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2024 State Government Election Candidate Questionnaire

The Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc. (OSCAR) an umbrella group for resident and community groups in the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government areas (LGAs) has a tradition of seeking the views of candidates for State elections on Local Government issues that are partially or wholly the responsibility of the State Government (by way of funding or legislative control).

Your responses, in full, will be published on the OSCAR website for the benefit of our members and the wider community.

We appreciate the fact that you are very busy at this time but we would value receiving your responses on the issues we have identified by October 16. Many questions can be answered with a simple Yes or No but the opportunity is there for you to expand your response.

We welcome individual responses from all candidates. Those of you who are members of the same political party may submit a collective response if preferred.

Candidate	Ian Simons
Electorate	Kawana
Party	Queensland Greens
Date	11 October 2024

State Planning Issues

1. Will you commit to ensuring there is statutory recognition and protection of the existing regional inter-urban break, between the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay Regional Councils (including Halls Creek)?

I recognise the importance of maintaining the inter-urban break.

This green corridor is vital for biodiversity to have protection.

Sunshine Coast residents and tourists value the unique green spaces that are a feature of the Sunshine Coast. The inter-urban break / green space is a vital contributor to the sense of character and connection with nature that we all enjoy.

2. (a). Will you support the Blue Heart project on 5000 ha of the Maroochy floodplain as a critical response to climate change?

Blue Heart is vital to the survival of the ecosystem and world renown biosphere of the region.

The Blue Heart enables natural drainage systems. Without the Blue Heart, at times of floods, there would be an increased risk to the coastal residents and infrastructure.

The Blue Heart is therefore an insurance policy that we should all invest in, as we face a climate emergency.

- (b) Will you ensure that funding from the State's Land Restoration Program is continued and is available to landowners within the Maroochy floodplain?

Yes. I would work in consultation with the residents and environmental scientists to support systems that protect life and the ecosystem.

3. As the Planning Act includes forms of planning and development that fall within the scope of "development" in the Economic Development Act, if elected, in the interest of consistency across state legislation, will you commit to amending the Economic Development Act to ensure that the ecological sustainability principles in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Planning Act are incorporated fully into the Economic Development Act and applied as intended by the Planning Act?

I fully support the importance of maintaining the natural environment. The other missing piece is the importance of consultation with the Traditional Owners who have thousands of years of knowledge and cultural places that are not protected effectively by the Cultural Heritage legislation.

4. The State Government has established a State Facilitated Development (SFD) process to “deliver affordable housing”. It allows the state to ignore and override local planning schemes, local councils and the community and removes the right of appeal to the Planning and Environment Court.

Recently the State Government declared an SFD in Noosa Shire in opposition to Noosa Shire Council, its Planning Scheme and against Community Expectations. At its September General Meeting OSCAR member groups voted unanimously that:

OSCAR calls on the Government, the Opposition, and all standing Candidates to commit to repealing the SFD legislation within 6 months and Rejecting or Suspending all current Applications/designations.

Will you commit to repealing the SFD legislation and reject or suspend all current applications/designations and undertake negotiations with Councils and the community.

Affordable housing should be built up using existing infrastructure. I would be pushing for areas such as Nambour and railways towns that have transport and other existing infrastructure to be prioritised to provide housing without destruction of natural habitat. Nambour would benefit from building up to 8 stories, and maintaining the green circle that provide for healthy connection with bushland and contributes to the quality of life.

I would maintain low building heights along the shore and ensure that there are restrictions about building in low lying areas that are subject to future flooding in the face of climate change.

New developments must have adequate trees to provide shade, avoid heat sinks, and provide a mechanism for drainage in the event of floods.

Building urban sprawl and losing bushland is something I would argue against.

Large areas of concrete contribute to greenhouse gases and create heat sinks that mean that the houses are dependent on high energy consumption.

The housing crisis has been created by the prevalence of corporate greed. I would encourage Community Land Trusts in areas that have already been cleared (eg dormant farmland).

I would also encourage systems that enable large houses to be renovated to provide multiple dwellings.

I would also encourage better opportunities for tiny houses while maintaining effective water, sewerage and green power options.

5. In relation to the finalised Sunshine Coast Airport Development Scheme finalised by EDQ on Friday 27 September 2024: will you commit to the stated objective of “no worsening for existing communities around the airport”, by guaranteeing that ALL infrastructure (road and drainage) will be in place in time to manage non-aviation development impacts?

I would consult with OSCAR and residents impacted by the scheme. Ideally, I would support all strategies to minimise the impact of air traffic. I have not had the opportunity to fully understand the impacts of future airport plans.

I would love to live in a world where we had effective alternatives to air traffic. I would need to understand more about the options, and make my decisions keeping in the mind the quality of life of residents.

6. Given the significant and diverse implications of Climate Change for this region and the State as a

whole, what emissions reduction and renewable energy targets and associated timeframes do you commit to for Queensland, and what detailed plans do you have to achieve those targets?

Sunshine coast has one of the highest car dependency in Australia.

We need to urgently look at green transport options.

Continuous noise and pollution levels from the Bruce Highway 24/7 is disturbing many residents. Developing bushland along busy roads, minimises the radiant noise.

Free and frequent public transport is one solution for major traffic flow areas.

New developments should only be allowed where low pollution transport systems are provided for.

Let's encourage bikeways and active transport options wherever possible.

Older residents, and residents living away from major traffic routes must have access to affordable transport such as 'demand' driven electric buses using GPS coordinations systems.

Shared vehicle ownership of electric vehicles in denser populated areas should also be considered. EG Community Land Trusts or Body corporates could provide shared electric vehicles.

Social and Affordable Housing

7. What do you see are the issues underlying homelessness on the Sunshine Coast and what strategies will you implement in the next term, if elected?

The Greens would create a publicly owned building company to create cost effective public housing, thus ensuring that the ridiculous profiteering from large corporations is taken out of the equation. Low income families need to live in sustainable housing that minimises energy costs.

We want to see an end to giving tax breaks to the rich for owning properties.

Real Estate Agents profits should be taxed to contribute to the public housing costs.

Community Land Trusts provide a vital part of the solution, particularly for older women. Public Land and/or a guaranteed percent of large development areas can be used to provide sustainable community developments

People living in large houses, should be provided with financial incentives to subdivide and contribute to more effective use of the net area under housing..

Rural residential cleared properties should be able to support Tiny Homes and have financial support to provide shared water, sewer and power thus minimising costs.

We should be building New York / Berlin style apartments where there is good public transport options and existing infrastructure.

Public housing must have good education and health facilities within reach- providing the best opportunities possible for disadvantaged families.

8. How will you seek to facilitate greater availability of affordable housing and improve the abysmally low amount of social housing on the Sunshine Coast?

Create a government owned housing developer.

Provide training and support for the building trades.

Enable Community Land Trusts, encourage subdividing large houses to minimise the footprint of the average dwelling.

Tax developers, investment properties, and real estate agents so that more funds go to the public rather than the multi-millionaires.

Cap rents. Set limits on the ability of landlords to increase rents beyond CPI.

There is an unfair balance between tourism and residential housing. Properties that are solely Airbnb and other short term rentals must comply with the same restrictions that registered BNB and tourism accommodation incur. We must create an even playing field.

Rates on short term rental housing properties, where the owner does not reside must be increased to discourage the use of housing as a profit making business. On the flip side, owners who choose to rent out a room in the short term rental market, should be required to meet WHS requirements, but only be encouraged in tourism areas to support tourism and related employment infrastructure to enable employment opportunities for this vital industry.

Infrastructure

9. The delivery cost and capacity of the proposed Direct Rail Project are publicly debated between parties.

a) By 2032, how far are you committing for the direct heavy rail line to go, and where will the stations be located?

The priority must be for fast, frequent and free transport along the existing rail line from Gympie to Brisbane. This is taking too long.

The Maroochydore line is of little value while the connection through to Brisbane is ineffective.

I would consult with residents, TMR, OSCAR and SCEC for advice on the details of the proposal.

b) How can we be confident that you can deliver this project in time and on budget?

The chances of any project completing on time and on budget in today's international economic environment has been challenging around the world.

We need an effective business plan, taking a wide range of factors that need to be completed before making a commitment of this kind to my constituents. I would always promise to be transparent, including the use of reliable project management and business planning that is open to scrutiny.

10. Will you commit to reviewing Public Transport timetables for the Sunshine Coast from the hinterland to the Nambour Hospital, Sunshine Coast Airport, Peregian Springs and other locations across the Coast currently with hourly services?

Yes. Residents must have effective transport, particularly to hospitals and shopping centres.

11. Will you commit to ensuring that Active Transport is provided progressively across the Sunshine Coast and, in particular, will you campaign for State funding for the Nambour to Coolool Trail and the Mapleton to Maleny trail as a landmark Olympics Legacy projects for the Sunshine Coast?

Yes, active transport is a key policy for the Greens. I would commit to both these attractive proposals, once informed by a thorough costing study.

12. Do you agree that heritage, natural environment, cultural values and the values of the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Biosphere designations must be acknowledged, respected and taken into account in any major new infrastructure projects to protect the character of our villages and towns and unique fauna, for example, fauna friendly underpasses/overpasses?

Yes. I am also deeply disturbed by the lack of protection for First Nations Cultural Heritage, and I would make protecting Kabi Kabi and Jinibara heritage a key priority, and ensure that both Queensland Government and SCC maintain a Duty of Care for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and work with the Kabi Kabi Peoples Corp to protect that natural heritage of our regions.

Every day, Kabi Kabi people see the destruction of their ancestral heritage; it is possible to develop land respectfully. Our First Nations peoples have an intrinsic knowledge of the natural heritage and passed down knowledge about keeping balance.

13. Seqwater's Water Security Program 2023 (WSP2023) sets out a 30-year plan to ensure we continue to maintain high levels of water security for South East Queenslanders.

What do you feel is the best approach to ensuring water security for the Sunshine Coast given the continuing high rates of population growth and the implications of Climate Change?

I would base my decisions on consultation processes, particularly valuing the natural landscape, maintaining biodiversity, and water quality. I would revisit the strategy of residential water tanks and learn what are the barriers to encouraging all houses to have self managed water reserves. Effective waste water management that minimises health risk is another key consideration.

Local/State Government Reform

14. In the interests of consistency, will you support the State funding of Local Government Elections

under a similar model to that of the State Elections?

The last council election processes were a deterrent to effective democratic participation. As a member of a grassroots political party I am aware that the cost of that election was high. In principle, I stand for encouraging political discourse and grass-roots democracy. I would be pushing for Truth in political advertising, so that voters can re-establish trust in the information provided at elections. We need to return to productive political debate- we can all learn from each other, if we share the same basic truths.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our questions. Responses will be posted on the OSCAR website as part of our "one-stop shop" for elections.