



*Please Quote Reference:
Enquiries:*

28 February 2023

Electoral Representative Advisory Panel
C/O Victorian Electoral Commission
Via Email - CentralGoldfields.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Julie Eisenbise

I refer to the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2023–24 electoral structure review of Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) to meet the governance requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

Central Goldfields Shire Council provides a joint submission which covers off on the key components the panel is seeking to review during stage one.

Number of Councillors

The number of councillors within CGSC currently sits at seven and when evenly distributed amongst the number of eligible voters in the municipality facilitates between 1500 and 1700 voters per councillor. This number is consistent with many other small rural councils and facilitates sustainable representation of the diverse and growing communities within the shire. Retention of the current number of councillors that are already in place also facilitates easy distribution of voters when subdivided into wards. Taking this into consideration it is recommended the number of councillors is retained at the existing number of seven.

Electoral Structure

CGSC has a diverse community with varying needs across the entire municipality. The varying nature of the municipality which includes a large district town, smaller rural townships and farming communities located between, requires diverse representation. The differing social economic circumstances within these varying localities, also necessitates the need for diverse representation.

Taking this into account the implementation of a subdivided council into wards with one councillor in each, facilitates representation amongst the diverse needs of the entire municipality. This approach also facilitates greater local access to councillors and reduces the likelihood one particular point of view or sectional interest dominates the Council plan and agenda.

Without t a subdivided structure, the current dominant population level and anticipated growth of the large district town of Maryborough could lead to interests of surrounding communities becoming ignored due to uneven representation.

The introduction of a subdivided structure may also potentially avoid large ballot papers at municipal elections seeking to reduce confusion for voters and reduce likelihood of informal or nil voting.

Ward Boundaries

Within CGSC the representation across councillors is fairly evenly distributed, with the Tullaroop ward having the highest deviation of +9.8%. The most appropriate approach to implement a subdivided ward structure with one councillor in each, that achieves fair representation is detailed below:

- Split the existing Maryborough ward into four distinct new wards and implement minor boundary shifts if required to achieve even distribution of voters between 1500 and 1700 voters for these new wards.
- Slightly realign the ward boundaries for existing ward of Tullaroop, particularly around the growth area to the north of Maryborough to facilitate even voter distribution.
- Move the Mount Glasgow locality from the Tullaroop ward into the existing Paddys Ranges ward to even voter distribution across these wards.
- Move Timor and Red Lion into Paddys' Ranges ward; Move Simpsons Rd & Dooley's Rd, into a Maryborough Ward; (western boundary is Slaughter Rd Track) to improved connection between communities of interest.
- This approach reduces the number of proposed changes within CGSC, whilst limiting the disruption and impact to the local community and delivering the requirements of the Act.

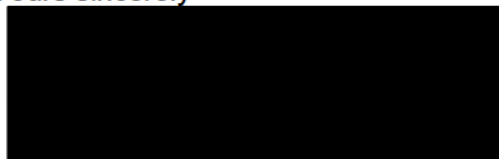
Ward Names

To facilitate the changes required under the Act, whilst limiting disruption to the community, retention of existing ward names is the most appropriate outcome. Utilising existing ward names of Flynn, Tullaroop, Paddys Ranges and then adding compass directions of North, South, East and West to the four new Maryborough wards achieves this outcome.

Should the panel seek to deviate from this approach it should be aware of the local history across the municipality and take this into consideration when putting forward ward names.

Council thanks you for the opportunity to submit to the 2023–24 electoral structure review of CGSC and should you like to discuss this submission in further detail please contact me on [REDACTED] or our Chief Executive Officer, Lucy Roffey on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Grace La Vella
MAYOR, CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE