

Kooyong Climate Change Alliance

City of Boroondara Election 2024

Candidate Questionnaire [\(version 2.0 M Nolan\)](#)

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?

Boroondara Council has already adopted a declared 'Climate Emergency', and Council is 3 years into its 10-year Climate Strategy, which includes a community emission reduction of 60% by 2030. But Council's Budget is at odds generally with responsible spending – e.g. projects like Kew Rec Centre and Kew Library redevelopment, meaning there ends up being a de-prioritization of local community projects.

This points to a cultural issue and/or an in-ability or un-willingness to reprioritize key community priorities – which includes practical climate-related initiatives - such as electric vehicle charging in Bellevue shopping areas (will help encourage local shopping over Chadstone as well as reduce emissions), and protecting trees and a greater priority on tree planting on Council land.

Tree planting is especially important in restoring Koonung Reserve near North-East Link. As well, we need Council to help residents with independent advice on installing rooftop solar to lower bills and emissions.

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?

Further to Qu 2.1:

Without intimate knowledge of the current Builder Contract at **Kew Rec Centre**, I am not sure of the implications on cost and time of conversion away from gas at this stage of what is clearly a problematic project – cost and timing are already major issues. Residents and rate-payers are already faced with 6+ years instead of 2.5 years building works, and \$89M cost instead of \$68M+, an overspend of at least \$20M.

I have an Engineering and Project Management background, and I have led teams that managed major infrastructure projects, as well as a variety of conversions of technology in my working life. As an example, I led the development of a strategy for the conversion of a large multi-million refrigeration fleet in Melbourne facilities, to non-ozone depleting refrigeration plants.

My view is we need to address any heat-pump concerns in Boroondara in a non-controversial way. We need to avoid risk to users of the pools and amenities. And we need to demonstrate the cost savings in using efficient electric heat pumps versus using gas-fired boilers. So while we **should** almost certainly 'create the space' (footprint and elevation) to future-proof the Kew Recreation Centre for future conversion to heat pumps.....we almost certainly **should not** do the actual conversion at this late stage in what is already a problematic project.

Without intimate knowledge of the current Builder Contract at **Kew Rec Centre**, it seems much more sensible to **begin with** the **Boroondara Sports Complex** conversion a.s.a.p. (in Belmore Road, Balwyn). This would allow everyone to understand and prove and be comfortable with heat pump technology and validate the economics of using gas versus electric. I have heard there is a pending grant application to a Federal body to do the conversion to heat pumps at the **Boroondara Sports Complex** (Balwyn) which would assist Council budget-wise.

I am keen to see a Strategy pursued for 'Conversion from gas to electric heat-pumps at all *Council's sports complexes* in a well-planned way. I will be pushing for a strategy to be developed if am elected.

Further to Qu 2.4:

I answered Yes, but the proviso is that we don't assume a building must be demolished and re-built. I am all for responsible spending. **Kew Library** (cost \$22M) is an example. It might be better to do a renewal at the Kew Library and accept lower energy efficiency but save a significant part of the capital \$22M for use on other important community-driven initiatives. It would have a much lower embodied energy by renovating rather than demolishing and re-building.

Kew Library is a specific case, but the general principle of looking at renewal instead of always demolition and major re-build applies.

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?

Educate, incentivize community, hand-in-hand with *Responsible Spending* by Council elsewhere, particularly guarding against obsession with major project infrastructure projects.

Make rooftop solar and heat pump hot water easier to navigate for residents. Need trusted, independent *Advisory Services* available for residents/households.

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 will strongly advocate on behalf of Bellevue Ward residents impacted by **North-East Link (NE-Link)**. **Noise** – removal of 50-year-old trees has already increased noise in the adjacent residential areas, removed amenity and removed carbon sinks. Council needs to review the specifications of the noise barriers, and the extent of noise barriers and the contracts, to make sure residents get a really good solution.

Trees – Council needs to ensure tree planting is AAA+ on Council land (and monitor trees on NE-link land). That includes good soil preparation (deep ripping to allow moisture to penetrate deeply into sub-soil), and tree health monitoring (by expert staff and contractors), as well as watering (5 to 10 year contracts that ensure moisture is available and trees and not stressed /starved of moisture during summer months).

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?

Residents have told me, absolutely we do need more transparency and communication coming to residents from Council, and we should have more consultation with residents on projects like Kew Library (not pre-determined Agendas).

We do need to ensure that when there is open discussions that is clear, and not over-minuted, which can be counter-productive to brainstorming.

6. Other Comments

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

Starts with 'Responsible Spending' elsewhere, underpinned by KPI's (key performance indicators) and PD's (position descriptions) for Staff and Councillors that aligns Staff and Councillor responsibilities with the Council's Climate Emergency declaration and the Council's 10-year Climate strategy.

Firstly though, Council needs to create some Budgetary headroom, which in turn enables Council to keep rates low, and also allows existing Climate Strategy to be more effectively implemented, along with:

- implementing more community ideas,
- building community
- encouraging local shopping
- providing more amenities like BBQ & shelters, public toilets (including public toilets in Leigh Park in Nth Balwyn and public toilets and BBQ shelters in Hyde Park in Kew East).
- More planting and protecting trees on Council land
- other

This all needs a good communication strategy and transparency to residents and rate-payers.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!