**National Trust, Far South Coast Branch Questionnaire for Council Candidates, 2021**

**Summary of Responses, candidates in alphabetical order**

**Tony Allen - Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I don’t believe private property should be heritage listed without approval of the owner**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I haven’t really followed the issue, it’s the responsibility of councillors from the south of the shire**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**Believes we need structurally strong buildings replacing those lost, but they should reference the architectural heritage of the South Coast**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I believe we should preserve the aesthetics of the wooden superstructure of the bridge, but strengthen the sub-structure, in line with the reference group’s discussions with Council staff.**

* Indigenous sacred sites

**I totally support protection**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   Logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**Proper planning should enable all these activities, but protection against fires is the essential issue.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Totally supports this, but maintenance of such facilities is the key issue.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**I’m very supportive of maintaining libraries and pools.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I’m not willing to indicate at this stage.**

**Neil Bourke – Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**If a building is genuinely heritage, it should be preserved.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I believe the majority of the building was rebuilt in 1980. However, if the community wants it to be preserved, their views are more important than my personal views.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**Of course these buildings should be sympathetic to what’s there.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I have given my support to preserving this bridge because of the large number of community members who signed the petition. Personally I would like to see a new bridge.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   Logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I believe all uses should be considered, including logging and carbon credits, based on their economic merits.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Yes, this is an important role, and all levels of access should be provided**, **including for prams and wheelchairs.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, I also support all these.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**An experienced person like Russell Fitzpatrick.**

**Michael Britten - Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I’m very supportive of heritage protection. I’ve been very happy to see Hotel Australasia in Eden renovated.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I have supported the group opposing its demolition and construction of a new supermarket. I gave them a previous report showing there’s no need for a large new supermarket in Pambula.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**I support the new buildings reflecting regional heritage architectural characteristics.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I believe we should be able to preserve the heritage look of buildings and bridges, which is important for tourism. I’ve spoken to Four Winds about this issue.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I don’t think logging should continue. I previously believed the chip mill should be replaced by an industrial estate and transport hub.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**I believs Council doesn’t have enough money for this but should have a vision for such developments.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Council needs to identify essential services which will never be self-funding, and focus on providing these.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I would like to stand for mayor for 1-2 years then hand over to a new councillor.**

**Simon Daly – Labor Party**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**It’s critically important to preserve heritage buildings and indigenous sites.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I don’t think it should be demolished. The façade should be preserved and the rest of the building restored, to preserve the streetscape.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**As in Pambula, the heritage streetscape should be preserved.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I’m a big supporter of maintaining the bridge as it is. The drive down this stretch of coast is stunning. Why would we want to change it?**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**There should be a mix of all these activities. The livelihoods of people in the forest industry should be protected. The main future of the region is eco-tourism. I don’t want us to over-develop our region.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Yes, definitely. The Shire has lost tourists for 2 years with the fires and COVID, so we really need to help the tourism industry. Investing in infrastructure is crucial.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, definitely, these are all important.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**Helen O’Neil**

**Russell Fitzpatrick - Independent**

The National Trust received no reply from Councillor Fitzpatrick to several requests to participate in this questionnaire.

**Cathy Griff – Bega Valley Greens, also representing the views of the Greens team Angus Ashcroft, Peter Hagger, Vivian Harris and Paula Park**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**The Greens support heritage in all cases from bridges to hotels. Our Shire has a fascinating history of Indigenous and white settlers, which has been too quickly dismantled in the name of development, not in the interests of residents or tourists.  
The public record will show my voting and speeches have always been pro heritage.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* *The Royal Willow Hotel*?

**I have liaised with the group wanting to preserve the classic façade; informed them on the 7 Dec public hearing and support their view. Those in support of Willow’s heritage don’t deny the rights of the owners but wish to preserve the character of Pambula mainstreet.**

* The heritage character of buildings in *Cobargo’s* main street after the losses of the bushfires?
* *Cuttagee Bridge****:***

**I have campaigned from day one with the Save Cuttagee bridge group as will be clear from photos and interviews. First step is to have a feasibility study undertaken on using timber for the bridge in keeping with its unique heritage.**

* *Indigenous sacred sites:*

**I believe there is no excuse ever for interfering with sites of importance to First Nation people. The law is catching up with this view. They are precious to all who live in our shire**.

1. *What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire*?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**The Greens views on logging are very well known. Our forests are precious for multiple roles including carbon capture, ecotourism and biodiversity. A ground breaking report from Frontier Economics and ANU on the case against logging in the Southern NSW state forests has just been released and is essential reading.**

1. *Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?*

**I have raised and had passed several motions in support of shared paths for cycling, walking and enjoying our environment. Nature based tourism is a no-brainer for tourism in our region. It is the chief drawcard and our pathway networks need to be extended. The Tathra headland walk, Merimbula lake walks, Wharf to Wharf, Light to Light and the Bundian Way and many more, have huge potential and are appreciated by visitor and resident alike.**

1. *Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?*

**Greens advocate strongly for social services like those mentioned above are the backbone and heart of what the community needs to function and come together. Our community halls are unique attractions for cultural tourism and locals. Youth is underserved in the shire. At times we may need to balance the need for some facilities with the maintenance cost. Generally our council is not run for profit. Often council is the only provider of such services. The community is dependent on cool libraries, pools and childcare centres.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**Cathy Griff** *–* **I am experienced and yet not been around for too many years**

**Mitch Nadim - Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**Our identity is formed by our heritage architecture.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I am opposed to preserving it. It looks terrible**.

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**I want the new buildings to pay homage to the surrounding architecture**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I don’t believe it has any architectural merit but it does have beauty and charm. If we need a new bridge, it should be rebuilt as wooden.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**All of the above.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**I believe that of course it has a role in these areas.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**I am a big supporter of these facilities. I voted against a rate rise to pay for the Bega pool.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**Russell Fitzpatrick**

**Helen O’Neil – Labor Party**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**It’s important to preserve heritage buildings and indigenous sites. The Labor Team wants Council to develop a cultural tourism plan, based on bringing community groups together to promote cultural tourism. First nations groups inputs are integral to this.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**The facade should be preserved and the rest of the building restored, to preserve the streetscape.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**The community’s views should be respected and its future development needs met. The community development design should developed with Cobargo Community.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**The bridge should be protected. The Labor team is a strong supporter of the community campaign to protect Cuttagee Bridge.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**Forestry will be a vital part of meeting climate challenges in the next few years and I hope to see an ecologically sustainable industry policy being developed.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Yes, cultural and eco-tourism are very important.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, definitely, these are all important.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**Let’s see who will be the nine people around the table after the election. We are hoping to have a progressive Council that will bring people together and collaborate in facing the big challenges facing us, including affordable housing and climate change.**

**Natham O’Donnell – Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I am a big fan of heritage buildings, but would need to look at proposals on a case by case basis.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I am in two minds about this project. I can see the benefits of the supermarket project, and you can’t cut off progress completely. However, I would need to have a closer look at the details.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**I haven’t seen the details of the documents close up, but I believe we should try to preserve the heritage characteristics of the architecture of Cobargo. This will be important for tourism also.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**We should definitely try to preserve this bridge. It’s important for tourism as tourists like to travel these roads.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire? Logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I’d like to see all these activities co-exist together better, using the resource of the forests for timber, tourism, carbon and biodiversity.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**In an ideal world, Council would fund all these but it is not a bottomless pit. You’d need to look on a case by case basis.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, I believe the Shire’s libraries and recreational facilities are well used.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I’ve not focused on this issue.**

**Joy Robin – Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I support heritage preservation 1000%. I’m very disappointed in what we do to first nation people.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I think we should try to save the facade.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**I’m not aware of this issue.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I support retaining this bridge.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I believe the timber industry is sustainable if properly managed and maintained. This is not the case at present. We currently have 5 government forestry workers in Eden, down dramatically from former years.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Yes, anything which is necessary for the community is worth doing. We need to advocate for funds from the NSW Government for these projects.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, but these facilities should be provided more on the basis of needs of various communities in the Shire.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I would favour a knowledgeable person, particularly a woman.**

**Joshua Shoobridge - Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I’m all for preserving heritage.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I’m not aware of this issue.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**I’d definitely like to support the heritage architectural appearance of Cobargo.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I’m all for retaining the aesthetic of this bridge, keeping it safe.**

* Indigenous sacred sites

**These definitely should be protected.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I’m definitely against old growth forest logging and in favour of eco-tourism, mountain bike riding and other diverse uses.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Definitely, but there’s a need to allocate money appropriately.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Yes, definitely. We should re-instate the Youth Council**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I would vote for someone experienced.**

**Karen Wright - Independent**

1. What is your view about preserving heritage buildings and traditional indigenous heritage in the Shire?

**I very strongly support this.**

In particular, what is your view about preserving

* The Royal Willow Hotel?

**I’m very concerned that the hotel could be replaced by a shopping centre. At very least, the facade should be preserved.**

* The heritage character of buildings in Cobargo’s main street after the losses of the bushfires?

**The buildings absolutely should fit in with the streetscape and Cobargo’s village feel.**

* Cuttagee Bridge

**I strongly support preserving the bridge.**

* Indigenous sacred sites

**I’m really passionate about this issue. I want to change the name of the Ben Boyd National Park and other local places to their traditional place names.**

1. What do you believe is the best future use of the public native forests in the Bega Shire?   
   Logging, conservation for carbon capture, eco-tourism and biodiversity?

**I definitely want to preserve the forests. Plantations are ok.**

1. Do you believe the Shire has a role to support nature-based tourism in the Shire, including by providing infrastructure like walking tracks and roads to beaches?

**Yes, definitely. Accessible walks for prams and wheelchairs are also important.**

1. Do you believe the Shire Government should provide Library, Youth Services and other social services and social infrastructure like swimming pools and toilets?

**Absolutely. Council is not just about roads, rubbish and rates. Swimming pools are also really important.**

1. If elected, who would you support for Mayor?

**I would probably support Helen O’Neil or Cathy Griff if I’m elected.**