



2022 STATE ELECTION CANDIDATES RESPONSES

The Bellarine Candidates for the 2022 State Election were asked to respond to key issues affecting our environment. Each candidate was provided with the same questions, but not all replied.

Q.1 What support will you/your party provide for community renewable energy projects, including community batteries?

ALISON MARCHANT, Australian Labour Party:

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will invest \$42 million to deliver an extra 100 neighbourhood batteries in priority metro and regional locations.

This means an additional 25,000 homes will benefit from energy storage – tripling the number of Victorian households who can access a neighbourhood battery, driving down power bills for all and avoiding expensive upgrades to the grid.

In addition, Labor will re-establish government ownership of energy by reviving the State Electricity Commission (SEC). The SEC will invest in renewables and drive down energy prices. As part of the plan, Labor will end Victoria's reliance on coal generation and reduce emissions by 75-80 per cent by 2035.

SARAH FENTON, Independent

I think these projects are a fabulous initiative and should be supported across all parties and candidates. It makes economic and social sense, not to mention the environmental impact of transitioning to renewables. I will be pushing whichever major party gets in to implement funding in each LGA and to work cohesively with those local councils. I will also lobby federal parliament. Please read my policies and values at this [link](#).

ADAM CARDILINI, Animal Justice Party

I will fight to end fossil fuel subsidies and redirect these towards renewable energy projects, including those that support local community renewable energy projects. I will advocate on the behalf of Queenscliff, and other Bellarine communities, to access funds and other resources to develop community renewable energy infrastructure which meets their needs, including the installation of community batteries. We've already seen many successful community energy projects in Victoria. I will work to ensure the communities on the Bellarine can do the same.

RACHEL SEMMENS, Australian Greens

Myself alongside the Greens will be providing large scale investment in renewable energy and storage, and that includes community batteries. We will upgrade the electricity and transmission and distribution grid, integrating more wind and solar energy. We also have a plan for the creation of a publicly owned non-profit retailer, to push prices down and end price gauging by the big energy companies. I want every household across the Bellarine to have the opportunity to make a swift transition to renewable energy and I will provide the support needed to do this via subsidies to households and businesses to electrify heating, cooking and to install batteries.

Q.2 Do you/your party support the building of the Viva Energy Gas Terminal in Geelong?

ALISON MARCHANT, Australian Labour Party:

Victoria is leading the country in forward thinking energy policy, as proven by our Australia-first Gas Substitution Roadmap. Viva Energy is currently undergoing an Environment Effects Statement, our state's most stringent impact assessment process.

SARAH FENTON, Independent

No, I do not support this at all. I was at the rally last Sat in Geelong for Renewables Not Gas and have stated this since the start of my campaign. This is stated in my policies and values as per this [link](#).

ADAM CARDILINI, Animal Justice Party

We are absolutely opposed to the building of the Viva Energy Gas Terminal in Geelong. Andy Meddick, AJP's member in the upper house of the state parliament, has been strongly and vocally opposed to the gas terminal for years. The threat of an accident leading to environmental pollution represents an unacceptable risk to the local marine environment, local community, and local animals. It also represents an unacceptable risk to the global environment, people everywhere, and animals because it supports the continued use of fossil fuels. The increased shipping traffic of the large ships supplying the terminal increases the risk to the environment and the amenity of the area. We need to be transitioning away from fossil fuel industries, not developing new ones. This wasn't an acceptable project in Western Port and isn't in Geelong.

RACHEL SEMMENS, Australian Greens

Absolutely not! Recently, I rallied with the group Geelong Renewables Not Gas alongside my fellow Greens candidates and passionate community members to send a strong message that we absolutely do not want or need a floating gas station in the middle of Corio Bay. It is nothing short of obscene to be considering new fossil fuel projects amidst a climate emergency. This gas station in Corio Bay, proposed by Viva, is in direct contradiction with recent announcements from the Andrews government regarding reducing emissions and boosting renewables. There won't be a decision made until after the election, we can't and shouldn't be voting blind on this important issue. The impacts of this hideous project will be nothing short of catastrophic to marine life, water quality, the health of our community and our precious wildlife and ecosystems. It must not go ahead.

Q.3 Will you/your party commit to no new coal or gas, including coal seam gas, developments in Victoria?

ALISON MARCHANT, Australian Labour Party:

I am very proud to have led the Western Victorian Anti-Fracking campaign for 4 years to protect our community and agriculture from fracking (gas drilling).

In 2017, Labor legislated to permanently ban all onshore unconventional gas exploration and development, including hydraulic fracturing ('fracking') and coal seam gas.

Labor enshrined the fracking ban in Victoria's Constitution in 2020, ensuring permanent protections for our community and environment.

I will fiercely protect the Fracking Ban and now focus on delivering our commitment of 95% renewable electricity by 2035 and to reach net zero emissions by 2045.

SARAH FENTON, Independent

I will 100% commit to no new fossil fuel developments or exploration in Victoria and will be calling on the government to stop the exploration in the Port Campbell National Park. This is stated in my policies and values as per this [link](#).

ADAM CARDILINI, Animal Justice Party

We definitely commit to no new coal or gas developments in Victoria. I personally will advocate for a rapid transition away from currently operating coal and gas. The world is already experiencing a climate crisis and we need to reach zero emissions as soon as possible and start to work on negative emissions through large scale drawdown initiatives, e.g. revegetation. We need to work towards a safe climate, not a more dangerous one.

RACHEL SEMMENS, Australian Greens

Definitely! In an emergency, the very first action we have to take is to immediately remove whatever is causing the damage. For the climate emergency, that means keeping all untapped coal, oil and gas fields in the ground. By phasing out coal and gas power plants, investing in offshore and onshore wind, solar and energy storage and rewiring Australia with a 21st century electricity grid we can repower our economy and society with clean energy. By shifting to renewable energy and “electrifying everything” we not only drive carbon pollution to zero, but we can lower home energy bills and industry costs while creating jobs around the country. I absolutely oppose plans for gas drilling near the 12 Apostles.

Q.4 Do you/your party support a total ban on native logging in Victoria and if so by what date?

ALISON MARCHANT, Australian Labour Party:

The Victorian Forestry Plan is Victoria's largest ever environmental protection initiative. In the past three years alone, the Andrews Labor Government has added more than 250,000 hectares of protected forests in Victoria. By 2030, Victoria will have an area of native forest larger than Tasmania that is protected from logging and providing valuable habitat for our precious plants and animals. The Andrews Labor Government implemented an immediate end to logging in old-growth forests which has protected 90,000 hectares of old growth forests.

As well, Labor is phasing out native timber logging with a significant step-down in harvesting from 2024, supported by a \$200 million package of transition measures to help regional businesses, workers and communities. By 2030, no native timber will be logged in Victoria. This approach is sensible as we transition to new plantation-based timber supply sources and is necessary for workers and communities who depend on the industry. The Andrews Labor Government has invested more than \$560 million towards protecting our precious biodiversity since 2014 – the biggest investment in Victorian history.

SARAH FENTON, Independent

Yes. Immediately, but also with the caveat and economic rationale supporting those communities and people affected by the cessation and which re-directs knowledge and skills into new labour areas such as fire management. This is stated in my policies and values as per this [link](#).

ADAM CARDILINI, Animal Justice Party

The Animal Justice Party supports an immediate ban on native logging and a cessation of land clearing for animal agriculture. Logging of native forests harms the animals who call them home, it threatens our ecosystems and biodiversity, and it contributes to climate change. It needs to stop.

RACHEL SEMMENS, Australian Greens

Yes!

First Nations people have cared for forest Country for thousands of years, have never ceded sovereignty over forest Country, and understand that forests are essential health and wellbeing. The Greens have a detailed and fully costed plan to end native forest logging, move workers into new jobs, and meet our timber needs with plantations and other timber alternatives. We will legislate an end to logging in 2023, and to protect native forests for the vital habitat they provide to threatened wildlife and for the carbon they store that protects us from climate change. Our plan crucially includes working with First Nations people to protect forests across the state. First Nations people will play the central role in self-determining how land is protected and cared for and in designing the economic ventures to showcase the region's unique beauty and wildlife whilst creating new jobs.

Additionally, we have a plan to protect and restore nature in Victoria. We will not only stop Labor's destruction of nature by ending native forest logging, we will also ban barbaric duck hunting and stop our rivers being sucked dry. We will introduce a new \$1 billion per yer Zero Extinction Fund to reverse environmental destruction, restore habitat, and fund the recovery of Victoria's 2000 native plant, animal, bird and fish species facing extinction. We will fix our broken nature laws so they actually protect forests, rivers, grasslands and wildlife from destruction. Again, we will place First Nations people at the centre of caring for Country with stronger rights and programs to return sovereignty over land, water and oceans.

Q.5 What support will you /your party provide to encourage the rapid uptake of Electric Vehicles in Victoria?

ALISON MARCHANT, Australian Labour Party:

Labor's not just talking about it – we've fueled a 300 per cent boost in zero emission vehicle (ZEV) sales, slashed emissions and cut the cost of living for thousands of Victorians as part of the most ambitious renewable energy plan in the country.

Only Labor is powering Victoria's ZEV uptake through massive subsidies, installing chargers across the state and boosting business and council fleets to create a second-hand market.

Our goal is that zero emission vehicles make up half of all light vehicle sales by 2030.

Labor's nation-leading ZEV Roadmap is backed by \$100 million, with 20,000 subsidies and fast-charging stations across the state. The Labor Government offers subsidies of \$3,000 for ZEVs under \$68,740.

Our \$5 million Destination Charging Across Victoria Program, will see approximately 141 chargers installed at approximately 116 sites across Victoria by July 2023 - making sure no one is more than an hour away from an electric vehicle charger.

In December 2021, two additional programs were launched - the \$1.5 million EV Charging for Council Fleets and the \$1.5 million EV Charging for Business Fleets programs. These programs will support local councils and businesses to transition private vehicle fleets to EVs and fuel the second hand ZEV market in years to come.

SARAH FENTON, Independent

I will support the best economic case for rapid uptake of EV in Vic , funding of community charging stations and to lobby federal Government for reforms to EV taxes. This is stated in my policies and values as per this [link](#).

ADAM CARDILINI, Animal Justice Party

We would advocate for the rapid transition towards electric vehicles and provide financial incentives to both producers and consumers to make the switch. We would support the development of an improved public transport system (with more frequent services!) on the Bellarine that uses electric buses. I personally would like to see the bike/walking paths across the bellarine be developed into a safe network of paths that joins up with the rail trail, e.g., connecting Portarlington to Drysdale. This would facilitate the uptake of active transport (walking and cycling) and could be complimented by an e-bike scheme that supports travel around the Bellarine (particularly during the holiday season).

RACHEL SEMMENS, Australian Greens

The Greens Electric Vehicle Rapid Uptake Plan will see Victoria become a world leader in the switch to cleaner electric vehicles, drastically cutting emissions, reducing air pollution and creating jobs. Transport is Victoria's fastest growing source of emissions, producing around 20% of the state's total. This makes transport our second biggest source of emissions after coal. Whilst governments around the world are lowering the cost of electric vehicles by thousands of dollars, the Victorian Labor Government wants to put a new tax on electric vehicles, making them even more expensive. To tackle the climate crisis, Victoria needs a government-led plan to help people rapidly shift from polluting petrol cars to cleaner electric vehicles.

So the Greens and I will kick start a clean transport revolution! This will see the manufacture of thousands of solar powered electric buses to create a high frequency bus network, something the Bellarine is in desperate need of. Currently, upfront costs are the biggest barrier to the uptake of electric vehicles and governments around the world are providing incentives worth thousands of dollars for electric vehicles. We will reduce upfront costs with an \$10,000 eco-bonus for the purchase of an electric vehicle under \$77,565. We will abolish Stamp Duty for electric vehicles under \$77,565, saving EV drivers up to \$3,257. We will reduce annual costs by stopping the Victorian Labor Government's tax on people driving electric vehicles, which would increase the operating cost of electric vehicles by over 50%. Furthermore, registration for EVs will be free, saving drivers up to \$734.80 a year.

It is crucial that electric vehicle charging stations are available to every Victorian so we will accelerate the rollout of charging stations across Victoria, including at every metropolitan and regional train station car park. We will pass 'Right to Charge' laws that will give renters the right to install a charging station in their residential parking space. We will pass Electric Vehicle readiness laws requiring all parking spaces at new developments to be EV ready.