

2022 - THE YEAR OUR ROADS GET FIXED?

by Andy Gough

Lismore has a new mayor, restaurateur Steve Krieg.

Mr Krieg attracted a massive 69.82% of the total 27,044 votes for mayor, steamrolling over former mayor Vanessa Ekins in second place on 30.18%.

Also elected from the Krieg ticket were Andrew Bing, Peter Colby, Andrew Gordon, Jeri Hall and Electra Jensen.

His preferences also helped Big Rob gain a seat at the table for a total of seven new councillors with no local government experience.

Krieg has been running his cafe La Baracca in Lismore for the last 13 years and will now have to balance his personal life with the very demanding public role of mayor.

Having never been on Council before, Krieg will have a lot to take in before his first Council meeting on Tuesday 11th January, but locals have a lot to be excited about by his campaign promises, including making our roads his top priority.

“We need a Council that gets back to the work of fixing our roads, managing our rates and bringing jobs to our town – that’s what a good council should do,” Mr Krieg told *The Byron Echo* back in October.

“My intention is to present a fresh alternative for the constituents of Lismore and its villages,” he said.

The Krieg team maintained



This sign, erected on the border of the Lismore LGA on Blue Knob Road, speaks for itself. Mayor elect Steve Krieg (right) promises action to fix Lismore's 1200km of roads.

a consistent commitment to prioritising road repairs and maintenance, with the topic featuring heavily on his social media pages.

This will be an epic challenge to live up to as Lismore City Council is responsible for 1200km of roads – 780km of sealed roads and 420km of gravel.

About 140km of sealed roads are identified as in poor or very poor condition, which means undertaking temporary pothole repair is not an effective approach to fixing these parts of our roads network.

Community satisfaction surveys consistently report that maintaining roads has the highest level of importance yet the lowest level of satisfaction of all services Council provides.

Civic Services manager Darren Patch said, “It is unrealistic to expect that our roads will be as good as those in metropolitan areas.

“We have a \$89 million roads backlog and we do not receive adequate funding from other tiers of government to adequately maintain our 1200km road network.”

On average, Council

repairs approximately 25,000 potholes a year – almost 70 potholes a day.

LCC already has a budget and reconstruction program for the 2021/22 financial year, with \$51.4 million allocated to roads and bridges. That’s 40% more than 2019/20.

Council has also claimed \$14.5 million for two natural disaster events to restore damaged roads.

Council achieved 100% completion of its resurfacing program and 93% of its reconstruction program in the 2020/21 financial year.



The reality is that without a significant amount of funding from government or another source, it is likely that a large portion of the worst sections of road will remain in that condition for the foreseeable future.

So let’s see what Mayor Krieg and his team can pull out of their hat over their term on Council.

In the meantime, to report a pothole call 6625-0500 or click on ‘report a problem’ at: www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

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