

# BELLINGEN DISTRICT GREENS POLICIES

## ACTION

On Council, we're committed to taking Bellingen Shire back to what matters by focusing on four key issues.

### - **Cost-of-living**

Councils, and state and federal governments, can do more to address the cost of living. We can preserve critical agricultural land in places like Dorrigo, preventing it from being sold off to developers and driving up food prices. We will also act on the Bellingen Shire Food Resilience Vision to help residents access a strong local food network (which has been sitting on the shelf during this term).

We will support affordable renewable energy in the Bellingen Shire to replace expensive coal and gas. There are opportunities for councils to get funding for community batteries which we will pursue. We will ensure affordable access to Council spaces like pools, libraries, and community centres.

We will also advocate to state and federal governments to ensure we get our fair share of funding. We will continue to push for an increase in the Federal Assistance Grants from less than 0.5% to 1% of income tax.

We will push the NSW state government to reimburse local government the full cost of the waste levy back to councils instead of the current 18%. In addition, we will seek rates for State Forests, National Parks, and state-owned caravan parks.

### - **Environment**

The Greens have a proud history of standing up for environmental protection and action on climate change. We've led the charge for a Great Koala National Park, and in this term of Council we successfully passed a motion calling for an end to native forest logging, which was unanimously supported on Council.

The Greens will progress the Council's motion to end native forest logging. We will design/create and fund regular accessible community citizen science training and events for more of the community to be able to engage and help protect these important ecosystems.

The Greens will ensure that the need for clean water will be put back to the top of the agenda and ensure we have plans to deal with water

	<p>scarcity.</p> <p>The Greens will continue work on the Climate Emergency that was declared under the Dominic King-led council. We will apply the climate emergency lens over all our operations and work proactively with the community to look for local based solutions.</p> <p>We will work towards regulations that ensure pet animals are contained, thus minimizing risks to wildlife.</p> <p>- <b>Housing</b></p> <p>The last time Bellingen Shire had a Green mayor, we initiated a partnership with the community, the private sector and both state and federal governments to build affordable homes for older women. We also waived fees on secondary dwellings to encourage a better supply of housing. This time, we're pushing for more public and affordable housing funding in our towns, community land trusts, and action to ensure better regulation of short-term holiday lets like AirBnB and Stayz.</p> <p>Our current Council is approving unaffordable land releases that only benefit developers that everyday locals can't afford. We don't need development for development's sake - <b>we need safe, secure and affordable housing for our community.</b></p> <p>- <b>Transparency</b></p> <p>Council is the closest level of government to the community - and <b>Bellingen Shire locals deserve a say in Council's decisions.</b></p> <p>The Greens are pushing for more transparency and integrity in Bellingen Shire Council. We want quarterly reports on key issues from all the different departments. This will allow the Councillors and community to have oversight over our local government. We'll also deliver more community consultation. <b>Bellingen Shire residents deserve a say in its</b> critical issues, so we want to provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions on any issues before the Council meetings. We want to see the community having access to Councillor workshops on climate-related issues and other important decisions.</p>
<p><b><u>Our town and communities</u></b></p>	<p>This election, a vote for Dominic King and the Greens, is a vote to take Bellingen Shire back to what matters - action on cost-of-living, housing, the environment and transparency in local government.</p> <p>We have all chosen to live in these townships and communities because of their intrinsic values, natural histories, and ecosystems. While some change is inevitable; the Greens are committed to</p>

	<p>protecting and enhancing those values.</p> <p>We know we need to work more effectively with people of the Gumbaynggirr language group. The October 2023 referendum results hurt us as a society, and we need to work harder with this country's traditional custodians to chart a way forward. This will minimise the impacts of a changing climate and ensure that the next question about appropriate recognition of Australia's first peoples is answered unanimously.</p> <p>We will provide dual Gumbaynggirr-English language signage.</p> <p>We will look after our streetscapes and our main streets. We will look after and protect the main road approaches to our towns, approaches that are the envy of many people not fortunate enough to live in our Shire. We will be vigilant in ensuring that our towns retain their character.</p> <p>We will minimise light pollution by ensuring all new lights are directed to where they are needed, not into the sky. We will develop plans to retrofit our current lights. Light pollution is wasteful and harmful, it takes away our dark sky and is the one of the easiest forms of pollution to fix.</p>
<p><b><u>Urunga</u></b></p>	<p>We want Urunga to be a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old.</p> <p>We will be developing plans and strategies around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flood preparation</li> <li>● Aging in place - aging well strategy and inclusive tourism</li> <li>● Driving on beaches</li> <li>● Caravan parks in local hands</li> <li>● Skate park</li> <li>● Community gardens</li> <li>● Accessible footpaths and accessible tourism</li> </ul> <p>The risks to Urunga are climate-caused: flooding, sea level, storm and tide intensity and frequency.</p>

<p><b><u>Dorrigo</u></b></p>	<p>We want Dorrigo to be a centre of sustainable food production and community lifestyle.</p> <p>We will be developing plans and strategies around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring intensive horticultural businesses that require high chemical additives and water use, such as blueberries, are properly regulated and policed.</li> <li>● Investigate Indigenous expression of culture and opportunities in Agriculture.</li> <li>● Urban and peri-urban agriculture is an important component of sustainable and community food systems in NSW.</li> <li>● The Dorrigo Plateau is an essential food-growing area that could develop further into a leading sustainable agriculture hub. We will seek funding for a hub that utilises the latest science and innovation to produce food, adapt to a changing climate, and restore the health of the environment.</li> <li>● The Plateau has an experienced and well-equipped farming sector that can be leaders in <b>regenerative agriculture</b>.</li> <li>● This transformation will not only lead to more long-term sustainable jobs but also put Dorrigo on the map nationally and globally. The potential for job creation is significant, and Dorrigo could also develop into an education and training centre of excellence, fostering a sense of optimism and opportunity.</li> <li>● The council should support this community, its economy and the environment by protecting prime agricultural land in perpetuity, advocating for grants to support the transition and using its governance and administration resources to ensure it happens.</li> <li>● Fostering the arts sector</li> <li>● Advocating for an alternate route to the coast</li> <li>● Supporting all the Markets to thrive and provide economic benefits to residents</li> <li>● Pressure state government to provide funding to deal with the increase in pressure on Council services and infrastructure due to increased visitors for the NPWS centre expansion.</li> </ul> <p>The risks to Dorrigo include isolation, bushfires, change, jobs, and loss of the character of the main streetscape.</p>
<p><b><u>Mylestom/Repton</u></b></p>	<p>We want Mylestom to continue to be a peaceful beach and riverside village.</p> <p>We will be developing plans and strategies around the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Driving on beaches</li> <li>● Flood preparation and mitigation</li> <li>● Riparian remediation</li> <li>● Increased public transport</li> <li>● Working toward providing access to town sewerage for all.</li> </ul>

## **Bellingen**

We want Bellingen to be leading the world in showcasing small-community resilience.

We will be developing plans and strategies around:

- Improved footpaths and bike paths around town. We want people to be able to cycle and walk safely and separate from cars and trucks.
- A walking/bike path to Urunga.
- Town planning that pays heed to a changing climate.
- Continuance of its reputation as a centre for the arts.
- Working with local food producers, both small and big, as we work towards increased resilience
- installing community batteries and developing local networks
- supporting all the markets to thrive and provide economic benefits to residents