

**Application Information**

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that your answers to all of the following questions will be published and made public on the PASS elections website (<http://elections2011.sqlpass.org>). Your email address and the email addresses of your public references will be public. Other contact information (including but not limited to phone numbers, mailing addresses, etc.) will be redacted for privacy reasons.

The following will not be published:

**Part One**

- Your home phone
- Home address
- Work phone
- Work address

**Part Eight**

- PASS Volunteer Reference
  - Phone #
  - Email Address
- PASS Public Reference
  - Phone #
- Personal and Work Reference
  - Name
  - Phone#
  - Email Address

**PART ONE - CONTACT**

1. Please provide your Contact Information:

Name: Rob Farley  
 Home Phone: <redacted>  
 Home Address: <redacted>

Employer: LobsterPot Solutions  
 Department: -  
 Job Title: Owner / Principal  
 Work Phone: <redacted>  
 Work Address: <redacted>

Email: rob@lobsterpot.com.au  
 Years of Experience in SQL Server: 14

**PART TWO - EDUCATION**

2. Education (list all appropriate types of educational experience - Degree, Diploma, University - please detail location):

Bachelor of Arts (Monash University, Australia)

Bachelor of Science (Monash University, Australia)  
Bachelor of Computing (Honours – first class) (Monash University, Australia)  
Certificate IV in Workplace Training (Tabor College, Melbourne, Australia)

### **PART THREE - COMPANY/PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND**

3. Describe your company's business:

Consulting, specialising in SQL Server and Business Intelligence and related technologies (such as SharePoint and .Net). We work across the full range of SQL Server – DBA work, Development work, Business Intelligence, and more.

4. Please provide your current job title:

My job title is Owner / Principal – I am the sole director of the company.

5. Please describe your primary job responsibilities:

I bear the responsibility for everything that the company does, including the management of my staff and what they do. My duties are shared between technical, managerial and marketing aspects of the business. I also mentor my staff, and am directly involved in their training and development. I also try to instil an appreciation in them for the importance of the community, both technical and non-technical.

One of the most important things that I do is set the tone of the business. This starts with our community involvement and support for local user groups but also extends into our professional engagements. For example, I help my staff to develop presentational skills and to achieve Microsoft Certified Trainer certification. This is not so much so that they can teach classes, but rather so that they can more confidently mentor our clients, so that our involvement on projects leaves them better than before they engaged us.

### **PART FOUR - STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS (Short Essay Format)**

*(Please note that these answers should relate to your public campaign platform)*

6. Please discuss why you would like to serve on the PASS Board of Directors:

During 2011 I was appointed to the Board of directors as a non-voting advisor. Since being on the board in this capacity I have gained an insight into the way that the board operates and the on-going vision for the PASS organisation. I believe I can help PASS realise its goals and reach further into the SQL community than ever before.

I think PASS faces unique struggles to balance the powerful SQL community that exists with the challenge of reaching people who are 9-5 data people. I believe this balance is critical to being able to achieve global reach, and I have been investing time in how to address this. I honestly believe that the

PASS organisation needs to have voting directors from more diverse communities, and being a representative of Australia should qualify me well for this.

7. Tell us about your accomplishments in other volunteer organizations; detail the key things you learned from these experiences:

Throughout my life I have been involved in churches and other organisations. Serving those organisations that I'm in is one of the things that I have always done. Some examples include:

- Leading the Adelaide SQL Server User Group.
- Serving on the South Australian Branch Executive Committee of the Australian Computer Society.
- Being assistant leader in church music teams.
- Assisting with the co-ordination of church conferences in the early 90s.
- Being on the committees of the church youth and young adults groups as a teenager.

Through this time, I've learned a great deal about working alongside various types of personalities in leadership positions. I've learned, as all parents must, to pick my battles and try to identify the things that will have the greatest impact. I've learned to deal with seeing initiatives getting caught in red tape and failing, and to fight for those things that I see as critical. I've learned the importance of trying to figure out the driving forces behind other people's perspectives on matters, so that I'm not standing up against something I don't consider right without understanding why someone else does. I've also learned to have no fear in stepping up when there is an issue I feel is important, and do not hesitate to be the only hand showing in the room.

8. If elected to the PASS Board, what goal would you set to contribute to the benefit of PASS? How would you work to accomplish that goal?

I am already working towards the goals of making PASS more relevant to international regions and of making PASS more relevant to SQL Server professionals who are not particularly interested in community; the first of these being an explicit goal, the second being only related and something which I am keen to address.

My involvement since the meetings at Stockholm has included involvement on a number of levels addressing the internationalisation of PASS questions, but has also included asking various people about their perception of PASS, and have been considering ways to make PASS more relevant to the wider population of SQL Server professionals.

## **PART FIVE - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (Short Essay Format)**

9. Please describe your management and leadership background, listing specific examples of teams or projects:

I currently run a company of six SQL server experts (myself and five others). I bear the responsibility of everything – the buck stops with me every time. I need to ensure that my staff are motivated to do their best, and to value the client and their needs, whilst maintaining the level of excellence and influence that I believe LobsterPot Solutions should have.

My leadership style is very much in enabling people and providing them with the task ownership they need to be able to step up in responsibility. I back up my staff wherever possible, but also do not shy away from bringing correction when necessary.

I persist with things, and don't quit when the going gets tough. Whether the problem be a client, a technical difficulty, or even a staff member, I seek to resolve the situation and to be able to move forward. I honestly want the best from every situation.

10. Are you or have you been a member of any board (volunteer or professional)? Please describe:

I served on the South Australian Branch Executive Committee of the Australian Computer Society for a number of years, ending at the end of 2010. I have decided not to run for a position on this committee again for the time being.

I lead the Adelaide SQL Server User Group, but this does not involve a board as such.

I have also been involved in committees through churches for many years.

11. Do you have formal management or leadership training? If so, please provide details of this training and an example of a time this training was directly beneficial:

I have completed a number of church leadership training courses over the years. One that springs to mind was one focused on Church Planting, run by CRC Churches International. Some of the aspects covered here included the importance to step up when leadership was needed, rather than letting things be overly committee-driven. Committees can be useful, but can also stop action from taking place when things get discussed too much. This has served me well over the time I've been running the Adelaide SQL Server User Group, which has largely been led by me alone rather than a committee (although my staff provide a large amount of support now).

12. Have you participated in any strategic decision-making processes? Please provide details of specific instances:

I run a business. I have to make strategic decisions regularly. For example, I need to work out the best times to get my staff to learn new skills as an investment for the future, and need to balance the technical and managerial aspects of running a business with the marketing and client liaison side.

I think of the time I brought on my first full-time employee, in early 2010. I'd brought on a casual staff member during 2009, which was great because I could pay him for just the work he did. It wasn't part of my plan though. I didn't want to grow a business on casual staff, and I needed to make the decision to step out and hire someone. That guy was not only my first FTE, but my first ex-employee. In hindsight, he wasn't right for us, but the move to start hiring full-time staff was.

13. Please describe your background/experience in dealing with organizational finances, including the size of the organization and sizes/types of budgets involved:

LobsterPot finances aren't huge – we only have six staff members. But still I've had to learn to adjust to seeing money as relative to the thing involved. Obviously the numbers are very different to my home finances, or the kind of money that has moved around churches I've been involved with over the years. Budgets are very different. When I need to look at the cost of sending five staff members to the PASS Summit, I could very easily figure that it's not worthwhile at all. However, when I look at the impact on my staff and the cost of trying to get an equivalent amount of training, inspiration, and realisation of the significance of the SQL community, I can easily make the call to spend that money. I just have to keep repeating that sort of operation to remove that part of me of me that thinks it's a lot of money just because I can easily remember the days when money had a different value.

#### **PART SIX - ACTIVITIES (Special Interest Groups, Committees or other activities)**

14. Please describe your past volunteer history with PASS. Specifically cover both event speaker and non-speaker volunteerism:

I've run a user-group for over six years, and presented regularly. I've spoken at almost every SQL user group around Australia, and many international and virtual ones remotely as well (including four events in just over a month earlier in 2011).

For four consecutive years, 2006-2009, I supported the SQL Down Under events (organised by Greg Low), travelling interstate to Wagga Wagga to present and support the initiative there.

I was a late fill-in for a 24HOP event in early 2010, throwing together a presentation to present in the hours before needing to present. I presented in the subsequent "Summit Preview" 24HOP session, and from there was asked to be on the 24HOP committee, a role which I have served in from Summit 2010 to Summit 2011.

In 2009, I supported the worldwide SQL community by travelling to SQLBits to be a late fill-in for a precon and spotlight presenter. In 2010, I returned as a scheduled precon and spotlight presenter.

In both 2010 and 2011, I commissioned PivotViewer collections of PASS Summit sessions, and also created a map showing the locations of PASS Chapters.

In 2011, I was asked to be on the Board of Directors as a non-voting advisor, and now serve on a number of sub-committees related to this position.

In addition to all this, I mentor many people, encouraging them to be better than they are. I will not list any of those people here, as I do not consider it to be appropriate for a public forum. I value individuals, and will always try to do what I can to help them improve, whether it be technically, professionally, personally or simply in their skills as a speaker.

15. Please give an example of a project you worked on for PASS that you followed through to completion. Describe how your specific contribution has benefited the PASS organization:

During 2010, I worked with Blythe Morrow to collect information about PASS Chapters from around the world. This was largely information available on the <http://www.sqlpass.org/PASSChapters.aspx> website. Having collected that information, I geocoded the various addresses and created a Silverlight application that showed that information on a map.

As time went on, I got Aaron Nelson to maintain the data, and then later, PASS HQ were able to take on the responsibility for maintaining the data, and they also started hosting it. I provided the support for them to be able to get it hosted successfully, and today it can still be seen at <http://www.sqlpass.org/PASSChapters.aspx>

16. Detail your participation in other volunteer organizations/boards (be specific about your contribution and in what capacity):

I was on the South Australian Branch Executive Committee for the Australian Computer Society for a few years, although was without portfolio. During this time, there was constant discussion and debate about increasing the relevance of the ACS for IT professionals in South Australia, particularly around how the ACS could support some of the Special Interest Groups that existed. Unfortunately, the local branch found it hard to provide good value to local IT professionals, because those initiatives were driven from a national level.

Within churches, I've served on committees for Childrens Work, Youth Work and Music Teams, and found myself in discussions regarding the goals of those groups. Questions arose such as how best to reflect God through the those church groups, and seeking answers as to what God needs the church (and those teams in particular) to be.

## **PART SEVEN - OTHER ACTIVITIES**

17. Detail other professional certifications:

Microsoft Certified Trainer

Microsoft transcript available from:

<https://mcp.microsoft.com/authenticate/validatemcp.aspx> (Transcript ID: 707979, Access Code: Adelaide)

18. Detail any awards received:

Microsoft Most Valuable Professional Award (six times), 2006-2011.

19. Detail some of your more recent published professional articles, books, etc.:

SQL Server MVP Deep Dives. Two chapters (7 & 40).

SQL Server MVP Deep Dives Vol 2. One chapter (2).

Bloggging at [http://sqlblog.com/blogs/rob\\_farley](http://sqlblog.com/blogs/rob_farley)

## **PART EIGHT - REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECK**

*(Please note that a short letter of recommendation from your references is highly beneficial, and should be included in the sections below.)*

*Volunteer References - You **must** provide references from 3 PASS volunteers with whom you have worked during your volunteer tenure at PASS.*

20. PASS volunteer reference #1 (please provide daytime phone and email)

- a. Reference Name:
- b. Reference Phone #:
- c. Reference Email Address:
- d. Statement of Support from Reference:

<redacted>

*Public References – You should provide references from people who agree to support you publicly. These references **must** have reviewed this application and provided a written explanation of why they support your candidacy to be published with this application. (These may be the same or different people than your volunteer references above.)*

21. PASS public reference #1 (please provide daytime phone and email)

- a. Reference Name:
- b. Reference Phone #:
- c. Reference Email Address:
- d. Statement of Support from Reference:

Adam Machanic

<redacted>

I first encountered Rob Farley in a private SQL Server MVP forum in 2006. Rob impressed me right away with his technical depth, quickly answering a question on his first visit to the forum that had previously stymied many of the longer-term members of the group. I later met Rob in person at various events, including the PASS and MVP Summits, and was always impressed with his confidence and personable demeanor. Later, in 2010, I was happy to accept Rob as a blogger on my Web site, SQLblog.com. He has proven himself to be dedicated to the craft of communication, and is the only blogger who has participated in every monthly T-SQL Tuesday event to date. Rob and I have struck up an online friendship, spending many hours discussing various issues over chat. Many of these discussions have centered around the state of the SQL Server community, and the role that PASS does--and does not--take. Rob is keenly interested in these issues, and is a true champion for the global SQL Server community. He has a strong moral compass and is dedicated to quality interaction for every member of the community, no matter where they happen to live or their experience level with the product. Both online and in person Rob presents himself as charismatic, a natural leader with the ability to easily bring together groups of people. It is without hesitation that I recommend Rob for the Board of Directors; I feel that his skill and enthusiasm will combine with that of the existing board and result in a long and fruitful relationship for all involved.

22. PASS public reference #2 (please provide daytime phone and email)

- a. Reference Name:
- b. Reference Phone #:
- c. Reference Email Address:
- d. Statement of Support from Reference:

Mike Walsh (organiser of Birds of a Feather and PASS Prayers)

<redacted>

I've had the privilege of knowing Rob for a few years now. Both as a friend and as a fellow SQL Server and PASS enthusiast. Rob's passion for the SQL PASS community shows at many opportunities. Through his time helping out at the Birds of a Feather events, enthusiastically picking a topic and gladly missing sessions to enjoy conversations with attendees, or his recent stint serving on the Board of Advisors making sure the Australia region is well represented at PASS - Rob cares deeply about PASS. His desire to serve the community at large comes from the same place in his heart as all of his other volunteer initiatives and I think we'd be in a better spot for his time on the Board. I'm running also, but I'd be happy to see Rob in one of the slots even if I miss the mark.

23. PASS public reference #3 (please provide daytime phone and email)

- a. Reference Name:
- b. Reference Phone #:
- c. Reference Email Address:
- d. Statement of Support from Reference:

James Rowland-Jones

<redacted>

I first met Rob at SQLBits back in 2009. He stepped up for us when a pre-con speaker had to withdraw at short notice. He travelled all the way over from Australia just to help us out and delivered a high quality day long pre-con on someone else's topic and also delivered their regular one hour session as well. We were incredibly grateful to him and were delighted that he was able to join us again in 2010. That's Rob all over. He'd do anything for anyone. Humble and gracious. When Rob engages it is always with the best of intentions and with maximum effort and enthusiasm. There isn't a malicious bone in his body (just a couple of defective ones).

Rob also brings a different perspective in his thinking. He's experienced both British and Australian cultures. Therefore he is able to communicate an international view. He also owns his own small SQL Server business, Lobsterpot Solutions Pty Ltd, where the values of PASS are communicated as a core part of the company's ethics and values. As an example Rob brought all but one of his consulting team to PASS Summit 2011 to ensure that his team understand the PASS community message and to help them all get involved in the community. How many others commit so much? Rob's knowledge, passion, creativity and insight are an inspiration to us all which is why I think he would be a fantastic addition to the PASS Board of Directors.

*Personal Reference – Optional*

24. Personal reference (please provide daytime phone and email)

- a. Reference Name:
- b. Reference Phone #:
- c. Reference Email Address:
- d. Statement of Support from Reference:

Yanni Robel  
<redacted>

Rob Farley is a great contributor for SQL Community. He is a wonderful mentor and is always willing to help others to improve, whether it be technically, professionally or even personally. The fact that Rob is located on the other side of the world from many in the SQL community it has never become a roadblock to prevent Rob from extending a hand when asked for help.

Rob is not only a consummate professional, he also believes in a charity work and give back to organizations. A recent example of this was when his company (LobsterPot Solutions Pty Ltd,) recently became a corporate sponsor of the Team In Training which is part of Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to be a sponsor of the 2011 Portland Marathon. Not wanting to just be a sponsor, Rob also registered for the event itself and walked the entire length of the half-marathon course to support the organization, despite a back injury. This example of selfless devotion is just small example of what Rob will bring to an organization like PASS.

Rob is full of great ideas on how to make PASS an even greater organization. He is a well-known and respected member of the SQL community. Rob's passion and desire to help others are an inspiration, to me personally as well as to many fellow members in the community. Rob would be an excellent addition to the PASS Board of Directors and I have confidence that he will bring tremendous knowledge and experience to the table.

*Work Related Reference – Optional*

25. Work-related reference (please provide daytime phone and email)
- Reference Name:
  - Reference Phone #:
  - Reference Email Address:
  - Statement of Support from Reference:

Dominic Mittiga (client of LobsterPot Solutions)  
<redacted>

Rob Farley, owner of LobsterPot Solutions, has been providing Business Intelligence (BI) consultancy services to the Courts Administration Authority since 2008, particularly within the SQL Server environment. The engagement with CAA has continued over the years to meet internal resource and skill shortfalls largely due to his and his team's professional approach to dealing with various issues. The other major factor is that the Lobsterpot group has demonstrated extensive knowledge and experience within the BI space, with a particular emphasis on the Microsoft SQL Server environment, during liaison.

Services have been supplied to CAA in a number of ways i.e. by the way of consultancy, solution design and implementation, and as a training provider. A key benefit of this has been the much needed skill transfer to the Information Management Group who manages the BI environment at CAA.

It is also important to note that Rob, as head of the Adelaide SQL Server User Group, has assisted SQL Server professionals keep abreast of the developments within the BI and SQL Server space. He has also been a major influence in maintaining a high level of enthusiasm for Microsoft SQL Server within Adelaide.

26. Have you ever been charged with a felony? If yes, were you convicted, and (briefly) what were the circumstances?

No, I haven't.

27. I agree to the time and travel commitments required for this office: \_\_\_YES\_\_\_
28. My employer is aware of and agrees to the time and travel commitments required for this office: \_\_\_YES\_\_\_

**PART NINE - SIGNATURE**

29. "I, \_\_\_\_\_Rob Farley\_\_\_\_\_, hereby certify, on this date, \_\_\_Oct 18, 2011\_\_\_\_\_, that all information I have provided or will provide in this document is true, and I agree to abide by all the terms and conditions listed within this document.

I agree to be considered a candidate for the position of Director-at-Large for the Professional Association for SQL Server. I understand that my email address may be made available to select PASS bloggers - screened and approved by PASS - during the campaigning period for the purpose of blogger interviews with candidates.

I am aware that the term for which I am applying begins January 1, 2012 and ends December 31, 2013. If elected, I agree to fulfil the duties and obligations of the elected position to the best of my ability." *(Please answer yes or no to all of the above):* \_\_\_\_\_YES\_\_\_\_\_