

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Election 2020

Candidates written responses to MPBBA questions

(By Ward, candidates listed alphabetically)

Briars Ward:

Stephen Batty:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?
EITHER A RESIDENT OR HOLIDAY OWNER WHO LOVES THE SAND AND WATER OF THE BAY.A FUN FAMILY LOCATION
2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores
AN ASSET OF THE BAY AND SHOULD BE PROTECTED.
3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would you like to see them assessed in the future.
I DO NOT KNOW THE RELEVANT FEES PER BOX IS, HOWEVER IF ELECTED I AM WILLING TO HAVE THIS AS A MATTER OF URGENCY AND UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF SUCH CHARGES.

Steve Holland:

1. In my mind, the typical beach box owner is a lifelong Mornington Peninsula resident with strong family and community ties to the area. As such it is likely that the beach box has been in their family for a long time and they are most likely prominent members of our community – either local business owners or community-minded people including volunteers or members of coastal groups/associations etc.
2. Similar to the bathing boxes Brighton, the beach boxes on the Mornington Peninsula are iconic. Not only do the boxes themselves attract tourists, but their existence encourages the owners to take responsibility for the protection and upkeep of the local environment.
3. I believe all fees and charges should be reflective of the service delivered (if any). If you follow me on Facebook, you will see I have run a very large campaign on council's "hidden" fee increases. My position is that the dishonest practice of increasing fees and charges to raise revenue and skirt the rate cap must end. This does not just apply to boat sheds and bathing boxes.

Dion Mullett Treloar:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?

My in-laws are part owners of a Beach Box in Mount Martha. They are proud of their little spot on the beach, take great care in maintenance and are generous in offering it's use to my partner and I. I don't know any other owners, but I would describe the typical holder as someone who is honoured to be able to enjoy their slice of paradise, who understands the

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heritage significance, who knows it is a privilege to own one and who is passionate about highlighting them as a special part of the Peninsula and Victoria.

2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores

Beach Boxes are an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores. They are an attraction for tourists, are instantly recognisable in photographs and are one of the things that set our beaches apart from a regular coastline.

I believe they encourage owners to take extra care for our beaches as they feel a certain kind of caretaker role. I know my in-laws have taken a keen interest in the erosion problems which many are experiencing, leading to a better understanding of local environmental problems.

3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would like to see them assessed in the future.

I would like to understand more about what other fees and charges are paid by Beach Box licensees that contribute to this significant figure, rather than promise you anything unrealistic in the hope of chasing votes.

I believe the licence fees of \$700 or \$900 respectively are reasonable, so long as the council can show where this money is spent in relation to the council's outgoings which are directly related to maintenance near Beach Boxes or administration.

In any sense, I would want the licensees to know they are getting value for money. I wouldn't want to see a reduction in fees, leading to poorer outcomes in the services provided to licensees.

I intend to learn more about your organisation if elected and would do my very best to address your concerns.

Barbara O'Reilly:

Thank you for your email. I think the beach boxes are great, really provide colour and atmosphere to our beaches. Also, having dedicated owners who are able to protect the beach environment, monitor security and keep it clean is a great asset to the area. As far as the rates are concerned, I would assume the amount charged at the moment has been acceptable to beach box owners for some time so should continue at that rate. Not having a list of owners, I am not able to say who the typical owner would be, except that if my family owned a beach box we would never let it go. So, I guess, my answer to who I think the typical owner is would be that the ownership is handed down through families.

Thank you to your contribution to the area. Most of the previous councillor cohort voted against the rate rise, so let's hope that continues.

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Peter Orton:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?
A regular community member.
2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores
My understanding is that beach boxes in Victoria were inspired by an English morality culture of a past age. Nowadays, I feel they are very valuable tourist asset reflecting our lifestyle and beach culture, particularly to overseas visitors. My wife is from north Queensland and finds beach boxes a unique partner to our public space beach asset.
3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would you like to see them assessed in the future.
I am not aware of the specific responsibilities of beach box owners, but would appreciate a better understanding.

Seawinds Ward:

Antonella Celi:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?
A person who values the coastal experience and enjoys the spending days down at the beach with their family and friends.
2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores
They are an iconic part of the Mornington Peninsula story from a historical and contemporary perspective. Bathing Boxes are a realised investment and asset for the owner.
3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would you like to see them assessed in the future.
Having spent a couple of years assessing the valuation models available to the Council the current fees and charges have struck a concordant outcome amongst bathing box owners. Any future adjustments would need to be considered and consulted upon in a thorough and evidence based way.

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Jared Tipping:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?

The people I know who own beach boxes are every day peninsula residents who bought their box years ago or inherited it from their parents.

2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores

I think that they add character to our foreshore. They are certainly used to advertise our area.

3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would like to see them assessed in the future.

I still cannot work out why the fees are different for owners in different areas based on whether or not they are managed by the council. If elected I will seek further clarity on this matter as the difference in rates seems to be substantial.

Nepean Ward:

Sarah Race:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?

I don't think there is a typical beach box owner. Some people have had their boxes passed down through their families and others are very recent owners, some are wealthy and some are not, some spend all summer at their boxes (and even winter!), and some pop down occasionally.

2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores
- Beach boxes are an iconic part of the Mornington Peninsula - they feature heavily in tourism promotion of our area, and I think we'd all feel bereft if they were gone.

3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would you like to see them assessed in the future.

Before I take a definitive position on this I want to understand the rationale behind the Council's rate charges, which currently I'm not privy to. On the face of it, I don't understand the waste charge, it seems excessive for the level of service received. I think the rates should be assessed/set on the services provided.

Thank you for the opportunity, and if I'm elected I will endeavour to catch up in person (if allowed!) or on zoom.

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Watson Ward:

Stefan Borzecki:

Apologies for my short reply.

In principle I am a supporter of the existing beach boxes as a valuable asset for the whole community. Provided that they are maintained in good condition and don't become a liability to the Ratepayers.

Cerberus Ward:

Darren Barnfield:

While we unfortunately don't have any beach boxes in the Cerberus ward, I have had the pleasure and access to my friends in Mornington.

If I was elected to represent the Cerberus ward I would work cohesively with the other council staff to provide protection for these iconic landmarks. These items bring numerous visitors and artists to the local area and should be protected and supported by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

Lisa Dixon:

Having lived on both sides of the bay, I am fully familiar with the beach boxes. I have never had an issue with them, in fact I think they are a wonderful tourism attraction. I am unable to make direct comment as I am standing in Cerberus Ward and whilst I have attended many council meetings in the past where the beach boxes have been on the agenda, I have not always agreed with the policy put up by council. So should I be successful in my nomination I would look forward to meeting with you and discussing further.

Red Hill Ward:

David Breadmore:

1. How would you describe a typical owner of a beach box on the Mornington Peninsula?

As a resident who has the fortunate enough to own a beach box. That is it Full Stop.

2. Explain why beach boxes are or are not an asset to MPSC beaches and foreshores

Beach boxes or boatsheds as i know them as have been part of the history of our beaches, they have existed for as long as i can remember. They in some ways identifies us as a bayside regional location. They also play a role in maintaining the stability of the beach structure i believe.

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3. Beach boxes and boat shed licensees pay various fees and charges to Council, contributing a total of just over \$2.1 m in the last financial year. Explain why these charges are or are not at reasonable levels and how you would you like to see them assessed in the future.

Don't own one, if you are fortunate to own a beach box then perhaps a fee is applicable, for waste management and space occupied. To be 100% honest i don't know nearly enough about this as i should, and that is my fault and i should know more and if you can enlighten me that would be appreciated.

Tim Davies:

1/ A typical owner as I understand is usually someone's family that has owned a beach box for generations.

2/ The beach boxes are an asset to MPSC as they attract visitors both local and international to the bay side. This brings revenue And the boxes are advertised as a feature of the Mornington Peninsula.

3/ The fees and charges levied by the Shire are high and must be capped. It is a complex arrangement between Owners, State government and shire. I have been told there have been numerous court /vcac cases over the years. The shire rates need to be reviewed as there are limited Services if any, provided to the beach box owners.

David Gill:

Thank you for this opportunity to write about my position and thoughts on Beach Boxes.

It is a good opportunity as my previous offer to meet and discuss with your committee has not yet been followed up. While we have differing views, I have always been frank and honest about my beliefs.

You have supplied rather leading questions however I would like to look at the real issues.

1. How to safeguard the future of our iconic Beach Boxes.
2. Availability at a reasonable licence purchase cost to average families.
3. Financial return to the community for the private use of public land.

We must safeguard our Beach Boxes from climate change and political intervention into the future by jointly developing a proactive master plan that includes beach renourishment, re-siting when necessary and stability considerations including construction standards.

Escalating licence purchase costs will eventually focus public attention on the lack of affordability for all but the very wealthy to hold these licences for public land.

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The future of private ownership is not guaranteed by long term leases (licences), but on acceptance by the public and government regarding arrangements that allow high price private sales. An example of what could happen is the taxi licence recall by the State Government.

While the average licence plus rates costs of around \$30 a week is considerable to some, it will come under increasing scrutiny by the public as they realise the disparity with licence sale prices.

There are some who treat Beach boxes as an investment asset. This has been aided by the advent of non-resident's ability to buy a licence and has meant that since the relaxation of these rules 56% of Beach boxes have been sold to people whose main residence is not on the Mornington Peninsula.

My view is that these licences which are bought and sold are over public land and should be affordable for as much of our population as possible. The licence fee could then be kept commensurate.

The financial return to the public is now much more appropriate. My family's Beach box payment was \$50 a year in total when I was growing up. Any future discussion about how much the fees should be now needs to be according to a set formula known in advance.

There has always been much debate about the special meaning of Beach boxes to licence holders.

I believe they have a special meaning to everyone on the Peninsula and most would like to have a licence. Somewhere along the way a belief has developed that Council should not charge fees based on the value to people and market competition.

No other property market operates in this manner, except for social housing based on income and need for a basic necessity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts about Beach boxes.