

Electoral structure review - Surf Coast Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Anthony Phelps - Winchelsea - 14 February 2023, 09:23 pm

Ideally, each Councillor should be responsible for both town and country areas/ratepayers. Surf Coast Shire is a bit too awkward to achieve that given the population density of Torquay. All the same, I suggest that solutions be sought which aim to mix urban with rural perspectives & needs.

One Councillor per ward seems to me to be the easiest to manage and update and to comply with legislation now and in future. As populations change (eg. Winchelsea can expect to grow significantly over the next decade), blocks can be reassigned to rebalance the wards.

One aspect that I think is very important is to rename the wards, however the final structure appears. Ideally, the name of each ward would have no relation to the major town it covers. My map has boring ward names such as West, North, Central, but I've also used Torquay West, Torquay East etc. Perhaps some effort could be put in to finding alternative names (eg. indigenous lands/areas/landmarks). Having names that are independent of towns would avoid some of the issues we've seen with people feeling they are voting in the 'wrong' ward because they feel they are more closely related to their town ward.

All the best with it, looking forward to seeing the final recommendation and result!