



Objection 294

Pyrenees Shire Council

2 pages

OBJECTION to the PROPOSED ELECTORAL BONDARIES contained in the 2018 PROPOSED REDISTRIBUTION OF VICTORIA INTO ELECTORAL DIVISIONS report.

The Pyrenees Shire Council makes this objection to the boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions.

In summary, Council recommends that the entire area comprising the Pyrenees Shire be retained in the electoral division of Wannon.

The reasons for retaining all of Pyrenees in Wannon are as follows:

1 Community of Interest

The people of Avoca and the northern parts of the Pyrenees associate with the Pyrenees Shire and with the Pyrenees Shire Council, and the interests of these communities are more frequently to the south than to the north. The main administrative office of the shire is in Beaufort and there is regular communication and travel between Beaufort and Avoca. The communities of Avoca and the northern part of the Pyrenees are somewhat removed from the Mallee division office of Mildura being a four hour drive away.

The economic interest of the area is more to the south and east, rather than to the North West. Produce grown in the region is predominately transported south and east. Health and education for these communities is predominantly sought to the south and east. Communities are more likely to travel south and east for regional shopping, recreation and entertainment and seldom would communities travel North West.

2 Means of Communication and Travel within the electorate

Retaining the whole of the shire within one electorate enables smoother communication between Council, the MP and the MP's office, and between Council and the communities of the Pyrenees in relation to federal matters.

Retaining communication with a single MP and a single office assists in consistent communication and ongoing relationships to be established over time.

Splitting the shire into two electoral divisions on the other hand requires additional effort on Council's part to maintain effective relationships and duplication when advocating on behalf of the community.

Advocacy is an important role of Council, and this advocacy also assists federal MPs to better understand the priorities and issues of the LGAs and their communities.

3 The Physical features and area of the proposed electoral division

The northern area of the Pyrenees Shire contains a large part of the Pyrenees wine region important to the regional economy. Significantly the visitor economy market is largely from the population centres of Ballarat and Melbourne. Pyrenees Shire Council is a member of Regional Tourism Organisation, Visit Ballarat which provides marketing to visitors to the region.

The northern part of the Pyrenees shire (along with the balance of the Pyrenees Shire) forms part of several regional areas of interest including the Central Highlands Regional Partnership, Central Highlands Councils Victoria, and Visit Ballarat RTO. The whole of the Pyrenees shire is contained in the Grampians DELWP, and EM region, in the Western CFA region and the South West weather district and TFB area.

4 The boundaries of existing electoral divisions

The existing electoral divisional boundaries have all of Pyrenees within the electoral division of Wannon, and retaining the status quo would avoid confusion and provide consistent messaging for our communities.

What other changes may be needed?

Council appreciates that retaining 1,947 electors within Wannon may necessitate other boundary changes to be made.

Some options to consider include:

Retain all of Pyrenees in Wannon, and retain all of Northern Grampians in Mallee (status quo) resulting in the number of projected electors in Wannon being 108,994 (within the desirable range).

This option would require some small adjustment elsewhere to bring the total electors in Mallee to be within the desirable range.

Alternatively this option could also be expanded to allow for all (or the majority) of Central Goldfields to be retained in Wannon, with all of Golden Plains including Smythes Creek and a slightly greater portion of Colac Otway being retained in Corangamite (Cox).

Conclusion

While these other changes are a matter for the Committee to consider, the primary purpose of this submission is to object to the Pyrenees Shire area being split between the electoral divisions of Wannon and Mallee, and to seek that the entire Shire area be retained in Wannon.

Council appreciates the opportunity to lodge this objection to the proposed distribution of electoral divisions, and would be happy to clarify or expand on any matter contained in this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Nolan

Chief Executive Officer

Pyrenees Shire Council