

Nepean Ward (2 vacancies) 7 Candidates

Candidates who did not respond:

NAUGHTON, Gary

Q1. Why are you standing for Council?

RACE, Sarah

Because I'm passionate about the community I live in, and I know I have a lot of skills and experiences that will be valuable as a Councillor.

BISSINGER, Susan

I am standing for Council so that I can use my position to help advance the following projects to improve and future proof our local areas and communities. A couple of years ago I set up Nepean Voters Action Group to address small issues around Sorrento, but found that real change had to come from within Council – a few months ago decided to become a candidate for Nepean Ward:

Upgrading Infrastructure & Maintenance:

- footpaths, bike lanes, roads, a lot of work needs to be done
- sporting venues are the soul of a community & need help
- beaches from erosion to inappropriate infrastructure
- shopping areas need to feel like a destination, beautiful & luxurious
- inclusive beach access, this is not only for wheelchairs & can be stunning
- future proofing local areas

Protecting our Environment and Wildlife:

- general environmental issues
- local vegetation & green wedge reinstatement & protection
- all wildlife (inc spider crabs)
- emission strategies using technology

Rebuilding Businesses:

- Councillor support & local support
- Council fee relief
- free Council advertising & promotions
- less regulations, easier applications

Supporting Community:

- unify people through events & projects
- support for groups combatting loneliness, depression, violence, discrimination
- empower community groups

Overseeing Council Projects in our Ward:

- make sure they are well prioritised
- ensure best use of resources

Improving Council Budgets:

- drive best outcome for ratepayers
- end wasteful spending

Pushing Waste initiatives:

- prioritize "waste to energy" plant
- promote better recycling

CHEERS, Mechelle

I am standing because I feel privileged to live in this beautiful part of the world (southern peninsula) and I want to ensure our natural environment and coastal lifestyle is protected. I believe as a Councillor I will be a more effective advocate because I will be in the position to influence Council decision making.

My key areas of focus are strategic planning and policy development as those areas relate to community services, the built and natural environment and social justice/equity. These are all areas I have been a community advocate for.

FRASER, Hugh

I was first elected to Council to represent Nepean Ward in 2012 and re-elected in 2016. The covid-19 emergency financial fallout demands a sensitive and flexible approach to relieve the hurt to our community. With 6 of our 11 councillors retiring at this election – continuity, experience, ability, ability and a clear understanding of council operations and the communities' needs are essential requirements for a shire councillor. These are the skills I will continue to bring to Council.

MULVANY, Simon

What do you regard as the five most important issues facing the shire?

1. Covid Recovery
2. Environment Preservation
3. Mental Health Support
4. Enhancing Entertainment & Festival Activity
5. Improved Transparency & Collaboration between Shire and Constituents

To expand briefly on these points, I feel facilitating a Covid Recovery Plan for the shire is paramount. We need to collaborate with local community and businesses to help support them and create strategies in response to this crisis. This includes, assistance to recreation and sporting clubs, amongst other community organisations. Covid-19 has created an atmosphere of fear and hostility, helping our community to feel safe and supported is important.

As an environmentalist, protecting our pristine and unique land dominates my agenda. I wish to reduce the amount of pesticides and herbicides used in the shire by using innovative alternatives. There are some wildflower highways appearing around the world. The Mornington Peninsula is home to Peninsula Honey, Diggers and Savethebeesaustralia. I would love to replace the cycle of Glyphosate used with indigenous flowers.

Over the past few years, I have become aware of the growing issues of mental health on the peninsula. I would like to see existing initiatives like, Men's Shed, RUOK and One in Five given more support, and see services to protect women and children made more accessible.

I feel there is a disconnect between council and community and I would like to rectify that. The community wants to be heard and their needs activated. I'd like to review and give transparency to public participation procedure, with the aim of allowing the public to see that their requests are being considered and where they are placed on the agenda.

I also feel we can better engage with our existing community leaders, such as local hero Josie Jones who has done so much work around waste management. Local Indigenous leader Lionel Lauch who brings education around the importance of keeping Aboriginal culture alive, or Rob Pitt who does a great job not only running Sorrento Hotel with his family, but helping other local businesses in the area. Some of this expertise may also help us develop our outdoor live music and festival event spaces to really optimise our seasonal opportunities and give all members of our community access to the arts.

What do you regard as the five most important issues in your ward?

1. Erosion between Portsea and Rye.
2. Conserve heritage sites and precincts.

3. To orchestrate a closed season on hunting for spider crabs.
4. Stop the spraying of herbicides in parks and community gardens.
5. Develop a outdoor bike space (BMX or mountain biking track)

Of which clubs or organisations are you a member?
Sorrento Sharks, Save The Bees Australia,

DAVIS, Mark

I have attended 90% of Council meetings for the last 2 years. Either in person or on line. I am disappointed with the perception the Community is there to serve the Council and not the Council is there to serve the Community. Poor budget management and not communicating with the Community.

Q2. Do you consider Council has a role in advocating on issues of concern to locals at the state and federal levels?

RACE, Sarah

Definitely, our 3 levels of government should be working together, not in silos, to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

BISSINGER, Susan

Absolutely, Council has been formed for the benefit of ratepayers, it is their responsibility to ensure that all issues that concern ratepayers are addressed at the highest level and everything possible is done to achieve a positive outcome.

CHEERS, Mechelle

I absolutely do! This Council unlike previous Councils has started to do advocate at the State and Federal Level such as their stance on the AGL issue, declaring a Climate Emergency and on more local issues such as the control of jet skis on the Southern Peninsula

FRASER, Hugh

Yes

MULVANY, Simon

Absolutely, that's why I have decided to get into politics. I also ran in the state election.

DAVIS, Mark

Yes I do.

I see local Council as critically important in driving and advocating issues of concern to the State and Federal level. Local Council is the interface to the Community.

Q3. What do you see as the main social justice issues which currently need Council attention or advocacy?

RACE, Sarah

This is the first COVID election. This pandemic has caused a lot of upheaval and exacerbated social justice issues. Homelessness, domestic violence, mental health, poverty and women have been hit particularly hard by this crisis. As a council I think the first priority is going to be reviewing our community and to get a broad picture of where the real deficits lie, and then make a plan to tackle them.

BISSINGER, Susan

I have not done any research into social injustices in the Nepean Ward or even the Mornington Peninsula. I would imagine they would centre around equality, racism, violence – but would have to be educated on this matter.

CHEERS, Mechelle

A lot more needs to be done in the area of enabling people with a disability to be able to go to almost any public space but, in particular the foreshores and to be able to do so without any barriers to their comfort or ability to navigate the space. This issue is part of my own campaign platform.

The Shire is trying hard to implement its gender equity strategy and if elected I would support that 1000%

I think there is also an issue in some of our towns with youth feeling disengaged and we need to advocate for decent employment options such as supporting the CEO's project for a Technology Park at Hastings and the Federal Government's funding for a Climate Change Research Centre at Point Nepean National Park. Not all school leavers or university graduates want to leave the Peninsula to seek employment.

FRASER, Hugh

To keep our residents covid safe and help our business restart.

To decarbonise the peninsula by practical projects to reduce the shires carbon footprint in its own day to day operation and in the shire carbon footprint as a whole. No to the AGL regassification import terminal at Cribb Point, No to continue blowing up Arthurs Seat by Hillview Quarries to make profits for the Ross Trust: there must be a better way of satisfying its environmental charitable trust objectives.

Address homelessness and the use of gaming machines in the Shire.

MULVANY, Simon

Loneliness, depression, domestic violence, gambling addiction and bullying.

DAVIS, Mark

Respect and Care for all citizen's in our Community. We are yet to see the full impact of Covid19 on our community. Homelessness. self esteem of the youth, adults and elderly. Employment opportunities. Transient homelessness. Effects on women and children.

Q4. Have you advocated or worked for better outcomes with regard to Social Justice issues? If so how and in which areas?

RACE, Sarah

I have been supportive of many social justice issues; gay marriage, indigenous recognition, mental health. However most of my advocacy work has been on environmental issues. I helped establish the Southern Peninsula Repair Cafe, Rye Crop Swap and Rye Beach Clean Boards

BISSINGER, Susan

I have never worked in this area.

CHEERS, Mechelle

I have a lifetime of advocating for social justice issues particularly in the areas of equity and inclusion. Indigenous rights, antidiscrimination (women, cultural, sexual preference and now gender) and on environmental issues – land and the marine environment.

I successfully lobbied for funding to be allocated in the Council budget for all-inclusive picnic furniture to be installed on Rye Foreshore as part of the Rye Community Group Alliance call for a Foreshore for ALL. The furniture is currently being rolled out and has wheelchair access at both ends and wide seats so larger people can sit comfortably. We are hoping it will set a precedent across the Shire.

FRASER, Hugh

Yes, domestically and abroad as representative for the International Council for Local Government Environment Initiatives. Council has stated its position in relation to the AGL proposal, as above; and is yet to form a view in relation to Hillview. I personally opposed the Hillview application to secure renewal of a (defunct) planning permit to reopen operations at the abandoned old Pioneer Quarry. My opposition was vindicated by VCAT. As councillor I facilitated the proposal by Peninsula Springs for the highly successful 2019 winter Peninsula Warmers program for our boarding house residents.

MULVANY, Simon

I have assisted with the one in five campaign. Volunteered to talk to community groups like the men's

DAVIS, Mark

Understanding the issues. Communicating with key people to identify key areas of assistance and crises management.

I have worked at Women's shelters, homeless shelters and soup kitchens, organised corporate work days to assist in food packages and support services. I have had family experience in these areas of social justice issues.

Q5. Do you support the renaming of Blacks Camp Rd, Pre-school and Reserve?

RACE, Sarah

Yes I do, but in consultation with the Bunurong / Boon Wurrung people.

BISSINGER, Susan

As a non indigenous person, it is not my place to make a decision on this. Unless the local indigenous people are united on this matter, find it offensive and want it changed, I think that it should be left alone. It is a worrying trend to see people trying to change history.

CHEERS, Mechelle

Yes, if that is what the Boonurong Land Council (BLC) would like to see happen. I believe if it does occur then the choice of name should also be decided by the Land Council.

FRASER, Hugh

Yes, with the name that the Aborigines themselves used for this important site.

MULVANY, Simon

Yes

DAVIS, Mark

Yes I do.

Times change, people change and community attitudes change. Changing names is not something to be concerned about. How people feel and react is more important.

Q6. What can the Mornington Shire Council do to help reduce violence against women in the home?

RACE, Sarah

I am not an expert in this area, but I would like to work with the people who are to tackle domestic violence. As a society we need to do better.

BISSINGER, Susan

Violence against women in the home is extremely complex and hard to navigate for the victim and groups trying to help. All anyone can do is offer tangible support and educate. MPSC could place educational advertisements on all their media platforms and website – it has to be confrontational and associated with negative connotations to show it is cowardly. Council should fund a group and also provide a safe place for women to be able to discuss this issue, find support and have temp accommodation available. Police action needs to be taken, violence is never ok!

CHEERS, Mechelle

I think the MPS is trying to deal with domestic violence through the implementation of their gender equity strategy, but I also think it is a whole of Government/community responsibility. If people know violence is happening to their family member, friend, neighbour then they need to feel safe about calling it out.

Women also need somewhere to go and while women's refuges may have had their problems at least they were a visible port of call. I have volunteered in times past in women's refuges and know that many confided in no one about what was happening to them. The 'safe places' rely on an abused woman knowing who to go to.

The State Government educating men with the peer pressure campaign was a good one that should be continued.

FRASER, Hugh

Council has previously provided refuges in houses on Council properties but this is no longer appropriate or useful. More can be done in assisting with Legal Aid and the State Government advertising of the nature and extent of this behaviour is an impressive social awakening of this issue.

MULVANY, Simon

Assist support groups that empower women. Offer a sanctuary for women and children that are suffering. Have educational sessions at male sporting clubs about strategies to avoid domestic violence.

DAVIS, Mark

Education, workshops and support management.

Refuge centres where Women and their children can feel safe and supported.

A very important and growing issue we need to consult, manage and act.

Council is responsible to its community.

Q7. What type of projects could council undertake to increase community awareness of Indigenous cultural heritage on the Mornington Peninsula?

RACE, Sarah

I have lots of ideas, however I'm not Aboriginal so this all comes with the caveat that we need to work with our local indigenous people to make the right plan. I would like the Council where appropriate to include the Aboriginal name of a place, as well as the European name. For example at Arthurs Seat and Point Nepean. I would also look story boards to talk about what areas of the Peninsula were like before European settlement. In the Grampians they have Brambuk, which is a cultural centre where visitors can learn about the Grampians from an Indigenous perspective - something like that would be amazing.

BISSINGER, Susan

Historical signage is by far the best method of attracting real interest, and would be a great start, also Indigenous artwork with stories attached, would draw attention and encourage awareness. There are plenty of opportunities for tasteful displays that could be a real attraction to the area.

CHEERS, Mechelle

Council is involved in several good awareness raising initiatives, such as its sponsorship of Willum Wurrain at Hastings and the advice it seeks from Bunurong Land Council (BLC) on a range of indigenous matters including commissioning cultural heritage studies. It also is increasing the number of interpretive signs.

I would like to see targeted education programs designed and run in partnership with the BLC and the funding of projects such as the one I initiated. The project involves working with the BLC to create a Cultural Heritage site at what is known as Whitecliffs on the Rye foreshore. There is a focus on revegetation but also signage explaining indigenous names for plants and for their uses.

Another project was to do with creating interpretive signage containing Bunurong words with English translations to tell the stories of fishing, shell gathering etc in pre-white settlement times. The signage is designed so children can easily learn the words.

Implementation (and the monitoring) of Council's Reconciliation Plan, 2019 will also assist to raise Indigenous Cultural Heritage.

FRASER, Hugh

Each year I support the work of the Peninsula's Human Rights Group and its annual oration. In a collateral way I am the council delegate to the Mornington Peninsula Friends of Lospalos, Timor-Leste and heavily promote its work on the Peninsula and for the benefit of our friends in Timor-leste.

MULVANY, Simon

I would like to have a festival led by the Indigenous community that not only celebrates Indigenous culture also includes a sorry component where we have to face the about atrocities that occurred in our past.

DAVIS, Mark

Indigenous culture is something the Council can be made to be more aware of.

History and education in our local schools is very important.

Change commences with children who influence each and their parents.

Q8. Did you protest about the closure of the Centrelink office in Mornington? If so how?

RACE, Sarah

No I didn't. But I think the closure is a regressive step and the part time solution they offered is unacceptable.

BISSINGER, Susan

I didn't protest the closure, I don't know enough about this topic to even have an opinion. I would advocate for assistance for those who struggle with online technology, maybe even supplying them with an ipad.

CHEERS, Mechelle

Yes, as member of Council's Disability Advisory Committee. Like the closing of banks, big organisations have no thought to the impact on vulnerable people.

FRASER, Hugh

Yes, that was the official council position and I supported that.

MULVANY, Simon

I spoke to Chris Brayne about it.

DAVIS, Mark

No I did not protest.

I was unaware of the closure until after the event.

Q9. Where will you provide further information for voters about your credentials?

RACE, Sarah

www.sarahracefornepean.com

<https://www.facebook.com/SarahRaceForNepeanCouncilWard>

<https://www.instagram.com/sarahracefornepean/>

BISSINGER, Susan

Website: www.nepeanvoters.com

FaceBook Susan Bissinger for Council - Nepean Ward.

Linkedin Susan Bissinger

CHEERS, Mechelle

The standard places including distribution of flyers and posters, through email and social media as well as accepting invitations to zoom meetings from various groups where voters can ask questions of me.

Email: cheers4nepean@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Cheers4Nepean-109162694245821>

FRASER, Hugh

You can follow my work on Council and in the community at ***hughfraser-morningtonpeninsula.com*** and I can be readily contacted on **0418 379335** and at hwfraser@vicbar.com.au

MULVANY, Simon

www.beethecure.com under the problem.

Also this petition with updates

<https://www.change.org/p/greg-hunt-mornington-peninsula-insect-massacre>

DAVIS, Mark

www.markdavisfornepean.com

Facebook : markdavisfornepean

Q10. How do you intend to gain input from the community when controversial questions arise in council?

RACE, Sarah

Well controversially I want to speak with people. If there's an issue where there is community division, I want to work towards finding the common ground - that seems to have got lost in a lot of our current debates.

BISSINGER, Susan

We have a 3 part community – locals, part timers and tourists, decision making should come from the first 2 groups, but the third group should still be considered in the final decision. The best way to get relevant interest is to put signage and flyers in the retail outlets they all visit in our townships – supermarkets, newsagencies, bottle shops, cafes etc. Even though there is a high level of apathy and a lot of people who don't want to make a fuss in our local areas, we need ensure that the few loud voices aren't the only ones heard.

CHEERS, Mechelle

Council regularly has Have YOUR SAY surveys etc on their Web page but not everyone becomes aware. I would try and disseminate information widely, holding community forums as well as consulting/informing key community groups. With any controversial issue I would want to make sure the communities in the Nepean Ward were fully aware. Sometimes the difficulty relates to how to engage community to become aware/to comment so it may mean trialling some different ways of consultation/information dissemination.

FRASER, Hugh

I am the chair of the Nepean Ward Community Coalition which is a monthly meeting of the community groups in Nepean Ward. This a very effective informed sounding board to assist me in my work as councillor. Additionally, pre covid, I meet with ratepayers and council officers every Monday afternoon to hear and deal with residents issues.

MULVANY, Simon

Social media groups, email, phone .

DAVIS, Mark

I intend changing the culture.
I will consult widely and seek insight and opinion.
Decisions made must represent the Community.

This material has been assembled from statements made by individual candidates.

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