

Kooyong Climate Change Alliance

City of Boroondara Election 2024

Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire for candidates in the Boroondara election has been developed by the Kooyong Climate Change Alliance, a group of community organisations concerned about climate change including Lighter Footprints, ACF Boroondara and Move Beyond Coal Kooyong. The Alliance and its member organisations are non-partisan and will not be endorsing any candidates in the election.

The questionnaire has been developed to assist voters in understanding each candidate's commitment to the role Council can play in addressing climate change. The responses to the questionnaire will be used as the basis for a candidate scorecard for each Ward that will help voters make their decision. The scorecards and candidates' full responses to the questionnaire will be made available on our website and extensively advertised on social media. Printed scorecards will also be widely distributed to households during the voting period.

All the questions require a 'Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe' response, however candidates are also given the opportunity to make general comments. The comments will not affect the scoring, but will be available to voters via the website. Any unanswered questions will be given the lowest possible score.

Click on the relevant box ('Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe') to indicate your answer to each question. Please type any comments in the boxes provided, which will expand to fit your response if necessary.

Your Name:

Ward Contesting:

1. Climate Leadership and Advocacy

1.1 Do you agree that we are facing a climate emergency? Yes Maybe No

1.2 Do you think the Council should take a stronger leadership role in the community's response to climate change, increasing the ambition of its action on the climate? Yes Maybe No

1.3 The specific allocation for CAP implementation in the 2024-25 Council Budget is only \$1 million in a total budget expenditure of \$261 million (operating) and \$80.6 million (capital) and a projected surplus of \$14.4 million. Do you support an increase in the annual budget for CAP implementation, including an allocation for significantly more staff? Yes Maybe No

1.4 Do you support more proactive advocacy with other levels of government on climate issues by the Council (e.g. higher standards for all new housing to increase energy efficiency and minimise emissions)? Yes Maybe No

1.5 Do you have any other comments on Council Climate Leadership and Advocacy?

Explanatory notes;

1.2: Whilst Council has a leadership role, I believe effective partnering with community groups is likely to achieve broader reach.

1.3: There are multiple additional funding allocations to deliver climate adaptation measures including waste management initiatives, biodiversity, stormwater harvesting for public gardens, reuse & reduce programs etc (please see attached list for more detail).

A surplus does not indicate unallocated funds. Especially at the moment as we have not been able to keep up some payments (specifically the Kew rec Centre) until the complex legal process concludes. Regarding an allocation of more staff, that is an operational matter that the relevant Director would put forward if needed. Therefore I am not in a position to determine if extra staff is sought at this time.

2. Policies & Actions on Council Emissions

2.1 Do you support using renewable electricity to power Council recreation centres/pools, abandoning the proposed use of gas at the Kew Recreation Centre and converting all other centres to renewable power? Yes Maybe No

2.2 Do you support increased Council effort to expedite the phasing out of gas at all its facilities, increasing the current target of 50% of facilities by 2030 to at least 85%? Yes Maybe No

2.3 Do you support faster transition of the Council fleet (including major contractors) to EVs, with all new light vehicles to be EVs and new heavy vehicles (e.g. rubbish trucks) to be EVs (or a zero emissions alternative) as soon as practicable? Yes Maybe No

2.4 Do you support a policy to ensure that all new Council facilities exceed current minimum standards for energy efficiency, have the maximum feasible number of solar panels and produce zero emissions? Yes Maybe No

2.5 Do you have any other comments on Council Emissions?

Explanatory Notes;

2.1/ 2.2 & 2.3 ; A business case needs to be explored. Large complex facilities are not like domestic heating, eg. Collingwood have budgeted \$600,000 to convert their Leisure centre.

I support this in principle, but note that expediting change overs that are underway can undermine value for the ratepayers dollar. For example the fleet change over is carefully worked out to achieve best balance of economics and value. Regarding large contractors, Council is limited to the availability of electric trucks (very limited in Australia) and types of vehicles is taken into account with contract allocation.

3. Policies & Actions on Community Emissions

- 3.1 Do you agree Council should provide more visible and proactive free advice services to residents on emissions reduction/energy efficiency (e.g. pop-up information services, a shop front demonstration venue at busy locations)? Yes Maybe No
- 3.2 Do you support Council establishing a new program to support businesses to reduce their emissions, including free advice tailored to the business? (For an example, see [Bendigo](#) Council.) Yes Maybe No
- 3.3 Do you support development of a strategy to promote and support the community's rapid transition from gas to all electric renewable energy? Yes Maybe No
- 3.4 Do you support the introduction of Council subsidies for low income households to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their emissions (e.g. by installing solar panels)? (Subsidies could be in the form of direct grants or payment via rates; for examples, see [Merri-bek](#) or [Darebin](#) Councils.) Yes Maybe No
- 3.5 Do you support Council ensuring a significantly greater level of access to EV chargers (provided by Council or privately), including options for those with no off-street parking? Yes Maybe No
- 3.6 Do you support development of a strategy to encourage the use of alternatives to private vehicle transport in the municipality, including walking, bicycles and public transport? (This could be part of an update of the [Integrated Transport Strategy](#) (2006)) Yes Maybe No
- 3.7 Do you have any other comments on Community Emissions?

Explanatory notes;

3.1; I believe best reach for actions like this, and less chance of replication is by partnering and helping to resource some of our community groups.

3.4; Would need to see a business case for equity, means assessment and form of subsidization. Would also want to see community consultation as such funding subsidy would be coming from the overall rates income.

3.5; Somewhat unrealistic to provide a generic answer as there are so many variables to locations, and no definition of 'significant' . Case- by -case basis .

4. Policies & Actions on Community Resilience and Adaptation

4.1 Do you support strengthening of the Council’s new tree canopy target (27% by 2040 across public and private land in the *Tree Canopy Strategy* adopted on 9 September) and a well-resourced program to ensure it is delivered? (Note that Council has resolved to review the target in 12 months.) Yes Maybe No

4.2 Do you support strengthening of the *Boroondara Tree Protection Local Law* (e.g. by requiring bonds from developers when significant or canopy trees are at risk during construction)? Yes Maybe No

4.3 Do you support more active Council advocacy for regulations/planning controls to maintain/improve tree canopy cover, including consideration of requirements at new buildings for minimum tree canopy cover, green cover and site permeability? Yes Maybe No

4.4 Do you support a more active community education program about preparing for extreme heat risks, and the development of a program to support vulnerable people (including the homeless) during periods of extreme heat? Yes Maybe No

4.5 Do you have any other comments on Community Resilience and Adaptation?

Our greatest challenge is the State Government’s Planning Dept proposed Planning changes . These pose a serious and extreme risk to our tree canopy, permeable surfacing, open spaces as well as strains on the already overstretched stormwater, drainage and sewage systems. Speeding up densification , allowing greater building footprints and reducing the number of garden settings we have in many heritage and single dwelling sites will all have a direct, detrimental effect on our quality of life and livability.

5. Policies & Actions on Council Accountability and Democratic Processes

5.1 Do you support establishing a standing External Advisory Committee (including community members) to advise Council on climate action issues? Yes Maybe No

5.2 Do you support publication of agendas and minutes from all External and Internal Advisory Committee meetings (subject to confidentiality requirements)? Yes Maybe No

5.3 Do you agree that Councillors should be expected to hold well-advertised events at which their constituents can meet them in person at least once each quarter? Yes Maybe No

5.4 Do you support routine recording of all Councillors’ votes on all motions at all meetings of Council, including Special meetings? Yes Maybe No

5.5 Do you support more meaningful public consultation on the Council Annual Budget, including opportunities for community input early in the process of formulating the budget? Yes Maybe No

5.6 Do you have any other comments on Council Accountability and Democratic Processes?

Explanatory notes;

5.1; If ToR differed in a meaningful way from the existing Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee, and Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action.

Council advisory committees can already invite external guests, presenters and advisors, usually for a specific matter or area of expertise.

6. Other Comments

6.1 Do you have any other comments on meaningful climate action in Boroondara?

My biggest concern and challenge at this time is the planning changes the State Gov are proposing. These have the potential to seriously undermine many of the achievements both Council and community have made over years. They have the potential to exacerbate heat island effects and generate over-densification at a pace that exceeds society's ability to accommodate and adapt. These will have irreparable effects on our environment.

Boroondara can accommodate growth, but at a reasonable rate, embracing neighbourhood character and Environmental & Sustainable Designs. Not at the sacrifice of the heritage, greenery, gardens and the liveability factors that draw people to live and work here.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

ATTACHMENT

Budget allocations over the last 3 years that directly affect the climate response;

- \$2.2 million to implement our Sustainable Council Building Policy requirement to deliver a minimum 5 Star Green Star equivalent standard for all new buildings and applicable retrofits.
- \$400,000 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including LED lighting and heating and cooling upgrades.
- \$420,000 to support our ongoing park and street tree renewal program.
- \$266,100 to enhance and maintain urban biodiversity across the municipality by implementing initiatives including the Backyard Biodiversity project, Wildlife not Weeds program, interpretive signage and to extend the areas of Boroondara which are actively managed for their significant biodiversity values.
- \$240,000 for additional street tree planting.
- \$985,000 to engage with the community to develop a Climate Action Plan.
- \$260,584 to implement actions from the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Strategy to continue to reduce waste sent to landfill, maximise recycling and provide efficient waste services to the Boroondara community.
- \$256,200 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council's buildings by implementing cost effective energy efficiency upgrades/retrofits and installing solar photovoltaics (PV).
- \$55,100 to Implement identified priority works at Council facilities (water harvesting, water recovery and water efficiency) to reduce tap water use and stormwater pollution.
- \$52,030 to implement initiatives including the Backyard Biodiversity project, Wildlife not Weeds program and rollout of interpretive signage to enhance and maintain urban biodiversity sites across the municipality.
- \$1.54 million to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs at Council buildings by implementing low emission technologies and energy efficiency upgrades identified in Council's Energy Performance Contract.
- \$52,500 to design and construct the remaining priority stormwater harvesting and reuse projects (rain gardens and wetlands), so that we reduce pollution to the Yarra River, create wildlife habitat and improve local amenity.
- \$1.53 million to provide paths and infrastructure on Council managed land and advocate for walking and cycling initiatives on arterial roads to increase active and environmentally sustainable travel options for the community.
- \$100,000 to undertake a green waste and food organics feasibility study to investigate opportunities to further minimise waste to landfill. Resulted in successful implementation across whole municipality of FOGO .

\$1.65 million to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council's large buildings through investment in cost effective low emissions technologies and energy efficiency upgrades/retrofits under an Energy Performance Contract.