

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Djirri-Djirri Ward (Web Link)
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Q1

Candidate Name

Praveen Kumar

Q2

Djirri-Djirri Ward

Contesting Which Merri-bek Ward?

Q3

Labor

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.

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 have lived in Merri-Bek for the past 20 years and this is the area where kids were born, raised and went to school. Locally I have
worked with multicultural
groups, volunteered for the Red Cross and supported the Glenroy Neighbourhood house

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

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

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 fully support the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy and its focus on promoting sustainable transport. My priority will be to advocate for practical and immediate actions that build on this strategy, ensuring safer and more accessible walking and cycling routes through better infrastructure, such as protected bike lanes and well-lit pedestrian crossings.

I would not be reinventing the wheel again where a lot of time and money have already been invested into the Merri-Bek Strategy. I would be advocating for its implementation and expansion, including enhanced safety measures and increased public transport advocacy, such as improved frequency and connectivity of buses and trains, but I also understand that the needs of the residents vary depending on where they live e.g. Brunswick to Glenroy to Gowanbrae

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)?

To address the heat vulnerability in Merri-bek's north, I will advocate for increasing green spaces and accelerating tree planting programs to create more shade and cooling areas. Sustainable development is crucial, and I will push for stricter guidelines that prioritize green building designs, permeable surfaces, and energy-efficient infrastructure to reduce the urban heat island effect.

I will also work towards enhancing community awareness and engagement, ensuring that all new developments contribute positively to our environment without compromising existing green spaces. By building on the existing action plans and implementing these targeted strategies, we can make Merri-bek more resilient to extreme heat events

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 recognize the importance of sustainable waste management and Merri-bek's goal of zero waste to landfill by 2030. I support ongoing efforts to educate the community on proper waste streams and encourage participation in recycling and composting initiatives. I will advocate for the promotion of existing programs and resources, ensuring they are accessible and easy for residents to engage with, while also supporting partnerships that enhance community awareness and participation in sustainable waste practices.

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)?

I believe Merri-bek's commitment to energy efficiency and renewable energy is essential in leading by example. To support these goals, I encourage continued focus on expanding the use of renewable energy in council operations, promoting energy-efficient practices, and supporting community programs that make renewables more accessible. I also support exploring opportunities to enhance existing initiatives, ensuring Merri-bek stays on track with its climate action goals while engaging and educating residents about the benefits of renewable energy.

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?

I believe supporting businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable practices is key to both economic growth and emission reduction in our municipality. I will advocate for the promotion of existing council programs that provide resources, training, and incentives to help businesses transition to more sustainable operations. Encouraging collaboration between the council and local businesses can foster green job opportunities and help develop innovative solutions that benefit both the environment and our local economy. My focus will be on creating an enabling environment that supports businesses in their sustainability journey

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?

I support enhancing community gardens, local food initiatives, and partnerships with community groups to increase access to culturally relevant and nutritious food. I believe in building on the existing Food System Strategy by strengthening support for food education programs and creating opportunities for diverse communities to engage in sustainable food practices

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?

I would advocate for strengthening planning guidelines to minimize overshadowing of solar PV systems and ensure new developments contribute positively to green cover. I support enhancing vegetation requirements and promoting water-sensitive urban design to protect biodiversity and improve urban cooling, building on the existing policies to create a greener and more sustainable Merri-bek

Q15

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

Priority 1	Invest more into providing better health care services
Priority 2	Create more open and green spaces for families and elderly
Priority 3	Encourage sustainable development
Priority 4	Support small businesses, Community Group and Sporting clubs

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

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?