



Victorian Electoral Commission – Review of Electoral Structure: City of Greater Geelong

The Portarlington Community Association is one of a number of Bellarine Peninsula community associations that have a preference for retention of multi-councillor wards. This remains the priority of the Portarlington Community Association as we believe that this structure has provided a better quality of representation than the single ward structure that existed prior to 2017.

Nonetheless, we recognise that VEC has an obligation to prepare draft boundaries based on single member constituencies stipulated in Local Government Act as it currently stands. We also recognise difficulty of that task - especially having regard to maintenance of less than 10% voter roll variations.

We believe there are shortcomings in each of the three models proposed in the Preliminary Report- particularly so far as the Bellarine is concerned. Some models divide very small communities, such as Indented Head and St Leonards, and Model 3 divides Portarlington.

Of the three, the PCA believes Model 1 is the least problematic if we were to judge by Portarlington specifically. However some alteration is needed to maintain a community of interest on the North Bellarine.

The smaller more established coastal settlements of Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards have a number of similarities including population size and age demographics. All are holiday destinations as well as serving resident populations. They share concern about local government issues such as provision of paved streets and footpaths and social infrastructure. This community of interest is longstanding - and we believe the communities would be better served by having a common elected representative.

Having regard to the need to maintain the under 10% variation, we accept that the logical inclusion of Indented Head and St Leonards in the so-named Grassy Point Ward must mean that there would need to be a corresponding excision from it.

The PCA acknowledges that the townships of Drysdale-Clifton Springs-Curlewis form a contiguous area, and that the community association of that area is reluctant to consider dividing it, for obvious reasons which the PCA appreciates. However there is some logic in considering the characteristics of the new Curlewis development and the community of interest that residents might share with other similar new or relatively new housing areas.

The Curlewis residential development is a relatively recently established dormitory suburb that has a younger population and different local government priorities to the older established North Bellarine coastal townships including Drysdale and Clifton Springs - it is a designated growth area in the City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy whereas Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards are not.

It is important to note that the area badged as being "Curlewis" within the "Moolap Ward" on the VEC Model 1 map is largely farmland and a golf course - the actual Curlewis residential subdivision and retail complex is to the east of it and in the "Grassy Point Ward".

Thank you for considering this submission.

Geoff Fary - President
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