

Electoral structure review - Horsham Rural City Council - Response Submission
Stephanie Barber - Horsham - 19 July 2023, 04:56 pm

I wish for the following to be taken into consideration regarding the electoral structure review for Horsham Rural City Council.

Something needs to change because the current model is not working. The voices of the community are not being heard or represented by the current councillors. The concern with the proposed creation of 7 wards is that it may be challenging to get sufficient candidates from each ward to run for election that will capably represent their ward. It has already been a challenge under the current model. However, if candidates do not need to reside in the ward they can be elected to represent, this may help alleviate this challenge (although this may also create its own set of challenges). In saying this, the new proposed model may help reduce the barriers to entry for new candidates, as they will no longer have to campaign for votes from the whole municipality, but will have a dedicated area/ward. Therefore, it may in fact bring more choice for voters.

If one of the three options had to be selected, option 3 would be preferable as it allows each councillor to represent the needs of both central Horsham and rural residents. Option 1 and 2 would only provide 2 representatives for rural residents out of the 7, meaning the votes would almost always fall in favour of the central Horsham representatives and result in continued dismissal and neglect to the needs of the rural residents, as we are currently seeing with the existing council structure. Option 3 would also allow for stronger advocacy for area-specific needs. For instance, Horsham North has long been overlooked by the council. By having a dedicated representative for this area, it would help ensure these residents have a voice that gets heard by other councillors and that resources and funding is more evenly shared across the municipality.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Barber