

#14

COMPLETE

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## Q1

Candidate Name

Helen Politis

## Q2

Harmony Park 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'm lifelong Merri-bek resident, daughter of Greek immigrants, mother, carer, and local small business owner. I'm deeply invested in  
our community's future. I'm a life member of Coburg Little Athletics and a member of the Lefkadian Club on Bell St, Coburg in my  
ward.

## 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 will be a strong advocate for real time tracking of bus services and I will for better bus services based upon the 2022 Victorian Bus Network Reform in the Northern Suburbs. Buses Merri-bek are an under-utilised mode of transport and I want to be part of increasing local uptake.

On top I'll be of this I'll always of initiatives to promote active transport which will help ease congestion and reduce the competition for car parking spaces.

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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)?

I will encourage the expansion of tree canopies and advocate for more green spaces.

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## 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 have a strong history of engaging with non-English speaking communities. I strongly believe in bringing the community with us rather than lecturing people on what to do. I will my experience and connections in the community to increase uptake of waste streams.

Unlike some "progressive" councillors, I will ensure essential services like the former Moreland Energy Foundation are not privatised by council, which occurred in 2022.

<https://brunswickvoice.com.au/energy-foundation-a-loss-to-moreland-community/>

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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)?

I will advocate for the use of solar on council buildings. I advocate for more EV infrastructure in the municipality.  
I will advocate to shift from gas appliances at end of life to electric. And support an increase to green canopy in the area.

### 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?

Council should have officers dedicated to assisting businesses transition to more sustainable practices. The Moreland Foundation, which was privatized under the watch of The Greens this term of council was essential in supporting such as this.

### 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 will encourage "urban farming" and community food gardens. As member of the culturally and linguistically diverse community, I know the importance of the availability of culturally food and see a huge opportunity in our incredibly diverse municipality to share knowledge and information in gardening 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 will ensure all of these considerations are factored into any design decision of council. I will be a vocal advocate towards ensuring that buildings are sustainable and include all these features.

### Q15

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

Priority 1	Coburg Revitalisation
Priority 2	Funding essential services like aged care and childcare
Priority 3	More parks and green spaces (including increased tree canopy coverage)
Priority 4	Cleaner streets and more effective waste management

## 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?

**Support**

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

**Oppose**

## 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?