

Mitchell Shire Council Elections 2020
BEAM Mitchell Environment and Community Energy Groups Questions
to North Ward Candidates

In addition to this survey, Candidates' Statements are included with Ballot papers that you will receive in the mail.

You can also download **North Ward Candidate Statements** and responses to a short Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) questionnaire [here](#).

<p>1. What are the three most important things that you would like to achieve over the next term?</p>
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Rhonda Sanderson:

1 Covid-19 and Recession Recovery – To ensure the ongoing provision of valued community services and to support economic development and job creation to assist our community through the pandemic and recession and 'out the other side' of this challenging time.

2 Land Use Planning - Review of the Seymour Structure Plan to remove references to the levee and the finalisation of the Broadford Structure Plan. It is important that development is planned and not ad hoc.

3 Caring for our environment - MSC can set an example by embedding climate change considerations into all work areas and by declaring a Climate Emergency. We can advocate to other levels of government to take action.

Bill Chisolm:

I bring a different set of views and experiences, some practical knowledge on small businesses and the Rural sector.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

<p>2. Climate Change is a rapidly looming existential crisis, reading the science. What role do you think Local Government can play in action on climate change?</p>

Rhonda Sanderson:

- Advocating for net zero emissions due to Council activities by 2030.
- Leading by example.

Bill Chisolm:

Council has a very important role to play, but within the fiscal constraints of each individual Council.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

3. Please explain why (or why not) the Council should join the Cities Power Partnership, a grouping of 125 LGA's and 500 cities and towns across Australia seeking to take meaningful action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. <https://citiespowerpartnership.org.au>

Rhonda Sanderson:

Collaboration with other councils is a great idea. There is strength in numbers particularly when advocating to State/Fed governments and in procurement matters eg Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance collaboration has been very useful. The sharing of ideas and resources is also productive.

Bill Chisolm:

This is a very extensive question and I need to do more research and study to understand the full implications. Might catch up sometime for a chat on this and similar issues.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

4. Please explain why (or why not) the Council should develop an Action Plan to become Net Carbon Neutral by 2030. Include any ideas you have about reducing and offsetting greenhouse emissions from Council activities and across the broader Local Government Area.

Rhonda Sanderson:

Why – shows responsible leadership in caring for our environment and the future of our planet.

Ideas – solar power on Council buildings, use of renewable energy, environmentally sustainable design and retrofitting of Council facilities, more online meetings/services and less vehicular travel, sustainable purchasing practices, use of electric vehicles, diversion of green waste from landfill, improved recycling.

Bill Chisolm:

Seems reasonable.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

5. BEAM Mitchell Environment Group has been active in our Shire for 32 years. Are you aware of some of the issues BEAM champions? What are the top two environmental issues that you are concerned about?

Rhonda Sanderson:

Yes.

1 Climate change

2 Waste

Bill Chisolm:

Yes.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

6. In your opinion, what should be the relationship between community groups and Council? For example, Mitchell Community Energy promoting Council use of electric vehicles over the next five years.

Rhonda Sanderson:

Community groups can work in partnership with Council.

For example, they can: bring innovative ideas and proposals to Council; raise the profile of environmental issues to ensure they remain top of mind for Councillors and staff; and, also make submissions to budgets outlining the economic/social cost-benefits of adopting environmental practices such as the use of electric vehicles.

Bill Chisolm:

This nearly seems a two-part question to me, if you take the example as the second part. Part one - Yes.

Your example (Part two) - No. As a rural resident I cannot see the infrastructure in place within 5 years. Shire vehicles need the ability to cover the whole Shire. If infrastructure comes to fruition I would definitely support

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

7. Given the importance of tourism in Mitchell and the inevitable increase in the number of electric vehicles on our roads, what do you think about the installation of charging stations around Mitchell Shire?

Rhonda Sanderson:

This is a very good idea. The MSC Eco Dev team and Environmental staff are conscious of this.

Bill Chisolm:

Definitely.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

8. In light of Victoria's continuing biodiversity loss, what can Council do - internally and externally - to advocate and implement policy, procedure and resourcing for the management of our natural environment?

Rhonda Sanderson:

Internally - Our Environmental and Planning staff are aware of this issue. Council can continue to maintain its bushland reserves and protect our significant roadsides and wildlife corridors/wetlands. We can educate the community to ensure invasive plants and pests do not become established. Externally – Council can advocate to other levels of government.

Bill Chisolm:

As an active Landcare member and a CFA member, there definitely needs to be changes on how we approach the current effects of Climate Change. We need to be innovative and strive for balance in the short term, while trying to address the actual causes. Australia's and ultimately the worlds Biodiversity cannot afford many summer's like the previous one, with no changes on how we tackle the threat of fire in the environment.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

9. In Mitchell Shire, plans are being made to accommodate rapid growth in our population in parallel with Melbourne's growth. As a Councillor, would you encourage the increasing rate of growth, and how would you manage the opportunities and impacts of this growth of our towns and countryside?

Rhonda Sanderson:

The southernmost part of the Shire is within Melbourne's Urban Growth Zone and will continue to experience growth in line with State policy. Our other major towns are listed in the Hume Regional Growth Plan and Plan Melbourne as sites for future growth. We need to responsibly plan for the growth so that it is managed and contained within township boundaries and is not ad hoc.

Managing the opportunities/impacts would include: encouraging environmentally sustainable design (eg water saving, energy saving), creating 20 minute communities where practicable, encouraging active transport (footpaths, bike paths, trails) and public transport, urban forest strategy, sufficient open space, protect waterways.

Bill Chisolm:

Hope the above give you a reasonable outlook on my thoughts. We definitely need substantial change and fresh ideas in many areas, and hopefully create a better world.

Fiona Stevens:

Please refer to Ms Stevens general response below.

Carol Tullett:

Please refer to Ms Tullett's general response below.

General responses

Fiona Stevens:

I have spoken on and supported improving our representation in the areas you (BEAM) hold interest in.

I'm a simple person who stands by the old 'Often action speaks louder than words'. Particularly when speaking of last minute questionnaires, public spooking or giving people what they might want to 'hear' with a pending election as a possible incentive. That's not me.

I can't promise you specific replies as the days are demanding, not so much just re campaigning, but family too, which has to always be the first priority. Back to your questions, it must be remembered if Re-elected I remain one of nine.

What I can say is I hold a great interest in the areas referenced. I can also say I believe we can always do better. I'm dry open minded as to what that looks like. There are many pieces to this.

One I will commit to is advocating strongly (as I have and do) for a much higher representation in solar on our buildings - Both Council and other. The sporting complex at Seymour is a wonderful example of success. The Tallarook Hall another but that leads to a far broader discussion with so many positives than can now be used as another brilliant example.

I really value the knowledge and passion and time invested by your group and Mitchell Energy, and again if Re/elected will greatly look forward to ideas and projects you might present and what role council may play.

I hope this rushed reply gives some confidence. I am happy to continue to be judged by my actions, not just words.

Carol Tullett

I am sorry that I have not answered your questions.

I feel some answers can be opinions only because as a Councillor I would be one of nine and as such the majority are needed to pass recommendations.

I will present arguments to try and gain support for recommendations that reflect the interests of the community.

What I can do here is to give you some idea of what I have done in the past so that your members can get some idea of my environmental creds.

In 1992 I graduated from the University of South Australia with a degree in Business Management. While doing this degree I studied a subject called 'Environmental Dilemma' and due to my nursing background I did a paper on "Disposable Nappies - Friend or Foe". It was very interesting and I learnt a lot. I had already been interested in our impact on the environment that's why I chose this subject. When going to the beach my friends would not walk with me because I would go with a bag picking up all the rubbish and delve into bins to get the cans since they could be recycled. I had some interesting nick names. I was also growing plants for wildlife and helping farmers and landholders plant the trees I'd grown.

After this I lived in Sydney where I would drag family and friends to tours of tips and recycling centres in Western Sydney. Again very interesting and at one tip I was astonished to see how this huge hole in the ground was nearly 3/4's full after just 18 months of operation.

We arrived in Seymour in 2002 and our son started Prep at the then Green School. By the next year I was able to organised the first tree planting day for Planet Ark by the school. I did this for the next couple of years until my son changed schools and then I organised it for his new school. During the time spent at the Green School I was allowed for a couple of years to conduct classes on Environmental Issues for the 5/6 classes to fit in with their curriculum.

I can't remember the years in which the Council ran the Sustainable Communities program but I was a regular attendee. I enjoyed seeing the 'House of Straw' in Kilmore, the property outside of Violet Town that did not use any energy off the grid and much more. It was a real shame that this program was discontinued. I certainly would love to see something like this up and running again since it gave people information so that they could make better choices.

I have not lost my enthusiasm about my regard for looking after the environment and lessening our impact but life sometimes has a way of deviating your focus.

I know that this is not what you and your members wanted but I hope that what I have written helps you understand some of my core values.