

**Electoral structure review - Moorabool Shire Council - Response Submission**  
**Katherine Toom - Ballan - 19 April 2023, 03:32 pm**

Only the model of Councillors by ward will provide ratepayers outside of Bacchus Marsh with any equity in the decision making process. We must have representation by geography as we are a different demographic with highly varied needs. If we have no populous representation, then there is no incentive for improvement or future investment.

Many in the western region of the Shire are more closely aligned with Ballarat than Bacchus Marsh and therefore have a very different experience to those in Bacchus Marsh who are more closely aligned with Melton and the western suburbs of Melbourne. Employment opportunities, health services and secondary and tertiary education links mean that many from Ballan and westwards preference Ballarat for essential services and never travel east unless going to the city or visiting metropolitan Melbourne for recreational purposes.

I fear that if regional areas west of Bacchus Marsh have no direct representation in Council, we risk being the dumping ground or overlooked poor neighbour to the suburban sprawl that Bacchus Marsh has become. Nature conservation and resource management for agriculture are other matters so meaningful to the west of the Shire, yet likely to be overlooked or under-weighted in decision making if we are to become Bacchus Marsh centric as proposed in model 1.

Residents in the west are already feeling the frustrations of being in secure Labour seats at state and federal government such as the proposed dumping of toxic soil from metro infrastructure projects and we are currently fighting the imposition of giant overhead powerlines as part of the Western Transmission link, which will benefit those in the city. Similarly at a council level, how can residents outside of Bacchus Marsh compete with the interests of the majority of ratepayers who reside in the BM township, and how can we ensure our voices are heard unless we have representatives from our local communities sitting at the table to demand our fair share of the rates pie.