

Marija Vujcic – Coastal Ward Candidate – 2000 characters

My name is Marija. I grew up in South Freo and White Gum Valley as the daughter of Croatian immigrants who taught me the values of family and community as the virtues of a good life. I have raised four beautiful children and we cherish our Freo lifestyle together.

My background is in Education and Human Resources and I am working with Jundalya as a trusted advisor and business mentor for the Thalanyji Traditional Owners.

In my second term I will work for:

- zero increase in rates for 2024/25.
- the full restoration of the Red and Blue CAT bus services.
- more transparency on the sale of ratepayer assets.
- improved basic local services for ratepayers.
- greening and care of our community parks and reserves to attract tourism.

WHY ARE YOUR RATES AT 9% AND INCREASING?

2012 King's Square Business Plan approved \$45M to build a new Civic Centre, financed by the sale of City assets: Queensgate Carpark, Queensgate Centre, the Spicer site for \$30M, plus a State government loan of \$15M.

2021 OAG Audit confirmed the total cost of the unfinished Civic Centre at \$63M, the sale of 3 additional income performing carparks was actioned and the loan increased to \$20M over 20 years, with a repayment of \$1.2M per annum paid by the City.

The opportunity cost of the overspend on this single project is increased rates, the loss of our CAT Bus, the sale of 5 revenue earning assets and a lack of maintenance on our roads, parks & heritage buildings.

Until Council addresses this overspend our reliance on increased rates and parking fees is bound to continue, as the sold-off income performing assets have not been replaced. Fremantle's low ratepayer base is often used as a justification for our financial challenges.

In my view, this is a deflection from the impact of the additional millions spent on the Civic Centre/Walyalup Koort and the lack of capacity to provide basic service delivery without rate increases to ratepayers and residents.

