

13 March 2016

To Brisbane Residents United,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your important questions. I attach a response on behalf of Greens candidates running in all of the Brisbane City Council electoral wards.

I would like to start by recognising the work that Brisbane Residents United has progressed at the Local and State level. As we all know, planning and development is an issue that is controlled by both levels of government. It is vital that both tighten their rules to ensure better outcomes on the ground for people, the environment and for long term sustainability.

For that to happen, council needs to change. We must immediately move away from a system that places developer profits above the interests of communities. This position has led to significant long-term impacts on people and local businesses, increased congestion and led to the loss of public and green space.

What we know is that given the opportunity and support, people are clever enough to find solutions to problems such as a growing population while retaining and respecting our special places.

People are not opposed to development but they are quite rightly opposed to poor development decisions that offer little or no benefit to the community.

The Greens are confident of winning 1-3 seats in the council chamber and will work hand in council to right the wrongs of the past and tip the balance back in the favour of residents.

Sincerely

Ben Pennings
Lord Mayoral Candidate for the Greens

QUESTIONS	YES / NO	Comment
1. Do you commit to prioritising community input to both the development and deliberation of city, local area plans and development applications for approval through the implementation of a People's Charter?	YES	Greens candidates will always advocate strongly for the community and fully support a People's Charter that encourages deliberative democracy in practice. There is clear evidence to show that, given the right support and opportunity, people in the community can help deliver outstanding results on the ground. We are all tired of seeing process without positive outcomes. The community voice has been watered down over the years through a system that favours developers. This is not surprising when the old parties accept developer donations. Some candidates from those parties have asserted that they personally don't accept campaign donations from developers, but this doesn't fix the core problem. It is their parties that decide policy from the top down, and it is their parties that are accepting millions of dollars in donations. Greens say no to developer donations.
2. Do you commit to reviewing key elements of the City Plan 2014 to ensure resident amenity (adequate access to light, airflow, privacy etc) and sustainable development principles are embedded and prioritised?	YES	Greens candidates are 100% committed to fixing the City Plan so that it embeds sustainable development principles, and protects and prioritises long term community interests when it comes to local neighbourhoods, heritage and green space. We are also committed to change the develop-at-all-cost culture within Council and make Council's Executive Managers accountable for delivering sustainable development outcomes as part of their key performance indicators.
3. Will you ensure adequate public consultation and greater protection of heritage by committing to all development of heritage sites or those adjacent being deemed impact assessable?	YES	Greens candidates are wholly committed to delivering a planning system that protects and respects our special places and spaces – including our heritage listed trees. Development does not have to happen at the expense of valuable heritage sites, but should instead be complementary.
4. Will you commit to an independent review of the public notification process for development applications and require that code assessable developments also reflect the same need to consult with the impacted public?	YES	Right now people are unaware of the many development applications in with Council for consideration. These developments often remain silent until the bulldozers roll in. The system needs to change so that the public is fully aware of a proposal that is going to impact them. A review will not only shine a light on the gaps in the system, but also help to identify where improvements can be made to make it easier and more user-friendly. Code Assessable developments have been used to shield developments from public scrutiny, leading to perverse outcomes such the approval to build a 47 storey high rise immediately adjacent to heritage protected Customs House. Greens candidates say this needs urgent review and amendment. The public deserves to be consulted.
5. Do you commit to delivering Council's parkland KPI, this is in addition to adequate provision of community and sporting facilities?	YES	Greens candidates are 100% committed to protecting existing parkland and increasing park area and green space to meet the growing population. Parks and green space provide significant services to the community when it comes to temperature and storm water management, air quality, human health and wellbeing, and ecosystem support. It is vitally important that any new community and sporting facilities do not contribute to any further loss of park area or green space. Much has already been lost to hard surface playing fields, visitor car parks, sheds and other infrastructure and we cannot afford to lose more. We also need to prioritise green infrastructure solutions, for example tree planting, soft planting, permeable surfaces to mitigate heat and flooding events, which help reduce costs in the long run as well as improve amenity.
6. Do you commit to a transparent, timely and fully documented application process that is publicly available?	YES	Greens candidates are fully committed to a transparent, timely and fully documented publicly available development application process. This should include keeping a record of all development application related communication, for example minutes of meetings and records of phone conversations. Furthermore, unlike the LNP and Labor candidates, Greens Councillors would not be compromised because they do not, and will not, run their election campaigns on the back of developer donations. Accepting developer donations presents a clear conflict of interest for Councillors when it comes to making decisions.