

## **BRUCE CLARKE. – COUNCILLOR CANDIDATE. 2020.**

### **HISTORY IN DOUGLAS SHIRE.**

Bruce was born in Cairns in 1947. Father born in Cairns. Grandfather born in Port Douglas in 1887. Great Grandfather was the Harbour Master in Port Douglas in the 1870's. Bruce moved to Port Douglas in 1980 as a Building Designer. The business became successful during the construction of the Sheraton Mirage and the influx of residents coming to the Shire. Clarkeville Designs is still being operated successfully by Bruce in the Shire today.

Bruce was elected to Douglas Shire Council in 2013 as a member of the first Council after de-amalgamation with Cairns Regional Council.

Bruce has decided it is time to stand for election once again as he feels he has a lot to offer the Shire in experience, common sense, and a conservative attitude.

### **MY STRATEGIC PLATFORM.**

**1.**

#### **INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.**

There are a lot of people who would like to come to live in Douglas Shire for the Sea Change. It is a Shire which is close to the reef, rainforest, and also the hinterland. A lot of people may even decide to shift to Douglas after the tragic bush fires to the south of us. The biggest obstacle in their way is the lack of residential properties available for purchase. An increase in Residential Housing does quite a few things.

1. It increases our growth rate, which, at the moment is dangerously low.
2. With more people building new homes it increases our rate base, which helps to keep our Council more Economically stable and helps to keep the rates down.
3. With more people in the area, it stimulates more business. Businesses in Douglas are feeling the pinch at the moment, so with the increase in Residential building, the Builders and associated Contractors will be encouraged back to the area which stimulates other businesses which then have a chance to prosper.
4. The Environment and Residential housing can go hand in hand. All it needs is the addition of Common Sense. One of the most natural Environmental activities is for new home owners to landscape their new surroundings by planting trees and gardens on their new property. This natural Environmental activity also helps to decrease our Carbon Footprint. I have yet to see a new residence where this has not occurred.

So the increase in Residential housing is a Win – Win situation which will benefit the whole Shire. There are a lot more situations which go hand in hand with this increase, and Posts 2. and 3. will explain two of these most important situations.

**2.**

### **UPGRADE OF WATER TREATMENT PLANT.**

Not only does this go hand in hand with Residential Housing, but it is the most important Plant the Shire has. The conservation of the Reef and Rainforest are very important indeed, but the Shire is a long way behind when it comes to the conservation of the most important commodity on the face of this earth, **WATER.**

Our Water Treatment Plant is an up to date plant that has been very successful for a very long time. The Plant itself is not the problem. It has the capability of treating twice the amount of water than it does at the moment. The problem is the Intake, which can't deliver enough water to the plant for the Shires normal daily use. This is why we have levels of water restrictions which we suffer year after year because the problem is being ignored.

There is a bandaid fix which has been used by Douglas Shire Council some years ago. This can be used during dry periods whilst the permanent upgrade of the plant is being done. A permanent solution is to source another appropriate intake supply. This would of coarse trigger a revision of the water licence with the State Government, but it can be done.

We could also isolate the Port Douglas 20 mega litre reservoir and source a supply to feed a smaller Treatment Plant close to that reservoir. At the same time, the existing supply line from Mossman would remain as a backup and for emergency situations. This, of coarse, would have to be a longer term project. All this costs a lot of money, but these costs can be partnered with the normal head works costs associated with the Residential Housing. State and Federal Grants would also be available for this most urgent upgrade.

**3.**

### **UPGRADE OF SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT.**

This is another project that goes hand in hand with Residential Housing. At the moment, the Port Douglas Sewerage Treatment Plant has only a very short time before it reaches maximum working capability. I understand that there is enough land on the present site to double the size of the existing plant. This should have been started long ago, as now it puts the Shire in the position where it is a must upgrade.

Sub-stations can be also built at different locations, as has been done at Cooya Beach, but this does not solve the problem, as these sub-stations feed to the established Treatment Plants.

The only way through this problem is to either, upgrade the existing Port Douglas Plant or build a new Plant at another appropriate location.

Yet again we have a project on our hands which again costs a lot of money.

Here is another project that can also be partnered with the normal head works costs associated with Residential Housing.

State and Federal Grants would also be available for this most urgent upgrade. From Posts 1, 2, and 3, it is easy to see that progress in Douglas Shire has fallen down. The Growth Rate coupled with the main two Infrastructure upgrades are an absolute must, and have to be undertaken to avoid the Shire becoming stagnant. Not a good position to be in.

#### **4.**

#### **EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION.**

The most important undertaking by a Council in any community or Shire is communication. All major decisions should be made with extensive consultation with the Residents and Rate Payers of the Shire. It is their Shire, not the Councils. The Council is the Board of Directors who make sure the progress of the Shire is proceeding in the direction required by the majority of the people who live here and pay Rates. We must listen to every ones opinion, even if we don't agree with that opinion because there may be a small part of this opinion that we do agree with. This enhances our own opinion and leads to making a decision based on a larger number of the Shires Residents and Ratepayers.

We have the newly formed Douglas Shire Ratepayers Association. This association will be a great help in advising Council as to problems associated with the way the Rate Payers see the future of the Shire, but for the best results the Councillors need to stay in direct contact with the Residents. This makes sure that the Council gets direct information straight from the Residents. This method is the most open and transparent method that can be used in any situation.

The newly formed DSRA is aligned with the Qld. Local Government Reform Alliance. This in itself is a fantastic partnership as reform of corruption in Qld. Councils is long overdue to be investigated. We can go onto the QLGRA website and see exactly where their efforts are being directed. All this information can be passed onto the Council and Ratepayers of the Shire by the DSRA.

The best way any organisation can talk directly to the Councillors is by asking for a deputation. This makes sure that the Council receives up to date information from the public arena. Going through a middle man operation always distorts the original information and the end result may not be the correct result.

## **5.**

### **URBAN ROAD NETWORK.**

The Urban Road Network is an essential part of the Shires access to all properties throughout the Shire. Constant maintenance on these roads is a must in order to keep up the reliability of clear road transport in all locations at all times. Even though a bandaid repair on these roads may, at certain times be acceptable, a long term solution to a road problem always ends up being the most cost effective way of maintaining the Network. Filling the same potholes with bitumen week after week must be very frustrating for not only the road crews involved, but also the road users. This bandaid fix must be eliminated where at all possible, as in the long term it costs the Shire a lot more than using a long term maintenance programme. Keeping the sides of the Shires roads clear of grass and rubbish is also a very important part of maintenance and safety.

Maintenance on Main roads throughout the Shire is, of course, the responsibility of the The Department of Transport and Main Roads Qld. These State maintenance programmes sometimes require the assistance of the Local Council, so this is why we must stay in the loop of the State network in order to bring the financial benefit of this work back to the Shire.

Good roads produce happy road users and also safer roads.

## **6.**

### **LAGOON.**

A project that will happen, but will have to be put on hold for a few years until the Shires Economy increases to a stage where construction and ongoing maintenance costs are affordable. Some of the construction costs may be offset by State and Federal grants, but the very biggest problem for the Rate Payers at the moment is the ongoing maintenance costs. This cost will only become affordable when the Shire starts to increase it's rate base by increasing it's growth rate which at the moment is close to zero. A dangerous position for the Shire to be in.

The Lagoon in Cairns is a moderate design, is very popular, but attracts an annual maintenance cost of around 2 million dollars which is affordable for Cairns Regional Council because of the cities very large rate base. Port Douglas Lagoon will of course have to be a smaller moderate design so that the ongoing maintenance costs can be accommodated by a moderate growth rate which at the moment we do not have and which we must have before the consideration of the construction of a Lagoon.

Also what must be looked at is the Lagoon Investigation that has already been done at a high cost, and looks at the proper location and affordable design.

Security is also a very big cost. Law requires 2 Lifeguards on duty in daylight hours. Security will also be required for the remainder of each 24 hour period. Another large cost. Cairns Lagoon has the advantage of a 24 hour Police Beat office which overlooks the Lagoon. In our case, night security would have to be contracted out to a private security company.

In spite of all the advantages and disadvantages of a Lagoon, it is quite an achievable project for us which requires patience, a little time, and most of all Common Sense.

## 7.

### TOURISM AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Around 80% of the Shires income is from Tourism. Tourism has declined, not just in the Shire, but Australia wide. Because of the tragic bush fires and now the coronavirus, we can expect a further slight downturn in Tourism. However, we should not use the National decline as the total excuse for the decline in the Shire.

There are still a very large number of tourists coming to Australia. We must stay in the loop with Tropical Tourism North Queensland and Queensland Tourism organisations so as to get the up to date information on where their efforts are being targeted to catch as much of this decreased market as possible.

It is not the Councils job to directly promote Tourism, but it is the Councils job to target Tourism by making sure that the Shire is well presented and a very acceptable place for Tourists to visit. This is why Infrastructure such as Water, Sewerage, urban road networks, maintenance of parks and gardens, etc, should be kept up to a very high standard. We should also be looking at a face lift for both Port Douglas and Mossman. This is where the southern property owners should do their part in the maintenance of their leased buildings in the Shire. Property owners should also look at the very high lease costs they are putting on their buildings. If these prices were put at a reasonable level, it would help businesses stay operational and also make sure that their buildings are occupied over a longer term.

The downturn in Tourism also very much affects Business in the Shire. The Chamber of Commerce then becomes a very important advisory organisation to the Council. Council should have automatic grant funding each year in the budget, as has been done in the past, to help the Chamber of Commerce in it's business promotion operations. They are then charged with the task of advising the Council as to the rise and fall of business in the Shire so the Council can direct appropriate funding in the right direction.

**The downturn in Tourism is also a very important reason to increase Residential Housing as explained in POST No 1.**

**It is a fact that people come to the area to visit friends and relations and also to enjoy the Shires beauty and Tourist activities. This in itself helps our businesses to survive and the Shires Economy.**

## **8.**

### **ENVIRONMENT.**

**One of the most important natural undertakings of our Shire. We are all environmentalists as none of us want to destroy the place we have chosen to live. Some of us are Radical Environmentalists and we must remember that radical people make radical decisions. Moderate Residential Housing and the Environment can go hand in hand. All that is needed is to add common sense. If we don't use common sense with everything we do it will fail. Also, we can't throw a noose around the Shire and tighten it up so that no more people are able to move to the Shire. Driving around the Shire I have yet to see any new residence where the new owners have not planted trees and gardens in their yard. This is a normal environmental activity that we all do automatically and this activity will never stop. We should all take notice of a local Doctor and reduce the Carbon Footprint in our own back yards. This in itself would help reduce the total Carbon Footprint of the Shire. People who still own vacant blocks north of the Daintree River should be given their Building Rights back. They would then be able to plant Rainforest species trees on the remainder of the block around their house. This would achieve 2 things. It would help reduce the Carbon Footprint and would increase the Shires Rate Base, thus helping to keep our rates down. Douglas Shires Carbon Footprint is one of the lowest in Australia and it follows that our Shire will never attract any Carbon Credits what so ever.**

**By approaching the environmental activities with a more common sense approach we will achieve the same required end result for the Carbon Footprint and at the same time add to our economy.**

## **9.**

### **SPORTS.**

**We are so lucky to have so many top sports men and women in the Shire. As well we are blessed with some of the top sporting teams in North Queensland. These sporting clubs and athletes must be recognised at all times, as the**

sporting events that are held in Douglas Shire attract athletes from around the world. These events all add to the Shires Economy.

Of all the sports I was connected with, I must mention Surf Life Saving. Having been active in this sport for some 30 years I was lucky enough to be elected as President of the Ellis Beach Club for 6 years and President of the Port Douglas Club for a period of 3 years.

The Australian Surf Life Saving Championships are the biggest sporting event in the world outside the Olympic Games.

My last competition was the 1984 Australian Championships on the Gold Coast. Swimming is the only exercise that uses every muscle in the body at one time, and coupled with other training exercises, it is an excellent way to stay fit no matter what age you are.

All sports are a great form of discipline, and as such, are good for children to get into at a young age. It is so good to see that the sporting clubs in Douglas Shire all have junior clubs as well. A great way to make sure the particular sport is carried on year after year. We must make sure that this continues.

## **MY 'PLAN' IS NOT JUST TO PLAN, BUT 'ACTION'**

Authorised by Bruce Clarke, 7 Shalom Close, Cooya Beach, for Bruce Clarke,  
( Candidate.)