

James Walker

Community consultation

Council has been conducting community consultation on several issues and this has been done through 'Your Say' and other more active methods such as surveys. Many in the community feel that even though the consultation is conducted, the input from it is not considered since many decisions made more recently by the Council seem to be at odds with community wishes.

If elected, what would you do to ensure that the community consultation conducted by Council had more influence on decision making?

With increasing complexities councils have tended to become more reliant on experts. Whilst expert advice is important, often experts do not have the specific local knowledge and sense of place. This is the unique value of community consultation. Next term I will seek examples of best practice ways to ensure that community voice is clearly and fairly presented on council agendas and reports. This will help guide decision making.

Council has to take account of both local and general community interest as well as wider regional implications. Often there are also overriding statutory obligations especially in relation to planning.

Initiatives like "Your Say" have been greatly aided by the organic growth of neighbourhood Facebook pages. Council should make things as easy as possible by embracing new technology whilst keeping traditional avenues of consultation open.

This term I have got council to use QR codes when development applications are posted on properties so residents can easily see what is being proposed. I'd like to see an opt in alert system (possibly by email) so people can be automatically notified of activities, services and development applications in their area or areas special to them.

Climate Change

Every year we are seeing increasingly devastating impacts of climate change across Australia and the world. Many councils have declared a "climate emergency", along with delivery of Climate Emergency Plans which include actions such as 100 percent renewable energy, zero net emissions, divesting finances and pledges to lobby state and federal politicians for stronger action.

What are your views on this and in your role as councillor what sort of actions would you support to mitigate or adapt to climate change?

I believe in a practical approach to addressing climate change issues in Clarence. I'm proud to be the deputy chair of the Copping Refuse Site Joint Disposal Authority. The Copping Landfill is best practice in reducing and harnessing methane emissions for electricity generation. I've provided oversight to get Council moving towards FoGo compost generation using leading technology such as closed vessel systems.

Energy efficiency is a key imperative. Clarence's move to LED street lights this term was a great example of this. There is more work we can do in this space. As a health professional I believe an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I opposed rezoning of large tracks of Clarence deemed highly susceptible to inundation and I'm confused as to why some of those who profess to be concerned about climate change did otherwise.

Public Land

In the last 10 years we have seen proposals put forward or invited by Council for the building of private developments on public land (such as Arm End, Kangaroo Bay, Rosny Hill). These proposals have been controversial suggesting that they will have significant impacts on community.

If you were elected and you received evidence of significant community opposition to a proposed development on public land under Councils control, how would you act on it?

I think what's important here is talking about the first step. The biggest lesson I have taken from Kangaroo Bay and Rosny Hill is that I am done with Expression of Interest (EOI). This is not the best process to determine future usage of public land.

The intent is that EOI leads to great concepts and ideas but the reality is that it works against open discussion due to constraints like intellectual property. Community consultation may precede EOI processes but rarely guide them. The end result becomes a surprise selection rather than a suite of options to discuss further.

You are never going to get consensus on land use but you should be able to come to an understanding or ideally a shared vision. Rather than EOI we could have a competition for concepts that inspire rather than bind either community or council.

Urban Growth

In the last ten years, the Census shows that the population of Clarence has increased by almost 10,000 people, and there has been a corresponding increase in dwellings of 3,500. With new suburbs still being developed, further growth is underway.

What challenges and opportunities do you think this level of growth presents to Council?

Historically a lot of growth occurred on the Eastern Shore when the bridge was built, freeing up new land for housing. Lots of modest housing was built on what is today considered large blocks. We need to target areas for increased density and open new areas to sustainably manage growth.

Otherwise, the growth will mainly occur as ad-hoc infill from Geilston Bay through to Howrah. The opportunities include looking at how we allow people to age in place, that is be able to downsize into universal designed dwellings in their local neighbourhood close to services.

We know that the average number of persons per household is decreasing, we could better accommodate this and preserve neighbourhood character by encouraging conversion of existing larger homes into 2-3 units rather adding large two-story executive townhouses on the front or back of every block.

Ferry service

The new ferry service between Hobart and Bellerive is anticipated to continue. The current patronage of the service is already putting pressure on the parking around Bellerive, and this will only increase if the service grows.

Do you support the service and, if you do, what would you do to address the parking pressures especially if the service was to be expanded in the future?

The ferry service is providing a great option for Eastern Shore Commuters. I am proud this service resulted from the Walker Ferry Plan concept I put forward in the 2017 Pembroke by-election. The Federal government have committed \$20 million for associated infrastructure. To me the most important action is decked parking at Percy Street. This would also be useful when other major events occur in the nearby area. Going forward I will ensure council improves parking monitoring and management.

Your key issues

What new initiatives are you eager to champion if you are elected and why do you see these as important to the future of the Clarence community?

Council needs to bed down the worthy projects on our books first. I will be focussed on delivering these quality projects:

- The State-of-the-art dog park I championed last election which was agreed to by other Councillors. We have selected a location, done design work and it should be commenced next year.**
- The Lauderdale Canal Park project which will reinvigorate a great public open space.**
- The signature coastal walk in Clarence for tourists and locals alike from the Ferry wharf to Bellerive beach. My May 22 notice of motion has secured funding for detailed design work along Victoria esplanade which can be shovel ready for roll out next year.**

In order to fund services and new infrastructure we need council running as efficiently as possible.

Measures I've got council to adopt to achieve this include performance budgeting.