

**Electoral structure review - Surf Coast Shire Council - Preliminary submission
Kevin Breen - Hawthorn - 16 February 2023, 11:29 am**

From: [Kevin Breen](#)
To: [Surf Coast ERAP Submissions 2023](#)
Subject: Ensuring adequate representation for Aireys Inlet residents and ratepayers
Date: Thursday, 16 February 2023 11:28:44 AM

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I wish to make a submission to the review of the electoral boundaries within the Surf Coast Shire.

- 1. Background.** We have owned our property [REDACTED], Aireys Inlet for 15 years and over this period have variously used the premises as a holiday home, a permanent residence and now as a part time residence. While my partner is the formal registered owner of the property and in this capacity she is entitled to vote in Council elections, I also have a fundamental interest in the property and the rights emanating from ownership and use of the property.
- 2. Interests adequately protected.** In reviewing the electoral system, it is critical that the interests of residents in Aireys Inlet and other locations some distance away from the main Surf Coast Shire population centre of Torquay and Jan Juc are adequately protected through a Subdivided Ward structure. A Subdivided Ward structure is required in a municipality such as Surf Coast where there is a relatively large population centre in the form of Torquay that will dominate and skew planning and Council expenditure to meet the particular needs of Torquay and the contiguous Jan Juc at the expense of outlying areas. Torquay and Jan Juc have effectively become peri-urban centres and as such have quite different needs to the Aireys Inlet community. This has been exemplified in recent years by the campaign for the development of a major aquatic centre in Torquay. I have no argument against the people of Torquay and Jan Juc having ready access to such a facility but at a 30 minute drive from Aireys Inlet it will have absolutely no benefit to us yet the large capital cost will be met by all Surf Coast ratepayers. Over time, this pattern of major facilities, whether they be libraries, sports centres or other capital intensive services, will be increasingly dominated by the Torquay/Jan Juc population centre that will grow proportionally faster than other parts of the municipality. So it is critical that the needs of the dominant population centre be balanced by a system of Wards where the interests of those areas outside the dominant population centre are represented by local Ward councillors who can reflect and champion local needs and enable Council services and facilities to be equitably distributed across the Surf Coast municipality.
- 3. Equity versus equality.** The 'one vote, one value' democratic principle meaning that every person's vote counts equally is accepted as a cornerstone of a democratic system of government. However, the concept of equity is also a fundamental principle of democratic governance and this requires more than the government being dominated by a crude majority and that the needs of all people are properly considered. An undivided Ward structure would not allow this and so retention of a Subdivided Ward structure is important to retain. I make no specific recommendation of exactly how this should be achieved but make the general observation that Lorne has more in common with Aireys Inlet (along with Fairhaven and Eastern View) and Angelsea than it has with communities inland and so future Ward structures could reflect this.

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