

## Greg Cheesman

### Cootamundra Ward

Thank you for considering me as your local Cootamundra council member. I work & live in your ward therefore have a vested interest in ensuring Whitehorse council is running according to our expectations.

With an important change of representative comes a reinvigorated approach to council. Decisions made on our behalf by a handful of people requires oversight, and as a businessman of 25plus years I seek to address a number of challenges:

- Yearly increases to property rates coupled with a decrease to services & service quality.
- Over-development of multi-storey apartment towers in residential areas.
- General neglect of basic maintenance, including graffiti & unrepaired potholes & footpaths.
- Government acquisition of community open spaces for developments benefiting others.
- Small business closures due to cost of living crisis impacts.
- Youth mental health support services & secondary school early leavers.

My skills & experience in communications, marketing & negotiations, as well as in public speaking, events hosting & community fundraising, will ensure I achieve the best outcomes for our community.

Please visit my website [www.gregcheesman.com](http://www.gregcheesman.com) for more detailed information.

#### **Why are you standing for Council?**

As a local who lives and works in the ward, I'm concerned about over development encroaching on our green open spaces impacting our standard of living and environment with no increase to associated services such as health, police and schools to support the growing population. Roads, graffiti, broken footpaths remain unrepaired (in some cases for more than 5 years) and council rates are excessively high for the inadequate services provided.

As a small business owner of 25 plus years, I can see local traders are suffering significantly both personally and professionally and meaningful support is required to rejuvenate our small business sector.

I am concerned about our youth and their wellbeing. We've seen mental health decline, school attendance decline plus a loss of self esteem and hope. Connecting our young to immediate help within the community is essential. We have an obligation to give our youth and their families a chance for a great future.

#### **How will you make a difference?**

As one of you I am committed to this community and will work to serve only our interests. Cootamundra has been served by the same councillor for the past 16 years and it's time to bring new energy, skills and connections to our council and to cast a fresh eye over the books.

Firstly, the council has been increasing our rates every year for decreased services and performance. With excessive development the rate pool has increased and therefore our rates should have decreased.

The significant impact to our local area of government projects and other developments should have seen the council secure compensation from those parties for the major disruption and impact to our standard of living and given our rates have increased, it's appropriate to question what our rates are actually paying for.

Roads, footpaths and graffiti must be addressed without excuse or delay. Our communities thrive in nature and with a village type of atmosphere. There is a threat on our doorstep that this could change without our ability to scrutinise and fairly object.

Loss of open spaces is key to the lifestyle of our community and we are not immune to the significant transformations seen around us. Local residents do not want mini-city planning approval for our neighbourhood and I will proactively be seeking, uncovering, identifying and mitigating risks due to the radical change already impacting our community.

Small business is the heart and soul of our community and we must identify ways to connect business owners to the right supports to ride through economic downturns. As a small business owner, we need to support and promote local, and to network externally to identify opportunities and find incentives to support our businesses.

Finally, and most importantly, we must act to rectify the impacts of the last several years on the mental health and wellbeing of our young people. With 25% of all young Victorians who begin secondary school not completing Year 12, we need to connect our youth with immediate assistance and when the funding is not there, we must turn to each other to support youth and their families.

Mental health programs, lived experience support services and meaningful connection for no cost, rather as goodwill across our community, will bring people together, utilise the strengths of our residents and provide an immediate and meaningful impact to our young people and their families.

### **What are your key interests or issues?**

As previously mentioned, my key issues and reasons for standing for council are:

1. Youth mental health and wellbeing
2. The encroachment of over development in our neighbourhoods, loss of green open spaces, inadequate associated services and an increase of pollution.
3. Basic maintenance of assets such as roads, footpaths and gutters as well as removing graffiti
4. Increased rates during a cost of living crisis for decreased services, including when there is an increased ratepayer pool
5. Rejuvenating and supporting small business

### **Are you a member of a political party, and if so which party?**

I am standing as an independent, not endorsed by any party. My views and my policies are my own and I am not beholden to the direction of any party. I believe Local Council should be made up of community representatives and be free of the influence of political parties. For the past ten years I have been politically active;

campaigning against those who do not serve the communities interests. I have a common sense approach and therefore present myself for consideration as 'The Sensible Alternative'.

I am a member of Freedom Party of Victoria and vow to keep any political association totally separate to council. I am very community minded and my values are clearly laid out on my website [www.gregcheesman.com](http://www.gregcheesman.com).

Email [greg.cheesman@gmail.com](mailto:greg.cheesman@gmail.com)

Please visit my website [www.gregcheesman.com](http://www.gregcheesman.com) for more detailed information.

As one of you I will seek and welcome your input & work only for positive outcomes for our community. Vote 1 Greg Cheesman

*Authorised by G Cheesman P.O. Box 1108 Blackburn Vic. 3130*