

Toowoomba North Electorate –

Candidates' responses to “Bimblebox owner puts candidates on the spot”

Greg Keane, Independent Candidate, Toowoomba North

26/01/2015

Hi Joan,

Thank you, for contacting me. I share your concerns about Bimblebox and am at a loss to understand why the Federal Government would think it is valuable enough originally to commit nearly three hundred thousand dollars of taxpayer money to protect it, as well as, the State Government commitment to protect it, and then turn around and possibly approve the project with conditions that are still at best, ambiguous.

I am not against mining, there are many benefits to our economy and community and for the last one hundred years we have had benefits from mining activities. However, there has been great expense too, from the cost of clean up in the early days from Gas Light production to health concerns for miners and now health concerns because mining companies carry coal uncovered and many more issues.

I would want to protect designated nature reserves, marine parks and areas of cultural significance and would only be supporting projects where there was agreement from all stakeholders.

Best regards,

Greg Keane

Independent candidate for Toowoomba North

Ken Elliott, Katter's Australian Party Candidate

27/01/2015

Hi Joan

Thankyou for the opportunity to both speak with you and giving me the chance to revise the post to your web page.

I have altered only a few phrases, I have, them in red for ease of comparison. I do not think the changes have altered the content of the message, but rather, provided your readers with a clearer understanding of my position. After all I did say that I wanted honest accountable politicians, and that is what I am trying to represent here.

I don't want to appear to mislead any voters in this election. therefore I would be happy to submit the changes below as a truer picture of me.

Thanks

Ken Elliott

Joan's summary of discussion with Ken Elliott

Katter's Australian Party

The official policy of the Katter Australian Party is to support development of mining in the Galilee Basin. However, elected members need to vote in the interests of their electorate. That is, every issue is considered a conscience issue, so candidates are free to promote the views of the members in the electorate and do not have to propagate those of the KAP.

Ken Elliott's view on new coal mines

Ken Elliott's view is that the Galilee Basin should not be developed for coal mining at this time. He feels that the world does not currently need any more coal. Furthermore, the price of coal is very low and continuing to go down, making development of new coal mines uneconomical. He acknowledges that many environmental problems are caused by coal mines. In particular, he does not support development of the Adani Carmichael Mine, for financial reasons. He does not approve of investing hundreds of millions of tax-payer dollars in a foreign owned coal company. In addition, income coming to the Queensland government would be delayed for the first 2 or 3 years due to removal of royalties. He noted that two or three days prior to the announcement of this post-G20 deal, the Indian energy minister is reported to have said that in two or three years India plans to limit coal imports, because they plan to invest heavily into the use of renewables, a statement that has not received much media attention.

Groundwater and the Great Arterial Basin

Ken considers the issue of groundwater and the Great Arterial Basin to be extremely important. He lived in Longreach and half of his family are from an agricultural background. He considers food to be more important than coal, and does not want unlimited water to be made available to mining companies while water allowances to farmers are decreased. He considers that the current government has taken away our civil liberties in removing our rights to object to mining projects.

Renewables

He feels that the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Queensland Government is intending to give to Adani would be better spent on solar and wind energy. These funds should be going to our local renewable energy industry, to create local jobs, and local industries.

Climate change

Ken believes that climate change may be happening, and the precautionary principle should be used in dealing with it.

Nature Refuges and other Conservation Areas

Ken said that he was generally unfamiliar with environmental issues and biodiversity, but given his views on coal mining I believe he may be considered as a likely source for support. I have referred him to content on our website describing Clive Palmer's China First Coal Mine and the devastation it would wreak on Bimblebox Nature Refuge.

Other issues

Ken also offered his views on additional issues. He is against asset sales, and feels that the upper house should be reinstated in Queensland and should be comprised of the Queensland mayors in order to maximize community input. He believes that Australia should be developing its own manufacturing industry, rather than importing from China.