

# Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Action Group Inc. (MTAG)

## March 2024

### Divisional Councillor Candidate Questionnaire

As a key advocacy groups on the Sunshine Coast, we are seeking your views on public transport and housing densification in the region. Please be advised your responses will be collated and made public as we believe all voters should be aware of your position on these two key issues prior to voting. No response will be taken to mean you agree with the following:

1. The current Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Southern Sunshine Coast Public transport strategy and their decision to proceed with Rapid Bus Transit in a dedicated lane along our coastal strip.
2. The current Sunshine Coast Regional Council plan to house the large majority of the future population growth out to 2041, in the Coastal corridor between Maroochydore and Caloundra.

Name of candidate:	Christian Dickson	Date:	20 January 2024
Division contesting:	Division 6		

## Section 1: Transport

- 1 Do you think two public transport spinal networks (Heavy Rail from Beerwah to Maroochydore and a Mass Transit system from Maroochydore to Birtinya) with feeder networks running to them, is the best public transport system for the region?

YES/NO Yes

- 2 If NO, and you are elected, will you advocate to TMR for a different Sunshine Coast Public Transport strategy?

YES/NO Yes

If YES what?

I believe there is more to the Sunshine Coast than the coastal strip. The Hinterland requires better public transport as well. I would be advocating for a fuller/broader bus system that services the entire region outside of the proposed heavy rail upgrades which are planned for the region. I would also like to see the Sunshine Coast Council and the State Government provide a free bus/public transport trial.

- 3 Do you support a Rapid Bus Transit system in a dedicated right of way along our coastal corridor?

YES/NO Yes

- 4 What will you do to improve public transport now?

Response:

I would like to see the public transport levy be utilised to provide covered bus shelters at all bus stops on the sunshine coast. This would also include pathway improvements for accessibility. Further to this, the levy could be used to provide a free public transport trial across the network. Either council starts to get some wins on public transport or the levy should be removed. Public transport is in fact a State Government job and severely lacking on the Sunshine Coast. Look at the Harmony estate, we had to fight tooth and nail to get a bus service here when it should've been there from day one. Now we have limited services. All infrastructure items should be up and running from day one in my view. If the Government wants growth, they need to step up.

- 5 What do you think should be the priority for better public transport in the future?

Response:

Heavy rail from Brisbane to Maroochydore + Heavy Rail Upgrades to Nambour. This should occur with dedicated bus priority lanes and a significantly improved bus system to the entire region.

## Section 2: SCRC 2024 Draft Planning Scheme

6 Do you support the current plan to put the large majority of new arrivals out to 2041 within the Coastal Corridor? (Maroochydore to Caloundra)?

YES/NO No

7 What does high-rise mean to you (how many storeys)?

Response:

This is a specific question that everyone will have a different view on. To me, its buildings that reflect city buildings in a CBD. High rise is often seen as "gold coast" type development. I am not sure the Sunshine Coast has experienced true city "high rise". This said, I would have to say in a Sunshine Coast context that anything over 10 storey's could be considered high rise on the Sunshine Coast.

8 Do you think housing densification should occur along the Heavy Passenger Rail Corridor rather than the Mass Transit Coastal Corridor?

YES/NO No

Explain why?

My view is slightly different, I believe that there are many communities outside of the beach suburbs that can accommodate growth. Nambour as an exmple has much opportunity for expansion, as do places like Beerwah. I also realise that there is a need to carefully spread population growth throughout the region. In Division 6, we are experiencing a lot of growth that is taking pressure away from the beach. I am well aware of growth pressures in my own division. To this end, i believe we are asking the wrong question. The question should be "what can we sustain"? What's our carrying capacity? Growth targets and populations are driven 100% by the Queensland State Government. That's a fact. Councils are charged with delivering these growth targets. What the Government isn't doing is providing the infrastructure needed for this growth. I'd like to say no more growth until the Government steps up with the infrastructure.

9 If you are an existing Councillor, did you vote in favour of the current draft 2024 Planning Scheme?

YES/NO Yes

10 If you are elected, will you vote to review the draft 2024 Planning Scheme, in particular the densification of the coastal corridor?

YES/NO Yes

11 As a Divisional Councillor, what will you do to ensure we do not become another Gold Coast?

Response:

I believe I have always tried to be balanced in my decision making. For example, voting against Mass Transit and Light Rail. I believed this was the wrong decision and I was vindicated when the State Government removed Light Rail as an option for the Sunshine Coast. I am one of the elected councillors who can actually work with all State and Federal MP's on the Coast.

Teamwork will yield outcomes for the coast and sadly that is something the current council has not done well. We need to get everyone in a room (elected members for the region) and seriously thrash out what the future will look like. At the end of the day, the buck stops with those in office. We need to be working together on things that impact us all. This means asking the questions around what the region can take in terms of development. I'd like to see some rural residential blocks allowed to subdivide. I'd like to see tiny homes for the less fortunate. I'd

like to see us be very careful where high rise is allowed (certainly not on the beach/sand). Making sure infrastructure is there in advance. Ensuring we have one central CBD that is recognised as the centre of the Coast, not multiple CBD's like the Gold Coast (wall to wall development). Protecting our inter-urban break (green spaces between Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast).

**12 Do you think the current planning decision making process is too lenient toward developers, especially in regard to site coverage, set backs and density?**

YES/NO Yes	Why? It's a regular complaint i see and something council staff are well aware of. It's always a sensitive discussion because new developments will always have impacts on existing homes/nearby developments. The real issue here comes down to using the land you have available for development. If it's a cbd/high density zone, go for it. However, we need to be extremely cautious in low-medium density areas where existing housing stock may not appreciate the shock factor around set backs and density impacts.
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**13 Do you think all Development Applications should require Council to notify all adjoining neighbours?**

YES/NO Yes	If YES, what will you do to try and make this happen? I already support this. I would really like to see it occur in the new planning scheme. A simple and courteous change.
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**14 As a Divisional Councillor, what will you do to achieve better development outcomes for the region and your Division?**

Response: Listen to what locals have to say. Do my best to get their concerns and ideas raised in the new planning scheme. Encourage locals to be more active in making representations to the State Government and State Government members around planning. Advocate to State Members around planning. Continually push for infrastructure. Ensure new developments are well serviced by car parking, wide streets, areas for planting and social gatherings. Open space and parks for people to recreate.
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