

Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

23rd September, 2020

Dear Candidate,

Below is a list of questions compiled on behalf of Darebin community groups; Darebin Progress Association, Darebin Residents Group, Save THE Preston Market and Darebin Appropriate Development Association.

The aim is to supply our members answers to questions that are most important to them, in the hope it will aid their voting choices in the upcoming council election.

We have aimed to keep the impost on your time to a minimum by posing most questions for yes or no answers with some also asking how you might achieve the answer as a Councillor.

Your answers will be posted anonymously, unedited, on our websites and Facebook pages for maximum coverage to our members across Darebin.

Please leave a YES or a NO and remove or cross out the answer you don't want.

GENERAL RESPONSE

Name: Vasilios Tsalkos

Ward: West Ward

Please tell us in 50 words the main reason you are running for Council and your top three issues you want council to adopt

I am running for council in order to hold the council accountable and do what is right for the community

I strongly believe that:

- It's time to stop party affiliated political agendas and start becoming a truly local and independent Council
- It's time for transparent governance
- It's time to get things done

My top 3 issues I want council to adopt are:

- Support for the Darebin Community, small business and local economy during the recovery from Covid-19
- Support responsible rates
- Better water quality of Edwardes Lake



Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARANCY

One of the glaring weaknesses of the majority of current councillors has been their inability/failure to accept that they represent the community. The following questions require a simple yes/no/how answer to demonstrate your commitment to important democratic procedures.

1. Will you support complete transparency in issues affecting the community?

YES	
<p>I am a strong believer of community consultation and transparency, so that all members of the public are able to see clearly why decisions were made, and not left to second guess every step of the way.</p> <p>Ward specific forums could be held so that councilors and residents can have open dialog into all things occurring in the ward, and Darebin as a whole.</p>	

2. Would you guarantee regular meetings with the community by all means available?

YES	
<p>Ward meetings would be key if elected to ensure that the community have a voice not only via the phone or email but in person. These forums would be used as the driving force behind votes on council matters.</p>	

3. Will you actively consult with community groups prior to any local by-laws being enacted?

YES	
<p>As a strong believer of transparency, all community groups and residents should be engaged and input from the residents of Darebin should be vital before any changes being enacted.</p>	

4. Would you restructure Public Question Time to allow questions directly to Councilors?

YES	
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5. Will you support a review of the Council newsletter to make it more informative, regular and representative?

YES	
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Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

6. Will you ensure Advisory Committees recommendations are heard in General Council meetings?

YES	
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7. Will you work for the community and not to serve any political party?

YES	
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8. Will you insist on an annual staff survey and make it available to the community?

YES	
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9. Will you listen to the Community's opinions when motions for spending and approvals for planning are brought before Council?

YES	
Community opinions should take precedent before spending is occurring throughout the municipality.	

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Will you oppose the demolition and relocation of the Preston Market elsewhere on the site and actively support its retention?

YES	
As a start we need to push for mandatory height restrictions at a local level, then we will need to work closely with the VPA and STPM to get the best outcome for our community.	

2. Will you support mandatory heights limits be applied to the Preston Market site?

YES	
As above	



Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

3. Will you oppose the practice of trading off of objectives and standards, such as height limits in the planning scheme that can result in poorer outcomes but gets developments built in Darebin?

YES	
Standards are set for a purpose and there should not be any reason as to why council should trade these off, unless there is need for change that the residents in the community have strongly voiced.	

4. Do you agree to a complete review of the Darebin Planning Scheme including consultation with community groups and members to ensure it is clearer in its intent, eg: applies mandatory heights to development plans, better protects neighborhood character and increases neighbourhood residential zoning?

YES	
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5. Will you support the Open Space Levy and Developer Contribution Levy that adequately increases the amount of land dedicated to open space in order to meet the future needs of Darebin's growing population and ensure that the money is spent in the general locale of where the development occurs?

YES	
We need to, ensure open space for Darebin's growing population, and look into avenues to sustain these open spaces in the future.	

6. Will you support a review of the Planning Committee Charter to give objectors more time to present their case, to allow at least one councilor to call up planning applications and, release the agenda papers and reports at least seven days ahead of meetings and to allow residents to ask questions and make submissions?

YES	
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Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

AGED CARE AND DISABILITY SERVICES

1. Will you support Council having an ongoing role in the direct delivery of home support care services to eligible older people and people with a disability in Darebin?

YES	
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2. Will you support Council subsidising the cost of home care services to eligible residents?

YES	
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3. Will you support Council continuing to directly deliver to eligible older residents and people with a disability the following :

• home support services;	YES	
• personal care,	YES	
• shopping,	YES	
• respite,	YES	
• food services,	YES	
• home care,	YES	
• community transport,	YES	
• home maintenance	YES	

4. Will you oppose further restrictions of eligibility criteria for home care services in Darebin?

YES	
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5. Will you agree to support Council becoming a registered home care provider?

YES	
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6. Will you agree to maintain at least \$6m in council co-funding for age care services and provide open financial reporting of aged care services?

YES	
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Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICES

1. Will you campaign and vote to provide more public facilities eg; toilet facilities, bins, footpaths upgrade, bike paths, Outdoor Gyms, upgrading parks, and regular removal of graffiti and litter in Darebin?

YES	
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My aim is to encourage the residents of Darebin to spend more time in the community. This interaction and collaboration will positively contribute to a sense of community. Good clean public facilities will enhance our community environment, provide exposure to and opportunities for a wide variety of intellectual, cultural, and physical activities.

2. Will you vote for balanced services and equal spend across all of Darebin, particularly Reservoir, including rebuilding to the Reservoir Leisure Centre?

YES	
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3. Will you oppose unsubstantiated use of money spent on consultants?

YES	
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4. Will you vote for more parking and vote against blanket parking restrictions?

YES	
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5. Will you support Council in making publically available more detailed financial reporting on departmental, program and project expenditure?

YES	
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Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

- **ENVIRONMENT**

1. **Given that we are in a climate emergency and everyone; individuals, corporations and all three levels of government must be part of mitigation and adaptation, are you prepared to commit to strong action on global warming?**

YES	
<p>Decisions that we make every day, for example, about our transport and diets can help reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change.</p> <p>Climate change is one of the most urgent issues of our day. Acting individually, collectively and decisively to address this challenge and shift our economy to clean energy will bring significant benefits. Every councillor along with the residents of Darebin must commit to strong action on global warming thus helping to improve this climate emergency.</p>	

2. **Will you bring policies to Council that will make a real improvement at a local level to Darebin's environment and biodiversity?**

YES	
<p>Improving Darebin's environment and biodiversity will improve the resident's health and wellbeing. It supports our economy and life. Biodiversity sustains both our lives and much of our quality of life and I will ensure that our policies are providing valuable ecosystem services, such as, nutrient and water cycling, maintenance of healthy soils, plant pollination, and a direct source of raw materials and food. Darebin's natural environment is important to our community and cultural identity. Our biodiversity provides us with inspiration, places to relax and experience nature. Let us not forget that biodiversity is essential to Indigenous culture, and we must respect their traditions that are linked to land.</p>	



Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

3. Darebin Council set up both Climate Emergency Darebin and the Darebin Nature Trust as key initiatives very early in their term. What do you know about these two entities and their specific achievements?

	<p>Darebin City Council declared a climate emergency in December 2016, recognising that there is an urgent need to take action to avoid dangerous climate change and provide protection for people and nature.</p> <p>This program was designed by council and community leaders across Darebin. It raised awareness, mobilised, activated and facilitated the Darebin community contributions around the climate emergency issue.</p> <p>Darebin community is growing and changing with the ever increasing development of high rise or multi-dwelling living, changing demographics and an increase in population. This is why Darebin residents may not have access to private open space. Public open spaces are becoming more important to the health, socialisation and recreation of the Darebin community. This is why the Darebin Nature Trust was introduced.</p> <p>With this increasing pressure on our existing open spaces, I believe that there is a need to create more open spaces and natural environments.</p>
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4. Have they been effective?

YES (*but a lot more needs to be done*)

In order to share this information to voters please return your responses to the sender in a Word, PDF or JPEG document by the 30th September 2020.

Thank you.

On behalf of:

Darebin Progress Association: <https://www.facebook.com/Darebin-Progress-Association-163813440325401/>

Save THE Preston Market Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4553059228098235/>

Darebin Appropriate Development Association: <https://www.darebinada.org/> and

Darebin Residents Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/695607447257408>

