

## WODONGA COUNCIL CANDIDATES 2020 – CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEY RESPONSES



All 19 Wodonga Council candidates were emailed two climate change questions in September 2020. They were given a week to respond and sent a reminder text. Ten responded (see details in table below), the following nine did not:

- Libby Hall
- Ron Mildren
- Kev Poulton
- Willem Manley
- Beth O'Shea
- Graeme Charles Simpfendorfer
- Olga Quilty
- Rick Del Monte
- Danny Chamberlain

### RESPONSES FROM CANDIDATES

Candidate Name	Q1. How you rate the importance of climate action on a five point scale, where one indicates climate action is a low priority and five indicates it's a high priority.	Q2. How will you use your position on council to move council towards zero emissions?
Andrew Lees	5	Climate change remains the pre-eminent challenge of our time. There is much that can and should be addressed at the level of local government. My priority areas for advocacy include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The embedding of climate change and biodiversity thinking into everyday operations by switching major events to carbon neutral status.</li> <li>2. Promoting greening and zero emissions buildings into the planning scheme.</li> <li>3. Investigating the viability of rates incentives for energy efficient buildings.</li> <li>4. Continuing the transition to renewables through solar panels across facilities and energy efficient LEDs for all street lighting.</li> </ol>
Bernard Squire	4.5	I think all Council decisions should be passed through a matrix/filter that 'stress tests' the impact of decisions on a whole raft of issues/areas. The impact on our environment should be one of those filters (a very important one).
Brian Mitchell	5	My stance on an urgent move to zero emissions is well known. As I have done over the last 2 years, I will continue to advocate for continued change towards this end.
John Watson	4	Ensure that we work towards best practice to reduce and finally zero emissions. Covid 19 has shown with less traffic and air movements our air quality has improved. Look at council policies and attracting the clean business to our region and city. Work to keep our city filled with great parks and gardens, and when in the State and Federal government sector, lobby to make sure we invest in the right technology for our country.

Joseph Thomsen	5	I accept the science on climate change. I believe in doing everything possible to progress the uptake of renewable energy; both for the health of our climate, and a lesser reliance on the giant private power generation oligopoly and its ever-increasing prices.
Kat Bennett	5	<p>Advocate for a set target on emissions. Council is already doing some fantastic work in this space, as well as supporting other local groups to take action. But it's hard to measure all councils work when they are no set targets.</p> <p>Council has taken the first step to entering into the Power Purchase Agreement, which will see council source 100% of its energy from renewables. This is a fantastic example of Councils in Vic working together to utilize their collective procurement power.</p> <p>The state govt has just mandated that all Council Public Health and Wellbeing Plans must include how councils are addressing and mitigating climate change. I was involved in helping campaign for this to happen (with my hat on as a Councillor and working in Community Health). Climate change and climate injustice are the biggest threats to public health worldwide, and having this legislated as something Council is mandated to address, firmly solidifies Councils role in addressing climate change. Ensuring climate health is front and centre of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is something I will be strongly advocating for, as this also means it's firmly embedded in the Council Plan, so appropriate resource allocation can go to this.</p> <p>Another area to work on is ensuring Councils risk framework is fully considering the implications of Climate Change. Councils across Aus are already seeing insurance premiums increase due to climate implications.</p> <p>Another area to explore is cross referencing or procurement plan to include environmental considerations.</p> <p>Councils 3 bin system has diverted 71% of waste from going into landfill, this is one of the highest rates in Vic. But domestic waste account for only about a 3rd of waste entering landfill. The biggest contributors to local landfill is commercial and the building industry, so work needs to be done to action the current Waste Management Strategy to work with these industries to help them adapt.</p> <p>In my past term I have tweaked how I have approached the issue of climate change, and I emphasize the economic impacts of both not addressing climate change, and the cost benefits of addressing climate change, eg installing LED lighting in Wodonga has saved rate payers money. I find this approach reaches more people, and no matter what your understanding of climate change is, lowering costs to rate payers is something most people want and understand!</p> <p>I believe climate change is the issue of our times. I certainly don't have all the answers, and I rely on community and experts to help educate me. Like I have for my past term as a Councillor, and would continue to do if I was re-elected again, I would attend community events, advocate for resource allocation to Halve Waste, promote local action and use my voice on council to champion action on climate change</p>

<p>Michael Fraser</p>	<p>4: Protecting our environment is an obligation for everyone of us. As individuals, we must do what we can to ensure that we leave this world in a better place than it was when we arrived for the future generations who remain.</p>	<p>I will advocate for council to continue to maintain (and increase if possible) its resources in maintaining our waterways, green spaces and hills. We do need to work out how to get the balance right in how we use our hills. Locking them up is not the answer, using them to educate about the environment, and managing appropriate access is the key. Council should also continue to support development of "green" energy production and use where ever possible, both internally and throughout our community.</p>
<p>Rupinder Kaur</p>	<p>5: Climate action is high priority for me and I place it at level 5, because there is enough scientific evidence to advocate for the need and the urgency of earliest possible interventions to be implemented to reduce/combat the carbon footprint. In short I can say, " We need climate action now, more than ever before, because it will not matter how much money we have, and what car we drive, if we do not have clean air to breath and safe environment to live and clean water to drink" Life we know on earth will/may stop to exist in times ahead of us and, us taking no climate action will drive us to our extinction. There are many scientific studies we can refer to, even pioneer organisations such as NASA is also pointing out to the Global Temperature Rise, Warming Oceans, Shrinking Ice Sheets, Glacial Retreat, Decreased Snow Cover, Sea Level Rise, Declining Arctic Sea Ice, Ocean Acidification and Extreme Events related to weather/climate is happening and they are all corelated to the need of urgent climate action and there have been an increase in carbon dioxide emissions by 414 parts per million and a rise of 2 Fahrenheit of temperature at global scale, decline in artic ice by 12.85 percent per decade, rise in sea level 3.3 millimetre per year and further depletion of Ice sheets at the poles by 427 gigatons per year are all alarming indicated as per listed on NASA website. There are many more prominent scientific researches organisations and scientise across the globe that are working hard and actively advocating for the need of climate action based on facets and evidences.</p>	<p>I strongly believe, "knowledge is the power of achieving the change, the change we need.", to achieve zero emissions we need proactive advocacy at all levels". Advocate and reviewing current/future council policy about climate action and actively work towards developing/executing projects that will aim in raising the awareness towards implanting operations that are zero emissions or are carbon neutral. There is a need of bigger/small steps needed to combat the carbon foot prints, but I will also focus on implementing/advocating to raise the awareness at all possible level in Wodonga. Our Youth is receiving awareness on the importance of zero emissions through their study curriculums but, there is still a larger gap that needs addressing, such as providing awareness programs for the migrant/refugee settlers who are new to the Wodonga and they understand their responsibility of their actions toward achieving zero emission. This can only be achieved by tackling carbon footprint from all possible directions. Future buildings and current buildings to be fitted with adequate number of solar panels to generate enough power to sustain their operation and in future I will promote operations/infrastructure in Wodonga that help render/reduce carbon footprint. I also believe educating and raising the awareness about our daily choices we make on using items/action to conduct our daily life, will also help us reduce carbon footprint.  I future I would like to have community events such as debts, panel discussion and community awareness forums and many other community engagement programs that will welcome and let people from all walks of life to participate and share their ideas and understanding about the zero emissions. I will work hard and do everything possible to keep Wodonga clean, safe, and vibrant for now and in future for us and future generations to come.</p>

Simon Welsh	5	As well as supporting Council emissions reductions initiatives, I see a big role for renewable energy in terms of supporting local jobs and the economy. A strong policy on renewables can create a) direct employment opportunities on local projects and b) a local energy infrastructure that is not just clean but provides us with a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses to the area. We have a great opportunity for a win-win on environment and local economy.
Danny Lowe	5	I will continue to advocate and lobby my councillor colleagues to continue implementing change towards zero emissions. A continuing of the rollout of solar lighting along our path networks as just 1 example of this. Continuation of our tree plantings , design control over any new buildings and procurement of not only vehicles but power as well. Continuing the push for net zero emissions by working with all level of governments and the community.