



Candidates close in on finish line

Jon Ryan

CANDIDATES have entered the final stretch of the race to become a Whitehorse councillor.

The 33 bidding for a seat at the civic centre should learn on Monday who has emerged triumphant.

Meanwhile, residents have put them through their paces at public forums across Whitehorse.

The candidates faced questions from the floor and made their pitch hoping to be one of the 10 people elected.

About 50 people turned out to hear candidates vying for the two seats in Elgar Ward at a hustings debate hosted by Elgar Contact in Box Hill North. The group's president, John Bredhauer, said all attended and "presented themselves well".

"They all had their own ideas of what they would do if elected to the council and were able to express those ideas," he said.

Candidates faced 20 questions on issues such as rates, open spaces, and development in Whitehorse, Mr Bredhauer said.

Their counterparts in Springfield Ward also fared well at a forum hosted by Mitcham Residents Association. Association member Neil Kerby said five of the six candidates attended at Mitcham RSL, and faced "enthusiastic" questioning from the 50-strong crowd.

Open space policy again featured prominently among questions, plus a lengthy discussion on bus routes.

"It was a very important event, not only to gauge how the candidates line up in terms of representing us, but also to gauge how much interest they have in speaking to us," Mr Kerby said.

The largest of the meetings was organised by West of Elgar Residents, and featured candidates from Riversdale and Elgar wards.

Honorary secretary Judy Sharples said the incumbent councillors had the advantage of being able to present what had been done during the previous term.

New candidates, she said, ranged from "extremely well prepared to pretty well unprepared".



Children from Taralye Centre Alyssa, 4, Mitchell, 5, and Ellie, 5.

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Art depicts kids' silent world

KINDERGARTEN children at Taralye exhibited their lives through pictures at the Blackburn school's 25th annual art exhibition.

Diane Jackson, development co-ordinator at the oral language centre for deaf children, said many children created art that represented their family and the world around them.

"Art and creativity is important as it assists learning and allows

children to express how they are feeling," she said. "We encourage our students to talk about their art work they've created."

Taralye holds the exhibition annually to enable parents to appreciate their children's creativity and to connect families.

"The art exhibition gets a lot of families interacting, which is great as it creates a support network," Ms Jackson said.

"Some parents feel over-

whelmed when they have a hearing-impaired child, but other school parents can encourage them because they know what they are going through."

Every child's piece of art work was mounted, laminated and placed on the wall at the open-to-the-public exhibition. "It looked very impressive, so the kids were very proud to show their art work to their families and friends," Ms Jackson said.

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In a land not so far away, Santa made his first appearance

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