



MEDIA RELEASE

Natalie Johnson, Douglas Shire Council Candidate 2020

Local Tourism Professional Announces Council Candidacy For 2020

Natalie Johnson announces Councillor candidacy under the three community pillars of business, tourism and family.

December 17th 2019- Local tourism professional, Natalie Johnson, has officially announced her candidacy for Councillor in the Douglas Shire Council elections in March 2020.

Living in the Douglas Shire for almost two decades and working in high-level senior management positions in tourism, one of the two largest industries in the region, Natalie is well positioned to offer a fresh, business and tourism focussed voice as Councillor.

“I am excited about the opportunity to bring to the table extensive and successful tourism and business experience, passion and independent thinking,” Ms. Johnson said.

“Given the Shire’s reliance on tourism, I believe it is important to have an experienced tourism sector councillor. The Shire’s recent, world-first eco-tourism destination certification is incredibly exciting and Council can work with industry to capitalise on this.

“There are fantastic opportunities in the entire region to further our tourism offering including the expansion of agri-tourism, the botanic gardens and in particular, indigenous tourism, which in our destination is already well ahead of others in terms of the number of ways tourists can engage with indigenous culture, and the exceptional quality of these engagements.”

Natalie’s community service work includes six years as a Director on the Board of Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and seven years as Chair of Business Events Port Douglas. She has also spent time as a committee member with the Chamber of Commerce, Douglas Theatre Arts Group (The Clink) and the Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre. Her passion for supporting survivors of domestic violence led to her organising a bi-annual fundraising lunch collecting much-needed items for the women of Ruth’s Shelter.

Natalie’s financial and business acumen is a strong asset she can bring to the council table. “There has been a lot of discussion around development in the Shire of which I feel I can bring a balanced view to when considering economic, environmental and social outcomes,” she said. “I’m not shy about development; however, it needs to be considered in line with the global issue of water security and local infrastructure capacity.

“The water security issue is not unique to the Douglas Shire and we need to expand on water security education and storage, whether that be community storage upgrades and increased grey water usage or working with individual households to encourage home storage tanks.”

Natalie’s other focus is family facilities and support within the region. “My daughters attended St. Augustine’s School in Mossman where I served two years as a Director on the Board and assisted the fundraising committee for eight, ensuring the school continued to enjoy the advantages of updated technology, modern classrooms and play facilities.

“As a mother, my children benefited from many of the Shire’s community programs and activities including playgroups, kinder gym, dance and drama, theatre, music, rhyme time and netball – all of which are essential for a strong community. As part of my family focus, I am also keen to see asset upgrades to the Shire’s parks and the option of a children’s water play facility.”

Rounding out her business, tourism and family platform, Natalie’s ability to communicate effectively through her years of selling the region to the world will benefit all residents of the Shire.

“Listening is key, together with engagement – two skills I have used daily for twenty years and that I feel is something the community really wants more of. I believe there are some ways the Council can further engagement through the option of perhaps mobile council and meeting time rotations.

“Overall, I believe I offer the community a hardworking, passionate voice coupled with an exceptional understanding of business, tourism and how important the region's cultural and natural assets are to a thriving economy together with the everyday nature of being a local, long-term community member.”

- ENDS -

MORE ABOUT NATALIE

Natalie Johnson has lived in the Douglas Shire for 19 years. From hotels and resorts to restaurants and attractions, Natalie was most recently the long-standing General Manager of Flames of the Forest and the Beach Shack Restaurant and Bar.

Natalie has worked extensively with government tourism agencies including Tourism Australia, Tourism and Events Queensland and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council to strengthen support for the growth of indigenous tourism and the importance of the protection of Australia’s two greatest natural assets - the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest.

A confident and engaging public speaker in business forums, she has worked closely with tourism organisations to shape the strategic direction of the tourism industry within the region.

Behind the scenes, Natalie is a mum to the family’s Paws and Claws rescue sausage dog, Ella, and two teenage daughters Ava and Jade. Her husband, Dale Priem, is a passionate local history buff who works as a tour guide. A local musician, he has been a part of the fabric of the community for 19 years spending 17 on-air, five days a week at Radio Port Douglas, and now, together with another long-time local runs the weekly Port Douglas Muso’s night at the Central Hotel.

Natalie brings a strong sense of community and a desire to ensure the place we all call home is financially and environmentally sound, and a beautiful and welcoming Shire that is proud to be the custodian of Australia’s greatest environmental and tourism assets – the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest.

She is passionate about creating an open, thriving, sustainable community of which every resident can enjoy and be a part of, whilst supporting the growth of tourism, small business, economic development and diversity, families, our retired community and ensuring water security.

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