

# #16

## COMPLETE

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Page 1: 2024 Merri-bek Council Candidate climate survey

### Q1

Candidate Name

Ella Svensson

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### Q2

**Brunswick West Ward**

Contesting Which Merri-bek Ward?

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### Q3

**Greens**

Are you a candidate for a political party? Which Party?  
Are you standing as an Independent candidate? If you  
are standing as an Independent but you are also a  
member of a political party, please write that party in the  
Comment box.

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### Q4

Connections to Merri-bek Wards. Outline your connection to Merri-bek, do you live in the ward you are contesting, do you work in that ward? What are your other connections to the Merri-bek community?

I'm a Brunswick West local and have been for several years. I live here with my fiancé Sarah and hope to be here a very long time! I'm a member of the Brunswick West community garden and have many friends in the area. I'm part of the Merri-bek branch of the Victorian Greens and am regularly involved in campaigning in the Merri-bek area.

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### Q5

Climate Emergency. Merri-bek Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2018. Do you accept the research evidence from climate scientists and the UN Secretary General that:

Answer

the earth is already too hot and we are outside the safe climate zone?

Yes

we face a climate emergency?

Yes

local cooling is required to prevent runaway warming?

Yes

## Q6

Governance and Triple bottom line accounting brings to account three domains that we need for a good life. They are economic, social and environmental sustainability. In the past projects have been delivered based on organisational silos often not considering other aspects outside the silo. Will you endeavour as a Councillor for Council to use triple bottom line accounting on all Council infrastructure decisions to ensure that climate emergency priorities are embedded in Council decisions? Note that triple bottom line is already encapsulated in the Local Government Act 2020 Section 9, 2b and 2c for good Council governance.

(no label)

Yes

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## Q7

Transport: Upfield Rail Upgrade - Problems with parking and traffic congestion, capacity issues of public transport need solutions for upgrading the Upfield Line. According to Infrastructure Australia, the northern region Transport Corridor will reach and exceed capacity in the next decade. Do you support the Northern Councils Alliance campaign to Connect Melbourne's North for duplication and extension of the Upfield rail line to Craigieburn and Wallan for provision of a more reliable and frequent rail service catering for the growing population in Merri-bek and residents in new growth suburbs further north?

(no label)

Strongly Agree

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## Q8

Transport: Mode shift - What actions will you be pushing for to facilitate a mode shift to more sustainable modes of transport in Merri-bek as part of, or beyond, Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (PDF), including increasing safety for walking and cycling and increasing public transport advocacy?

I'm proud of, and intend to continue the work the Greens team on Council has done during this last term. They consistently voted to make it safer, easier and more enjoyable for people to walk, ride and catch public transport. This has been through defending and strengthening transport strategies, voting in favour of active transport projects, strong public transport advocacy (on bus timetabling & frequency, Upfield line, LXRP, accessible tram stops) and securing significant budget increases towards bike and pedestrian spending.

If elected, I hope to increase funding for active transport to provide increased pedestrian safety and cycling infrastructure. I also plan to heavily advocate to the state government to fix Sydney rd and implement the recommendations of Vic Roads community survey and safety research recommending removing parking on Sydney rd, increasing footpaths, planting street trees, creating accessible tram stops and creating protected bike lanes.

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## Q9

Heat Vulnerability: Large sections of Merri-bek's north are at the extreme end of the Heat Vulnerability Index, meaning residents are very susceptible to global warming extreme heat events. What will you do to address this beyond existing policies, including Merri-bek Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan (PDF), Merri-bek Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2017 (PDF), Cooling the Upfield Corridor Action Plan 2018-2028 (PDF)?

Merri-bek already has some fantastic existing strategies to combat extreme heat, however, they need to be fully funded to ensure maximum benefit for communities most at risk. There is potential for further work to help homeowners and renters to keep their homes cool by expanding programs like solar savers (assisting low-income households to install solar panels and insulation) and support to make rentals climate friendly.

If elected I would also like to continue the work of greens on council in significantly expanding Merri-bek's tree canopy and overall native planting, and creating more green spaces to combat the heat island effect.

I'll also carefully consider the climate impact and heat resilience of all proposed development and advocate for better sustainable design standards for new builds to increase their climate resilience.

## Q10

Waste Management. Merri-bek aims to be a leading council in sustainable waste management. What will you do to help Merri-bek in educating citizens on waste streams , to achieve Merri-bek's 2030 zero waste to landfill target as part of Zero Carbon in the Planning Scheme – ESD Policy v2.0?

I am committed to Merri-bek's 2030 target of zero waste to landfill. Now that the food and organics bin has been universally rolled out, we will see a reduction in the amount of food and organics waste going into landfill.

Nevertheless, medium and high-density blocks are often excluded from council organics waste services. Given this, I plan to investigate possibilities for tailored waste management for medium and high-density residential developments. Such as providing composting systems or tailored food waste collection.

Furthermore, given there continues to be a high level of contamination in Merri-bek's recyclables stream it is also clear that further community engagement and education around waste management is required.

I will also promote circular economy principles and support initiatives promoting zero waste initiatives.

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## Q11

Energy Efficiency and Renewables. Merri-bek has a goal of “Efficient and 100% renewably powered energy”. How can Merri-bek “walk the talk” on renewable energy and meet the community goals set in the Zero Carbon Merri-bek – Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (PDF)?

- 1- Getting council facilities off gas and onto renewable energy.
- 2- Work with state government to submit planning scheme amendments to improve environmentally sustainable design standards for new buildings.
- 3- Provide targeted support to low-income households through environmental/thermal upgrades.
- 4- Continue to buy 100% of council's energy from renewable sources.
- 5- Use initiatives like the community battery installation to help provide financial support/incentives for residents to move to renewable energy.

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## Q12

Supporting business and the environmentWhat actions will you take to help the Council promote environmentally sustainable jobs in the municipality and for businesses to reduce emissions in their operations?

Continuing to support the programs within Zero Carbon Merri-bek that support businesses with recycling, reusing, waste minimisation and energy efficiency.

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## Q13

Food SecurityHow would you build community resilience and address food security in Merri-bek beyond the existing Merri-bek Food System Strategy 2024 - 2027 (PDF)? How do you think Council could further support culturally relevant and nutritionally rich food to diverse and vulnerable communities?

The Food System Strategy 2024-2027 is currently in its first year so has not had time to fully progress. Council should continue to implement this strategy and regularly consult with community and review the effectiveness of its implementation.

Council should also continue to support local community gardens, food swaps, and grant access to commercial kitchens at low or no cost.

I will also advocate for further investment in Merri-bek food hubs to strengthen the food and material relief sector and provide direct material support to the community.

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## Q14

Buildings, Biodiversity and Urban cooling: What would you do as a Councillor to ensure that with new building developments, Merri-bek residents have protection from overshadowing existing solar PV systems, and that Merri-bek has sufficient vegetation cover to contribute to biodiversity outcomes, urban cooling, and water sensitive urban design beyond existing policies in the Urban Forest Strategy (PDF), Merri-bek Nature Plan, and the Achieving Zero Carbon in the Planning Scheme – ESD Policy v2.0?

Merri-bek council has already taken steps to improve sustainable design principles through partnering with other Victorian councils to submit an Environmentally Sustainable Design planning amendment. Frustratingly this amendment has been with the minister for consideration for over a year without progress. If elected, I will partner with our state government colleagues and continue to pressure the state government to approve these amendments.

I also commit that, if elected, I will do everything within my power to pressure developers to build to a higher environmental standard, including retaining (and where possible increasing) green space, and incorporating heat and water sensitive urban design principles. However, it is important to acknowledge that council and planners' role in negotiating with developers is a sensitive one as the state government has provided a pathway for developers to frequently bypass council decision making through VCAT. Given this, I will also advocate to the state government for return of planning powers back to local government.

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## Q15

What are your top four priorities for the Council Plan, to be formulated for 2025-2029.

Priority 1	<b>Affordable housing</b>
Priority 2	<b>Addressing the climate and biodiversity crises</b>
Priority 3	<b>Addressing cost of living</b>
Priority 4	<b>Improving cycling and walking infrastructure</b>

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## Q16

Democracy and representation: advocacy to State Government on multi-member wards versus single member wards. The state government has imposed single-member wards on Merri-bek against the recommendation of the council, the Local Government Association of Victoria, and even the Victorian Electoral Commission. This shift in electoral structure is an imposition by the parliament, not a choice of experts.

Answer

Do you support or oppose single-member wards?

Oppose

If (re)-elected will you initiate and/or support measures to pressure the state government to return to multi-member wards?

Support

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## Q17

Respondent skipped this question

Do you have any other comments on Climate Leadership and Advocacy by Council? Do you have any supplementary comments relating to the questions above, comments on other issues related to climate resilience and climate adaptation, or comments on making decisions for the whole municipality?