

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?

I believe that climate leadership is predominantly the responsibility of the Federal and State governments. However, Council has a critical role to play in “advocating up” to government, educating the public and providing the environment in which each member of the community can choose to participate in a way that suits their philosophy, beliefs and circumstances. Fundamentally, Council should lead by example.

Any increase in expenditure in any area of Council’s budget should be measured with strict controls, clear objectives and outcomes and an assured pathway to achieve those objectives and outcomes.

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?

I support these policies in principle. However, it is incumbent on Councillors to make full enquiries and understand the full context and ramifications of these decisions. I have significant experience in delivering emission reduction initiatives in local government through my work with the City of Melbourne (“CoM”). My company manages the CoM fleet. In the early 2000’s, we were approached by CoM to assist in reducing council’s carbon footprint. As a result, we introduced one of the first all-electric cars in Australia around 2008, some years before the major manufacturers started importing production models.

The Blade Electron was built by an Australian company operating out of Castlemaine using a Hyundai Getz platform. We trialed this car in the CoM car-pool and then as it gained acceptance, we

introduced another. We also reduced fleet numbers, introduced E-bikes as an alternate mode of transport and offered MYKI tickets as a further alternative. Through communication and education, we were able to bring the organisation along on a journey of innovation and development. Jump forward to today, the CoM pool fleet is almost entirely made up of EV's, Hybrids and E-bikes. Most importantly, council was able to meet its emission targets almost a decade in advance.

I have a unique experience and understanding of practical leadership and success in this area that I can bring to the council chamber.

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?

Whilst subsidies for low-income households might be part of a solution, there are also other ways to achieve the same result without further distorting the energy efficiency markets. These markets already enjoy significant funding from the State and Federal governments which has the effect of distorting price. I believe that these subsidies could be sought from the market itself without placing pressure on Council's budget.

I believe that Council has a role to play in delivering a solution for those households that want to participate. However, I don't believe that Council should be providing funding for capital improvements to private assets. Council already has a number of grant programs in place that support various community initiatives and are in part supported by funding provided by groups including Rotary. A potential solution to providing subsidies for low income households may be found through a grant program sponsored by the industry. This would provide a broader base of support and potentially greater funding pool to achieve our objectives in a shorter period of time. I would actively support and advocate for this as a Councillor.

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 draft *Tree Canopy Strategy*) and a well-resourced program to ensure it is delivered? 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?

I fully support these initiatives. I particularly believe that Council must play a significant and active role in protecting and growing our tree canopy. This necessarily includes a review of the penalties for breaches. Current penalties are simply taken as an economic cost of development and provide no real deterrent. Moreover, Council’s inability to properly investigate and prosecute leaves our tree canopy under significant threat as development activity grows.

As a Councillor, I will advocate for these policies and actively support appropriate penalties to ensure the security of our tree canopy.

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?

I have worked for a number of years advocating to many councils in every state and territory of Australia on behalf of various local community groups. In this time, I have seen some poor examples of public consultation and I have seen some very good examples, as well as all points in between. As a Councillor I will use that experience to advocate for a more inclusive, transparent and consultative approach to Council's annual budget process.

6. Other Comments

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

I believe that climate action is a critical but shared responsibility between the community, local governments, state governments and the federal government. Council has a critical role to play in education and providing the environment for the community to participate in a way that suits their philosophy, beliefs and circumstances. Fundamentally, Council should lead by example.

As a Councillor I will work to ensure that the City of Boroondara is a local government leader in climate change policy, enacting effective, responsible and measurable climate action initiatives.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!