storage and grid stability, we can look for opportunities to provide a faster internet that would benefit many businesses in the Borough, both in the main streets and for people who work from a home or a shed.
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?
I have not yet read it, but fully support the intent to be more prescriptive in key heritage planning requirements.
22. Major strength of Queenscliffe is its 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 with the assumption in the question as I think the proposed new building will be functional and suit the site. I objected to the planning permit for the Hub because it omitted a 24 hr toilet facility and because I thought too much of Field Park was compromised in the proposal. I have now withdrawn my objection after the permit was issued with a commitment by the Council to provide a 24 hr toilet in the area, and conditions that retained both trees and incorporated natural materials as well as appropriate planting in front of the new building.
23. Would you consider using the talent in our community rather than spending money on consultants who are not actually familiar with our Borough?
Absolutely.
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?
We are all in the Borough community, so we should provide care to each person who needs it.
25. A solar park in Murray road ? what is this ? has our local community been consulted?
I can't see how the economics for this stack up, so there will be issues finding an investor. Anyway, the problem hasn't been defined and this looks like grabbing for a solution.
26. What is the one project / cause you will champion if elected ?
Sorry - I want to champion three (see answer to Q3), and also support all of the other things I stand for.
27. What reporting mechanisms would you put in place to improve accountability and tracking of progress to the community on Council plans and commitments?
Great question. I think we need to develop the BoQ 10 yr strategies then the 4 yr Council plan, then set the measures to track progress. Reporting should be visible, using BoQ facebook and website, and maybe a hard scorecard in the Borough.

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

Do you mean filled up with sand? I'm going to talk with the people who know more than me, eg Swan Bay Environment Association, oceanographers and marine engineers.

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

Please come and discuss this with me – I'm keen to learn.

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.