

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 question most important 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, 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: Gaetano Greco Ward: North West

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 want residents to have more direct say over Council decisions. My top three issues are: 1) real rate relief for residents and small businesses affected by the COVID-19 shut down; 2) Fighting against the potential demolishing and relocating Preston Market; and 3) making sure Council continues to deliver in house aged care services.

GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILTY 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

NO



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HOW?

Ensuring residents:

- 1) Have greater access to relevant financial information;
- 2) Are able to ask questions and make submissions at ALL council meetings, i.e both Ordinary and Special Council meetings;
- 3) Are able to ask questions and have more time to make submissions at Planning Committee meetings;
- 4) Establishing a fair and timely process for resident's complaints to be heard and impartially reviewed;
- 5) Limiting the number of confidential Council reports that come to Council meetings and requiring the Mayor or CEO to publically justify why certain reports have to remain confidential.

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

YES

NO

HOW?

- 1) Organising more regular Ward meetings or online meetings if Covid-19 restrictions still apply.
- 2) Having community meetings leading up to the budget to help shape Council's broad priorities before the draft budget is determined.
- 3) Organising community meetings based on themes, e.g planning, aged and community care services, sporting policy, environmental policy, leisure services, youth services etc

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

YES

NO

HOW?

I have made it a usual practice to consistently consult community groups in the past, e.g Does Darebin Care, Darebin Ethnic Communities' Council, Darebin Appropriate Development Association, Save The Preston Market Group, Darebin Interfaith Council, Darebin Nature Trust, Preston and Reservoir Traders Associations, Sporting Clubs and groups, etc. However consultation with community groups needs to be formalised to ensure all councillors and key Council staff part take in this critical consultation process.

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

YES Some other Council's already allow for this and as long as it is respectful so

NO



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should Darebin.

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

YES This is critical as there is a lack of information in the community about Council matters. Also the newsletter needs to be less “corporative”, more community oriented, more culturally representative with occasional summary articles in different languages to reflect the wider community and come out 6 times a year.

NO

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

YES This is absolutely critical for Advisory Committees to fully perform their roles. Many Advisory committees have constantly made reference to this short coming.

NO

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

YES I’m not a member of any political party

NO

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

YES this is a good idea as a public health check on the organization.

NO

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

YES

NO

HOW?

Extend submission time allowed to residents on motions, budget items or planning matters to enable residents sufficient time to put their case.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

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YES	NO
<p>HOW?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move a motion to reverse Council’s previous position that supports the market to be potentially demolished and reallocated. 2. Move a motion in Council to explicitly reject the Urban Design report that recommended to relocate the market to the Cramer Street end of the site. 3. Demand that Council rejects any loose State Government Planning Controls that potentially allows for the market to be demolished and relocated. 4. Move a motion demanding that Council becomes the Responsible Authority to develop the Planning Controls for the market site that supports the market staying where it is now with a robust heritage overlay that properly protects the current market. 5. Continue to work with community groups to raise community concerns about safeguarding Preston Market. 6. Continue to work and support traders 7. Explore the possibility to get Council to reapply for Heritage Protection with the Victorian Heritage Council on the basis of new heritage information. 8. Implement the recommendations of the Context Heritage Report. 	

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

YES	NO
<p>HOW?</p> <p>Move a motion seeking appropriate changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme to apply mandatory heights to the Preston Market site as I did earlier this year. However my motions was unfortunately defeated by a majority of Councillors.</p>	

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	NO
<p>HOW?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Call for a “root and branch” review of the Darebin Planning scheme to tighten up on discretionary clauses and outcomes and remove as many ambiguities as possible that potentially enable trade-offs. 	

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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 see above	NO
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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	NO
HOW? Conduct a comparative audit of open space requirements across our city and prioritise areas that have poor open space areas, such as many areas that have already been noted in the northern end of our city.	

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 councillor 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 see above	NO
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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	NO
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2. Will you support Council subsidising the cost of home care services to eligible residents?

YES	NO
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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	NO
• personal care,	YES	NO
• shopping,	YES	NO
• respite,	YES	NO



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• food services,	YES	NO
• home care,	YES	NO
• community transport,	YES	NO
• home maintenance	YES	NO

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

YES	NO
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5. Will you agree to support Council becoming a registered home care provider?

YES This is critical and must be done as soon as possible in preparation of the federal govt's likelihood of ceasing age care funding to Council in 2022.	NO
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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	NO
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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	NO
<p>HOW?</p> <p>In the recent budget I voted against the cutting of nearly \$20m in capital works especially now given the state and federal governments are trying to stimulate the economy to create jobs.</p>	

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

YES	NO
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3. Will you oppose unsubstantiated use of money spent on consultants?

YES	NO
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4. Will you vote for more parking and vote against blanket parking restrictions?

YES Last I year, with the communities support I moved a notice of motion to abandon blanket parking restrictions	NO
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5. Will you support Council in making publically available more detailed financial reporting on departmental, program and project expenditure?

YES see above	NO
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• **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	NO
<p>HOW?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promote the Solar savers program especially amongst low income earners who don't have the upfront capital to purchase the panels. 2) Support the Darebin Nature Trust advisory committee. 3) Commit to planting more trees and vegetation especially in northern end of the city where temperatures in summer are generally higher due to less tree coverage. 4) Install more solar power panels on Council buildings 5) Promote competitive bulk buying of renewable power for the city. 6) Assist low income earners with the installation of energy saving measures in their homes. 7) Advocate for systemic changes along with Individual behavioral changes 	

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

YES	NO
<p>HOW? (please provide examples)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solar Savers Program to be directed predominantly to low income earners. 2. Assistance to low income earners to make their homes more energy efficient which will also save them money. 3. Plant more trees and vegetation in the sparse northern areas of our city. 4. Clean-up the toxic water quality at Edwardes Lake Park to improve aquatic 	



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biodiversity.

5. Improve walking paths, footpaths and parks to encourage more walking.

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?

	I voted in favor of establishing these two advisory committees and participated in both of them. I continue to be a member of the Darebin Nature Trust. The Climate Emergency Darebin provide input into Darebin’s environmental policies and the DNT has just achieved a restructure to enable working groups to tackle specific open space issues
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4. Have they been effective?

YES However only partially as many committee members have been extremely frustrated because their input has not been properly received and valued.	NO
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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>



