

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: **Paul Le Mottee** Standing for **West Ward** Date: **9th August 2017**

<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?	
Comment? Absolutely I will support the re-introduction of webcasting! I am a naturally happy person and quite at home behind a microphone or camera so I will most definitely support the cameras coming back PROVIDED you (or anybody else) can get the General Manger and Governance Officer to write a report recommending its re-introduction. I find it ridiculous that people have been using this matter as a tool to claim a lack of transparency when the reality is the former General Manager, the current General Manager and the Governance Officer have consistently advised that the risk of webcasting and unauthorised recording of meetings is too great. Perhaps somebody in the next Council might be bold enough to move a Notice of Motion to review Council's appetite for risk on a whole range of issues?	
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?	
Comment? I certainly would not object to this as I work close to the Council Chambers and attending more frequently wouldn't bother me. However, I'm not so sure how the East Ward Councillors would feel about the doubling of trips to the Council Chambers and I'm not sure how the rate payers would feel about a doubling of	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
payments to Councillors for travel and meal expenses. Notwithstanding those matters, if the majority of Councillors wanted it that way then I would not object.	
Q3. Will you support full disclosure of the detailed financial accounts of all Council business enterprises including its Holiday Parks?	
<p>Comment? Put simply, I support full disclosure of all financial details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That aren't commercially sensitive • That aren't unnecessary and waste Council resources. For example, in my business I know how much we spend on fuel each year but we don't use time to sort out how much fuel we bought from all the different service stations. <p>Apart from the things that are commercially sensitive such as people's wages and items that are supplied by tender, I have never seen anything that should be not disclosed and I really struggle to understand what more it is that people actually want to see?</p>	
Q4. Will you support full disclosure of the costs to Council of legal actions?	
<p>Comment? Yes</p>	
Q5. Are there any circumstances in which you would favour a merger between Port Stephens and any other adjoining LGA?	
<p>Comment? My word there is! Any proposal to merge Port Stephens and Newcastle would immediately have me supporting a merger with ANY of our other adjoining LGAs if that would avoid a merger with Newcastle.</p>	
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?	
<p>Comment? Yes! Absolutely. I already do support this. I have been saying for decades that information is king and if people could be made more aware of proposed development AND, very importantly, the NSW Government planning law that surrounds development then there would be a lot less unnecessary angst and confusion in the whole process. Council would need to commence this advertising pretty soon after lodgement so as not to unnecessarily delay development but that is not difficult.</p>	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
Q7. Will you support giving greater priority and resources to monitoring of compliance with conditions of approvals, and, where necessary, to enforcement action?	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>Everything I have witnessed in the last 5 years tells me the resources allocated to compliance are at an acceptable level when weighed against all other Council responsibilities. Having said that, illegal dumping and even general littering are issues that really drive me nuts! If the opportunity arose to increase spending in these areas I would most certainly support it!</p>	
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)	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>The mere fact this question is being asked tells me you don't fully appreciate just how much weight this issue is already given. As far as I'm concerned, it's pretty much the number 1 issue in most planning decisions.</p> <p>It also tells me that you are not giving enough opposition to one of the biggest problems and that is the draconian bushfire laws that have resulted in massive increases in clearing. For example, prior to the introduction of Planning for Bushfire legislation, a common scenario would have been for a Rural type lot in a reasonably vegetated area to have a building envelope of say 20 metres x 30 metres comprising an area of 600 m². Under current legislation, you now have to clear a buffer around the building envelope. The width of these buffers varies but they are usually at least 40 metres in all directions. This increases the buffer from 20 x 30 to 100 x 110 comprising 11,000 m²! A massive increase of 1,833%, no typo there, it's an almost 2,000% increase in clearing for every house in vegetated areas.</p> <p>In my opinion, you should be taking up any concerns you have with this issue with the state government and, if you did, you would have my support.</p>	
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?	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>Do I accept there is climate change? YES</p> <p>Do I accept the human race is contributing to climate change? YES but the human race is not the only cause.</p>	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
<p>Do I accept the amount of carbon emitted each year is acceptable? NO</p> <p>Do I accept Sea Level rise predictions? NO (Science on that front is flawed – happy to attend a meeting and explain why)</p> <p>Do I accept there are more storms? No, I don't feel like there are – could be wrong but I have not been shown any hard data on that specific issue.</p> <p>Do I accept storms are more intense? Not really, 1974 Sygma storm was as bad as anything in the last decade. 1974 Cyclone Tracy was the most intense cyclone we've had and that was 43 years ago.</p> <p>Nearly all of Port Stephens is bushfire prone and development in low lying areas should be limited but NOT stopped entirely.</p>	
<p>Q10. What if any role do you think Council should play in relation to the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park?</p>	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>That is a good question that I have not previously considered. Certainly I think the Marine Park is hugely significant. I am a SCUBA diver and I fully appreciate just how wonderful our part of the ocean and estuaries are. Experience has told me that the more agencies that are associated with managing something, the more likely it is that nothing will happen and all the funding allocated is eaten up with bureaucracy. On that basis, I think Council should stay out of it (other than reporting matters of concern) and let the state government agencies run it.</p> <p>The existence of the Newcastle Port Corporation is the result of too many agency cooks spoiling the broth and I think the same would apply if Council were to get involved with the Marine Park.</p>	
<p>Q11. Do you see any potential for coal seam gas extraction in Port Stephens?</p>	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>No. That can go somewhere else with far less constraints as far as I'm concerned. Someone would have to show me some really significant data relating to safety and impacts before there would be any chance of me so much as considering such a thing.</p>	
<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?</p>	
<p>Comment?</p> <p>That question is completely moot. The State Government quite deliberately took planning decisions relating to mines and quarries out of the hands of Council because the Sydney basin is now devoid of such raw materials but is growing at an ever increasing rate. Where I live is significantly affected by increased heavy vehicle movements and the roads are nowhere near the standard of Nelson Bay Road. Every morning I watch my 'P' plate daughter drive out onto these roads</p>	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
with a great deal of concern and frustration. As a Councillor, I only have the same rights as everyone else and that is to make submissions to the state government.	
Q13. Should Council actively promote the use of renewable energy and energy conservation, both in its own operations and in the general community?	
Comment: Yes it should and it already is. I accept that more could be done but things must be changed in an economical and ecologically sensitive way. There is no use in running out and buying an LED light bulb if you are going to throw away a working incandescent light bulb that will end up in land fill.	
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?	
Comment: YES! Absolutely. In fact I think you will find that as a result of lobbying by LGNSW (the peak body representing ALL Councils in NSW) and groups like your own that Coles and Woolworths have vowed to discontinue the use of plastic bags in about 12 months' time.	
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?	
Comment: Not until there is wide spread recognition that domestic cats and dogs are the main problem. Humans and Koalas can cohabit reasonably well. Until such time as there is wide spread support for residential areas where dogs and cats are not permitted there is no point in changing the CKPOM	
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?	
Comment: YES. I have already shown support for this (along with every Councillor)	
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)	
Comment? Yes. I already do. However, just having an aspirational idea like this is not enough. It needs good solid ideas to make it happen and make it sustainable into the future. Social Housing in Raymond Terrace has some people still in asbestos	

Issue	Yes (Y) or No (N)?
ridden houses built in the 1950s. I would be only too happy to hear any ideas you may have to help make this situation improve.	
Specific local issues	
Williamtown contamination Q18. Will you support Council actively lobbying for State and Federal Government solutions to the problems of PFOS/PFOA contamination around the Williamtown airport and RAAF base, and back this up with Council action such as better drain management?	
Comment? Both myself and Council already hold this position and have done everything we can think of to get action out of defence. In terms of better drain management, and at the risk of offending some people who may read this, it is mostly environmental groups or agencies that prevent Council from undertaking much more drain maintenance than they do. Therefore, I would be extremely interested to hear any ideas you may have on how drains could be better maintained?	
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?	
Comment? If I recollect correctly, Council is already doing this and opposed the sale in the first place.	
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?	
Comment? Again, a completely moot question. That is 100% State Government. For two decades the State Government, no matter who was at the helm, have been selling assets like this with the tag line "with the proceeds from this sale we will be able to provide more doctors and nurses and build a new football stadium". Accordingly, committing to <u>ensure</u> it is only used for public purposes is beyond the power of a Councillor and it would be false and misleading for anyone to say they would <u>ensure</u> it would be so.	
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?	
Comment? No. I believe height limits should be determined using different criteria than that.	

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Yes (Y) or No (N)?</i>
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)	
Comment: None.	
Q23. Will you or your Group be directing preferences to any other candidate(s), and if so, which?	
Comment? You sent me this document within minutes of my nomination going online. I haven't considered such things yet.	
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?	
Comment? No. I don't accept donations from anyone. The only help I ask for is handing out 'How to Votes' and maybe a bit of help putting signs up. Please let me know if have anyone willing to help?	