

Christchurch City Council - Spreydon Ward

Melanie Coker - Council

Hi ERO,

Thanks so much for the opportunity to answer your questions. I appreciate you taking the time to get in contact to hear my views.

1. What changes have you made in your life, personally, in response to the climate crisis?

The greatest contribution to emissions in Christchurch is transport. I have had an electric car for over 18 months that I'm now using for the majority of my travel. We do intend to get a second electric car for the family when finances allow. My partner travels everywhere on his electric unicycle (on cycle lanes where they exist), so he's doing better than me.

Agriculture is also a large contributor to greenhouse emissions. Our household has a generally meat-free diet, although we do have chicken and fish a few nights of the week. We never eat red meat. We don't use cow's milk, but instead alternatives such as soy and almond for coffee or breakfast. Our 7 month old baby is learning to eat and we're aiming for a mostly vegetarian diet for her as well.

In regards to waste, our household tried to minimise buying plastic packaging, but we could definitely do better in this area. I believe that the best way to reduce plastic waste would be by the government from preventing businesses from selling products with excess plastic packaging in the first place. We are also using cloth nappies and wipes to reduce the impact of having a baby on our environment.

2. Will you, if elected as councillor, vote to reaffirm the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration?

Absolutely.

3. Are you willing to make the climate and ecological emergency the overarching priority for everything that you do/every decision you make? How will you do that?

Close to 90% of submissions on the CCC Emissions Target supported getting

to net zero by 2040, rather than the governments 2050. This means that Christchurch people want the Council to do all it can to reduce the effects of climate change.

It's also important for Council to be forward thinking around climate change, and it has been around controversial plans on cycleways and public transport lanes that many of the public have been vocal against. Other projects include the Yoogo fleet, efficient LED street lights, encouraging community food growing, as well as many others

<https://www.ccc.govt.nz/environment/climate-change/>

Any decisions made by Council should always consider the impact on the environment. "Climate Change Impacts" are now a part of the reporting structure for reports in Council agendas, though don't appear to be included in every report. If elected I will be asking for this criteria to always be included.

Another area that is important is that groups that are funded by Council are also doing their part for the climate emergency. Again, I believe this criteria should be included in all funding applications.

4. How will you ensure that all voices are heard equally in matters relating to the climate emergency?

The most effective method is for those that are vocal about the climate emergency to talk at Council meetings, as they already do. This doesn't allow for everyone's voice to be heard though. Consultations around local projects, including asking citizens' opinions on climate aspects are crucial. It is the job of Councillors to take notice of climate change groups, such as Extinction Rebellion, and actions by people to draw attention to the climate emergency, such as the Strike 4 Climate marches. If elected, I intend to use social media as a mechanism to ask questions about upcoming agenda items and where Council should focus its spending. It is not possible to hear from everyone, but those who are vocal about the climate emergency will have their voice heard - as demonstrated by the recent emissions targets hearings.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Melanie Coker