

MURRINDINDI CLIMATE NETWORK
Questions for candidates in the Eildon Electorate



Answers of Bruce Argyle (Independent)

1. *Do you accept that climate change is occurring? If not, what specific scientific sources and references do you rely on to justify rejecting the scientific consensus?*

Yes, absolutely – this is something that thinking people have recognised for many years and now presents as the single most important issue facing our world.

2. *Do you believe that all politicians have a moral obligation to understand the science of climate change?*

Yes, there is plenty of evidence and reliable sources of information that mean there is no excuse for not understanding the impact of climate change.

3. *Are you aware that [over 97% of climate scientists](#) globally, the [CSIRO](#), the [Australian Academy of Science](#) and every major national [science academy](#) in the industrialised world (whose membership includes climate scientists) agree that the planet is warming, that the observed climate change is mostly human caused, and that if we continue with business as usual, harsh impacts and irreversible changes to the climate system will occur?*

This is disturbing information that everyone needs to be made more aware of. The visit of Al Gore and his 'Inconvenient truth' video is a great resource and has been supplemented by an Australian response where ten ordinary Australians talk about how they have responded. A must for schools.

4. *Is it your position that Australia needs to urgently adopt policies to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in line with scientific recommendations? If not, what specific scientific sources and references do you rely on to justify rejecting the scientific consensus?*

Yes, the reintroduction of renewable energy targets for both State and Federal Governments is the absolute first step. The community is asking for a more meaningful set of policies and strategies at a time when other countries are taking much more significant measures to reduce emissions. Australia has really 'dropped the ball' in the past few years, when given our history of innovation and leadership together with favourable weather, we should be at the forefront.

5. *Do you think carbon emissions should be priced? If so, how? If not, why not?*

Yes, I am not too fussed by the mechanism adopted but it needs to be on a 'user pays' basis with few exceptions. Most Australians are willing to see a few extra dollars on their energy bills in order to see carbon reductions.

6. *If elected, how will you ensure that the State of Victoria reaches its emissions reduction goal for 2020?*

I will advocate for the reintroduction of the RET and take every opportunity to support emissions reductions. This will include the move away from brown coal and the transition and redeployment of these workers into the renewable energy sector.

7. *Are you aware that the renewable energy sector employs 5 times more people than the coal industry and is the fastest growing industry in Australia? What is your position on the Renewable Energy Incentive Scheme?*

Yes and I am fully supportive of this scheme. It needs to be expanded.

8. *Do you believe that financial contributions of the Victorian government to the coal mining sector are compatible with the Renewable Energy Target? If yes, why? If not, why not?*

As mentioned above the brown coal mining sector needs to be relatively quickly transitioned to renewable energy with reskilling and incentives provided that ensure continuity of employment for those most affected.

9. *Can you offer residents, businesses and community groups of your electorate incentives to address climate change at a local level? How?*

Increase feed in tariffs for solar panels and encourage initiatives/provide rebates that assist more in the community to move to renewable energy. Provide businesses with a tax benefit for installation.

10. *The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act requires the Victorian government to actively protect listed species. In our electorate, particularly in the Upper Goulburn catchment, large areas provide habitat to a considerable number of listed flora and fauna species. This habitat has come under additional stress due to the Black Saturday bush fires and continued logging activities after the fires. What actions do you suggest and support to protect endangered species in our electorate?*

I believe we need to ensure that endangered species of flora and fauna are protected and that we adopt a 'do no harm' approach. This means continued and careful monitoring of these species by independent analysts and not undergoing logging in areas of potential risk to this habitat. I also fully support the work of the Healesville Sanctuary and a number of philanthropic organisations and individuals who are doing great work in this area.

11. *Do you support the creation of a Great Forest National Park in our electorate to provide a greater level of protection to the mountain ash forests? (<http://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au/>)*

The GFNP definitely needs to be on the agenda (refer website www.bruceargyle.com.au) and stakeholders brought together to address concerns and map out a way forward that sees timber harvesting, job security, park access and environmental issues all on the table. I would use my mediation skills to actively move this forward to the benefit of all directly involved and for the broader community.

12. *Given that VicForest has not been able to run a profitable operation from its logging operations of public state forest over the last 7 years and has been relying heavily*

on government subsidies, what is your position on the future of VicForest and on the logging of public state forest in general and in our electorate in particular?

We need to move fully to sustainable plantation and selective logging. There should be no milling of old Mountain Ash for pulp and paper. Already 87% of forestry in Victoria is from sustainable plantations and we need to move this to 100% as soon as possible, whilst supporting the timber industry to transition and avoid job losses. In Eildon there are huge ecotourism opportunities.

13. *Given the limited public funding, if only one of the projects could be built - the East-West Tunnel or the Melbourne Rail Link Tunnel - which one would you support and why?*

I am more concerned about public transport and roading in the Eildon electorate where there is direct benefit to the local communities. We do need to address both our public and private transport for Melbourne but I don't think either has been satisfactorily researched and costed and I don't like the lack of transparency and secret deals done immediately prior to the election. These are our taxes.