

Electoral structure review - Mount Alexander Shire Council - Response Submission
David Ling - Harcourt - 11 April 2023, 09:05 pm

Model 1 would likely see candidates focus campaign and governance efforts entirely on the most densely populated areas (Castlemaine), to the detriment of the regional areas that equal a bit more than half of the total population.

Model 3 seems clearly the most equitable in these senses, but the +/- 10% rule seems to have been applied non-randomly: it puts smaller populations in ALL Castlemaine areas than the populations in ALL regional areas. So, Model 3 makes EVERY town-based elector's vote worth more than EVERY regional elector's vote.

Model 2 has the worst of both others: it splits communities and it blends dense-Castlemaine oriented populations (Chewton, Cambells Creek) with much more regional communities. Both Chewton and Campbells Creek are connected to Castlemaine by continuous residential strips, and while they have their own identities, it is more akin to their Castlemaine counterparts than the further-afield regional communities.

In both Models 2 and 3, the imbalance of town-to-region can be remedied by expanding the Castlemaine-based wards' boundaries to include the Castlemaine-oriented communities of Cambells Creek and Chewton.

For your consideration, I include a custom redraw of the ward boundaries. This custom redraw proves it is totally possible to implement the abovementioned advice, while meeting the stated aims of the project better than any of the proposed models.

As well as maintaining connection of like communities, the custom redraw also minimises the differences between elector populations in each ward.

The custom redraw has only 13 electors difference between the largest and smallest wards. This compares very favourably to Models 2 and 3 in the preliminary proposal, which have much larger discrepancies: 632 and 496, respectively.