Tuesday 25 July 2023 13:40

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Submission is self-explanatory, not requiring further advocacy.

Background:

Administrative electoral experience, active interest in workings of CoGG over many years, living in Brownbill Ward.

Electoral Review Geelong

1. Scope of review is disappointing. A much-needed opportunity to review and address *what is the modern role and purpose of the Greater Geelong council; the role, function, and purpose of councillors; review mandatory accountability processes for all within council, especially councillors.*
2. Given the emerging publicised criticisms and concerns with role and function of the Geelong council an expectation these be addressed has been ignored. If it can't be done in a "review", when can it be done? How does increasing wards to single person representation fix the problems?
3. What is offered is a token review mandated by a population paradigm, imposed from outside Geelong, producing three proposed models – each with serious weaknesses across the region depending on where you live. The THREE models for consideration are more of the same i.e., *"rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic"*. A new paradigm for Geelong local government is needed, and this review negates the opportunity to consider a new model addressing current problems and new needs.
4. The current CoGG model has councillors charged with representing ward views, whilst at same time "representing" the overall entity's outcomes. Often this divided allegiance of conflicting purposes creates tensions/conflicts for both the councillors and the community.
5. Councillors, voting on issues can form alliances often on party lines again diminishing the ward focus reason for representation. Modern local government politics in Geelong works at a "whole of council" level NOT necessarily ward.
6. THEREFORE, this WAS an opportunity to introduce a new model based on eliminating ward identity replacing with several councillors only. Recent experience indicates the ward representation conduct has been replaced by whole of council behaviour.

7. **This submission RELUCTANTLY - and with no confidence opts for Proposed Model 1** – *a single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward,* because:
    a. It does not increase councillor numbers in a financially troubled council.
    b. Ward boundaries are "acceptable" in our "ward" being representative more of suburbs of similar characteristics e.g., Drumcondra, Rippleside, Geelong West, Newtown by history, contact, are "united" in one ward, unlike Model 2 – *a single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward (with boundaries different to Model 1*), where various boundaries splinter this core historically oldest area into "messy" parts and an unlikely allocation of Drumcondra and Rippleside as ward sharing with Corio, Norlane separated by transport infrastructure and industrial precincts.
    c. Not having detailed knowledge of the "culture" of suburbs/areas outside the inner core area of Geelong, the ward boundaries of Proposed Model 1 would appear to be more "natural" i.e.., well known and less confusing with boundaries more defined.
    d. Proposed Model 3 – *a single-councillor ward structure with 12 councillors – 12 wards with one councillor per ward*, increases council costs, is rejected because off the unacceptable, and unchallenged assumption that population only must drive the shape and revised function of Geelong council. If the Geelong community had been given the opportunity in a genuine review process of local government in Geelong than less councillors would be more acceptable. The opportunity to address current, functional problems has been lost.

Sincerely,

David L. White
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