

Hi Juliet,

I am sorry for the delay in response to your e-mail. I'll respond to your questions in the letter in chronological order:

#### Tree Management:

I am happy to see as many trees retained as possible, given the fire risk. I think that if private individuals wish to have trees on their property, then that is a matter for them. However, that being the case, they would also need to be responsible for fire risk mitigation strategies on their own property.

As far as what strategies I will employ? I am happy for this to be a community venture. I would talk to the Wye and Sep Creek communities before coming to a position - you live there after all, not me!

#### Bushfire Recovery:

I don't know enough about BAL ratings to give a firm commitment - I'll be upfront and honest about that. My approach would be to talk to the residents of Wye and Sep Creek and form a position after that. As a principle, I do not believe the council has a role in telling private individuals who own property, what they can do and how to do it, on their own land. Each property owner needs to take reasonable steps in the maintenance of their own property.

Yes, A bushfire is an extreme weather event and I would be happy to help those impacted by the bushfires in any fair and equitable manner practicable.

#### Waste Collection:

I have been pushing as part of my campaign for a 'getting back to basics' approach - that includes waste collection. If residents don't have access to these basic services, what sort of a shire are we? So I would not advocate for a reduction in waste services. I also support the idea of a hard waste collection service.

As a side note (and this relates to Bushfire recover too), I think council should stop the idea where a person has to have a 'permit' to collect wood or kindling off the side of the road. I think we should let any shire resident who wants to clean up the side of the road, to go for it! The benefit to our

community in terms of fire risk mitigation is far more than the money that would be raised in licence fees. It also saves people money when they have a wood fire at home.

Rate Capping:

I'll actually go one further - I want to reduce rates in this shire, not increase them. I think the council could be saving quite a lot of money, for example:

- Senior executive roles could be reduced (too top heavy)
- Too much paper work and bureaucracy
- Becoming more efficient in council operations eg. Shared services (payroll)
- No mismanagement of key projects that result in cost blow outs Eg Blue Water (\$3mil over budget)
- Council programs that have been thrust upon us by the State Government, but funding has been discontinued - council picks up the tab - this needs to be examined.

In short - I believe that money is better in your hands than the council's hands - you spend it more wisely than any government bureaucracy ever can. The simple reason this is the case is because you have earned it. Money isn't easy to get.

I realise this may not be an overly popular position with other candidates and councillors - but somebody needs to ask the tough questions and ensure there is accountability, responsible budgetary management and some form of openness and honesty in council planning. I may be young (28), but I have a Bachelor of Commerce & Bachelor of Management, I've worked as an Accountant in the past - I believe that it can be done and should be done.

Imagine if Colac Otway Shire could say "We have the lowest rates in the State" - what an incentive that is to businesses and potential home owners to come and operate in Colac Otway Shire.

Anyway - thankyou for your e-mail. If you would like any clarification or follow up, please contact me on 0419 597 892.

Kind Regards,  
Joe