



REVIEW OF WARDS AND REPRESENTATION

November 2022



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SHIRE OF AUGUSTA MARGARET RIVER
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA 23 NOVEMBER 2022

Review of Wards and Representation for the Shire of Augusta Margaret River

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Appendix 1 – Detailed submissions made by members of the public

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BACKGROUND

Conway Highbury were engaged by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to assist with undertaking a review of wards and representation under the *Local Government Act 1995*.

This report summarises the process and possible outcomes for the Shire.

A review of wards and representation was last undertaken by the Shire in 2016/17 which resulted in the current structure of 7 councillors elected from across the district. The Shire has no wards and the Shire President is elected from and by the councillors.

At its meeting held on 27 July 2022 Council resolved to:

1. *Initiate a review of the Shire's wards and representation system in accordance with clause 6(2) of Schedule 2.2 of the Local Government Act 1995;*
2. *Give local public notice of its intention to carry out a review of wards and representation and invites submissions as required by clause 7(1) of Schedule 2.2; and*
3. *Endorses the discussion paper detailed in Attachment 1, for the purposes of community consultation.*

(Item 11.1.2 refers).

Notice of the review was given in advertisements and various publications by the Shire:

- For six weeks in the Augusta Margaret River Times public notices section;
- Shown on the Shire website for seven weeks;
- Shown/ advertised on the Shire Facebook page and in the Augusta and Margaret River community Facebook groups;
- Posters on official notice boards in the Augusta and Margaret River Shire Offices for seven weeks; and
- At the August Community Resource Centre.

A discussion paper containing background information and a number of options to assist with community input was made available via the Shire's website and from the Shire offices.

Public meetings were held in Augusta and Margaret River on 23 and 24 August respectively. Some 23 persons attended the meeting in Augusta, but none in Margaret River. The meeting was chaired by Chris Liversage from Conway Highbury who outlined the process, the possible options and fielded questions from attendees.

Submissions were able to be made online, in writing or by delivery to the Shire offices in Margaret River and Augusta. While the deadline closed on 28 September 2022, a small number of submissions were received after the deadline but were accepted and have been included.

A summary of the submissions received is made below and detailed comments were made by members of the public are shown in **Attachment 1**.

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STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Clause 6(2) of Schedule 2.2 of Local Government Act 1995 (the Act) provides that a local government that is not divided into wards may carry out reviews as to whether or not the district should be divided into wards, what the ward boundaries should be and the number of offices of councillor there should be for each ward.

As the Shire has no wards a review was not mandatory, but if council decides that wards are to be introduced then the process set out in the Act to establish them must be used.

Proposed changes to the Act by the State Government

In addition, s2.17 (2) of the Act currently provides if the method of filling the office of president is election by the council, the council is to consist of between 6 and 15 councillors.

However, in September 2022, during the process of the review the Minister for Local Government advised the Shire (and all other local governments who may be affected) that the State Government intends to amend the Act in early 2023 to the effect that:

- The number of councillors will be based on the population of the local government. In Augusta Margaret River's case, this will mean that the total number of elected members may be between 5 and 9 (including the President); and
- The President is to be directly elected by all electors from across the district.

It is likely that the legislation will be amended, and will come into effect at the ordinary council elections scheduled for October 2023. The Minister has further requested that local governments advise if they intend to use the existing provisions of the Act to move to the likely final configuration, or if it will be necessary to include the required changes in transitional provisions to the proposed amendments to the Act.

As such, depending on councils decision with respect to the review of wards and representation, no action may be necessary with respect to the number of councillors as the Shire presently falls within the range within the proposed legislation.

A change to the method of election of a Mayor or President from election from and by councillors can be by an Absolute Majority decision of a council under s2.11(2) of the Act:

2.11. Alternative methods of filling office of mayor or president

(1) ...

(2) *A local government may change* the method of filling the office of mayor or president used by the local government from the election by the council method to the election by the electors method.*

This is discussed later in this report.

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Criteria for establishing ward boundaries

When considering possible ward boundaries, clause 8 of Schedule 2.2 of the Act requires a council to assess options against the following factors:

- Community of interest;
- Physical and topographical features;
- Demographic trends;
- Economic factors; and
- The ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards.

This criteria, and how it applies to the Shire was canvassed in the report to council on 27 July 2022 and also included in the discussion paper used for the community consultation process.

In particular, the Local Government Advisory Board (LGAB) which assesses reviews of wards and representation undertaken by local governments and makes recommendations to the Minister for Local Government considers that the ratio of electors per councillor should be as even as possible, but will consider variations of up to plus or minus 10% of the average.

If satisfied that a review has properly taken these factors into consideration, the LGAB then makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to whether or not the proposal should be approved. The Minister may accept or reject the Board's recommendation.

Community Consultation and Advice

Clause 7 of Schedule 2.2 of the Act stipulates that before conducting the review, a local government is to give local public notice that a review is to be carried out and that the notice must also advise that submissions may be made to the local government by a date at least 42 days from the date of the first notice (not including the day of the notice).

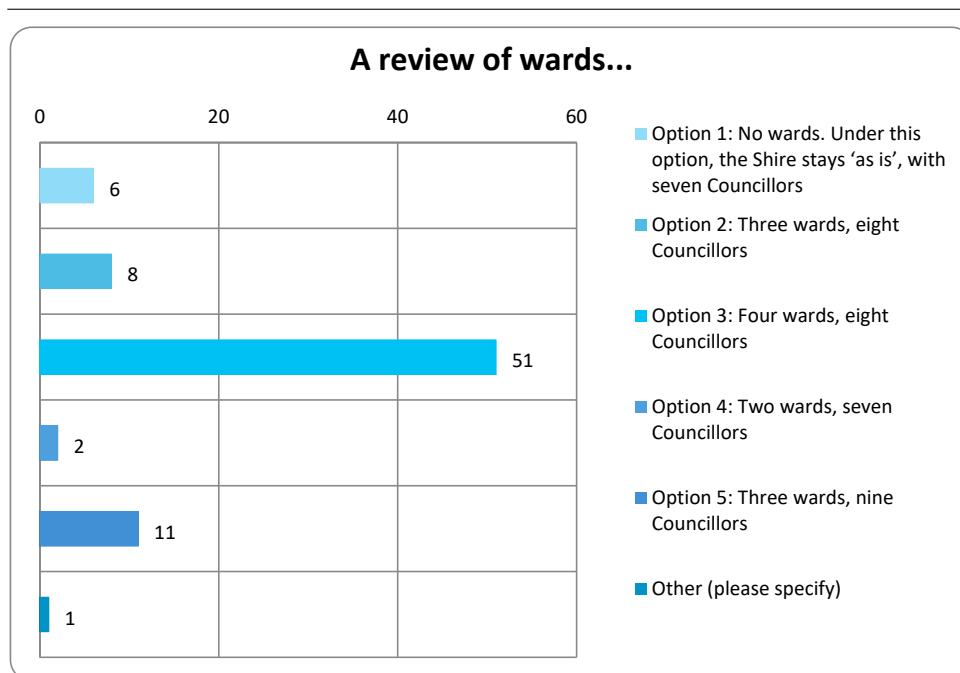
The LGAB also recommend that as part of this process local governments provide information to communities that might contain possible options and any associated information in terms of the criteria to establish ward boundaries. As noted above, a discussion paper was also adopted by council to assist with community consultation and input to the review.

The consultation period was scheduled to close on 28 September 2022 but held open for several days to allow members of the community who had indicated a desire to be heard make input. Some 78 comments were made via the Shire's website and online submission process, and four written submissions made.

In summary, the majority of submissions favoured Option 3 of the possible changes suggested in the discussion paper:

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A number of comments were also made which are included as Attachment 1.

A request was proposed at the public meeting held in Augusta to vary Option 3 of the discussion paper used for community consultation that the localities of Kudarup and Karridale be added to the possible Augusta ward, and increasing the number of councillors for that ward to two. This though results in ratio deviations well outside the parameters acceptable to the LGAB, and as such is highly unlikely to be approved:

Option 3 – Ward	No of electors	No of Councillors	Ratio of electors per Councillor	% Deviation from target ratio (max plus or minus 10%)
Augusta	1809	2	905	-29.7%
Central	1130	1	1130	-12.2%
Margaret River	6033	4	1508	17.2%
North	2611	2	1306	1.4%
Total/ average	11583	9	1287	

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DISCUSSION

Wards or no wards?

The question of representation and wards/ no wards is a matter for council in consultation with the community to decide. As listed in the discussion paper used for community consultation, the positives and negatives of wards vs no wards can be summarised as:

Advantages	Disadvantages
○ Elected members are elected by the whole community not just a section of it. ○ Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs would result broadening the views beyond the immediate concerns of those in a ward. ○ The smaller town sites and rural areas have the whole Council working for them. ○ Members of the community who want to approach an elected member can speak to any elected member. ○ Social networks and communities of interest are often spread across a local government and elected members can have an overview of these. ○ Elected members can use their specialty skills and knowledge for the benefit of the whole local government. ○ There is balanced representation with each elected member representing the whole community. ○ The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and administer. ○ Promotes the concept of a whole-of-district focus, with Councillors being elected by and concerned for the local government as a whole, rather than parochial interests. ○ Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of Councillors to approach with their concerns. ○ Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the council election. ○ Councillors can use their speciality skills	○ Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they don't have an affinity with any of the elected members. ○ Elected members living in a certain area may have a greater affinity and understanding of the issues specific to that area. ○ There is potential for an interest group to dominate the Council. ○ Elected members may feel overwhelmed by having to represent all electors and may not have the time or opportunity to understand and represent all the issues. ○ It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvass the whole local government area. ○ May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented or for others to dominate. ○ May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of Councillors. ○ Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters. ○ May lead to Councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the local government area. ○ May be difficult for voters to assess the performance of individual Councillors. ○ In some LGs it may be appropriate to have wards, for example where a local government might have 2 or more distinct population centres

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Advantages	Disadvantages
and knowledge for the benefit of the whole community. ○ Removes the need to periodically (re)define internal ward boundaries.	

Possible wards structure – four wards and eight councillors

If council decides to bring in a wards system, 'Option 3' outlined in the paper used for community consultation was favoured by a majority of submissions received.

In order to achieve a ratio of electors per councillor that within the deviation from the average that is acceptable it will also be necessary to increase the number of councillors to eight.

A summary of Option 3 option is:

Ward	No of electors*	No of Councillors**	Ratio of electors per Councillor	% Deviation from target ratio
Augusta	1516	1	1516	4.7%
Central	1423	1	1423	-1.7%
Margaret River	6033	4	1508	4.2%
North	2611	2	1306	-9.8%
Total	11583	8	1448	

*March 2022

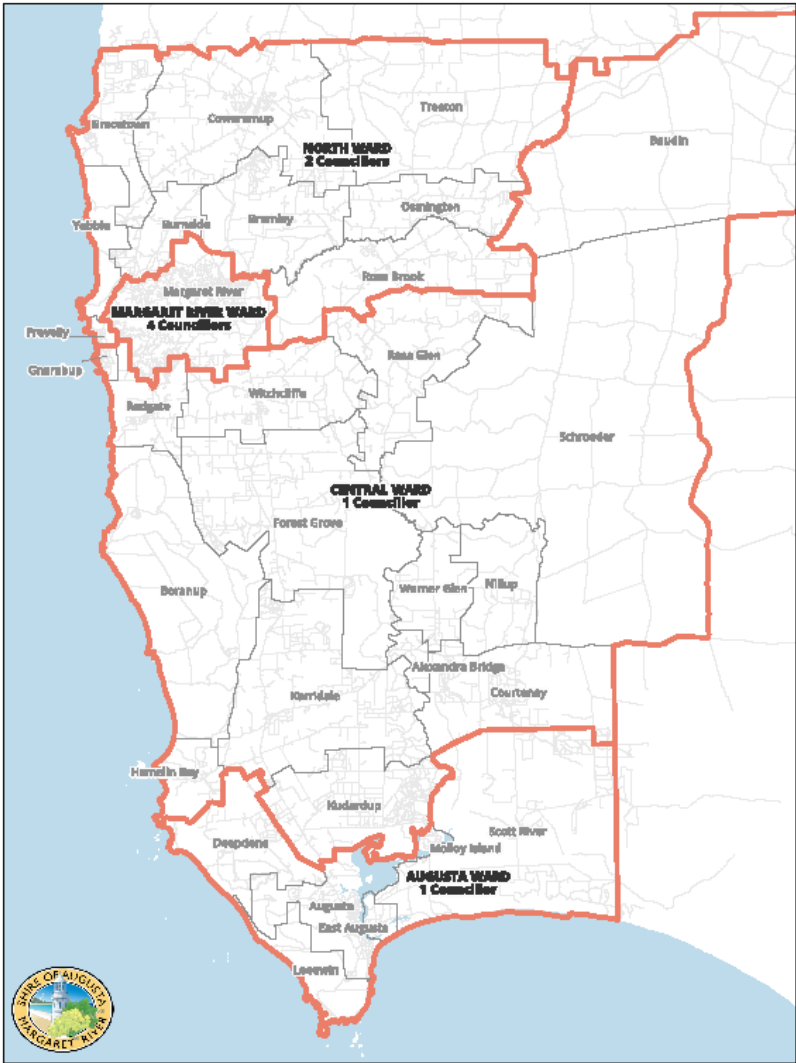
**If the Act is amended as proposed by the State Government a Shire President elected at large would also be added to the council, making a total of nine elected members.

A map of the possible wards under this Option is:

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Option 3 – Four Wards, Eight Councillors



In terms of the criteria to be applied under the Act when establishing wards:

Community of interest	Physical and topographic features	Demographic trends	Economic factors	Ratio of Councillors to electors
Communities of interest are grouped together to the extent	Areas of the district with similar features	There is capacity for growth in the proposed	Areas of agricultural, commercial and	Ratios of councillors to electors are

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Community of interest	Physical and topographic features	Demographic trends	Economic factors	Ratio of Councillors to electors
possible, albeit the communities of Gnarabup and Prevally have similar characteristics but have to be split between the proposed North and Central wards in order to achieve an acceptable ratio of electors per councillor.	are grouped together to the extent possible.	North ward.	industrial development are substantially within the same wards.	within the limits considered reasonable by the LGAB. Two of the proposed wards will have only one councillor and will vote only once every four years.

Option 3 complies with the proposed amendments to the Act under which a local government the size of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River may have a maximum of nine elected members including a Shire President elected at large.

If council were of a mind to introduce this Option, a possible resolution could be:

That Council requests the Local Government Advisory Board to recommend that an Order be made in accordance with Schedule 2.2(9) of the Local Government Act 1995 that at the ordinary council elections to be held in October 2023 a system of four wards and eight councillors detailed as Option 3 of the report of the CEO be implemented for the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.

Retain a 'no wards' system

Council could decide to retain the current 'no wards' system. Having undertaken a review, it is required to make a report in writing to the LGAB under Schedule 2.2(9) of the Act.

A possible Council resolution could therefore be:

That Council advises the Local Government Advisory Board that:

- 1. The Shire has completed a review of wards and representation in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 1995 and it be provided with copies of the resolutions of council regarding this matter and all supporting reports and documents; and*
- 2. No changes are proposed.*

Election of the Shire President

As noted above, the Minister for Local Government has advised of amendments likely to the Act to the effect that the method of election of the Shire President for local governments the size of Augusta Margaret River is to be from and by the electors, but has requested potentially affected local governments consider making changes ahead of the legislation.

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A council that wishes to change from the method of election of a Mayor or President by and from the members of council to election at large can do so by passing a resolution by an absolute majority under s2.11(2) of the Act, and which will come into effect at the next ordinary council elections.

This can be implemented regardless of what decision council makes with respect to wards. If council is of a mind to change the method of election of the Shire President from by and from the members of council to directly by and from the electors than a possible resolution could be:

That Council resolves to change the method of election of President under s2.11(2) of the Local Government Act 1995 to come into effect at the next ordinary council elections scheduled for October 2023.

(Absolute Majority required)

If council is of a mind to see what path the legislation proposed by the Minister might take, then it could simply do nothing.

Both of these outcomes would be in addition to any decision council might make about introducing wards or retaining the present system.

Observations

The system of representation and whether or not to introduce wards is one for council itself to decide.

The number of submissions from the community about this issue were not overly high (82 in total) in spite of the Shire undertaking a well developed consultation process. The majority of submissions made via the Shire's website and written submissions appeared to be from members of the community in the southern part of the Shire.

There were 23 members of the community at the public meeting held in Augusta but none at the meeting in Margaret River.

The members of the public who attended the meeting in Augusta were well informed and made insightful observations, including the need for someone from the area to actually nominate for council, which seems to have been problematic in the past.

There appears to be at least a perception of being under represented by the community from the southern part of the Shire. It was not entirely clear what the possible introduction of wards might do to assist, but having their own ward(s) may at least assist in overcoming this concern.

In addition, in the experience of the consultant assisting the Shire with the review, candidates seeking election to council *tend* to nominate for a vacancy in the ward where they live or own property even though they can nominate for any vacancy in any ward. It is emphasised that this is not a hard and fast rule, simply an observed tendency.

However, given the population distribution of the Shire, under Option 3 single councillor wards for the possible Augusta and Central Wards would be introduced. If the tendency of electors to

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nominate for a vacancy in 'their' ward does occur, Option 3 could have an unintended effect of reducing 'local' members for the southern part of the Shire when compared to a 'no wards' system even though a candidate could nominate for any vacancy in the district.

As noted above, this would also see an election in the proposed Augusta and Central wards once every four years given that they would be single member wards.

The State Government is proposing to amend the Act so that councils of local governments the size of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River are to be between 5 and 9 elected members including a Mayor or President, who is to be elected at large.

In addition, while the review does not indicate any overwhelming or compelling case for change, a way of increasing community representation may be to increase the number of councillors. This may have the effect of encouraging members of the community in the southern part of the Shire to seek election, is in accordance with the allowable range of elected members under the present and proposed changes to the Act, and reflects the growth of the Shire.

In conclusion (and again it is emphasised that this is a matter for the council of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to decide what is best for its community), a possible way forward could be to:

1. Retain the 'no wards' system; and
2. Resolve to change the method of election of President to 'at large'.

In future, council could also consider an increase in the number of councillors to eight, making a council of nine including the Shire President.

This could be used to encourage electors in the southern part of the Shire to nominate for council and assist to overcome any concerns about representation, while at the same time retaining the strengths of the present system of representation.

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Pretty disappointing to see all options bar 1 had Margaret river stacked with councillors. The farming and smaller communities need decent representation too - time to remember, it is not just all about Margaret river!!	I believe the community benefits from all councillors being informed on all the issues across the shire in a holistic way rather than being primarily representative of a wards concerns.	I think the ward system is a fairer and more equitable way for the community to be represented and Option 3 seems to be the best fit. A properly constructed ward system prevents particular interest groups dominating Council, provides easier access for rate payers to their elected representative, makes it easier for elected representatives to be in touch with local issues and ensures specific local issues are raised and debated in Council in a timely manner. While I understand the theory behind having no wards with elected members supposedly having a whole of Shire focus I have yet to see this work effectively. Proximity to electors and living within a particular community will always provide a closer and stronger connection, regardless of the best intentions of elected representatives themselves. A return to a Ward system is my strong preference. I am also looking forward to the proposed changes to the Act and having a chance to vote for our Shire President / Mayor. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
This is the only option that allows the substantial town of Augusta (including Molloy Island) meaningful recognition and representation. This region has its own identity, and its interests do not always align with Margaret River township.	Areas in the shire other than Margaret River need to be represented and represented fairly.	Compliments firstly to the staff for compiling a very comprehensive review paper. I am not sure where the push is coming for a review and possible return to wards, but I oppose it. Councillors under our current system are required to represent ALL electors and despite what may seem a lopsided representation (favouring the Cowaramup/northern side), they've done a good job. There is no need to increase the number of councillors to an even number (8) or a higher odd

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		number (9) as I believe this will add cost without much benefit. I am squarely in favour of the general electorate determining the president in order to eliminate the jockeying for position that currently occurs and to use that position as a 'general manager' of good governance and a casting vote in times of a voting tie. It seems that it is being forgotten that good representation comes from having good candidates and the southern end of the Shire has often struggled to find ANY candidate, let alone a good one, therefore imposing wards will not necessarily improve that situation. I'm also a bit bewildered at the massive area of 'central' needing to be represented by the same councillor as the southern end. My previous point covers this as well. Overall, any suggestion to return to wards clearly favours Margaret River townsite and I can't imagine that electors outside the townsite would be in favour of that concentration. In summary, I say let the Mayor be elected by the general population and remain a ward-less Shire with 7 councillors.
I really support wards as a fairer more transparent way to create a better equality between the region	We feel that Augusta needs it's own identity and more done for it than what we are getting at the moment. Maybe this will help.	For a diverse shire, a local voice is important - encouraging community engagement and community satisfaction with the shire will encourage locals from each ward to step forward and nominate. The Shire is losing focus on a lot of grass roots community issues, and local ward representation may help to address that.
Smaller towns and communities must be represented or they can quickly lose their character due to low quality development projects and lack of maintenance.	4 wards is much more sensible as it gives each area councillors that represent the people of those areas	Karridale and Kudardup should be included in Augusta and have an extra councillor.

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Equal numbers elected in each ward.	It is important that there is balanced representation for the population of Augusta, Including Molloy Island. Currently there are multiple Councillors from Cowaramup which does not appear to be representative of the overall shire	Lets re-invent the wheel again...
The ward system is an unnecessary administrative burden that divides the shire.	I believe Kudardup and Karridale should be incorporated into the Augusta ward as they are more aligned with that development type than the farming area of Schroder etc. Scott River could be moved into the central ward as it is a majority farming area. I do not think it is in the interest of Kudardup to potentially have a representative based in Baldwin for example or vice versa. It would be no better than the current system. I do support the ward system and understand the need to balance the number of electors per councillor but I think the Margaret River ward could manage with one less councillor and that councillor position could go to better covering the southern wards. The central ward spans a vast area with multiple development and demographic variations.	I would like to Augusta represented!
No.	Option 3 should have at least 2 counsellors for the rural component as very large and a diverse region, not just 1 town with the 1 issue. Would be fairer to have 2 per ward.	Option 5 would be our 2nd choice
Augusta and surrounds needs better representation.	I believe Councillors should be representing the shire and community as a whole - we utilise many of the services and facilities that would lie outside of our proposed ward and have an interest in what's being decided in Augusta, Hamelin Bay, Gracetown, Gnarabup etc. (as I imagine so do many others)	The boundary for the Augusta Ward needs to include Karridale, Kudardup & Hamelin Bay irrespective of the number of electors as the majority of electors would have far more common issues / demographics with Augusta than Witchcliffe & the Central Ward - the boundaries proposed seem to be number based rather than

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	Concern the ward system encourages an Us Vs Them mentality rather than whole of shire approach. I believe with the development and implementation of robust engagement strategies all residents, no matter where they reside, should feel that they have had an opportunity to voice their view, feel represented and understand the decision making process around certain matters. Thanks for listening 🙌	demographics What was the previous Ward structure & what was the logic behind the change - as a Augusta Resident I definetley feel under represented with current no Ward structure
The "Advantages" as listed in the review says it all.	It has been a long held view that the smaller communities are constantly outvoted by the pure numbers of the Margaret River townsite. Wards give the smaller communities the opportunity to have an elected representative from and for their area. This was proven by the loss of southern councillors' over the following elections when the wards were removed. Its about time they had the opportunity for decent representation, especially with the current obvious imbalance of funding.	Need this option to have better representation for Augusta.
whilst the current system is meant to have counsellors across & representing all of AMRS residents - I think this is unrealistic & counsellors who live and work alongside residents gain a richer perspective - Augusta needs a counsellor at this end for the shire. Past counsellor Pauline engaged a lot and David Binks has reached out, others?	About time there was more understanding of the needs of the areas within the shire and not just focusing on Margaret River.	Having been a member of the previous council when wards were abolished I have substantial knowledge as to why it occurred and would be supportive of a return to the wards system. It would give a more balanced representation to the electors of the Shire. The electors in the south of the Shire have been underrepresented and in turn financially neglected for the last three years
I am aware that the last time the Council sought submissions that it ignored the majority of residents who wished to retain the ward system	Being a resident of Augusta for 27 years, the last 15 years has seen nothing done by the Shire to captivate Tourist. Skippy Rock Road is a disgrace	If the Councillors on the Augusta Margaret River Shire had had any integratory, we would have still been using the ward system and would not have

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and instead decided to eliminate the ward system. Whilst this may have assisted certain councillors retain their seats at the following elections, it disenfranchised from local representation those who did not live in Margaret River central area where the majority of voters reside. The decision to eliminate wards would be similar to the state government allowing the election of members of the Lower House by the total number of votes received from throughout Western Australia. If this occurred, the Perth central population would have the majority of votes and there would be no regional electorate representation. Accordingly, I am pleased that the Council has sought submissions once again and I hope that it does not vote against the reintroduction of the ward system. Having considered the various options, I am of the opinion that Option 3 of four wards and eight councillors is the most equitable and would be more representative for all electors.	and should have been bituminised years ago as so many other roads to attractions all over the State have been. This Shire is all for Margaret River and is spending OUR rates on the so called improvements on that town. Augusta has been left out of having a say since the 'Ward system was changed .Augusta has no land available for more housing, so that means the Shire is missing out on getting more rates etc. We are not even RV friendly. My husband and I have just travelled 5,000 kilometres anti every town had a dump point also many parking areas also had a dump point. I have not been impressed by the Augusta Margaret River Shires spending of huge amounts of money for Margaret River and not a thing for Augusta. We need representation of a Councillor for Augusta. The best option is Option 3 with 4 'Ward as each area is more suited and allows for councillor numbers to be altered with growth of any section. Augusta can then have a Councillor to have a say for Augusta.	had to do this submission. The submissions received by the Shire before the change to all council voting was a 76% favouring staying with the ward system. Changing to the all-council voting has meant that Margaret River town area can always control the vote on council often to the detriment of the rest of the shire. The change to all-council voting has meant that Augusta can never under this system ever elect a councillor on to the Shire Council as a separate vote is given to every elector for every vacant councillor spot so the area with the most votes controls who is elected in every councillor's election. The only way that an all- council election can be fair and equitable for whole of shire voters is for each voter to only have one vote total and the councillors would then be drawn from all over the shire. The Augusta Margaret River Shire with Margaret River domination has always held Augusta back from developing and in 1997 and 2003 Augusta applied to form a separate Shire of Augusta so we could develop as we should, each time we were only refused our shire on the grounds that Margaret River could not survive as a shire without Augusta, I do not now believe this to be the case and maybe it is time to again try for our Shire of Augusta. I have for the last 20 years sent into the Shire CEO's a list of items needed for Augusta and very few items have eventuated, we are still waiting for caravan parking adjacent to the shops and a dump point, available housing blocks in Augusta are still non-existent as the shire has always by veto's and conditions stopped any housing development, when will the shire

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	support Augusta?
We have owned our property since 2004 and have had strong connections with the area since 1990. We are very strongly of the opinion that Option 3 – Four Wards, eight Councillors should be adopted. The current ‘No Ward’ system works to disenfranchise ratepayers and residents who are located outside the Margaret River township, its suburbs and its immediate surrounds. DIFFERENCES IN MAKE-UP OF AMR SHIRE The Shire is made up of a number of distinctly different parts, separated both in their nature and geographically. The most prescient differences are characterised by stark variations in • Population density • Extent and density of built infrastructure • Nature of built infrastructure • Prevalent types of economic activity • Types of services and public infrastructure required • Nature of community interests. CURRENT ARRANGEMENT - NO WARDS The current arrangement of having no wards does not provide equitable and effective representation to those significant parts of the AMR community located outside the immediate vicinity of the Margaret River (MR) town and its suburbs. On a statistical probability analysis alone, it is clear that a predominance of candidates at Local Government (LG) elections will be from people living in the Margaret River town precincts. Indeed this has been the history since the abolition of the ward system following the 2016/17 review. Voters at LG elections have an understandably vested interest in supporting candidates who reside in their own vicinity because those are the candidates who will be more aware of the local issues and local needs that are the voter’s own issues and interests. Consistent with this voting predisposition of electors in the densely populated MR precincts and based on the overall geographic spread of voters, candidates from outlying areas will not be as strongly supported, and so less likely to be elected. It then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that there will be progressively even fewer nominations from outside the MR enclave, given their diminished chances of election. This too has been the history of results and trends since the 2016/17 review. EFFECTIVELY EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION The ‘No Ward’ system is best suited to a local government area which is completely homogenous in all aspects of its make-up and which is geographically compact. Under this scenario, the interests, needs and issues are more likely to be similar in all parts of the LG area and so all Councillors will be aware of the same matters and likely to act equitably for all ratepayers and residents. In the case of AMR, although in theory all Councillors should act in the fair and balanced interests of the whole Shire and indeed that may be their intention, it is inevitable that each Councillor will be more acutely aware of the issues in their immediate area than of those in distant places. This immediate awareness applies to economic, social, infrastructure and environmental issues, all of which are significantly different in various parts of the Shire. The Shire is not homogenous in its make-up. In the AMR Shire, distances across the Shire are large. Even if they have been made aware of an issue, it is unlikely that Councillors will have personal knowledge of say infrastructure requirements in Augusta if they live in MR. Personal experience and knowledge of a situation	

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is much more likely to result in an active response than a disconnected or transient awareness of it.

Although this is not about our own particular situation *per se*, by way of example, how many Councillors have visited Molloy Island in the last 5 years to see the general condition of the roads and drainage issues and to act on them? Nowhere else in the Shire have we seen roads in a similarly decrepit state.

BENEFITS OF OPTION 3 – Four Wards, 8 Councillors

Option 3 will serve the entirety of AMR to much greater effect and benefit than all the other options and most certainly much more so than the present 'no ward' system. The proposed four wards each contain an area whose make-up within itself is largely homogenous. The geographical division into four Wards also reduces the distances and areas for which the relevant Councillors will be most directly responsible.

The eight Councillors will all still have an equal input to decisions on every matter before Council, including the critical ones of financial budgeting, planning and general policy, and they will still all have equal input to those more local matters brought to the table by Ward Councillors.

However Councillors for each Ward will be better placed to be aware of and to bring to Council, matters affecting their own Ward more particularly. They will also be more closely attuned to the overriding opinion within their ward on matters before Council and vote accordingly, thereby providing democratic representation for their ward constituents.

CONCLUSION AND PREFERENCE

Option 3 – Four Wards, eight Councillors will restore equal franchise to all ratepayers and residents of the AMR Shire without detracting from the benefits of the present system.

Thus we are very strongly in favour of adoption of **Option 3 – Four Wards, eight Councillors**. We respectfully ask that our submissions be carefully considered and that **Option 3 – Four Wards, eight Councillors** be adopted.