



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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## Candidate survey – Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) Election 2024

Surname:	Burgess	Given name:	Michael
Position contesting:	Mayor		

### 1 About you:

Do you live in the Division for which you are standing?	YES/NO	Yes
Are you a member of a registered political party?	YES/NO	No
If so, are you endorsed or formally supported by that political party?	YES/NO	No

### 2 How will you deal with situations where you or your immediate family have assets, interests or affiliations that might be likely to present you with potential conflicts of interest in carrying out your tasks as a Councillor?

Comment:

I will abide by the ethics & regulations that apply to these situations

### 3 If elected, how do you intend to engage with your community and/or the region?

Comment:

I will advocate for the formation of Citizen Committees for matters being considered by the council so the community can input its opinion, knowledge & expertise in a formal, collective, & guaranteed way, I will also engage in round tables with the community wherever possible

The reports of these ad hoc committees will be made available to the community by being published on the council's website & in any other media who so choose to do so

### 4 If elected as a Divisional Councillor, how will you advance the specific needs of your community?

Comment:

### 5 Why do you think that you are the best candidate for your Division or for Mayor?

Comment:

I believe I have the best understanding of the issues facing the new council, having spent the last 8 years skeptically viewing the previous councils' actions, & no history within previous ones to protect. I also have a comprehensive set of policies for reform but more than that for establishing the Coast as viable, self-reliant & resilient place & economy

## 6 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning this section of the survey?

**Comment:**

The Coast or this region was essentially a positive economic place until its agriculture section was dismantled & all the financial & real estate assets that we were endowed with came from those previous generations. Many of these have been squandered in the last 12 years & because we are now a negative economic zone we can not replace them.

The last three councils, in particular, have burnt our candle at both ends disposing of irreplaceable assets & mortgaged the future with a \$450 million debt. We are descending into a beggar economy subsidised by Federal government support payments & the occasional infrastructure project with no prospect of prosperity without a significant effort to create it.

Our plea for infrastructure & the relative lack of response from the other levels of government is indicative of our status as a dormitory or people dumping ground. It should not be forgotten that cities began to provide labour to industry; in our case we are concentrating labour with virtually no industry in need of them.

It should not be assumed that there is some entitlement to more than our earned share of the pie. If we want to get what we need we are going to have to get a lot of it for ourselves.

## Governance, Transparency and Ethical Behaviour

### 7 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
the relevant legislation and regulations that govern the conduct of Councillors and the activities of Council?	YES/NO	Yes

### 8 How do you see the above influencing your decision-making?

**Comment:**

The act restricts what councils are allowed to do to fairly confined areas but as we have seen with the last three councils these are a little elastic.

I am not suggesting the new council should embark on the borrowing & "Special Projects" binge of the last 3 but it should consider its ability to influence economic change without financial commitment & encourage by facilitation the setting up of compatible industries we need here to create the prosperity to align jobs growth with population growth.

### 9 If elected will you:

support providing requested information (other than current commercial-in-confidence) to the community without the need for individuals and organisations having to resort to Right to Information applications?	YES/NO	Yes
support that community consultation will become routine and results respected and acted upon such that the public interest takes precedence over vested interests?	YES/NO	Yes
advocate to ensure consistent, high-quality, professional outcomes by requiring the planning and execution of all Council-initiated community engagement processes to be oversighted by the community engagement team of the Council?	YES/NO	Yes

commit to forensic scrutiny of projects and expenditure directions and the budget overall?	YES/NO	Yes
support the Environment Levy and its policies, including the continued acquisition of land for conservation, partnership funding for Land for Wildlife and other environment programs?	YES/NO	Yes

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

### Comment:

Sustainable means to not use today materials that can not be replaced infinitely & so will not be available for use tomorrow. There are more general environmental issues that are often lumped together with sustainable & sometimes these cross over

There is also the aspect of using materials or energy today that will require mediation energy to be expended in the future

Sustainable development then means using material that are no exhaustible or if exhaustible can be replaced by other material being produced within the ecosystem, which is a long way from what is happening on the Coast at the moment, but producing local energy would be a big step towards achieving some better balance

Sustainable development could be measured by designing an index that incorporated the whole of life energy needs of buildings, vehicles, & other installations done on the Coast. Included in this index would be energy used in construction, the future heating/cooling needs, fuels used, transport, the likely remediation & maintainance energy requirements, & a final recycling of the thing at its end of life.

This could then be balanced against a similar index of local energy generated by activities on the Coast such as agriculture, forestry, recycling, manufacturing, and local energy production

At the moment such an index would show the Coast to be a huge "sink hole" of energy with little emanating from it

**11 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning Governance, Transparency and Ethical Behaviour?**

**Comment:**

I believe ethics to be lacking in all levels of government since marketing techniques now hold sway over most interactions between government & voters

All government officials should act in accordance with a high standard of "in the public good"

Government is after all, the thing that in a democracy organises society for the benefit of the people & business is one of the things that need to be organised for the benefit of the community

If business, the media & government become a bloc acting as they may perceive for the "good" it is unlikely that this good is the public's. Unfortunately, if this happens the economy of a place becomes stagnant as more money is removed from circulation & given to an increasing small number of people or entirely exported from the region

By acting with propriety government ensures money is properly distributed in a way to support small businesses which is the natural employer in regional economies

Only by acting with proper governance in an ethical way can government benefit both business & the people in the long term. Short term advantaging business will not create prosperity or even be of benefit to most businesses in an economy for very long

The only reason for not working transparently is in order to camouflage the advantaging of one section, usually large business, over all others

## Climate Emergency

**12 What do you see as the key impacts of Climate Change on the Sunshine Coast and how should the SCRC deal with this now and into the future?**

**Comment:**

Change in weather patterns bring many challenges for councils including more impacts on all infrastructure, more costs for repair & maintenance of community facilities, more disaster rescues

The impact of nature on an environment created by a "different" nature will be a complex interplay that we will only experience as it happens. But councils must be aware that nothing will stay the same & must build into their system great flexibility & contingency

Part of this is not overcommitting their future funding to debt financing & be able to quickly switch resources to any new issues that develop

Impact on waterways & floodplains are of particular concern & council should mitigate this as much as possible by restricting development in those zones

**13 Do you endorse the Climate Change Emergency Declaration made by the current Council and will you advocate for a review of the scope, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the current corporate performance mechanisms to give effect to the Declaration?**

**Comment:**

Yes, but I am unsure of what the current council has done in practical terms to effect any changes within the parameters of that Declaration. I would be more interested in day to day paradigms than adjustment or addition of parameters & measurements

**14 What role do you see for the SCRC and the Planning Scheme to accelerate the Sunshine Coast becoming a low emissions region by 2041?**

**Comment:**

The Coast could develop local energy production, green industries such as hemp growing & use of this in building, green manufacturing, local food production to cut transport energy use & many other initiatives to contribute to Zero '41

The general outline of policies in the PS Zero '41 organisation plan are OK as these things mostly are but misses the opportunity to consider to what degree we could make the Coast a closed loop of growing, recycling, energy generation & reduced transport

Essentially our modern world is based on the idea of inhaustable resources that can produce an endless series of things we need that in turn can use an endless amount of energy to get them to where we need them

Zero emissions concepts should be more broadly based on keeping the energy within things in use as it moves through various states, that is, there is no "waste" just resources in different forms

A careful analysis should always be made of the overall energy saving of local production & the transport energy used in bringing those goods from somewhere else

Despite the PS plans it seems unlikely that we can replace our \$11 billion of imports with zero energy equivalents by 2041. So to balance this we must create an equivalent in positive energy exports or replace imports with local zero or less energy packed products

This entire paradigm becomes much easier if we can balance our imports (\$11 billion) with exports (presently \$5 billion) because in theory we have much greater control over what local production we encourage than we do over the products imported by 10,000s of individuals

**15 The Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS):**

Will you ensure that the current CHAS is regularly updated as new Climate Change information and IPCC reports become available, and ensure CHAS updates are incorporated in the Planning Scheme as soon as possible after updates occur?	YES/NO	Yes
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## 16 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning Climate Emergency?

**Comment:**

I believe that many simple actions could be taken that, should they be taken global, would have an impact on whatever we face as regards to the weather. But also it is the responsibility of the council to act on the probability of events that will effect the sustainability of our region in a very real sense of future weather events impacting on zones where building likely to be damaged by these events has been placed contrary to likely cost of remediation

As I said earlier a building should be rated in a single measure of lifetime energy & included in that should be probable energy cost of any remediation

## Planning issues

### 17 What is your understanding of when it is appropriate to override the Planning Scheme (PS) when there are conflicts?

**Comment:**

To me it would be appropriate to override the PS if there is a conflict between it & the public good for the community

The test of whether this is so would be the willingness of the majority of councillors voting for an override

### 18 Do you agree that:

Development Applications (DA) that conflict with the relevant PS Performance Outcomes and other planning instruments should be refused unless there is an overriding need in the public interest?	YES/NO	Yes
the community should be able to make formal public submissions and have the right of appeal to the Planning and Environment Court for development applications involving major impacts on the community and the environment?	YES/NO	Yes
Councillors rather than Council staff should decide such major development applications?	YES/NO	Yes
development that is vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change such as flooding, inundation, coastal erosion, landslip and bushfire hazard should be prohibited?	YES/NO	Yes
financial contributions in place of the provisions of onsite parking should not be allowed unless improvements are provided within 200 metres of the development?	YES/NO	Yes
longer public submission timeframes than the statutory minimum times concerning amendments of the PS and for the proposed new PS should be implemented and consultation time for the new PS should be longer than the statutory timeframes (currently a minimum of 40 business days) to allow time for the community to understand and make an informed response?	YES/NO	Yes
further development on the floodplains should be prohibited and not approved?	YES/NO	Yes
a thorough review of the proposed Draft of the new PS, including the assumptions underlying it and the provision of infrastructure on which the proposed Draft PS is relying should be undertaken by the new Council? These include for example, the proposed rate of population growth specified in the SEQ Regional Plan Update to be accommodated on the Sunshine Coast and the impact of that rate of population growth in the region including the increases in dwelling numbers and densities mandated in the Update.	YES/NO	Yes

where community expectations about the PS are inconsistent with the planning directions and expectations of the State Government (eg in the SEQ Regional Plan Update or State legislation or policies), you will advocate strongly to ensure that the State accommodates the expressed planning wishes of our regional community to the greatest practicable extent?	YES/NO	Yes
Halls Creek should not be recommended for residential development and should remain part of the Inter-Urban Break as per the long-held view of the SCRC and supported by OSCAR?	YES/NO	Yes
there should be a level playing field for all quarry operations in the Sunshine Coast region by ensuring that the new PS has the same zoning for all quarry operations and the same level of development assessment for their operations?	YES/NO	Yes

**19 Concerning the South East Queensland Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ) Update of December 2023, what are your views on the strategic directions for the Northern Subregion, the expansions of the Urban Footprint at Yandina, and the population and dwelling requirements for the Sunshine Coast region?**

**Comment:**  
It is a potentially creating a difficult situation by offering relatively cheap land in a location without sufficient public transport or other community facilities in a place that would not have these overlapping from adjacent areas. It would therefore put extra pressure on existing roads with extra private vehicles as the only likely means of transport

Although on the highway it would be difficult to bring any extra transport facilities to such a relatively isolated location. And even if promises were made it seems these are often withdrawn & withdrawing them from this place would have a high probability because of the cost & the lack of other population centres along the route they would take

**20 Given the focus on increased densification via higher buildings and/or “gentle density” as per the SEQRP2023 Update will you commit to:**

the development of careful guidelines for “gentle density” and that this type of development is not just seen as “accepted development”/“as of right”?	YES/NO	Yes
ensuring that SCRC undertakes a pilot project for higher density living that demonstrates the best in planning outcomes as per the ELS policy?	YES/NO	Yes

**21 The coastal hazard “erosion prone area” is defined by the Queensland Government. The State Planning Policy Guidance states redevelopment is to “avoid urban footprint expansion into erosion-prone areas while the State Policy prohibits this land “to be used for urban purposes” unless already located in an urban area or urban footprint in a regional plan.**

**Will you oppose increases in the urban footprint and the density of medium and high-rise mixed-use residential buildings in these designated coastal hazard areas to reduce overall risk – and if so, how?**

**Comment:**

Yes, but the normal processes reject wherever possible applications for development in these zones. Also I would advocate that a system be devised that would formally inform buyers of the parameters of the locations they are investing in, this could take the form of a document that would include the parameters plus consequences of these such as the unavailability of some insurances & it would acknowledge the buyers have been informed that the council would take no remedial action to preserve their buildings should they be impacted by ocean erosion, This document would be notarised & returned to the council

I would also advocate for a differential rate system that took into account the probability of buildings becoming uninhabitable or unmaintainable & the likely cost to the community of this. The "whole of life" energy index could be used in calculating the differential rates

**22 How can the Planning Scheme support the biosphere?**

**Comment:**

I understand the BioSphere to be a series of undertakings that the community has agreed to abide by so rather than the PS supporting the BS it seems to me these principles should underlay the PS in more than just words. The various areas designed as BSs are parts of an over-of-region paradigm

I could be wrong

**23 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning Planning Issues?**

**Comment:**

I believe a responsible council should turn away from development near the waterways & floodplains because the future impact on these zone is calculable & therefore it is known they are unsustainable in that they will cost the future resources to maintain & protect them

## Transport Infrastructure and Service

**24 Given the Australian Government has withdrawn financial support for all but one of the 5 major transport projects on the Sunshine Coast and has reduced Federal contributions from 80% to 50% for approved projects, and given the strong nexus between land use planning decisions and the provision of transport infrastructure, do you agree that:**

all the current regional transport projects should be reassessed to identify and “lock in” the most effective and affordable project or projects that realistically can be delivered with Federal and State funding?	YES/NO	Yes
accurate budgeting with realistic cost increases and contingency funding must be included in this reassessment process?	YES/NO	Yes
projects that meet the need to efficiently move large numbers of Olympics 2032 spectators to, from and within the Sunshine Coast and that deliver a significant “legacy” transport benefit to the region must be a major decision-making consideration?	YES/NO	Yes



any reassessment should explore some options that do not involve the high capital cost, fixed transport infrastructure projects currently under consideration eg significant increases in the regional public bus network with small and large battery buses on more routes, servicing all major regional destinations, with greater frequency and express services, and with bus right of way clearways at peak periods and priority at traffic lights?	YES/NO	Yes
that ratepayers should not be subsidising major infrastructure projects that traditionally have been funded by the State and Australian Governments through an increase in Council debt or increases in the Transport Levy?	YES/NO	Yes
given the importance of synchronising and integrating land use planning and development approvals with the planning, funding and delivery of transport infrastructure and services, you will support including in the proposed new Planning Scheme medium, high and gentle density land use changes only where the relevant transport infrastructure and services are guaranteed to be funded and delivered in a synchronised way?	YES/NO	Yes
Active transport and Accessible transport should be made priorities in any transport infrastructure projects?	YES/NO	Yes

## 25 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning Transport Infrastructure and Services?

### Comment:

I have some reservations about making the needs of the Olympics a primary determinate of transport budgeting. The general aphorism is "The Olympics cause to be built things for which there was no demand before them & will be no demand for them after"

Also this idea there will be a Olympic bump in the infrastructure budget may proved to be an illusion especially in our region where already basic promised projects unrelated to the Olympics have been canceled & it is doubtful whether funding would be restored to all those by 2032

As a rough back-of-the-envelope guide if the Feds 10 year infrastructure is \$600 billion proportionally we may get \$8 billion & that, even with a State top up. won't provide much more than our basic needs

It may not be appropriate to discuss it here by the region should have a closer look at not the vague legacy benefit of the Olympics but the actual real time financial pay back & also the value in dollars of such legacy effects as increased tourism

As to the ratepayers financing any major infrastructure it is inconcieveable that at today's escalated cost of consturction our 160,000 or so ratepayers can afford very much at all but what is troubling is the invisible cost of millions being spent by the council in investigating spurious options & lobbying for these

Thank you for your responses. We appreciate your time commitment to complete this survey.