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From:	David Gibb ████████████████
Sent:	Saturday, 11 November 2023 5:41 PM
To:	Mornington Peninsula Submissions 2023
Subject:	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Electoral Structure Review
Attachments:	9 Ward map.jpg

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Electoral Structure Review for the Mornington Peninsula Shire

<u>Submission From</u>: David D.V. GIBB, ████████████, Red Hill. 3937
<u>To</u>: VEC, 11/530 Collins St,
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Firstly I would like to <u>strongly object</u> to the use by the VEC of *suburb* in relation to this Shire and elsewhere in rural Victoria.
There are no suburbs in rural Australia. This is a very <u>city-centric</u> view of the world, alienating country people. Mornington Peninsula consists of 85% Green Wedge i.e. agricultural land. "Suburb" is entirely inappropriate for one of Victoria's major food bowls that produces $820 million pa of agricultural produce.
Technically, the State Government categorises MPSC as "Metropolitan", but in every other respect, including its Upper House representation, we are rural.
I urge the VEC to amend the descriptor to *Township* or *Locality* on the website and in future publications, to be inclusive, generate more goodwill, and to help break down the city/country divide.

Single Councillor Wards
This is now a requirement, but in any case, I strongly endorse this model. I was an MP Shire Councillor from 1997 to 2016. From 1997 to 2000, I was in a 2 man ward, from 2000 I was in a single Councillor ward, and for my last term until 2016, I was again in a multi Councillor ward. For multiple reasons, upon which I don't need to elaborate as the single councillor ward structure is now mandated; having experienced both structures, the single Cr structure is far superior to multi Councillor wards

Number of Councillors
It was a bad outcome When MPSC changed from 9 Crs to 11 Crs.
1] I didn't have any reduction in workload: Including reading time it was still a 30 hour a week "part time" role . No reduction in phone calls or emails. No reduction in meetings either formal, or informal with ratepayers.
2] Greater costs for the municipality: Extra Cr's allowances, vehicle and meal expenses, laptop, phone and IT expenses etc. This is estimated to be in excess of $100K pa., not including officer time.
3] Inefficiency in Council meetings. It's not just 22% more talking time, it's 22% on top of that 22%. Without a switched on Chair (Mayor), which is the majority of the time in my experience, there is not the discipline to curtail irrelevant chatter.

4] Unnecessary: When you consider the boards of high powered public companies listed on the Stock Exchange, with income and assets and that are well in excess of Shire Councils, 11 Board members are unheard of.

5] Councillor duties are reducing. With each change in the LG Act, more and more general powers are being stripped from Councillors. CEOs are declaring more and more areas "operational" and therefore not the responsibility of Councillors. And finally, under the influence of the development industry, the State Government is removing from Councils, more and more statutory obligations under the Planning & Environment Act.

6] The Peninsula has a huge number of non-resident ratepayers and a huge number of vacant dwellings and lots, the largest in the State. Simply, these are less demanding of a Councillor's time.

7] Proportionality: There are Shires, especially in the west of the state with vastly lower populations, that have 5, 7 or 9 councillors. i.e. a very low ratio of ratepayers per councillor. If the VEC is saying that the population of MP Shire warrants 11 Crs, then these other Councils, pro rata, would warrant only 3 or 4 Crs per Shire. The conclusion is that there is not a nexus between the population of a Shire and the number of Crs, and the VEC still has discretion to reduce the number of Crs for the Peninsula.

I strongly recommend returning to a total of 9 (nine) Councillors to represent the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Ward Boundaries
Clearly, all three models exhibited by the VEC fail because they have 3 to 5 wards with a greater than the permitted 10% variance from the average number of voters.

The simplest new map would keep the existing ward boundaries and subdivide the existing multi Cr wards into 3 (2 for Nepean). Amongst other things, it solves the problem of the proposed Moorooduc Ward straddling Moorooduc Highway, as Moorooduc Highway is fairly close to the boundary between Township and rural land.

If the VEC wished to be radical, it could have a "Zebra" map, whereby each ward had both Port Phillip Bay and Western Port frontage plus the rural land in-between. That would mean that every Cr had responsibility for some of the Green Wedge rural land, rather than purely Township based Crs who don't have to concentrate their minds on protecting the Peninsula's agriculture. An indicative 9 ward map is attached.

Ward Names
The pre-amalgamation Shire of Flinders used the historic names Matthew, Murray, Bowen and Collins as Riding names. All are associated with the Peninsula's European discovery and history. Very old Parish names were used for the 1997 review but unfortunately, this principle was diluted with the creation of additional wards at the time of the 2000 review. **Any new names should be historic ones** e.g. Pioneering families, that allow the community to honour and remember the past. i.e. Keep our history alive.

Any new names should not have too many syllables either, or they risk being shortened in everyday use. e.g. Mornington Peninsula Shire is frequently shortened to just Mornington Shire, which causes angst amongst ratepayers who are not from that particular town and believe that they are missing out on influence and resources. (In hindsight, the Shire should have been, and may at some time in the future be, called simply "Peninsula Shire")

AUST. ELECTORAL
COMMISSION

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2. 11036
3. 11979
4. 11611
5. 12443
6. 11114
7. 11398
8. 12155
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