

## **Regarding the ALGA's Don't Leave Local Communities Behind Campaign**

I support this program and appreciate our local governments concern that the next Federal member well represents our towns and communities. A core factor in my decision to run in this election has been to see more resources and political decision making concentrated at a local level, where I believe these resources can be used and targeted in the most efficient manner. A core policy and principle of the Liberal Democratic Party is in the deliberate de-centralisation of government, meaning that decision making and resources are directed more intensely to local level government and community rather than being managed primarily by large, centralised Federal and State governments. We believe that this is the most effective way to gain true community representation, direct funding in a targeted and efficient way with strong community involvement and accountability, and to better tailor government policy to specific local needs and circumstances, which are very hard to represent accurately on Federal and State levels, and differ widely between communities.

What I have seen for many years on a Federal level is that some funds are wasted or spent very inefficiently, whilst other sectors of critical need on local levels struggle to receive support or are massively underfunded. The last few years have taught us the difficulty of directing decisions and funding, and the devastating effects on community and commerce that can be wrought, when critical decisions are made without good local representation and specific local considerations, and when local jobs, businesses, freedoms and sovereign decision making are bulldozed by overzealous Federal and State edicts that tend by nature to lack fineness, targeted focus and restraint. I have personally witnessed committed local professionals Nurses, teachers, admin staff, have their entire careers ripped out from under them and have their livelihoods and family homes put under threat through forced mandates. These are educated and intelligent people who researched the drugs being forced, studied their safety profiles, made an informed decision not to participate for personal medical reasons, and were entirely denied the right to informed consent. One local School fired 40 out of 100 staff, not through their own choice but through being directly forced to by the State government, egged on by the Federal government. This is a disgrace. During a "pandemic" we have highly educated Nurses cleaning houses to pay their mortgages, whilst the government allows Covid positive Nurses to come to work due to the staff shortages they have created. It is nonsensical and wrong. I aim to ensure that our local communities are well represented, with intense consultation, and that funding and resources are directed in a fair, efficient and equitable way that empowers and builds local communities in a proactive and targeted way, and that the basic rights of citizens; informed consent, parental rights, the right to work and provide for our families, are protected and respected.

Of particular concern to me is the increasing cost and unaffordability of housing, making it incredibly hard for young people in particular to settle, plan and build a future. This is destructive on many levels. Of equal concern is the dramatic rise in the cost of living overall, which I have witnessed putting tremendous financial pressure on local people, particularly the elderly and others on set, low to medium incomes. This is antithetical to shared Australian values, and devastating to local communities, it needs to be addressed proactively and urgently. There are clear practical measures that can be taken on every level of government to not only relieve these pressures but solve the issues that cause them. The Liberal Democrats have a clear and concise economic policy aimed at aggressively addressing the issues of inflation, debt and rising living costs which can be found at

ldp.org.au. On a local level, with Federal support, I wish to work closely with our local governments to find practical measures to make good local development and policies, targeted at getting local young families into their own homes, accessible and affordable. I believe the key to this is to increase the resources in local government to assist with and assess on a case-by-case level small scale development, making the task of opening up residential land achievable and affordable, and to aggressively work to cut the red tape on state and federal levels that prohibits local government from making sensible, targeted decisions on local development and planning. What I have seen, having a career in the building industry, is that many good, well planned, affordable small scale developments that could make a meaningful impact on the cost and availability of local housing and put money directly into our community, whilst maintaining the low density beauty of our region have become prohibitively complicated and unaffordable.

This system has restricted development to mainly larger and corporate developers who have the resources to fight through the system, and has cut out Mum and Dad scale developments that would be directly beneficial to the community in every way, even when local councils wish to support locals in these endeavours. The net result of this is that most developments tend to be high cost, large scale, environmentally often less than ideal, and that the money from them rarely stays directly in our communities. This is not the fault of local councils, who by and large I have witnessed to work hard and genuinely have the best interests of the community at heart, it is the result of a systemic government problem that disempowers local government from critical and targeted decision making, and a lack of recourse to play a truly assisting role in helping the community to tackle these issues and plan for our future. I believe that the role of a Federal member should be to ensure a better equipped, represented and empowered local government and local community at large, that can build our towns and region in a wholistic way, supporting locals in the healthy building of communities, and make a meaningful impact on the serious challenges facing us. I look forward to engaging with the Councils across Cowper and our local communities into the future, regardless of the outcome of this election. I invite anyone in the community who wishes to discuss these issues to contact me directly by email at [simon.chaseling@ldp.org.au](mailto:simon.chaseling@ldp.org.au).

Sincerely, Simon Chaseling

Liberal Democratic Party candidate for Cowper