

16 August 2024

Ku-ring-gai Council Election 2024 – Candidate Questions

Please return your answers to **info@foke.org.au** by **5.00pm on FRIDAY 23 AUGUST 2024.**

Candidates Full Name: Barbara Ward
Ward Standing for: Gordon ward

Authorised Campaign Address: 36 Ridge St Gordon 2074.

Email:.....barbara.ward@outlook.com.au..Mobile:... 0447 081 824....

Website:..barbaraward.com..... Facebook:.....Nil.....

Qualifications:Day job:...Director Impact One

Are you a member of a political party? **YES/NO YES**

If **YES**, specify ...Liberal Party of NSW.....

Community/ lobby/ sporting group membership? **YES/NO YES** If **YES**, specify
 Rotary Club of Ku-ring-gai and Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai, Lifeline H2H, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai
 Womens Shelter....

Have you endorsed Save Greater Sydney Coalition’s election planning principles? **YES/NO YES**

Have you signed the YIMBY election pledge? **YES/NO NO**

Do you believe dwelling supply alone will solve the housing shortage and affordability? **YES/NO**
 The whole of government, private public sectors and community approach is required to solve this problem. Severe housing crisis is caused by imbalance between demand and supply. It is defined by low rental vacancy, rising homelessness, surging rents and dwelling prices and a persistent housing crisis that is unlikely to be resolved in the short-term. There are many factors attributing to the crisis and successive governments have not tackled the problem properly. For instance, there’s population growth, high net overseas arrivals in 2023, return of international students and skilled migrants, construction industry has severe shortages of skilled workers, emerging from the pandemic, supply chains for construction materials are disrupted. Rising inflation leading to shortages and increased material cost prices, this has made large-scale projects riskier and more expensive, deterring many developers from starting new projects.

Higher interest rates have also led to increased borrowing costs for construction companies and developers, has resulted in many projects becoming financially unviable, leading to delays or cancellations of new housing developments. The private sector is struggling to keep pace with demand and is expected to deliver new housing. The government's target of building 1.2 million new homes over five years relies heavily on private development (97% of the target).

Do you support Ku-ring-gai Council's legal action against the NSW Government's Transport Orientated Development (TOD) SEPP? **Why or why not?**

Yes. This is not a decision I have taken lightly but with a measured and informed approach. I have acted in the best interest of the residents and it will also benefit future residents. It is my view that the policy does not align with the procedures required by law.

If Council is not given an opportunity to plan a better outcome than it is concerning as to the long-term impacts on our heritage and natural environment. Council communicated with the State Government its willingness to provide for additional housing through consultative planning process that delivers high quality urban outcomes that respects the built and natural environment. Councils concerns on issues such as the capacity to service more people, the strain on 100-year-old pipes with, infrastructure delivery and financial implications this will be felt by our ratepayers.

I for one am financially prudent therefore believe me we are not wasting money but trying to get the best outcome for all of us and for our future, a good decision today will save ratepayers millions of dollars in future infrastructure costs and will also provide a well-planned Ku ring gai.

Do you support making a new place based LEP to mitigate the adverse impacts of the TOD and Low to Mid-Rise Housing SEPP on Ku-ring-gai? **YES/NO YES**

Do you support maintaining public Council land for community use? **YES/NO YES**

Do you support listing Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion as a UNESCO GeoRegion? **YES/NO**

Do you support the protection of Ku-ring-gai's Heritage Conservation Areas? **YES/NO YES**

Do you support the establishment of a Ku-ring-gai Council Environmental Advisory Group? **YES/NO YES**

Do you support natural turf on Ku-ring-gai's sports and playing fields; or the installation of artificial turf? **NATURAL/ARTIFICIAL TURF**
Both as appropriate

Expanded Questions:

Please keep each answer less than 200 words (longer answers may be cut).

1. What motivated you to run for office at the Ku-ring-gai local government elections?
I have lived here for 30 years. I deeply committed to serve the community and want to continue to make a positive and tangible impact in our community today and in the future. I am passionate about doing good and the local council is where our community is and it has the power to make real difference. I believe I can use of my skills and acknowledge to provide better outcomes and also be the channel for residents to raise their concerns.
2. What is your vision for Ku-ring-gai?
Is to have diverse, inclusive and connected community cohesion, where our natural environment and heritage are valued and preserved and to work towards a sustainable future. I would like to see the council deliver the right balance between appropriate development preserving our natural and heritage environment. That Ku ring gai is a vibrant community where we celebrate cultures, provide safe community facilities for growing demand for Arts & Culture, Sporting, businesses, preservation of open spaces and a robust plan for future needs of residents of all ages including vulnerable people.

3. What life experiences and professional experiences do you bring that will serve in your role as a councillor?

I bring my passion, commitment and energy. As the 1st term current Councillor I've drawn on my experience, skills and knowledge to serve the community and have made a significant and positive impact. I am inclusive, work collaboratively across with everyone including the political spectrum to bring about meaningful and long-term change for people in our community. I absolutely enjoyed my first term despite some challenges.

4. What do you see as the key issues facing Ku-ring-gai?

Housing Crisis and Councils Plan for Future Homes – I believe we can support more diverse housing without major impacts to our heritage and environment. We need frank, proper and detailed planning taking into consideration appropriate infrastructure, traffic, transport & links, open space with more people, children's parks, child care and schools, hospitals, shops, other amenities and access. We must consult residents and encourage them to be part of the solution to provide more diverse housing options, affordability and balancing community demand.

Environment- Ku-ring-gai Council aims for net zero emissions by 2040, focusing on electrifying homes, reducing waste, and offering rebates for solar, batteries, and insulation. The strategy includes community engagement, renewable energy adoption, and achieving 100% renewable energy for council operations by 2030. Part of the plan is to be achieved by expanding recycling services and educating residents on proper recycling practices, organic waste management and waste minimization practices.

Financial – It is important for Council to remain financially viable and provide sustainability. I am concerned that the Council is expected to deliver more services with less funds and it will get worse should the TOD be implemented in its current form. As a member of Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee I am acutely aware and engaged in the financial aspect of the Council and it is worthy to note that I also possess finance background (Former Financial Controller @ Lane Cove Council).

Community Engagement – As a new Councillor I am focused on community engagement and have been working with the GM to bring about culture change in this regard. Council has completed preliminary work to expand Council's community consultation approach. I along with the Mayor Ngai have worked on Youth Committee which will be launched, I have held a number of meetings with the groups and liaised with various schools to promote this initiative which is well received -Youth Advisory Committee to give young people an input to local policy after all its their future.

5. How do you propose to address those issues if elected?

Housing Crisis and Councils Plan for Future Homes – Council staff are planning and exploring various scenarios to provide for housing ensuring no adverse impact on heritage and the environment. As a normal process the public will be consulted sometime in November to make appropriate changes to the LEP in 2025. Dual occupancy controls are under review, if Council does not appropriately update our controls by 1st July 2025 then the minimum lot size of 400sqm per two homes will apply as a default.

Financial – The current Mayor and the GM are currently undertaking an internal review of the council's processes. To date with the use of new technology has yielded \$100m+ cost savings in the maintenance of long-term infrastructure backlog. It is envisaged other savings will be identified, with the limited funds we want to do more so any savings will help.

Environmental– Council staff have commenced work as part of their sustainability program and as councillors we will continue to provide support. There are many initiatives I will explore and collaborate with fellow councillors to act on these in the next term to promote re-use and reducing waste that goes to landfill.

Community Engagement – As already mentioned, I have laid the groundwork through my guidance as Mayor, and the new Councillors will have the opportunity to finetune then launch the policy. My only regret is not having had the opportunity to launch the process during this council term, as other distractions (e.g. TOD) consumed much of the time of our MarComms team.

6. How will you ensure community engagement, and participation?

Use diverse outreach methods, host inclusive public forums, leverage social media, and provide transparent decision-making processes. Encourage volunteerism, recognize active citizens, and address community needs directly. Foster trust through consistent communication and feedback loops.

7. What do you consider are key issues in your Ward?

Transport Oriented Development (TOD) I am not totally opposed to this because I believe we need to be part of the solution to assist with the housing crisis, however any development must go through proper planning process, community consultation, and delivery with a quick turnaround. We must uphold Councils planning provisions and maintain diversity of our suburbs. I also believe that the State government must provide funding towards the increased infrastructure.

Upgrade and revitalise town centre and plan for future increase in demand. Development of Town Centre has been in the plan for many years and must be progressed. Marian St Theatre to commence asap (we have committed funds).

Retaining open spaces such as Former Gordon Bowling Club site and convert to community garden, Retain and maintain Gordon Gold club and upgrade facilities, create more open space with club houses and appropriate facility for sports.

Promote, grow and support small business to provide for a strong economy and attract quality jobs. Enhance the quality and amenity of local retail centres and create economic employment opportunities through vital, attractive centres, business innovation and technology.

8. Are there any additional comments you wish to add?

Candidate's Name: Barbara Ward . Signature:... 

Date:...24th August 2024

Thankyou for your time in answering the questions. Candidate answers will be published on FOKE's website, Enews and sent to members and supporters/resident's lists.

Please attach your election **photo**.

Authorised by Kathy Cowley, President, Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc. (FOKE) M: 0431 158 880