

#18

COMPLETE

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Q1

Candidate Name

Liz Irvin

Q2

Randazzo Ward

Contesting Which Merri-bek Ward?

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.

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 Brunswick East for nearly four years. In that time I have developed many connections with the community. I have
been a member of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee for council, and I'm a member of the Friends of Merri Creek and
Merri-bek BUG. I shop on Sydney Road, I swim at the Brunswick Baths, and I regularly walk, run or ride along the Merri Creek
trail. I'm also a volunteer and board member at the Brunswick Tool Library.

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?

As a transport planner, I have experience in delivering projects that enable mode shift across Melbourne. I support the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy and support the actions within it. If elected, I would push for treatments that reduce traffic volumes on local streets and bring speeds down to safer levels. I would support increased investment in footpath maintenance. I would also support advocacy efforts to improve frequency on the Upfield Line, and improve bus services across Merri-bek (including Sunday services for our current six-day routes).

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 Council's existing strategies to combat extreme heat are incredibly valuable tools and resources. We need to fully fund them 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 workshops on making rentals climate friendly. Increasing tree canopy and introducing more green and blue infrastructure is also important for reducing the urban heat island effect.

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. I volunteer at the Brunswick Tool Library, an organisation that runs a monthly repair cafe to keep household items out of landfill and save residents from needing to buy replacement items. I would support investigating ways Council can support existing repair cafes and expand on these programs.

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 would support continuing the existing work of Council, with an increased budget allocation to implement the transition to renewable energy.

One priority will be to get all of Council's aquatic and leisure centres off gas and onto renewable energy. Greens on Council successfully ensured that the Fawkner Leisure Centre would be gas-free in its recent upgrade, and it will be important to address Council's other aquatic and leisure centres in the next Council term.

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

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 is only in the first year of its current iteration and so needs time to progress. This strategy is groundbreaking for a Council and recognises the complex intersections of climate change, socio-economic status, community resilience and food security. Continuing to support local community gardens, food swaps and granting access to commercial kitchens at low or no cost are some ways that Council can support this access to culturally relevant and nutritionally rich food.

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?

The policies and fundamental principles are in place - but more funding is needed to fully realise their potential. Regarding planning, many of the controls are out of Council's hands and are subject to the approval of the state Planning Minister. This is most evident in the Elevating ESD in the Planning Scheme Amendment that has been sitting on the Minister's desk for many months now, resulting in multiple Councils not being able to enforce higher environmental standards in new builds.

As per Merri-bek Council's existing policies and guidelines, where there is an application that overshadows existing solar panels, the applicant can be encouraged to change their design, contribute to the supply of new panels or relocate the existing panels.

Q15

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

Priority 1	Work with the State Government to ensure the best possible outcomes for the Level Crossing Removal in Brunswick, including safe and accessible alternative public transport, walking and bike riding route during construction.
Priority 2	Invest more in footpaths and safe bike riding projects
Priority 3	Allocate street space for more tree planting and pocket parks, which will reduce traffic on local streets, reduce the urban heat island effect, and provide more green space close to where people live.
Priority 4	Install more rain gardens and permeable surfaces to reduce the impact of stormwater and intercept water (and associated litter and pollutants) before it reaches our creeks.

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

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?