



CANDIDATES AND CLIMATE

Queenscliff Climate Action Group (QCAG) is proud to be a member of the Corangamite Climate Alliance - a collective of grassroots community organisations who are all fiercely advocating for a safe climate future for our communities.

In March 2022, in anticipation of the calling of the federal election, the Alliance hosted the Climate Change Response Forum as an opportunity for Corangamite constituents to gain insight into each federal election candidate's position on the subject. Prior to the forum, each participant was provided with the following set of questions, with an eye to helping voters create an informed decision. All candidates were asked to participate, but not all replied.

[Q.1 What are the three most important issues relating to climate change/the environment and how will your party deal with them?](#)

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

No more, coal, oil and gas. Coal and gas are the biggest causes of the climate crisis. The science is clear: the mining and burning of coal, oil and gas increases the climate crisis. Every tonne of coal, oil and gas burnt increases the intensity and speed of changes to our climate.

The dirty donors ruining our planet. We should be taking urgent action to end our use of coal, oil and gas. But instead, Labor and the Liberals are backing plans for more coal and gas. Why? Because they take millions in donations from big coal and gas corporations and billionaires. Many of the biggest coal and gas companies pay no tax and they send their profit offshore.

Jobs rely on a clean environment. Over a million jobs in industries including tourism and farming are at risk. If we continue on this track, we'll experience huge economic losses, food, insurance and health costs will go up. But if we act, electricity bills will go down, we'll create more jobs and more economic opportunity.

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

The issues that I feel are most important are actively managing/reducing consumption, managing/reducing waste and actively addressing our unsustainable generation and use of energy. These are all obviously interconnected – and clearly impact biodiversity, climate change and many other intersecting environmental factors – but they are the issues that I feel we can address as individuals, at a local level and also through national and global policy and action to immediate and practical effect.

Government has an important role to play in encouraging energy efficiency, reducing consumption and managing waste. Actions include:

- a \$1 billion plan to transform Australia's waste industry
- 13 new joint projects with the State Government
- funding for Australian Renewable Energy Agency and Clean Energy Finance Corporation
- establishment of Australia's first, public New Energies Service Station in Geelong, which will include hydrogen and electric battery options.

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

Poverty and the costs to future generations:

World-wide the impact of climate change, including longer and more intense droughts, floods, storms, and heat waves as well as the warming of our oceans will affect us all. But the poorest countries dependent on local-level agriculture and fishing will be hit the hardest. This will disrupt food supplies and industry, resulting in the dislocation of whole populations.

Loss of biodiversity:

The predictions for species loss under various climate change scenarios is catastrophic. Species are already being impacted. According to the United Nations climate change currently affects at least 10,967 species on the Threatened Species list.

Seizing the opportunity:

The most important issue today is to seize the opportunity to reduce the rate of climate change, which is both a challenge to protect our major carbon sinks, to

modify carbon emitting industry and to capture and create whole new climate friendly industries.

Q.2 What emissions reduction target by 2030 does your party support for Australia ?
What is this based on?

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

The Greens have a 75% emissions reduction target by 2030. Net zero or net negative Australian greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 or sooner.

In 2018, the IPCC released a special report on 1.5°C which found that 'limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require reductions of global human-caused carbon dioxide emissions of 45% by 2030 compared to 2010, and reach zero emissions around 2050.' Their latest report in 2021, confirmed that we're not doing enough. Unless we rapidly decarbonise our economies in the next few years, we could hit 1.5°C sooner than initially expected.

We require large-scale public investment in renewable energy and storage, to replace every coal-fired power plant in the country by 2030, ensuring we deal with the climate emergency in time.

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

Our Government is acting to deliver net zero emissions by 2050, in a responsible way that will ensure more Australian jobs. Our Plan is built on five principles:

- Technology, not taxes.
- Expand choices, not mandates.
- Drive down the costs of new technologies.
- Keep energy prices down with affordable and reliable power.
- Be accountable for progress.

We are on track to reduce emissions by up to 35% by 2030 – beating our commitments. Over the next decade, our Technology Investment Roadmap will unlock \$80 billion in public and private investment – including in clean hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and energy storage. Our plan recognises that reducing the cost of new and emerging clean energy technologies to cost parity with existing approaches is the key to unlocking widespread deployment. See [positiveenergy.gov.au](https://www.positiveenergy.gov.au)

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

The ALP has an emissions reduction target of 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. This puts Australia in line with COP26, and would meet Australia's obligations under the Glasgow Climate Pact.

We do recognise this target will need accelerated action. To achieve this, Labor has announced our "Powering Australia" program with initiatives like:

- Upgrading the electricity grid to fix energy transmission
- Making electric vehicles cheaper
- Allocating up to \$3bn to invest in green metals; clean energy component manufacturing; hydrogen electrolysers and fuel switching; agricultural methane reduction and waste reduction.
- Rolling out 85 solar banks & 400 community batteries.
- Working with large businesses for transparency on climate.
- Restoring the role of the Climate Change Authority

[Q.3 Will you advocate for funding for a Renewable Energy Industrial Precinct in the G21 region to create sustainable jobs in our region?](#)

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

Yes. In Corangamite, G21 and Australia, we have brilliant scientists, skilled engineers and a world class workforce. If we back them, and invest in our manufacturing industry, we can tackle the climate crisis, strengthen local communities and create well paid secure jobs.

The Greens plan involves using low cost, green energy to rebuild our manufacturing industry, support new green export industries and bring back jobs that have gone overseas.

Last time the Greens were in balance of power we created the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and Australian Renewable Energy Agency, kickstarting a boom in our renewable energy industry.

As the Greens Candidate for Corangamite I will advocate for the REIP in G21.

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

The G21 region is an ideal site for a Renewable Energy Precinct for a range of reasons including proximity to a university, population size that provides scale, available land, educated and professional workforce, commutability to the state capital and a collaborative local government sector.

I certainly support the notion of the G21 region being a leader in advanced industry and manufacturing, particularly renewables energy solutions.

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

I would support the establishment of a Renewable Energy Industrial Precinct for the G21 region.

*Q.4 Does your party support the gas import terminal proposal for Geelong?
Why/why not?*

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

No. The Greens plan involves immediately banning the construction of new coal, oil and gas infrastructure, ensuring we can transition our economy to zero carbon energy while maintaining a safe climate.

The gas import terminal poses a huge risk to Geelong. Best practice is to locate the terminal 3.5km away from the coastline, however this terminal is proposed to be 2km away. Floating gas terminals are a threat to marine life and fishing.

Gas is highly flammable and many locals are concerned about safety, in listening to the Corangamite community, and aligning with the Greens Party policy, I will not support this proposal for a gas import terminal in Geelong.

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

Gas is part of the Government's plan to reduce emissions without imposing new costs on households, while at the same time creating jobs, growing businesses and the economy.

Gas is considered a necessary fuel in the transition to a renewable energy future. Professional advice that I sought for the local council group, from the state's leading energy consultant, described the gas import terminal as effectively 'the least worst option'. The Viva import terminal is a state planning decision, not a federal decision.

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

Australia's energy production future will be increasingly renewable, and that's now happening fast, especially in our region. But we are not there yet.

Gas will continue to play a role in securing our energy grid as we transition to renewable energy, although there's varying views are around about how long that will take and indeed what role gas will play. We still need to massively increase the storage in our grid through batteries, pumped hydro and green hydrogen.

The Geelong gas terminal is connecting into a region where investment in wind energy is now pouring in. I am very confident that, once power storage capacity is increased, our region will be one of the first in Australia to be 100% renewable.

Q.5 Does your party support using regulation to require Australia's largest GHG emitters to reduce their emissions in line with your 2030 target ? Will tax-payers money be used to pay companies to do this and if so, how will this be funded ?

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

The Greens plan includes:

- A well-funded, comprehensive and research-based emissions reduction plan, with binding annual targets and national emissions limits, supported by reporting for all sectors with significant greenhouse emissions.
- A national system of energy efficiency targets and stringent Minimum Energy Performance Standards that are consistent with, or exceed, world's best practice for products, buildings and infrastructure.

This plan will be funded by:

- End government handouts to the billionaires and the big corporations, like the fossil fuel industry
- Put in place a new Corporate Super-Profits Tax of 40% on big corporations
Introduce an annual extra 6% wealth tax on billionaires
- Tax the mega-profits of big corporations earning over \$100m annually
Crackdown on multinational tax avoidance

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

We're making it easier for large energy-using businesses to adopt new energy technologies where it makes sense for them to do so. Supporting choices not mandates means businesses should be free to adopt renewable power, hydrogen and other technologies at their own pace. That's why the Government will not lower the threshold for the Safeguard Mechanism, or ratchet down baselines for existing facilities. This would impose new costs on more than 500 of Australia's most energy-intensive businesses and facilities, many of whom are exposed to international competition. It would require businesses in sectors like agriculture and

food production, mining and resources, waste management, trucking and railways to reduce or offset their emissions – regardless of whether the technological solutions for them to reduce their emissions exist.

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

As well as strongly supporting renewable energy, Labor will carefully watch and work with big emitters to reduce green house gas emissions. Afterall, the top 215 large emitters generate 28% of Australia's emissions.

We will impose baseline limits on the largest emitters, and drive down those emissions. The specific regulations that need to be developed are around the federal regulations, known as “the Safeguard Mechanism” within the NGER Act.

Q.6. Does your party support new fossil fuel developments (including gas) anywhere in Australia? Why/why not?

ALEX MARSHALL, THE GREENS:

No. The Greens plan involves immediately banning the construction of new coal, oil and gas infrastructure, ensuring we can transition our economy to zero carbon energy while maintaining a safe climate. Helping out mining workers and communities by creating long term, sustainable industries to assist in the move beyond fossil fuels and to ensure people do not lose work. Phase out the mining, burning and export of thermal coal by 2030 to ensure we do our bit, so the world does not go over the 1.5 degree climate cliff.

The Greens Party does not take donations from the fossil fuel industry and are therefore not influenced by these stakeholders in our policy making. It's time to ban all political donations from the fossil fuel sector and close the revolving door between politicians and the coal and gas industry.

STEPHANIE ASHER, LIBERAL PARTY:

Access to affordable and reliable energy is an important part of a modern industrial economy and a compassionate society and each development application is considered within the context of local and global demand and impacts. The share of renewables is growing in our market and I am optimistic about technology speeding up the energy transition. However, demand for electricity will likely increase with adoption of low and zero emissions vehicles and transitions of heating and cooling processes to electricity. Gas has an important role to play in the transition from coal

and while battery storage technologies continue to evolve. Many other countries also have a demand for Australian fossil fuels.

The energy technology being developed will determine what fossil fuels are required, but the broad commitment is to move away from fossil fuels.

LIBBY COKER, AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:

Labor's strong preference is to move away from high emissions energy production, and move the Australian power generation system swiftly toward renewables. We will not support any new coal generation plants, and we will be working through detailed jobs, training and reinvestment plans for regional communities affected where coal mines are being phased out.

Significantly, the lion's share of investment in renewable energy is going into regional Australia.

Australia will need to generate more electricity with wind and solar farms as it removes fossil fuels from the energy grid, which will create opportunities to build them in regional industrial centres close to industrial facilities.