

Federal Election Q&A with the Barker Candidates – Summary of Results

The Federal Election Online Q&A session for the Barker electorate was organised by the Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce to gather insights into how the upcoming election could benefit our local business community. All ten Barker candidates were invited to participate, with a strong focus on business-related questions submitted by our members. While questions were categorised into a range of topics, the primary emphasis remained on issues directly impacting local businesses.

The aim of the session was to keep our members informed about the candidates' positions and the election process, strengthening our community's understanding of the election's potential impact on the local economy.



MEET THE BARKER CANDIDATES

 Tony PASIN	 Rosa HILLAM	 Jonathan PIETZSCH	 James ROTHE	 Jennifer TROETH
 Michael BROHIER	 Ian PENNO	 Robert JAMESON	 Major Moogy SUMNER	 Cody SCHOLLES

2025 Federal Election**Saturday 3rd May 2025**

Jonathan Pietzsch

1. Business Taxes and Financial Support

- Q. What changes to business taxes do you propose, and how will they benefit small business?

A. The Nationals will commit to making the instant asset write off cut-off \$30,000 going forward for companies with a turnover of up to 10 million dollars. If elected I will be advocating to make this write off up to 30k of any asset purchased, not just those valued under 30k. We'll also put in place an Entrepreneurship Accelerator tax reduction that will cover the first \$200,000 of taxable income for the first three years of a newly incorporated business. This will help set small businesses up for growth. Simplifying fringe benefits tax will also be a high priority.

- Q. How will you ensure small businesses have better access to loans and financial support?

A. The Nationals will work with APRA to simplify lending rules to small business and provide transparency around the requirements that the banks put in place based on APRA's rules.

We will make it easier for businesses to switch banks and find better lending products through the Consumer Data Right and will index the venture capital and early stage tax breaks to encourage investors to back Australian businesses and enable them to scale up.

2. Support for Small Businesses

- Q. How will you support programs to help small businesses find skilled employees?

A. The Nationals will invest over \$500 million to provide small and medium businesses with \$12,000 to support the wages of eligible new apprentices and trainees taking up training in areas of skills shortages for the first two years of their training.

We will also double the work bonus hours available to pensioners and veterans before it impacts their pensions. This will give small businesses access to a skilled and reliable workforce.

- Q. What initiatives will you introduce to help businesses adopt new technologies and innovate?

A. We will create a bonus tax deduction of \$2000 for eligible tech spends that exceed \$4000.

- Q. If elected, what will you and your party do to help ease the pressures on small business? With rising costs of power, wages, rent, supply chain issues, cost of living pressures for our customers, how will you look to easing these? Many businesses are finding it increasingly hard to stay afloat and the flow-on effect is killing small business.

A. I believe that cheap, reliable base load power is the key to reducing a number of the costs impacting business. The Nationals will adopt an agnostic approach to power generation, renewables, gas, and nuclear energy must be part of the future power generation matrix. In the short term we need to increase the use of Australia's own gas resources to power the nation. In the longer term, nuclear power generation using proven technology from South Korea needs to be our base load energy source. I would also like to see an expansion in our ability to store renewable energy, not necessarily traditional batteries but things like pumped hydro and mechanical batteries.

- Q. What economic policy do you think needs to be introduced or changed to help the small business of Barker?

A. Given the horrendous impact of the drought and a number of policy concerns that has brought into focus I would like to see an expansion of FMD's to businesses that are immediately ag adjacent, not just farmers.

- Q. How will you support programs to help small businesses find skilled employees, including through migration and reskilling initiatives?

A. The Nationals will refocus our immigration system to have clear outcomes based around the needs of Regional Australia. This will include re-establishing the Ag Visa.

3. Natural Resources and Economic Policy

- Q. Does the government need to do a better job at capitalizing on our natural resources? And why don't we take more revenue in royalties and taxes when we are one of the largest gas exporters in the world, for example? We should be doing what Norway and Qatar do.

A. We do need to do a better job on capitalizing on our natural resources, that why the Nationals will introduce a Regional Future Fund of 20 billion dollars that will be funded by royalties from our natural resources. This will deliver 1 billion of new

money into Regional Australia every year to fund the infrastructure and service needs of people right across the regions.

- Q. Qatar has zero income tax as they profit enough money from their natural resources.

A. ? N/A

4. Representation and Competition

- Q. The Electorate of Barker is a big area with many different industries and businesses throughout the various regions with sometimes competing needs and wants. How have you or how do you intend to make sure they are all heard and represented equally?

A. The Barker electorate has at least 5 distinct regions with settlements that range from

regional cities down to hamlets of a few people. Balancing the needs of the electorate is

about undertaking genuine engagement with communities and recognising that not every

community has the same requirements. If elected as the member for Barker I would undertake to visit and engage with all communities regularly and provide open and clear

means of communication.

- Q. Government doesn't have a good record of backing winners. Will you get out of the way and just let business be business?

A. The Nationals will implement a pro small business agenda that focuses on saving time and money with less government intervention and greater business freedom. Cutting red tape that gets in the way will be a priority in government.

- Q. Competition is critical to business efficiency. How will you strengthen and entrench competitive practices including, say, competition with arms of government such as councils?

A. The Nationals in government will strengthen the role and voice of the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO), restoring the funding

slashed by Labor and tasking ASBFEO to undertake performance reviews of how government agencies deal with small businesses.

A key priority of a Littleproud ministry will be to keep supermarkets from exploiting suppliers and consumers through new competition policy which will include on the spot fines and divestiture powers when supermarkets behave in a predatory way.

5. Infrastructure

- Q. Australia ranks 58th in the world for internet speed. And we're a rich country! How will you increase our ranking?

A. We need to look at ways to increase access and uptake of low orbit satellite services and I think we also need to look at some sort of regulatory response to Telstra as the promises made around increased speeds with the switch off of 3g have not materialised.