

Baxter's Leftie/Progressive Candidate Guide 2022 **UPDATED** V3.1

No idea if candidates are Left or Right leaning? Progressive or dinosaurs? Like me, you probably want to know how Councillors will vote on issues important to you, before they get your vote to represent you. Baxter Productions once again proudly presents the Lefties Voting Guide for the 2022 Dunedin/Ōtepoti local body elections. Enjoy...

You should vote however you want, this guide is here as a quick and helpful way for you to know which candidates have Leftie and/or progressive views so that you are more informed when making your own choices.

STV Voting Strategy

DCC uses STV, so voting is as easy as simply ranking the candidates in the order you prefer them. You **don't** have to rank them all - and generally with STV it's better to rank candidates down as far as you can tolerate them, and then **stop** ranking them.

What is this [Potential VFF etc Warning] tag?

Voices For Freedom is a seeming coalition of anti-vax/anti-mandate/anti-transgender/anti-Labour people, who are secretly organising getting supporters into decision-making positions, and have told their candidates to [hide their VFF affiliations](#). VFF has been a significant [spreader of misinformation](#), conspiracy theories, and some are climate change deniers. While not all are necessarily right-wing (some are all over the shop), the wider movement has attracted ultra-conservatives (like Brian Tamaki) and even white supremacists (like [Kyle Chapman](#)). Candidates who are either suspected members, associates, sympathisers, or who [share values with VFF](#) are noted here with a **[potential VFF etc Warning]** tag. I won't be voting for any of them myself.

Voting closes *midday*, Saturday October 8th. This is when the DCC must *receive* them by, so if you're *posting* your votes in, do it on or before October 4th if you want to be assured your votes will be counted (drop them directly to the DCC if you miss this postal date).

Note: if you're reading a printed or email copy of this it may not be the latest version. This can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/rp6y7bsx>

Brief Summary

If you don't want to read the full guide here is a very summarised list of Leftie/progressive candidates - though I encourage you to use the full guide.

I will be ranking these candidates in this order:

DCC Mayor - [1] Aaron Hawkins, [2] Sophie Barker, [3] Mandy Mayhem-Bullock, [4] Jett Groshinski, [5] Carmen Houlahan.

DCC Council - [1] Marie Laufiso, [2] Jim O'Malley, [3] Sophie Barker, [4] David Benson-Pope, [5] Steve Walker, [6] Mandy Mayhem-Bullock, [7] Christine Garey, [8] Richard Knights, [9] Chriss Hamilton, [10] Peter Barron, [11] Robyn McLean, [12] Joy Davis, [13] Jett Groshinski, [14] Carmen Houlahan, [15] Rachel Elder, [16] Marita Johnson, [17] Randal Scott.

Otago Regional Council - you only get six votes (FPP)

I will vote for these four candidates: Elliot Weir, Alan Somerville, Bryan Scott*, and James Cockle.

*see Guide

Plus two of these candidates (you'll have to read the Guide to see which you prefer): Jenn (Slime) Shulzitski, Bill Southworth, Ross Davies, Gretchen Robertson, or Mathew Kiore*.

*see Guide

DCC MAYORAL CANDIDATES

You **don't** have to rank them all, and generally with STV it's better to list candidates down as far as you can tolerate them, and then **stop** ranking them.

However, if you want to try and block a specific candidate from winning Mayor then you can choose to tactically vote, eg if you desperately want to block Vandervis and prefer Radich if it comes down to a choice of just these 2 candidates, then add Radich at the *bottom* of your mayoral list (or vice versa obviously).

BAND 1:

Candidates with Left-wing policies or strong Left leanings, who I will be ranking in this order:

1 Aaron Hawkins - Current mayor and Green Ōtepoti candidate. Mostly solid Left-wing answers to my survey. Hawkins' candidate profile references inclusivity, climate change, public housing, and pointedly refers to building a modern transport network (as opposed to focusing on parking). He is also one of the few (only?) mayoral candidates to acknowledge Treaty of Waitangi commitments. Polished performer in Council meetings, articulate, intelligent and a formidable debater. Has presided over a progressive agenda as mayor while also investing in ageing infrastructure. He can rub people up the wrong way and his detractors find him smug, a smart arse, and are triggered by his endorsement by the Green Party. The ODT provides this neat summary: "Mr Hawkins' principles are clear. He is an advocate for meaningful climate action, for not leaving the disadvantaged behind and he is socially liberal. Showing due respect to mana whenua is a priority for him...and Mr Hawkins has been prepared to front this" (ODT, 10 September 2022). ODT rating 7/10.

Note: Even if you haven't agreed with everything Hawkins has said or done this past term, there is a significant anti-Hawkins group out there (and a lot of deliberate misinformation) so **it is important you give him a ranking somewhere, even if not at the top**. Otherwise... you know... Vandervis might be your next Mayor.

2 Sophie Barker - Current councillor. Holds generally Left and progressive views and provided reasonably solid Left answers to my survey. Her candidate profile has plenty of vision but not a lot of easy to understand priorities. An advocate for heritage and rail assets. She is not a polarising figure, communicates effectively and is capable of asking penetrating questions on Council. Good grasp of governance and most effective councillor last term according to the ODT with a rating of 7.5/10 (*ODT, 10 September 2022*). Usually voted with the leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term (voting to not leave the Three Waters protest group was due to Left-wing concerns about these reforms). And if Vandervis, Radich, and Hawkins all turn out to all be too polarising to achieve a majority of the votes, Barker very probably can - ie ***make sure you rank her high, as she is the only insurance against a right-wing Mayor if Hawkins loses.***

3 Mandy Mayhem-Bullock - Current Waikouaiti Coast Community Board member. Holds generally progressive views, and largely firm Left-wing responses to my survey. Priorities include local climate change solutions, supporting cheap public transport and healthy affordable homes, as well as enhancing and safeguarding cultural facilities. Promotes an inclusive approach and looks to balance growth with protecting the environment. Good leftie-friendly option for a high mayoralty and council ranking.

BAND 2:

Candidates with some Left or progressive leanings, who I will be ranking after Band 1 candidates:

4 Jett Groshinski - Gave solid Left answers to my survey; but also advocates rates cuts so fails to understand rates is how those things are paid for. Student candidate with one of the more likeable candidate profiles, Jett puts forward his various priorities in a non-aggressive way be they climate change, recycling or parking. Notes the value of intergenerational leadership and wants a “sustainable and equitable” city. Having a more diverse council also includes having younger voices around the table. Probably worth a vote.

5 Carmen Houlahan - Current councillor. Ideologically centrist/populist/weak-Left so it's no surprise she can be somewhat of a fence sitter. Generally progressive views and she often votes with the progressive block on Council. But not always (including on some key issues), hence this candidate cannot be trusted to always vote Left. Responses to my survey further illustrate that while Left leaning in some areas, she's not committed to the Left. Of the councillors standing for re-election, she was the least effective last term according to the ODT with a rating of 4/10 but does well in the representation and advocacy aspects of her role (*ODT, 10 September 2022*). Previously a founding member of Jules Radich's conservative and Right-leaning “Team Dunedin” group before launching her own mayoral bid (*ODT, 21 May 2022*).

BAND 3:

Candidates with Right-wing policy and leanings (or bland indistinguishable politics), who I will NOT rank at all.

Jules Radich - Current councillor. Right-wing to Right-leaning politics depending on his audience. High profile leader of the “Team Dunedin” group. A strong chance for mayor this time if Hawkins doesn't get a majority. An advocate for the business community who

clearly has a well funded campaign. As Hawkins' likely main rival, he has been mining and fostering discontent about the Council seemingly not paying sufficient attention to community sentiment. Priorities are primarily infrastructure (roads, transport and parking). Seems to be supportive of improving public transport (fare free CBD trams). Opposes the Three Waters reforms (but seems to support a model with smaller regional water entities than proposed (based on catchment areas), if council owned). Still fixated on reinstating a groyne at St Clair. Strident critic of the plan to convert George St into a one-way street and, like Vandervis, Radich and his "Team Dunedin" seem to want to bring the road works back to George St and spend many more millions making it two-way again (*before we've even had a chance to see how well the one-way layout does or doesn't work*) (ODT, 17 September 2022). Appeared to be assisting an obviously transphobic submitter in a recent Council forum. Voted against the Leftie/progressive group on key Council votes last term. ODT rating 7/10. I will NOT be ranking for this candidate for mayor (*but you may wish to add Radich as the lowest ranked candidate on your mayoral list if you want to block Vandervis from winning mayor*).

Lee Vandervis - Current councillor. Right-wing/Liberterian politics. Somewhat of an austerity candidate with a low-tax/minimal-government ideology, who thinks DCC's role should be limited to overseeing infrastructure like sewerage and drains. So forget having any nice things as a city, or even much of what you and I call basics. Once served a useful role on Council as a kind of devil's advocate, but is past his use-by date now and simply comes across as a shouty conservative Boomer who has a tanty whenever things aren't done his way. One whose behaviour costs ratepayers thousands of dollars over a parking ticket while claiming to represent financial prudence on Council. One who fronts freedom of speech forums, but blocks opposing views on social media. One who has dabbled in the realm of conspiracy theories. Vocally opposes Three Waters reform and is openly sceptical of the merits of co-governance. Unsurprisingly he did not vote with the Leftie/progressive group on key Council votes last term and sometimes was the sole vote against things which even other Right-wing Councillors voted for. ODT rating 5/10. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Richard Seager - A little to like here, but sadly much more to dislike. Pro sustainable transport/cycling and seems to prefer pedestrianisation of George St over having one-way traffic, but dog whistles to the right/business friendly which is also reflected in his survey results. Thinks Ardern is worse than Thatcher (the global hero of the '80s right-wing). Says Vandervis would "make a pretty good mayor". Was a Green voter, but "never again" as they are too woke for him; which leads to his transphobic stance. Also did an interview on BHN where he said he does not believe viruses exist (and confirmed in an email: "I don't believe in viruses"), and thinks illnesses caused by viruses could be vitamin deficiencies. He denies involvement with VFF (and that's very probably true given he's seemingly not a climate change denier, and unlike some possible VFF candidates he has been completely open with his anti-vaccine and transphobic views). However, he is still drinking the same kool-aid as VFF. I will NOT be ranking this candidate. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Bill Acklin - Previously a city councillor years ago, has had a few personal issues to work through since then. Gave largely Right-wing leaning answers to my survey. Presumably still has a support base to get him back onto Council but just seems a bit grumpy and without purpose. Borderline ranty candidate profile that uses right-wing dog-whistle phrases like "the current council has totally lost its way", "it's idealistic approach" and "let's get back to making practical decisions". Not a fan of public transport either. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

David Milne - Claims a wide range of experience but appeared inept and out of his depth with no visible political substance at the Business South forum. Hard to gauge on the

left-right spectrum and his candidate profile is too much vision with no real priorities, though oppose the direction the current Council has been going. Backed Seager's anti-vaccine stance. Seems business-friendly over people, with a plain-pack budget-label vision of Dunedin's future, so very likely a right-winger. Also, not sure his Boris Johnson-esque crazy-hair gimmick works for him. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Pamela Taylor - A colourful range of policies that are too schizophrenically all over the place to be able to locate anywhere on a traditional Left-Right spectrum. Highly non-progressive. Seems likely to be a Voices for Freedom candidate (despite her denial) and attended their march. Obsessive Covid conspiracy theorist. Climate change denier. Believes a woman's right to choose is "greatest human atrocity" and has shared conspiracy theories on Facebook about gender identity, abortion, climate change and plans for global depopulation. Has been called out online by numerous people as a racist homophobe. Her priorities (the non-offensive ones) are mainly infrastructure. Her comments in my survey suggest she does not understand the role that social housing plays and believes it is ok for these groups to live in less than ideal housing situations if that's all they can afford. The climate change question was clearly a red rag to her and she refers to the "Fraud of Climate Change" and wealth transfers to the "elites who own Green Industries". Exclude entirely from your vote - *or get some popcorn to watch the entertainment of representative democracy eating itself from the inside out (which is actually one of VFF's strategies)*. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

DCC Council Candidates info on the next page...

DCC COUNCIL CANDIDATES (14 to be elected)

You **don't** have to rank them all, and generally with STV it's better to list candidates down as far as you can tolerate them, and then **stop** ranking them.

BAND 1:

Candidates with Left-wing policies or committed Left leanings, who I will be ranking in this order:

1 Marie Laufiso - Current councillor and Green Ōtepoti candidate. Strong Left values. There's not a lot of diversity present on the current council, Marie is pretty much it. She chaired the community and culture committee in the past term. Typically respectful but tends to achieve more when she is forthright and straight-talking (*ODT, 10 September 2022*). She is a believer in equity, justice and honouring of the Treaty of Waitangi and has described herself as a communist. Argued for subsidising rents for community housing. Notably she has clashed with Lee Vandervis on multiple occasions, including saying that she appreciates hearing arguments offered by him because she then knows to vote in the opposite way. Consistently voted with the leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term. ODT rating 5.5/10.

2 Jim O'Malley - Current councillor and trained scientist. Left-wing values and dislike of neoliberalism. Hardworking with intellectual heft. Strong opinions and sometimes clashed personalities with Aaron Hawkins. Key figure in transport debates and successfully advocated for additional transport funding last term. Leading voice opposing Three Waters (due to Left-wing concerns about these reforms, e.g. anti privatisation potential/equivalences). An advocate for climate action and especially managing waste. Usually voted with the Leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term. ODT rating 7/10. His election campaigning is not strong (he's literally doing Council work instead) so it is important to give him a high ranking, otherwise he is in danger of being displaced by someone with nothing more than a flasher personality.

3 Sophie Barker - See comments under Mayoralty. Competent and generally firm Left/progressive views.

4 David Benson-Pope - Current councillor and former Labour MP and Cabinet Minister. Solid Left-wing responses to my survey. Vastly experienced in both central government and local government. Influential, effective and the chief defender of the Hawkins mayoralty. Also an inviting target for people who have antipathy for the Council or its political leanings. Has a penchant for rebuking Lee Vandervis and putting Jules Radich in his place so important to vote for him for that reason alone, but also on-point at being able to explain why the Left approach is the best path. Consistently voted with the leftie/progressive group on key Council votes last term. ODT rating 7/10.

5 Steve Walker - Current councillor and Labour Party candidate. Gave solid Left answers to my survey. An advocate for the environment, passionate about climate change, and likes to frame debates as a contest between progressive forces and those that would undermine a positive direction. He places himself firmly in the progressive camp (*ODT, 10 September 2022*). Additional comments from my survey show that he understands why social housing matters and believes housing should be universally affordable. Consistently voted with the Leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term. Hard working. ODT rating 7/10.

6 Mandy Mayhem-Bullock - See comments under Mayoralty. Good leftie-friendly option for a high mayoralty and council ranking.

BAND 2A:

Candidates with firm Left or progressive leanings, who I will be ranking after Band 1, in roughly the following order:

7 Christine Garey - Gave mostly solid Left answers to my survey. Current councillor and deputy mayor. Loyal to Aaron Hawkins. Solid performer, showing her mettle in the most recent annual plan deliberations. Priorities are climate action, facilitating transport options and social justice. Strong advocate for improving Otago Peninsula infrastructure. Consistently voted with the Leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term. ODT rating 6.5/10. Well worth voting for.

8 Richard Knights - Solid Left-wing answers to my survey. Runs a progressive local Facebook group and is seeking election to help ensure the current direction of Council is maintained. Wants to be part of a forward thinking, equitable and progressive council. Boycotted a Dunedin Ratepayers Association (*a conservative right-wing pressure-group*) meeting recently (as did Steve Walker) due to a social media post urging members to refrain from using the word Ōtepoti. Knights said "I've got no desire to associate myself with racist viewpoints" (*ODT, 12 August 2022*). Worth voting for.

9 Chriss Hamilton - Mostly good Left-wing responses to my survey, e.g. her comments on the drinking water question: "Private companies exist to make money. They do not exist to provide public services. Essential infrastructure should never be able to be sold to private companies or overseas interests". While she does talk a little too much about using a cost/benefit approach to resolve issues, she offers plenty of leftie/progressive ideas along the way, e.g. advocating for local branches of central government services to be returned (to assist in reducing local unemployment) and for new direct bus routes (to the airport, hospital and university). Her candidate profile emphasises her various volunteer roles, also includes some obligatory guff about strategy and policy development etc. Describes herself as community minded (with examples). Reliable leftie/progressive. Seems to get stuff done. Worth voting for.

10 Peter Barron - Gave solid Left responses to my survey. Varied career including stints as a pharmacist, restaurant owner (Huntsman Steakhouse) and a DHB member. Has a sense of social justice. Decent, fair and capable. Liberal use of te reo in his candidate profile and references mana whenua and Te Tiriti. Worth voting for.

11 Robyn McLean - Nails her leftie/progressive credentials to the mast with one of the few candidate profiles written in both English and te reo. Comes across as positive and enthusiastic: "I'm standing because I want to see more young, progressive and qualified people on Council, achieving lasting positive change." Currently manager of the South Dunedin Community Network. Wants respectful debates on Council and more collaborative working. Another quote: "I love that our city is moving in a positive and progressive direction and want to help make Dunedin an accessible, sustainable, vibrant, modern city". Her stated core values are equity of outcomes, living sustainably, the importance of whanau and serving her community. Worth voting for.

12 Joy Davis - Current Mosgiel-Taieri community board member, regional neighbourhood support coordinator and Labour Party candidate. Generic candidate profile but does mention climate change, affordable housing, accessible/affordable public transport and

wants to promote “inclusivity, collaborative, connected communities - a progressive vibrant Dunedin where everyone can belong”. Worth voting for.

13 Jett Groshinski - See comments under Mayoralty. Probably worth voting for.

BAND 2B:

Candidates with some Left or progressive leanings or sympathies, who I will be ranking after Band 2A, in roughly the following order:

14 Carmen Houlahan - See comments under Mayoralty.

15 Rachel Elder - Current councillor. Centrist/weak-Left politics. Gave mostly Left answers to my survey, but not all. Biggest achievement this term is progressing development of the Mosgiel to Dunedin cycling trail. Her long-ish list of priorities include climate change, an improved transport system and parking, a better waste system, more dry and affordable homes, accessibility, supporting our live performance scene, supporting the tourism and business sectors. Also wants to invest in South Dunedin and in upgrading/renewing local playgrounds. She abstained on the Three Waters vote and thinks a “reset” is needed. Surprisingly hard-nosed voting record during the 10-year plan process when you consider the spending that would be required to achieve all of her stated priorities. Did not vote with the Leftie/progressive group on some key council votes last term (*ODT, 10 September 2022*). So some mixed messaging there, perhaps she doesn't want to admit to the reality of paying for her spending priorities? ODT rating 4.5/10. Probably still worth voting for but with a low ranking on this basis.

16 Marita Johnson - Ngapuhi and Tainui descent. Varied background from fashion design to nursing in elderly care. Interests include art, music and historic buildings. NZ Nurses Organisation training has enabled her advocacy role and she has successfully advocated for positive changes for healthcare assistants at a national level. Seems to be fighting the good fight and would increase diversity on council. Worth a vote.

17 Randal Scott - Liberal use of Te Reo in his candidate profile. Has a background as youth pastor, school teacher and mental health support worker. Enthusiastic about governance though may have a tendency towards blue sky dreamer/talker. Priorities are secure housing, employment, fair rates and a safe city. Seems to have a genuine concern that no one is left behind and seems like a good guy. Worth a vote.

BAND 3A:

Candidates with Right-wing policy and/or leanings (or bland indistinguishable politics), who I might rank a couple of at the bottom of my votes as a hedge against the more strongly Right-wing or VFF candidates.

Kevin Gilbert - Right-leaning responses to my survey. Gilbert's Fine Foods business owner and Team Dunedin candidate. Another who highlights his business experience. Also emphasises his sustainability/community credentials via being a provider to food rescue organisation KiwiHarvest and the local Supper Club charity. His priorities are waste minimisation, recycling and financial sustainability. Some leftie/progressive views but you also get the feeling he thinks the current council are wasting money with their current priorities. His comments on my survey show some support for social housing:

“The DCC should do significantly more to ensure affordable housing is available”. Also some support for cultural priorities in one of my questions but then lets himself down in another response with the patsy right wing statement “the council should get the basics right before throwing money around at the unnecessary”. Possibly worth a low ranking as a “least-worst” hedge against the more Right-wing candidates of Team Dunedin or VFF candidates.

Doug Hall Jr - Son of former councillor Doug Hall. Runs ClickFix computer repair business. Describes his political views as centre left and his priorities include central city parking and recycling (*ODT, 22 July 2022*). Generic candidate profile, unknown quantity. Possibly worth a low ranking if only to keep out overtly Right-wing or VFF candidates.

Rob Waide - Fairly generic candidate profile with no mention of priorities. Background in swimming and surf lifesaving. Mentions an ability to work across diverse communities and a desire to bring a fresh perspective to the Council. No real indication of Leftie/progressive values. Possibly worth a low ranking.

BAND 3B:

Candidates with Right-wing policy (or indistinguishable but suspect), who I will NOT rank at all.

Jules Radich - See comments under Mayoralty. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Lee Vandervis - See comments under Mayoralty. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Richard Seager - See comments under Mayoralty. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Lynnette Scott - Right-wing/“Team Dunedin” candidate. Finance background and wants to see greater scrutiny of Council spending (ie a code for cutting services). Her priorities are opposing the Smooth Hill landfill, increasing parking, retaining the one-way system, coastal erosion issues and recycling. Weirdly writes her candidate profile in the third person and when you scrutinise her priorities you can’t help but feel that Jules Radich has written them. Additional comments from my survey suggest she is somewhat dismissive of the role of Council in providing social housing and also implied cultural factors are expendable if this helps to minimise rate increases. She also gave a patsy right wing response to my unemployment question, again emphasising her “leave it to the private sector” attitude. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Cheryl Neill - Otago Peninsula Community Board member and “Team Dunedin” candidate. Her priorities are also weirdly worded in the third person and are remarkably similar to other “Team Dunedin” candidates (notably Lynnette Scott) and include a promise to listen to the people, spend money wisely, retain the one-way system and invest in car parking. Like the other “Team Dunedin” candidates she is also passionate about the environment and coastal erosion issues (presumably she is talking about Jules Radich’s groyne). The similarities in the “Team Dunedin” profiles might be seen as either a team united on the issues but it looks more like a cut and paste job with a few tweaks. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Brent Weatherall - Right-wing/“Team Dunedin” candidate and self-styled nemesis to Aaron Hawkins. Displayed a sign banning Hawkins from his shop. Caught out lying about giving his staff a holiday as a political stunt against Hawkins and the George St changes, he may be the most toxic of “Team Dunedin”. One of the few Team Dunedin candidates

who appears to have written his own candidate profile, Brent is not afraid to sell his personal qualities: "I'm competent, practical and decisive, dependable, vastly experienced in business, grounded, highly approachable, and wholeheartedly dedicated to our wonderful city" and separately describes himself in the "Team Dunedin" pamphlet as "a George St icon". Wants to see "Change" and "Realism". He is concerned about the level of council spending and wants Dunedin to "begin living within its means". Prominent critic of the Council's decision to change George St to a one-way street. Feels he has not been listened to as a retailer (because he confuses not being listened to with not getting his own way). His priorities include promoting Dunedin's heritage character, hassle-free transport commutes and remedying the central city parking situation (presumably so more people can come to his shop). Confirmed he was "not a Right-wing nutter" (*ODT, 4 June 2022*). You know what to do when a candidate feels they have to tell you they are not a right wing nutter. Avoid this candidate.

Callum Steele - Hard Right-wing/"Team Dunedin" candidate. Former ACT Party candidate in 2020. Very critical of the current Council: "poor decision-making, wasteful spending, and failure to consult with ratepayers", "irresponsible leadership", "shortages in parking", you name it. He's even upset by the dots on George Street - even though they were 90% funded by Waka Kotahi (*ODT, 8 June 2020*). Not much room for his priorities after all that ranting but he does seem to want improved public transport, increased parking and responsible spending. Avoid this candidate.

Andrew Whiley - Current councillor, Right-wing/"Team Dunedin" candidate, could be deputy mayor if Hawkins loses. Previously a spokesman for local pro-oil and gas industry group. Advocate for infrastructure spending and among the council's more prominent critics of Three Waters reform. Did not vote with the leftie/progressive group on key council votes last term, but is often pragmatic and will work with policies he does not personally agree with, e.g. making George St one-way. This contrasts with the oppose-oppose-oppose approach of - say - Vandervis. So clearly not a Leftie/progressive but nevertheless a relatively moderate right-leaning voice on council if you want to add some non-leftie balance to your voting (and can get past his support for oil and gas). *ODT* rating 6/10. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Bill Acklin - See comments under Mayoralty. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Nathan Gordon - Candidate profile is vague on policies. Has worked in a wide range of jobs and believes this varied experience gives him a broad knowledge and perspective about what Dunedin needs. States that council communication and consultation "need significant improvement" and alludes that council decisions and actions are somewhat wanting: "We need to look big picture and not with tunnel vision". Make of that what you will. Candidate profiles that are light on policies tend to be right-wing at best. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Chris McBride - Unknown politics. Describes himself as a recycling advocate. Leans noticeably into his business credentials on his candidate profile with a fair amount of jargon. Priorities are inner-city development, mobility and parking, recycling infrastructure and locally focussed investment. Unclear whether he fits the Leftie/progressive profile and it is tempting to see a connection between the part of his profile where he says he owns local businesses and the part where he wants more investment in local businesses. Probably best to avoid.

Cherry Lucas - Doesn't give much away on her candidate profile but according to her pamphlet she wants the one way system to stay, more parking and to "reclaim lost parks", and is against Three Waters reform. All Right-wing dog-whistles. Curiously she blames the "topography of our city" for the need to drive cars into the city centre. No evidence of

Leftie/progressive views. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Bruce Mitchell - Longtime owner of Mitchell Transport, now semi-retired. Member of the Mosgiel Round Table. It is unclear from his candidate profile what his priorities are. But his statement that “the Dunedin community deserves open, honest and reliable representatives” could be interpreted as unhappiness with the current progressive direction of Council. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

David Smith - Man of few words. No candidate statement provided. Not worth your vote.

Vick Veera - Amusingly begins his candidate profile like he is fronting an infomercial - this appears unintentional. Clearly not happy with the current direction of Council. Claims our beautiful city is “insidiously” losing its eminence and beauty and darkly speculates on the presence of political influence. Anti-George St revamp, and pro building a parking building. Appears unhappy with 3 Waters reforms. **UPDATE:** suspected by some as a potential VFF candidate, but I can’t find anything other than a few people who think he’s into conspiracies; make of that what you will. Either way I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Pamela Taylor - See comments under Mayoralty. I will NOT be ranking this candidate.

Michael Lee - Owner of Southern Cross Jewellers, founder of the needle exchange programme DIVO and a nice guy if I recall correctly. But also one of the founding members of the Dunedin Ratepayers Association (*a conservative right-wing pressure-group who want to pretend it’s still the 1970s*). Possibly the most pro-car candidate standing for Council. His priorities are to remove “unnecessary” speed bumps and roundabouts, reinstate parking, reinstate user-friendly roads (presumably he means driver-friendly). His non-car priority is to restore the Market Reserve Toilets. I will NOT be ranking this candidate. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Tracey Pita - Part of the husband and wife duo (*see also Watson Pita, ORC*) who started a Dunedin branch of Voices for Freedom (*Stuff, 13 Sep, 2022*). Rabid supporter of Parliament occupation. No mention in her profile of what her priorities would be if elected, which seems to be a very deliberate tactic in all of the VFF candidate profiles. Perhaps their only priority is to be elected? I will NOT be ranking this candidate. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Veronica Jackman - Believed to be a Voices for Freedom candidate. No mention in her candidate profile of what her priorities would be if elected other than spending ratepayers money “wisely”. Gives away her political perspective by saying that Dunedin needs a voice of “common sense”. I will NOT be ranking this candidate. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Malcolm Moncrief-Spittle - A standout candidate profile but not in a good way. A conspiracy peddler who claims “democracy itself is under threat” (whilst engaging in the democratic process), and describes the current central government as “tyrannical”. Fears co-governance and has been sucked into the He Puapua scaremongering. Very much against the Three Waters reforms. Criticises the media and academia as having become “seduced by wokeness and slavish compliance with this form of apartheid”. Yes he (mis)used the word apartheid. Accuses current councillors of being “tools carrying out globalist agendas such as Agenda 2030”. He is a supporter of the Freedom & Rights Coalition, and a climate change denier. **UPDATE:** Moncrief-Spittle has confirmed with me that he is a supporter of VFF and has been involved in local VFF activities and attended local VFF meetings (*a previous version of this doc said he’d denied being a member, and while he does not “have a membership badge or certificate or anything like that” he is*

very clear that he is indeed a supporter of VFF and thinks they are doing a "great job"). I will NOT be ranking this candidate. **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL Dunedin Constituency (6 to be elected)

ORC uses old-fashioned FPP, so you have to vote tactically instead of simply ranking candidates in the order you prefer them (*ie some of your FPP votes could knock out the candidates you actually most wanted*). You can choose **up to 6** candidates.

PS - Environmental concerns are as important as traditional Left-wing values on this Council so you may also find Forrest and Bird's survey of candidates useful for these positions:
www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/vote-nature-dunedin

I'll be voting for these candidates:

Elliot Weir - Youngest candidate at the 29th August candidates meeting. Quiet but strong Leftie, environmentally conscious sort. Has sensible policies, could represent youth well. Currently doing a masters in ecology and interested in conservation. Wrote for Critic and the ORC Environmentalist. Active user of the buses, also an advocate for disabled riders (he himself is not disabled) and improving bus drivers' pay. His work helped expose a neo-nazi running for election up north. Would add a needed younger voice to council. Worth voting for.

Alan Somerville - Green Ōtepoti candidate. Present at the 29th August candidates meeting. Chair of community housing provider Abbeyfield Dunedin for ten years (housing for the elderly). Focussed on the environment. Able to work with people with different views to address climate change. Empower local groups, bring about change in farming practice, native planting. Probably worth a vote.

Bryan Scott - Current councillor. Grew up on a farm in Balclutha. Notable priorities are enhancing the health of our waterways (he helped establish a catchment community to improve the quality of rivers during the last council term). Supports 3 Waters reform. In favour of a managed retreat for South Dunedin from coastal erosion. Wants the DCC to own and control the buses. Some say a long time outspoken and outnumbered voice of reason on ORC. Reasonable voting record on leftie/progressive issues. Experienced councillor. Worth retaining (however, if you want to vote strategically (*ORC use old fashioned FPP*), he'll very likely retain his seat without your vote so you might want to consider using it to vote for a more overtly Left candidate instead).

James Cockle - Candidate profile includes many laudable goals regarding the environment, but he also wants to "increase farm profits" while, at the same time, "sequester carbon, restore the soil, and heal our precious water ways". Dedicated grassroots activist. Likely worth a vote.

And **two** from the following:

Jenn (Slime) Shulzitski - Ecologist, environmental and social justice activist using irony and theatre to campaign: "I'm Slime the Nitrate Monster who's been oozing my influence through Otago for years. I'm now ready to rule the regional council. Synthetic nitrogen fertiliser is my power. Slime is your reward". Word on the street is as the campaign rolls on, Jenn will overcome her Slime Monster alter-ego; she managed to break out long enough to provide very solid Lefty responses to the survey questions DCC candidates were asked.

Bill Southworth - Labour Party candidate. Appears to have good Left values and some of the priorities in his candidate profile sound promising (such as further bus subsidies) but hard to get a feel for his other views.

Ross Davies - Former Borough Councillor and a Community Board member. One of the few who understands that rates sometimes need to increase to pay for things. States "the ORC needs to agree this is a climate emergency". Seems to support a fully electric mass-transit bus network, and thinks it should be divested to DCC. Want to see the strengthening of relationships with iwi. Labour party involvement. **UPDATE:** Now his website is working he seems to have plenty of Left-leaning and environmental policy.

Gretchen Robertson - Current councillor (15 years). Generally supports leftie/progressive issues. Aquatic scientist and Environment Commissioner. Experienced councillor who is probably worth retaining, especially due to the extremely low number of female candidates running this year, though she already has a very high chance of being re-elected.

Mathew Kiore - Started his initial statement in Maori (few did). Has worked in health, education, justice. Wants to give back to the community, seems to be coming from a good place. He responded to questions well, seemed sensible and considerate. Seems to be endorsed by several local Labour members. But has also made comments about red-tape and wasteful spending, which are often right-wing dog whistles. Possibly worth voting for. **UPDATE:** Kiore endorsed a VFF linked candidate (seemingly without knowing their links or fully understanding what VFF is). He has subsequently withdrawn political endorsement of them, and has since posted to clarify that he disagrees with VFF and does not politically support their candidates. Make of that what you will; he seems genuine to me and I will still consider voting for him.

Special mention / maybes:

Tim Mepham - Chartered Accountant. Experienced community and business leader. Chair of Presbyterian Support Otago, a trustee of the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust and a Director of City Forests. Believes the DCC should own and control the bus service. A keen fisherman, he observes that some rivers are no longer fishable. Priorities are to respect our environment, land management and flood protection and believes the ORC must prepare for significant changes. Solid presentation, good policies, relevant experience. **UPDATE:** However, he wants a report to "review into the optimum ownership structure of Port Otago", with a view of partial privatisation of Port Otago (to fund pressing infrastructure investment), hence I will be unlikely to vote for this candidate (but this seems to be his only detractor so you might chose differently).

Andrew Noone - Current councillor and ORC chair. Not strictly Leftie/progressive but nevertheless an experienced pair of hands that seems to consider views from all sides. Also a former Dunedin city councillor. Has a farming background but doesn't fit the

stereotype. States that he respects iwi values for how natural resources should be managed. Useful, in that a Right-wing chair would be a problem (however he'll likely retain his seat without your vote so you might want to use it to vote for a more Left candidate instead).

I will NOT be voting for any of the following candidates:

Richard Anderson - Has worked professionally in the agriculture sector for the past 22 years. Grew up in Hindon. Involved in the Cargill Castle trust and a local rugby club. Very little to say about specific issues. He is in favour of transparency and wants to be “the people’s voice”. He wants to hold the ORC accountable and rebuild trust. Passionate about swimmable water.

Malcolm Budd - Former owner/operator of Ritchies Transport, now retired. Also involved with the AA and SADD (Students Against Dangerous Driving). Has many complaints about the council bus service and wants it to be privately owned. Could bring useful bus industry experience to ORC, but would be a right-wing representative of that interest group. Also unhappy about loss of car parking (which has nothing to do with ORC).

Geoff Lyell - An easy no. Uses phrases like “overreach of bureaucracy” (in fact, he mentions this twice, he is so angry about it) and “hedonistic rush to net carbon zero” in his candidate profile. Describes Three Waters reform as a travesty. **UPDATE:** says he supports VFF (OAR ‘Candidate Spotlight’ interview). **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Watson Pita - Part of the husband and wife duo (*see also Tracey Pit, DCC Council*) who started a Dunedin branch of Voices for Freedom (*Stuff, 13 Sep, 2022*). Moved to Dunedin 2 years ago. Present at the 29th August candidates meeting. Very vague, no specific policies or issues mentioned. He is against ORC rate increases. But he also wants to clean up rivers etc. Does want to improve the connection with mana whenua. Unfortunately Watson 'stands with' Brian Tamaki. Rabid supporter of the Parliament occupation. I will not be voting for this candidate **[Potential VFF etc Warning]**

Don't forget to share a link to this if you found it useful and think others also might :)

The Fine Print...

Note:

This document is my personal opinion, which I, as a Left-winger, use to base my votes on. These opinions are based on my own interactions with candidates, their statements in various media and forums, their voting record, a survey I conducted (DCC candidates), and

information from trustworthy sources. These are collated with the assistance of ghost writers and researchers.

–If you feel I've seriously misunderstood a candidate's position please contact me via FB or baxdesign at gee mail dot com with supporting information, and I'm happy to correct any misunderstandings.

Transparency:

I am real life friends or acquaintances with a number of candidates; for transparency here is a list of them: Carmen Houlahan, Aaron Hawkins, Lee Vandervis, Mandy Mayhem-Bullock, Marie Laufiso, Sophie Barker, Jim O'Malley, and Malcolm Budd. And I believe I'm a relative of Brent Weatherall. I'm also Facebook friends with several other candidates (*especially since I published this for some reason LOL*), they can be seen on my FB page, but I've never met them more than in passing (if that) and don't have any other links with them so haven't listed them here.

Cheers,

Mark I Baxter

baxdesign at gee mail dot com
