

2021 Election: City of Sydney Council

Lord Mayoral candidate key position statements

	<p>Candidate's name & party: Yvonne Weldon, Unite for Sydney</p>
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Snapshot of your key platforms

- **BRIGHTER** - I want to see a brighter Sydney, where the culture, heritage and history of our diverse population are celebrated in the public realm through dedicated community spaces and meaningful support for the arts and music. I would take action to reduce empty shopfronts and boost the small businesses, creatives and entrepreneurs who are so vital to our local economy.
- **FAIRER** - I want to see a fairer Sydney, where everyone's voice can be heard - even those too often locked out of the corridors of power. That means genuine consultation and dialogue between residents, businesses, and Council, where the interests of local communities are placed front and centre.
- **GREENER** - I want to see a genuinely green recovery for Sydney - the climate emergency requires urgent action. We need to draw on the knowledge of First Nations peoples to boost native biodiversity, enhance green spaces, improve tree coverage, and create places for people to cool off as summers get hotter.

Focus	Candidate's Response (please write your response to the questions below)
Community	<p>Q1 GLEBE/FOREST LODGE COMMUNITY CENTRE</p> <p><i>What are your plans to provide us with a genuine centre for community activities?</i></p> <p>The City of Sydney's community spaces are under threat. Staffing allocations have been reduced and investment diminished. I am concerned by Council's diminished commitment to ensuring community activities are available at their facilities. St Helen's Community Centre has been closed and unstaffed since early 2020, and all the City's venues are listed on the Council's website as available for hire.</p> <p>Community spaces and services are vital tools that build the strength and resilience of our communities. They support physical and mental well-being and provide opportunities for residents to connect with others. Our community centres need the City's support, especially as we emerge from the COVID lockdown. I am committed to re-establishing and re-invigorating Community Centres and City of Sydney Town Halls.</p>
	<p>GLEBE COMMUNITY STRATEGY & FUNDING</p> <p><i>Q2 Do you support Council reviewing the Community Strategy?</i> Yes, there are virtually no community activities in Glebe, especially when one compares what's available in the Inner West Council. I'm not suggesting Council staff organise activities themselves, rather I would like staff to invite, facilitate and promote activities organised by locals. We need staffed City of Sydney venues to encourage their use by the community.</p> <p><i>Q3 Do you support a review of the current CoS grant model to fund targeted community organisations?</i> Yes, we need far greater transparency when it comes to who and which projects receive City funds.</p>

Environment	<p>BLACKWATTLE BAY OVERDEVELOPMENT Q4 Are you for or against the State Government’s current plans for Blackwattle Bay development?</p> <p>I oppose the current plans - my team and I objected to the overdevelopment. (please see hyperlink, https://www.facebook.com/YvonneWeldonForSydney/posts/156793093256022) The plan for this is an extraordinary overdevelopment of the Bay with towers of up to 45-storeys high, little open space, no reasonable plans for the extra traffic that will be created and will have Glebe looking at a wall of buildings.</p> <p>Q5 If you are against the overdevelopment are you committed to actively oppose and change it? Yes, I am committed to advocating for a proportionate plan that adds public amenity and a significant proportion of affordable homes, while preserving the scale of the area.</p>
	<p>Q6 WENTWORTH PARK 6.1 Is this an important issue for you? The way we use and maintain our public spaces is crucial to our success as a city - every park, every social space and every playground matters.</p> <p>6.2 If you were Lord Mayor, briefly outline how would you reconcile these competing claims for the control of the future direction of Wentworth Park, and ensure that the future direction the Park recognises and continues its historical connection to Glebe? Wentworth Park has been used for well over a century for public recreation. In 1885, the Colonial Government proclaimed Wentworth Park an area for recreation. The following century saw the park used for Rugby and Cricket. Local brass bands played in the rotunda.</p> <p>My view is that Wentworth park should continue to be available to the general public for recreation. The Covid pandemic has reminded us how valuable parkland is. We need even more parks and open space so that people can exercise at a safe distance and, more broadly, benefit from communing with nature.</p>
Heritage	<p>PROTECTION OF GLEBE’S URBAN & SOCIAL FABRIC</p>
	<p>Q7 Protection of low rise and broad social demography What are your plans to protect this aspect of Glebe’s urban and social fabric? I would work hard with developers and CHPs to increase the supply of both public and affordable housing, and fight the sell-off of existing public housing. I believe it’s possible to strike a balance between higher-density housing to accommodate our growing population, and maintaining the scale, heritage, and diverse demography that makes Glebe, Glebe.</p>
	<p>Q8 What is your position on rezoning for high rise in Glebe? The renowned urban ‘rethinker’ Jan Gehl says cities should be six or seven storeys high -- highrises tend to separate people from the street and each other. Sydney residents don’t need a Danish architect to tell them this.</p> <p>High-rise living has a number of drawbacks including social isolation and diminished public realm amenity. It reduces the sort of chance encounters that lower-rise dwellings ensure are inevitable, as residents are on the street more often. High rises create silos -- physical, social and psychological.</p> <p>High towers are far from sustainable as well. They need constant air conditioning and heating. High wind velocities mean windows can often not be opened above certain heights. Tall buildings also create large shadows, wind tunnels and poor street environment, which in turn makes activities such as jogging or cycling much less enjoyable creating less amenity, life and activity. New developments must be sensitive to the scale of their surroundings.</p>
<p>Q9 Will you work for the retention of Glebe’s heritage conservation areas?</p> <p>Unfortunately, in NSW, neither the Local Government Act 1993 nor the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 give councils the legal powers necessary to order that property owners maintain their buildings, even if they are listed as heritage items in the Local</p>	

Environmental Plan. Councils are therefore unable to legally require owners to maintain their properties or prevent demolition by neglect.

But I would invest in an heritage education program, including a public heritage workshop. This has the potential to raise knowledge and awareness of owners about the significance of their property as well as leading to better informed and designed proposals submitted to Council. I would also lobby the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for the Arts to give councils greater powers to prevent the demolition of heritage properties by neglect through NSW planning and heritage legislative changes. We all need to understand what we have in order to value and conserve it.

Q10 If elected will you oppose the demolition and rezoning of the Franklyn Street estate? Thanks to Jack Munday and Tom Uren, Glebe is one of Australia's most intact inner-city suburbs. The Land and Housing Corporation plans to replace low rise housing is entirely out of scale and context of the Heritage Conservation Area in which it is located. I am opposed to LAHC's plans to divide Glebe in two: one which is historic and lowrise and the other which is heartless and highrise. I strongly support the provision of additional housing in Glebe but it must be well-designed, lowrise infill which is integrated into Glebe's urban fabric.

Q11. Development Control Plan Improvements How can these be improved ?

1. Transform city office spaces left empty since the initial COVID-19 lockdown into residential apartments similar to those in New York and London as a way to reinvigorate Australia's economic centre. But I would ensure that at least 30 per cent of such housing provides a mix of affordable housing for key workers priced out of the Sydney market, and social housing.
2. Change the City of Sydney's requirement that high rise residential developments include commercial or retail usages on the ground level. We have a housing shortage and I would push to allow landlords to rezone this space for social and affordable housing.
3. Introduce native tree planting requirements or at least limit planting of certain trees that are found to be less resilient to Sydney's changing climate and not so helpful when it comes to biodiversity

SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE

Q12 Do you support having a heritage education program to develop and provide resources and guidelines for maintenance, restoration and sensitive development of residential heritage in Glebe/Forest Lodge? Yes, as mentioned in my answer to question 9, I would invest in an heritage education program, including a public heritage workshop. This has the potential to raise knowledge and awareness of owners about the significance of their property as well as leading to better informed and designed proposals submitted to Council. Wonderful local organisations and individuals are already making great contributions to heritage education - I support those activities. Residents of these historic areas deserve the guidance and resources they need to appreciate the local heritage, and preserve it for the next generation - Council must provide that.

Q13. How would you engage with the community on developing such a program so it responds to community needs? I would consult with community groups first and foremost. We would also look at providing annual funding through an independent and auditable process, to give these groups more independence to carry out the work they are doing to those ends.

General

Q14 BRIDGE ROAD CYCLEWAY

What is your view on Council's plans for the future of this cycleway and/or alternative proposals? I have long advocated for the improved provision of safe cycle paths and integrated transport options for people living, working and visiting Sydney. However, there are serious questions about the implementation of the new 'pop up' initiatives.

The cycleway on Bridge Road is neither safe nor fit for purpose. Abrupt merges with traffic, bus-stop crossings and moveable markers put cyclists, pedestrians and drivers at risk. With more than 20,000 vehicles per day, Bridge Road is clearly not the appropriate location for a cycleway from the point of cyclists safety, residents convenience and traffic congestion. We need quiet routes, safer bike paths and infrastructure that's designed and built properly.