

**Electoral structure review - Corangamite Shire Council - Response Submission
Helen Durant - Noorat - 03 April 2023, 09:12 pm**

I am writing in support of a wards based system for Corangamite Shire and to consider an amended version of Option 3, being 7 Councillors across 7 wards.

The current option 3 separates Noorat and Glenormiston from Terang. I strongly believe they should be in the same ward:

- they share a common connection to Terang as their main town for shopping and other commercial activities
 - *they provide feeder schools into Terang
 - *many people in these 2 townships are involved in community activities and organisations based in Terang. e.g. hospital auxiliary, op shop volunteers, cemetery trust
- these communities use health and medical facilities in Terang.
 - *Terang provides the community infrastructure used by these communities e.g. library, maternal and child health centre, kindergarten and child care.
 - *Terang is closely linked to these communities through sporting affiliations and volunteering.
- the main agricultural activity in these 3 towns is dairy farming.

I am concerned that an unsubdivided ward may leave smaller more isolated communities with no representation. Rural communities enjoy a relationship with their councillors that is far closer and more personal than metropolitan councils, and many interactions occur socially and/or rely on well established knowledge of the local area and its population. Rural people appreciate this connection and in times of crisis, rely on it.

The current ward system has served Corangamite Shire well. Despite having some uncontested ward elections, the past 2 election cycles has seen a majority of new Councillors elected.

Whilst all Councillors act and make decisions on behalf of the entire Shire, there is no substitute for local knowledge and every part of the Shire needs to have someone representing them who has this. It is unrealistic to expect someone from the far north of the Shire to be aware of the community needs of a township in the far south, as these communities have unique characteristics, issues and needs.