

Darebin Council Elections 2020: Questions for Candidates

23rd September, 2020

Dear Candidate,

Below is a list of questions compiled on behalf of Darebin community groups; Darebin Progress Association, Darebin Residents Group, Save THE Preston Market and Darebin Appropriate Development Association.

The aim is to supply our members answers to question most important them in the hope it will aid their voting choices in the upcoming council election.

We have aimed to keep the impost on your time to a minimum by posing most questions for yes or no answers with some also asking how you might achieve the answer as a Councillor.

Your answers will be posted, unedited, on our websites and Facebook pages for maximum coverage to our members across Darebin.

Please leave a YES or a NO and remove or cross out the answer you don't want.

GENERAL RESPONSE

Name: Emily Dimitriadis Ward: South East Ward

Please tell us in 50 words the main reason you are running for Council and your top three issues you want council to adopt

I have lived in Darebin my whole life and I want to make a positive difference in our community.

1. An immediate stop to inappropriate increases in rates for businesses and people hit hardest by COVID-19.
2. Fast track investment in capital works and support local businesses to create jobs and rebuild Darebin's economy post COVID-19.
3. Stop oppressive parking constraints.

GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILTY AND TRANSPARANCY

One of the glaring weaknesses of the majority of current councillors has been their inability/failure to accept that they represent the community. The following questions require a simple yes/no/how answer to demonstrate your commitment to important democratic procedures.



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1. Will you support complete transparency in issues affecting the community?

YES	
HOW?	
<p>Council should be as open as possible to the community particularly in deliberations and decisions. I will support transparency by pushing to have as few decisions as possible made behind closed doors and push for the continuation and expansion of live streaming of council meetings during COVID normal to ensure resident can continue to be engaged with decision-making.</p>	

2. Would you guarantee regular meetings with the community by all means available?

YES	
HOW?	
<p>If I am successful as a Councilor, I would love to engage with my local community and be accessible by the constituents to hear their concerns. With COVID-19 restrictions, this would need to be via online forums and via the phone. In the future, I would like to open this up to in person gatherings. This would allow the community to raise concerns they have regarding Council and to receive updates on how Council is progressing. I would also be available to be contacted via email, phone and social media.</p>	

3. Will you actively consult with community groups prior to any local by-laws being enacted?

YES	
HOW?	
<p>Yes, the method of communication may be in part dependent on the by-laws and the impacted groups. Options include mail-outs, social media, electronic boards and signs.</p>	

4. Would you restructure Public Question Time in allow questions directly to Councillors?

YES	
<p>I would have to see the best forum for this. The length of the current Council meetings are also significantly long to the point they impact community engagement so another forum may be the preferred route. A pre-submission process may be required to ensure the questions are appropriate to the work of Council and are not offensive.</p>	

5. Will you support a review of the Council newsletter to make it more informative, regular and representative?

YES	
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Darebin Council currently has a survey on the Darebin Community News, I encourage anyone who has concerns about the newsletter to fill out the survey to help guide the future of this newsletter. Changes area also needed for the newsletter, currently the are 3 - one for Each Ward, however we are moving to 9 wards.

6. Will you ensure Advisory Committees recommendations are heard in General Council meetings?

YES	
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Advisory committees have an important role in supporting council decisions within their areas. The community should know what the committee has recommended and then it is up to the councilors to make decisions based upon all inputs including the recommendations of the advisory committees.

7. Will you work for the community and not to serve any political party?

YES	
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While I am a member of the Australian Labor Party, I am not endorsed by the party and I am therefore not locked into a policy or voting block.

8. Will you insist on an annual staff survey and make it available to the community?

YES	NO
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There is not enough details provided with this question to provide an answer. You are welcome to contact me with a more targeted question. In general, this would need to be carefully considered, the impact of staff knowing the results would be made public may impact the quality of the results you receive. There are also privacy concerns that must be considered.

9. Will you listen to the Community's opinions when motions for spending and approvals for planning are brought before Council?

YES	
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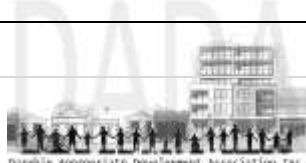
HOW?

I would listen to community input and consider it when making decisions as a Councilor. Sources of input could be the normal community consultation processes, community engagement events and direct contact from constituents.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Will you oppose the demolition and relocation of the Preston Market elsewhere on the site and actively support its retention?

YES	
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HOW?

Preston market is an important part of our Darebin community and has been for the last 50 years. It would be a great loss for the community to lose the current market and the charm that has developed over the last 50 years.

Councilors have a legal requirement to assess each application on its merits. Council is also not the only decision-maker in this space with the Victorian Planning Authority forming a key part.

2. Will you support mandatory heights limits be applied to the Preston Market site?

YES

HOW?

Any development in Darebin, not just the Preston Market should be appropriate for the surrounding area. The area around Preston Market is not a high-rise area and such a building without height restrictions would be out of place and against community wishes.

3. Will you oppose the practice of trading off of objectives and standards, such as height limits in the planning scheme that can result in poorer outcomes but gets developments built in Darebin?

YES

HOW?

We should have a minimum level of standards that should not be compromised. Inappropriate developments are a real risk to Darebin’s future.

4. Do you agree to a complete review of the Darebin Planning Scheme including consultation with community groups and members to ensure it is clearer in its intent, eg: applies mandatory heights to development plans, better protects neighborhood character and increases neighbourhood residential zoning?

YES

Inappropriate developments are a real risk to Darebin’s future.

5. Will you support the Open Space Levy and Developer Contribution Levy that adequately increases the amount of land dedicated to open space in order to meet the future needs of Darebin's growing population and ensure that the money is spent in the general locale of where the development occurs?

YES

HOW?

Large developments put pressure on our existing precious open spaces and infrastructure



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services, these developments should contribute financially to partially support the costs for Darebin to deliver for the community.

6. Will you support a review of the Planning Committee Charter to give objectors more time to present their case, to allow at least one councillor to call up planning applications and, release the agenda papers and reports at least seven days ahead of meetings and to allow residents to ask questions and make submissions?

YES

AGED CARE AND DISABILITY SERVICES

1. Will you support Council having an ongoing role in the direct delivery of home support care services to eligible older people and people with a disability in Darebin?

YES

2. Will you support Council subsidising the cost of home care services to eligible residents?

YES

3. Will you support Council continuing to directly deliver to eligible older residents and people with a disability the following :

• home support services;	YES	
• personal care,	YES	
• shopping,	YES	
• respite,	YES	
• food services,	YES	
• home care,	YES	
○ community transport,	YES	
• home maintenance	YES	

4. Will you oppose further restrictions of eligibility criteria for home care services in Darebin?

YES

5. Will you agree to support Council becoming a registered home care provider?

YES

As an Emergency Department Pharmacist, I have seen many patients come into hospital, at times due to poor at home or institutional care. I believe delivering high quality services is of critical importance.



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I would need to see more details on the benefits and implications to service recipients of becoming a registered home care provider.

6. Will you agree to maintain at least \$6m in council co-funding for age care services and provide open financial reporting of aged care services?

YES	
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FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICES

1. Will you campaign and vote to provide more public facilities eg; toilet facilities, bins, footpaths upgrade, bike paths, Outdoor Gyms, upgrading parks, and regular removal of graffiti and litter in Darebin?

YES	
HOW? These are core Council business and Council needs to get the basics right. I will push for more say for locals over upgrades and fixes.	

2. Will you vote for balanced services and equal spend across all of Darebin, particularly Reservoir, including rebuilding to the Reservoir Leisure Centre?

YES	
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3. Will you oppose unsubstantiated use of money spent on consultants?

YES	
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4. Will you vote for more parking and vote against blanket parking restrictions?

YES	
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We need responsible parking decisions tailored to the local level.

5. Will you support Council in making publically available more detailed financial reporting on departmental, program and project expenditure?

YES	
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- **ENVIRONMENT**

1. Given that we are in a climate emergency and everyone; individuals, corporations and all three levels of government must be part of mitigation and adaptation, are you prepared to commit to strong action on global warming?



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YES	
HOW? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide residents with subsidies to replace end of life gas appliances with electric appliances. ○ Promote the Solar Savers Program. ○ Provide residents with subsidies to buy batteries so they can store the solar energy generated by their solar panel systems. ○ Provide access to cheaper renewable power for local businesses. ○ Commit to increasing tree cover, particularly native regeneration ○ Provide greater support to the Darebin Nature Trust and Climate Emergency Darebin advisory committees. 	

2. Will you bring policies to Council that will make a real improvement at a local level to Darebin's environment and biodiversity?

YES	
HOW? (please provide examples) Please see above.	

3. Darebin Council set up both Climate Emergency Darebin and the Darebin Nature Trust as key initiatives very early in their term. What do you know about these two entities and their specific achievements?

	These groups have worked to raise greater awareness of the urgent need to take action on the climate emergency and protect our open space. They were created by Darebin Council to provide input into the Council's plans around climate emergency and in creating more open spaces and natural environments.
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4. Have they been effective?

	NO Having spoken to members of these groups, they state that the recommendations they have provided Darebin Council have not been implemented and that the groups have been inactive for some time, in particular the Climate Emergency Darebin advisory group has met for over 18 months.
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In order to share this information to voters please return your responses to the sender in a Word, PDF or JPEG document by the 30th September 2020.

Thank you.



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On behalf of:

Darebin Progress Association: <https://www.facebook.com/Darebin-Progress-Association-163813440325401/>

Save THE Preston Market Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/4553059228098235/>

Darebin Appropriate Development Association: <https://www.darebinada.org/> and

Darebin Residents Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/695607447257408>

