

**Electoral structure review - Buloke Shire Council - Preliminary Submission
Bernadette Hogan - Birchip - 15 February 2023, 02:05 am**

The Buloke Shire is a geographically large shire comprising 5 main towns and 5 smaller towns with over 70% of its rate income coming from the farming sector. The shire is less populated in the Northern regions with larger farms and a warmer, drier natural environment with Lake Tyrell a popular natural tourist attraction for the area. The southern parts of the Shire have higher rainfall, heavier soils, smaller farms, larger non-agricultural town populations and more economic development. The current 3 ward subdivided model has served the Shire well and in particular ensures that there is always representation in the northern area. An unsubdivided Shire would in all likelihood see representation concentrated in the southern towns of the Shire which could result in less advocacy for issues in the northern areas and the resultant uneven distribution of Council resources.

The three-ward subdivided map which I have proposed gives a more even population spread and a better linking of towns and populations with common industries and demographics. The reduction in Councilors from 7 to 6 (2 in each ward) and only a minimal adjustment to ward boundaries i.e moving Birchip back into the Mallee Ward would, I believe, be well received by the majority of the Shire population. An even number of councilors would provide a better balance of power across the Shire.