

**Electoral structure review - Mornington Peninsula Shire Council - Response Submission
David Gill - Balnarring Beach - 15 November 2023, 4:08 pm**

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Mornington Peninsula Submissions 2023](#)
Subject: Fwd: Submission to the Local Council Electoral Structure Review Panel (Mornington Peninsula Shire)
Date: Wednesday, 15 November 2023 4:08:45 PM

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Thank you for this limited opportunity to make a personal submission on the matters before the Panel regarding the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

I object to this process but understand that the Local Government Minister has taken the independent powers away from the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) onto an appointed panel and that the Minister will make all final decisions without the usual early or acceptable community consultation. The Panel is answerable only to the Minister not to the community.

Feedback is basically limited to several alternative choices made by the panel on important Shire Ward boundary and naming decisions in a regional municipality unsuited to the newly mandated (with no consultation) one councillor wards. Trying to bandaid 42 towns, villages and precincts into 11 wards has not been successfully achieved in your options.

The lack of thought put into naming the wards disrespects these communities.

The VEC has previously objected to the one councillor ward option for regional large councils, like the Mornington Peninsula, as unsuitable.

The panel also contemplates splitting areas to have large population centres join with sparsely populated rural areas. This would create a disaster for these mainly farming areas (70% of the Shire is in the Green Wedge Zone) as the likelihood of a representative being elected in such a population imbalance would prove too difficult for most candidates, leaving rural areas poorly represented.

A councillor elected by large town populations would find it difficult to represent a small minority when prioritising services and projects, and in understanding rural issues.

The Panel has clearly not understood the Mornington Peninsula and the cultural, demographic and geographical issues in the proposed boundary and naming of wards in this forced and rushed political exercise.

The recommendations are crude and lack careful consideration and ignore democratic traditions and laws of fair distribution including the plus or minus 10% "maximum" average variation in the number of voters in each ward.

The naming of wards (likely to stay for many years) received little consideration and the Government should be ashamed that consultation was non-existent. The Panel recognises that proper examination was not possible.

Consideration of First Nation language names has been shelved apart from several off-handed suggestions with no evidence provided of the historic or other meanings of the words except that were used by European Settlers.

Altogether this is a cheap and nasty outcome based on political engineering to do with Metropolitan Councils in which the Mornington Peninsula Shire is unfortunately caught up as we are designated metro not rural by the State Government. Rural municipalities are not included in the one councillor ward mandate.

In summary:

None of the choices for one councillor ward boundaries should be used but as they are the options in the eleven ward scenario then Option 1 with least change keeps some integrity of mutual interest for our segmented communities. I say this with no real brief for the 11 ward concept.

There is no apparent way of splitting the Shire into 11 wards that improves the existing boundaries in the best interests of the general community including small businesses and farmers.

The naming of wards should be put on hold until properly investigated.

The panel summary on page 18 of the Preliminary Report does honestly lay out sufficient reasons as to why the electoral structure review is inappropriate for the Mornington Peninsula. Forty two villages and townships dotted over the Peninsula are not suited to one councillor wards.

Thank you for your consideration,

Regards,

David Gill

Long term Mornington Peninsula Shire Councillor.