

Mark Silcocks Replies to Questions to candidates.

Cross Street Carpark:

I'm not opposed to a cinema in Double Bay. But I am opposed to the deep excavation which would be necessitated by moving the Cross Street car parking underground to make room for one. And I'm opposed to a significant increase in apartments in that area and potential height limit breaches. I think any Public Private Partnership involving residential apartments is fraught from a Public liability point of view. Kiaora Place is a terrific example of how a partnership with one flagship retailer can replace the parking above ground and create a sympathetic low rise commercial only development. Alternatively we could just renovate the existing car park (it's had no love for about 30 years, but engineer's reports suggest it's good for at least another 40), which would be much easier, quicker and cheaper. It's actually a prime example of brutalist architecture which will be appreciated and valued in decades to come.

Shared path/cycleway

We have two conflicting issues: we have too many people and we need to provide more active transport. No solution is going to be ideal because we don't have enough space to provide all the facilities we require. I am concerned about one form of active transport interfering with another form of active transport. But we have discussed and debated this cycleway ad nauseam and we have made a commitment to proceed. My approach to democracy is as follows: review the proposal, consult with the community, debate all the issues, vote, make a decision and stand by it. There will be winners and losers, but as long as everyone has had their say and been heard and the decision has been made in a transparent fashion, then the community should accept and abide by that decision and we can all move forward. We can't keep going over the same ground on everything or nothing will ever get done. My personal view is that this is a strange idea, but the decision's been made, so let's trial it properly (the reality is that cyclists are cycling along here anyway without any regulations or separation) and if it's not working or dangerous, then respond accordingly. But I am much more focused on the much BIGGER issue - how do we limit growth when there is no more room and no more infrastructure?

Parking

I've ticked "Yes" but I alone cannot ensure that we can deliver sufficient parking during 3 to 4 years of developing a multi-storey underground car park with a retail and residential development above it. That's one of the main reasons I oppose such an unnecessarily massive redevelopment.

Enforcement of noise controls

I was instrumental in enforcing the conditions of consent for all the Double Bay venues 2 years ago and in developing the new Night-time Economy and Footway Dining Policies.

Wardens at night in the CBD

I've ticked yes, but there needs to be some understanding of Council and Council Rangers' responsibilities and powers. They are not the Police. Excessive noise, disorderly behaviour

and dispersal are Police matters. Rangers merely have limited powers regarding parking infringements and monitoring and to some extent enforcing Council conditions of consent. Given the increased popularity of Double Bay, I think we should have Rangers monitoring the area on Friday and Saturday nights, funded by the venues, so we can be fully informed of any breaches or incidents and take the necessary action or liaise with the Police accordingly. There are contact numbers for any Council Rangers on duty and for the Managers of the venues and for the Police and an explanation of how to make complaints and whom to ring on the Council Website.

Height and bulk controls

I have been fighting to keep Double Bay a low rise bayside village for a decade and will continue to do so.

Edgecliff Centre

We're already well on our way to meeting our 2016 to 2036 target of 1,200 additional dwellings and we don't need to increase those targets or build high rise to achieve them.

Public open spaces

I do, but please be aware that Steyne Park has been used on rare occasions for events like Hanukkah and the Double Bay Fair and I suspect that will continue.

Environmental controls

I moved the motion which insisted on better understanding of low rising hydrology, excavation and de-watering. I am firmly opposed to excavation in the flood plains and will continue to push to limit this. I'm not sure about hiring more staff for the sake of it; it's more about having the rules and regulations and abiding by them and having the knowledge internally and using experts when absolutely necessary.

Local Planning Panels

Let me say at the outset that I am against the LPPs. Why bother to elect Councillors to represent you and then have decisions made by unelected State Government appointees? I'm even more concerned that the community reps are then chosen by the Mayor, rather than by the communities they are supposed to represent. I have argued for and insisted that the community reps at least come from the relevant Ward, all to no avail. This is all part of why democracy is under threat throughout the Western world and why you should be voting for a local party like Residents First - local Councillors for local issues.