

ECAN - Mid Canterbury

Sarah Walters - ECAN - Mid Canterbury

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

Our household has tried to be aware of our footprint generally, such as shopping with our own bags for over 15 years, recycling for over 20 years and trying to minimise waste generally (we are not on a rubbish collection route), buying second hand, not having a clothes dryer. I enjoy gardening and try to take account of other species as I do so, eg. food for bees and butterflies (including stinging nettles) and not being too tidy!

However, this year we had to replace our 2008 Daihatsu Sirion (bought for fuel efficiency) so bought a Prius C (not new!) and we try to minimise our car journeys. We also have an older, larger and less fuel efficient car so rather than having a car “each” (or half a car each when our daughters are home from university) we work on who will be travelling the furthest. We live rurally, so for our commute on the days I work, my husband and I travel to Christchurch together to his workplace and I bike to my work and for most of my other journeys around Christchurch. I also use public transport when it suits, but we are not close to any routes so it’s always mixed mode.

Our vegetable garden is currently very neglected and overgrown, so I have got back into sprouting seeds for eating, but we also have our own free-range hens. We buy our milk in glass bottles from a local farm and I have recently started making yoghurt and ice-cream to avoid waste – which also means we don’t always have them. I’m also working on trying to cut down on packaging in the foods we buy.

We try to be conscious consumers, working to my motto of every dollar you spend sends a message – be careful what you say. I also try to write to manufacturers to encourage them to improve their environmental efforts.

As much as I/we do, I am also conscious that there is still room for improvement, so it’s always a work in progress.

2. Will you, if elected to the ECan Council, vote to reaffirm the Climate Emergency Declaration and to amend it to 'Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration'?

I support the Climate Emergency Declaration and am open to Discussion on a Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration. We face unprecedented times.

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?

Ecan has been a signatory to “Health In All Policies” in conjunction with other partners for over ten years. I am disappointed at how little regard has been given to this as health is our most important asset and I don’t want to see the Climate Emergency Declaration treated in the same way. Improving transport options that make it much easier for people to reduce single occupant private car journeys, along with providing many other benefits, is an area I am particularly keen to see developed.

When I was first elected to Selwyn District Council in 2007 there was a section in every council report for the consideration of the cultural, economic, environmental and social well-beings that were part of the purpose of Local Government at that time. I would like to see something similar for each report at Ecan where the climate impact is considered. The upcoming review of the Regional Policy Statement will also provide opportunity for change, with an opportunity to consider urban planning, where it is appropriate to build or not, where we will grow our food, etc.

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

Sorry, I’m not sure exactly what you are referring to in this question.

Ian Mackenzie - ECAN - Mid Canterbury

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

Answer: we grow most of our own food; recycle all food waste to our pigs; use all burnable waste in our furnace to heat water and to cook; our business sequester significantly more carbon than we emit so we are already in credit for carbon emissions; we nurture a 10ha wetland area that is home to various endangered native fish and birds on our land; we recycle glass and metal; only wear clothes made from natural fibres such as wool, cotton, leather and silk; we have been planting hundreds of native trees and shrubs every year for decades; most of our fertiliser requirements for our cropping programme is met by using recycled green waste from Christchurch; we are a multi generational family business that owns land that depends on our culture of care to look after that land....so that is what we do (look after it) and have always tried to do.

Will you, if elected to the ECan Council, vote to reaffirm the Climate Emergency Declaration and to amend it to 'Climate and Ecological

Emergency Declaration'?

Answer: I am a believer in actually doing things rather than token gestures. My observation of these declarations is that they fall into the token gesture category. I am a strong believer in personal integrity and when I see climate change activists turn up to demonstrations in nylon clothing then I judge them accordingly. Once I see a personal commitment from those agitating about the end of the world to some of the principals I already live by then I will take those people and their declarations seriously. That doesn't mean I don't support policies that look after our environment and reduce carbon emissions.

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?

Answer: as you should be able to see from my answer to question 1, we as a family are already committed to leaving this world a better place than when we started. Our commitment to protecting the wetlands, streams and rivers in our district is testimony to this. A council role on Ecan is all about good governance to fulfil this role better. Water quality, restoring flows, protection of habitat, rational investment in infrastructure to enable well planned growth and development, investment in public transport and adherence to bio-security are all important issues and collectively are all tied up with climate change and environmental health. That is what we are all about. To achieve these things you have to take the majority of people with you. Organisations like yours agitate on the fringes but it is the actions of the majority that makes the difference. Whoever wins the election has to have that majority support for action!

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

Answer: Democracy is about listening to everyone but being swayed by the majority. However I am a supporter of collaborative community engagement where disparate community views are debated and a community consensus is formed to advise government (regional and national). This process is less about majority rule but more about sensible people agreeing on good outcomes and finding ways to deliver those outcomes. It is particularly destructive that Forest and Bird have decided to try and stop this community collaborative process.