

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUTURE

Yass Valley Council's policies and decisions on development must have sustainable outcomes at their core. Growth and change needs to respect the community and the environment and ensure a sustainable, long-term future for Yass Valley. Council has a clear role to play in setting local standards to ensure we get the best local development outcomes.

Council's recently adopted Development Control Plan won't provide the "high quality" development outcomes it states it will. The plan has no sustainability measures, ensures we get 'more of the same' and sets base-line numerical standards for developments to design down to. And it continues this Council's political resistance to renewable energy. None of this bodes well for a future North Murrumbateman.

The Greens want local development that is understood and guided by local residents, that serves local interests – and sustainable development is at the core of those outcomes.

Your Greens Councillors will work towards these key targets:

1. Getting real sustainability into Council's Development Control Plan (DCP)

A revised DCP will properly place community and environmental sustainability at its core, rather than ensuring developments 'tick a box'. We can incorporate widely known and accepted approaches into the DCP - like Water Sensitive Urban Design - that have been applied by other Councils for decades, as a simple first step. A DCP that is truly looking to a sustainable future will encourage innovation in design, layout and building materials, including the re-use of building materials and fittings. The Yass Valley DCP should incorporate the most contemporary approaches that support less resource-intensive development, improved water management, less waste production, fewer hard surfaces and better vegetation retention and planting – all changes we need to make for a sustainable future.

2. Supporting affordable housing

Our villages are very important parts of Yass Valley and offer real lifestyle choices for people. But they have existing unused lots that could be developed to provide more, different and affordable housing in a way that ensures our villages are sustainable into the future. A subsidy/grant scheme up to a defined amount could be provided by Council to those who are looking to build homes on existing unused land parcels. Subsidies could be used on landscaping, installing septic systems, providing driveways, plan-drawing costs for example, and would support housing provision in different areas and for different lifestyle choices. More people in our villages ensures their future, attracts more services and facilities and strengthens Yass Valley.



3. Reviewing the Yass Valley Settlement Strategy

The current plan to settle around 10 000 extra residents in North Murrumbateman - without an appropriate water supply – needs to be rethought. A new settlement strategy is the missing ‘Plan B’ for when three governments fail to agree a change of state/territory borders in return for a pipeline from the ACT to Murrumbateman. We need to deal with the reality of our water supply and look at ways of delivering sustainable growth and more housing, without making Murrumbateman a ‘dormitory suburb’ of Canberra. We can have quality of life and sustainable growth, without forcing people to live without water.

4. Regular Reviews of Development Consents and Outcomes

We need to be sure that development decisions are meeting community expectations, and that Council’s development policies and resources are appropriate for a changing community and environment. A representative sample of approvals and the on-the-ground outcomes, reviewed annually, would do just that. Councillors, senior and assessment staff should visit development sites and objectively review the outcomes against local, legislated and contemporary sustainability standards. These reviews – all of which would be reported back to the community for feedback – would feed into policy and planning and help ensure our local development outcomes meet community and contemporary sustainability standards.

5. Better enforcement of Development Consents and unauthorised activities

Conditions imposed on a consent to minimise impacts are worthless without their being enforced. Unauthorised activities (eg noise, vegetation clearing, rubbish dumping, companion animals) can also have serious impacts on environmental and community health. And the community has a right to expect Council to act on such activities where it is reasonably legally able to. Greens Councillors will work to ensure there is appropriate resourcing, training and authorisation of Council staff to enforce the conditions of development consents and take action on illegal activities. To support staff in their monitoring activities, a clear enforcement policy will also be pursued; this policy will establish Yass Valley Council’s legal responsibilities and constraints; its enforcement priorities; likely responses to breaches; and how people will be treated in any enforcement activity.

Greens MPs at State and Federal level are working hard to return decision-making on planning and development to local communities, away from large developer influences city-based standards. Greens Councillors will be active in using our political networks to gain the best outcomes for Yass Valley.

TOGETHER FOR REAL CHANGE.

VOTE GREEN

ADRIAN CAMERON AND TANYA CULLEN FOR THE CHANGE YASS VALLEY NEEDS

