

## 10 QUESTIONS WITH BRUCE MACKENZIE – Port Stephens Mayoral Candidate

August 30, 2012



### 1. What led you to run for Mayor?

After 36 years as a Councillor I have learned a lot about Local Government and what the community should expect. Council is a large business and should be run as such, with each person being held accountable for the role they play in keeping it financially viable. I am not afraid of working with other Councillors in making tough decisions and that may not always make me the most liked man in town, but I will always do what I believe is in the best interests of Port Stephens and I can best do that as Mayor.

### 2. This will be the first time the Mayor has been popularly elected in Port Stephens, why do you think the change was needed and how will it effect your chances?

This will get rid of the rubbish that goes on within Council every 12 months when the Councillors vied for the Mayoral position. I believe my chances are as good as any of the other candidates.

### 3. You have served as Mayor already, how valuable is that experience in this election?

Any experience that a candidate can bring to the table is positive. I have no doubt that the terms I spent as Mayor and my understanding of the roles and responsibilities would make an easier transition for me than for the other candidates, but I believe it is my understanding of Council itself and the way it has evolved over my time there that will be of the greatest value.

**4. Will it be beneficial for council and Port Stephens to now have a four year term for council?**

Council has operated with a four year term for some time now. But if you are referring to the Mayoral term now being four years I believe with the right person this can be a positive, however if it is the wrong person it could be a disaster.

**5. Port Stephens was the first to live stream council meetings, did you support that move and will it help the public make their vote now that the Mayor is now popularly elected?**

I supported and continue to support live streaming of Council meetings and I can only hope that people have used this means of interacting with Council to form a judgement on performance.

**6. What would be your main priority if elected?**

Financial stability, our road network and working together with a new modern management team.

**7. What is your biggest challenge in winning this election?**

Being Bruce Mackenzie

**8. Why should rate payers have faith in you?**

I have a proven record of achievement and am proud of the fact that I am able to put a strong voice in Council for the people I represent.

**9. How would you rate the performance of the current council and what would you change?**

Fairly ordinary, I think some Councillors have made it their business to disrupt Council. In fact in the Port Stephens Examiner on the 20th May 2010 Cr Geoff Dingle stated to journalist Nikki Taylor that he and other Councillors would "...demand deferrals, lodge rescission motions left, right and centre and be difficult to get along with." It is not up to me to change this childish behaviour it is up to the community when they vote. I really only wanted to get on with the job.

**10. How do you rate your chances of winning the election?**

One in 3

Written by Diana Bushby · Filed Under [Newcastle News](#)

## 10 QUESTIONS WITH SALLY DOVER – Port Stephens Mayoral Candidate

August 29, 2012



### 1. What led you to run for Mayor?

When I learned that there had not been a woman elected Mayor of Port Stephens for 75 years, I was challenged to throw my hat into the ring.

### 2. This will be the first time the Mayor has been popularly elected in Port Stephens, why do you think the change was needed and how will it effect your chances?

At the last election in 2008 the residents of Port Stephens were asked if they wanted a publically elected Mayor and 75% said YES. I believe also that it is more democratic. I believe over the last 8 years I have built a reputation of being a woman of integrity and someone who gets things done. I am passionate in particular about our groups of volunteers who work so diligently to accomplish for Council.

### 3. Will it be beneficial for council and Port Stephens to now have a four year term for council?

It will give the Mayor an opportunity to build a strong cohesive team working together to achieve long term goals.

**4. You have spent time as a councillor, how will that experience help you if elected as Mayor?**

After 8 years as a Councillor and 2 years as Deputy Mayor, I understand how Council works and I have built relationships with staff and many volunteers committees in our community. I believe that residents trust me to represent their issues and to work with staff for the improvements of facilities In Port Stephens.

**5. Port Stephens was the first to live stream council meetings, did you support that move and will it help the public make their vote now that the Mayor is now popularly elected?**

Yes I did although I don't particularly like to see myself on TV but I can appreciate that live televised meetings can be very helpful to those who cannot attend at Raymond Terrace.

**6. What would be your main priority if elected?**

To build a cohesive team of Councillors who will work together to achieve an efficient, pro active Council serving the community of Port Stephens.

**7. What is your biggest challenge in winning this election?**

Well I am a woman stepping into a man's world, so prejudice is a strong opponent.

**8. Why should rate payers have faith in you?**

They have seen the hard work I have done over the last 8 years and I believe they are looking for a Mayor of integrity and determination to work for the betterment of the whole of Port Stephens.

**9. How would you rate the performance of the current council and what would you change?**

I believe we have been a courageous Council quick to defend residents who could have been discriminated against within our planning laws. We look at each item on its merit and vote accordingly. I would like us to be more together and not so divided and I believe I can achieve that.

**10. How do you rate your chances of winning the election?**

I believe the people of Port Stephens want a council that serves them. And I believe that I can continue to build on the foundation that is there to see that achieved. Our community want people to lead with action – and that’s what I intend to do, my chance are hopeful! After all someone once said “If you want a tough job done well give it to a woman”.

Written by Diana Bushby · Filed Under [Newcastle News](#)

## 10 QUESTIONS WITH GEOFF DINGLE – Port Stephens Mayoral Candidate

August 29, 2012



### 1. What led you to run for Mayor?

This will be the first time PS has had a popularly elected Mayor. I believe I have the leadership and communication skills combined with the management background to take Port Stephens forward. I have the time and the energy to do a good job and will do it without fear or favour.

### 2. This will be the first time the Mayor has been popularly elected in Port Stephens, why do you think the change was needed and how will it affect your chances?

There are potential plus and minuses with a popularly elected mayor. It is important our first mayor can show respect to all Councillors that they are free of the shackles for potential to have

pecuniary interests associated with property ownership and development conflicts. Residents have voted in the last LG election to support the election of popularly elected Mayor, the decision is in the hand of the voters.

**3. Will it be beneficial for council and Port Stephens to now have a four year term for council?**

A four year term of Council is already standard term and I have now been on this council for a total of two four years terms.

**4. You have spent time as a councillor, how will that experience help you if elected as Mayor?**

It is important you understand policies of meeting procedure and the processes involved in correct process for dealing with development and general items which come before council. A good knowledge of the Acts which influences Council procedure such as the Local Government Act, Planning and Assessment also assists greatly. Any candidate who lacked background as Councillors would find it very difficult and extremely steep learning curve to operate as an effective mayor.

**5. Port Stephens was the first to live stream council meetings, did you support that move and will it help the public make their vote now that the Mayor is now popularly elected?**

I did support the web casting of meetings which currently only covers Council meetings and not Committee meetings. I believe it is great step forward in making Council meetings and Councillor Behaviour transparent and Councillors accountable to their constituents.

**6. What would be your main priority if elected?**

The ensure we started to communicate regularly through workshops, something sadly missing in the last term of Council with not one single formal workshop held on four years of this council. To treat all Councillors with equal respect and equal access to participate in all events something which again did not occur previously. To minimise the use of the casting vote, this option used all too frequently as part of a voting bloc in the first two years.

**7. What is your biggest challenge in winning this election?**

Allocating the resources required to man 27 booths, get thousands of leaflets out to ratepayers and get the message across to ratepayers on minimal budget as a self-funded retiree, relying on

dozens of volunteers support. Competing with other candidates who can afford to throw unlimited financial resources at the campaign and pay for the manpower required to swamp the campaign.

#### **8. Why should rate payers have faith in you?**

My track record in the community says it all, I have been a Scout leader for over 30 years and awarded one of its highest honours, the silver emu award, the chair of our community centre committee the most successful facility in Port Stephens for over 25 years, successfully run my own business for 18 years. Active in the local Tidy Towns committee, a member of Hunter regional Botanic gardens and I can point to the achievement I have made on council including, completion of the Medowie strategy, an active member of a number of Council and associated committees: Chair of the Koala Plan of management Committee, a regular member of Council's traffic committee. I am on record as having the best meeting attendance over past two terms of any Councillor. An active participant in kick starting the Health One facility in Raymond Terrace now supported by State and Federal funding.

#### **9. How would you rate the performance of the current council and what would you change?**

For the first two years under the leadership of Cr Mackenzie very poor, I was instrumental in having the DLG investigate Port Stephens council and this resulted in 36 recommendations for attention, 24 considered serious. The financial performance of the council is poor with excessive deficits, some extremely poor performing assets and legal costs exceeding equivalent sized Councils many times over. I would off load Samurai resort which has cost this Council \$17 million over the past 8 years, insist that negotiation replaces vexatious litigation. That an independent panel be formed to assess any codes of conduct items before recommending investigation, that plans are prepared for longer term replacement and upgrade of community facilities notably children's playgrounds community centres and sport amenities. That we carry out total review of our position with road maintenance and prepare a strategy for sustainable maintenance funding of longer term maintenance requiring a submission to the State infrastructure committee. That we change the methodology for drainage maintenance shifting to a sustainable environment model rather than the current slash and burn technique. That we complete community planning strategies adding infrastructure strategies as an integral part of the overall planning process.

That we hold meetings on specific proposed development and rezoning applications involving all councillors not a selective few.

#### **10. How do you rate your chances of winning the election?**

Since I am running alone with no preferences between another candidates, this depends on the mood of the electorate. Having recently seen Council loose \$500,000 in a case involving the Stockton Bight Track associated with Cr Mackenzie's sand mining DA for lot 218 in case involving compulsory acquisition of land I hope the residents and ratepayers start to understand the need for change. An effective Mayor must be free of the association shackles that they are seeking more than just looking after the interest of the ratepayers. I rate my chances as 50:50.

Written by Diana Bushby · Filed Under [Newcastle News](#)

## **PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL ADOPTS AIRPORT RESTRUCTURE**

July 25, 2012

Port Stephens Council have given the go ahead for an expansion of Newcastle Airport.

The airport has been jointly owned by Port Stephens and Newcastle City Councils since 1993 and has adopted a corporate structure.

Last night Port Stephens councillors approved the restructure which will now face Newcastle Council next month.

The expansion may allow for third party investment in the future.

Port Stephens Mayor Bob Westbury says " Newcastle airport will now be positioned for significant future growth. Just as importantly from Council's point of view, this structure will enable an income stream to flow back to the shareholder Councils... I am over the moon with this outcome."