

ECAN - South Canterbury

Elizabeth Mckenzie - ECan - South Canterbury

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

I have changed my career direction in response to climate change. The reason I am running for ECan is because of the climate crisis. I have reached a point in my life where the impacts of climate change have become more urgent and important to me than anything else. I realised that simply producing more scientific evidence was having absolutely no effect on political decision-making.

I made choices early in life not to have children or own a car for a variety of reasons, including population pressure and air pollution. I have always walked, cycled or used public transport, carpooled or hitch-hiked. In 2016 I started actively avoiding consumer advertising, trying to buy local products, reducing meat intake, composting, and trying to go Zero Waste. I also encourage others to do it too. In 2018 I made the choice to attend local scientific conferences rather than international ones. I founded the University of Auckland Faculty of Medical & Health Sciences Sustainability Working Group in late 2018, before I moved South to join my family in 2019.

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'?

Yes, I would affirm the declaration and support the amendment, but we need to go a step further and start increasing mitigation and planning adaptation to climate change. Currently local government is in denial/inertia/reactive mode, rather than being in proactive mode about climate change.

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?

Yes, absolutely, it is already in the forefront of my mind; it is the number one policy that I am campaigning on. The most important thing in being effective in achieving it is having enough allied councillors on ECan who will act together cooperatively and lead together. While I have considerable skills in drawing people together and achieving consensus, the makeup of the current ECan council will depend on you, the voters.

My main platform is for the development of an ECan Climate Change Emergency Mitigation and Adaptation Plan. The current ECan long-term plans do not contain any plans for rapid climate change. We need to increase the speed of greenhouse gas mitigation by changing to green transportation and sustainable farming. We need to take steps now to avoid insect kingdom collapse.

We need to make new regulations that support the adoption of climate safe modular buildings, climate safe relocatable homes, composting toilets, and energy self-sufficiency. We need to find funding to support modification of existing homes and buildings. We need to review building and infrastructure expenditure in low-lying and coastal regions. We need a sea level rise plan for our major highways and rail network. We need a support plan for farmers transitioning to sustainable farming. In Canterbury, we need a plan for water storage for when our snow and glaciers retreat. We need a plan to build community resilience in the face of future geopolitical instability, and we need a plan for dealing with an influx of climate refugees.

If ECan can lead the way on climate change mitigation and adaptation, then other regional councils could follow. Unfortunately, some of the changes are going to result in short-term hardship, because big business has had a “free lunch” at the expense of our environment for far too long. But in the long-term, we will have more sustainable land use, and a more resilient economy.

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

Hierarchical big business-dominated organisational structures do not act in the interests of the planet, or the people. We need co-leadership, cooperative decision-making, transparency, and equity. Therefore, I am advocating for:

1. STV at the next election (single transferable vote, so no vote is wasted);
2. Online voting at the next election (so younger people are represented);
3. Proportional representation at the next election. That means the ECan council should be 50% women, 30% low-socioeconomic individuals, and 15% Maori representation.
4. For long-term plans that go beyond 20 years, consultation should include individuals over the age of seven because these plans will be the ones that affect them the most. I believe that the current paternalistic attitudes towards young people’s opinions are based

on unfounded stereotypes. Young, well-read people can provide valuable insights less shaped by social norms.

Phil Driver - ECAN - South Canterbury

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

Three and a half years ago my wife and I left 'corporate' jobs in ChCh and moved to Otipua (just outside Timaru) where we have 5000 sq metres of good land. We have built a low energy house and are establishing a food-forest using no artificial fertilisers and based on permaculture principles. We capture rainwater and feed it into swales to minimise the need to pump water from our well. We will produce far more food than we need so are giving away the surplus. We're also establishing insect-friendly (especially pollinator friendly) spaces within our food forest. My wife retrained as a nurse - a huge change from corporate life - so she could give back to society! I did my Masters and PhD in solar energy back in the 1970s so I have been at the environmental end of the spectrum for over 45 years.

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'?

Absolutely! Although I might lobby for the word 'emergency' to be replaced with 'crisis'. I agree with XRs 'demands'.

3Are 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?

Unequivocally yes. The climate crisis is orders of magnitude more serious than any other issues that ECAN can address. I will push to get ECAN to 'demand' that central government also declare a climate and ecological emergency/crisis. I will fight for a huge re-writing of legislation at all levels of government so that climate change mitigation (not merely adaption) is central to all policies where appropriate. I will do all I can to rein-in any activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and will strongly support environmentally-sound activities to sequester

large amounts of carbon (especially widespread planting of native trees). There will be enormous resistance to effective mitigation actions but these actions are absolutely crucial to our futures. People will adapt on a case by case basis over the longer term but mitigation must be sustained and must happen immediately!

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

I am not sure that 'equally' is the correct term unless we are going to include the next 10-20 generations in that 'equally' - in which case I agree with 'equally'. That means that future generations need to have the overwhelming majority of decision makers in the room! Or, if that's not practical in the short term, to have decision makers who unequivocally accept the science of climate change and who will actively 'represent' future generations in much the same way that individuals 'represent' the Wanganui river.

Let's hope enough climate-aware candidates get elected to ECAN and other local bodies so that we can take serious and sustained action to mitigate climate change. In this respect are you able to put me in touch with XR people in South Canterbury so we can work together? By the way I'm standing on a platform of 'climate-elders' (see climate-elders on Facebook - need to tidy-up the page plus I'll shortly have my climateelders.nz website up and running).

Here's some of my core messages.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming. We have a climate and environmental emergency that threatens our children's future and even the survival of humanity. Climate-elders will speak the truth and will act with urgency for the well-being of future and current generations.

When elected to ECAN I will set aside blame for well-intended but unsustainable activities in the past.

Instead I will take responsibility for fighting to reverse the environmental and climate damage that has been and is still being caused

Kind regards

Phil

