

Electoral structure review - Moorabool Shire Council - Response Submission
Michael Hotchin - Blackwood - 18 April 2023, 04:29 pm

I wish to begin by acknowledging the support provided by Moorabool Shire to the residents of Blackwood after the 2021 storm event.

We were well served by the assistance of Ally Munari, now Deputy Mayor. Ally's attendance at town information meetings was a cornerstone of the information in and for arranging attendance by representatives of emergency response groups and essential services. As the representative of the Woodlands Riding, she was the natural person to attend but it was not mandatory. I appreciate her support over the nearly a week it took to restore communications (fixed land lines, ADSL, Mobile network and 4G broadband), electricity and road access.

My concern over the models being proposed include that there will be no one clearly responsible to do the things that Ally did during that week. If no one from council comes to our aid, under similar circumstances, the residents would be left voiceless and ignorant of anything happening around us. I feel that someone without specific responsibility would be less likely to show the level of commitment demonstrated by Ally. Worse still might be an outcome where a different councillor attends on subsequent days, losing continuity and perhaps needing a full briefing before each meeting.

How would community support and resilience be addressed under each of the proposed models?

We had a number of issues that required the Shire to act as a champion on our behalf; Powercor sending text messages very four hours stating that power would be restored in four hours;

Th 'Road Closed' sign across the only access road to Blackwood, even though residents and service providers were expected to us that road (should have been 'Local Access Only' or such like).

Both of these, plus safety concerns, stopped Telstra from coming up the mountain to restore services. NB The same safety concerns that residents were expected to face every day.

Communities need a spokesperson to get across to government agencies and corporations the needs of the community and then report back to residents on progress or otherwise. These representatives should be part of the Moorabool CEMP/CBEM approach. I would hope that an elected representative aware of our community would be the one.

I would be pleased to talk to these issues if the opportunity arises.

Thank you,
Michael Hotchin
Blackwood