

Yarra Langridge and Nicholls Ward Candidate Councillor Questions 2020

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

I have lived in Yarra for 18 years in Clifton Hill and North Fitzroy and worked as a Health Practitioner in the Community Health Sector for the past 20 years, in various roles and currently as a Diabetes Educator and Community Nurse. I'm a member of the Collingwood Fitzroy Labor Party and a proud member of the ANMF all my nursing life.

My guiding principles for my work in community health is social model of health ie a wholistic health approach that looks at not only managing disease but considers the social, emotion, relationships, cultural, social connections, housing and education of people. Community health provides programs that are accessible to all people in the community and respond to new and emerging community needs.

In my spare time, I am a passionate gardener, a keen bird watcher and enthusiastic member of the Rushall Community Garden. I enjoy time with my family young and older and value art and music in my life.

I've nominated for Council because I believe I can bring my experience of family and people, my ability to listen and my passion for health promoting environments and the social model of health and wellbeing to the role of councillor for the City of Yarra.

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

- I am a member of the Collingwood Fitzroy Labor Party and current FEA representative for Melbourne at the Labor State Conference 2019.
- A member of the Rushall Community Garden and previously a member of the Collingwood Children's and Farm community garden
- A supporter of the Save Queens Parade Group including supporting fundraising activities there.
- I have worked as a health practitioner at North Yarra Community Health (now Cohealth)

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

The Save Queens Parade campaign.

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

As a resident providing feedback in relation to street trees in McKean Street

Parking issues in McKean Street.

Planning objections in and around Queens Parade.

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

Community feedback is vital to a well-functioning council and the collective wisdom of the community, is powerful and valuable. An excellent example is the recent campaign to Save Queens Parade and the resulting outcome of mandatory height and set back limits.

The Fitzroy Residence Association is another great example of this with its commitment to keep Fitzroy Livable and its history of grass roots action.

In my work, I am a campaigner for the consumer voice in shaping healthcare and I see the local and collective voice of community, equally important to inform direction for decision making at council.

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

- Firstly, and foremost, I am committed to listening to my community
- Turning up to community events, Library events, community groups, workshops, open days, School events.
- Participation in community groups such as the community garden
- Answering emails
- Through Yarra news delivered in hard-copy and electronically
- Establishing reference groups for specific planning opportunities.

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- Through my local experience, I live locally, shop locally and frequent my local community spaces for exercise, relaxation and family gatherings.
- encouraging community input through surveys, council meetings, and via emails.
- I will advocate to ensure the community feedback is captured, valued and reported on and that the “loop is closed” when feedback is given.

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

The new councilors will be elected into a Covid recovery environment so our first priority will be to work with community to prioritize a recovery plan.

Health promoting environments are my passion for my work and my own family and it will be my priority if I'm elected to council. So that includes a lot of different areas. Access to outdoor public spaces, rejuvenated waterways with an increased tree canopy throughout our streets and to cool our city is very important to me.

We need to provide opportunity for exercise but also for relaxation and safety when the two are mixed (ie in the shared bike paths.)

We need to promote opportunity for social connection which could be through neighborhood houses, libraries, festivals and community and cultural groups such as aged or youth specific programs, because we know that social isolation is linked to poorer health outcomes across many diseases.

Access to healthy food, local shopping strips which promote walking and interaction and the local opportunity to grow food (as in community gardens) are treasures within Nicholls. They need to be treasured and supported to flourish.

Employment will also be key in our recover and building new and maintaining current stock of social housing will provide employment and address homelessness and housing affordability in Yarra.

Social services and amenities provision for the Richmond and MSIR area is also a priority. With input from residents, we need to draft a priority list of how to spend the \$9 million allocated for upgrade to amenities around the MSIR

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

- Heritage Protection and Conservation
- 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?

All these are important issues and it's hard to choose. Yarra council strategy, policy and guidelines will of course provide overarching direction.

My top 3 key priority areas are those of

1. Climate Action- Because if we don't act now on climate change then we will suffer the consequences of a warming planet and that will affect our weather causing more extremes of drought, bushfires and flood and overall high temperatures. It will affect our agriculture, food production, animals, birds, insects and of course the health of people. As a council, we can lead on Climate Change mitigation strategies. We can increase use of renewable energy including electric powered transport, practice and support water conservation and reuse, reducing food waste, supporting effective recycling and reducing energy waste.
2. Heritage Protection and Conservation- With Yarra's multifaceted heritage and diverse communities from traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people to the establishment of one of the early suburbs of Melbourne, Yarra has very rich built and natural heritage. The integrity of this area will only be maintained by sensitive planning, careful documentation of our history and active support for implementing the heritage plan. Our community needs to be ever vigilant and the council responsive to actively preserve our wonderful heritage for future generations to enjoy.
3. Homelessness and social issues- According to council data Yarra has twice the rate of homelessness than the Victorian average and has almost 10% of people living in social housing. In order to promote a fairer society,

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Yarra Council has a major role in promoting and funding services that promote health and prevent illness, that support affordable housing and maintenance of public housing, support lifelong education and employment. Services that address the reasons for homelessness through early interventions such as parenting support, family services and counselling, mental health services, youth programs, drug and alcohol program and more will be valued and supported by me.

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

Yarra City Council should work with all levels of government to get the best outcomes for its residents. Applying for grants, collaborative projects, feedback on issues and representation of community voices is an important role for council.

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

Yarra can learn from other council successes i.e. Darebin council has led the way with recycling.

Where issues of planning fall across council boundaries such as the proposed redevelopment of Ikon Park which lies in the city of Melbourne but is close to residents in Nicholls ward, collaboration and advocacy will be important.

Disaster relief is another area that councils might collaborate as in the black Saturday bushfire relief, councils across Victoria can support each other with expertise and resources.