

**Electoral structure review - Surf Coast Shire Council - Preliminary Submission**  
**KAREN PITT - LORNE - 21 February 2023, 08:24 am**

I advocate that:

- The Surf Coast Shire should retain the current subdivided representation, primarily because its communities of interest are quite diverse: from suburban Torquay, to the rural hinterland of Deans Marsh, to the coastal communities between and including Anglesea and Lorne.
- The communities of Lorne and Deans Marsh should continue to be represented together: many residents of Deans Marsh and environs work in Lorne; there are links between the schools; Lorne residents AND WEEKDEND HOME-OWNERS regularly attend Deans Marsh market days and dog trials; many Lorne residents include a coffee stop at the DM General Store in any trip to Colac; there are strong friendship links between the two communities around shared yoga classes, gardening and home owners moving between the two communities.
- I am aware of the proposal by AIDA that the Shire have 12 Councillors across three wards. However, I am not convinced that this is in the best interests of either Lorne or Deans Marsh ratepayers. Certainly the interests of the smaller community of Deans Marsh are unlikely to be as well represented as they are at present.

Finally, of all the communities of the Surf Coast Shire, Lorne has the highest proportion of non-resident ratepayers, for whom voting in Council elections is not compulsory unless they have enrolled to vote. While this group is often quick to complain about Shire decisions that affect their interests, I cannot recall any past campaigns to urge non-residents to enrol to vote.

It is my view that the VEC should ensure that any decision to change the structure of Shire elections should be preceded by a campaign to encourage non-resident registration, emphasising that they will not have a say in municipal matters without registration.

Regards  
Karen Pitt