

2020 Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Watson Ward
Candidate Statements

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MERCURIO, Paul

I want a council that supports our community not one that polices and suppresses opportunity. I wish to see a council that celebrates our community. This can be achieved in a myriad of ways, from the smallest gesture to the grandest. For instance, the apple on a stick in Somerville by the central roundabout is a rather sad and unloved symbol. Let's fix that to something more emboldened, something that says we are proud of our history and who we are today. Somerville train station and the area around it is very tired and unkempt. Let's make that area attractive and useable so locals can use and enjoy the space. I want to be part of a council that wants to make things happen - such as Somerville Family Fun Day or Tyabb Airshow - rather than being a council that creates obstacles. Let's celebrate and bring our townships together by building the bike path between our towns and parks. Let's celebrate our wildlife and fauna by building and maintaining better walking tracks around the Western Port Coastal Reserve. Let's celebrate, support and work with the many small businesses that make the Peninsula unique Farm Gates, wineries, boutiques, our café culture, coffee carts, Food Tourism, Performing arts, craft markets and our antique shops. Let's create a sustainable environment for jobs for our children and ourselves. Let's cut red tape, cut enforcement, cut planning times, cut unnecessary VCAT hearings, cut costs and cut rates. Let's get back to basics and fix our roads, build public transport, build educational and training opportunities. I want a council that genuinely wants to help understand and meet community needs. Lastly, I have a vision to create a performing arts centre to nurture and celebrate talent with a local professional theatre for everyone to enjoy.

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PAGE, Louise

Some of you may not have thought about the council election, but your vote will make a difference to the future of our area. If you want that bike track, that walking trail or graffiti removed as well as job opportunities and appropriate development then please consider the following. A thriving community needs forward thinking, energetic and innovative councillors. I am a community leader, an achiever who is motivated and dedicated. I believe our youth need to be active with options for education and training. To manage growth and attract sustainable business and investment for employment while retaining the character and rural aspects we love, is the challenge we face. For a decade I worked in the food, wine, accommodation and tourism sector on the Peninsula, so I know the complexities and difficulties facing businesses and residents. I understand what it takes for a region to reach its potential and the delicate balance between growth and preservation. Currently, I am the co-owner of a niche risk management business and our clients are primarily municipalities. This knowledge gives me a comprehensive understanding of the risks faced here and at a global level. I am an active member of several community organisations. This year I received a Mayoral Commendation for my work as past president of Save Westernport and for my genuine care for the marine wildlife and coastal areas. My business and community background combined with a passion for the environment and wildlife provides a solid foundation for sound decisions. If elected, I will be tireless and accessible and will fight to ensure that this area and Westernport in general becomes a priority. For more about me and FAQs - www.louisepage.online

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STEPHENS, Michael

My name is Michael Stephens and I am running for Watson. I have been working on the Mornington Peninsula as a Plumber for 35 years and have grown up fishing in our treasured local bays. I have been a local school councillor for 6 years, 2 of these as President. I have led and participated in community-driven Climate networks and volunteer for a local foreshore management committee. I have worked hard to reduce my personal and business carbon footprint over the last 20 years and now I am focussing my energy on assisting the council to implement rapid emission reduction. I am running to ensure the MP council fully implements and improves on their Climate Emergency Plan. Why Emergency? We all saw the climate bushfire refugees arrive in Somerville last summer. I am worried that global targets of 1.5 and 2 degrees of warming exist in hope only, and that governments globally are committing our planet to 3+ degrees of warming. A future too devastating to describe, however one our children will have to survive. We can avoid that future; however, it will require Emergency Mobilisation by all levels of government. The good news is that our council can help make this happen. I will listen to your concerns. I will drive our council to spend your rate payment dollars within our council electorate. This will regenerate local economies, communities, and address the Climate Emergency at the same time. This approach will boost local jobs, providing hope for children's future. Creating local jobs benefits us all. The COVID crisis has revealed to us that when governments listen to the science, and act decisively, worst-case scenarios can be avoided. Now is the time to act on global heating. To accelerate climate rescue and action, Vote 1 Michael Stephens for Watson.

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BORZECKI, Stefan

A lifetime local resident and major employer in our Shire, I've spent the last 35 years building and running a large, successful business in Watson Ward. Now a retiree living with my family in Somerville, I have the time, drive and commitment to effectively represent local residents, businesses and ratepayers on Shire Council. From decades of regular interaction and dealings with the Shire I'm well aware as a ratepayer how urgently Council needs to change the Shire's negative culture and review any unsustainable business management, operations, spending priorities and debt levels. Qualified and experienced in Civil Engineering, Business Management and Finance, I aim to help our Watson Ward community weather the coming recession as a voice for change on Council. I will challenge without fear or favour, any serious shortcomings embedded in Shire culture. In supporting concerns of ratepayers I will also work towards the Shire becoming more proactive in facilitating local job creation, declaring an extended freeze on rates and operating in a more transparent, sustainable and cost-effective manner. Simple changes like taking care of our own rubbish, not dumping it in our neighbour's yard or spending more on roads and potholes and less on non-essentials and showy icons would be a positive step. Pedestrian paths and crossings need attention; the cycle foot-path from Somerville to Baxter to Mornington should be completed. The proposed low-cost, popular Tyabb-Somerville-Hastings Coastal Trail should be approved. I advocate doubling the area of our nature parks, green belt and coastline by seeking to incorporate French Island into the Shire. The Shire should cut non-essential costs, minimise unnecessary red or green tape, reduce using consultancies and avoid costly lawyer expenses. To demonstrate my commitment and willing leadership I'll donate 20% of any personal Shire income to the Somerville Salvation Army.

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LOOIS, Bernhard

Bernhard Loois was a registered builder with extensive experience in the construction industry. He has lived in the Watson ward for 25 years, making significant contributions to the community particularly among disadvantaged young people and in the youth and adult justice area for those with cognitive impairments. He has been on the board of several local service clubs over many years. Bernhard is standing for council again because he wants to see improvement in distribution of services for the Westernport side of the peninsula, also ensuring transparency of council bureaucracy activity, reducing, for example, the significant expenditure of time and money in taking residents to court (and losing) on planning and other issues. He wants to see the end of waste of money by council, and proper scrutiny by the audit committee of all expenditure. This includes a quality assurance watch on contractors used by the shire. Bernhard is passionate about buying local, for local people - and council - supporting local businesses. This has become even more important than ever. He is a strong supporter of the value of the Tyabb airfield for emergency services, pilot training, employment, recreation, and the Peninsula Aero Club's (PAC's) support of peninsula charities through its biennial air show, which brings visitors from all over Australia to our area. Local sporting facilities need improvement to offer access to all areas of the community, including those with disabilities. Bernhard believes it's time for change. Don't just sit and watch the council bureaucracy take away our local freedoms. This is our chance to make a real difference for our future, so vote 1 for Bernhard Loois if you want to see things to change within our council. Lets make it happen together.