

Six Years on Council

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Six years on Council –What have I achieved? What will my legacy be?

There are the tangibles in Maribyrnong:

- leading Maribyrnong to commit to going carbon neutral. It's a great example of what you can achieve despite being only one councillor in seven
- trucks bans in central Footscray
- being a leader of the successful campaign for \$52 million funding for Footscray station, and recognition by the state government of the value in investing in Footscray
- Maribyrnong being recognised as a leader in sustainable transport. My role in this has been advocacy locally and across Melbourne, and actions such as achieving funding for a sustainable transport officer, and ensuring every year that we allocate the full amount in the budget to implement our bike strategy
- requiring a Green Travel plan for all major developments
- Establishing the Footscray Reference Group which brings residents, traders and Council together to improve and promote Footscray.
- Promoting street parties to build community connectedness—we now have a program to encourage street parties across the city.
- Support for a huge range of social measures through actions such as chairing our disability advisory group, and advocating for affordable and social housing
- Being responsive to residents on everything from traffic in their street to complaints about parking fines. I haven't always been able to solve their problems but they get a good hearing!
- Bringing residents together to form the Maribyrnong Truck Action Group
- Bringing national and global issues to the Council chamber, such as support for the Palm Sunday rally, taking a position against logging in water catchments, and writing to the Prime Minister about human rights in China.
- Having the opportunity to proudly be one of the first Greens Mayors in the country in 2006

Then there are my achievements at a statewide level. I was Chair of the Metropolitan Transport Forum for four years and in that time repositioned the Forum as a serious player in transport advocacy in Victoria. I've also been an active player on a range of transport advisory and consultative committees and groups, and have spoken at a vast number of conferences and workshops! Whilst Chair of MTF I did regular media spots – it seemed I chatted to Jon Faine every month or so about something! Such advocacy is all part of creating a culture and environment in which change is possible, and educating and inspiring the community to take action.

I was proud to win the Municipal Association of Victoria's McArthur Fellowship in 2006. This funded a research trip to North America and Northern Europe on community attitudes to sustainable transport. The trip was a great learning experience for me, and informed and inspired those with whom I shared my findings on returning home. My overwhelming message was that change is possible – what's required is political will. I was also privileged to be awarded the Cycling Promotion Fund's national award in 2006 as the politician who had done the most to promote cycling – giving up the Mayoral car for a Mayoral bike was part of the reason for that!

I've been on the board of the Victorian Local Governance Association for almost four years also; the last two as Vice President. The range of issues we have dealt with as a Board has been vast. I

was also the inaugural chair of the VLGA climate change working group, and chair the women's policy group.

Some of my less tangible achievements are creating a culture of good governance through consistently speaking, acting and taking positions which are guided by Greens policy – resisting the temptation to be populist. In particular I've stood up and spoken out in favour of medium and high density developments with significantly reduced parking because of their benefit in helping to create a compact sustainable city. Often this has been in the face of considerable resident opposition.

I know I've had respect from officers and have hugely valued the relationships I have with them. In local government you can't achieve things by yourself. Most actions are implemented by officers, so having strong supportive relationships is critical

It's hard to know the importance and value of other intangibles- such as being a strong woman leader, being a mentor and advisor to lots of younger people, being known as a politician who works hard, is responsive, has integrity, and is honest!

It's been a busy, busy, busy but satisfying six years. In addition to these achievements, some of the most satisfying work I have done as a Councillor has been working and getting to know my community, sharing their stories, their achievements, their hopes and dreams. It's time to move on, but I know I will look back on these six years as being some of the best and most valuable years of my life.