

Electoral Representation Review - East Gippsland Shire Council - Preliminary Submission  
Anthony Meade - Bairnsdale - 12 March 2019

I wish to provide a submission to the Victorian Electoral Commission regarding the Shire of East Gippsland electoral structure.

It is my firm belief that the East Gippsland Shire should remain an un-subdivided electorate. I believe that this structure gives the electors the best opportunity to select councillors of a high calibre from the field of candidates. I also believe that the number of councillors should be raised from 9 to 12.

My reasoning for these convictions are that the ability for candidates to stand in a "General Election" that encompasses the entire Shire gives the option for the electors to select a candidate who may not be co-located in the same area. This would not be the case in a sub-divided electorate. This greater choice will I believe give a better result in selecting councillors who are both respected and able to fulfill there duties. There are times when a small area may well provide several candidates of high quality one of whom may not be elected in the ward system.

My reasoning for an increase in numbers are that firstly by increasing the number of councillors as in the instance quoted above where two councillors are elected from a smaller area will not skew the influence of this area to such a large degree, that is 2/12ths of the positions rather than 2/9ths being held by those councillors. Second, it is also my belief that the number of councillors to represent our Shire has always been too low since amalgamation. Prior to amalgamation the 5 shires had 12 councillors each thus a total of 60. The reduction the reduction to 6 at amalgamation then later 9 was too severe. An increase to 12 will give the opportunity for councillors with a wider range of opinions and ideas, representing more areas of the Shire. With 12 it is quite conceivable that a small area such as Mallacoota may be able to field a successful candidate.

A larger unsubdivided council will I believe give the best mix of representation of the community both as a whole and of the individual areas. More councillors will give more choice and more quality to our representation.

I would argue that a ward system will bring into play the fact that "one vote, one value" will not be fully achieved as the mechanism of subdividing regions and altering boundaries to account for population change may well skew the electorates to the end of the +/- 10% range giving a possible 20% variance between any two wards. This is hardly one vote, one value.

Thank you for receiving my submission.

Anthony Meade

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