

Political Resume - Zed Latinovic

BRIEF PROFILE

Having grown up in the war-torn Republic of Serbia, where the devastation of war was ever present, Zed knows more than most the importance of family and putting loved ones above all else. Now happily settled in the South Waikato,



Zed and his family feel at home here, and love the close-knit communities they are a part of. With his background, he understands the importance of community coming together to overcome hardships and challenges. It is the people – friends, and neighbors – that build a positive and thriving community. As such, leaders within the community need to work for the people.

Zed is a builder by trade, and has, for many years, run a successful business. He's a practical person and likes to solve problems effectively and efficiently. Straightforward and to the point, Zed does not hesitate to speak out when the need arises.

While acknowledging the strengths of the current council, Zed feels that the executive and governance arms of the South Waikato District Council have lost touch with the needs and wishes of the people they are entrusted to serve. This is why Zed is wanting to stand as a Councillor, and as Mayor. Zed is passionate about making a difference. He is ready to jump into action, and advocate for change where it is needed.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Zed spent most of his young life in Serbia, before moving in Italy with his family in the early 2000s. In Italy Zed established his construction company where he had the privilege of working on the restoration, preservation, and conservation of heritage buildings. Visiting New Zealand was Zed's dream long before he came here as a tourist in 2011. Within a very short time, Zed fell in love with this country - his dream place. He felt so at home, he said to his wife Nena "I think we should move here!"

Moving to New Zealand in 2011, at age 34, Zed continued his career in construction. His building expertise quickly attracted employment opportunities in Auckland. Obtaining a work visa, Zed stayed with a great employer for two years and was granted permanent residency in 2013.

After two years, an entrepreneur at heart, Zed established his own business Artbuild Ltd. The business was a success and Zed and his team completed many building projects in Auckland. His business focused on house renovations - especially old villas and bungalows. However, despite years living in cities in Italy, and now in Auckland, Nena and Zed realized that at heart they were country folk. Financially secure, with a thriving business, they decided to complete their New Zealand dream and move to the countryside with their family.

Taupo or Rotorua were their initial thoughts for settling down – so they made many trips south from Auckland searching for the right property. Every trip took them through the South Waikato. One memorable morning, they were sitting at the Cow Café in Putaruru having a coffee enroute to Taupo when Nena said: “You know what Zed – I’d really like to live in a village like this!”

The family soon found the perfect South Waikato property close to Putaruru. Their family has grown to include cats, a dog, and a horse – to which their daughter is devoted. They also have a huge flower and vegetable garden created by Nena, no visitor leaves without some form of baking or garden produce to take home. Their dream had become a reality. Zed quickly became involved in community life, making many friends, attending community events and learning about the area he and his family had chosen to call ‘their forever home’.

WHY ZED IS STANDING

Zed is standing because he believes Local Government has lost track of the important issues facing community and, therefore, is completely disconnected from the reality on the ground. As someone who believes the South Waikato is the best place in the world to live, Zed wants to see our region thrive. Zed wants to work towards a clear, shared vision for sustainable economic growth and job creation that also entices our young people to want to stay. He wants to eliminate wasteful spending, uncontrolled borrowing, and excessive regulations from Council.

Zed is passionate about creating a council that is totally transparent, and accountable. All projects and initiatives need to be backed by sound research, and historical precedent. Ratepayers will know where their money is going, and how that money is benefiting their community. Zed wants to return the council to its core business and leave the Central Government to deal with the areas that are their responsibility. Zed wants to bring efficiency to the way Council runs. The Mayor and Councilors are in charge of making policies, and the executive team carry out these policies. The executive team must understand that they are there to action the policies, not create them. Zed has been in front of Council to share his thoughts, and has been active in advocating positive change. Zed understands that it is easy to criticize current policies and directions when you're sitting in the "cheap seats". He feels it is time to put his money where his mouth is, and action change. This is why he is putting his name forward for both the role of district councilor and mayor.

ZED IS STANDING BECAUSE HE WANTS TO:

- Bring rates rises under control
- Council to refocus on core business (rubbish, roads, water, and assets)
- See economic growth, and greater job opportunities available
- Eliminate excessive spending, and uncontrolled borrowing so that our future generations are not placed in debt
- Provide transparency and accountability in all areas of the Council
- Focus on maintaining, renewing, and upgrading existing assets

THE BIG ISSUES

- Rising Rates and Cost of Living
- Waikato Waters Done Well
- Water Meters
- Transparency and Accountability
- A vision for South Waikato

RISING RATES AND COST OF LIVING

With drastic increases in the cost of living, and in rates, ratepayers are struggling. Uncontrolled borrowing to fund non-core projects is taking money away from hard working families and putting strain on the family budget. Excessive regulation and wasteful spending by Council are hurting our community by pushing up the cost of living for those who can least afford it. Rates need to be sustainable. Zed feels that accountable spending on research-based initiatives will lower the overall council expenditure, and bring rates rises under control.

WAIKATO WATER DONE WELL - A CURRENT AND CRITICAL ISSUE

The central government is requiring every council in the country to ensure environmental and financial sustainability of drinking water, sewer and storm water. Zed believes that all infrastructure regarding water must remain in the ownership of the local council and not be transferred to any other organization. This is a great example of the council's core business.

The council has voted, and this is worrying, to establish, with other councils, a Council Controlled Organization (CCO) and transfer the ownership of our assets to this organization.

Zed's position is that our council has very capable employees currently looking after our waters infrastructure. Zed believes that with proper restructuring and policy implementation our council is more than capable to keep providing excellent water service while complying with central government requirements.

Within the CCO our council will have representation, but will not have any significant leverage to ensure the interest of our community are safeguarded. The water represents a significant percentage of our council's revenue. Going with the CCO means that our council will lose this income, and will very likely become unviable leading to amalgamation with other unviable councils. This would have severe consequences for our community.

Zed's first option will always be local control of all local assets.

WATER METERS

The cost of implementing, monitoring, and invoicing for water meters is going to be a greater cost to the community than the existing payment structure. Zed is proposing that instead, we focus on maintenance, renewal and upgrading of the current system.

While Zed appreciates the noble thought behind this idea, the reality is that council currently cannot afford the expense of 8 million dollars to implement it without borrowing money. In addition to this, a system will have to be established to monitor and invoice users which will have a massive cost. To top it all off, more employees will be required for this task, including a manager and a few other employees which will have a cost of around half a million a year. All those costs will be reflected in the water bills, further raising the cost to the constituents. What Zed is proposing is to focus on maintenance, renewal and upgrade of the existing assets.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Council is frequently criticized for making decisions without consulting the community. As Mayor, Zed will fight for complete transparency, and accountability. The council will collaborate, consult, and involve the community in decisions, and in the solutions. Zed also feels strongly about making all workshops and council meetings open to the public. Workshops are where the elected members meet with the executive, information is fed and discussions take place and, in reality, where decisions are made. Currently these workshops are held in secret. [Opening them to the public] is the only way to bring true transparency.

A VISION FOR SOUTH WAIKATO

South Waikato is a fantastic place to live, but our growth rates and employment statistics are not improving. The South Waikato needs a collective vision to address these issues, and a council that works for a positive future; one that encourages new businesses, investment, job creation, and sustainable economic growth. Economic growth means more businesses, more people, more shops and more services. Council must make greater efforts to make our region more attractive to business investors and also by emphasizing the positives of the region such as our critical location, our resources, potential for tourism and our relative price competitiveness. A friendly environment for business will ultimately lead to more regional wealth, growth and a reduction in rates rises.

WHAT A VOTE FOR ZED CAN DO FOR YOU

- You will have a council that has your back; the interests of the ratepayers will be a top priority
- Reduce the percentage of rates and rent rises, by cutting excessive spending within council
- No more secrets. Zed will keep the community informed, be open to public opinion, encourage free speech and a 'grass roots' democratic process
- Start work on infrastructure renewal and growth
- Ensure that current facilities will remain and be maintained
- Encourage economic development by removing as many barriers to development as legally possible

STRATEGIES FOR COST CUTTING

- Examine existing projects and halt, wherever possible, those which are non-productive or do not contribute to the welfare of the community.
- Examine the asset pool and look for ways to make them productive assets as quickly as possible.
- No more housing projects. Facilitate housing and development by clearing the road but development itself leave to the private sector.
- Initiate an immediate review of the staffing structure with a view to reduce operating cost and increase efficiency.
- Ensure that work undertaken by contractors is work well done – unlike the Tokoroa toilet projects.
- Keep tight on the budget and borrowing. Interest payments can destroy future goals and sap away much needed money.

EDUCATION

- Diploma in Technical education
- Professional training in construction industry - national certificate level 4
- Diploma in planning and management
- Diploma in construction

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Zed has always had an interest in community involvement

- New Zealand Community Patrol (Auckland)
- Board member CPNZ Mt Albert
- Chair of Mount Albert New Zealand Community Patrol
- Board member Auckland Neighborhood Support
- Judicial committee Apprentice of the Year (Auckland)
- Chair South Waikato Residents and Ratepayers Action Group

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Zed is a true family man. He has been married for 27 years, and has a son and a daughter. Typical of Serbian culture, Zed and his family are known for their warm and friendly hospitality, and expressive character.

Zed's work shed contains his hobbies - a restored car, and another he has built from scratch. There is also a mountain bike he enjoys taking for a spin.

Zed loves spending time with family, enjoys helping his wife in the garden, and loves exploring nature and being outdoors.

CONTACT DETAILS

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