

**Electoral structure review - Surf Coast Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Chris Ryan - Aireys Inlet - 13 February 2023, 04:18 pm**

From: [Chris Ryan](#)
To: [Surf Coast ERAP Submissions 2023](#)
Subject: Submission on Surf Coast Shire Structure Review
Date: Monday, 13 February 2023 4:18:55 PM

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.

To the Panel:

As a long-term permanent resident of Aireys Inlet I have considered the information and the possible structural options for ward structures in the Surf Coast Shire.

I ask you to consider the following:

(1) A single ward option for this regional council could never represent the diversity of interests and concerns that divide the shire into, broadly, three clear communities: The urban-growth mini-city of Torquay; the coastal communities along the Great Ocean Road and the communities of the more rural hinterland.

To reduce the democratic representation of the shire to a single ward would, by virtue of population distribution, make it almost impossible for the other two communities to be heard. The divergence of community interests is clearly and strongly expressed in the 2020 survey of Aireys Inlet and District, where the character of this area was frequently contrasted with Torquay, as 'non-urban' and as having to be protected from the priorities and form of residential development and infrastructure that characterise cities such as Torquay.

As the coordinator of a multi-university collaboration on the future of the Great Ocean Road (GOR) I know that the coastal communities see tourism and transport along the GOR, as well as climate change (in terms of fire and coastal erosion), as top concerns about the future; neither of those issues appear to be of great concern to the residents of Torquay. A shire has to balance its responsible governance on a recognition of such divergences of character and concern across its communities. It is only through elected representatives who have direct understanding of the diverse and changing lived-interests of communities, who are responsive to their local voters, that this shire can flourish through what will be challenging times.

It is relevant that the Victorian government act that established the GOR as a single tourist destination under one Authority, found that the destination should be defined as excluding Torquay and Warrnambool, because the interests and challenges of the coastal communities along the road diverged so significantly from those of the large urbanised communities. That same GOR process also acknowledges the differences between the hinterland communities and the coastal region, in terms of environments, economies and foreseeable future challenges.

(2) The growth in residential populations of the shire will be affected by both urban pressures from Geelong and Melbourne and from shifts in life-priorities caused by the pandemic (which has seen the permanent residential population of the Aireys district grow). It seems reasonable to assume that the population growth predicted in the VEC briefing for this review could be underestimated.

(3) I submit that wards could be constructed so as to join communities of interest and match the number of electors. The mini-city of Torquay could be constituted as two wards, the coastal GOR communities from Anglesea to Lorne would be another ward and the

**Electoral structure review - Surf Coast Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Chris Ryan - Aireys Inlet - 13 February 2023, 04:18 pm**

hinterland (including Winchelsea) another.

(4) The significant challenges for the GOR coastal communities suggest that they will become more dependent on and integrated with their immediate hinterland. My strong support would be for some of those communities, say up to Bambra and Deans Marsh to be included for representation in a coastal GOR ward.

(5) In regard to the number of councillors for each ward, I think three councillor wards would be workable.

I would like to request to speak in person as part of the second stage of the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Chris Ryan

[REDACTED]

Aireys Inlet.

Ph [REDACTED]

Chris Ryan, BSc, PhD | [REDACTED]

Professor Emeritus, Design and Sustainable Futures, RMIT University, Victoria, Australia | Co-director, Eco-Acupuncture International | Chair, Academic Board,
PSC.edu.au | www.GreatOceanRoadFutures.com | www.ecoinnovationlab.com | www.ecoacupuncture.com | www.visionsandpathways.com |
Short CV: <http://www.ecoacupuncture.com/crev>