

**Electoral structure review - Hepburn Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Jen Bray - Hepburn Springs - 01 March 2023, 12:50 pm**

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

28 Feb 2023

Re: Hepburn Shire Council Submission – Electoral Structure Review 2023

I am writing to provide a submission to the Electoral Structure Review.

I believe that the current number of seven (7) Councillors is appropriate for a shire of our size.

I would support a seven-ward structure, with a single councillor assigned to each ward.

The reasons for this option are that:

Hepburn shire has a wide spread area with several small towns, and two larger towns in Daylesford and Creswick. The needs across the shire vary greatly due to differences in topography, agriculture, history, and population density. Local knowledge of these needs is important in our councillor representatives,

Having allocated wards for each councillor will ensure that the needs of each of these areas is fully appreciated and represented.

I would not support an un-subdivided structure for the following reasons:

There would be an increased likelihood of candidates from the more populated towns being elected. This would lead to an imbalance of representation and local knowledge for those living in the outer areas of the shire. As I mentioned, there is quite a diverse range of circumstances and needs throughout the shire and having councillors who are familiar with each of those areas is very important.

Councillors who are local to an area are more responsive to residents needs, also due to the distances across the shire. If councillors were only based in the two main towns they may not be able or willing to travel to the further reaches to connect with community out there.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Regards

Jen Bray

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