

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Ru Carslake and I am standing as a candidate for council in division 3.

Thank you MBCA members for your all questions, for which you will note, since time is short I have provide written answers. Answers, which I am more than happy to elaborate upon during question time.

There are other questions I would have liked to answer, questions such as:

- Matters pertaining to our young people
- Economic development
- Operational efficiency, and
- Prioritisation of expenditure

And my answers to these questions and others I will post on my website rucarslake.com over the next few days.

But what I'd like most to talk about during the remainder of my five minutes is the one question, which so far during the run up to this election I haven't been asked. It's a BIG question, like the question which was traditional in Miss World competitions years ago. I can't remember the question, but I know the was answer always "*World Peace*".

Well my BIG question, to myself, runs something like this...

"If you could do anything, one thing, anything at all with respect to the Cassowary Coast Council, what would it be?" And my answer is this....

I would change the culture...

Now a statement like that of course raises more questions than it answers, so before I take this discussion any further, let me tell you a little about myself.

For the majority of my working life, my job has been as a manager or as a consultant, implementing change in large organisations. This almost always involved the application of technology but also always included changes to business processes, the way people work and the interactions between the organisation and it's stakeholders. Their customers in particular.

Now organisational change is not the same as cultural change. They overlap, but they are different. Let me illustrate how cultural change can be achieved in a large organisation, as well as the importance of developing a method for change, a mechanism.

Back in the 90's I worked at American Express as a technology manager in their travel division, specialising in FX systems. During that time I was selected to participate in a series of skip level meetings which gave me the opportunity to work directly with the CIO, a man called Allan Loren, during a period of significant reform. Amex at the time had 72,000 employees so it was a much bigger organisation to change than council, something worth bearing in mind for all those detractors who say "You'll never do it", "It can't be done", or "You're Dreamin'".

The change in culture at Amex was dramatic. It had the progressive effect of uniting the business across divisions and between countries. The mechanism Allan developed to achieve change was by a technique of strategy development in particular the formation of a set of *Guiding Principals* and a set *Values*. These values remain in place to this day. They call them their "*Blue Box*" values (which is of course derived from their logo).

Now strategy and formulation of values and guiding principals were innovative back then, but they're a tad old hat today. So what we need is a different and appropriate mechanism.

The important points to note here, if cultural change is to be achieved are:

1. The need for strong leadership, and
2. the need for a "Mechanism" for bringing about that change.

Okay, so what change? What am I talking about here?

Well the way forward in situations like this is clear.

- First we must articulate culture as it is now.
- Then we must define the culture we want to achieve.

What we have now, council, is an organisation which FROM THE VERY TOP when questioned on matters such as "why do things cost so much?", or "why do things take so long?", will all too often shrug it's shoulders and respond "It's council, that's the way it is" or simply offer up some other excuse.

What I believe we should be aiming for is an organisation for which every one of the 300 plus employees are proud to work. A council that the 30,000 plus people who live in the Cassowary Coast are proud of. Our objective must be a scenario where there is little or no difference between what the council wants and where they are heading and what the residents want.

Organisational theory calls this Legitimacy, or development of a new Social Contract.

So HOW do we do this?

Well we need the right leaders and hopefully this election will head us along that path. But we also need that mechanism. That strategy, that plan.

So do I have one? Well..... I think I do.

I have a concept which I have thought about very long and very hard. It's an idea I am convinced can work.

But my next job is to get elected. After which I need to convince the other councillors, the mayor and the CEO of the merits of the idea. Then, hopefully, I can be instrumental in a committee that leads the process of cultural reform.

I am happy to answer further questions on this topic but given the tight agenda, tonight is probably not the time. I am happy to stay later or can reschedule at another time if anyone would like me to.

Thank you very much.