

**Electoral structure review - Greater Geelong City Council - Response Submission  
Andy McKoy - Ocean Grove - 26 July 2023, 03:46 pm**

I strongly wish to retain the current Greater Geelong Council 4 ward structure.

I ask that the VEC electoral structure review for the City of Greater Geelong Council be extended for a further 14-36 months and that the current structure is retained for the next Council term. At that point we will be able to fully evaluate our current 4 Ward model.

We have only used your 2015/6 VEC recommended structure of 4 wards divided among 11 Councillors for 7 years.

Given how well this structure is working we need more time to prove it your recommended model is the best model for CoGG.

Since the Administrator left and the 2016 elections The Bellarine Ward has worked very well. We have 3 excellent Councillors working together to serve the Bellarine as a cohesive group of towns.

Further most of the issues that put CoGG into administration - when we were under the previous 12 ward structure - seem to have vanished.

I note that there are at least 3 studies including 2 by VEC in 2016 and 2017 that recommended our current 4 ward structure for excellent reasons.

The Bellarine Ward residents, Associations and Councillors have worked hard to complete the Statement of Planning Purposes for the Bellarine Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL). When signed the DAL will protect the distinct look and feel of each Bellarine town. It protects our town boundaries from over development.

The DAL can only succeed if Bellarine Ward is kept together under the the 4 Ward structure.

I requests that the Minister for Local Government confirm the value of the current ward structure of the City of Greater Geelong and retain our multi-councillor wards. At least until a decent proposal can be worked out.

Preferences:

For all the above reasons none of the proposed options are remotely acceptable. However:

- Option 1 is the least bad. It is the only option with a chance of the Bellarine continuing to work together to put the DAL into operation. This can only happen if the 3 wards Councillors are willing to share resources and cooperate.

Note that Point Lonsdale as a Coastal Ocean town has much more in common with Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove. They have expressed a desire to be in the same Ward as Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads.

If you force this on CoGG, the ward boundaries must be changed to address Drysdale, Indented Head and St Leonards issues. Communities must be in the same Ward.

This is the only Option where the DAL has any chance of success. It is still unacceptable.

I suggest that Moolap (1477 voters) be removed from proposed Moolap Ward. It has little in common with the Bellarine and its character is more like Newcomb.

- Option 2 places the smallest Bellarine towns in a Ward with Armstrong Creek. They will likely see no Council funds or representation. This destroys any chance of Bellarine DAL being implemented because of the inclusion of Armstrong Creek and the adverse influence of a large population with

no connection to the Bellarine.

Completely unacceptable

- Option 3 destroys any chance of Bellarine towns having a voice to implement the DAL recommendations because the boundaries merge the Bellarine with Greater Geelong. The Concept of a Bellarine community is completely lost. This splits Ocean Grove in half which goes against VEC's stated objective 'to keep communities together. Completely unacceptable

- Ward Names: Bellarine North, Bellarine Central and Bellarine South. But only If VEC cant persuade the Minister to abandon this proposal or move CoGG into the Group of Councils with Multi-Councillor Wards.

The Name Moolap is completely unacceptable.

Councillor Numbers : 11 Councillors - 12 produces a potential deadlock in Council.

We note that CoGG previously had 13 which included a separately elected Major. Each single Ward Councillor has approx. 20,000 voters. Councillors in Bendigo and Ballarat only have approx. 10,000 voters, while Queenscliffe has 800 voters per Councillor.

How is this fair. At least have 3 Councillors serving approx 60,000 people share the high load while helping keep the Bellarine as a unique environment

Andy McKoy