

**2023 Mornington Peninsula Shire Council**  
**Watson Ward**  
Candidate Statements

**NOTICE:** The contents of candidate statements are provided by the candidates. Any enquiries about candidate statements should be directed to the relevant candidate. Candidate statements are not verified or endorsed by the Election Manager.

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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 aware as a ratepayer how urgently Council needs to change the Shires 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 other Municipalities 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 footpath from Somerville to Baxter to Mornington should be completed. The proposed low-cost, popular Tyabb-Somerville-Hastings Coastal Trail should be maintained and enhanced as it is still a basic fire trail. I will also advocate doubling the area of our nature parks, green wedges, and coastline. The Shire should cut non-essential costs, minimise unnecessary red or green tape, reduce using consultancies and avoid costly Legal actions especially against Ratepayers. The Shires continuous growth in Management and Overheads is itself unsustainable.

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**STEPHENS, Michael**

Hi, I'm Michael Stephens. I've lived and worked on the Mornington Peninsula for 35 years. 30 of those years I've run a small business serving the Peninsula. I've experienced the constant growth of the Peninsula firsthand. From vibrant country towns, to bustling complex urban suburbs. I know the challenges that we face running small businesses, raising our families, paying the bills, and chipping away at the expenses of keeping a roof over our heads. I have deep community volunteer involvement history. I've participated in school council, CFA, Westernport foreshore management, Westernport Sea grass restoration. Recently, I've volunteered time and effort finding out what matters to peninsula residents through participatory democracy. The Watson ward is growing rapidly. Alongside this growth comes the need for steady and increased local government support and attention. Local voters have highlighted the need for major road and intersection upgrade attention, sporting club upgrade support, increased small business support, and issues of increased township graffiti problems. I'll push for a cross peninsula public transport service. Will support council to investigate measures to address the housing and rental crises. I'll help Watson households embrace renewable energy systems, which will reduce their power bills. Even if issues affecting Watson are not the direct responsibility of local government, I will work constructively with all levels of government. I will listen to your concerns. I will empower local community to have their say, and have their voices heard. I will actively encourage council to spend your rate paying dollars back into the Watson ward. Watson needs an attentive Councillor who will draw the needs of the ward to the attention of the council.

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**CLARKE, Rob**

I am a recently retired engineer and planner. I have lived in Somerville for over fifty years and have seen the town grow from a small friendly environment into what is sadly little more than a glorified B&B with many of our towns folk having to travel hours a day to find suitable employment and career opportunities. I have seen with dismay the rise of heavy vehicle movements through Tyabb and Somerville rather than using the Western Port Highway (so called). They now roll through, hundreds a day, clogging and damaging roads while increasing the risks of accidents and injury. I will campaign to have all vehicles over Five Tons GVM restricted to the Westernport Highway and prohibited from entering the town limits of Tyabb and Somerville (unless for local pickup or delivery). My desire is to enable the towns to be truly communities; where children and old folk are safe to walk to where they want to go. Where mothers don't have to dodge potholed or non-existent footpaths as they go about their business. To be a community is more than just having your house in the town. A community is where our young can be both educated and find viable and interesting futures without daily travel to other places. We can and should develop tertiary industries in order to attract and keep our best rather than having them leave just to find the futures they desire. I believe the Mornington Peninsula should be treated as an area separate from the greater Melbourne, to create an environment where business want to come here; not just service industries, but new and innovative firms that will bring both wealth and progress, benefiting all who call the towns and areas of the Peninsula home.



**LOOIS, Ben**

Living in Watson ward nearly 30 years, I've seen the rural area grow into townships alongside vegetable growers fighting to continue to provide essential fresh food and employment. I know our growing pains and am hearing these concerns from ratepayers: Lack of road maintenance and proper repair to dangerous potholes that cause expensive damage to vehicles; failure to carry out fire hazard reduction along grass-choked roadsides and public areas under control of council; reduction in mechanical street cleaning and clearing of blocked drains, causing local flooding. Clearly income from rates is not being spent on core responsibilities of local government - roads, council assets and rubbish. Funds are being diverted to costly legal proceedings against residents and business that should have been resolved in house, accepting VCAT decisions, moving on; council has attempted to police activities like jet skis on maritime waters outside their area of responsibility. And they are making local laws designed to limit ratepayers' rights. A key part of my voluntary activities over the past 20 years has been working with young and disadvantaged people. Over many years State government has been transferring responsibilities to local government without State funding. I want to ensure council can provide services and support needed, properly resourced. I am conscious of the fact that in a single councillor ward, effective cooperation with other councillors is essential. I will be a strong voice, careful listener and full-time councillor on your behalf. Meanwhile, we all are facing rising costs particularly to power and food. This means rates will also rise out of proportion to the services provided. I have always had to live within my means, I will ensure council does too.



**BEVERIDGE, Susie**

A twice elected Mornington Peninsula Shire Councillor, second time unopposed, I pledged loyalty to my constituents and delivered, seeing a "forgotten" ward blossom over those years. Now this region has the attention of state government, it's time to reignite renewal networks, forging strong partnerships again maximising funding opportunities for Watson Ward. Chairing the Community Renewal Steering Committee for some years enabled us to facilitate collaboration of Shire, State and Federal governments with various stakeholders. Our recent Westernport Neighborhood Watch committee public forum, I asked if a regional renewal be considered, after launching a creative concept to engage our townships' youth; "The Westernport Regional Mural Trail" bringing together our youth, skating legends, artists, indigenous art mentors; connections to charitable not-for-profits e.g. Tyabb Airfield recently hosting the 15,000th free flight for children and carers. Renewal and mural trail concepts already creating significant interest at government and community level. Together we can work overseeing important upgrades in service quality and infrastructure, including construction of the missing bike path link on the dangerous stretch between Somerville and Baxter townships, traffic hazard mitigation including potholes, broken road edges, poor lighting and obscured visibility, while preserving what we love most about where we live. The relaxed semi-rural ambience, natural bushland, significant trees are important to this community. After years of campaigning for healthy environments and healthy communities, I joined Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council. It's important to strike sustainable balance between environment, economy and societal pressures. Access to safe housing, employment opportunities and recreational facilities enable communities to thrive, not just survive. Wisdom through lived experience of hardships enabled me to generate funding, awareness and kindness. A small business owner. No developer nor political ties, no conflicts of interest; only willingness to help Watson Ward achieve its very best. Second preference - Kate Roper.



**ROPER, Kate**

The current Council has been ranked one of the worst in Victoria (2022 community satisfaction survey). Our community has been unrepresented for 8 months. No one in Council is listening. Neglecting basic needs is not good enough. The state of Watson Ward is a disgrace with your community expectations not met. You need a committed, stable and commonsense representative for Watson. Don't waste more time with another new representative that does not understand the processes and procedures needed to get results. Experience matters. As a resident of Western Port for 25 years including Tyabb where my children attended school, I am concerned about the lack of attention and funding this side of the peninsula receives. My professional background in finance, bookkeeping and running my own small business, will enable me to get the best value for every ratepayer dollar. As a past Councillor and Deputy Mayor, my negotiation skills have enabled me to get important large projects initiated, funded and completed. As a member of Western Port Neighbourhood Watch committee based in Somerville, I have worked with volunteers and police to prioritise improving community safety. Increased crime is a significant concern. We want our fair share of rate money spent here and I will fight for: Updates for our Community facilities and sporting clubs, more funding for roads to bring them up to standard, better support services for vulnerable members of our community, increased Job Training opportunities and cross Peninsula transport. I will work constructively with State and Federal Members to ensure optimum funding for these vital projects. I am standing as an independent, community first candidate and I am here to represent you with transparency and integrity. I will always respond to all communication. Second preferences to Susie Beveridge