

Meet Your Candidates Forum 2025 – Questions

Amanda Ireland responses:

What do you think the Augusta Community needs most right now?

The Augusta community have voiced concerns for many issues - Turner Street Jetty, Wind Farm in Scott River, the Augusta Precinct Plan with better traffic flow and safety, and a parking strategy.

Where do you stand on current development trends in Augusta and are you aware of the issues re: Karridale Cemetery

Development trends in Augusta are vital to the health and wellbeing of the residents. There also needs further investment opportunities for the hospital and retiree accommodation. Our support for older residents to remain connected to the community they've built is of great significance for me. The Karridale Cemetery issue was raised at the Shire held candidate meeting and I was unaware until then.

Are you committed to environmental protection in the Shire

As a former wildlife carer with FAWNA, my commitment is deeply personal and guided by the belief that we share a responsibility to preserve and restore the biodiversity that sustains our community.

What is your opinion on the Safe Speeds trail

The speed trial has been contentious issue throughout the campaign. What it has highlighted for me is the importance of residents voting and being engaged with Shire and Council and likewise the message put out by Shire and Council needs to be louder or more transparent. I believe this RAC trial was taken to residents for consultation with a very low number responding. Of that low number who engaged with Council the numbers indicated a small positive response. Potentially if a greater number of residents engaged then the results may have been different. Equally if the Council was able to engage with residents better then more residents would have known to get involved with their voice and respond to the consultation. Residents must be engaged...

What are your thoughts on the renewable energy projects like the proposed Scott River Wind Farm

I am very much interested in renewable energy however the proposed wind farm in Scott River is not a project I wish for the Scott River area with its rich and unique biodiverse area. I am hugely concerned for the environmental impacts on the waterways downstream and the immediate land area.

Do you support the draft Ag Policy

I agree with the Shire's commitment to developing an economic development - Agriculture Policy which I believe, addresses current trends, infrastructure, the sustainability of farming across the region. I understand the concerns of the farmers regarding the loss of clarity on what 'use rights' and the 'red tape' compliance, and other restrictions. With the new LPS2, this is a critical moment to ensure that planning rules protect farmland, biodiversity, and the

livelihoods of rural people - all while our landscape, waterways, wildlife, and soil get the protections they need for future generations.

How are you different from the current Councillors or candidates

Having retired early to care for my husband through palliative care, I now feel ready to re-engage in community life. That experience deepened my empathy and strengthened my commitment to ensuring support systems within our community remain accessible, responsive, and compassionate. I am also different in that I have direct experience in wildlife care or rehabilitation. That gives me credibility in environmental protection, biodiversity, fauna issues - species protection, wildlife corridors, rescue and/or care. This gives me a deeper understanding of ecological impacts of planning decisions, pests, and habitat fragmentation etc.

What is important in Augusta to you

My first concern is the proposed Scott River Wind Farm.

What do you think is the hardest part of being a Councillors and how will you deal with this obstacle

Making sure the community feels heard, respected and represented well with the highest integrity I possess.

With so many local homes now used as short-term rentals, how would you work to ensure balance between housing for residents and accommodation for visitors

This is clearly an issue for the region considering housing prices and homelessness. I believe, and I am aware there is a lot of work going on by various vested stakeholders within our community. I support a balanced approach that protects the rights of homeowners, ensure sufficient housing stock is available and affordable for local residents across the region, support clear regulation and monitoring of short-term rentals to prevent negative impacts on neighbourhoods, infrastructure, and local amenities. I will also encourage tourism that supports local businesses.

What is your understanding of agriculture in the Shire and what is your opinion on Landcare organisation in the shire

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River - not only an economic driver but also a custodian of much of our natural landscape. Productive farmlands supports local jobs, maintains our rural character, and contributes to biodiversity when managed responsibly.

Landcare groups play an essential role in protecting and restoring our natural environment. They bring community knowledge, hands on action, and environmental stewardship to projects and I strongly support this partnership.

What do you see as the importance and benefits of restoring and conserving heritage sites and buildings, for example the old hospital precinct.

Restoring and conserving sites like the old hospital precinct in Margaret River is vital for maintaining the town's heritage, character, and sense of place. Restorations can involve significant financial investment, including structural repairs, heritage compliant materials, and ongoing maintenance. I support careful, well-planned restoration projects that balance fiscal responsibility with the preservation of our heritage, ensuring that sites like the old hospital precinct remain vibrant for generations to come.

Being a member of Council can often require you to work with people who have very different view to you, how would you go about this?

Working effectively with people who hold different views is a critical skill for local government, community leadership, and collaborative projects. My approach is to firstly find common ground or shared outcomes, like community well being, sustainable development, or safety, rather than positions or labels. I will use active listening - reflect back on what I have heard to ensure understanding, I will also validate feelings and concerns without necessarily agreeing with the position. I will look to separate facts from opinions so that I can seek clear evidence or case studies to support evidence. My main aim will be to seek collaboration and not confrontation - problem solving not problem engagement!