

**Combined Residents of Whitehorse
Action Group (CROWAG) Incorporated.**

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Candidate Questionnaire, Whitehorse Council Elections – October 2020

Name of Councillor candidate: [Stephen O'Brien](#)

Whitehorse Council Ward: [Elgar](#)

The *Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group Inc. (CROWAG)* represents a number of community groups and individual members across the municipality. In the current COVID-19 environment we are seeking to assist candidates to reach our members, helping them to make informed decisions when they vote.

CROWAG advocates for appropriate and sustainable development concerning built-form, public amenity, and the natural landscape within Whitehorse to all tiers of government. It seeks to promote the quality of life for residents and the natural landscape of Whitehorse. It lobbies Whitehorse Council to improve its relationship with its constituents in the areas of public accountability, public transparency, good governance, community engagement, fairness and equity.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be made available:

- a. to all CROWAG individual and group members and their networks within Whitehorse
- b. on the CROWAG website at www.crowag.com

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Please answer all questions and keep written responses to each question to less than 150 words.

1. How long have you been a resident of Whitehorse?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

2. Do you live in the council ward for which you are a candidate?

Yes or No

3. List the community, political and/or professional organisations with which you have been involved during the last 10 years.

Planning Institute of Australia
Ex Liberal Party Member

4. What positive achievements resulted from your membership of these groups?

Understanding that early community engagement with the community on planning amendments and development applications is critical to ensuring appropriate development outcomes are achieved. As a Member of Institute, I am also required to achieve annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) targets to ensure I maintain my membership. In relation to the Liberal Party, (which I am no longer a member of), I believe in the inalienable rights and freedoms of all peoples and for a lean government that encourages small business to innovate.

5. Please state what you want to achieve as an elected Councillor

Much greater transparency in decision making, a stop to wasteful spending (such as a stop to overseas “study trips”) and a review of dwelling height limits (to lowering to 9 metres max) in the GRZ, more so as it applies to development applications in cul-de-sacs. I will also move a motion at the March 2021 Council meeting that seeks to ban donations from property developers and real estate agents to Councillors at any time during their tenure in office.

6. What are the top five issues you believe could improve the functioning of the *Whitehorse City Council* in representing its ratepayers and community?

- 1) Mandatory early community consultation of all development applications (including those assessed and approved under Officer delegation) with the Ward Councillor in attendance
- 2) A Youth Council (as opposed to the current standard Youth Advisory Committee) wherein the Youth Councillors report back to the elected Councillors quarterly on programs and issues that shape the needs and wishes of the young in our community
- 3) As many in our Ward have difficulty speaking English, I propose that Council Home Care Services can be provided with carers who speak Mandarin. We need an all inclusive society, a Councillor who can bring us together not tear us apart, a Councillor who is not Culturally insensitive.
- 4) By 2022, I want this Council to reach the top 20% of all Councils for improved community satisfaction with Council’s engagement practice
- 5) Increase tree canopy cover, enhance existing open space and create at least two new parks, in areas with the lowest access to open space

7. There are many important roles of Local Government. As a Councillor you will need to make difficult decisions with many issues of importance competing for your vote, council action and finances. Whitehorse Council’s responsibilities are listed below.

In the boxes below, please **rank the roles that are most important to you** from 7 (Most important) to 1 (Least important). Please do not use the same ranking number more than once.

3	Children and Families including childcare, kindergartens, maternal and child health, playgroups, immunisation
1	Health and Wellbeing including disability services, home and community care, meals on wheels, food safety
2	Residential and Commerce including strategic development, planning, and building, business development, animal registrations, rubbish collection and recycling
6	Sport and Leisure including sportsgrounds and pavilions, aquatic and leisure centres, Morack golf club
7	Non-structured Recreational activities including cycleways and shared use paths, parks and gardens, bushland, and open space
4	Roads and Safety including management of roads and footpaths, streetscapes (including street trees), street lighting, car and bike parks, pedestrian and cycling safety and security, disabled accessibility
5	Community including library services, theatre and the arts, community centres, volunteering, community grants

8. **The following Issues of specific interest to CROWAG.**

In the boxes below, please **rank the priority of the issues** in order of importance **to you** from 10 (Most important) to 1 (Least important). Please do not use the same ranking number more than once.

3	Engagement with residents and ratepayers
4	Transparency and governance in council matters
8	Council response to Climate Change and Sustainability issues in terms of mitigation, adaptation, and urgency

5	Administrative and budgetary efficiency.
2	Council rates and capital expenditure policies
1	Administration of Council's planning and building provisions in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme (WPS) e.g. overall level of development in the city, building site compliance requirements, general administration including inspections, Planning Permit Conditions compliance, administration of tree and vegetation controls, tree retention and protection on building sites, ensuring compliance with landscape and planting plans, community consultation, fines and prosecution for transgressors
7	The city's natural landscape, tree canopy, streetscape, and overarching neighbourhood amenity considerations
9	Provision of infrastructure for walkers, cyclists, and people with disabilities
10	Management and utilization of the city's parks, open spaces, and linkages (e.g. shared use paths, waterways, and residential streets)
7	Traffic issues in Whitehorse

9. If you have any further comments please note them below:

my vision is for a greener, bolder, more inclusive, resilient and connected City. This embodies fostering a strong community, providing a healthily environment, creating a smart economy and a commitment to service excellence. A City where everyone has equal access to opportunities and who are fully engaged in shaping decisions that affect their lives.

Thank you for completing the CROWAG questionnaire.

For further queries contact CROWAG secretary David Berry on 0413 457 184

Please save your completed questionnaire and send it as an attachment by email to 'Whitehorse Councillor Candidate Responses' at: crowag.inc@gmail.com