

PHILLIP BIGG

Independent candidate for Councillor and Deputy Mayor

Derwent Valley Council election 2026

BIGG ideas. Finish the job.

Grow the Valley. Stop the excuses.

I am asking for two boxes: Councillor and Deputy Mayor. Number both papers. That includes New Norfolk and its outskirts — Lawitta, Magra, Molesworth, Granton — and the upper Valley: Bushy Park, Glenora, Westerway, Plenty, National Park and Maydena.

I ran in 2022. I have kept at Valley issues between elections — housing, roads, regional services — at local, state and federal level. I am not a four-year tourist. The Valley does not stop at the New Norfolk roundabout.

First 90 days

1. First ordinary meeting: a proposed motion for a rates-remission policy. Two-year general-rates holiday on new homes. Three-year half-rate on vacant shopfronts that are then leased, with the saving written into the rent. The motion asks Council to obtain a report on cost and a cap, and to review the scheme after 12 months. A councillor cannot direct staff. A motion puts the work on the agenda.
2. That week: a motion that Council write to the Minister for Building Tasmania seeking a Derwent Valley housing partnership and a pipeline meeting.
3. A proposed motion for a live tip-status page — open, closed, or closing because of weather — so people are not driving to a locked gate.

Seven BIGG ideas

1. **Rates holiday for new homes.**
Zero general rates for two years from the certificate of occupancy. After a 6 per cent rise in 2025-26 and 7.75 per cent in 2026-27, a family should not cop a full rates bill the day they get the keys.
2. **Halve the rates on vacant shopfronts — only when they are leased, and only if the landlord passes the saving to the tenant.**
Valley-wide. High Street is the example people can see after the Salvos closed at 14 High Street. Same problem exists in shopfronts across the municipality. This is not a gift to landlords leaving buildings dark. Under section 129 of the Local Government Act, Council can remit rates for a class of ratepayers by absolute majority. The class is commercial premises that sat empty and are then leased to a new occupying business. Fifty per cent off the general rate for three years. The rent cut is in the lease and lodged with Council each year. No tenant, no rebate. No pass-through, no rebate.
3. **Put the Derwent Valley on Building Tasmania's list.**
A councillor cannot pour the slabs. A councillor can stop this Council treating housing as someone else's problem. Move that Council write to the Minister. Table an audit of Council and Crown land. Invite Building Tasmania in for a public workshop on sites, zoning and pipes. Give social and affordable applications a concierge path through planning. Attach the two-year new-home rates holiday and local apprentices on any job that uses Council land. Housing Land Supply Orders already exist for eligible government land through to 2032. Put Valley land on that list.
4. **A live page so people know if the tip is open before they leave home.**
Peppermint Hill and National Park already shut on fire-ban and extreme-wind days. National Park was then closed after a WorkSafe audit. Residents still drive to a locked gate. That is a webpage, not a strategy review.
5. **Increase support for community groups.**
Halls, pantries and clubs already stretch tiny grants. Grow the pool. Cut the paperwork.

6. Finish Pioneer Avenue and High Street before the next announcement.

Pioneer Avenue is the tree-lined entrance from the Junction roundabout on the Lyell Highway into New Norfolk. Council's 2025 advocacy paper still lists it as shovel-ready and still asking for \$900,000: pavement renewal, new seal, footpaths, kerb and channel, line marking and verge works that leave the trees alone. What went in the ground was a short reconstructed stretch. The rest of the avenue was left as it was. If the grant only pays for the first section, do not take the grant until the rest of the job is funded.

High Street is the same pattern one street over. Council's 2020 town-centre plan covers High Street from Arthur Square to The Circle. Stage 1 was built at the top end around the Burnett Street roundabout. That is as far as construction went. Council's own papers still ask for \$1.2 million to continue Stages 2 and 3. The 2024-25 Annual Plan did not fund those stages. It only said Council would "pursue funding." Traders further down the street copped the dust and still look at the old surface.

7. Fight for better waste management and landholder reimbursement.

I put this to Council in April. Move that Council write to the Minister and the Waste and Resource Recovery Board: levy money back to the Valley for cleanup, and private landholders reimbursed when illegal dumping lands on their ground and the dumper cannot be found.

You cannot cut your way out of a hole forever

After years of operating in deficit, Council cut about \$600,000 mid-year. Then rates went up 7.75 per cent. Nobody is pretending the books were fine. They were not. Cutting the road grader and the mower is not a growth plan. You get smarter. You fill empty shops. You get new houses built. You bring businesses and families into the Valley so the rates base grows. A remission that puts a tenant in a dark window or a family in a new house pays for itself. A cut that leaves Pioneer Avenue half done and the playgrounds on hold does not.

What the February 2026 minutes actually took out

Item	Change
Roads, bridges and footpaths maintenance	-\$88,000
Parks, reserves and recreation maintenance	-\$35,000
Stormwater maintenance	-\$6,000
Playgrounds (deferred)	-\$92,500
Tynwald Park AFL lights (deferred)	-\$320,000
Lawitta stormwater (deferred)	-\$265,165
Also deferred: Barracks drainage, June Road works, Court House toilet, Bushy Park pool investigation	See minutes

Bushy Park: stop saying it is gone

The Bushy Park War Memorial Pool was built by that community as a living memorial. Council voted to save it, then said it could not legally reopen — parking, access after the Styx bridge, wastewater, a septic system that does not comply. Then the answer became: the pool is finished.

"Where was the motion to demolish what cannot be made lawful and work with the State and the Commonwealth on a small, purpose-built pool that meets the rules — proper parking, proper access, proper discharge — on that site or next to it? Nobody put that on the table. They listed the problems and called it a decision."

If elected I will move for a funded options paper: keep the war memorial in place, clear what cannot be saved, and take a modest compliant aquatic facility to Building Tasmania, Parks and federal grant programs. New Norfolk's pool is a drive away. That is not a substitute for a community that built its own memorial with its own hands.

The National Park transfer station is the same habit. Closed for non-compliance. Fine — then fix the compliance. Do not send upper Valley families to Peppermint Hill and call it sorted.

Waste, the levy and dumping on private land

I raised this with Council in April when the 2026-27 fees and charges came up and the State landfill levy was going from about \$45 a tonne to \$71. Ratepayers pay that levy. Most of it leaves the Valley. Illegal dumping does not. It lands on the Lyell, on back roads and over farm fences. Public land gets a sliver of rebate when Council tips dumped rubbish. A private landholder who finds a load in the paddock pays to get it off.

That is the wrong way around.

If elected I will fight for better waste management. That means a motion that Council write to the Minister and the Waste and Resource Recovery Board: levy money should come back here for cleanup, and private landholders should be reimbursed when illegal dumping lands on their ground and the dumper cannot be found. It also means the live tip-status page already in this plan, so people are not driving to a locked gate and leaving the load in the bush.

A councillor cannot rewrite the State Act from Circle Street. A councillor can keep putting the Valley's bill on the Minister's desk.

Heritage rail is not an excuse to ignore the roads

I am Deputy Chair of the Derwent Valley Railway. A heritage line and a recreation trail are not the same job, and neither comes before making Pioneer Avenue and High Street finished roads, or putting toilets, halls and footpaths in the upper Valley in a fit state. Big corridor projects can wait their turn. Half-done local streets cannot.

What else I will take on

- Rate pressure after successive rises, with residents asking what they are getting for the extra money.
- Gravel roads, drainage and flood damage that reopen every winter.
- Missing footpaths in upper Valley towns where people say they risk their lives walking the dog or getting kids to school.
- Slow movement on the Lyell Highway while New Norfolk keeps growing as a commuter town.

"I ran in 2022 because I wanted a voice for communities that get talked over. I am running again because the excuses have piled up faster than the solutions. If you pay rates in Maydena you are not a second-class ratepayer. Put the motion. Chase the grant to the last metre. Fill the empty shops. Get Building Tasmania in the room. And stop telling Bushy Park that gone is a plan."

BIGG ideas for the whole Valley — not just the roundabout.

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