

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

Wednesday 24 November 2021

7.30pm – 10.35pm on DTE Zoom

Forum Hosts/Moderators: Lindy Hunt - David Cameron - Melody Braithwaite

## 2021 DTE Director Candidates

(Listed in order as shown on 2021 AGM Notice)

**TANIA MORSMAN \* ROBIN MACPHERSON \* LANCE NASH**

**KATHY ERNST \* JOHN MAGOR**

## OVERVIEW

- **Audio Recordings**
- **Instructions to Candidates**
- **Acknowledgement of Country**
- **Forum Instructions**
- **Candidate 4 minute opening statements**
- **Prepared question 2-minute responses**
- **Break and Questions from the floor instructions**
- **Questions from the floor**
- **Vote of thanks**

## AUDIO RECORDINGS

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The Forum Hosts sincerely apologise that we overlooked turning the Zoom audio recording back on after we had completed our trial run-through just prior to the Forum meeting. After we realised it was off the audio recording function was turned back on after the Break at 9:15pm when we started the Questions from the Floor segment.

As most candidates wrote and spoke from their responses to their prepared questions they have been copied into these notes.

**Opening Statements** (35 minutes - thank you David Cruise):

<https://dte.org.au/audiominutes/2021-11-24%20FORUM%20first%20half.mp3>

**Questions from the floor and post Forum discussions** (1 hr 40 mins)

<https://www.dte.org.au/audiominutes/2021-11-24%20FORUM%20part%20two.mp3>

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES & PREPARED QUESTIONS

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Director Candidates were sent the following instructions and questions to help them prepare for their presentations at the Forum.

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*“In addition to a 4 minute prepared statement, candidates were invited to prepare responses to the six questions:*

- Order of speaking will be rotated so that each candidate will be given an opportunity to speak first on a question, and visa versa - all candidates will also be last to answer a question thereby having the benefit of hearing other’s replies before their own.*
- In the interest of time and to allow questions from the floor - your response will be limited to 2 minutes maximum, an audio cue will indicate 30 seconds before your microphone is muted.*
- The order of questions may not be in the order listed below.*
- Where requested to give a specific example please do so, as this will enable people to more fully appreciate your point of view.*
- If you are unable to attend, you may submit a 200 word max statement for each question (please do not include links to any external information or resources).”*

## 2021 FORUM QUESTIONS

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- 1. If you have a disagreement or conflict with another director, what will you do to ensure that it does not impact on the ability of the board to continue to function cohesively? Please give a specific example.**
- 2. If you are elected, how will you empower more volunteers to be seen and heard in the organisation? Please give specific examples.**
- 3. What is your understanding of the term 'Conflict of Interest? Please relate your answer specifically to DTE. If you become aware of a conflict of interest, either your own or from another director ... what steps will you take to remedy the situation? Please include a hypothetical scenario in your response.**
- 4. The members have often requested transparency from the Board of Directors. The CNL states that the board is answerable to the members in an ongoing way. If elected how will you facilitate this process? Please give specific examples.**
- 5. Ideally, how do you see the roles and responsibilities being split between the Board, the Organising Committee and other committees?**
- 6. What is your vision for Confest if we cannot gather like we have before?**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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Spoken by David Cameron

***“We acknowledge that we are hosting tonight’s meeting from the lands of the Kurna, Gadigal and Wurundjeri peoples in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne.***

***We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which DTE members and volunteers live and work.***

***We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.***

***We recognise and celebrate the diversity of all Aboriginal peoples, their ongoing cultures and their connections to all the lands and waters of Australia.”***

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

## FORUM INSTRUCTIONS

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Lindy Hunt on behalf of the Forum Hosts outlined the following meeting protocols:

- *“Welcome everyone. We assume you have read how this forum will be run ? Here is a quick refresher*
- *The chat will be turned off during the prepared statement and responses to prepared questions section. To enable people to focus on what is being said .*
- *All mics will be muted except for those of the moderators, the time keeper and the relevant candidate when they are asked for their responses.*
- *NO PERSONAL ATTACKS WILL BE TOLERATED! if we deem there is a personal attack that person will be immediately muted..*
- *Each candidate will have 4 minutes for their prepared statement at the 3.5 minute mark an audible cue will be made to advise the candidate that they have 30 seconds left. Once that time has elapsed the speaker will be advised their time is up and they will be muted.*
- *Each candidate will have 2 minutes to answer the prepared questions , with a 30 second warning audible cue , then advised when the time is up and will then be muted.*
- *The chat window will be opened up at the 10 minute break before questions from the floor section of the evening so that people can put their question in the chat. The moderators will be the only ones able to see the chat and will determine if the questions are appropriate.*
- *1 question only per member , volunteer or guest. At least until everyone who wants to ask a question has had a chance to do so ....*
- *Please make your questions concise , respectful and thoughtful, so that as many questions as possible can asked and answered .*
- *1 minute will be allowed for the question to be asked and 2 minutes will be allowed for the candidates to respond again with a 1.30 minute warning .*
- *Again NO PERSONAL ATTACKS WILL BE TOLERATED.*
- *We will now start with the candidates prepared statements.”*

## CANDIDATE (4 MINUTE) OPENING STATEMENTS

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- The candidates were invited to present a statement outlining their platform and advised that the speaking order (as listed below) was in the order of the AGM Notice/Agenda.
- These notes are part transcribed from Audio Recording Part 1 (see link above) as well as supported by the candidate supplied script notes.
- Editing notes shown in brackets, for example (my being a candidate) have been provided to give a context, and/or additional explanation for comprehension.

### 1. **Tania Morsman** (transcribed from audio starting from 2:10)

*“...In alignment with the spirit of ConFest I believe that my essence of being, my integrity to DTE, for the love of DTE has everything to do with (my being a candidate). I have been volunteering for just over six years, (and) have been frequenting ConFest for 10 years. In that time I have made myself available to volunteering across various aspects of DTE. You’ll know that I’ve been an amazing cook for the Arts including (helping with) the setup, and have encouraged everybody to eat there. Also for working bees I’ve been very proactive, I have helped the Woolshed being cleaned, and used, along with other people who I won’t name but who know I will be thinking of them, so that we have a beautiful space where people can come and sit and enjoy each other’s company.*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*I have been a mediator, fortunately DTE paid for me to be a mediator, it wasn't a certificate it was accreditation, so I'm very fortunate fortunate to have done that, it has been impactful, which has been pretty wonderful. And I have so loved being on the property of DTE, enjoying it and loving it. Also hosted welcoming others onto the property. I have felt privileged to welcome people and cooked meals for them on particularly after they have driven long distances. I have enjoyed that aspect of caring for members in our community and volunteers.*

*Pretty much there a lot of people here this evening who know what I'm about. I am here to serve DTE, and contribute my knowledge, and my love of DTE. I thank everyone for listening to me and I look forward to what is to come.*

## **2. Robin MacPherson** (transcribed from audio and candidate supplied notes from 5:10 )

*"I believe and have always felt a better Down To Earth is possible. I think we are better served I think, when each one of us is focusing on our own personal development moving forward in pursuit of a better version of one self and as a result we collectively move forward towards a better future together. Sometimes we trip, yes, sometimes we fail gloriously, yet step, after step, after step, we create a path, a path from where we were, to where we are now and to where we are going.*

*So now it's your turn to choose the next step for the co-operative. Consider carefully the options, which steps are illusions, just hot air, after all talk is cheap and which steps show the sign of considered written thought and demonstrated strategy. Then there is the quality and quantity of the words when they are written.*

*You can choose between a candidate who can write 50,000 words plus in emails primarily in criticism of others or candidates who put 50,000 words towards a website aiming to serve all our members. As for quality of words, well there is a toxicity in many of our meetings, inflamed by poor and obviously biased chairing. This behaviour is replicated in our email lists where there are many commonalities, however Troy or Robin isn't one of them. Yes you can choose candidates who as recently as last week emailed toxic words to fellow members such as...." NOTE: Hosts muted Robin's presentation for not adhering to Forum Protocols.*

## **3. Lance Nash** (transcribed from audio and candidate supplied notes from 9:00 )

*"When I came back into DTE, after about twenty years away, it was just like coming home. I have met, and worked with, some wonderful people, during the last several years, and I know we'll remain friends. My time working with Fincom and with ConFab has been a blast. Working with Skye, Melody and Elisa has required me to lift my game; They have been very patient! The ConFab meals at Lentils and the workshops I have done in Blackburn and at the Earthship in Kinglake have enabled me to reconnect with DTE in a way that I thought was no longer possible.*

*Working with Robin Macpherson has been productive as we share a passion for flat structures and open government. His capacity to use technology to house, share and publish ideas is immensely valuable. There are some things about DTE, however, that I find less pleasant. Much of the behaviour I have witnessed would be unacceptable in most parts of society, let alone in an organisation which purports to offer a better way to live. Some of the behaviour is obstructive, some of it is unpleasant to the degree of being downright nasty. Bullying and lying for effect are common in the email threads. I have just witnessed a member threaten to ensure that ConFest doesn't run again. None of this is constructive, most of it, in fact, tears down what DTE has put together over many years.*

*This behaviour is paralysing the organisation. Instead of using the enforced idleness brought about by the pandemic to rebuild and to develop alternative activities and generate new income streams, warring factions have taken the bickering up a notch. It is not uncommon for meetings to degenerate into shouting matches and I've seen people walk out of meetings rather than put up with such behaviour.*

*With the last several ConFests having not produced stellar results financially, with all the facts mentioned in the previous paragraphs, and with Wooreoma being neck deep in prickles, I'm not sure that some new energy might not be a good idea. I've decided, therefore, to have another tilt at a Directors role because I feel I can assist in healing some of the wounds in the Co-operative. Questions have been raised in meetings*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*as to whether I have sufficient “recent or relevant” experience to be a Director. I have been involved in running twenty or so major festivals, including a number of ConFests, a few music events from folk clubs to music festivals and a handful of smaller events. None of them have lost money or suffered any major disasters.*

*My professional career has involved working with legislation and conducting investigations and, for the last few years, I have been involved in Occupational Health and Safety in which I have qualifications. My responses to questions raised in this forum outline the strategies I will pursue as a member of the Board. These have been discussed with, and align with, the views held by Robin. We are outward looking and collaborative and look to harness the talents of all members and volunteers.*

*You might not appreciate some of what we do, but its always going to be out there, its always going to be open, and you are allowed to question it. I thank everybody for listening. I believe that ConFest will come back , and has a great future and I believe in the ability of all ConFest members.”*

### 4. **Kathy Ernst** (transcribed from audio and candidate supplied notes from 12:35 )

*“I have been a Director since February 2020. I consider that I have been successful in some areas; mainly things that I could do by myself or with the support of one or two other directors as I have been on the outer throughout my term.*

*One of my goals in becoming director was to improve transparency and I have been able to do this without the support of the Board.*

*I have made financial information, details of motions by circular and information about Board processes available to members. I am trying to make Board correspondence available to all members.*

*It is very disappointing that two years without a ConFest was an opportunity to improve our processes and clear up outstanding tasks.*

*Unfortunately this has not happened. A common tactic is to filibuster and find delaying tactics to prevent motions being discussed. Some motions are on the Board agenda for months before being discussed.*

*Clearly not having good processes in places suits some people. Examples are our failure to have an open process to record inactivity credits, our adhoc complaints process and our lack of a process for dealing with inappropriate spending. I am working on these processes and hope to be able to implement them after the AGM.*

*With the support of two directors, I worked to get a new independent auditor appointed. It was a lot of stress and work. It should not have been but clearly some preferred the poor audits of the past.*

*Why am I persisting with DTE? Because I love ConFest. I am determined to protect the participant created nature of ConFest. DTE and Confest volunteers are not the typical festival volunteers, carrying out a few tasks as directed in return for a free ticket. ConFest volunteers make the decisions. They own ConFest. Volunteers are DTE’s greatest asset.*

*I am also determined that Confest remains true to its origins as a place to explore alternative ways of living.*

*That is all I am going to say. It is too easy to write lots of nice, meaningless, insincere words. And even easier to make nasty defamatory websites. I prefer to be judged by my actions and by my contributions to actual meetings. Thank you for listening to me”*

### 5. **John Magor** (transcribed from audio from 15:37 )

*“First of all to Kathy, wow really well said sincerely; Tania (it was) just beautiful; Lance thank you for raising the issues around toxicity – it’s timely and appropriate. (John added comments about his perm and wearing his tulip covered moo moo).*

*ConFest is very dear to my heart. I strongly believe it is my ConFest - it’s your ConFest - it’s our ConFest. ConFest has and will always belong to you and me. Having volunteered in Rangers, Site Operations as well as the Organising committee, Confest committee and Facilitators Forum, establishing and facilitating conflict resolution face-to-face and in a group.*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*I have a deep broad and balanced understanding of the dynamics within our organisation. It's been a learning experience to chair a number of meetings, Board, OC, CC and general meetings. - and I hope to continue learning. Without a decent chair the meetings (tend to) fall apart. I highly value community and social justice, honesty decency, open communication and transparency.*

*I see potential to further encourage the Board to (embrace) and model these qualities between fellow directors and members of our cooperative. If elected I would value (in the directors role) the opportunity to foster better relationships and cooperation between the board and the DTE committees, because after all DTE is a cooperative by name and hopefully in nature. It has been my privilege to attend DTE meetings where I encourage all to be heard and have their input valued. In the same spirit I hope to further encourage all voices within our community, and hold in high regard any roles I undertake within DTE.*

*To any members who don't regularly (attend or) engage with DTE meetings in its board OC and CC, my main aim for nominating is my response to an ongoing series, in the hope to encourage more cooperative, in what after all is Confest in name and hopefully (in) spirit a cooperative.*

*If we choose to ignore history we are forever burdened by it. That is a fact that keeps getting repeated over and over again. I would like to take people back to Jim Cairns, what he gave to the nation and to us that is still Confest, and that we get back to something that aligns much better (with his vision). And with regards to history, and recent events and the potential outcome, if we don't acknowledge them, and ask ourselves, each other and the community 'Is this what we really want?' That is why I'm putting my hat in and that is why I'm nominating: I want different, I want openness, I want transparency., I want a bit more love in and between the board. Once again thank you for organising this meeting tonight"*

## PREPARED QUESTION 2-MINUTE RESPONSES

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- The candidates given the questions a few days before the Forum to prepare their responses.
- **Due to the significant time (12+hours) and effort required to create these notes, and how soon the AGM is upon us, the notes/scripts prepared by the candidates and shared with the Hosts (thank you) have been published below for your review.**
- The audio for the prepared questions starts at 19:40 on the first recording (link above)
- The order in which candidates responded to this question is as shown below.
- In line with the original instructions provided to candidates to not include them - all links to external information or resources have been de-activated in any material copied over.

**Q1: If you are elected, how will you empower more volunteers to be seen and heard in the organisation? Please give specific examples.**

### 1. Robin MacPherson

*"By making it easier for members to become involved in co-operative activities.*

*There are too many gatekeepers who control access to areas of community responsibility. By moving away from one person, to a team of people who are collectively responsible for making stuff happens. By moving the oracle from the person to the document also enable participants to engage at their own pace in their own time.*

*There is none of this leader follower crap, get into the area you want to be involved in, build multiple points of redundancy thereby improving your own skills and our communities overall resilience.*

*For example on the dte.coop website how there are now landing pages for*

- **MEMBER COMMITTEES - Market Committee, Board, Confest Committee & Confab**

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

- OTHER COMMITTEES - Asset Committee, GSC Governance, FinCom, MemCom, ICT/Tech Team, Media Coms Crew & WHS
- PROJECTS - Confest Online, Bylands Ecology Project, Friends of Woorooma, Community Development Fund & Sustainability

The board recently approved my agenda Item (Mvd Troy Sec Coral) for a newsletter, passed by consensus This will begin our proactive messaging to our membership and supporters encouraging them and making it easier for them to become involved.

Another example is FinCom - In the finance area where there had been nothing but toxic infighting for years. The FinCom (2018/19) initiative has seen this dissipate and volunteers now meet regularly providing a good and valued service to fellow members without the weaponising or politics. It is possible if you have the right processes and fair minded participants.

As for Confest, I have been very much part of the creation of the ConFest Facilitator summits . It was obvious the CC was simply getting in the way of the facilitators who form the core crew of making it happen. The facilitators wanted a place away from the politics. It took a couple of years to refine and it will continue to refine. One of the silver linings of Covid is now the broad uptake and mainstreaming of platforms like Zoom, cost no longer needs to be as bigger factor as it once was. That being said there is nothing better than the camaraderie developed hanging out with the crew through the weekend all with a focus and a clear desire to see processes improve.”

## 2. Lance Nash

“Why is there a decline in involvement in DTE? Are our meetings that toxic, do we actively discourage people from becoming members or do we make participation difficult by reliance on administrivia? Do we talk in tongues?

It is difficult to empower volunteers in DTE if they are not invited to participate and if they don't have the power to influence decisions of the Co-operative.

Communication is the key, particularly when there is a longer than usual gap between ConFests and there are few other DTE events scheduled.

There is now provision for a newsletter to be circulated. I wish to promote the formation of a publicity collective to compile the DTE News and to circulate publicity via the Facebook groups to which we have access.

It is also past time we asked Confesters for their views by surveying opinion.

We could also schedule meet and greet events using Zoom or ConFestopia.

The promotion of events like ConFab and ConFest online will attract people. It is up to us to keep them happening.”

## 3. Kathy Ernst

“Firstly, implementing policies and procedures to stop individuals having too much control. Some time ago I proposed SGM motions to limit the power of individuals. Unfortunately these motions failed, but I think we need to revisit this. Allowing a few individuals to be both Directors and controlling large chunks of OC and CC functions and budgets is a risk to DTE, can lead to corruption and excludes people. People have been excluded because they have displeased a few powerful individuals.

Secondly, I intend to continue supporting the standing committees to do their work. This is where most volunteers contribute. For example I have always supported members being able to access Zero and I have provided information, I have supported the OC and CC by pushing the Board to approve their funding, and I have worked to rescind Board motions which attempt to control the OC and CC.

Thirdly, harder to achieve but not impossible, is creating a more welcoming environment for volunteers. There has been a big improvement in OC meetings, people are being encouraged to contribute, conflicting ideas are treated with respect and compromises are often successfully worked out. Unfortunately I believe certain directors are deliberately creating a divide between the Board and the Standing Committees by undermining their work and driving away potential participants by describing meetings as toxic. Those members who attend meetings will have seen that I do not do this.”

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

## 4. John Magor

*“Encourage and invite more, more, more, Members. Obtain access to the full Members email list and send them out regular emails telling them about -all- meetings, and how they can access them.*

*Encouraging them to attend meetings, play a part in the creation of Confest*

*Confest is the thing we all love, it's one thing that indisputably holds everyone, not only here tonight, but all members (and attendees who are currently non Members) together.*

*That's a **immensely** powerful source of potential untapped energies, all of it based on deep and committed love for the beautiful legacy that is Confest.*

*I'd like for more -entire- Board engagement with the confest Facebook page (and its spin-offs)*

**Confest is the flower - DTE, it's sub committees & its meetings is the plant, so I seek for much more broad and rich nourishment of the plant, the body that creates Confest**

*Ongoing allegations of 'a toxic OC' -versus- the reality, and how to bring about change via more participants, training of a pool of people to Chair these meetings so they're run better, and encourage a far broader mix of members to attend, participate, and bring about the change that comes from more spirit, ideas that will (hopefully) come with those who bring them.”*

## 5. Tania Morsman

*“Well this is tricky. Life happens of course and I get immersed into my own world, so I can easily be distracted from community engagement. I reckon though, we've learnt a lot from the Covid experience to know that we can still be connected even when we can't be in the same physical space. So, with that said, it comes to me that there is more we can do together.*

*By wanting to do that for a start and being consistent in engaging with members via meetings. I would love to see a newsletter make its way back into DTE. Emma did it for a while and I loved reading it as a member since it kept me connected to the Cooperative in a sort of invisible way. I believe though it takes more than one person and I also know that desire and motivation are two things that really impact in getting something done – so yes I'd like to start that up again and encourage members to tell their stories or any news they want to share. I reckon we could have fun with it as a group.*

*Another thing I've been thinking about it a NFP Social Enterprise aspect that DTE could engage in. I believe generosity is in the spirit of Confest and this could be rippled out from DTE as a community development project. People love to do good stuff for people who are not in such good positions and I believe this would engage many more people from our Cooperative and create a difference in the world. I'd really love to explore this more with others.”*

**Q2: Ideally, how do you see the roles and responsibilities being split between the Board, the Organising Committee and other committees?**

### 1. Lance Nash

*“This is a question, and a scenario, I have agonised over. I don't imagine that its any great secret that I have discussed this and other issues with Robin Macpherson and that, in this area, above all, we have a meeting of minds.*

*The current rules cause significant problems but, essentially, they point DTE in the right direction. The subcommittees of the Board all have a legitimate focus and should have the ability to carry out their function.*

*We need to think about the following:*

*The Board is considered by all outside parties to be the Executive body of DTE. No Solicitor, Banker or business person is going to sign a contract with DTE unless it is authorised by the Board. Live with it! The Organising Committee should be seen as the Administrative arm of DTE and should carry out functions consistent with that definition.*



# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*The rules reflect two contradictory views as to how the committees of the board receive their powers. There is a provision for active members to qualify for membership of the Operating Committee and the ConFest Committee by turning up to three out of the last five meetings.*

*On the other hand the Board is required to foster and develop and appoint members to Standing Committees of the Board and to ensure that a 'reporting to the Board' structure is set up by these Committees. There are various comments in there about "the Executive Arm" and a "non-executive advisory and legal role" but they don't detract from the essential meaning.*

*I'm not keen on the suggestions that we change the rules drastically or revert to the model rules. I'm certain that a combination of Board and SGM policies and procedures would clarify issues and allow for constructive administration of the Co-operative."*

## 2. Kathy Ernst

*"The Board has overall responsibility for DTE but the Boards main role is in compliance and financial processes.*

*The OC and CC are where most work is done, where most decisions are made and where members can play an active role and make an important contribution. Except in extreme situations, the Board's role is to encourage and facilitate the standing committees, not to control them.*

*Only in extreme cases, should the Board overrule standing committees. In some cases, the DTE rules are very clear For example; Rule 28 says that the Board should take responsibility for General Meeting notices if the OC fails to do so, not that the Board can take over simply because they want to.*

*The General Meetings are the voice of the members. Some directors claim that the Board can overrule a general meeting but I believe this should only be in extreme cases where it can be shown that a GM decision jeopardises the future of DTE and should not be used to give directors power over the members.*

*The subcommittees do not have decision making powers, (except for minor day-to-day decisions) but are important way of involving members and reporting back to the Standing Committees and the Board."*

## 3. John Magor

*"Can't recall what I said about this - but part of it was to proactively work to foster far better respect, cooperation, and shared responsibilities (as opposed to the Board feeling a need to 'take over' roles far better decided by Members through the appropriate roles of committees.*

*Let the Board let the Members inform what's best - whilst the Board keeps an eye purely on its responsibilities - and offer any and all assistance the Board is able to provide as requested. Basically, I hope the Board listens far better than it 'tells', as has been the case for too long."*

## 4. Tania Morsman

*"All the DTE Standing Committees and Board are responsible for DTE Cooperative. I do not see that these roles are split especially since Members are also Directors. Of course, there are specifics in relationship with the role that the independent committees are geared towards, but essentially they all work together and complement each other.*

*I understand that the Board has a legal and ethical obligation to DTE. I understand that its legal obligation is be lawful in upholding CNL and any state law that coincides with its lawful practice. This includes but not all: Annual reporting and transparency in making this available. I understand that ethical obligation is to act in way that is honest and with integrity to the best interest of DTE. This includes but not all to exercise an independent judgement that is not in personal conflict. There is also the point of democracy – that's the important point here, that the members of DTE do the running day to day activity of DTE Cooperative and act in unison collectively and with transparency.*

**38 / 3**

**(3)** *The Board must maintain a non-executive, wise elder role and ensure that the Co-operative fulfills its legal and ethical obligations.*

**(4)** *The Board is required to: (a) foster and develop and appoint members to Standing Committees of the Board (Clause 47 (16)) as the executive arm of the Co-operative, and*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*(b) ensure that a reporting to the Board structure is set up by these Committees, and (c) ensure that the Board has all the information required to perform its non executive advisory and legal role.*

*(5) The Board is to actively involve members in being part of the executive arm of the Co-operative through voluntary participation in the primary activity and in the running of the Co-operative.*

*(6) A Board member may be an ordinary member of a Standing Committee of the Board.*

*47 / (a) The ConFest Committee. The ConFest Committees sole function is the promotion, staging, managing, and organising of ConFest*

*47 / (b) The ConFab Committee. The sole role of the ConFab Committee is the organising, promotion and management of ConFab: (i) Meetings of the ConFab Committee are held during the function as necessary.*

*47 / (c) The Market Committee. The sole role of the Market Committee is the organising and management of the ConFest market.*

*47 / (d) The Organising Committee. (i) The Organising Committees function is to: (a) run general meetings of the co-operative: (b) be the executive arm of the Co-operative relating to all matters not covered by the other standing Committees of the Board: (c) regularly record, compile, update, and publish to members, all policies developed by the Board, the Committees of the Board, and general meetings of the Cooperative.”*

## 5. Robin MacPherson

*“Firstly I would like to see them written down so we can collectively craft an understanding of mutualism and partnerism. While the rules clearly define the OC and other committees as sub committees of the board, it does not mean all the decisions have to take place at board meetings.*

*A good board works with it's sub committees, it enables and partners with them to achieve mutual goals. Where they do not agree they can put those issues to one side until resolved and focus on implementing the ones they do agree on. “*

**Q3: If you have a disagreement or conflict with another director, what will you do to ensure that it does not impact on the ability of the board to continue to function cohesively? Please give a specific example.**

### 1. Kathy Ernst

*“Firstly it is important not to support ideas or motions based on personal feelings about individuals. There is an appalling tendency in DTE to make decisions based on personalities and tit for tat: ‘you support my budget and I will support yours’, ‘don’t expect me to vote for your motion when you did not vote for mine’. I think I have enough integrity to make decisions based on what I think is best for DTE not who is proposing or supporting the ideas.*

*A more difficult situation is when people genuinely have different ideas. In this case the issue should be discussed and a genuine attempt made to reach consensus or at least a compromise which is more acceptable to everybody. It is unrealistic that everybody is always happy with every decision but people need to be heard and to feel respected and best decisions are made when there is a diversity of opinion. This can only work when everyone has DTE’s best interest at heart and are willing to compromise. As a director who has been on the outer most of the time, I feel discussions are often held to batter people into submission rather than seek real compromise.*

*I would like to see the Board function cohesively but not at the expense of having to support ideas or motions which I consider not in DTE’s best interests or against the rules.”*

### 2. John Magor

*“If I have a disagreement or conflict with another /director - I'll not let this impact on how I listen to that Director. Everybody, I believe, has a right to have their words heard - If I refuse to hear any person, how can I ever claim to hear them?*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*As a Director, it's my strongly held belief that it's my responsibility, as a Director, to act and vote by being informed by any and all information, views, opinions, and ideas, from as broad a range of a sources as are available to me.*

*Members vote Directors into the role to act on their behalf -*

*And because a director is the **ONLY** role in DTE that's decided by Members, it deserves full respect and appreciation of that fact.*

*By nominating, I'd hope, encourage -and remind - that all nominees and Directors have chosen to take on these responsibilities.*

*By way of example -*

*- Ongoing (and evidenced) and continued non replies / gaslighting to emails and comms to 3 Directors,  
- Way too many examples of Board motions held by circular, and passed by a 'majority' of 4 Directors before the other 3 have even had a chance to respond."*

### 3. Tania Morsman

*"If I have ever had conflict with another I have asked to talk about the conflict with the person involved. I have found that if both parties are willing to talk then there is an opportunity to reveal the emotional attachment. I am willing to own my own part in the conflict since it takes all sides to contribute. If that isn't an option and I have had instances where it hasn't (and I'm talking specifically to the question now) I would declare it to the Board and ask if there's a possibility for someone on the Board to mediate if all are willing that is? This way the Board is aware of any underlying distance that could come up between those involved in the conflict. Even so, that aside in my role as a director I feel that it is important to continue working together. Communication is a big thing for me, and I'd be respectfull of being in that role. I couldn't imagine purposely leaving out any directors if I had a moment of conflict with one."*

### 4. Robin MacPherson

*" I stay focused on the motion before the board and speak to the strengths and weaknesses of the words. It is common for inexperienced or untrained board members to think it's about popularity and playing to their supporter base.*

*To me it's about the written words (Agenda Items)(Rules) evolving, redefining the co-operative as we move forward in time. I ask myself what do the words say, are they clear, are they unambiguous for those reading them in the future. This is what concerns me more while I serve the members.*

*If a relationship looks likely to derail I would ask for their thoughts on the agenda item/rule in writing so I could take the heat out of the discussion. I would then try and see in their written words what I do not in their mind understand. If at the end we simply disagree, then we disagree. If I think it is getting personal i will take it to the appropriate process.*

*It would be nice to think one of the platforms we will have enacted if elected is the removal of the board, other than as a board of review, from the complaints process . An independently driven process is where I would then take this issue. Hopefully by then the Panel will be in place.*

*The other thing I have learn't is many disagreements come through a lack of mutual understanding of the words which manifest our co-operative. Too much of it is spoken rather than written and therefor often open to misinterpretation. This spoken code is rarely relayed to others in its original form or with it's original intent. Hence being precise, not verbose with the written word will help to encourage us towards self governing our community as much as possible. Hence the construction of the website dte.coop*

*Specific example: dte.coop has been a 2 year project involving a number of different volunteers. In that time we have built a website which helps you as a member better understand our co-operative, to reduce misunderstanding and increase participation in our community - take the dte.coop/board. A portal to help you have what you need to know as a member of the board.*

*I didn't have this when I first sat on the board. I wish I did and I will be looking at improving induction and how it can make a valuable contribution to a new directors welcome pack."*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

## 5. Lance Nash

*“Disagreements between directors occur more often where Board members lack a commitment to Board solidarity or misunderstand the requirements to act in the best interests of the Co-operative or, otherwise, in the best interests of members.*

*Where a disagreement occurs with another Director I prefer to step back and ensure that I fully understand the issue before I consider whether my response is appropriate and proportionate to the matter on hand.*

*At that time I look at what my colleague is saying and consider whether a consensus can be achieved.*

*Whether the differences arise at a Board meeting or outside a meeting it may be necessary to bring the matter up formally and try to achieve a consensus decision by the whole Board.*

*The example I recall involved polarised views on whether Star Pickets and Poly Pipe should be considered to be assets or formed part of recurrent expenditure. We agreed that we should refer the matter to the auditor of the time for advice. From memory he decided that they should be assets.”*

**Q4: The members have often requested transparency from the Board of Directors. The CNL states that the board is answerable to the members in an ongoing way. If elected how will you facilitate this process? Please give specific examples.**

## 1. John Magor

*“-----as in question 2, re "how will you empower more volunteers to be seen and heard", I'd be looking for ways to let all Members know that any Member -ALL MEMBERS- can post an agenda item for the Board and other committees) to consider, then and all it takes then, is for one Director to move that agenda item, and it can then be voted on. Any Member, ALL Members, Everytime”*

## 2. Tania Morsman

*“I am not in favour of circular meetings, and I will be declaring that to the Board. I think we need to discuss its implications given the current history of numerous Motions by Circular that have been hidden and called at a moment's notice. They have kept the members from being involved in any Board Meeting and I feel this has directly impacted on the members and their engagement with the board. I also believe in question time at Board meetings. Question time set apart from the actual motions of the Board. Some time for free slow questioning. I think this is healthy. This gives the members an opportunity to speak to directors and engage in questioning of Board decisions and also in connecting with tasks to do with directors.”*

## 3. Robin MacPherson

*“I am not sure if this is a trick question. The board and the directors are answerable to the law. The members will vote in the board they think will best serve them going forward. The members cannot force the board to break the law even they are called the Organising committee.*

*Examples of promoting transparency*

- **Memcom** - Prior to Memcom membership was in a mess with multiple forms going missing, membership dues without explanation (unlike the recent error with bank accounts on membership form) - Members are able to participate in managing memberships by volunteering to be involved in Memcom
- **FinCom** - the weaponising of receipts and the poor accountability. Under previous systems less than 50% of our receipts were seen by anyone other than the auditor and a couple of designated vols and a toxicity ensued - 2 years later the water is much calmer, a group of dedicated volunteers have shown it can be done
- **dte.coop** - Both Memcom and Fincom have teamed up with tech team and created dte.coop as a way of bringing transparency to the membership in ways previously not seen in our co-op before”

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

## 4. Lance Nash

*"This question needs to be addressed in both the positive and the negative. To view the negative first; there are some circumstances under which the Board is required to maintain confidentiality. These very often involve complaints where making matters public may lead to significant disadvantage to either the complainant or the respondent.*

*I am on record as having the view that the current Board needs to release information about numbers and classes of complaints, together with a description of their processes and evidence of any planning for other processes going forward.*

*My view is that DTE needs to shed responsibility for complaints handling and outsource it to competent professionals.*

*Having said that, I would suggest that a future board should carry out the initial investigation of some cases with a view to seeking resolution by agreement.*

*As for positive actions; I am also on record as suggesting that the Board needs to ensure that its actions and decisions are more transparent. I believe that Motions by Circular should only be used in the most urgent of circumstances which indicates that we need more and longer Board Meetings, at least in the short term. It goes without saying that such meetings need to be made efficient and it may well be that selecting a skilled facilitator is a required step.*

*It may also be that ancillary planning sessions are required which can be public.*

*Otherwise, releasing Board reports on a regular basis should be considered."*

## 5. Kathy Ernst

*"I believe that I have already facilitated this in my current term as director. As an OC and CC member I was frustrated that budgets were approved but members did not get to see how the money was spent. So, I provided much financial data and transaction details to members. I have also supported the OC to get read-only Xero access for OC members. I have put a lot of effort into getting a new independent auditor appointed.*

*I have also made Board processes more transparent. This includes Motions by Circular. After becoming director it took about six months to find and have recorded in the minutes, two Motions by Circular which targeted individuals. The Board is now regularly including Motions by Circular at the next meeting as required by the CNL and DTE rules and I regularly inform members of motions by circular. Unfortunately I have not been able to do much about Motions by Circular being used to bypass discussion at Board meeting. I am trying to make Board correspondence available to all members (after removing any genuinely confidential correspondence).*

*Members are entitled to see the membership register and I have offered to make a list of members available to any member who asks for it. I have also had a motion regarding this on the Board agenda for six months and hope we get to it after the AGM."*

**Q5: What is your understanding of the term 'Conflict of Interest? Please relate your answer specifically to DTE. If you become aware of a conflict of interest, either your own or from another director ... what steps will you take to remedy the situation? Please include a hypothetical scenario in your response.**

## 1. Tania Morsman

*"Conflict of interest is to me gaining personal gratuity from exploiting a professional position. It essentially deceitful in that hides a hidden agenda to gain personally. If I am in a position of Conflict of Interest it is essential declare the conflict of interest as soon as possible. If I need to remove myself from the situation, discussion, vote etc I will. I will also state the conflict if I am aware of another director in that position and make that knowledge knowable. An Example of conflict of interest is as follows.*

*I have taken on a role in a facilitated area. For example*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

- a. *Technology: I put in a budget for DTE and its tech costs. I then use DTE finances for Tech programs that have benefits to my personal business. This is a Conflict of Interest.*
- b. *Assets: I put in a budget for DTE assets. I use the funds for mechanical repairs and vehicles for DTE. I then receive personal favours from the mechanic to repair and use parts for my own car with DTE funds. This is a Conflict of Interest.”*

## 2. Robin MacPherson

*“My understanding is based on years of experience and numerous reference points.*

*I am a member of the ICDA and seek external advice if needed. I also have my own legal counsel whom I can turn to if required.*

*Hence if I suspected Conflict of Interest in another director then I would turn the suspicion into evidence first and act accordingly, as a director you are honour bound. However rumour and innuendo doesn't make it so.*

*How I might experience Conflict Of Interest? I am involved in a number of events and none of them operate in conflict with each other and over the years I have built a pretty good understanding of what is permissible and what is not. I believe just as travel broadens the mind, multi-event participation is how one learns new things. Some processes are beneficial to all events, better for the industry I am involved in and then there is stuff that you know is totally inappropriate to share, ie customer lists, volunteer lists.*

*Another example of Understanding Conflict of Interest would be to imagine the improper harvesting of a co-ops members lists to send to members unapproved correspondence. If such an act was condoned by a director and a director actively participated in it. Then this is clearly a conflict between personal allegiance and being a director. if your not up to putting the role ahead of your personal then you should step down.*

*Just because directors have a conflict of interest between their personal loyalty to friends or political clique it doesn't abrogate their responsibility to the role and their obligations to the board.*

*Another example of Conflict of Interest would be if a director mishandled confidential documents concerning sexual assaults ultimately finding their way to the perpetrator (their friend). If this was to happen then you would say the director has without a doubt compromised their obligation to the role, the co-op and it's members.”*

## 3. Lance Nash

*“Typically, a conflict of interest arises when a person or organisation is involved in a decision in one sphere which may lead to them gaining an advantage in another.*

*This is a scenario which happens often in DTE, where people may have numerous interests and social contacts and it is not unusual for a person to have a business interest which operates at ConFest, while they maintain a role as a volunteer.*

*None of the above means that their behaviour is corrupt unless they actively promote a scenario from which they, or an associate, makes a profit.*

*There are other examples which apply where a financial advantage doesn't accrue but there is some other advantage available.*

*If I was to be involved in a situation where I would profit from a Board decision I would need to stand aside from that decision. If I knew that another director was involved in such a process I would initially counsel them to withdraw from the decision making process and to refrain from exerting pressure to influence the decision. Failing that, I might call for a meeting of the Board to discuss the issue.*

*As a caution, we need to be fairly careful about accusing people of having a conflict of interest. It is not unusual for people to make money at or through ConFest and to also be an active and valuable volunteer.*

*The hypothetical scenario is one that I have witnessed often. A food vendor is chosen to run a stall at ConFest but works as a volunteer and attends meetings. They may even be a Director. They, and members attending, have a duty to ensure they aren't actively involved in deciding the placement of their stall or any particular conditions under which it may run.”*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

## 4. Kathy Ernst

*"A Conflict of Interest is when a person uses their position to benefit themselves individually at the expense of the organisation or when a person's ability to make a decision in the best interest of DTE is compromised by their interests outside of DTE.*

*It is a Director's responsibility to declare a Conflict of Interest and remove themselves from discussion and voting. Other people can suggest that there might be a Conflict of Interest but my understanding is that a Director cannot be forced to declare a conflict of interest. I would discuss any potential conflict of interest with the director and when a motion is discussed at a meeting, but it is up to the Director to declare the Conflict of Interest.*

*In the past two years we have had increased transparency of financial transactions. This will deter people from improper use of DTE funds and allow improper spending to be addressed early and nipped in the bud.*

*Give a hypothetical example? There are real examples of financial conflict of interest. I am currently working on a process for the Board to consider complaints about improper spending. I hope we will be able to resolve most of these issues quickly and without too much fuss.*

*In both types of Conflict of Interest I believe that if it cannot be resolved by the Board, the members need to be made aware of what is happening. Members elect Directors and can even remove Directors mid-term if necessary."*

## 5. John Magor

*"I'll frame this answer with reference to the responsibilities any nominee or Director I mentioned in an earlier question, and its reference to the responsibilities of Directors as being bestowed -by ALL Members - the honour of the role.*

*Beyond this, & to save repeating it, I'm more than happy to defer to my fellow nominees - specifically Tania, Kathy, and Lances definitions of it as they've stated it before me.*

*Conflict of interest, I believe, is a situation in which any person (or group) through their ability to influence (and / or vote on) any decision, has a responsibility to openly declare any ways that it might benefit them (or their friends) over the entire Membership.*

*----- censorship*

*----- inappropriate spending - Directors having authorised paying a fellow Director's rent -and- utility bills while they were 'volunteering' on site.*

*This was done without any member or other committee or group within all of DTE.*

*It took one Director to need to make sure this was eventually minuted, but any time I raised it, well enough people know how people were treated who call out such actions - so I fully encourage an entirely open, transparent, and honest series of process so that any allegations of conflicts of interest can be called out for what they are, base entirely on any AND ALL of the facts of the matter, as well as having the benefit of any and all unfounded allegations being called out for what they are.*

*Re the "weaponising of 'facts'" - I question this often used term - what's 'weaponising'? if the facts of the matter haven't been handled in an open and transparent manner, The only 'weaponising' that occurs in these situations occurs by the attacking of those who dare to raise them.*

*In any conflict of interest, it's those who seek to keep facts, or conflicts of interest hidden from Members by framing Members who speak up to them pariahs. This is the -only- weaponising factor in this."*

**Q6: What is your vision for Confest if we cannot gather like we have before?**

The Hosts selected a speaking order based on the last letter of each candidates FIRST NAME?

## 1. Tania Morsman

*"At this point under the current covid laws we wont be gathering like Confest was. That's not to say it cant have all the elements of a traditional Confest.*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*There are particular legal requirements that involve the vaxx from what I understand up that DTE must conform to if we are to hold gatherings again. This is unfortunate but it is out of our hands if we want to gather again. I have always been in favour of smaller Confests rising up but to do that we need to be consistent with our planning. Maybe three smaller Confests per year. I don't see smaller as a bad thing. I see it as a way to manage what we have. I have always understood that the essence of Confest Gathering is in the people who make it happen.*

*Look if it is that you have to be vaxxed before entering we will see a decline in numbers for sure and our friends from overseas. I don't really know what it looks like in terms of only vaxxed or non vaxxed.*

*I think there's a bigger issue here and that is those who won't be admitted due to not having had the vaxx. I think this is really sad, it deeply saddens me. I have no solution, but I am mindful of the divide that it poses.*

*I really don't know at this point, but I'd love to delve into more conversations around this. I do understand that as much as we are governed by legislation now we'll be governed by legislation then. What I do recognise is that everything has been upended and it's like a reboot!"*

## 2. Lance Nash

*"If we look at what DTE has done in the past we find that it has run ConFest for about 45 years, it has run several small festivals (NonFests) it has run urban Exhibitions of Alternatives, it has run ConFab and it has run musical events. It has also worked with and supported conservation groups and social justice initiatives and it has supported protest activities. It has assets of around \$2m (largely cash and freehold properties) and it has the most wonderfully skilled and creative community of ConFesters just waiting to be invited to help.*

*My vision is that we revisit a number of these activities, whether or not a traditional Confest goes ahead, and we add to them ConFest Online and events on ConFestopia.*

*We need to fund this by harnessing our wonderful ConFesters to come up with an income stream, presumably doing something with the two large chunks of land we own in southern New South Wales."*

## 3. Kathy Ernst

*"The obvious answer is that we will have many small ConFests. This could be smaller gatherings on our existing sites or throughout Australia. While I would encourage this, I see it is only a partial answer.*

*Small gatherings do not provide the same experience as one with several thousand people. There are only a few long weekends when we can hold an extended festival. ConFest is best experienced over a longer period and our properties are too remote for an ordinary weekend. It is difficult to make enough money from small festivals to support our expenses.*

*I believe that we will soon be able to hold festivals of a few thousand people soon. Maybe we could have multiple medium sized festivals at both our properties. If this can't happen we may eventually need to buy properties closer to the cities where our participants live and have regular weekend gatherings. In the meantime we could hire facilities as Sydney ConFest does. The problem is: at what point do we decide that ConFest as we knew it will not return?*

*If ConFest cannot happen this Easter I believe we need to have one or several smaller gatherings. We cannot go any longer without a gathering even if it is only for members and regular volunteers.*

*The Board can plan, facilitate and encourage but ultimately it is up to the members and volunteers – they are the ones that will make it happen."*

## 4. John Magor

*"(I acknowledge)Tania's response first - it was bloody great!!*

*Put this question to the community first (also, in my opinion, because -once again- -- Directors are the ONLY DTE position chosen by all members) this applies to pretty much every question. No Director can (or should) claim (or act) in a way that presumes they know what's 'best' for Members.*

*My response includes:*

- Online?
- More, smaller gatherings, maybe 'state based' - either by gatherings in different states, and/or gatherings held on DTE sites, but invites only for members from various states (if any future Covid restrictions make this a 'best' option)



# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

- *Many working bees, possibly even 'rolling' working bees*

*I note that 2 fellow nominees have stated a number of times, that they are 'fellow nominees' for the record I consider all nominees fellow nominees"*

## 5. Robin MacPherson

*" ConFest Futures, ConFest Online, Urban Warehouse/Space and Cooperative Future Fiscal Planning*

- *More smaller gatherings in more regions, a reinvigoration of a national network of ConFest's*
- *Potentially a warehouse/space in Melb and Sydney to enable our pursuit alternative agendas/lifestyle options*
- *Confest Online re-emerging as an exploration of online alternatives and help bring together our dispersed communities*
- *Most of all it will require good community consultation and much discussion, something I am very much looking forward to"*

## BREAK

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- From 9:05 - 9:15pm
- During the break Forum attendees were invited to write their Questions to one, several or all candidates into the CHAT that was set up to only direct questions to the Hosts
- One question only per person in the CHAT - until everyone who has wanted to ask a question has done so
- Questions are to be concise, respectful and thoughtful
- Hosts choose the order of questions by how they appeared in the CHAT
- If Hosts deemed any of the submitted questions to be inappropriate, they would not be asking them

## QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

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- Candidates were permitted a 2 minute response before their mic was muted
- If the question was directed to all candidates, the order of speaking was rotated - this is reflected in the transcription from the audio shown below
- Time stamps [MM:SS] at the beginning of the questions from the floor refer to Part 2 of the Forum's audio recording <https://www.dte.org.au/audiominutes/2021-11-24%20FORUM%20part%20two.mp3> to allow easier navigation to each question's audio response.

**[00:16] From Bruce from Arts: To all candidates. In ONLY a few words; What motivated you to want to become a director?**

**Tania:** *"In a nutshell it is my love for the people of DTE, and their acceptance of me in their community. It is the only community I have felt that I wanted to be a group of. I am a fish – I fish in an out, moving and swimming in and out of everything, for the longest period of time I feel that this cooperative accepts me and the learning has been extraordinary.*

*Yes I love this cooperative, it speaks to my heart, I am just so grateful so very very grateful thank you. "*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

**Robin:** *"I would like to point out that 25 years ago or more when I first came to Confest I can say that it literally changed my life irreversibly. I saw a different way of living, I saw a different way our country could be, I saw different ways that we could collaborate and make things happen that I never thought possible. It put me in a position to consider events, career and I am forever ever grateful. And so coming back to down to earth as I did maybe about 15 or 16 years ago, was very much about putting back in to something that has given me so much. I believe that today the board is in crisis, I believe it needs a strong board experience now more than ever, diplomacy and compassion not abuse. And that's why I think I would be a good director."*

**Lance:** *"Bear in mind that I didn't come onto the deck this side of the century. I was helped very much by down to earth when I came into it. I was enticed to become involved because they wanted someone to run their stage. I have gained a deep and abiding respect for ConFest. And respect for down to earth and even more respect for the people who work in it. Walking around Confest has been my greatest experience and being involved in the music. I just love the whole organisation. I see it as somewhat in crisis. I have seen this for the last several years. It really hurts me to see so many people being nasty to one another. At the same time I know most of those people are really fantastic people. I have never seen dishonesty in down to earth. Nobody is here to make their fortune. They are all trying to make a good ConFest. Some if they don't agree with people, they get into Barnies, which is a bit of a problem with a large family. I am here because I see some problems, I would like to become a director because I think I have some of the keys to work those out. I am not entirely certain that I am the best candidate. I see value in what everybody has said tonight. Yes I want to help out, I think I can. That is why I want to become a director thank you very much."*

**Kathy:** *"Honestly the reason I wanted to become a director was to work for the future of DTE and Confest. So that was the reason why I was involved in the OC and the CC for many years before I became a director. The reason I felt I needed to be a director rather than only working through the OC and the CC, was the lack of information and transparency. I felt that the only way I could work this out was by becoming a director. There was a lot of secrecy around the board, and rumours about inappropriate spending, and I could never be certain of getting answers or be certain of what was really going on. As a director I got the information, I got access to Xero, and various other documents, which unfortunately confirmed a lot of the rumours about inappropriate spending and other inappropriate behaviours." I think that's it in a few words why want to be director rather just an OC or cc member.*

**John:** *"I went to my first ConFest back in the 80s. At that time my mum was dying and my father was terribly distraught. I manage to convince him to come to his first ConFest. I haven't got the time to express what a beautiful experience that was. At that Confest I threw in my government job that I held, went on a bus wherever that was going, and basically lived in a TP for two years Plus and didn't wear shoes for three years beyond that. ConFest has given me so much. I started to volunteer after seeing ConFest beyond just a party thing, because I got sick of just partying at Confest, and then someone who is here tonight started telling me about the ugliness of the meetings including Board meetings. I could not balance that with what my experience at Confest was. At the time I was in Ops, I was in Rangers it just didn't reconcile but I trusted the person enough to attend meetings. It shits me that they were right. So that was years ago and what is inspired me over the years Has been to try to bring about some change. To be honest the other thing that has inspired me has been Kathy. Kathy's ongoing strength, ongoing honesty, determination to bring honesty to membership, via sharing the minutes and motions by circular, and a whole lot of other issues stuff that would never ever be heard otherwise. So there are a lot of things that has inspired me to become a director."*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

**[10:43] From David Cruise: Will each candidate commit to support the committees as defined in DTE's rules?**

**Robin:** *"If you were going to say 'Would I follow the rules?' Of course I would follow the rules. Are the rules malleable, are they able to go to a general meeting, can they be change yes they can, so I would follow those rules. I made this clear in my initial directors statement I will go by the governance and compliance of the organisation."*

**Lance:** *"I'm going to start by making a statement and which I'm going to address. I have had the novel experience of being on the board which was sort of backed into a corner when having to run a major ConFest. Taking the bulk of the responsibility to run a large ConFest on a tricky site... I can assure you that you cannot do it safely, you cannot do it effectively – you need people. The best way to have those people is in the committees during the planning and budgeting process not just during the ConFest. The best Way to split that up is as it's defined in the rules. The committees have a brief, they have a knowledge of what we are doing, they are all experience people and they should be allowed to go ahead and do it. I do not have any quarrel with that. I do have problems regarding the way in which the relationships are handled between the board and the committees. I think the rules are at fault as I've said in a previous reply, I think we can do that by a combination of the policy of the board in front of all the people, and Policy by general meetings."*

**Kathy:** *"The answer is of course I do. I think that during my time as director that I supported the standing committees. Some of the ways that I have oppose the board motions that attempt to control and undermine the OC and cc. After the last AGM I was able to resend most of those motions. I have also supported the standing committees by pushing the board to provide payments at the time that they were holding them up, providing information to the standing committees to allow them to do their work, and I have supported issues such that allowing members of the OC to have access to Xero. So yes the answer to the question is I have shown that I support the subcommittees and I will continue to do so."*

**John:** *"...I seek to encourage better relationships between all committees. As a director my role is listening, talking, hearing and not imposing my rule or trying to gain power over any committee. As I see the role of a director as basically sitting back ...In fact the less you do the better for the entire organisation while still maintaining the role and responsibilities of a director. So I hope to encourage far far better communications in the board and the OC and look for a better in every single way rather than trying to rip it apart in divisive and horrid allegations - Not only the OC but the chairs who host meetings as well. So I would like to encourage Are for whereby we establish a series of chairs who agree and adhere to a series of principles, to reach free-flowing and open communicative meetings. This is my hope for DTE and this is my wish for directors. This is why I am here. "*

**Tania:** *"Thank you David Cruise, I would like to acknowledge that you would've put a statement before it outlining The direction of your question, but we didn't get to hear that. I have been privy to what's been going on, on all our emails and such, and am well aware of how the rules are being broken constantly by a select few Director candidates here tonight. So I would like to say and declare, yes David, I as a director if there is a rule that I am not understanding of, I think that is something that We have been good at in the past, though not all the time, that is some of the time deciphering our rules, because they do have a dual meeting sometimes. It is all in the spirit of ConFest, one size does not always fit all, I have said that for a long time and so I would like the interpretation of the rules to be quite clear. However if issues come up they can be challenged. Do I support our DTE rules? I absolutely do thank you for the question."*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

**[22:04] From Marte Kinder: The CC has asked the DTE Board to make the site fit for purpose eradicating prickles, deadwood and hazardous junk. Are you in favour of following advice of local landowners by spraying herbicide and if not why not?**

**Lance:** *"This is a bit of a loaded question because I don't particularly believe in herbicides. I have quite a lot of experience with Waze, particularly woody weeds like Gorse and blackberry. These are similar to the weeds we have on site I think the short answer would be to use herbicides. The downside to that would be, we would be using them for a long long time before they would take affect. So no I don't favour the use of herbicides, but I do believe that the alternatives are necessary, we will need to apply them all the time, and it will be costly. So that might as well be we need contractors in to do the work and it may involve herbicides."*

**Kathy:** *"I think we need to consider her besides, I would very much opposed to be using herbicides if we had an alternative. But there are herbicides that are not as toxic as I've heard about Roundup. Maybe it's our only option at this stage of the problem, and then once we use the herbicides, perhaps we can use another way to keep the weeds under control. I'm not an expert on this, but I do have a degree in related areas, so I think we are going to have to get advice from local people, including the person in Deniliquin who is already been out to see Bylands, and has talked to Andrew. And also some of the local landowners And I would be guided by what the experts say. And if our only feasible option is to use herbicides I would reluctantly support that."*

**John:** *"Marte Thank you for your question. I will state that I don't favour the use of herbicides as a first option. But then again I am not an expert on herbicides and/or weeds. What I am an expert is on ... is I know outside the front of my house at the moment, is (a lot of bees) dying ....And I am on the war path, I have no idea why it's happening. My preferred option is that we send a delegation to our friends and neighbours in Mouleimen Either in person or via zoom to seek local solutions by local people, That will enhance our stand as a community to ethically and in an environmentally friendly way this horrid issue. It almost makes me not want to go to Confest, even when it was in inverted commas clear last time it was still dreadful. So I hope we can find better ways to sort this out Marte. This is a good question because it impacts everyone at Confest, and I don't know how we gonna deal with it. I do welcome inclusive and broad and local solutions if you know what the reason then to re-engage with, what I consider our family our neighbours, and the residents of Moulmein. They can perhaps tell us what worked, and what doesn't work, and then we can tell them what we prefer to do."*

**Tania:** *"i'm not sure I want to pull anything out of my... That I don't know about. However I will say that I have been privy to the discussion that has been on our OC email, that most members received. We have had many amazing responses from our community including everything that has just been said. I think this is still in discussion, would I support the local area and their knowledge? Absolutely. .. the urgency of herbicides I understand is because of having a Confest at Easter and that in order to have a ConFest, for it to be safe – these weeds have to be removed, otherwise it could be seriously harmful. We as a collective cooperative would be negligent, and that would be a very... Sad affair, so with that in mind I believe there are other things that we can do, like burning and seek out advice and learning from our local aboriginal Wamba Wamba people, And go from there. At this point I think there are a series of things that we should be looking at here."*

*Do I personally know the solution to that? Do I support what we as a collective and a cooperative put into place, I absolutely do."*

**Robin:** *"I would like to add is What the hell happened? For the cc to actually write an email to say that the site is not fit for purpose, what has the OC been doing for two years. It has been trying to"*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

*remove directors, it's been trying to pull political scores, what it has not done is to maintained and looked after It's primary responsibility our properties. So I think we need to look at other things besides what you do after it, like looking at how we got into this mess in the first place. I thank the CC for sending it. As a director I would probably say the same thing, for any question put to me I would consider the advice presented to me at the time, assuming that it would be presented by experts, I would like to see creative responses, I would like to see organic responses, and ultimately as a director of the board, I would go by the advice presented to me."*

**[30:59] David Cameron added his comments about the weed situation - please listen to the audio for his views - there was insufficient time to transcribe his comments.**

**[33:23] From Ian Hales: Unfortunately, for a number of years the Board has been divided. By their majority pact have voted in block together on most motions regardless. Do you support this group factional way of voting, or will you always vote as independent from your conscience, as directors should be voting?**

**Kathy:** *"I always vote according to how I think, without allegiance to anybody else on the board. It sometimes might seem there is a game of four or a game of three, but sometimes it may appear being part of a gang of three simply because there have been three directors they have stood up against some of the motions that are detrimental to DTE and all which contravene the rules."*

**John:** *"I will always commit to voting with my heart, with my ears to be informed as such,, I am not interested in partisanship. .... I want to hear what all directors have to say, how can I vote Without knowing what my co-directors say. I can't, if I'm doing that I'm doing it from a place of power, I don't see directors as being a place of power, it's an honorary role - I will always see it as such, and the minute I see otherwise, I say now and openly on the record, I will resign. The current board and his propensity for ignoring so many emails from so many members is ugly and I think and I think really sad. How can the directors do these motions by circular, they throw out and then suddenly for directors vote before any other directors have a chance to vote, this is not the board that I want and this is why I want to be a director. I want to bring about beautiful loving change. I want the board to reflect what Confest is, And hopefully what Jim Cairns wanted."*

**Tania:** *"Thank you for your wonderful question, and I have an answer for that. It comes from the authenticity of what I bring to DTE, and that is I will always act with the intelligence of the matter at hand, and with my conscience I am an empowered human being. I work beautifully in my power and State that I do not need power over. I do not need to be in a faction to get power, in our vulnerability we have the power to action our heart, and I can freely do that knowing that my friends on the board will respect and understand, and not have a go at me or put me down or threaten me, and they will always value my input. I feel really good about saying that, so thank you lan for offering this opportunity thank you"*

**Robin:** *".... I would like to build consensus as a director. Sometimes you can't and four directors vote against three would be in a majority, it's not a block it's not oppression, it's not fucked up, it's simply a majority. And the problem I believe we had on the board, is a minority not accepting that they are a Minority – That they should have greater respect for the directors that have been elected by the members who have voted in a particular way.... There is no block, if you go to suggest that directors are unable to make choices belittles all the candidates, so let's understand the difference between a majority and a minority."*

## 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

**Lance:** *"This is a question dear to my heart having previously been involved in a situation where two directors deliberately absented themselves from meetings for a lengthy period of time such that it incapacitated the board. I am well aware of what happened when these blocks occur. To me it's not a A block of four or a block of three, ...whether it's majority or a minority, if that is consistently happening , Two things need to be done, the board function needs to be clarified, and the other thing is the board needs counselling not three of them or not for them but all seven of them, need to function with board solidarity and they need to be advised on what they can and cannot do if in fact they are not able to make a choice. So yes I will always act as an independent. I will also seek to ensure that the Board functions in consensus mode and it doesn't get carried away with these motions by circular, and it only uses them when it's absolutely to, and then it's open and transparent."*

**[48:19] From Gary Lasky: To all directors do you know your responsibility and duties as a director as listed in the CNL? Have you read the code of conduct?**

**John:** *"In all honesty I have not read my responsibilities as listed in the CNL. What I'm hoping to do if I am elected into the role as a director, I will be knuckling down and reading it. More to the point I will be seeking out current and previous directors for help because I cannot claim to be what I don't know. But what I will be doing is sending out emails to any directors and all directors who can assist me with the links I might take, communications via the phone, or anything and all that can bring me up to speed with that. What I would prefer is an induction process in place for all new directors, If I am lucky enough to be deemed suitable to be a director By the Members, to have a fluid and dynamic workspace where we can address those things welcoming all new directors to their responsibilities."*

**Tania:** *"I have had a glance at the CNL, and I have read the code of conduct for best practice by offices and directors, so I am familiar with reading it. Could I tell you offhand, not word for word, ethical decision-making comes to mind, conflicts of interest, resolving disputes and things like that. Would I always go to reference code of conduct? Absolutely. Power to the code of conduct I am all for it."*

**Robin:** *"Yes I have for many years, in many different ways and in many different forms. I am the director of more than one company, I've been passed directors of others, a variety of different types and I rely on my legal counsel to ensure that I don't put a step wrong. You try to do the best you possibly can and so as far as I'm concerned . I would like to point out I have been involved with two legal firms involved in the construction of constitutions for entities and their code of conduct. Yes I'm very much over (in understanding) it. "*

**Lance:** *" this is the area I've been involved in for sometime. Yes I do know the responsibilities as outlined in the CNL and the code of conduct for directors. Like Tanya I'm not going to be able to answer 20 questions on it but I understand the general thrust of these general areas, and I will do my level best to review them. I do know them from various associations that I help out with, non-profit and community organisations. If I became a director I would be suggesting to the board that they would want to be taking some notes of those resources and use them. A very insightful question"*

**Kathy:** *"I have read up on quite a bit of the CNL and it's quite large. I am aware of my responsibilities as a director, and I have attended webinars mainly run by the ICGA (?) about directors in general in particular about financial responsibilities of directors. When it comes The code of conduct, there was one that was circulated but it was a generic one and not all that relevant to DTE or to cooperatives, Perhaps we need to be looking at one that is relevant to DTE. If we have a code of conduct for directors I don't recall ever having seen it."*

# 2021 Meeting the DTE Director Candidates Forum Notes

**[59:07] From Martin Schwarz: hi my question is for Lance. Given you have not attended a confest in over two decades, how do you intend to make decisions regarding an event that has changed quite a bit in that time.?**

**Lance:** *"I have been to a couple here and there. The last one I spent a lot of time at was the 40th anniversary. I think that my long and varied experience running festivals speaks for itself. I have a fair bit of corporate knowledge which stands me in good stead. We are currently in a situation where ConFest actually hasn't been an outstanding success financially for a few years although it may have ticked some other goals. There is a weed infestation that has not been taken care of over the last couple years to any degree. We have constant problems within the organisation, and the flare ups at meetings are not handled well. The organisation is not developing income streams and it has a \$100,000 a year operational habit that will make DTE funds dwindle ... I think it's doubtful we will have a Confest next year. In answer to that question I think I can have a pretty good shot at it given that are there incumbents haven't quite got on top of the matter. "*

**[1:02:44] From Gary Lasky (second question): To All candidates....do you think the election process has been fair and reasonable?**

Our apologies there was insufficient time to transcribe the candidates response to this question. Please reference the Part 2 audio recording at 1 hr and 2 minutes.

## **VOTE OF THANKS BY DAVID CAMERON**

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We now bring the evening to a close. We have had 3 wonderfully productive hours, where we have heard both prepared statements and off the cuff answers to questions from the floor to our candidates.

We wish to thank all the candidates for turning up and participating in the forum. We also wish to thank all the members, volunteers and guests who logged in and asked questions.

We want to say thank you to everyone who participated in any way and finally we want to offer a really **BIG THANK YOU TO JOHN REID** for all his help and technical support.

**We hope you have found this evening to be informative and thought provoking. We want to remind you to vote in the upcoming Director's Election, voting finishes at 8.30pm AEDST Tuesday 30th November 2021. One hour after the AGM starts.**

Thank you and good night .