

**Electoral structure review - Corangamite Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Corangamite Shire Council - Camperdown - 14 February 2023, 06:08 pm**

Council has endorsed this proposed ward structure by resolution at its meeting on 14 February 2023. Please refer to the attached written submission from Council's Chief Executive Officer and the included deputations made at the meeting of Council.



Tuesday 14 February, 2023

Ms Julie Eisenbiser
Chairperson
Electoral Representation Advisory Panel

Dear Ms Eisenbiser

Re: Corangamite Shire Council Preliminary Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the Corangamite Shire Council Electoral Structure Review.

Council believes that its current subdivided structure consisting of seven Councillors elected from four single member wards and one multi-member ward is effective and delivers fair and equitable representation. However, Council acknowledges that the current structure is now non-compliant as a result of the passage of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

As the status-quo can no longer be maintained Council is in favour of the least disruptive changes possible to ensure the continuation of a very well-functioning and broadly supported electoral structure.

Council does not believe that the number of Councillors needs to increase or decrease. The number of Councillors per municipality has traditionally been based on the number of electors in each Local Government Area. This is a sensible approach and as Corangamite's population has not dramatically changed since the 2015 review a change in the number of elected representatives would be unnecessary. Additionally, the current arrangement of seven elected representatives is providing for good governance and results in an appropriate workload for each Councillor.

It is Council's view that a uniform multi-member ward is not a realistic option for the Corangamite Shire given our population distribution and odd number of Councillors. This leaves an unsubdivided structure and seven single member wards as the two most viable options.

While Council does acknowledge that there are benefits to an unsubdivided structure, we are strongly in favour of the retention of a wards-based system.

Corangamite is fairly unique in its level of diversity across the entirety of the Shire and this is hard to capture and ensure representation of without a ward-based system. This diversity exists across numerous measures. There is our topography, with plains in the north, volcanic cones in the centre, and hilly country in the south.



There is diversity of industry, with dairy farming in the south, sheep and cattle grazing in the north, and tourism along our southern coastal border. There is economic and age diversity, with Camperdown, Terang, and the Rural North being older and more disadvantaged on average than the southern parts of the Shire.

This lends itself very well to a ward system as our community is made up of very distinct and logical communities of common interest that are easy to define and largely centre around towns who then act as service centres for their surrounding areas. A ward system ensures that all our unique and diverse communities are adequately represented by removing the risk of smaller and more remote communities not having a Councillor who represents them. An unsubdivided municipality is a better option for councils who are more uniform in their industry, topography, and demography in our opinion.

Accompanying this written submission is a proposed single member ward structure that divides the Central Ward into three wards and makes some other minor changes to the existing four single member wards.

This structure creates a Terang-Noorat based ward (called West Ward) and splits the rest of the Central Ward into an east and west Camperdown and surrounds wards (called East-Central Ward and West-Central Ward respectively).

The West Ward follows the Mount Emu creek in the east, the Princes Highway and Bend Road in the south, and Mackinnons Bridge and Terang-Mortlake Roads in the North. These are natural boundaries that keep Terang and Noorat in the same ward. This is crucial as they make up a single community of interest because of their strong community links and geographic closeness.

The East-Central and West-Central ward split Camperdown along the Camperdown-Cobden Road into Camperdown and then along the Princes Highway. This provides very logical and easy to understand natural boundaries and splits Camperdown's population into roughly even halves. The northern part of the central boundary follows the Darlington-Camperdown Rd to the North Ward and Mount Emu Creek.

While Council acknowledges that splitting the residents of Camperdown between wards is not strictly ideal, doing it in this way effectively gives Camperdown two wards with its electors split evenly, and also provides for a roughly even geographic split between the surrounding parts of the two wards. This means that residents on rural and farming properties are also evenly spread between the two wards.

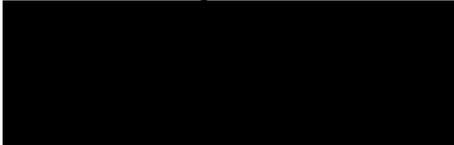
Some other minor changes include shifting the boundary between the South-West and South-Central wards from Cross Forest Road to Forest Park Road. This moves the Cobden Airport and other key Cobden community assets into the same ward as the town of Cobden. There are also small changes to the northern borders of the



Coastal and South-Central wards to follow more natural boundaries.

Council also received multiple written deputations when considering its submission at a special Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14 February 2023 to consider Councils formal position on this submission. These also called for the retention of a ward system and have been attached separately.

Sincerely



Michael Tudball
Chief Executive Officer
Corangamite Shire Council