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Candidate questionnaire – Noosa Shire Council Election 2020

Surname:	STOCKWELL	Given name:	BRIAN
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? These are overarching considerations throughout your role as a Councillor. They should influence how you vote, what policies you advocate for and how you set budget priorities. However, legislated principles will have little impact if they are contrary to your own personal values. In my case the Local Government Act principles closely align to those which I have sought to progress throughout my adult life.
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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? No development interest, no real-estate interests, own one property. It is only my affiliation with numerous community groups (see answer to Q23) that has in the past represented a perceived or real conflict of interest in council, particularly when it comes time for decisions on matters such as community and environmental grounds. I also have a business relationship with some of the groups and Seqwater in my part time role as an environmental planning consultant (Watershed Australia).
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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:	I would seek the advice of the Chief Executive Officer with respect to the specific matter in question. I have, in this term of Council, for example, raised the issue with him whether a motion put forward by a fellow Councillor was in fact ultra vires, considering the legal advice in front of us.
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Q 4 Do you believe that all Council meetings should be open to the public?

YES/NO No	If NO, then what circumstances might justify a closed meeting? The Act clearly states the situations where a meeting can be closed to the public. The record of Noosa Council in the last term is that we only very rarely invoke these provisions, and what we
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	release (e.g. financial information) on a regular basis some other Councils will not put in the public domain.
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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

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	<p>If NO, why not?</p> <p>Q 5. I am neither yes or no on this question 5 above and because I think a review of committee process is required. My view is there is merit in making the initial 'portfolio' committees to be more open to active engagement between Council and the community. I think the question time at the end of Ordinary Meetings is tokenistic and does not add much to the public discourse, and would prefer to see meaningful and focussed dialogue at committee. The question regarding live streaming is a secondary consideration once the best use of these meetings is determined.</p> <p>Q6. It has been standard practice for Council to release reports once the reason for confidentiality has passed e.g. a contract for the acquisition of land has been completed. I do not believe confidential sessions should be recorded as it may stifle full and frank discussion of confidential issues.</p>
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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?
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Q 9 What do you see as the key impacts of Climate Change on the Noosa Shire?

<p>Response:</p> <p>Economic - Forecast higher risks for extreme weather and associated fire conditions, potential for more severe storm events, combined with rising sea levels exacerbating flood risk will likely impact our tourism economy and all those businesses that service it. Similarly, it will result in temporary loss of productivity of local business whether targeting domestic or export markets. We will also see significant threats to one of our largest economic drivers - our beaches, as coastal erosion impacts on adjacent residential premises. Highly contested decisions will need to be made to either protect property or allow the beach to retreat and maintain its utility as a recreational and tourism asset. Either of these options have significant economic impacts.</p> <p>Health & Wellbeing - we are witnessing a significant decline in the mental health and outlook of our youth, as a result of their concerns about what may be to come as a result of climate change. Vulnerable age groups and individuals will also be adversely affected by more frequent heat waves, and together with higher sea levels and</p>
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more frequent flooding of low lying areas lead to increased mosquito borne disease (e.g. Ross River Fever).

Environmental : The potential impact on some of our most valued aquatic ecosystems e.g. the Everglades, are significant and we are likely to see conditons more suited to weeds reestablishing after disturbance (e.g. fires). Increased frequency of fires may change the species e.g. on coastal wildflower plains. Ocean Acidification and temperature change is likely to upset the current recreational and commercial fish populations as well as marine biodiversity more generally.

Q 10 How should the Noosa Shire Council deal with Climate Change now and into the future?

Response:

Council has already embedded Climate Change consideration throughout its governance, policy and planning frameworks and is recognised as one of the most advanced in the state for its endeavours in this regard. We must continue to be at the leading edge and set the example for others to follow.

The first consultation exercise of the new Council will be going out to the public with the final round of engagement of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. This plan will seek to to set the priorities for how Council will work with community and industry to address the above impacts (and more) . Once we have final sign off on the Coastal Hazards Assessment we will also need to amend the New Planning Scheme to reflect the predicted changes to the coastal erosion prone areas etc.

I would hope that Council Zero's Emmissions Organisational Strategy achieves its target of carbon neutrality within this term (i.e. two years before our target of Zero Net Emmission by 2026).

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?

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 No

Planning issues

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

Response:

The Brundtland Report introduced the concept 'sustainability' and linked it to development, suggesting that sustainable development was a process that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Some look at it through the lens of 'triple bottom line', suggesting the key to sustainable communities will be to recognise that economic opportunity, ecological integrity, and social equity are interlocking links in the chain of well-being. AtKisson links sustainability to resource longevity, suggesting a society's use of resources, its social patterns, and its pollution emissions are such that they will either go on indefinitely (sustainability), or they won't. For me, Atkisson's seven principles of sustainability probably best sum up our approach to sustainable development in Noosa. They are: think long-term; recognise limits; protect nature; transform business-as-usual, practice fairness; and embrace creativity and foster a shared focus on understanding systems.

At the time I became a Councillor in 2016 I was lecturing at the University of Sunshine Coast in a subject on Regional Sustainability and Change. One of the key messages I emphasised in that course was that we must shift our focus away from concepts that are based on a steady state of the world around us, because the conditions are continually changing. Therefore, when setting measurable targets we should focus just as much on building resilience to change, as we do setting limits of acceptable change. Over the last four years I have championed a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation in our strategies plan and you will see many measures of sustainability within them e.g. Environment Strategy, the Noosa River Plan etc. Implicit within the New Noosa Plan is a commitment to the long standing approach to growth management; sticking to it is therefore an important measure.

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
(c) that development that is vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change, flooding, and inundation be prohibited?	YES/NO
(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	<p>If NO, why not?</p> <p>I will support staff to negotiate the best possible outcome for these two issues, and while I would prefer to see the current settings remain, I will also be pragmatic if this is not an achievable outcome.</p>
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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:

With the adoption of the new Planning Scheme imminent there should very rarely be need to "override" the Planning Scheme (on the basis this is taken to mean approving inconsistent land uses). There may be a one year period during which we accept applications under the old scheme; this may potentially constitute overriding the new scheme on occasion. More generally, on rare occasions, there may be bona fide reasons why the settings of the Scheme could be 'overridden', e.g. where land identified as flood prone can be shown after more detailed, larger scale investigation not to be so. Each development application needs to be considered on its merits and if new information identifies that the higher levels outcomes of the scheme can be achieved in these circumstances then so be it.

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 Yes

Q 19 Do you support the proposed Coolumb 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 No	<p>If NO, will you, if elected to the Noosa Shire Council, support SCRC community groups in advocating to the State Government against this proposal?</p> <p>I think it constitutes a major conflict with the Regional Plan Settings. It is very similar to the refused approach to a Space Theme Park in the Emu Swamp in the 1980s (the state government came in and declared the area National Park). It would, in my mind set a bad precedent that may affect Noosa Council in terms of permitting major urban developments outside the Urban Footprint, in flood prone land etc. However, I can't commit to anything specific in terms of what mechanisms may be appropriate for Noosa Council to take in order to make its views on this issue known.</p>
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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:

I was the Chair of the Environment Sector Board when the previous governance arrangements of the Biosphere Reserve were reviewed. I therefore have a strong affiliation with the designation of the Shire. To me the designation is the recognition of the good work by many in the community since the 1960s, sometimes working with the council of the day, sometimes opposing it; to achieve a balance between human needs and the preservation of our supporting ecosystems and biodiversity. In this term I have brought all of the environmental, community natural resource groups (e.g. Landcare Catchment Management) and community organisations with an interest in sustainable development together into an active network that met on 3-6 monthly basis. The aim of

the network is to build partnerships and commitment to a sustainable future for the Noosa Shire. Working together to ensure our natural ecosystems and biodiversity are valued, cared for, improved and conserved and our lifestyles, urban form and character are protected and enhanced. These features of the local area also underpin our economy. The network also aims to further the goal of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program by:

- Sharing problems and ideas to solve them.
- Development of collaborative projects.
- Learning from others and celebrating success.
- Driving a shared direction toward implementing environment and sustainable development policies, strategies and plans.
- Two-way communication between Council and community groups to foster networks and enhance relationships.

Building greater understanding of, and commitment to, the values, policies and actions that led to Noosa being recognised as a Biosphere Reserve is the ongoing challenge.

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

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?

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:

I have championed a greater focus in the current draft of the Noosa River Plan on management and rehabilitation of the aquatic ecosystems in the Noosa River system. This is a large challenge. We have started a number of well researched projects. While there is still more investigation required to determine the actions that will have the highest likelihood of achieving a significant impact on the benthic fauna; as a Catchment Ecologist my view is always that it is best to work from source to sea. In this regard continuing the good work to stabilise eroding landscapes and creek banks in the Kin Kin to reduce the supply of sediments which may be smothering benthic habitat; recreating critical elements of the estuarine habitat (e.g. oyster reefs) to provide the structure that will generate greater productivity and biodiversity in the river; and reducing the factors that are directly impacting benthic habitats (e.g. working with state government with a voluntary beam trawl licence buy back scheme) are the best options at this stage. Ongoing investment in the implementation of the Noosa River Plan by Council, State and Federal Government and philanthropists is needed.

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

Response:

In Short - the same way I have over the last four years. I live in the geographic centre of the shire and it is small enough that I can, and do, ride my electric mountain bike anywhere in the shire for a meeting, site inspection or chat to a concerned resident. For this reason I considered the whole shire my local area, but my home is in the hinterland. It is not a large shire and having experienced the role of Councillor when we had 9 divisions, I am

convinced the current approach achieves the best outcomes for the community and ensures decisions are not made on a narrow parochial basis.

A lot of the communications Councillors do are in fact informal as part of every day life. In this regard I am active in groups across the shire, Vice President of the Noosa Lions Football Club at Sunshine Beach, and a Group Leader of the Noosa Sea Scouts in Noosaville, member and Council's representative on the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association and Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee and member of Country Noosa and Noosa Landcare in the hinterland. I am always open to a quick chat on Council matters regardless of whether I am there for personal or official purposes.

Once or twice a year I conduct my own "coffee cup consultation" where I invite residents to meet with me over a cup of coffee and discuss issues of concerns across the shire. In this term I also conducted a survey of hinterland residents to identify their priorities. This involved standing in front of the supermarket in Pomona and Cooroy, and at markets in pomona and Kin Kin, going to meetings of local groups and gathering input through an online surveys. The results were then discussed in a workshop with all the hinterland gourps invited to participate.

On top of this is there are numerous opportunities for residents to engage Councillors and staff as part of formal consultation processes.

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

Response:

I have a demonstrated commitment to, and active involvement in, the community for nearly four decades. I bring the most relevant experience to the table, with 14 years experience in local government (seven as a Councillor and seven as an Environmental and Town Planner) as well as extensive government experience (e.g. Sunshine Coast Regional Director for the Department of Emnployment Economic Development and Innovation and the Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning). My qualifications that cover geography, local , regional and resource econmics, planning, ecology and natural resource management span nearly every major policy area in council. Most importantly, I bring passion and enthusiasm and will continue to strive to embed the core values of what makes Noosa 'Different by Nature' into every relevant decision.