

Why I am running: Michael McCluskey, Indpt



There is not just one vet running for South-West Coast at the next state election. Independent Michael McCluskey plans to bring his science and economic skills to the political arena. Image: Supplied.

[box]In the lead-up to the Nov 29 state election, *Bluestone Magazine* invited candidates from the three major parties – [Liberal](#), [ALP](#) and [Greens](#) – to tell us why they were running for the seat of South-West Coast. Michael McCluskey is an Independent candidate who contacted us with his response to this same question. He has chosen a question and answer style.[/box]

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[dropcap]hy have you decided to run?

I have held a long term frustration with the way our political

system operates, particularly in regard to the lack of science-based, 'bigger picture' thinking amongst our politicians. The quote 'A statesperson thinks about the next generation whilst a politician thinks about the next election' rings very true to me.

What skills do you believe you can offer the community and the electorate?

I believe my diverse background, in particular my strong grounding in science, would be an invaluable asset to our current political system. Initially I worked as a dairy farm hand for 3 years before joining the Federal public service as an Employment Officer.

After leaving this role I then went to spend the next 24 years as a veterinarian, serving the agricultural industry and then later the equine (horse) industry. I have also completed extra university study with units in Psychology and Economics, and obtained entry into the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.

What are the main issues affecting our community?

I believe the main issue affecting us is the level of violence within the community. Until we more effectively deal with this issue our four main well beings – economic, social, environmental and animal well being – will never realise their full potential.



Violence in our community, including family violence, must be tackled if we are to progress across a range of areas. Image: www.stylemagazine.com.

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[/dropcap]hat other issues are important to you?

Health care– Currently our pets and racehorses receive access to a better healthcare system than what most humans do, particularly in relation to surgery waiting lists. A well funded and wisely operated health system, with timely access to needed care will bring greater economic and social well being both in the short and long term.

Education– If we look at any community throughout the world there is little doubt access to education is a key determinant of how well a society functions, both economically and socially. Whether one takes a trade, university or other creative pathway, we need to do all we can to maximise access to these pathways, including restoring the TAFE system.

Public transport– an efficient, well funded public transport system, along with the provision of quality roads will produce

a significant boost to the economic, social and environmental well being of all our communities.

Fracking for natural gas mining— the known short term and unknown long term risks associated with injecting many millions of litres of chemically laden fluids into the ground/aquifers outweighs the potential benefits. It took politicians nearly 80 years to acknowledge lead in petrol was harmful to our children. For the sake of our grandchildren we can't afford to wait another 80 years on this issue.

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[/dropcap]hy didn't you run through a political party?

My concern is once in the party system, the ability to speak one's mind and act with one's head and heart can be stifled, which for me defeats the purpose of being in politics in the first place. If we can't vote with our conscious on every issue, are we really being true to ourselves and to our electorate?

How can we fund these important issues you have raised?

Reducing wastage within our system is one key component. \$100 wisely spent is better than \$1000 poorly spent. Tapping into some of the billions of dollars entering our superannuation system presents an opportunity as well. It would help fund vital projects in healthcare, education and public transport, as well giving super funds a safe, alternative asset class in which to invest in. In the 'chase for yield' there is already concerns about asset prices being pushed beyond fair value due to pent up investment demand.

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