



Candidate questionnaire – Noosa Shire Council Election 2020

Surname:	Wegener	Given name:	Tom
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?
------------	---

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 No	If YES, how will you deal with these?
-----------	---------------------------------------

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: My response would depend on the circumstances.

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? There are lots of different sorts of Council Meetings and the local government act already governs them. However, a circumstance which may close a council meeting is the Corona Virus: There will probably be highly emotional debates stretching for hours and into the nights. Knowing people are watching may stifle debate. Also, in an emergency, like the virus, quick action may be needed and lack of a camera crew or notice to the public should not slow the decision making process.
-----------	---

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?
------------	-----------------

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?
------------	-----------------

Q 9 What do you see as the key impacts of Climate Change on the Noosa Shire?

Response: The rising sea level and the effects on the low lying areas within the shire.
--

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

Response: Noosa is a world leader in sustainability and climate change thinking. Already Noosa will be hosting the country's forum on climate change. Noosa has the natural land resources and talent to develop and implement climate change strategies, programs, and education. Noosa's knowledge will be a valuable export commodity or asset. Silicon Vally in California develops computer programs, Noosa develops climate change strategies. Both create value.
--

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 Yes

Planning issues

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

Response:

First, new developments should not diminish the high standard of living enjoyed by the residents. Our natural environment and low density is what drives our current tourist side of the economy as well as gives us a high standard of living. Sustainable development is that which sustains what we have now.

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?
------------	-----------------

(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 No	If NO, why not? I do not know enough about this issue to give an informed answer
-----------	---

Q 17 What is your understanding of when it is appropriate to override the Planning Scheme, where there are conflicts?

Response:

This is such a big question. I cannot provide an adequate answer.

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

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

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 biosphere is important because it is a codification of our Noosa culture. We value our natural environment and we want to continue to protect it. The Biosphere does this. Culture can change or be forgotten quickly. The Biosphere gives this culture a tangible, legal status.
--

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?
------------	-----------------

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: The reintroduction of fish stocks to depleted areas is something I know about. I have seen numerous examples of successful programs. Bringing the oyster beds back is essential. I will go back to the University of the Sunshine Coast, where I recently received a PhD, to find out what went wrong. I know a similar program is working in Moreton Bay. My experiences as an environmental attorney in California show me that small investments now in programs often reap enormous benefits in the future.
--

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 have raised my family in Cooroy and know this community very well. I also make surfboards and spend my Saturdays working on Hastings Street. I will engage the with the entire Shire community.
--

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

Response: The best? Not my style to claim the best.... I will use my vast experience as a small manufacturer in Noosa for 20

years as well as my time spent as an attorney and PhD researcher to understand, communicate and legislate issues with Noosa residents.