

OSCAR SUAREZ
CANDIDATE DIVISION 5



Thank you Carlie and the Fraser Coast Chronicle for contacting me and giving me the opportunity to respond to your request for the top 5 election issues and why I think they are important.

Traditionally the main focus of regional councils were Rates, Rubbish and Roads but as our region grows we need to shift our focus from a Regional Council and start thinking in bigger terms like a City Council, with more projects and the area destined to grow exponentially we must prioritise other ideas and find solution moving forward.

I will briefly touch on the 3 Rs as we cannot ignore them as they are very much still important council matters. I am advocating that Rates be capped for the next 4 years for existing rate payers and we need to look at bringing back the early payment discount that has been a tradition across councils for as long as I remember and for some reason has ceased. With household incomes barely changing while everything else rises costs are impacting to many residents and this also affects the community with people on edge turning to escape mechanisms that are detrimental to our communities health and well-being.

More people moving to our region is putting pressure on our roads there needs to be policies in place that focus on proactive road maintenance being budgeted for, this needs to be so that we do not fall behind retroactively trying to fix all our roads at the same time. Having Proactive systems attracts competent workers that build a passion for their jobs and their region, this will be of great benefit and will ensure a balanced work force that does not crack under pressure like the roads themselves.

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We need to make sure our region is accessible to all with footpath access for all abilities that connect our community hubs in a meaningful way this is important getting people off the roads before we have a tragedy and someone's life is impacted because they just went to store but walked on the road because the grass was long and wet as an example I have personally seen were some young boys were nearly hit by a car in Toogoom. So, let's get on the front foot and create a safe vibrant city that encompasses the region as a whole and not just the BAY and the BOROUGH.

Rubbish we have dedicated workers doing their very best to maintain our rubbish, but I would like to see the possibility, if there is a desire in the community to look at revitalizing the outer dump sites that were closed down. I think there could be an opportunity for community groups to take up some aspect of Recycling that could potentially fund the operations even if it's just a few days a week from electronics furniture and green waste I think there is a great potential for volunteers to find purpose and communities to be able to self-fund important projects they deem important for example, showers at beach accesses and amenities were they are needed.

Were I am really passionate is to protect the charm of our region we need all development to be sustainable and to focus on leaving old growth vegetation assets in place for future generations and the diverse wildlife we currently have here. Fraser Coast Regional Development policies should reflect the residents wishes and the developer should have to pay for any infrastructure needed for any future development.

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Town planning should not be about just ticking boxes, instead the needs of the community should be seriously taken into consideration. We need to maintain wildlife corridors and not bulldoze everything and then add trees as an afterthought. I am personally appalled at some of the Environmental aspects of some developments and the lack of foresight, so I think we need a clear policy on these issues. Our rates should be used for the benefit of the ratepayers not to fill the pockets of developers and those chasing the quick dollar.

We need to improve the Bushfire management plan into something that is fit for purpose and inclusive of the ability to respond to emergency situations. It is unfair that as we grow into a more densely populated region in Southeast Queensland, we are solely reliant on a volunteer Rural Fire Service. We need to support these amazing people who tirelessly risk their lives in service to the community. As a council we need to start preparing better management plans with trained staff and resources so that first responders are well versed in all aspects of emergency response including Bush Fire Management.

As I study individual policies, I am finding them to be ambiguous and not containing information that is purposeful to residents. In some cases, these policies are being used to enforce rules by way of financial penalties (fines)when they are open to interpretation. I also want to ensure these policies are accessible to the community so that residents can be informed and make best practice decisions without any ambiguity.

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We need to look at our whole region and ensure that there are community hubs that are accessible and enjoyed by all residents. We need better consultation with the users of said spaces and be prepared to rectify any issues to make them inclusive creatively evolving learning places. In saying this we need to think creatively to remedy situations in a cost-effective way that has the outcomes we want.

My motto is Driven to find Solutions. I will work hard to get the outcomes that the community is seeking because I will listen to their issues and fight for Division 5 interests.

Yours Sincerely

Oscar Suarez

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P.S Can you please share my Clean up Australia Event

<https://register.cleanup.org.au/fundraisers/oscarsuarez/dundowran-beach>