



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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

Surname:	BURTON	Given name:	Tracy
Position contesting:	Division 5		

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	Yes

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 am dedicated to maintaining a high level of transparency and accountability in all aspects of my professional life. Transparency is key in fostering trust between individuals and organizations. This is especially important when it comes to matters of finance and investments. By openly disclosing any potential conflicts of interest, I am showing my commitment to being honest and upfront in all of my dealings.

In addition to personal conflicts of interest, I also recognize the importance of avoiding conflicts within my family. While I do not currently own any investment properties, I understand that even the appearance of a conflict can be damaging. That is why I take extra precautions to ensure there are no conflicts of interest with my family and their financial interests. I firmly believe that transparency and accountability go hand in hand, and I am fully committed to upholding these values in all aspects of my life. By being transparent about any potential conflicts of interest, I am holding myself accountable for my actions and decisions. This not only builds trust with those I interact with professionally, but it also sets a positive example for others to follow.

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, transparency and accountability are more important than ever. By openly and honestly addressing any conflicts of interest, we can create a culture of trust and integrity that benefits everyone involved. Overall, my goal is to maintain the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

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

Comment:

For the past 12 months, I have been actively engaging with and listening to the local communities across Division 5 to hear what matters to you for your Local Council. I have found that engaging with the community is crucial in understanding their needs and concerns. By hosting regular events and being accessible through monthly pop-up offices in each town, I hope to create a space for open communication and collaboration between myself and the residents of Division 5. In addition to these efforts, I also plan on utilizing social media platforms to keep the community informed about important issues and decisions. This will allow for wider participation and feedback from those who may not be able to attend in-person events. Furthermore, I am committed to actively listening to the diverse voices of Division 5 and working together towards finding solutions that benefit everyone. By creating a platform for continuous dialogue and involving the community in decision-making processes, we can ensure that their needs are being met and their voices are being heard. My dedication to community engagement will be a continuous effort throughout my term as your elected councillor. I believe that by working together, we can build a stronger and more inclusive community in Division 5.

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

Comment:

As your councillor, I will prioritize the needs and concerns of our community. Through active community consultation, I will strive to gather feedback and ideas from all members of the community, capturing the diversity of our voices and people.

Participatory democracy is an essential aspect of my approach. This means that I believe in involving as many members of the community as possible in the decision-making process. This includes listening to and considering the views of marginalized groups and ensuring that their voices are heard.

I also strongly believe in co-design principles, which involve working closely with community members to develop solutions that meet their specific needs. By involving community members in the design process, we can ensure that our initiatives are effective and truly address the issues at hand.

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

Comment:

As a seasoned professional with a diverse background, I am excited to embark on the next chapter of my career by focusing on community service and local government. With my previous experience as a teacher, nurse, and now community services worker, I have gained valuable skills and insights that I believe will be vital in serving the people of Division 5.

Having spent 15 years living and raising my two children in the hinterland, I have developed a deep connection and understanding of our community's needs and aspirations. This has fueled my passion for working towards the betterment of our local council.

In addition to my strong organizational skills and strategic thinking abilities, I am also highly motivated to make a positive impact in the lives of those around me. As a teacher, I have always been dedicated to nurturing the minds of young individuals and guiding them towards a brighter future. Similarly, as a nurse, I have strived to provide compassionate care and support to those in need. Now, as a community services worker, I am determined to use my skills and experience to contribute towards building a stronger and more inclusive community.

I strongly believe that local government plays a crucial role in shaping the future of our communities. By working together, we can address the issues and challenges faced by our community and make meaningful changes for the betterment of all residents. I am committed to using my diverse background and skills to deliver effective solutions and outcomes for Division 5. With my strong drive, experience, and passion, I am confident that I can make a positive impact and contribute towards building a stronger and more vibrant hinterland.

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

Comment:

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:

In any professional setting, governance, transparency and ethical behavior are crucial aspects that contribute to the overall success and credibility of an individual or organization. As professionals, it is our responsibility to maintain a high level of integrity in all our actions and decisions.

Both governance and transparency play a significant role in building trust with clients, colleagues and the community at large. As professionals, we must ensure that our actions are in line with the ethical standards of our profession. This includes adhering to a code of conduct, maintaining confidentiality and avoiding conflicts of interest.

In my professional roles, I have always prioritized governance, transparency and ethical behavior. My impeccable 20 year teaching record is a testament to my dedication towards upholding these values. I firmly believe in fairness, equity and justice for all individuals, regardless of their background, and my strong moral compass guides me in making ethical decisions.

If elected, I will continue to uphold these core beliefs as I serve the needs of our diverse community. I am committed to promoting good governance practices and maintaining transparency in all my actions, to build a strong and trustworthy professional environment. Overall, it is only by upholding these principles that we can create a fair and just society for all individuals.

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 development is a key concept that guides progress towards creating a better future for all. Measuring sustainable development is crucial in understanding how far we have come and what else needs to be done to achieve our goals. In the Sunshine Coast Hinterland and Division 5, one way to measure sustainable development is through environmental indicators. This includes tracking air and water quality, biodiversity, waste management practices, and energy consumption. These indicators can help assess the impact of development on the environment and identify areas for improvement. Social indicators such as equality, diversity, and inclusion are also crucial in measuring sustainable development. This includes tracking poverty rates, access to affordable housing, community participation levels, and social cohesion.

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

Comment:

As a leader, it is imperative to establish trust and transparency with the community you serve. This not only builds strong relationships but also fosters an environment of open communication where the needs and concerns of the people are heard and addressed.

To create a stronger level of trust, it is important for elected representatives to be transparent in their actions and decisions. Transparency means being honest about the reasoning behind decisions and being open to feedback and criticism from the community. This shows that the representative values the opinions of the people and is willing to work towards finding solutions that benefit everyone.

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:

As the Sunshine Coast continues to grow and thrive, it is crucial that we prioritize strong environmental and sustainability practices. Our beautiful region is not just home to people, but also to a diverse range of flora and fauna that must be protected for future generations.

One of the most pressing issues facing our community is the effects of climate change. It is imperative that we take proactive measures to address this global crisis. By implementing sustainable practices and reducing our carbon footprint, we can protect not only our environment but also the health and well-being of our residents.

In order for these measures to truly make an impact, it is essential that we stop inappropriate development and protect sensitive native habitats. This means carefully considering development proposals and their potential impact on the environment before they are approved. It also means preserving our natural areas and avoiding development on flood plains, which are vital for preventing flooding and protecting our communities.

Furthermore, we must prioritize funding towards climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. This includes implementing renewable energy sources, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and promoting environmentally-friendly practices among businesses and residents. By increasing funding towards these initiatives, we can make significant progress in mitigating the effects of climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for our region.

It is also crucial that we put an end to clear felling the forests of the hinterland. These precious ecosystems not only provide important habitats for native species but also play a vital role in carbon storage and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By preserving these forests, we are not only protecting our environment but also taking a proactive step towards addressing climate change.

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:

In today's world, we are facing a critical issue that threatens not only our immediate surroundings but also the entire planet - climate change. As we witness its devastating effects on a daily basis, it is more important than ever for individuals and communities to acknowledge the urgency of this global crisis. This is why, in the 2020 local government election, I took a stand and advocated for the council to declare a climate emergency.

As the sole candidate in Division 5 who supported the declaration of a climate emergency, I am proud to have taken a strong stance on this issue. And even though I did not have the support of other candidates at the time, I am glad that it was eventually passed by Council, thanks to the efforts of a neighbouring elected councillor.

But my advocacy for climate change does not end there. If elected as the councillor for Division 5, I will continue to push for initiatives and policies that aim to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change in our local communities. This includes working towards reducing carbon emissions, promoting sustainable practices, and protecting our natural resources.

It is crucial for us to take immediate action in addressing the climate emergency as it affects not only our present but also the future generations. I believe that through collective efforts and strong leadership, we can make a positive impact in combatting this global crisis. As a dedicated advocate for addressing climate change on a local level, I am committed to doing my part in creating a more sustainable and resilient community.

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:

I am committed to creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly community. Council has developed a Planning Scheme that sets out guidelines and regulations for development within the region. I share the view with council, that climate change is a pressing issue and as such, we need to continue to implement and increase measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. To achieve this, as a councillor, I will work closely with developers and businesses to ensure that all new developments comply with energy efficiency standards. This includes adopting sustainable building practices, using renewable energy sources, and promoting green infrastructure.

Furthermore, the Planning Scheme should also encourage the use of public transport, walking, and cycling as alternative modes of transportation. By reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road, the council aims to decrease carbon emissions and improve air quality.

In addition, the council can continue to implement and improve initiatives to reduce waste and promote recycling. I will collaborate with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of reducing emissions and taking individual actions to mitigate climate change. This includes hosting events, workshops, and campaigns to promote sustainable practices.

By working with the Planning Scheme, the Sunshine Coast Council can effectively address emissions reduction in a holistic manner. By implementing sustainable development practices, promoting alternative modes of transportation, and encouraging waste reduction, the council is making significant strides towards creating a more sustainable and environmentally friendly region.

Furthermore, I will actively engage with stakeholders such as businesses, residents, and community groups to gather feedback and suggestions on how the Planning Scheme can be improved. This collaborative approach ensures that the council can develop strategies and initiatives that are relevant and beneficial.

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:

The scientific consensus on climate change is clear: it is human-induced and the time for debate over this issue is long over. As a global community, we must now shift our focus towards taking concrete action on the ground to mitigate against the increasing frequency of severe weather events such as flooding and fires.

Climate change affects everyone, but its impacts are not equally distributed. Vulnerable communities, especially those living in poverty or marginalized groups, are the most at risk and will require special attention to ensure that no one is left behind as we face the challenges ahead. Declaring a climate emergency is an important step towards addressing the global issue of climate change. It sends a clear signal that our council is taking this matter seriously and acknowledges the urgency to act upon it.

As a future member of this council, I wholeheartedly support the declaration of a climate emergency. However, it is critical that we not only make this declaration but also follow through with concrete actions to mitigate the effects of climate change.

One of the key ways in which we can make a difference is by setting clear and measurable goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This could involve implementing green practices in our operations, investing in renewable energy sources, and encouraging sustainable behavior among our community. We must also hold ourselves accountable by regularly monitoring and reporting on our progress towards these goals.

Furthermore, it is essential that we work together with other councils and governments to create a unified approach towards tackling climate change.

Planning issues

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

Comment:

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:

I am committed to creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly community. Council has developed a Planning Scheme that sets out guidelines and regulations for development within the region. I share the view with council, that climate change is a pressing issue and as such, we need to continue to implement and increase measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. To achieve this, as a councillor, I will work closely with developers and businesses to ensure that all new developments comply with energy efficiency standards. Furthermore, the Planning Scheme should also encourage the use of public transport, walking, and cycling as alternative modes of transportation. By reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road, the council aims to decrease carbon emissions and improve air quality.

In addition, the council can continue to implement and improve initiatives to reduce waste and promote recycling. I will collaborate with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of reducing emissions and taking individual actions to mitigate climate change.

By working with the Planning Scheme, the Sunshine Coast Council can effectively address emissions reduction in a holistic manner. By implementing sustainable development practices, promoting alternative modes of transportation, and encouraging waste reduction, the council is making significant strides towards creating a more sustainable and environmentally friendly region.

Through these efforts, the Sunshine Coast Council can not only work towards reducing emissions in its own community but also contribute to the larger goal of mitigating the impacts of climate change. By incorporating sustainability into its Planning Scheme and actively engaging with stakeholders, the council is setting a strong example for other regions to follow and creating a more sustainable future for all.

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:

22 How can the Planning Scheme support the biosphere?

Comment:

The biosphere is a delicate and interconnected system that supports all life. Planning decisions made by governments and city councils can greatly impact the health and sustainability of this system. It is important to consider the effects of urban development on the environment and find ways to mitigate negative impacts.

It is crucial to stop inappropriate development and protect our sensitive native habitat. This includes avoiding building in areas that are prone to flooding or natural disasters, as well as preserving important wildlife habitats. By doing so, we can maintain the balance of ecosystems and ensure the survival of many species.

Furthermore, supporting small secondary dwellings and low-impact infill housing can help alleviate urban sprawl. These types of housing options allow for development within existing urban areas, reducing the need for expanding into natural habitats.

Planning decisions have a significant impact on the biosphere. By prioritizing sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices, we can work towards preserving the delicate balance of our planet's ecosystem by thinking globally and acting locally. This includes promoting public transport, improving pedestrian connections, protecting sensitive habitats, and supporting low-impact housing options. It is crucial to consider the long-term effects of development on the biosphere and make responsible decisions for the betterment of our region.

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

Comment:

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:

One of the biggest challenges that cities and towns face today is managing population growth. As more people move into an area, there is a strain on resources such as housing, transportation, and utilities. This can lead to increased traffic congestion and strained public services. In order to prevent these issues from occurring, it is crucial that before approving large-scale new housing developments, we must ensure that each town has the infrastructure to support such population growth.

Developing new housing communities without proper infrastructure in place can have detrimental effects on both current and future residents. If a town (such as Palmwoods) does not have adequate transportation options, it can lead to increased traffic and longer commute times for residents. This not only affects their quality of life but also has negative impacts on the environment.

Therefore, it is essential that before approving any large-scale housing developments, town planners carefully consider the existing infrastructure and assess if it can support the expected population growth. This includes evaluating transportation networks, water and sewage systems, schools, healthcare facilities, and other essential services.

In addition to ensuring that existing infrastructure is sufficient, town planners should also plan for future growth and make provisions for necessary upgrades or expansions. This proactive approach will help prevent potential issues and ensure that the community can thrive with a growing population.

Ultimately, it is crucial to prioritize sustainable development and consider the long-term impacts of housing developments on the community. By carefully planning and investing in infrastructure, we can create thriving communities that can accommodate population growth while maintaining a high quality of life for all residents

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