



Please consider me!

BOB: Last week Amanda and I talked about the upcoming Local Government Elections in September next year and said it would be good to start hearing from potential candidates now, rather than just in the last few weeks leading up to the election. I suggested it would be good to come up with a “mock” application form, publish it in City Watch and then invite those who are prepared to state their interest now, to fill it in so we can publish it in Newswatch over coming weeks. If nothing else, it will help those candidates who take up the opportunity, to start their campaign rolling. It’ll be interesting to see if anyone takes up the offer at this early stage, but if you don’t try these things you’ll never know. So, for better or worse, let’s give it a go.

Amanda, what’s your best guess as to whether many people thinking about standing next year will actually announce their intentions at this early stage? Why?

AMANDA: This is a tricky question. The election will be held on 4th September 2021 and the term will be a 3 year term to September 2024, so people need to think about whether they want to make this commitment a long time in advance. I like the idea of getting people talking about this openly as it would be good if like-minded people could get together so that we have fewer tickets and less than the 88 candidates who stood in the last elections in 2017 much to everyone’s confusion.

Candidates, groups and third party campaigners are required to comply with various requirements that can be found on the NSW Electoral Commission’s website; <https://www.elections.nsw.gov.au/About-us/Media-centre/2020-NSW-Local-Government-elections-bulletins>
<https://www.elections.nsw.gov.au/About-us/Forms-and-Fact-sheets/Fact-Sheets>

These requirements may seem complex but hopefully they will not deter people from standing for election. Orange City Council has left resources in place on its website to guide potential candidates despite the postponement of the elections for a year. <https://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/elections/>

BOB: One of the reasons we’re trying this is because it can be so hard for good intentioned and suitable candidates to become known well enough in the community, and what they stand for, for sufficient people to actually vote for them. Do you have any thoughts on what potential candidates should start doing now, so that they have at least a fair chance come polling day?

AMANDA: I don’t really feel qualified to advise on this matter, but what I would recommend to potential candidates is to get a copy of Ruth McGowan’s book ‘Get Elected’.

As I mentioned in last week’s column John Howard said ‘you can’t fatten a pig on market day’, so potential candidates do need to have established their authenticity and credibility in the local community over a period of time, through volunteering and helping others.

I do think people need to have good reasons for standing for election to any organisation. I have seen too many people standing for election as office bearers in organisations so that they can promote their businesses or themselves, rather than wanting to achieve something for

the organisation and its members. To quote JFK ‘ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.’

Your offer for people to present themselves in City Watch is a generous opportunity for potential candidates to make themselves, and what they stand for, known to the readers.

BOB: Of course, media advertising is used widely in the getting elected process and sadly, often it is those with the deepest pockets that spend the most and often get elected. It’s almost like trying to buy your way in. Why does Clive Palmer’s name come to mind about now? How could a potential candidate who can’t afford such publicity best approach the task?

AMANDA: There are rules about how much candidates can spend and there is a Fact Sheet on the NSW Electoral Commission website that says that for the 2021 Local Government elections expenditure caps are for expenditure from 1 July 2021. The caps are calculated on the basis of the number of enrolled electors. At the 2017 election Orange had 29,131 enrolled electors so I am assuming that we have now exceeded 30,000 in which case the expenditure caps are:

Number of enrolled electors for local government area
Non-mayoral candidates and groups that do not include mayoral candidates

Number of enrolled electors for local Government area	30,0001 – 50,000
Non-mayoral candidates and groups that do not include mayoral candidates	\$36,000
Mayoral candidates in undivided areas	\$45,000
Mayoral candidates in undivided areas	\$12,000

A third party campaigner is an individual or entity that incurs more than \$2,000 in electoral expenditure for a local government election in NSW during the capped expenditure period. Electoral expenditure is only expenditure that has the dominant purpose of promoting or opposing a party or candidates or influencing the vote at an election.

I imagine that there are few independent candidates or groups who will have these kind of resources available. However, social media is a very powerful, free or cheap tool to reach a lot of people.

Unfortunately, it seems that some keyboard warriors are determined to use social media to defame people. We should all fact check whenever we can and treat with suspicion rants that are aimed at destroying reputations.

Elected representatives do need to be resilient and be able to understand that, for example, public interest journalism seeks accountability and should not be taken personally. The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) definition of corruption includes partiality in which a public official ‘*improperly exercises his or her official functions in a partial manner*’. So, candidates for election do need to feel sure that they are sufficiently resilient not to take criticism personally, so that they will make unbiased decisions.

BOB: Like I said, it will be interesting! I have come up with our “mock” Application form.

I think by now, readers will have the drift of what I’m attempting so if you’re considering standing for Orange City Council next year, feel free to use these questions as a basis for your “mock” application. If you’re happy for me to publish your answers, email me your answers and include a photo of yourself if you’d like that included. Email me at bob@ocliffe.com.au

QUESTIONS:

1. Name
2. Are you going to stand for election as Mayor and a Councillor?
3. Are you going to stand as Councillor only? (ignore questions 5 and 6)
4. What do you think are the main issues facing Orange City over the next Council 3 year term 2021 – 2024
5. How would you aim to tackle those issues as Mayor to make a difference?
6. In less than 100 words describe why you should be elected as the Mayor of Orange City.
7. Describe how you have been involved with the Orange community and how you would bring your experience into your role as a Councillor or Mayor.
8. As a Councillor or Mayor how would you facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body?
9. How will you ensure that your decisions are not biased by your personal feelings?
10. What would you like your time as Mayor or Councillor of Orange City Council to be remembered for?
11. What do you do to have fun?

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions about anything you read in City Watch, email Amanda at aespalding2@bigpond.com or call her on 0417 288 246.

FOR THE RECORD: Amanda Spalding was recently employed by Regional Life Group Pty. Ltd. Her role being Executive Officer of Hearts for Orange, an initiative of Regional Life Group Pty. Ltd., set up to specifically market, and support Orange’s retail sector. Amanda works out of our office in Lord’s Place but does not work for our publications of Orange City Life or Newswatch, she is however, and has been for some time, a freelance contributor.