



## Advocate for Your Bushland this Federal Election 2022

The Urban Bushland Council encourages our members and supporters to meet their federal election candidates to discuss local environmental issues and their level of commitment. We're inviting you to ask them four questions then share the responses with us and your Friends Group so we can all be even better informed as we vote.

Want skills training or just a little confidence building? Need a coach to practice your skills? Join us on zoom (**Thursday evening, 28 April, 7:30-8:30pm**). We will help you to find out who your candidates are and learn more about the issues.

### Key questions to ask your federal election candidates are:

1. Do you know who your local bushland friends' groups are and what they do? Will you visit local urban bushland? (Offer a tour if you're keen!)
2. Will you advocate for and support stronger national laws to stop extinctions and protect the environment?
3. How will you support a federally enforced ban on destroying habitat of threatened species, like the Black-cockatoos?
4. What will you do to address climate change?

### What we want to achieve:

- **An independent Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), reforms to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation EPBC Act*, not streamlining approvals, real protection of habitat and biodiversity, enforcement, compliance and stronger Indigenous engagement.**
- **Clearing habitat of threatened species to stop** while we regenerate and replant green canopy for animals and climate action. Underwood Bushland, Tuart and Banksia woodlands should not be cleared.
- **Committed action to reduce emissions to net zero.** Science says 2030, major parties say 2050. Ask how they intend to achieve it.
- **Support for local bushland groups.**

## Tips on each question:

### **Question 1: Talk about your passion to protect your local bushland/wetland.**

Candidates need to know about the environmental issues in their electorate. Introduce them to your Friends Group and the local urban bushland and wetlands in their electorate. Explain that **volunteers** are working hard to revegetate, weed and protect these places. Elected Members can support us financially through grants, by raising our concerns directly to Ministers and also in Parliament, and by keeping us informed about decisions that impact us and the natural areas we are caring for. Ask them, should they be elected how will you support us? Regular meetings? Volunteering? Helping to recruit volunteers and allocate resources?

### **Question 2: We need stronger national environmental laws.**

Australia is experiencing an extinction crisis. In part because our environmental protection system is failing. For example, Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) identified under the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act)* include nationally significant wetlands, RAMSAR wetlands and:

- *Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs):*
  - Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain endangered ecological community;
  - Tuart Forests and Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain critically endangered ecological community
  
- *Endangered species:*
  - Carnaby's Cockatoo
  - Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo
  - Ring-tail possum.

Will you advocate for better environmental standards; an independent Assurance Commissioner; an Office of Compliance and Enforcement; and stronger Indigenous engagement?

### **Question 3: Some iconic species are at risk of extinction due to clearing.**

Will you support a ban on clearing their habitat? Will you promote legally enforceable measures to prohibit clearing habitat? Will you commit to ending clearing and the net loss of vegetation cover (deforestation) in WA and in Australia?

Note that more than 100 countries signed onto this at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference - known as COP26 at Glasgow in Scotland. (Australia has not made such a commitment).

**Retaining urban bushland is also critical to human health and well-being** (having liveable, beautiful cities). Ask the question: Are you aware that heatwaves kill more Australians than any other natural disaster? (Price-Waterhouse Cooper, "Extreme Heat Events" <https://www.pwc.com.au/publications/extreme-heat-events.html> ).

Key points to discuss around retaining bushland for health reasons:

- Reduces urban heat island effects (keeps city/community cooler, reduce deaths associated with heat waves, save on power bills)
- Helps purify the air/reduces carbon levels
- Gives people access to nature (connect with nature) which makes people feel good/is de-stressing
- Beautifies the city which is also relaxing and de-stressing (and increases property values)
- Gives people access to areas to walk and run which directly improves their health.

Perth could be one of the hardest hit cities by climate change. Retaining urban bushlands and increasing the tree canopy across neighbourhoods will help keep temperatures in the city low and combat decreasing rainfall.

***Question 4: Climate change threatens biodiversity.***

Ask the question: Are you aware that thousands of native species in our local bushland are under threat from climate change? The climate in southwest WA has already started changing. Decreased rainfall and falling groundwater levels are a significant threat to our banksia woodlands, tuart woodlands, jarrah forest, and wetlands.

Will you commit to actions that deliver urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030? By how much? For example, 50% or 70%? What is your plan to reduce Australia's emissions to net zero by 2050?