

26 July, 2023

ELECTORAL STRUCTURE REVIEW / Submission

I provide this submission as a “*wedded to The Bellarine*” resident for 45+ years, a former Bellarine Ward Councillor, and currently a community / Council engagement leader. As such my values and views, whilst somewhat skewed to The Bellarine, are provided in the interest of a broader perspective for the opportunities that these proposed changes can open up.

My support is for Model 1 based on the following -

- a) The broad boundary for the proposed 3 Wards replicates the present Bellarine Ward boundary and as such will ensure minimal disruption to the community’s fear of change to the current lifestyle.
- b) The unique interface of marine, coastal, urban and rural aspects can be maintained, again with minimal if any disruption.
- c) The opportunities for the incoming Councillors to protect, preserve and enhance the look, feel and function of The Bellarine can be even further developed.
- d) The regular influx of visitors, local, interstate, and international, should continue to value add to the variety and quality of opportunity such that the tourism benefits, not just for The Bellarine, will serve as an example for the G 21 region overall.

However, there will be difficulties and challenges that may deflect attention from the opportunities, those being in no particular order -

- 2026 Commonwealth Games cancellation.
- Covid – possible future impacts
- RBA rate changes – investment / employment impacts
- The Voice referendum
- G21 – Geelong Region Alliance transport strategy
- Population growth – regionally to 536,00 by 2041
- Present housing shortage
- Incoming CEO and possible additional staffing requirements
- Smart City - proposed developments

Whilst the Preliminary Report / About Geelong City Council / Community section refers to a fast growing population of nearly 400,000 by 2041, referencing a report by .id 2023, the same group, .id informed decisions, provides a further report headed “Understanding liveability to advance quality of life” that is prefaced as follows -

*Australia, like many peer nations, has woken up to the fact that we need to understand and measure prosperity in terms broader than GDP.*

*Our leadership – political, social, corporate – is demonstrating this shift by placing more emphasis on community wellbeing in decision making.*

*And, while previous generations may have seen investment in wellbeing as being in conflict with traditional economic measures of progress, contemporary sentiment acknowledges that such things work better in concert.*

## Guidelines in this report being -

### *Defining liveability and how to discover it*

- *The role of Local Government*
- *Comparing for context*
- *Monitoring for impact*
- *Small area geographies*
- *Putting residents at the centre*

## Summary -

In supporting the following extract from the Preliminary Report, I encourage the Advisory Panel to strongly recommend the above mentioned “ Understanding liveability to advance quality of life” report such that the proposed Model 1 change is implemented with due dignity and respect on behalf of our community.

*The advantages of Model 1 are that it maintains current ward boundaries to the greatest extent possible, dividing each current ward into multiple wards. Where possible these boundaries follow readily identifiable and recognised geographic features and infrastructure.*

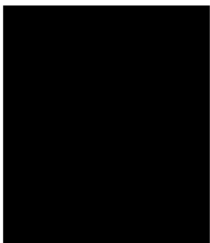
*Model 1 also has the advantage of keeping the townships of the Barwon Peninsula largely within ward boundaries and not divided across wards. As a result, communities of interest of the Bellarine are reasonably well captured by the proposed wards of this model.*

*However, potential disadvantages with this model were also identified.*

*However, the ideal number of councillors can also be influenced by the circumstances of each council, such as the:*

- *nature and complexity of services the council provides*
  - *geographic size and topography of the area*
  - *forecast population and voter growth or decline*
- social diversity.*

Sincerely,



Tom O'Connor

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