

Catherine Noone

Independent candidate for Nicholls Ward

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Q1. Why have you decided to stand for the Yarra City Council?

I love being a resident of Nicholls Ward. I grew up in Gore Street, Fitzroy. I went to school locally, learned to swim locally, and did work experience at the local library. I have worked and volunteered in the area and still use our great local parks, council services, businesses and shops. Our suburbs might be small, but that just means we pack a lot in to our 5km bubble!

The pandemic has highlighted how important it is to keep our area safe, accessible and liveable, for everyone. I know how much can be achieved by working together on this. As an active committee member at Holden Street for nearly 10 years, and as Chair for 5 years, I worked with people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. I am proud of our work to integrate environmental sustainability into every aspect of the Neighbourhood House, while adapting to changing community needs and funding requirements.

As an independent candidate, with a lifelong commitment to social justice, I want to work with you to make sure Nicholls Ward continues as a great place to grow up, live, work, play, and grow old.

Q2. Are you a member or supporter of a local group or organisation?

I have a long record in community activities. I have also volunteered and worked with the Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre, North Fitzroy Public Residents Association, Holden Street Neighbourhood House, and Fitzroy and Carlton Community Credit Coop.

Q3. Have you been a participant in a local project or campaign?

Local campaigns I've been part of include:

- A petition to support Save Fitzroy Pool, as Secretary of the Student Representative Council at Collingwood College
- Gore Street Area Action Group
- Liveable Streets Fitzroy
- Save St Joseph's Collingwood

Q4. What experiences have you had with the Yarra City Council?

In addition to participating in local campaigns and attending relevant council meetings about these issues, my work and volunteer roles at the neighbourhood houses involved funding from Yarra – and advocating for changes in state and local government funding. Through my role on the committee of governance at Holden Street Neighbourhood House, I participated in council consultation with community and businesses representatives for the Brunswick Street working group and the community space at the new library, Bargoonga Nganjin.

Q5. What role does the community play in council decision making? How can this be made more effective?

Community voices must be heard and considered in council decision making. Councillors represent the voices of their community, and can only do so by hearing from people and being an active community member.

Community engagement cannot rely on one form of interaction. We have a diverse mix of people in Nicholls Ward, and need to make sure everyone has the opportunity to participate in appropriate ways – taking into account language, literacy, internet access, and whether people feel more comfortable expressing their views individually or as a group. Council and Councillors must work with the community to ensure effective, transparent and flexible ways of engagement.

Q6. How do you propose to communicate with the community if elected as a councillor?

I will actively listen to the community and attend community events. Connecting during COVID has changed some ways of communicating, but as above, we need to keep working together to find the right ways to make sure community voices are heard. I'm here to speak up for our community in local decisions, and to be transparent in my communication with the community.

Q.7. What are your priorities if elected to the Council?

I am committed to representing community voices to ensure:

- inclusive and diverse community participation;
- safe and accessible streets, parks and services;
- social connection and the wellbeing of our community;
- addressing climate change to save our planet;
- protection of local heritage and appropriate development, not over development;
- good governance and accountability.

Q8. The FRA has identified the following key priority areas

- **Heritage Protection and Conservation**
- **Planning Permit Information and Advocacy**
- **Yarra Council Strategy, Policy and Guidelines**
- **Homelessness and Social Issues**
- **Climate Action**

What priority would you give to each and how would you respond to your top 3 if elected as a councillor?

All of the priorities listed are clearly important, but addressing environmental and social issues have to be the starting point for keeping our community strong and vibrant.

- Climate Action
 - Taking action to protect our planet has to be an integral basis for any decision making and planning. Yarra has declared a climate emergency for a reason, and Council has a responsibility to lead the way for local solutions.
- Homelessness and Social Issues
 - Many of the issues highlighted by the pandemic are not new for a lot of people, for example, housing affordability; isolation and loneliness; and the digital divide. Social issues are going to need extra support, advocacy and planning as we deal with the effects of the current pandemic. Council will have to work with other levels of government and the community to ensure better ongoing outcomes for Yarra.
- Yarra Council Strategy, Policy and Guidelines; Heritage Protection and Conservation; Planning Permit Information and Advocacy

Council is facing fresh challenges as everyone plans for new ways of doing things due to the current pandemic. I have experience in the public and community sectors with making the most of limited budgets to meet community needs. I believe in working with people to achieve practical solutions. We've got lots of experienced and knowledgeable residents in Nicholls Ward - let's work together to come out of this pandemic even stronger.

Q9. What should be the role of Yarra City Council in relation to State and Commonwealth governments?

Council has a key role to play in advocating to State and Commonwealth governments about decisions that affect our local area. For example, the FRA priority of homelessness will need advocacy to state and federal government.

Q 10. What relationship should the Yarra City Council have with neighbouring councils?

It is important that Yarra City council work with neighbouring councils to advocate for the needs of residents near municipal boundaries, and issues that need broader advocacy to state and federal governments.