

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?

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?

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

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

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

Boroondara Council must urgently enhance its climate leadership by significantly increasing the budget for dedicating more resources, including staff. Given the clear evidence of a climate emergency, Boroondara Council must take decisive and bold leadership in climate action. The current budget allocation for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) is insufficient to achieve the 60% emissions reduction target by 2030.

The Council must lead by example, demonstrating a genuine commitment to a sustainable and resilient future. Most importantly the Council should work with all stakeholder and community groups to make tangible progress and fund the deliverer of initiatives in the Climate Action Plan with urgency.

I will advocate for increased funding and additional dedicated staff to deliver the CAP. The CAP is multifaceted and impacts across all council operations including but not limited to sustainable transport, energy efficiency, biodiversity and trees, water management, circular economy and waste management and planning and development in particular stronger advocacy for higher environmental standards in new developments.

The Council should lead robust advocacy for higher energy efficiency standards and proactive climate policies, setting a strong example for the community and other levels of government.

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

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

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

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

2.5 Do you have any other comments on Council Emissions?

To effectively address Council emissions, Boroondara must fully commit to renewable energy solutions. This includes powering all recreation centers with renewable electricity, abandoning gas at Kew Recreation Centre, and accelerating the phase-out of gas in all facilities, aiming for 85% by 2030. Additionally, a rapid transition of the Council fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) is crucial, ensuring that all new light and heavy vehicles are zero-emissions. Moreover, all new Council facilities should exceed energy efficiency standards, maximizing solar panel installation to achieve zero emissions. These actions will solidify Boroondara's leadership in reducing its carbon footprint.

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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 3.7 Do you have any other comments on Community Emissions?

To effectively address community emissions, Boroondara Council must prioritize cross-cutting initiatives within the Climate Action Plan that empower residents and businesses to transition to renewable energy and reduce emissions. This includes providing proactive, visible advice services on energy efficiency, supporting businesses with tailored emissions reduction programs, and developing strategies to accelerate the community's shift from gas to all-electric renewable energy.

Council should also offer subsidies for low-income households and matched grants and bulk purchases programs for business to improve energy efficiency and reduce commercial waste. There must be significant increase in funding to promote sustainable transport alternatives like walking, cycling, and public transport. Through its planning scheme, Council can mandate for better passive solar design and zero emissions buildings. Rate incentives for environmentally efficient new building and the upgrading of existing facilities can also provide powerful motivation for change.

All these initiatives must be delivered through comprehensive community engagement to accelerate the municipality's transition to a low-emissions future.

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

Community resilience and adaptation in Boroondara must include comprehensive strategies for sustainable building design and climate mitigation across Council assets. To bolster community resilience and adaptation the Council should seek changes to the Planning Scheme to mandate higher levels of passive design and low energy requirements in buildings. Additionally, transitioning to heat and drought-tolerant species in open spaces, preparing stormwater systems for more intense rainfalls, and implementing stormwater harvesting for reuse are crucial.

Strengthening the tree canopy is vital and enhanced tree canopy target to at least 30% by 2040 and strengthen tree protection laws, including requiring bonds from developers to safeguard significant trees during construction.

Equally important is ensuring that all new developments adhere to stringent standards for energy efficiency, green cover, and site permeability. The Council should prioritize climate resilience actions on its assets, such as retrofitting buildings for extreme weather conditions and expanding green infrastructure.

Additionally, active community education on extreme heat risks and tailored support for vulnerable groups will further fortify Boroondara's resilience against the growing impacts of climate change.

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

5.2 Do you support publication of agendas and minutes from all External and Internal Advisory Committee meetings (subject to confidentiality requirements)? Yes

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

5.4 Do you support routine recording of all Councillors' votes on all motions at all meetings of Council, including Special meetings? Yes

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

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

Boroondara Council must significantly enhance its accountability and community consultation processes to ensure robust and meaningful community involvement that informs changes to policies, strategies and budgets. Holding regular, well-advertised councillor events and recording all votes enhance accountability, allowing residents to track council decisions closely. Moreover, Boroondara should adopt participatory budgeting, as practiced by neighbouring councils, to ensure community priorities shape budget decisions effectively. This approach should replace the problematic reliance on outdated community plans and inadequate consultation periods, allowing for immediate and meaningful input into budget formulation, ensuring community voices truly influence council initiatives and spending.

For more information see my Op-Ed on page 9 of Eastsider News July 2024

<https://www.eastsidernews.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Eastsider-News-July-2024-Final.pdf>

6. Other Comments

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

Meaningful climate action in Boroondara requires a holistic and aggressive approach that involves the entire community. The Council should increase its commitment to renewable energy by

transitioning all facilities and operations to non-gas energy sources and accelerating the electrification of its vehicle fleet. Investment in sustainable building practices and the expansion of solar energy programs are crucial. The Council needs to enhance public education on climate issues and significantly boost funding and staffing for climate action initiatives. Additionally, advocacy for stringent environmental standards and the enforcement of tree canopy and green space preservation in urban planning will solidify Boroondara's leadership in tackling climate change comprehensively.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!