

Hi Juliet and the WRSCPA

Thank you for your Email and your interest in wanting to be informed of the views of Council candidates.

Firstly as an overriding comment I believe strongly that the ideas and desires of each community need to be the yard stick that all proposals need to be measured against.

TREES

As someone who has lived in the shire all my life, spent my first 23 years at Gellibrand, have now bought back that farm and also own a 125 acre bush property at Wimba with 1.5km of the OB rail trail on it, I have a very strong understanding of the value of trees. Trees however do need to be managed and when it comes to public safety best fit species planted. I support the retention of trees unless proven to be a danger, end of life or need removing. There are a number of native tree species that can contribute to fire safety rather than fire danger and these could be included as well as the most important aspect of keeping the area clear of tree litter.

BAL RATINGS

The issue of BAL ratings and Flame Zones appears to need a good overhaul. There is an apparent disconnect between reality and being risk adverse. This along with "character" is something that the local community should be directly involved in specifying.

WASTE

Pre bush fire collections must continue. Both hard waste and fire danger waste collected and disposed of by group collection is far more efficiently than by individuals.

RATE CAPPING

I support the governments move to force councils to do what we should have done by ourselves.

However due to the above averaged rate hikes for COS compared to other councils, I will be working for a complete rate freeze for at least 2 years possibly longer. With council wage costs going from \$10 to \$20 million in just 8 years (virtually all indoor staff) this is where spending can be reduced to support a rate freeze, better tree management, better waste collection, roads, footpaths etc etc etc.

Hope this helps explain my view of things but I emphasise the local communities wishes should be the most important driver.

Here to Help

Chris Smith