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Candidate questionnaire – Noosa Shire Council Election 2020

Surname:	Halverson	Given name:	Meghan
Position contesting:	Councillor		

Governance, Transparency and Ethical Behaviour

Q 1 Are you aware of the Principles listed at the beginning of the Local Government Act 2009 and will you commit to abiding by these principles?

YES/NO Yes	How do you see them influencing your decision-making? I have a high standard of personal integrity and respect for all so would have no issue with adhering with these principles to govern.
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Q 2 Do you or your immediate family have assets, interests or affiliations which might be likely to present you with potential conflicts of interest in carrying out your tasks as a councillor?

YES/NO Yes	If YES, how will you deal with these? My husband is currently Chair of the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation however will offer to resign his role if this poses a significant conflict in the future.
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Q 3 As councillor/mayor you will regularly meet to vote on various matters. Some of these votes may be passed by a majority decision, yet there exists aspects which indicate some or all of the following: improper due process, breaches around what might be deemed 'reasonable action' according to duty of care, statutory instruments, local government legislative provisions, by-laws, policies, procedures and responsibilities. What action would you take in such a situation?

Response:
All of these concerns would of course be triggers for further investigation and appropriate action based on the nature of the issue and the appropriate remedies available.

Q 4 Do you believe that all Council meetings should be open to the public?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, then what circumstances might justify a closed meeting? General meetings and overall Council meetings should be open to the public. However, if there is a matter of confidentiality regarding safety or sensitivity then there may be reasons to provide privacy and respect surrounding the situation (ie: domestic violence, personal grievance or other sensitive matters).
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Q 5 Will you commit to continuing to support/extend the live streaming and video recording of all council meetings including those of the Planning and Environment and Services & Organisation committees?

YES/NO Yes

Q 6 Do you support that, once the previously published reasons for confidentiality have passed, the live recording, related staff reports and information of the confidential meeting should immediately be made public?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not?
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Q 7 Are you endorsed or supported by any registered political party?

YES/NO No

Climate change

Q 8 Do you accept the international scientific community's view that global climate change is the result of human activity over the past 200 years, principally through the burning of fossil fuels?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not? This also should include habitat loss and fragmentation and failed protection of our water systems and ecological and environmentally significant areas.
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Q 9 What do you see as the key impacts of Climate Change on the Noosa Shire?

Response: More frequent and extreme weather variability including impacts from drought, bushfire and flood events. Longer term we may need to address food production and water availability depending on the above. There is also already an impact of emotional health and we need to be addressing how this impacts human and social health.
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Q 10 How should the Noosa Shire Council deal with Climate Change now and into the future?

Response: Thinking long term we should continue to do our part in implementing a comprehensive and collaborative long-term plan to reduce our carbon footprint, looking at clean and green alternatives to fossil fuel use and planning for a new economic model to support the challenges of climate variability. In the short term we would need to ensure resources and immediacy in planning for mitigation and responses to climate related events.

Q 11 Will you advocate for the Noosa Shire Council to promote and support further Climate Change action within the broader community?

YES/NO Yes

Q 12 Do you support maintaining Noosa Shire Council's Declaration of Climate Emergency?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not?
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Q 13 Will you advocate for the Council to have a moratorium on any development proposed in areas vulnerable to the impact of climate change such as in flood-prone areas and coastal zones until such time as the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Plan is completed?

YES/NO Yes

Planning issues

Q 14 What do you mean by, and how would you measure, sustainable development?

Response:

An impact assessment with proper data to show the carrying capacity of the region in terms of ecological limits over time.

Q 15 Do you agree that:

(a) Development Applications that conflict with the relevant Planning Scheme Acceptable Outcomes and other planning instruments should be refused?	YES/NO Yes
(b) applicants wishing to lodge a Development application that does not substantially comply, or seeks to over-ride the Planning Scheme should be advised to await the formulation of the next planning scheme when they can lodge a submission on that new planning scheme during the public consultation period?	YES/NO Yes
(c) that development that is vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change, flooding, and inundation be prohibited?	YES/NO Yes
(d) genuine community consultation should be undertaken in the early stages of a Proposed Planning Scheme amendment and prior to being progressed to the state?	YES/NO Yes

Q 16 The new Noosa Planning scheme has been approved by the Planning Minister subject to a number of conditions, two of which are of concern to the Council. They are:

(1) Provisions for mandating 10% of high density housing as social and community (affordable) housing at the Shire Business Centre and former Noosa Bowling Club site at Noosa Junction.

(2) Requirement that Noosa Council adopt the recent State changes to koala protection regulations and remove local provisions.

(a) Will you support the Noosa Plan as it is?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not?
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(b) If elected will you support Noosa Shire Council in negotiating with the State Government to achieve a better outcome for the community in relation to these two provisions?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not?
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Q 17 What is your understanding of when it is appropriate to override the Planning Scheme, where there are conflicts?

Response:

Overriding the planning scheme in terms of conflict regarding STL should be addressed with further community consultation so that there is adequate management of development in low density regions.

Q 18 With respect to the South East Queensland Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ) that was given effect on 11 August 2017, do you support the Plan in its current form relating to the Northern sub-region, including designation of the Urban Footprint and population targets?

YES/NO No

Q 19 Do you support the proposed Coolum West intense residential/mixed use development and wave pool proposal on significantly constrained land, which is also outside the urban footprint?

NB The reason for this question being asked of Noosa Shire candidates is that Noosa Tourism published a survey in what appeared to be support for the project

YES/NO Yes	If NO, will you, if elected to the Noosa Shire Council, support SCRC community groups in advocating to the State Government against this proposal?
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General

Q 20a The Noosa Biosphere Reserve designation by UNESCO was recently renewed for another 10 year period. What do you understand is the significance of the Biosphere Reserve designation to the Noosa Shire and its community?

Response:

The recent "Man and the Biosphere" designation is a prestigious world wide recognition of the special nature of our region. There are only a handful of regions in Australia that have demonstrated being able to balance social, economic and environmental elements. By keeping the balance right, a sustainable future can be found through land designation and sustainable development within our ecological limits which benefits all who live here!

Q 20b Over the past 10 years the Noosa population has undergone significant change with new residents moving to the area. Will you advocate for an education and marketing program about what it means to local residents and the community as a whole to be a UNESCO Biosphere and how the community can assist in supporting and maintaining that status?

YES/NO Yes

Q 21 Do you support the Environment Levy and its policies, including continued acquisition of land for conservation, partnership funding for Land for Wildlife and other environment programs?

YES/NO Yes	If NO, why not?
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Q 22 In a recent interview the current Mayor referred to a "Crisis" in the Noosa River with biodiversity plummeting. What actions would you propose to address this issue?

Response:

There should be further testing and actions to assist with understanding this biodiversity loss with measurable outcomes and monitoring parameters understood.

Q 23 Given Noosa Shire is an undivided council, if elected, how do you intend to engage with the whole Noosa Shire community?

Response:

I believe that different areas within the shire have different needs and we need to be respectful of the wishes of the community to address this. Having community meetings regularly (within townships) to address the concerns of the community would be a start. A councillor should be an advocate for ALL and by providing a platform for concerns and challenges to be discussed openly allows residents to be heard and acknowledged so that there is a chance for Council to receive and provide information through open respectful conversations.

Q 24 Why do you think that you are the best candidate for Councillor or Mayor of the Noosa Shire Council?

Response:

I am the best candidate for the job because I am a connector, not a divider. I act with integrity and fairness for all. I show respect for all people without prejudice or judgement and have skills in being a team leader and facilitator. I think quick on my feet and also take time to research things that I do not understand. I am a "doer". I believe that action is necessary and that effective communication is imperative for a community to be cohesive in challenging times. Change is inevitable and Noosa has the opportunity to be a leader in creating a healthy, connected, collaborative community. Now is a time when we must work as a team to get it right for the future of our kids and their kids.