

Yarra Langridge and Nicholls Ward Candidate Councillor Questions 2020

Q1. Why have you decided to stand for the Yarra City Council? (200 words)

Over the past few months, I have seen nearby apartments empty out, and local businesses close their doors. Several years ago when I lived close to Bridge Road I watched that shopping strip slowly decline, which was truly heartbreaking. I am extremely concerned that this could now be the fate of the whole area.

I am running for council because I believe I have a unique combination of skills that will be needed during the pandemic recovery. I care deeply for my local area and want to do all I can to ensure that it bounces back strongly.

Q2. Are you a member or supporter of a local group or organisation? (100 words)

Only if you count the Collingwood Football Club as a local organization.

Q3. Have you been a participant in a local project or campaign? (200 words)

No, I am a regular resident who is putting myself forward not for my political campaigning abilities, but as someone who is highly approachable and completely independent of any vested interests.

Q4. What experiences have you had with the Yarra City Council? (200 words)

I am keenly aware of the impact the Yarra City Council has on my daily life. There is plenty of good work done by the council to be built on, and also some things that could change.

Q5. What role does the community play in council decision making? How can this be made more effective? (200 words)

Community involvement in council decision making is not just valuable, it is essential (and a requirement of the Local Government Act). The entire

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purpose of local government is to provide a mechanism for residents to directly have input into the decisions that affect them.

Having worked for the State Government I know that decision making on local issues is often a complex balancing act between many competing priorities. In a diverse council like ours it becomes even more important that we ensure everyone is given a voice and that people are provided the opportunity to have their say on the issues that affect them.

I am a strong advocate for local government acting as a force to level the playing field between those who have the money and resources to make their voice heard and those who do not, so that everyone gets a say.

Q6. How do you propose to communicate with the community if elected as a councillor? (100 words)

It is important that communication is accessible to our diverse community groups and that councillors spend more time listening than they do speaking. I believe that residents should be able to choose to communicate in a way that works for them. Residents can call, email, or write to me. Frequent attendance by councillors at the meetings of local community groups is critical so that residents can raise their concerns and ideas directly.

Q.7. What are your priorities if elected to the Council? (300 words)

I want to ensure that the whole area is revitalised, that local traders are given every opportunity to thrive, and that council leads the way by rapidly developing plans to reinvigorate the area.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to redesign our public spaces to be more liveable. To increase our green space, to make our streetscapes inviting places to be, and to encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Q8. The FRA has identified the following key priority areas - (500 words)

- **Heritage Protection and Conservation**

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- **Planning Permit Information and Advocacy**
- **Yarra Council Strategy, Policy and Guidelines**
- **Homelessness and Social Issues**
- **Climate Action**

What priority would you give to each and how would you respond to your top 3 if elected as a councillor?

These are all important issues for council, and I do not accept that we cannot work on all of them at the same time, and must prioritise some to be dealt with over others.

I do not believe that there is any tension between having well-designed and effective planning processes, protecting our heritage, and addressing social and environmental issues. We should be actively working towards a built environment that improves the lives of disadvantaged residents, contributes to a low-carbon future, and conserves the character and heritage of our suburbs. All of these things can happen at once.

The planning decisions we make today will determine the quality of life of future residents. I do not want to see our council become just a thoroughfare for the bordering suburbs to reach the CBD, or a dumping ground for “dog-box” apartments. We should always aim to be a destination in our own right, and that requires building streetscapes that are enjoyable places to be and quality housing that people want to remain living in through many stages of their life.

To me, our local heritage is a complex interaction of historical events, diverse community groups and established streetscapes. It is not enough to hold on to a few facades on the main streets, the area must evolve in a way that recognises the area’s past and continues to build on it.

Q9. What should be the role of Yarra City Council in relation to State and Commonwealth governments? (300 words)

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During the next four years funding from the Victorian and Commonwealth governments will be crucial to maintaining Yarra Council's finances while executing on a recovery plan. It simply will not be possible to fund all the work that needs to be done from rates, contributions and loans. Applying for grants and making effective representations to the State Government for additional money is going to be critical. We need to work aggressively to secure more funding for key projects.

As Yarra has many State Government managed pieces of land and infrastructure (for example, our arterial roads and the river) being able to negotiate and work well with the Victorian Government is absolutely necessary.

Additionally, I believe that councillors have a significant role to play in helping residents navigate the complexities of state and Federal governments and making sure that their voice is heard.

Q 10. What relationship should the Yarra City Council have with neighbouring councils? (200 words)

Several of our communities are split between local council areas (in particular in Alphington, and also around Nicholson Street) so collaboration between councils is important to ensure that decisions align and do not lead to unintended outcomes. Fora like the Inner Melbourne Action Plan provide a valuable opportunity to align strategy, share resources and amplify the voice of local government.

I am highly supportive of working with other councils to help deliver shared infrastructure upgrades (the Walmer Street Bridge comes to mind as a perfect example) and to collectively push state government to deliver better outcomes for residents.