

**Ward boundary review - Murrindindi Shire Council - Response Submission
Damien Gallagher - Blackburn - 13 March 2024, 04:03 pm**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I would like to offer an alternative approach to the two proposals shared by the Victorian Electoral Commission.

This approach is intended to support some further movement in population but the key aim is to achieve minimal impact for community members.

Furthermore, this proposal achieves the aims of:

- Retaining much of the Cheviot community in the Cheviot ward,
- Avoiding the establishment of wards whose communities are separated by difficult to traverse terrain, such as incorporating the community of Toolangi into Cathedral ward,

Proposal 1 is, to my mind, not workable given the distance (in practical terms) between Toolangi and the balance of the Cathedral ward. The option should be discounted on this measure alone.

Proposal 2, while workable, creates a significant representation disparity between Red Gate and the adjacent Eildon Ward, of almost 400 voters.

Proposal 2 would see Red Gate ward cover an area of 9.7 sq km and the adjacent wards of Cathedral and Koriella cover around 1,300 sq km.

It should be noted that neither this, nor the two VEC proposals address structural flaws in the composition of Murrindindi's ward configuration. Given that the Local Government Act 2020 directs Councillors to act in the best interests of the entire community, it could be argued that Murrindindi Shire would be better served by a single, 7 Councillor ward. Alternatively, a representative structure of 2, 2, and 3 Councillors would better serve an equitable travel load for Councillors looking to faithfully represent the entire municipal community in their deliberations.

One understands that LGA structure is not within the remit of the ward boundary review, however I feel that the lack of fitness for purpose of the current system is exacerbated by the two proposed options. Hence my proposed boundaries which minimise impact and my submission that at more structural review of Council's ward configuration be scheduled.

As current Murrindindi Shire Councillor, elected in the Red Gate Ward, this is not a self-serving submission. On the contrary.

Thanks for the opportunity to offer a perspective.

Regards,

Damien Gallagher
Mayor
Murrindindi Shire Councillor, Red Gate Ward