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## Candidate questionnaire – Sunshine Coast Regional Council Election 2020

Surname:	Baberowski	Given name:	Rick
Position contesting:	Division 1		

### 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 think the principles are a baseline standard that every councillor and candidate should support, regardless of their particular political stances or opinions. Ultimately I think they could be summarised by saying that councillors should, to the best of their ability and judgement, act in the long-term best interests of the community, not just particular sections of it, and certainly not of themselves. I have always endeavored to make sure that everyone in my community is represented.
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#### Q 2a What are the relevant legislation and regulations that govern the conduct of councillors and the activities of council?

Response: There are too many to list. Clearly the Local Government Act, the Local Government Electoral Act and the Planning Act lay out a lot of the basics. Over my 8 years in council there have been many pieces of legislation relevant to council activities, from the Corporations Act to the Native Title Act.
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#### Q 2b How will these impact your decision-making?

Response: I am not a lawyer, and councillors are not expected to be lawyers, but we of course receive legal advice on our options by council's legal team on a regular basis. I always endeavor to follow the legal advice we are given, but also to question it and get clarification or other opinions when that legal advice seems to prevent me from acting on behalf of the community.
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#### Q 3 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 No	If YES, how will you deal with these?
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**Q 4 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?**

Response:

It would depend on the specifics. Depending on the severity and whether the problem seemed to be intentional, my actions could range from raising the issue with the mayor, the other councillors, or the council executive to reporting my concerns to the Crime and Corruption Commission of Queensland.

**Q 5 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?

When the public would be significantly disadvantaged by the meeting being public. For example, last year I proposed that council should go to auction to buy a particular building in Landsborough with significant heritage value. If that meeting had been public, the owners could have seen the price council was willing to pay and it would have to have been tempting for them to try to drive the price up at the auction knowing that the council officers were authorised to bid to a certain point. As it was, council (and therefore ratepayers) got the building at significantly less than we were authorised to pay.

**Q 6 Do you support providing requested information to the community without the need for individuals and organisations having to resort to Right to Information applications?**

YES/NO Yes

**Q 7 Will you commit to voting to implement the live streaming and video recording of council meetings at Caloundra, Nambour and subsequently Maroochydore by 30 June 2020?**

YES/NO Yes

**Q 8 Do you support that, once the previously published reasons for confidentiality have passed, the live recording, related documentation and information of the confidential meeting should immediately be made public?**

YES/NO Yes

If NO, why not?

**Q 9 Do you support all financial dealings of Council in relation to major projects such as, but not limited to, the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion, The Maroochy CBD, the Broadband Cable, the City Hall and the Solar Farm being made fully available to ratepayers once a decision to proceed has been made?**

YES/NO No

If NO, why not?

I definitely support them becoming public (and I think the public will be happy with what they see - I think the confidentiality is actually fuelling speculation that there are many problems that don't exist or are a lot less serious in reality). However the reality is that the details, notes and recordings would probably have to be released over time - these sorts of contracts and commercial dealings can be very complex and negotiations can be ongoing after a decision to proceed has been made. We have to make sure that the interests of the ratepayers are served and our private partners don't get an unfair advantage in negotiations. I do support as much transparency as is consistent with that principle.

**Q 10 What do you mean by, and how would you measure, sustainable development?**

Response:

Environmentally, sustainable development should have minimal impact on the local ecosystem. Economically, growth should be at a pace that can be continued for an extended period of time, not a quick boom followed by a bust. Development should be in keeping with the character of the local region and should reflect the values of the local community. Care should be taken that development is well planned so that any new residents can easily integrate into the community and not be too isolated. Developments should consider the interests of more vulnerable groups and people who may have mobility issues, such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

**Q 11 Are you endorsed or supported by any registered political party?**

YES/NO No

## Climate change

### Q 12 Do you accept that:

(a) as the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases the proportion of the sun's radiant energy that is retained by the earth increases?	YES/NO Yes
(b) consequences of the increase in the retained energy include rising average temperatures and major changes in weather patterns that can result in drought and heavy rain in areas where such weather events had not previously occurred?	YES/NO Yes
(c) the combustion of fossil carboniferous fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas has been a major contributor to the increase in the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that has occurred since industrialisation began?	YES/NO Yes
(d) clearing of forest for agriculture and housing has also contributed to the increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere?	YES/NO Yes
(e) the major source of greenhouse gas emissions for local government comes from the decomposition of organic residues in landfill?	YES/NO Yes
(f) maintenance of biodiversity as close as possible to what it was before human intervention is essential for the healthy survival of the human species?	YES/NO Yes

### Q 13 What do you see as the key impacts of Climate Change on the Sunshine Coast?

Response:

Climate change is increasing our vulnerability to disaster events that can damage our economy and disrupt or threaten people's lives. It is also affecting our ecology and our flora and fauna, especially those that are vulnerable or endangered. Sea level rises potentially threaten the viability of residences in some areas of the coast.

### Q 14 How should the Sunshine Coast Regional Council deal with this now and into the future?

Response:

We should have a clear plan to reduce our impact on the climate, and we should work with other councils and other levels of government to coordinate action. While global action is needed to truly address climate change, we can play a small part in building and reinforcing the necessary consensus. We also need to make sure that resilience to climate change is built into our planning for the future. We need to see ourselves as guardians of the local ecology, and work to understand it and have a goal to increase habitat over time, to counter-balance some of the negative effects of climate change.

### Q 15 Do you support the SCRC in joining other councils in signing a Declaration of Climate Emergency?

YES/NO Yes

### Q 16 Will you advocate for the SCRC 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 Strategy is completed?

YES/NO Yes

## Planning issues

### Q 17 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) 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
(c) applicants wishing to lodge a Development application that substantially does not 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
(d) that development that is vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change, flooding, and inundation be prohibited?	YES/NO Yes

### Q 18 Do you agree that:

(a) Planning Scheme provisions regarding density, site cover, height and parking requirements must comply with the Acceptable Outcomes in the Planning Scheme?	YES/NO Yes
(b) financial contributions in lieu of the provisions of onsite parking should not be allowed unless improvements are provided within 200 metres of the development?	YES/NO No
(c) greater enforcement is needed where a developer constructs (or private certifier signs off) other than what has been approved, particularly in relation to height and density of development?	YES/NO Yes

### Q 19 What is your understanding of when it is appropriate to override the Planning Scheme, when there are conflicts?

Response:

I believe that to override the planning scheme there must be major community benefits beyond simply the employment inherently created by the project. For example, if a significant contribution to public infrastructure would be made (beyond what would ordinarily be required), or the development has significant benefit to an underserved group (for example people with disabilities). In these cases council would have to consider whether the benefit outweighs the impacts on the community.

### Q 20 Would you support extending submission timeframes from the statutory minimum in relation to Planning Scheme amendments?

YES/NO Yes

### Q 21 The floodplains of the Sunshine Coast have been extensively filled primarily for urban development. This has increased the risk to people, property, infrastructure and the environment from coastal inundation and flooding and contributes to greater exposure to extreme weather events associated with climate change. Planning instruments, State Planning regulation and various reports give regulatory and guidance material regarding floodplain management with land-use one of the key areas to avoid and manage risk. Will you act to prohibit further development on the floodplains?

Response:

Yes, and I believe council should be strict and sceptical when evaluating developer proposals for flood mitigation. I have opposed several proposals because I was not convinced that flooding issues could be adequately addressed

in the locations involved, and I will continue to do so.

**Q 22 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 23 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?**

YES/NO No

If NO, will you, if elected to council, support SCRC advocating to the State Government against this proposal? YES/NO Yes

**Q 24 What is your view in relation to this statement:**

*“ALL mixed-use multi-residential buildings requiring a Material Change of Use (MCU) must be “impact assessed” except where compliance is achieved with all relevant SCPS “Acceptable Outcomes” in the codes applicable to each development application. Community notification and rights of appeal in the P&E Court will therefore be restored for all non-compliant applications simply by this change”*

Response:

I would be happy to raise this as a discussion point in our planning scheme deliberations, but I would have to be guided by our expert officers as to the consequences before committing to support it.

**Q 25 The coastal hazard and “erosion prone area” is defined by the Queensland Government and State Planning Policy Guidance states redevelopment is to “avoid urban footprint expansion into erosion prone areas (3.2)”.**

**How will you participate in supporting a change to limit or avoid increases in the footprint and density of medium and high rise mixed use -residential buildings in these designated coastal hazard areas to reduce overall risk?**

Response:

I will be guided by the experts in the detail, but I certainly believe we need to be reducing, not increasing risk. I think this issue should be a major topic of discussion in the next planning scheme and we should receive a detailed report on it that should guide our decisions.

## General

**Q 26 The Sunshine Coast Regional Council ratepayers have been consistently hit with annual rate increases much higher than the region's CPI. How would you address this?**

Response:

As our major projects (such as the airport upgrade) near completion, the pressure on our budget (and therefore rates) will naturally go down. I have always supported councillors going through the budget in depth to reduce unnecessary spending, and would continue to do so. I believe all proposals need to go through a detailed analysis of costs and benefits, and where the costs can't be justified, the proposal should be rejected, and this is the approach I try to stick to in council.

**Q 27 Would you support a proposal that all Statutory Community Engagement exercises either by Council or other parties (including developers) must be carried out by a demonstrably independent and professional third party organisation according to specific pre-determined parameters?**

YES/NO No

**Q 28 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

**Q 29 Do you live in the division for which you are standing as a Councillor?**

YES/NO/NA Yes

**Q 30 If elected, how do you intend to engage with your community?**

Response:

I intend to continue to regularly tour the area with my "meet and greet" sessions in each of our townships and suburbs. I will continue to engage with the community through the local newspaper and frequent newsletters. I will continue to make my email and phone number available for anyone who wants to contact me, and I am always willing to come to wherever is convenient for residents if they want a meeting. I frequently meet on site at resident's properties or at the public location (road, park, etc) they have concerns about so we can see what we are talking about right in front of us.

**Q 31 If elected as a Divisional Councillor how will you advance the specific needs of your Division?**

Response:

I will consult with the community and fight for projects that benefit our area. Some of my specific goals include tackling congestion (especially on Caloundra Road), securing a rail system for our region going through Aura, securing the next stages of the Landsborough Masterplan, a major streetscape project for Glass House Mountains, a new community hub and library extension for Beerwah, and delivering the community's vision for Peachester's new park.

**Q 32 Why do you think that you are the best candidate for your Division or as Mayor?**

Response:

I've shown I can get results on the ground. Over the last term, I've delivered Glass House Mountains District Park, the Baringa Community Centre and the Beerwah Aquatic Centre upgrade, secured the Landsborough Township upgrade stage 1, secured the purchase of the Landsborough corner store for a future Heritage Precinct, delivered the new Peachester shelter and amenities block and the Beerburum trailhead and much more. I'm asking for the community's support so I can be at the table to argue for more projects for our area.