

Good morning Juliet,

Thank you for your email and the opportunity to respond to issues raised by the Wye River & Separation Creek Progress Association. Given time constraints in relation to the election and to allow time for my responses to be circulated to your membership, I have tried to keep my responses as brief and direct as possible.

1. *What is your approach to future tree management on Council owned land in Wye River?*

I have a personal view that a minimalist approach should be taken in relation to the removal of trees. There is clearly a need to identify and manage the removal of trees and vegetation that are considered dangerous in relation to potential future bushfire activity or threat of injury. A compromise balancing the environmental impact of tree removal and the resulting knock on effects such as land slips and impacts on local flora and fauna need to be carefully considered with community and expert consultation essential.

2. *What strategies will you employ to ensure as many trees are retained as possible?*

I do not profess to be an expert in tree conservation, nor have I ever lived in a bushfire prone environment so I will defer to expert opinion in this regard. This should always include consultation with resident groups such as yourselves who have practical experience in preserving and maintaining your local environment.

3. *What is your approach to BAL ratings? Do you think the current high ratings are appropriate given the substantial changes in vegetation in the townships?*

(You set us some homework on this one) Firstly, I accept the need to assess properties in relation to their potential threat from a firestorm. I note that a minimum rating of 12.5 is required. It is difficult for me to give an informed decision on the appropriateness

of the current ratings on your properties as I do not have specific information.

4. *Should there be flexibility for property owners in the bushfire affected areas to propose alternate responses or a change in BAL rating?*

The short answer is yes. I support any mechanism that allows property owners the opportunity to challenge ratings providing it is evidence based, or as a result of empirical research.

5. *How will you ensure neighbourhood character is maintained in the light of the many changes post bushfire?*

This is difficult to answer. Unfortunately we cannot stop natural disasters. We can only plan and establish contingencies for if/when they happen. Part of that planning inevitably occurs after such an event taking into account all of the circumstances. There is always the need for community consultation to find common ground and balance the wants/needs of the local community against any other considerations.

6. *Will you commit to maintaining pre-bushfire waste collection schedules and routes in Wye River and Separation Creek?*

I understand this is working well so see no reason to change. Any proposed change therefore should not see any degradation of the current service, only improve it.

7. *Will you consider introducing a hard waste collection service for properties within the Colac Otway Shire, and in particular assistance to help clean up properties in fire prone areas?*

Having previously lived in Municipalities that provided such a service twice yearly, I would say unequivocally yes.

8. *Will you continue to support the State Government mandate of capping rates to no more than 2.5% annually?*

Rate capping is a State Government directive. However, Councils do have a mechanism to apply for exemption to this ceiling in special circumstances. My position however is very clear. I too live in a small town outside of Colac, and I do not get the access to all services (eg. Rubbish collection) I also experienced an increase in my rates this year of 67% due to revaluation. As a finance industry professional, I am keen to identify areas where the Shire can save money. I would like to think that as a group of (hopefully) new councillors with improved financial acumen, that we can at the very least in the short term maintain rates at their current level with the hope that over time rates in real terms will reduce as we become more efficient with ratepayers money.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in your Q & A. I certainly do not profess to be an expert in all the issues specific to the Wye River and Separation Creek communities, but if elected I would become a Councillors for ALL residents in the Shire. I am committed to ensuring that I represent all communities. I am advocating for a series of "Town Hall" style meetings in all of our small towns to ensure that Councillors and Council officers are better informed of the issues that are important to those communities so that we can be more responsive.

I am more than happy to chat to any residents at any time.

Kind regards,

**Daryl Collins**  
**Candidate, Colac Otway Shire Council**

Written and authorised by Daryl Collins  
4570 Princes Hwy  
BIRREGURRA Vic 3242

**(m) 0408 267 390**

***(h/w) 03 5236 2115***

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/darylcollinsforcolacotwayshire](http://www.facebook.com/darylcollinsforcolacotwayshire)