Amalgamation statistics don't tell the whole story

Re: "Amalgamation rejection ignores citizens' wishes," letter, Aug. 27.

Mark Twain is often given credit for saying "there are lies, damned lies and statistics." I can think of nothing more appropriate than to throw into the mix on the often-misquoted numbers related to the interest in the local area for wanting amalgamation.

Let's be clear — only eight municipalities had a form of referendum question on the last municipal ballot, of which seven had a majority of those who voted in favour.

Across the region, only an average of about 35 per cent of the eligible voters voted. For the sake of discussion, let us assume that the municipalities who held referendums represented 75 per cent of the total voters in the region. Of those who voted, about 75 per cent of them were in favour of a study.

Now let's do the math: Multiply the 75 per cent the population by the 75 per cent in favour, multiplied by the 35 per cent who actually voted and my math indicates that would equal roughly 19 per cent of the total eligible voters actually voted for a study.

To my relatively simple mind, that hardly indicates that 75 per cent of the population is in favour of amalgamation.

Can we please start to use statistics responsibly?

Stephen Sawyer

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