

[REDACTED]

13 April 2023

Mr Frank Vincent, Chair  
Electoral Representation Advisory Panel  
c/o Victorian Electoral Commission  
[Hepburn.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:Hepburn.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr Vincent,

**Re: Hepburn Shire Council Submission – Electoral Structure Review 2023**

Hepburn Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Electoral Representation Review.

Firstly, it is our strong belief that the current electoral structure – that is, seven councillors elected from five wards - is working effectively and efficiently for the Hepburn Shire community. We acknowledge that model cannot be accommodated under the new legislation but it would have been our strong preference that the existing structure remain in place.

In response to the three models offered by the Panel, councillors were not unanimous in their preferred model, with some councillors preferring model 1 (unsubdivided) and the majority of councillors preferring model 3 (seven wards, with one councillor in each).

Model 2 (eight councillors elected from four wards) is not supported by any councillor as the preferred model for two reasons. Councillors have significant concern regarding the need for an additional councillor and are of the view there is no compelling evidence to support that addition. It is further noted that adopting a model with an even number of Councillors will put increased pressure on the Mayor, and disproportionate power, in the increased likelihood of the need for a casting vote to resolve a deadlock in voting.

Should the Panel decide to recommend model 2 (four wards, with two Councillors in each) we would like to provide the following feedback:

- Preference for ward names not to be based on the names of townships, given multiple townships are in each ward.
- Preference for an alternate name to be explored for Birch Creek.

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► HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL

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- We would like the VEC to seek guidance from the Minister for Local Government with respect to good governance when an equal number of Councillors are in place.

Should the Panel decide to recommend model 3 (seven wards, with one Councillor in each) we would like to provide the following feedback:

- The boundaries proposed are somewhat awkward and, in some cases, divide communities of like interests, such as parts of Creswick and Daylesford. We would request an onsite meeting with members of the VEC to review the boundaries.
- Preference for Franklinford to remain in the Hepburn Springs ward, rather than being reallocated into the Holcombe ward, given existing connections with neighbouring townships and given the more rural 'feel' of Franklinford.
- The Raglan Street boundary between Hepburn Springs and Daylesford wards places too much of Daylesford township into the Hepburn Springs ward. A boundary further north would be more appropriate.
- Prefer Creswick ward to be named simply Creswick, rather than Creswick Creek.
- Prefer that Newlyn is not used as a ward name, as it excludes neighbouring townships of similar size.
- That Eganstown is proposed to be aligned with Daylesford is considered a positive move, given their proximity and connection.
- That the area immediately east of Daylesford has been included with the Daylesford ward is considered a positive move, given their proximity and connection.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or Manager Governance and Risk, Ms Rebecca Smith: [REDACTED], or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] if you would like to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Brian Hood

**Mayor**