

From: Mayor Laura Binks [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 12 April 2023 1:16 PM
To: Strathbogie ERAP Submissions 2023
Cc: Dawn Bray - Director People & Governance; Julie Salomon - Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Strathbogie Shire Council Submission
Attachments: 20230412_SSC_VEC_Submission.pdf

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OFFICIAL

Hello Tania,

Thanks for accepting my submission via email as I was unable to use the online submission tool.

As discussed with you on the phone, this is a submission from Strathbogie Shire Council as was adopted at our Extraordinary Council Meeting of Tuesday 11th April 2023.

You can watch the meeting here

<https://www.youtube.com/live/-sLMXbE734o?feature=share>

The relevant item begins at 1:28:50

ATTACHMENT 1: SUBMISSION

The seven (7) Councillors of the Strathbogie Shire thank the Electoral Representation Review Panel for their work on their Preliminary Report.

Council, at an Extra Ordinary Meeting held on 11 April 2023, resolved that we respectfully ask the Panel to reconsider their dismissal of a representation model that consists of 7 wards, each with 1 councillor when making your final recommendation final recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

We believe that a model of 7 wards each with 1 councillor not only satisfies the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 in relation to electoral structures but also:

- ***Provides for an odd number of councillors, thereby minimising the need for the Mayor to use a casting vote to decide on matters.***

The need for the Mayor or the Chair of a meeting to use a casting vote to break a deadlock is a greater possibility when there is an even number of councillors.

As a Council, we believe that the use of a casting vote is undemocratic and also places a significant amount of pressure on the Mayor/Chair, which may lead to division in the Council over time.

Further, the use of a casting vote, if conventions are applied to maintain the status quo, may lead to a stalemate or a failure to make efficient and effective decisions on key strategic matters.

We consider both to be poor outcomes for our community.

- ***Ensures all communities of interest have a voice in their elected council and that the potential dominance of candidates from the larger townships is overcome.***

As Councillors, we are very concerned that the three models outlined in the Preliminary Report do not represent the best representational outcomes for our varied communities of interest across our large shire.

We believe that the Panel has already demonstrated that a seven ward structure is feasible in terms of the even distribution of voters per ward (within parameters set by the Victorian Electoral Commission).

We do not accept the Panel's comments on page 16 of the Preliminary Report that the proposed boundaries represent functional communities of interest – none of the models provide an optimal outcome in this respect.

Our intimate knowledge of our shire and our community has led us to consider that the 7 ward, 1 councillor structure is the best way in which our varied and individual communities, all with their own aspirations and flavour, can be represented.

This model ensures that the elected council is comprised of representatives from across the shire, not from the main townships, as is the real threat of an unsubdivided council or a municipality split into half.

We thank the Panel for considering our views and wish to request an opportunity for our Mayor, Laura Binks, to make a verbal representation to the public hearing session on 19 April.