



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

Surname:	Bunnag	Given name:	Taylor
Position contesting:	Division 8		

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	Yes
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:

As required under Chapter 5B of the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld), in circumstances where I had a prescribed or declarable conflict of interest, I would recuse myself from any and all deliberations/discussions relating to the matter. However, given that neither myself or my close associates have any assets/interests that would likely give rise to a conflict of interest, I believe there are limited situations in which a conflict of interest could arise.

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

Comment:

Given that local government is the closest level of government to people, I believe in proactive engagement. During my campaign, I've demonstrated the level of community engagement that people can expect from me as a councillor. I have personally knocked on over 3000 households now to engage with local residents on the issues that matter to them. I have run listening posts, delivered over 25000 flyers and been responsive on social media. If elected, I plan on hosting a community forum in each suburb in the months after the election to give residents a further opportunity to reinforce their priorities and aspirations with me.

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

Comment:

In Division 8, I believe that the crucial issues are lifestyle preservation, service delivery and better infrastructure. I will provide an example of my response to each of these issues in turn. On lifestyle preservation, I am determined to be a councillor who fights to protect the character of our towns and region. This means ensuring that the next planning scheme meets community expectations - no high rise buildings along our coastal corridor and no floodplain development. Once in force, I will support planning decisions which are in-line with the planning scheme. On service delivery, council needs to refocus its attention on providing better value for money to ratepayers by re-introducing services such as a kerbside clean-up and tip vouchers. I will advocate for these policies during the council budget planning sessions, when council deliberates over revenue and expenditure. Finally, we need the right mix of infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast, particularly when it comes to public transport. I believe that the debate regarding the optimum

transportation infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast is unsettled from an economic and planning perspective. The business case for 'Direct Sunshine Coast Rail' (ie heavy rail) along the CAMCOS corridor all the way to Maroochydore has just been released. Funding of the project in full is yet to be committed to by any level of government. If it's the case that funding for the project does not deliver a direct rail line all the way to Maroochydore, I have significant concerns about what that will mean for the entire Sunshine Coast Public Transport strategy. We need an integrated public transport strategy and one way council can assist immediately is to start getting people using public transport by using funds from the transport levy to add additional bus services in certain areas on a trial basis using different sized buses.

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

Comment:

I'm the best candidate because my of my local knowledge, skills, experience and character. I am a born and raised Sunshine Coast local who lives in Yaroomba with my wife, Gabi, and our 19-month-old daughter. I grew up in Coolum on Centenary Heights Road and went to school in Coolum, Yandina and then Nambour High, where I graduated as School Captain. I have not just grown up locally, I've grown with our community and understand our shared history. That local knowledge is bolstered by my skills. I have a Bachelor of Laws, a Bachelor of Journalism and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice. I have been a lawyer since 2016, representing catastrophically injured medical patients and workers in the manufacturing industries. My work as a lawyer has equipped me with various skills - problem-solving, forensic attention to detail and diligence. I've worked on a variety of complex issues involving companies like BHP, Rio Tinto and Qantas to name a few. This experience has been invaluable as I have consistently advocated for fairness in the face of adversity for everyday working people, made difficult decisions and given difficult advice at times. This experience sets me apart from the other candidates in Division 8. Finally, I believe character is an important consideration. People know that when I say I'll do something, I do it. Equally, I pride myself on being respectful, hardworking and people focused. Being a councillor requires an ability to work with a range of stakeholders - community groups, community members, councillor staff, other councillors, a mayor along with state and federal governments. It also means being able to balance the competing views of those stakeholders and it's very rare that all those stakeholders will share the same view. I have a strong trackrecord of bringing people together and working cooperatively with others to achieve the best outcomes possible - we need someone in Division 8 who has those traits and skills.

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

Comment:

I was admitted as a solicitor in the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2016. As part of the admission process, the Court is required to be satisfied that an applicant is a fit and proper person. Each year since, my practising certificate has been renewed on the basis that I continue to be considered a fit and proper person by the Court.

In addition, I am proud to have led by example in calling for real time political disclosures in local government over 12 years ago when I ran as a teenager. During the 2012 election, I proactively declared what donations I had received prior to the election. That approach is now the law in Queensland. I am an independent candidate who has been funded by my parents and myself, with no endorsement or funding from a registered political organisation.

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:

There are three particular principles within s. 4(2) of the Act that are highly influential to me -transparent and effective processes, decision-making in the public interest and ethical and legal behaviour. There is a strong sense within the community that the current processes of council with respect to community engagement are lacking. There is a genuine lack of transparency with respect to where Council is spending ratepayer money and I will be endeavouring to change that culture within council. I am also of the view that there have been several scenarios in which decision-making has not occurred in line with the public interest. The approval of developments such as Sekusui House at Yaroomba are clear examples of this and while the phrase 'public interest' has broad meaning, I will always be prioritising the views and interests of local people when making my decisions as a councillor. Finally, ethical and legal behaviour is very important to me and who I am as a person. I hold myself to a high standard of behaviour and will continue to do so as a representative of our community.

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:

I consider sustainable development to mean development that either has a neutral or net positive impact on the environment and surrounding community, which has been planned and designed through a rigorous community consultation process (ie it is provided for in the Planning Scheme).

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

Comment:

I support amendments to the Local Government Act which would require the disclosure of council candidates interests prior to the election.

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:

I believe the key impacts of climate change on the Sunshine Coast relate to greater occurrence and intensity

of natural disasters, endangering and extinction of flora and fauna species and reduced agricultural yields. I will focus my response on the first impact, in recognition that we are already facing more frequent and intense natural disasters. We need to endorse a planning scheme that recognises and manages the risks of further coastal erosion and inundation for the next century. SCRC should take a clear and consistent approach by rejecting floodplain developments, including community infrastructure such as sports fields. There are simply no public policy grounds which support development on floodplains in 2024 and beyond. We should continue to invest in projects such as the Blue Heart which preserves our flood storage capacity throughout the Maroochy River Catchment. I will be seeking information from council staff early on in my term regarding the preparedness of our disaster management systems, including real-time emergency information sharing with residents which has been a point of contention during natural disasters in other jurisdictions recently. I would like to review Council's capital works expenditure program to prioritise flood mitigation and drainage improvements in Division 8, particularly on the North Shore where we are drainage deficient.

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:

I was a founding member of the Australian Youth Climate Change Coalition. I understand the importance of dealing with climate change and in-principle support the declaration made by the Council in March 2022, but note that the declaration was made comparatively later than other jurisdictions such as Noosa Shire Council. I give my endorsement in-principle to the Declaration because I would like to see a more robust response which is not only focused on the council's organisational response to climate change, but how our region can become a leader in mitigating the impacts of climate change by turning those potential impacts into opportunities.

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:

Council needs to show leadership on helping lower emissions throughout the Sunshine Coast by endorsing a planning scheme that changes the Sunshine Coast's culture of car dependency. According to the CSIRO, as at 2023, the third largest percentage contributor to CO2 emissions was transport. The next planning scheme and the assumptions contained therein must be carefully integrated with the Sunshine Coast's Public Transport Network. That is not an easy task as I believe that the debate regarding the optimum transportation infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast is unsettled from an economic and planning perspective. The business case for 'Direct Sunshine Coast Rail' (ie heavy rail) along the CAMCOS corridor all the way to Maroochydore has just been released. Funding of the project in full is yet to be committed to by any level of government but if this project is delivered, I want to see a planning scheme that sensibly creates opportunity for people to live and work near public transport infrastructure, in particular along the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Corridor, to break our car dependency culture. In the interim, Council should start spending the public transport levy future fund on actual public transport services in key areas which people might actually use (ie a bus loop connection servicing Cotton Tree, Maroochydore CBD, Alex Headland and Sunshine Cove which is currently unserved etc). This would be within the scope of Council's transport levy policy, which includes contributing to trials of flexible public transport services to meet specific community needs.

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

16 Do you have any additional comments you would like to make concerning Climate Emergency?

Comment:

N/A

Planning issues

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

Comment:

I am aware of subsections 8(4)(a) and (b) of the Planning Act 2016 (Qld) which state that a state planning policy or a regional plan applies instead of a regional plan or local planning instrument, in circumstances where there is an inconsistency. A local planning instrument includes a planning scheme made by a local government. I am also aware of the provisions in the Economic Development Act 2012 (Qld) that allow the the Minister for Economic Development to declare a Priority Development Area, such as the Sunshine Coast Airport.

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:

The Shaping SEQ Update presents the next council with a difficult task of ensuring we maintain the character of the Sunshine Coast while also providing an additional 84,800 dwellings, with an additional 219,000 people to accommodate by 2046. There is a recognition within our community that there is a greater need for a mixture of housing supply that can be achieved by developments such as secondary dwellings, townhouses and duplexes, but this must be done carefully in locations that are suitable for such developments.

To that end, the Update also makes reference to a dwelling mix target, which includes reference to high rise being '9 + storeys'. It is evident from considering this definition of 'high rise' in isolation that there are many inconsistencies between the expectations of Sunshine Coast residents and the SEQ update, as high rise on the Sunshine Coast is considered as being 6 + storeys. This will need to be vigorously addressed by the next council through robust dialogue with the State Government.

I am concerned by the inclusion of Halls Creek as a Potential Future Growth Area and the expansion of the Urban Footprint north of Yandina, close to where I went to school. Neither of these areas in my view are suitable for future growth because they are not appropriately supported by infrastructure. The character of Yandina has already been diminished because of the short-sighted approval of developments which created a second town centre and further expansion of the urban footprint in this rural town is wrong.

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, by ensuring we have a planning scheme that reflects the realities and risks of coastal erosion prone areas and then making decisions in accordance with the planning scheme.

22 How can the Planning Scheme support the biosphere?

Comment:

One of the objectives of the Biosphere relates to development and demonstrating leadership in delivering a diverse and resilient economy. A focus area within this objective is encouraging responsible and sustainable development that contributes positively to our economy and community, while supporting affordable living outcomes. The next planning should be one which carefully integrates a mixture of housing options with infrastructure delivery such as Sunshine Coast Direct Rail. The planning assumptions within the planning scheme must align with the public transport system we have on the Sunshine Coast. If we want to be a sustainable and affordable region, we must break our car dependence and that can be achieved through our planning scheme.

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

Comment:

I was a member of the Community Reference Panel for the original Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme.

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:

We must start using the revenue from the Transport Levy today, we've had enough studies, how about a few more buses going to places at suitable times?

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