

**Combined Residents of Whitehorse
Action Group (CROWAG) Incorporated.**

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Candidate Questionnaire, Whitehorse Council Elections – October 2024

Name of Councillor candidate: [Anne V Makhijani](#)

Whitehorse Council Ward: [Mahoneys Ward](#)

The *Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group Inc. (CROWAG)* represents a number of community groups and individual members across the municipality. In the current COVID-19 environment we are seeking to assist candidates to reach our members, helping them to make informed decisions when they vote.

CROWAG advocates for appropriate and sustainable development concerning built-form, public amenity, and the natural landscape within Whitehorse to all tiers of government. It seeks to promote the quality of life for residents and the natural landscape of Whitehorse. It lobbies Whitehorse Council to improve its relationship with its constituents in the areas of public accountability, public transparency, good governance, community engagement, fairness and equity.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be made available:

- a. to all CROWAG individual and group members and their networks within Whitehorse
- b. on the CROWAG website at www.crowag.com

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Please answer all questions and keep written responses to each question to less than 150 words.

1. How long have you been a resident of Whitehorse?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

2. Do you live in the council ward for which you are a candidate?

Yes or No

3. List the community, political and/or professional organisations with which you are a member during the last 10 years.

Friends of the Healesville Freeway Reserve
Gardens for Wildlife Whitehorse
Bellbird Dell Advisory Committee
Whitehorse Reconciliation Advisory Committee
Bungalook Nursery
Nunawading Community Gardens
Gardens for Wildlife Victoria

4. What positive achievements resulted from your membership of these groups?

I started the community group Friends of the Healesville Freeway Reserve and as a result of my advocacy and leadership, 35 hectares of land has been saved, transferred to Crown land so no future Government can sell it. A large new park is in the process of being created there, once that is complete it will be the first large park created in the east in multiple decades. An intergenerational benefit for all in the community.

Gardens for Wildlife Whitehorse is a program I was the catalyst for in the city, it has proven human health and well being benefits to participants, as well as improving the biodiversity of privately owned land.

As President of the Nunawading Community Gardens during the Covid pandemic some difficult decisions had to be taken, which were not popular at the time but kept our members safe, despite a majority of them being in the high risk age bracket.

At Bellbird Dell I have had a long association and contribution, improving the biodiversity of the bushland park, assisting local school students visit, learn and participate in volunteering activity in the park.

5. Please state what you want to achieve as an elected Councillor

I want to see more community centred decisions that are truly consultative and have the best long term interests of the community at heart. I want a halt to the privatization of services, the experience of recent privatization has not been good for participants.

I will advocate for a hold on rate rises, we are in a cost of living crisis where people's wages and income are not going up, Council needs to show some responsibility and restraint.

I would like to see wasteful expenditure identified and reduced, so there is no need for more rate hikes, perhaps even facilitating a rate reduction. I look upon rates as a Local government tax, the community would not accept State and Federal taxes going up with the regularity that rates do.

6. What are the top five issues you believe could improve the functioning of the *Whitehorse City Council* in representing its ratepayers and community?

- 1) Stop the privatization of services and keep the current not for profit model.
- 2) Keep rates on hold.
- 3) Improve communication when members of the community call in issues, currently there is no communication to the source person on when the matter will be resolved or if it has been fixed and they have to keep contacting Council for months and sometimes years to follow up.
- 4) Do follow up checks on the work that contractors do on behalf of Council to make sure they have been done to an acceptable standard and install a clause in the contracts with contractors that if the work deteriorates within an unacceptable short period of time they will have to come back and fix it at no cost. A table with a list of this time expectation for different tasks will need to be worked out by the infrastructure department. At the moment the quality is not good and the work often needs to be redone, probably at ratepayer's cost.
- 5) Have a transparent system for the valuation of rateable property and space this out to 3 years. This should reflect a drop in valuation if that is the case, also is this being done inhouse or by consultants?

9. **The following Issues of specific interest to CROWAG.**

In the boxes below, please **rank the priority of the areas of interest** in order of importance **to you** from 1 (Most important) to 10 (Least important). Please do not use the same ranking number more than once.

3	Engagement with residents and ratepayers
1	Transparency and governance in council matters
4	Managing Climate Change and Sustainability.
2	Administrative and budgetary efficiency.
9	Retaining council oversight for planning and development
10	Speeding up Planning and development by reducing council oversight.
7	Advocating for the Federation Brickworks site to be parkland
5	Enhancing the city's natural landscape, parks, tree canopy, streetscape, and overarching neighbourhood amenity

6	Improvement of Infrastructure for walkers, cyclists, and people with disabilities
8	Managing traffic and parking

10. If you have any further comments please note them below:

There is nothing in this list about restraint in rate rises and stopping the privatization of services, they are both important issues to me.

Thank you for completing the CROWAG questionnaire.

Please save your completed questionnaire and send it as an attachment by email to 'Whitehorse Councillor Candidate Responses' at:
crowag.inc@gmail.com