

Your vision for Port Stephens

Questions for candidates for election to Port Stephens Council in 2017

Port Stephens Greens wish to assess where candidates stand on a range of issues, in order to assess which candidates share our values and priorities.

Candidates should preferably answer Yes or No to each question, but may add comments. In the absence of a Yes or No answer, or if comments qualify the answer, we reserve the right to make our own judgement about whether you do or do not support a proposition, and publicise your response accordingly.

If there is insufficient space for your comments, feel free to attach further pages with cross reference to the relevant Question No.

Please also feel free to send us any other information about your vision for Port Stephens, and what you see yourself offering in pursuit of that vision.

Please return as soon as possible to email@portstephensgreens.org.au

Based on your responses, we may invite candidates to address our Local Group.

Thank you.

Name of candidate: Giacomo Arnott, Des Maslen, David Simm (Labor Candidates)

Standing for (Mayor or Ward): Mayoral, West Ward, Central Ward, East Ward

Date:

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Yes (Y) or No (N)?</i>
Governance, transparency and accountability	
Q1. Will you support re-introduction of web-casting of Council meetings?	YES
Comment?	
Q2. Will you support re-introduction of a Council committee cycle that allows for at least two weeks consideration in public of papers on the Council agenda?	YES
Comment?	
Q3. Will you support full disclosure of the detailed financial accounts of all Council business enterprises including its Holiday Parks?	YES
Comment? Unless there is a legal reason preventing disclosure	
Q4. Will you support full disclosure of the costs to Council of legal actions?	YES
Comment? Unless there is a legal reason preventing disclosure	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
Q5. Are there any circumstances in which you would favour a merger between Port Stephens and any other adjoining LGA?	SEE COMMENT
Comment? Any future proposal needs to have their merits and issues dealt with before a decision is made. We will never support a forced or unwanted merger for Port Stephens.	
Planning approvals and compliance	
Q6. Will you support a minimum public exhibition period of 4 weeks (excluding public holiday weeks) for DAs and other planning proposals which are clearly of major interest or significance to the community?	SEE COMMENT
Comment? Contentious issues must be dealt with by Council and be guided by the advice of professional Council staff.	
Q7. Will you support giving greater priority and resources to monitoring of compliance with conditions of approvals, and, where necessary, to enforcement action?	YES
Comment?	
Ecologically sustainable development	
Q8. Do you agree that protection of the natural environment needs to be given greater weight in Council planning and land use decisions? (e.g. to limit land clearing)	YES
Comment? It needs to be given the appropriate weighting according to legislation, but where we have discretion we believe it to be a very important consideration.	
Q9. Do you accept that man-made climate change is increasing risks from sea level rise and more frequent and intense storms and bush fires, and that Council should adopt policies to adapt to the risks, including by limiting development in low lying areas and in bush fire prone areas?	YES
Comment?	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
Q10. What if any role do you think Council should play in relation to the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park?	SEE COMMENT
<p>Comment? None, council interference can only lead to conflict within the governance of the marine park. The council does not possess the scientific expertise to be of any use to the marine park's success.</p> <p>The only area the council should be involved is in crossover areas, ie; areas of interaction between terrestrial activities and marine conservation issues.</p> <p>At all times the scientific/environmental concerns must take the highest priority.</p> <p>The only exception to the above is with public safety and or with development applications such as water parks etc where consultation between both agencies is required.</p>	
Q11. Do you see any potential for coal seam gas extraction in Port Stephens?	NO, SEE COMMENT
<p>Comment? Our candidates agree with the ALP policy of banning all Coal Seam Gas exploration until/if the science suggests the practice is safe for water, the environment, and for communities.</p>	
Q12. Do you agree that proposed expansion of sand mining and hard rock quarrying operations in Port Stephens would impose unacceptable levels of heavy vehicle traffic, habitat destruction and other adverse effects?	YES
<p>Comment? Any future extraction projects would need to be assessed as they may not fit into the above criteria.</p>	
Q13. Should Council actively promote the use of renewable energy and energy conservation, both in its own operations and in the general community?	YES, SEE COMMENT
<p>Comment: Our candidates know that local families rely on the coal industry for an income, and acknowledge the important current role of coal as a baseload energy source for businesses such as Tomago Aluminium, but also recognise the growing need to look towards renewable energies for future energy and environmental needs. As such, we support the premise of this question.</p>	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
Q14. Should Council actively lobby the State Government to implement a ban on the supply by retailers of single use plastic shopping bags, to reduce both the environmental impact and the costs to Council of disposal?	YES
Comment:	
Koala Protection Q15. Will you support an urgent review and update of the Port Stephens Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management, with a view to stricter protection of koala habitat and movement corridors?	YES
Comment:	
Q16. Will you support major Council expenditure (up to \$2.8 million) on a Koala hospital/tourist attraction at One Mile Beach which is based on an estimate of 45,0000 visitors a year paying \$15 each within three years of opening?	YES, SEE COMMENT
Comment: Our candidates support the koala hospital as proposed by Port Stephens Koalas, however we acknowledge that the impact to the budget bottom line shouldn't be significant, due to the organisation sourcing grants and other donations for building it. We support previous financial Council support and would be open to finding more financial support if necessary and if viable.	
Social, health and welfare policies	
Q17. Will you support Council actively working with State and Federal governments to increase the supply of affordable housing in Port Stephens, including more not for profit social housing? (e.g. through Council's zoning and planning functions)	YES
Comment?	
Specific local issues	
Williamstown contamination Q18. Will you support Council actively lobbying for State and Federal Government solutions to the problems of PFOS/PFOA contamination around the Williamstown airport and RAAF base, and back this up with Council action such as better drain management?	YES
Comment?	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
The communities affected by the Williamstown contamination crisis need to be given assistance wherever possible and Council should be lobbying the State and Federal Government to secure the residents' future as a matter of priority.	
Mambo wetlands Q19. Will you support Council lobbying the State government to buy back the land sold by the Department of Education in 2016 and incorporate it into the Mambo Wetlands Reserve?	YES
Comment?	
Tomaree Lodge Q20. Will you seek to ensure that when Tomaree Lodge closes (in 2018), the land is used for public purposes and not sold for private development?	YES
Comment?	
Nelson Bay Town Centre Q21. Despite Council's recent approval of an apartment building more than double the current height limit, will you support new strict height limits on new buildings in the Nelson Bay town centre to ensure that they do not breach the tree line on the surrounding hills and ridges, when viewed from the foreshore?	YES, SEE COMMENT
Comment? Our candidates understand that community consultation is ongoing on this issue. We believe that the unique character of the Tomaree Peninsula must be maintained, and limiting building heights is an important way to ensure this is done. Our candidates will be guided by the community on this issue, and if the current consultation is not seen as representative enough of the community, then we will ensure that we keep consulting until we get it right.	
Your affiliations and preferences	
Q22. Are you a member of a political party, and if so which party? (whether or not you are standing as an independent)	YES, SEE COMMENT
Comment: Our candidates are members of the NSW Labor Party, representing Country Labor at this election.	

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Yes (Y) or No (N)?</i>
Q23. Will you or your Group be directing preferences to any other candidate(s), and if so, which?	YES, SEE COMMENT
<p>Comment? Our candidates will be looking for like-minded candidates for whom we can direct preferences to. This means progressive, transparent candidates.</p>	
Q24. Will you be receiving more than \$1000 in financial or in-kind support for your campaign from any one or more donor(s) (person or organisation), and if so who?	SEE COMMENT
<p>Comment? We expect that our candidates will be putting a reasonable amount of funds into this campaign, and will be relying on small donors for the rest of our fundraising activities. It is not yet known if these small donors will donate more than \$1000 individually, but we are not expecting any significant funds to come in from organisations.</p>	