

**Electoral structure review - Hepburn Shire Council - Preliminary Submission  
Mark Dickenson - Hepburn Springs - 01 March 2023, 2:38pm**

Electoral Representation Advisory Panel  
c/o Victorian Electoral Commission  
Hepburn.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au

1 March 2023

Dear Panel,

Regarding Hepburn Shire Council Submission – Electoral Structure Review 2023

Please accept my submission to the Electoral Structure Review.

If the current electoral arrangement needs to change at all, I support a seven-ward structure with one councillor assigned to each ward.

I believe this is the appropriate option because Hepburn Shire is large and geographically diverse, requiring representatives with local knowledge from those differing areas. Our various towns are spread far and wide, with no overlap and very distinct characters. Everyone in the shire deserves representation from, and access to, an elected representative who is familiar with the unique issues, opportunities and history of their region.

I wholeheartedly oppose the idea of an un-subdivided council electoral zone. That structure would clearly benefit candidates who promote themselves in the Shire's larger towns. The voters of Daylesford and Creswick would have an extraordinary influence over the final results, and their candidates would have a huge advantage over those from lesser-populated areas. It's difficult and expensive enough for a prospective councillor to communicate with the people of their immediate area, but it would be almost impossible for a candidate to gather enough support to be elected in an outlying town. Further to that, gaining support across the whole shire would undoubtedly require financial and practical support – the type offered by political parties. Thus the entire nature of local council would risk being undermined and perverted by external organisations with no investment in, or involvement with, our local issues.

Thank you and regards

Mark Dickenson

Hepburn Springs

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