

From: Steve [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 12 November 2023 6:42 PM
To: Casey Submissions 2023
Subject: Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

On my previous submission I did not favour a model. Let me clarify.

Model 3 I believe represents Northern Casey, and more importantly Southern Casey better than model 1 and 2. However 12 Councillors risks a dysfunctional Council.

History.....The Shire of Cranbourne before being amalgamated with the City of Berwick, was in a strong financial position. The City of Berwick in comparison, was holding debt.

Many believe the Southern suburbs missed out on crucial investment, after amalgamation into the City of Casey. I also believe this.

When amalgamations were legislated, it was envisioned, at that time, by Local Govt Minister Leonie Burke MP, that Casey would need be reviewed when the population exceeded 300,000 and possibly split in two.

It was also explained at that time, and since, various municipal contracts can fall across adjoining municipalities, ensuring economies of scale, and ratepayers not significantly impacted.

Model 3 however offers the best scenario in my opinion for Southern Casey to benefit from stronger representation.

As a former President of the Cranbourne and District Residents Assoc, we campaigned for Casey to be split along the Hallam main drain.

Thousands signed a petition which was presented to Casey Council. Debate has been vigorous by former Casey Councillors, and the community, on numerous occasions since.

In 2008 (30/4/2008) the Cranbourne News reported :

Cr Oates said he did not support splitting Casey now but was taking a proactive step towards coming up with the best plan for the future, should the need arise. "The time is right to start being proactive and make ideas for the community to give to the State Government if they propose a split in the near future. We will not be able to manage the city over a long period of time if this growth continues. "We are here to represent the best interests of the community and we should be able to say, if someone suggests a split, that we've had a look at it and this is the best configuration of how things will go in the future if we consider that," he said.

Mayor Neil Lucas agreed, claiming that when the State Government created the City of Casey it foresaw that the population would eventually grow beyond 300,000. He said a future split was inevitable but a long time away. "If it will be seriously considered we need to have thought processes about what the implications would be for both areas should that occur"

Another Councillor was quoted in the same article...

Springfield Ward councillor also welcomed the report, stating it was vital for council to be prepared for a split whether it occurred now or in the future. "If we are faced with this in 10 years time and are not prepared the horse might have bolted," he said.

Cranbourne News. 30/4/2008

Has the horse bolted? Operation Sandon highlights significant recommendations.

Personally I believe the consensus, long ago, was how the City of Casey would become increasingly time consuming and unmanageable for Councillors if it did not split.

Some former Casey Councillors even argued for full time status, Councillor car access, significant remuneration increases and more resources.

I do not support full time Councillors, or cars for Councillors or remuneration even.

I support smaller wards, allowing the community to educate their local Councillor on relevant community and area needs.

That is an education you do not need training for, or a ratepayer funded car, or increased remuneration to be schooled in.

The reward for a local Councillor is representing your community.

All other training can, and is administered by Council staff, and Councillor training allowances to attend various educational institutions.

Model 3 potentially configures wards to facilitate a future split of the municipality. I support that.

Previously, it had also been highlighted and reported how former Casey Councillors had either lived, or been elected to wards that favoured the Northern suburbs of Casey.

Southern Casey suburbs need be the focus.

Southern Casey has the greater need for infrastructure and employment, the greater need for investment in educational institutions, hospitals, health facilities, roads, childcare, maternal health care, retail, an international airport, sporting and community services.

Any proposal that favours representation and suburbs over those more in need, undermines one vote and value.

Any advantage at the expense of those in need, is unacceptable.

Model 3 with 12 Councillors, risks deadlocking the vote at Council meetings.

6 in favour; 6 against. This will require the mayor to adjudicate, or a system to ensure the smooth passage of decisions by vote. In a democracy it has to be by majority vote.

Is it fair or democratic for example, with a tied vote, that the Mayor has this deciding vote. Does this represent one vote one value? The Mayor actually votes twice in this scenario.

Is a coin toss representative of democratic decision making. I think not.

Even numbers of elected representatives, with one Councillor having an additional vote, to break a deadlock, can be argued compromises smooth passage of decisions, and outcomes believed to be democratically passed.

It also risks the favouring of who becomes Mayor, as Councillors vote who will be Mayor.

Should the mayor be popularly elected? Should this also be reviewed to minimise Councillor influence over who is Mayor?..... I believe so.

12 Councillors potentially results in deadlocked decision making, and a council perceived as dysfunctional with Councillor infighting and frustration a real possibility.

Casey Council going forward needs distinguish itself.

To quote from the Preliminary report... 'Unfortunately neither the Act nor the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 specify how to determine the appropriate number of councillors. Therefore, the models put forward by the panel are guided by the Act's intention for fairness and equity in voter representation' (page 7 of 37. Prelim report).

Another option I believe would be 13 Councillors across 13 wards predetermined to give Southern suburbs equal representation, until the City of Casey is split into two municipalities.

However the Act only allows local councils to have between 5 and 12 councillors. This would require an amendment to the Act recognising the need to split municipalities that have grown beyond a pre set population number.

There is ample time for the Local Govt Minister to revisit the need to spilt the City of Casey before the next Council elections.

Model 1 and 2 do not appear to give fair representation to Southern Casey. The voting intentions of ward Councillors appear to favour the more affluent Northern suburbs within Casey.

Southern Casey needs funding prioritised, with the emphasis on community infrastructure.

Ward boundaries that straddle both Southern and Northern suburbs, will offer fairness and understanding on the divide between Southern and Northern Casey.

Option 1 and 2 do not appear to offer this.

Municipalities must prioritise to the greatest areas of need.

Councillors need represent one vote one value, and municipal ward boundaries need equally and fairly represent all residents, suburb and community history, and growth to advantage all.

Individual wards help structure local representation, and help ensure fair representation.

However when a municipality numbers as many residents as Casey currently, how do you give everyone an opportunity to be heard, and access to their local Councillor.

How is it determined that access to your local Councillor and representation is guaranteed.

At what number of population within a ward, and a municipality, guarantees community access to representation.

One vote one value needs guarantee access and communication to local representation.

Wards and municipalities that boast their size, need realise the need for community access to all elected representation as more important. Casey previously boasted of its size.

This review needs reflect on the need to indicate when it is likely to see the municipality split in two.

Smaller municipalities give the community easier access to be heard by their local Councillor.

This also ensures accountability by local Councillors to their community.

Steve Beardon
Former Casey Councillor

[REDACTED]
Tocumwal
NSW 2714

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone