

Electoral structure review - Casey City Council - Response Submission
Graeme Phipps - Pearcedale - 05 November 2023, 05:12 pm

I would like to support Option 3, which bisects the coastal villages estate into two wards: Cranbourne Gardens Ward and Toradin Ward, divided in the main by South Gippsland Highway. A reasonable boundary.

My main reason for supporting Option 3 is that this southern section of the local government area has most of the natural attributes of an otherwise very highly developed council area. Less than 9% of the Casey LGA is deemed natural with the majority of that small but important percentage located in this zone.

The two wards share open space characteristics, but are also different in that Cranbourne Gardens has a much higher 'conservation rating' than Toradin ward. Going forward there will be planned housing development at Devon Meadows and industrial development at South Cranbourne which will require clever and careful attention to sustaining the integrity of what natural areas remain. Mapping of sea level rise shows that development at Toradin would be problematic even on current measures. The environmental values of the coastal zone are very important as are the values of the Cranbourne Gardens itself and its contribution towards sustaining those values and offering scientifically based solutions and options. It is an important resource.

This part of Casey Council area impacts particularly on the UNESCO Western Port Biosphere Reserve with particular attention needing to be paid to the Man and The Biosphere ethos and the international treaty obligations which saw the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve being dedicated in the first place, and for which Councils surrounding Western Port have signed on to. Option 3 provides the best balance of supporting the UNESCO treaty obligations and giving more potential emphasis on protecting and enhancing the natural values of this most important zone.

It would be hoped that councillors representing these two wards would reflect the environmental values mentioned, and the balance that supporting planned developments while still supporting the UNESCO goals requires. So it is a fairly tough call balancing these tensions as best they can. Other wards in the LGA are far more homogeneous - and in my view it is a much more difficult role if virtually ALL of the environmental responsibility for the LGA is loaded onto one councillor's ward as in Option 1 and substantially so in Option 2.

The maths of the situation is that in a council of 12 wards it would be far preferable to have the most complex wards in terms of land management shared by two councillors, hence Option 3 is the best option.