

## **QUEANBEYAN AGE COLUMN 07 AUGUST 2008**

**Mayoral Candidates put their views on business matters** – The five stated Mayoral Candidates for Queanbeyan City Council elections on 13 September addressed a well attended meeting of QBC Members and guests on Tuesday.

Vying to be only the third popularly elected Mayor of Queanbeyan over the past 28 years, current City Councillors Tom Mavec, Tim Overall, Ann Rocca and Kerry White, along with former City Councillor John Wright spoke passionately about their commitment to Queanbeyan.

A number of questions had been submitted by QBC Members and presented to the candidates a week prior to the meeting. There was a strong level of agreement about many of these issues including:

- CBD Redevelopment including Crawford Street. Candidates expressed their support for the current CBD Masterplan currently under development and agreed that Crawford Street, between Monaro and Morisset Streets, was currently in a degraded state. Most put much of the onus back onto the business community to apply peer pressure on developers who had not proceeded with Council approved major developments in the CBD. Whilst Council can facilitate, it is up to business to be pro-active in developing the city. QBC agrees with this.
- Residential Growth including housing affordability. Candidates supported proposed major developments at Googong and Jerrabomberra Valley with the understanding that these would be based on the principles of sustainability and address affordability issues. High density development within existing areas would be closely scrutinised.
- The suggestion of an integrated regional public transport system was well received, however it was recognised that significant cooperation from Federal and ACT Governments would be required to make this a reality.
- Present CBD Parking was considered adequate, if not always well placed or utilised. Future needs will be covered by requirements as part of future CBD developments. All supported a continuation of free parking.
- All candidates supported the proposed Sports Precinct which would include indoor, outdoor and aquatic activities. The location for such a precinct is uncertain, given the removal of Hoover Road extension as an option.
- Candidates were also supportive of the operations of the Visitor Information Centre.

Following presentations, Candidates answered a wide range of questions without notice from the floor. These included availability of parklets, more on-street dining, disabled parking, conferencing issues, protecting residents from impending lower employment, protecting Queanbeyan's water supply and protection of Queanbeyan River and bushland.

An issue apparently not considered previously was the suggestion by a QBC member that suitable land be found in Queanbeyan to accept clean material from excavations as in-fill, rather than the current practice of transporting it by road to ACT tips. This was well received by Candidates.

Queanbeyan Business Council wishes all Mayoral Candidates and Council Candidates well and is confident it can work closely and productively with whoever wins the Local Government elections on 13 September.

**Events** – Don't forget, if you have an event, please let Sandra at the Queanbeyan Visitor Information know. She has a range of options to promote your event – but only if she knows about it! Call 02 6299 7037.