

# STEP survey of candidates in the local government elections

[All Responses](#)[Question 1: There are community concerns about the environmental and social impacts of the installation of synthetic turf](#) > [Question 2: Are you in favour of the installation of synthetic turf](#) > [Question 3: How do you think the council should manage the installation of synthetic turf](#)

Question 1 has 10 answers (Open Text)

“There are community concerns about urban heat, and the environmental and social impacts of the installation of synthetic turf on local ovals. What are your views on this? ”

Sheri Evans said:

"I am against artificial turf. The problem is urban consolidation - not enough green space for the population, natural resources can't cope with constant wear and tear. Issues & questions that concern me and that need to be researched both longitudinally and cross-sectionally. We are talking in the main about children, who could potentially be spending 4-5 hours playing on these surfaces a week, perhaps more. The term Sick building syndrome has been around for decades. It originated from studies of buildings and workplaces that were very old, and was extended to whole of life studies. As I recall, new buildings release lots of toxins from all the plastics used in building products, furnishings, paint and flooring materials. These give off gases that can cause a range of health problems, from mild headaches, to chemical allergies and worse. Old buildings also apparently give off different types of toxic gases as materials age and begin to breakdown, & again, these have been associated with/ linked to various health problems. - the Heat that is apparently generated is likely to have a negative effect on the human body, including increasing the risk of heat stroke, in adults & children. - are Toxic chemicals released as the artificial turf heats up and would these be inhaled and impact sensitive lung tissue? Impact on subsoil. What happens under the turf? Presumably there would be a difference between subsoil under turf versus under artificial turf (AT). is this a problem, I'm not qualified to comment, but as someone making the stop/go decision, I would like this clarified by an independent expert/s before deciding. Water run off. Increase runoff means increase in flood risk for neighbouring areas. Again as a decision maker, I would need this quantified and clarified. End of life disposal. What happens when the AT starts to break down? I would want to know, 'Can it be recycled?', how much does that cost? Who bears the cost? "

Amanda BRIEN said:

"I support a balanced approach between the environment and the ability for our community to use our limited sports fields. I have been provided a wealth of information to read through, so I can develop an informed view. "

Greg Taylor said:

"I believe the environmental damage, installation cost and maintenance costs of synthetic turf sporting fields far out weigh their benefits. For Ku-ring-gai, the proposed synthetic turf at Norman Griffiths Oval is costing something in the vicinity of \$3.5 million. This is the same cost as upgrading 5 - 7 of Ku-ring-gai's sporting fields to best-practise natural turf fields. I believe best-practise natural turf sporting fields are the best option for Ku-ring-gai and it's residents, now and into the future. "

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Jayamala GUPTA said:

"I agree we are in the midst of a climate emergency and need to do everything we can to reduce human activity that is leading to an increase in urban heat. I know the issue of synthetic vs natural turf on local ovals is a topical issue for our residents. My official statement is that IF I am elected to Kuringgai Council I will be briefed on this issue before taking a position. My personal preference is natural turf though I understand that with more people moving into our suburbs, and sport being important to mental and physical health, the pressure on our open spaces and fields is growing. How best to balance these various opposing views points to the over arching question - how much population pressure can our land take? I hope a position on council would allow me to convey and advocate for all the residents as we debate this issue. "

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Sam NGAI said:

"It's a tough choice because there are generally three options. 1) Tell our people to play less sport due to the lack of available facilities. This would be detrimental due to the impacts on physical and mental health; 2) Clear additional bushland to make space for additional ovals, not supported for obvious reasons; and 3) More intense use of existing ovals, which may need to be supported by relevant methods or technology to increase the durability of the surface throughout each season. Much of the objections that I hear re: synthetic turf quotes older, outdated studies and data. Urban heat readings from over 10 years ago based on older generation synthetic turf technologies, references to rubber infill as compared to cork infill, references to older generation designs without retention of runoff, and lack of reference to hybrid surfaces which are predominantly (e.g. 95%) natural grass supported by a small amount of artificial reinforcement. We are open to discussions about technology types, soil types, and the tradeoffs of each option especially for oval proposals going into the future, though acknowledge that ultimately there is the difficult choice to make of whether we wish to make decisions that impact humans (by limiting sport as well as physical and mental health and development) vs. decisions that impact the environment (e.g. runoff of microplastics)."

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Alec TAYLOR said:

"Demand from residents and sporting clubs for recreational facilities, including sporting fields, was increasing well before Covid. They're good for the physical, mental and social well-being of the community, and we need to find ways of preserving them while increasing utilisation. And we need to avoid putting any more plastic into our environment. I have read and watched a lot of content on this issue, including the Synthetic Turf Study. Improving natural turf practices seems like an immediate 'quick win' for KRG. I watched the Mosman oval video with hope, and then heard that it is on top of a hill with existing drainage and 90% sunlight, unlike most ovals in Ku-ring-gai. Hybrid fields are underpinned, only have ~5% synthetic grass, and no plastic beads. Apparently they're used for most professional sporting codes, but they're expensive. If the sporting clubs are prepared to pay the difference and dogs etc can still use these fields it may be an attractive solution to meet the needs of our community. However, I'm not a current councillor and need to learn more about this important issue. I understand the council is currently working on a Turf Policy, and I hope that it is science-based and conclusive. I'm generally in favour of removing government grants for synthetic fields, although I believe that is primarily a state level issue, and wonder if it could be amended to cover hybrid fields. Ultimately I'm keen to represent the views of Roseville ward and Ku-ring-gai on this and all other matters, and feel that I would have a duty to make sure that those views were as well-informed as possible. Thank you to STEP for championing this issue and serving the community. "

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Carmel HEFFERNAN said:

"I was originally supportive of synthetic turf because it uses recycled materials and reduces the need for water and chemical maintenance. Great idea except for the heat that is generated. My husband and son are football players, and have commented on the heat. From a practical perspective, whilst the surface is smooth and good to play on, I don't think we should introduce any more synthetic turf pitches, because of the heat factor. I'm a huge fan of living things and synthetic turf doesn't tick the box."

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Trish Lynch said:

"I am not in favour of using synthetic turf. The effects are detrimental to our environment and health. It confines the use of an Oval to one sport when the entire community uses these grounds for recreation. There are current alternatives for improving the usability of our sportsfields such as 'hybrid' grass and proper maintenance of the natural turf. Council should be exploring and implementing better practice. I am the convenor for the Friends of Mimosa Rofe Park and Sheldon Forest, a local residents group. We fought against the proposal to put synthetic turf at Mimosa Oval Turramurra and were very pleased the majority of Councillors agreed with us."

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Mick MARR said:

"Not appropriate for many areas "

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Simon LENNON said:

"Community concerns on any issue should be addressed. I am not familiar enough with synthetic turf to have a view on it, but if elected would welcome learning about it."

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Question 2 has 10 answers (Open Text)

## “What’s your view on mountain bikers constructing their own new tracks through bushland?”

Sheri Evans said:

"Australia is one of the driest, most fragile ecological environments on the planet. Uncontrolled track making risks erosion, and as such can result in long term damage to the whole ecology. Early European farmers learned the hard way about the damage erosion can do to productive land. Once erosion occurs it takes decades to repair. Whilst I admire the skill, stamina and ability of mountain bikers, there needs to be appropriate management of our shared natural resources. The interests, needs and desires of users need to be taken into account, but ultimately, if an individual's/group's use of a public resource is detrimental to that resource then that can not be permitted to continue. It would be a matter of bringing ideas and solutions to the table, educating , listening, understanding the principles and values and aiming for a workable solution. Off road biking is definitely outside my wheelhouse, but good faith dialogue and consultation, goes along way. Stakeholder forums might help bring ideas to the table. Listening to stakeholders can take time, but the educative process often can be invaluable."

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Amanda BRIEN said:

"Any use of our bushland that results in modifying it, should be done in consultation with Parks and Wildlife. I believe council is working to provide a solution for mountain bikers, to prevent this issue. We do need to educate the community in a way that encourages people to care for our bushland. "

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Greg Taylor said:

"I feel mountain bikers constructing tracks through the bushland is not a good idea. Without the appropriate expertise and experience these tracks aren't able to be constructed without serious impacts to the environment and biodiversity. It is important that bike tracks are safe to use, and aren't constructed in situation that might endanger other users of the bushland. I would like to see official mountain bike tracks constructed throughout our national parks and bushland, though how this is paid for and how it is to be regulated are serious consideration, that Council and other bushland management agencies should be responsible for. "

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Jayamala GUPTE said:

"I am not fully aware of this issue but I wouldn't be able to support "mountain bikers constructing their own tracks through bushland". IF elected I would try to better understand and balance the needs of bikers with care for our fragile bushland."

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Sam NGAI said:

"Mountain bikers should work in collaboration with Council to develop tracks in sensible locations. The recently opened Jubes Mountain Bike Park is one example of how this can be done. If mountain bikers are constructing illegal tracks through bushland then this should be reported to Council, and ideally Council staff will take the initiative to proactively engage the Mountain Bikers to see if there are alternate arrangements that meet their needs."

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Alec TAYLOR said:

"Mountain biking continues to grow in Ku-ring-gai and that's good for the physical, mental and social well-being of the community. However, I don't agree with uncontrolled and unrestricted development of bike baths in bushland. While I need to learn more about this issue I perceive that it threatens and damages native fauna and flora, and is unpleasant for walkers. "

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Carmel HEFFERNAN said:

"I don't agree with mountain bikers constructing their own tracks. I believe that if there is strong demand for more mountain biking tracks, the council has a responsibility to listen to the demand. However, we operate in a democracy, so the needs of the majority should be balanced with the needs of a few. I'm a keen walker in the Ku Ring Gai area, and I've seen the mountain biking tracks in North Wahroonga. They're not pretty, but as I noted, if there is a demand for mountain biking facilities from a wide sector of the community, they should be constructed sensibly with proper planning and oversight. From a big picture perspective, mountain biking tracks are open space and provide a recreational experience for riders. Ku Ring Gai provides facilities for a variety of sports, golf, football, tennis, netball, cricket, basketball etc. All of these traditional sporting facilities require the natural landscape to be carved up and reshaped. Perhaps Mountain biking trails should indeed become part of the council sponsored facilities."

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Trish Lynch said:

"The bush in our area is not endless. We have a small amount of environmentally sensitive, beautiful natural bushland. Some of it, like the Blue Gum High Forest, critically endangered. The mountain bike community have a legitimate sport/pastime, but individuals continually constructing their own new tracks are degrading Lane Cove and Ku-ring-gai National Parks and surrounding area. This should not be allowed or encouraged. Council is currently working to improve facilities for bikers. Jubes track in North Wahroonga was recently reworked and improved with their input. Council should continue to work with bikers to find solutions that are not detrimental to our bushland. "

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Mick MARR said:

"negative view"

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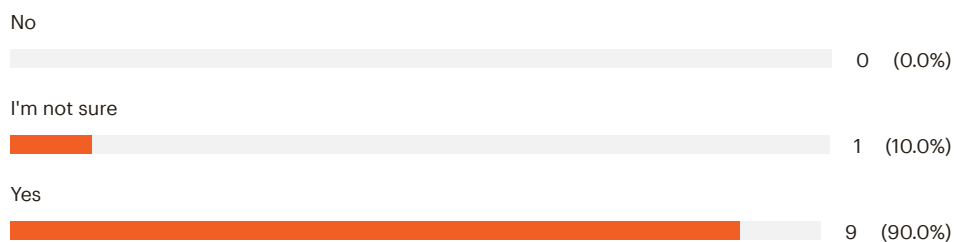
Simon LENNON said:

"I am not familiar enough with mountain bikes and their impact on bushland to have a view on the issue. On the face of it, mountain bike tracks through bushland sound damaging, even dangerous for others, unless there is value in those tracks for everyone or they provide firebreaks or access for firefighting or rescue. If elected, I would welcome learning about this issue."

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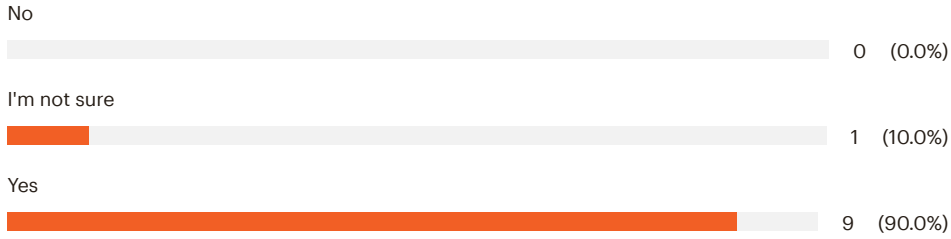
Question 3 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“The NSW government wants to increase tree canopy cover in Greater Sydney from 16% to 40% by 2030. However, development as a result of population growth, subdivision, larger house footprints etc means that we continue to lose tree cover. Will you work to increase tree canopy?”



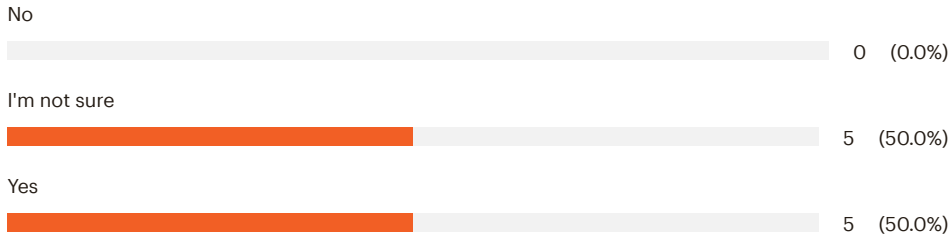
Question 4 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you support council’s environmental management policies, e.g. the biodiversity and water sensitive cities policies?”



Question 5 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Council does not have the financial resources to maintain effective firebreaks around all of the bushland boundaries of properties. Are you in favour of council developing a set of protocols so that qualified residents or their contractors are able to maintain their own boundaries?”





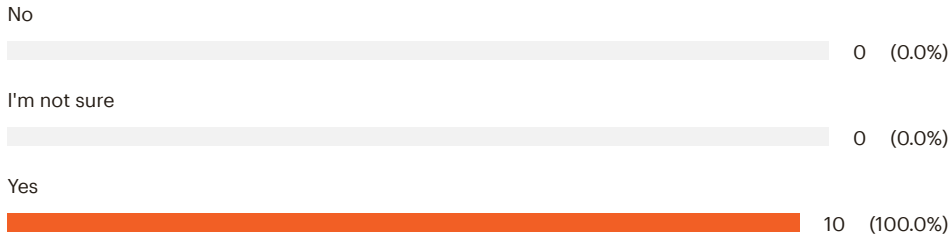
Question 6 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Some councils have resolved to dispose of surplus parcels of land behind closed doors. Will you undertake to make all such proposals transparent and invite community involvement?”



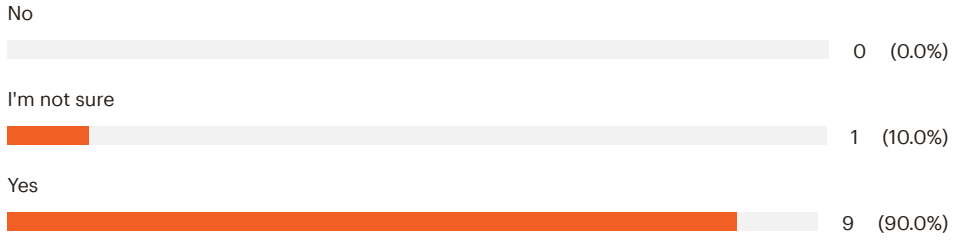
Question 7 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Some councils have not followed due process when asking for stakeholder feedback on a project. Would you take steps to ensure that all public consultation processes are carried out in an orderly and transparent manner?”



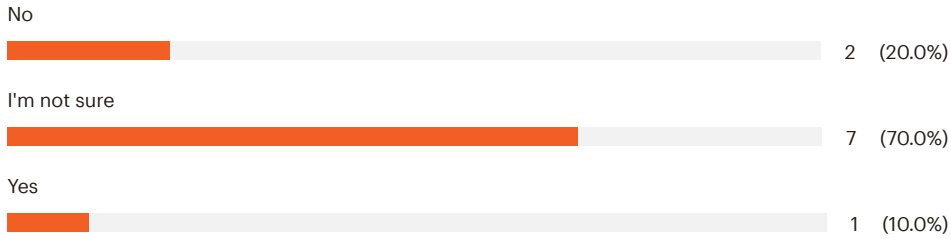
Question 8 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you think council should do more to encourage residents to reduce waste going into landfill?”



Question 9 has 10 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Council has resolved to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations and by the community to net zero by 2040 with an interim objective of a reduction of about 50% by 2030. Do you consider that enough action is being taken to achieve these goals?”



Question 10 has 10 answers (Open Text)

## “Is there anything you’d like to add?”

Sheri Evans said:

"If elected to council, I would review its current policies on the areas that I'm not fully apprised of at this point if time. I can say, as a matter of principle, I plant trees, prefer natives to introduced species. I have recycled since the 1980's, give to charities and buy items 2nd hand rather than new in the main. Put solar panels on our owner built home in the 1980's. Lived off grid for a couple of year's with two children. Grew fruit & vegetables, raised hens, milked a cow, made my own butter, made my kids clothes, kept bees etc. Prefer natural fibre to synthetic. Take my bike or walk, rather than drive, where practicable. Against high rise. Pro-organic community level planning and development not centralised forced development. Pro-sensible tree management policies, and pro genuine community consultation and participation in decision making. "

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Amanda BRIEN said:

"Regarding tree canopy, I will work to maintain this in Ku-ring-gai. I have volunteered to be a net-zero champion on our community. I look forward to contributing to community education on how we can proactively change our habits. "

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Greg Taylor said:

"I feel the unique natural environment, including two critically endangered plant communities, is one of Ku-ring-gai's most valuable assets. As a resident and potential Councillor in Ku-ring-gai, I very much look forward to contributing to the improvement of our land stewardship techniques, and caring for the Country that has provided for me throughout my life."

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Jayamala GUPTE said:

"As a new candidate not yet elected to council I will work collaboratively with the other 9 councillors to help get the best result for all our residents, and carefully look at the impact council decisions will have on our unique environment here in Kuringgai. Thanks "

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Sam NGAI said:

"Regarding tree canopy, our election brochure specifically says that we recognize the importance of tree canopy in keeping us cool, providing us with fresh air, and providing wildlife with homes. We wish to amend the council's Development Control Plans to require more planning for tree canopy. To be clear, this isn't to say that we want to prevent all trees from being removed because sometimes certain trees are located in unhelpful locations, however, what we do want to see is more intentional planning consideration with the development of each landowner's site. Rather than clearing out an entire block and then adding a few trees as an afterthought, it would be better to plan out a site while in consideration of which types of trees should be planted, where, and for what benefit. There is also an important role of landowner education in the entire process. All too often we see the wrong type of trees planted on properties, resulting in unintended impacts and the eventual extensive pruning or removal of the tree. This could have been avoided had the right type of tree been planted in the first place; it's important for landowners and neighbours to understand the implications of planting certain types of trees in certain places. Regarding firebreaks and bushland boundaries, our answer is both Yes and No. Yes in the sense that we are open to the idea of allowing residents to maintain the firebreaks near their own boundaries (especially if Council is not resourced to do this adequately), but No in the sense that we have concerns that once you give landowners the rules to undertake the maintenance of 'firebreaks', the rules will likely be bent by some to do much more than what was originally intended. Regarding the sale of 'surplus' parcels of land behind closed doors, we object to this strongly. Please take a look at the decision for Confidential Item #3, Ordinary Meeting of Council June 2021 where Councillor Pettett and I (Councillor Ngai) were the only ones to obje"

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Alec TAYLOR said:

"I have read some of the council's environmental policies, including the Water Sensitive Cities policy and Biodiversity policy (both of which I support). However, I have not reviewed them all and cannot say if I support them all at this stage. I'm also nervous about privately managed firebreaks - I feel that there is risk of abuse similar to other land clearing policies in NSW. If it is the most effective and economical solution then it would need to be carefully monitored and enforced with strong consequences for abuse. I understand that the council has recently completed some community engagement on the net zero objective. I'm optimistic that it is the start of productive process to identify and implement actions to reduce the carbon footprint of the LGA. If elected I will engage with operations and encourage progress on this important topic. Thanks again to STEP for championing these issues and serving the community. "

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Carmel HEFFERNAN said:

"I'm an active member of Streetcare close to my home. It's a great way to learn about our local flora, and to encourage a community consciousness about our environment. I've happily received and planted the native trees provided by the NSW Government initiative to plant a tree over the last few years. I'd like to see this program replicated in the Ku Ring Gai area. As the streetcare convenor for my street, I have a chance to spread the word about environmental programs. I'd hope to continue and expand the Council's focus on preserving and protecting our local environment. It is what makes Ku Ring Gai unique. In the questions above where I've answered "I'm not sure" I have chosen that option because I don't yet have the detailed knowledge to answer those questions honestly."

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Trish Lynch said:

"I can answer the above question if I am elected. I have taken part in the Net Zero Communities project and was very impressed by the staff and organisation. If that enthusiasm translates to action, these goals will be achieved. "

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Mick MARR said:

"allthebest"

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Simon LENNON said:

"My understanding is that Ku-ring-gai does well on environmental issues, but I would always welcome proposals to improve."

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