

# Local Council Representation Review

Final Report



**BANYULE CITY  
COUNCIL**

**October 2019**

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## Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.

This recommendation is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

## Executive summary

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third council general election.

The purpose of an electoral representation review is to recommend an electoral structure that provides 'fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.'<sup>1</sup> The matters considered by a review are:

- the number of councillors
- the electoral structure of the council (whether the council should be unsubdivided or divided into wards and, if subdivided, the details of the ward boundaries and the number of councillors per ward).

The VEC conducts all reviews based on three main principles:

1. taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors
2. if subdivided, ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council
3. ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

### Current electoral structure

Banyule City Council currently comprises seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. More information on Banyule City Council and the current electoral structure is available in the council fact sheet on the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au).

Prior to the last representation review in 2007, Banyule City Council was comprised of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. Visit the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) to access a copy of the 2007 review final report.

### Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions opened at the commencement of the current review on Wednesday 26 June 2019. The VEC received 30 submissions for the representation review of Banyule City Council by the deadline at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 24 July 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

## Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 21 August 2019 with the following options for consideration:

- Option A (preferred option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.**
- Option B (alternative option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Option A.**
- Option C (alternative option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.**

## Response submissions

The VEC received 48 submissions responding to the preliminary report by the deadline at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 18 September 2019.

## Public hearing

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 25 September 2019. Eight people spoke at the hearing.

## Recommendation

**The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.**

This electoral structure was designated as Option C in the preliminary report. Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

## Background

### Legislative basis

The Act requires the VEC to conduct a representation review of each local council in Victoria before every third general council election, or earlier if gazetted by the Minister for Local Government.

The Act states that the purpose of a representation review is to recommend the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides 'fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.'<sup>2</sup>

The Act requires the VEC to consider:

- the number of councillors in a local council
- whether a local council should be unsubdivided or subdivided.

If a local council is subdivided, the VEC must ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council.<sup>3</sup> On this basis, the review must consider the:

- number of wards
- ward boundaries
- number of councillors that should be elected for each ward.

### Public engagement

#### Public information program

The VEC conducted a public information program to inform the community of the representation review, including:

- public notices printed in local and State-wide papers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases announcing the commencement of the review and the release of the preliminary report
- a submission guide to explain the review process and provide background information on the scope of the review

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<sup>2</sup> Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



- an information email campaign targeted at known community groups and communities of interest in the local council area
- sponsored social media advertising geo-targeted to users within the local council area
- ongoing information updates and publication of submissions on the VEC website.

More information on the VEC's public information program for the representation review of Banyule City Council can be found at Appendix 3.

### Public consultation

Public input was accepted by the VEC via:

- preliminary submissions at the start of the review
- response submissions to the preliminary report
- a public hearing that provided an opportunity for people who had made a response submission to expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process but are not the only consideration. The VEC ensures its recommendations comply with the Act and are formed through careful consideration of public submissions, independent research, and analysis of all relevant factors.

### The VEC's principles

Three main principles underlie all the VEC's work on representation reviews:

**1. Taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors.**

The VEC is guided by its comparisons of local councils of a similar size and category to the council under review. The VEC also considers any special circumstances that may warrant the local council having more or fewer councillors than similar local councils.

**2. If subdivided, ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council.**

This is the principle of 'one vote, one value', which is enshrined in the Act. This means that every person's vote counts equally.

**3. Ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.**

Each local council contains a number of communities of interest. Where practicable, the electoral structure should be designed to ensure they are fairly represented, and that geographic communities of interest are not split by ward boundaries. This allows elected

councillors to be more effective representatives of the people and interests in their particular local council or ward.

## Developing recommendations

The VEC bases its recommendations for particular electoral structures on the following information:

- internal research specifically relating to the local council under review, including data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and .id<sup>4</sup>; voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll; and other State and local government data sets
- small area forecasts provided by .id for relevant local council areas
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and similar reviews for State elections
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government
- careful consideration of all input from the public in written submissions received during the review and via oral submissions at the public hearing
- advice from consultants with extensive experience in local government.

## Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows for a local council to have between five and 12 councillors but does not specify how to decide the appropriate number.<sup>5</sup> In considering the number of councillors for a local council, the VEC is guided by the Victorian Parliament's intention for fairness and equity in the local representation of voters under the Act.

The starting point in deciding the appropriate number of councillors for a local council is comparing the local council under review to other local councils of a similar size and type (Principle 1). Generally, local councils that have a larger number of voters will have a higher number of councillors. Often large populations are more likely to be diverse, both in the nature and number of their communities of interest and the issues of representation.

However, the VEC also considers the particular circumstances of each local council which could justify fewer or more councillors, such as:

- the nature and complexity of services provided by the Council
- geographic size and topography

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<sup>4</sup> .id is a consulting company specialising in population and demographic analysis and prediction information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>5</sup> Section 5B(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

- population growth or decline
- the social diversity of the local council.

### Deciding the electoral structure

The Act allows for a local council ward structure to be unsubdivided—with all councillors elected 'at-large' by all voters—or subdivided into a number of wards.

If the local council is to be subdivided into wards, there are three options available:

1. single-councillor wards
2. multi-councillor wards
3. a combination of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards.

A subdivided electoral structure must be developed with internal ward boundaries that provide for a fair and equitable division of the local council.

The Act allows for wards with different numbers of councillors, as long as the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council (Principle 2). For example, a local council may have one three-councillor ward with 15,000 voters and two single-councillor wards each with 5,000 voters. In this case, the average number of voters per councillor would be 5,000.

Over time, population changes can lead to some wards in subdivided local councils having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of the review, the VEC corrects any imbalances and considers likely population changes to ensure ward boundaries provide equitable representation for as long as possible.

In considering which electoral structure is most appropriate, the VEC considers the following matters:

- the VEC's recommendation at the previous representation review and the reasons for that recommendation
- the longevity of the structure, with the aim of keeping voter numbers per councillor within the 10% tolerance for as long as possible (Principle 2)
- communities of interest, consisting of people who share a range of common concerns, such as geographic, economic or cultural associations (Principle 3)
- the number of candidates in previous elections, as outcomes from previous elections indicate that large numbers of candidates can lead to an increase in the number of informal (invalid) votes
- geographic factors, such as size and topography
- clear ward boundaries.

# Banyule City Council representation review

## Profile of Banyule City Council

The City of Banyule is located in the north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, approximately 15 kilometres from Melbourne CBD and covers an area of about 63 square kilometres. Land use is mainly residential (about 76% of total land-use)<sup>6</sup> but also includes important areas of green space. The City contains significant health and education facilities, such as Austin Hospital and Melbourne Polytechnic, industrial precincts and commercial centres, including Greensborough Plaza, and the Heidelberg and Ivanhoe Activity Centres.

Healthcare and social assistance is the main industry of employment, accounting for almost one-third of all employment in the local council area.<sup>7</sup> It is also the main employer of Banyule residents, followed by education and training, professional, scientific and technical services, and retail.<sup>8</sup> About 30% of Banyule residents currently in the workforce are classed as professionals.<sup>9</sup>

The City of Banyule includes a variety of suburbs, from the well-established and wealthier suburbs in the south—Eaglemont and Ivanhoe—to more recently established suburbs in the north of the local council area, such as Greensborough, Watsonia and Bundoora. It also includes the suburb of Heidelberg West, where the village built for the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne is now the location for a large number of social housing dwellings.<sup>10</sup>

Separate houses comprise 77.7% of all dwelling types in the local council area.<sup>11</sup> Medium- and high-density living has increased since 2006, with such developments more evident in the south of the City in suburbs such as Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West and Ivanhoe.<sup>12</sup> Heidelberg and Ivanhoe are expected to accommodate much of the growth expected for the local council area, and the expansion of higher density living in these areas is likely to attract a younger demographic.<sup>13</sup> Ivanhoe East, Lower Plenty and Eaglemont have limited development opportunities, whereas other suburbs such as Watsonia and Greensborough, are expected to

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<sup>6</sup> Banyule City Council and Banyule Business, *Economic Profile 2018*, <https://banyulebusiness.com.au/>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>7</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: economic profile', <https://economy.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, Australia, 2016*, cat. no. 2001.0, 27 October 2017, [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

<sup>9</sup> ABS, '2016 Quickstats: Banyule (C)', [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20660?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20660?opendocument), accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>10</sup> For a history of Banyule City Council's suburbs, see Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, Final Report October 2018, prepared for Banyule City Council, <https://shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/heritagethemes>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '2016 Quickstats: Banyule (C)', [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20660?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20660?opendocument), accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>12</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: community profile', <https://profile.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>13</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: population forecast', <https://forecast.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

grow at a moderate pace.<sup>14</sup> Major infrastructure projects, such as the North East Link will take place in the local council area in coming years.

Overall, the population rates above the State and Greater Melbourne averages on various measures of social and economic wellbeing.<sup>15</sup> However, some areas are considered highly disadvantaged.<sup>16</sup> In particular Heidelberg West rates as one of the most socially disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria and contains a large number of social housing dwellings. It is also distinct in other ways, including a higher proportion of residents born overseas and home to one of the largest Somali communities in Victoria.

The percentage of the population born overseas is 23.6% in the City of Banyule. While significantly lower than for Greater Melbourne (34%), this percentage has increased from about 20% in 2006 and includes a large number of residents born in China and India.<sup>17</sup>

Population growth has been steady since the last representation review, increasing from 114,869 in 2006 to 121,865 in 2016.<sup>18</sup> The current population of Banyule City Council is estimated at 130,240 and is expected to grow by another 14,440 people over the 2018-31 period to be around 144,680 at about the time of the next scheduled review.<sup>19</sup> Growth will be uneven, with the suburbs of Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights and Ivanhoe expected to grow at a higher rate than the average for the whole local council area.<sup>20</sup>

## Current electoral structure

Banyule City Council currently comprises seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. More information on Banyule City Council and the current electoral structure is available in the council fact sheet on the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au).

Prior to the last representation review in 2007, Banyule City Council was comprised of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. Visit the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) to access a copy of the 2007 review final report.

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<sup>14</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: population forecast', <https://forecast.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>15</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: community profile', <https://profile.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019. See also ABS, *Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, 2016*, 2033.0.55.001. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The rankings use variables, such as income, education, employment, occupation and housing, derived from Census data to indicate relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage for particular areas, including Local Government Areas.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/2033.0.55.001>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>16</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: social atlas', <https://atlas.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>17</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: community profile', <https://profile.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Census of population and housing: time series profile, Australia, 2016*, 2003.0, 2017, accessed 15 August 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), *Victoria in Future 2019*, <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/land-use-and-population-research/victoria-in-future>, accessed 7 October 2019.

<sup>20</sup> id, 'City of Banyule: population forecast', <https://forecast.id.com.au/banyule>, accessed 15 August 2019.

## **Preliminary submissions**

At the close of submissions on Wednesday 24 July 2019, the VEC had received 30 submissions for the representation review of Banyule City Council. A list of people who made a preliminary submission can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Number of councillors**

Two proposals for the appropriate number of councillors for Banyule City Council were put forward in preliminary submissions. One, supported by nine submitters, was to retain seven councillors. The other proposal, supported by 18 submitters, was to increase the number of councillors to nine. Three submitters did not specify a preference for the appropriate number of councillors.

## **Retaining seven councillors**

Most submitters in support of seven councillors felt the current number of councillors worked well, provided adequate representation and was able to meet the community's needs.

In its submission, Banyule City Council argued there was no requirement or evidence to support an increase in councillor numbers. In a separate submission, Councillor Craig Langdon suggested the number of councillors did not need to be increased for the City's voters to be better represented and that the Council conducted itself well with seven councillors.

Various submitters suggested councillor workloads were not excessive and could be managed effectively with seven councillors. Banyule City Council submitted that the relatively low rate of population growth expected in coming years meant councillor workloads would not increase enough to warrant more councillors. It also suggested, as did Councillor Rick Garotti in a separate submission, that councillor workloads were not determined in proportion to the number of voters but by the complexity of issues councillors had to deal with. Cr Garotti and Hesham Mobarek both argued councillors had the support of the Chief Executive Officer and council officers to manage such issues.

According to the submission from Olympic Adult Education (OAE), increasing the number of councillors would add an operational burden to OAE as they would be required to keep a greater number of councillors informed of their activities in order to receive maximum support from Banyule City Council.

Four submitters, including Banyule City Council, commented on the associated costs to the Council if councillor numbers were to increase, arguing such costs would not deliver enough benefits to warrant such a change or that Council funds would be better spent elsewhere.

The Banyule Ratepayers Action Group Inc. (BRAG) argued against increasing the number of councillors to nine as it would split communities of interests to a greater degree than the current electoral structure of seven single-councillor wards.

### **Increasing to nine councillors**

Submitters in favour of increasing the number of councillors to nine argued variously that nine councillors would be appropriate for the current and projected population of the local council area, would assist with councillor workloads, and would provide broader representation for voters. Other submitters argued for increasing councillor numbers to enhance opportunities for community engagement, provide a more representative Council and to facilitate an electoral structure more aligned with communities of interest.

A large number of submitters suggested increasing the number of councillors to nine in response to population growth and to reduce the high voter-to-councillor ratio observed when comparing Banyule City Council to other metropolitan local councils. These submitters argued nine councillors would also be appropriate to address housing growth and other developments, and major projects such as the North East Link. Some submitters referred to growth in particular suburbs or wards to argue for increasing the number of councillors to nine.

Many of the submitters in support of increasing councillor numbers to nine raised concerns about heavy councillor workloads. Sustainable Macleod Inc., for instance, asserted in its submission that the councillors in the three largest wards by voter population—Olympia, Griffin and Ibbott—were overworked. Other submitters suggested that heavy councillor workloads under the current electoral structure placed unreasonable demands on elected councillors.

Some submitters suggested heavy councillor workloads discouraged some potential candidates from running for election, particularly those unable to commit to a full-time workload. They submitted that two more councillors would reduce councillor workloads and make the role of councillor more attractive and accessible, particularly for women and minority groups. Other submitters suggested two extra councillors would provide a larger pool of candidates for voters to choose from and thus broaden representation.

Matthew Goodman argued that Council rates would not necessarily be increased as a result of additional councillors as rates are capped and he believed the Council had increased them as much as was allowed by law.

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc. (PRSA) proposed nine councillors because it preferred an odd number of councillors, which it argued would uphold the principle that a majority view should be represented by a majority of elected councillors and would avoid tied votes in the Council's decision-making. The PRSA also suggested nine councillors in support of an electoral structure of three three-councillor wards.

### **Electoral structure**

Three different electoral structures were proposed in preliminary submissions. Two of these were electoral structures of single-councillor wards, comprising either seven or nine councillors, and

the other was an electoral structure of three three-councillor wards. Submissions were evenly split in their support for either a single- or multi-councillor ward electoral structure.

Two of the submitters advocating for a multi-councillor electoral structure of three three-councillor wards supported nine single-councillor wards as their second preference, as they felt this would be consistent with the proposed reforms of the Local Government Bill 2019.

Two submitters did not propose an electoral structure but raised issues relevant to their local ward—equitable representation for the suburb of Lower Plenty—or representation more generally. This included the importance of local representation, representation of disadvantaged communities and the value of residents knowing and having access to their local representatives.

The VEC received six mapping submissions prepared using the VEC's Boundary Builder tool, plus various written submissions detailing the composition of different electoral structures and/or ward boundary changes.

### **Single-councillor wards**

Of the 14 submitters supporting a single-councillor ward structure, nine preferred the current structure of seven single-councillor wards while five preferred a structure of nine single-councillor wards. Similar suggestions were made in support of both single-councillor options and most submitters felt that a structure of single-councillor wards was working well and would continue to best represent the voters of Banyule City Council.

In its submission, Banyule City Council contended the current structure remained the most appropriate as evidenced by its history of good governance and positive community satisfaction ratings. The Council quoted information provided by Local Government Victoria on the additional reforms proposed to the Local Government Bill 2019 to suggest that single-councillor wards 'provide stronger local democracy with direct accountability to the community,' and 'are the best way to ensure representation is genuinely local.'<sup>21</sup>

Other submitters felt single-councillor wards made councillors more accountable to voters and residents, and one submitted that the current councillors worked well as a team. The Council and Cr Garotti argued in separate submissions that single-councillor wards encouraged respectful and collaborative relationships among councillors. Some submitters felt multi-councillor wards could lead to conflict among councillors, which would be detrimental to local representation.

According to Cr Langdon, Banyule City Council conducted itself well under a single-councillor ward electoral structure and did not face the same issues as local councils with multi-councillor

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<sup>21</sup> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Local Government Victoria website <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/local-government-act-review>, accessed 15 August 2019.



ward structures. Banyule City Council suggested inequitable councillor workloads and conflicts among councillors had not been a major issue under the current structure.

Many submitters argued councillors in single-councillor wards developed a good understanding of local issues, which enabled them to effectively advocate for community groups, residents and other ward-based interests. Other submitters suggested a single-councillor ward structure best represented the City's communities of interest and different geographical areas.

Some submitters argued single-councillor wards provided the benefits of voters having a single point of contact (though according to one submission, this did not prevent residents contacting a councillor outside their ward where necessary), reduced the need for residents to connect with multiple councillors and generally gave voters good access to their elected councillors.

It was suggested by a number of submitters that the current structure of single-councillor wards enabled councillors to effectively represent both ward-based and council-wide issues and the current structure had delivered local representation as well as broader strategic initiatives.

Various submitters, including Banyule City Council, felt the current ward boundaries were appropriate and largely followed identified landmarks and any change to the current ward boundaries would split communities of interest. The Council's submission also pointed out that all wards were currently within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor and there was therefore no need to adjust the boundaries.

To sustain the current electoral structure of seven single-councillor wards, many submitters proposed changes to ward boundaries to ensure certain wards did not deviate too far from the required plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor. Other submitters proposed major changes to accommodate two additional wards in support of their preference for nine single-councillor wards.

### **Multi-councillor wards**

All but one of the submissions supporting a multi-councillor ward structure suggested that three three-councillor wards was the best option for Banyule City Council.

Submitters identified the main benefits of multi-councillor wards as: increased diversity of councillors and a broader range of views represented on the Council, use of the proportional representation vote counting system, more choice for voters and residents, and representation of the City's various communities of interests.

Of particular importance for submitters in support of a multi-councillor ward structure was the diversity of councillors and the range of views represented on the Council. Many submitters argued the current Council was not suitably diverse and/or did not adequately reflect the City's diverse social composition, particularly regarding the gender ratio of elected councillors. These

submitters felt multi-councillor wards would increase the diversity of councillors and interests represented and provide more opportunity for women and minority groups to be elected.

Various submitters supporting multi-councillor wards identified use of the proportional representation vote counting method to increase diversity and improve representation. They suggested multi-councillor wards would increase the pool of candidates that voters could choose from at elections and attract a more diverse range of councillors. One submitter argued that including more diverse viewpoints would improve council debate. Other submitters suggested proportional representation vote counting was more democratic and representative of voters' wishes and in single-councillor wards, preferential vote counting could possibly leave a large section of the voting population feeling unrepresented.

The PRSA highlighted further benefits of proportional representation in multi-councillor wards, such as maximising the value of effective votes and better enabling the representation of non-geographical communities of interest. It also suggested an electoral structure of three three-councillor wards was the fairest option, as it maintained equality between the different wards and had an odd number of councillors.

Some submitters felt multi-councillor wards would improve representation for specific communities of interest, such as environmental groups, those residents experiencing social disadvantage and particular cultural groups, as well as those communities with common interests spanning the entire local council area. One submitter argued multi-councillor wards would enable the Council to more effectively manage the impacts of major projects, such as the North East Link, and urban development more generally.

Numerous submitters argued that multi-councillor wards would encourage greater levels of strategic thinking by the Council, allow for larger initiatives to be undertaken, encourage candidates with a vision for the whole community and/or limit the influence of parochial and political party interests. Others believed multi-councillor wards would improve the Council's governance processes or allow for higher quality decisions to be made by Council.

Some submitters suggested having three councillors per ward would provide voters with the opportunity to connect with at least one councillor willing to represent them. One submitter argued councillor workloads could be shared more equitably with three councillors per ward and that councillors would be better able to keep the community informed about important issues.

Another submitter pointed out that most Metropolitan Melbourne local councils had multi-councillor electoral structures, which they felt justified this structure being put forward as an option in the review process. The same submitter further argued that the benefits of multi-councillor wards would naturally apply to Banyule City Council.

Various mapping submissions and/or written submissions detailing the composition of proposed electoral structures were provided.

### **Preliminary report**

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 21 August 2019. The VEC considered public submissions and research findings when formulating the options presented in the preliminary report.

### **Number of councillors**

The VEC considered nine councillors appropriate for fair and equitable representation for the City of Banyule. In determining the appropriate number of councillors for the City, the VEC considered a range of factors, including population and voter numbers and projections, arguments presented in submissions, communities of interest and any special circumstances that might influence the appropriate number of councillors. The VEC also compared voter numbers and the voter-to-councillor ratio of the City of Banyule with similar local councils.

Compared with many other Metropolitan Melbourne local councils, Banyule City Council has experienced a modest rate of population growth since the last review in 2007. Between 2006 and 2016, the population of Banyule increased by about 6% from 114,869 to 121,865.<sup>22</sup> However, the VEC reported the number of councillors has remained at seven since council amalgamations in the 1990s and at the time of the 2007 review, the VEC considered Banyule's voting population justified an increase in the number of councillors to nine.

At 14,165, it was reported that the Banyule City Council had the highest voter-to-councillor ratio of all Metropolitan Melbourne local councils and a voting population that far exceeded the other three Metropolitan Melbourne local councils with seven councillors—Bayside City Council, Hobsons Bay City Council and Maribyrnong City Council. The VEC determined that increasing the number of councillors to nine would bring the voter-to-councillor ratio of Banyule City Council more into line with similar local councils. Combined with projected population growth, the VEC considered that demographic change, such as increasing diversity, growth in higher density living and, in some areas, high rates of social disadvantage, provided additional justifications for increasing the number of councillors to nine.

### **Electoral structure**

The VEC presented three options for the community's consideration and feedback, each of which was developed in response to the arguments presented in preliminary submissions, the VEC's own research, and modelling of population projections.

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<sup>22</sup> ABS, *Census of population and housing: time series profile, Australia, 2016, 2003.0, 2017.*

Two multi-councillor ward electoral structures were presented as Options A and B, both comprising three three-councillor wards. The VEC considered both options would provide a good balance between local representation and scope for Banyule City Council to reflect greater diversity. The multi-councillor wards also offered voters a good degree of choice at elections and would likely provide improved election outcomes and a greater chance of electing a diverse range of candidates. The VEC determined both multi-councillor ward options corresponded with the geography of the City of Banyule to provide three, fairly evenly sized wards using clear and logical internal ward boundaries. The options also enabled larger areas with common features to be contained within wards, which the VEC considered would assist in the representation of geographic communities.

The VEC also proposed a single-councillor ward option comprising nine councillors. This option was modelled in response to the number of preliminary submissions in favour of retaining a single-councillor ward structure. At its last representation review of Banyule City Council, the VEC's final recommendation was seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards as this was found to better align with communities of interest than the alternative option from the preliminary report (nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards). Given the changes in the City of Banyule since the last review, including population growth and other socio-demographic developments, the VEC determined an increase to nine councillors was appropriate and that the nine single-councillor ward option would capture communities of interest at least as well as a seven single-councillor model.

#### **Option A: Nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards**

The VEC reported that Option A would provide voters with potentially a greater degree of choice at election times when compared with single-councillor wards. As candidates are elected through a proportional representation counting system in multi-councillor wards, the VEC considered Option A would provide multiple communities within a ward a better chance of electing a representative according to the proportion of support for their preferred candidate(s). The VEC also considered that the larger, multi-councillor wards would more likely provide representation for multiple and overlapping communities, increase the diversity of councillors and capture broader communities of interest than might be the case in single-councillor wards.

The VEC determined that the risk of uncontested elections, which remove the opportunity for voters to choose their preferred candidate at an election, would be greatly reduced under this multi-councillor electoral structure.

The VEC's modelling of population and voter projections provided evidence to suggest that multi-councillor wards would be more able to absorb uneven population growth than single-councillor wards and boundary changes to correct imbalances in ward enrolments would be less likely. All wards in Option A were currently within the plus-or-minus 10% tolerance for compliance with the

voter-to-councillor equality requirement and it was anticipated this would remain so over the long term or at least until the next scheduled representation review.

The proposed ward boundaries in Option A were easily identifiable and there was less chance the boundaries proposed would divide communities of interest when compared to a single-councillor ward structure.

The VEC considered that in most cases suburbs were kept intact within their respective wards. Although some wards brought together suburbs that were demographically distinct, this was not determined to be a major impediment to fair and equitable representation.

It was noted that a potential weakness of Option A was that two out of three of the City's main activity centres—Ivanhoe and Heidelberg Activity Centres—were located in 'South Ward', whereas there was no major activity centre in 'North East Ward'. However, this is currently the case under the present electoral structure, where the same two activity centres in the south of the local council area are in the single-councillor Griffin Ward.

#### **Option B: Nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards**

While this exact structure was not modelled in preliminary submissions, the VEC considered that it did provide an alternative three three-councillor ward configuration for public consultation and carried many of the same benefits as Option A. The VEC considered the ward boundaries in Option B were easily identifiable, though this option made better use of major thoroughfares as ward boundaries compared to Option A, such as the Greensborough Highway/Greensborough Road and Lower Plenty Road.

The proposed wards in Option B grouped similar suburbs together and the VEC found that this could be problematic in some ways. The proposed 'North West Ward', for instance, combined two areas with the highest levels of disadvantage, while the proposed 'South Ward' included most of the wealthiest areas of the local council area. The VEC considered that this could appear to create wards defined by socio-economic status and could potentially create some division or result in inequitable councillor workloads.

#### **Option C: Nine single-councillor wards**

The VEC considered that Option C retained what preliminary submitters suggested were positive features of single-councillor wards, such as accessible councillors who are aware of and able to readily respond to local issues. Option C also retained the strong suburb-based identities of the current seven-councillor wards, as this was a prominent argument presented in preliminary submissions. In many ways, the VEC assessed the wards in Option C to be better aligned with these suburb-based identities than the current structure of seven single-councillor wards.

The VEC considered that Option C did not split communities of interest to a great degree and in most cases the proposed wards captured and kept together the City's suburbs. Furthermore,

Option C did not split major activity centres or the smaller neighbourhood shopping strips, which was a priority amongst submitters. It was also considered that Option C provided a more even distribution of major activity centres between the wards, which the VEC noted was not the case under the current electoral structure.

The VEC found that to accommodate two additional wards, one in the south of the local council area and the other in the east, changes were required to all of the existing internal ward boundaries. Some of these changes were significant. Griffin and Hawdon Wards, for example, were split with boundary adjustments affecting each of the surrounding wards.

Option C satisfied the need for all wards to remain within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor over the long term. It was noted, however, that single-councillor wards in densely populated urban areas and situations of uneven growth would be more vulnerable to population change. While voter projections suggested all wards in Option C would remain within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor until the next scheduled review, the risk that unpredictable population changes would necessitate boundary changes remained.

The VEC considered a potential weakness of Option C would be the likelihood of uncontested elections and/or lower numbers of candidates in contested wards, as experienced under the current electoral structure. Changing from seven to nine single-councillor wards risked exacerbating these issues.

While the VEC reported most of the ward boundaries in Option C would be easily identifiable to residents, it was generally accepted that the smaller wards would more likely need to cut through suburbs and require the use of more minor roads as ward boundaries.

## Options

After careful consideration, the VEC put forward the following options:

- Option A (preferred option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.**
- Option B (alternative option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Option A.**
- Option C (alternative option)  
**Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.**

## Public response

### Response submissions

The VEC accepted submissions responding to the preliminary report from Wednesday 21 August 2019 until 5.00 pm on Wednesday 18 September 2019. The VEC received 48 response submissions. A list of people who made a response submission can be found in Appendix 1. Table 1 indicates the level of support for each option.

<i>Preferences expressed in response submissions</i>			
Option A	Option B	Option C	Other
23	—	24	1

There were similar levels of support for Options A and C. Option B received no support and strong arguments were presented against it, including that the wards in Option B appeared to each resemble a different socio-economic zone, which submitters argued would be detrimental to fair and equitable representation.

One response submitter did not specify a preference for any option but argued in support of a multi-councillor electoral structure.

There was continued support for the current structure of seven single-councillor wards in response submissions. Fifteen submitters, including Banyule City Council and seven pro forma email submissions, argued for the retention of the current seven-councillor electoral structure or stated that they would have favoured it had it been included as an option in the preliminary report.

### Option A (three three-councillor wards)

Of the 23 submissions in favour of Option A, the main arguments presented were that it better accommodated population growth and change, more appropriately catered for diversity and the City's different communities of interest, provided residents with more options when connecting with their councillors, would likely produce better election outcomes and provided clearer boundaries that follow more familiar features, such as major roads and landmarks. Seven of the 23 submissions supporting Option A were pro forma email submissions and presented similar arguments to those mentioned above.

### Accommodating population growth

Some submitters suggested that Option A was the best option to accommodate anticipated population growth. Gareth Moorhead argued that Option A was most consistent with a statewide approach and gave greater effect to the 'one vote, one value' principle. Emily Bieber and Don



Astbury in their respective submissions were of the opinion that Option A provided the most even distribution of voters across the proposed wards when compared to Options B and C. Transition 3081 suggested in its submission that Option A better met the requirement that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor, particularly in 'South Ward' where growth is expected to be the fastest. Matthew Goodman made a similar point and suggested that Option A would be less susceptible to population change and therefore less likely to require future boundary changes.

However, in its submission, Banyule City Council questioned the viability of combining the suburbs likely to grow the most—Ivanhoe, Heidelberg and Heidelberg Heights—within the one ward under Option A and suggested that structural change could be required prior to the next scheduled representation review if Option A was adopted.

### **Diversity of representation**

Various submissions supported Option A as they believed it would improve the diversity of councillors and interests represented on the Council. Submissions from the Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), Paul Kennedy and Suzanne Lees all argued that Option A would better reflect the City's diversity. Mr Goodman and Adam Newman suggested that changing to a multi-councillor ward structure would rectify what they argued had been a lack of diversity on Council.

In support of Option A, Councillor Peter Castaldo submitted that a multi-councillor ward structure would provide greater opportunity for more views to be heard and represented on the Council. Mr Moorhead contended that through proportional representation multi-councillor wards would encourage diversity whereas single-councillor wards would not.

Transition 3081 suggested that under Option A, it would be more likely that women and other minorities would be willing to stand as candidates for election. Similarly, Greta Gillies believed Option A would result in more women on the Council and Jacqueline Bryan suggested that Option A would improve diversity of representation overall. Mr Astbury argued Option A would encourage a diverse range of candidates to stand for election and provide a more realistic chance of them being elected.

### **Representing communities of interest**

Supporters of Option A argued that it would better represent the City's different communities of interest. Ms Bieber suggested Option A would provide better community representation and would not divide neighbourhoods as much as Option C. Mr Goodman also felt Option A would less likely divide communities. Transition 3081 argued that Option A would improve representation for different communities of interest, particularly those concerned about the

environment. Fred Harrington OAM, while not stating a preference for either option, argued that in multi-councillor wards councillors would more readily stand up for the interests of residents.

Mr Kennedy suggested that the larger wards in Option A better reflected the mobility of residents and broader communities of interest. He argued that residents were not just connected to their neighbourhood but to larger activity areas, particularly in relation to schooling, recreation, shopping and entertainment, and that Option A would represent these broad interests.

In his separate submission, Cr Castaldo argued that combining different social demographics and communities in each ward, and particularly in 'South Ward' would improve representation for all constituents. Likewise, Mr Moorhead felt representation would be improved under Option A, especially in the proposed 'South Ward', as it reflected the social diversity of the City.

Some submitters suggested there was a more equitable distribution of the wealthy and socially disadvantaged areas of the City in each of the proposed wards in Option A. Mr Astbury felt that the wards in Option A provided a realistic mix of similar and diverse land-uses and social demographics. (The main argument presented against Option B was that it had an inequitable mix of wealthy and socially disadvantaged areas in the wards).

In opposition to Option A, Rowan Harrison argued that 'South Ward' would generate the most rate income for the Council and could have its resources taken away from it by other wards. Banyule City Council contended that Option A, by combining different suburbs in 'South Ward', would not be fair or equitable as the contrasting communities had specific needs, which the Council believed would be better met under single-councillor wards. BRAG argued that under the larger, multi-councillor wards proposed in Option A, some communities would be left without representation if the three councillors elected were all from one area of the ward. This, it was contended, could leave socially disadvantaged and culturally diverse groups in 'South Ward' without a local representative. The Watsonia Traders Association felt that having to compete with other shopping centres and communities would be more likely under a multi-councillor electoral structure, and that this would be detrimental to the Association's interests.

### **Connecting with councillors**

Many submitters suggested that Option A would improve opportunities for residents to connect with their councillors. The Ivanhoe Branch of the ALP felt that multi-councillor wards would provide residents with more choice when connecting with a councillor than single-councillor wards. Ms Bieber suggested that three councillors per ward would ensure ward issues were represented when a councillor was absent. Cr Castaldo argued that three councillors per ward provided residents with more options when seeking a councillor to represent them and that this enhanced democracy. Cr Castaldo also suggested that communities could potentially connect with three councillors under Option A and that this would be preferable to just the one elected representative under Option C.

Andrew Conley similarly argued that multi-councillor wards would result in more councillors for residents to approach. He also suggested that with more options open to residents there would be more of an impetus for councillors to respond to their concerns and interests. Liesel Green felt that with three councillors to choose from under Option A, residents would have a better chance of connecting with one that held similar views to their own. Similarly, Ms Lees believed Option A would provide residents with more options when connecting with their councillors and a better chance that residents' concerns would be brought before the Council.

### **Councillor working relationships**

Some submitters in favour of Option A suggested it would improve the way in which councillors related and worked with each other. Cr Castaldo felt that under the current single-councillor ward structure councillors tended to stay out of the business of other wards, but that residents outside of his ward occasionally contacted him to have their views heard. He claimed that as a result the views and interests of some residents were not always represented under the current single-councillor electoral structure or by their ward councillor.

Ms Gillies felt that Option A would encourage councillors to work together more effectively and Ms Lees suggested it would enable councillors to share workloads and facilitate residents working together on what unites them as a ward. Transition 3081 suggested that Option A would attract more candidates and councillors willing to work together and solve issues collaboratively. As in preliminary submissions, some response submitters argued that multi-councillor wards would better address council-wide issues or issues spanning multiple wards, such as the North East Link project. Mr Harrington suggested that a multi-councillor ward would better enable councillors to develop a shared and collective vision for their ward and that it would be less likely for a councillor to be swayed by the Mayor.

In contrast, Watsonia Neighbourhood House felt that a multi-councillor ward structure could reduce the responsiveness of councillors in cases where councillors elected from the same ward held conflicting views. Banyule City Council suggested that Option A could encourage division between councillors.

Arguing against Banyule City Council's preliminary submission, Mr Conley suggested that there was nothing inherent in multi-councillor structures that would inhibit respectful relationships between councillors. He also suggested that differences in opinion between councillors should be expected and are good for democracy.

Some submitters argued that having three councillors per ward would provide more balance in the Council's decision-making. Cr Castaldo suggested this would occur by representing a greater variety of views and interests on the Council, whereas Ms Lees argued that connecting with more than one councillor about an issue would provide a good check on the number of issues coming before the Council.

Mr Harrington argued that councillors would work more as a team in a multi-councillor ward structure, be able to cover for each other and share workloads. Ms Lees also felt that councillor workloads would be shared more equitably under Option A. This was not the view of some submitters in favour of Option C, however. For example, Mr Harrison felt that in a three-councillor ward the workload would likely fall on the councillor able to commit full-time to the role; Banyule City Council and other submitters argued in general that multi-councillor wards could lead to one councillor undertaking more work than another from the same ward.

### **Election outcomes**

The PRSA preferred Option A or B as both provided an odd number of councillors overall, and in each ward, the same odd number of councillors would be elected. The PRSA submitted that this arrangement maximised the benefits of proportional representation vote counting, minimised uncontested elections and ensured voters' wishes were fairly reflected in election results. The PRSA also opposed Option C and single-councillor wards more generally as it was argued that just under half the votes in each ward could be wasted.

Many submitters felt that Option A would improve voter choice at election time, especially when compared with low numbers of candidates in some wards in previous elections under the current single-councillor ward structure. Others suggested that Option A would reduce the potential for uncontested elections. For example, Mr Florance argued that Option A was more democratic as there would be less chance of uncontested elections, which denied voters a choice.

In contrast, numerous submitters in support of Option C argued that Option A would increase the role of party politics in Banyule City Council elections and potentially provide less chance for local, independent candidates to be elected; BRAG contended that Option A would result in large numbers of 'dummy' candidates at elections.

### **Ward boundaries**

Many argued that the ward boundaries proposed in Option A made good use of major roads and landmarks and would be more familiar to residents. Ms Bieber felt Option A provided good, easily identifiable ward boundaries and Mr Florance argued that the ward boundaries in Option A achieved this better than Option B and were superior to those proposed in Option C.

Mr Kennedy argued that the ward boundaries in Option A provided a better grouping of the larger, common activity areas that residents are engaged in. Ms Green also felt the ward boundaries in Option A were more acceptable, particularly with reference to the suburb of Montmorency, which is divided under the current electoral structure and has led, she felt, to a north-south division within the community. Ms Green suggested that this would be remedied in Option A and would enable a more holistic approach to representing the area.

Many of the submitters in support of Option A suggested that ward names should reflect and recognise local Aboriginal culture and heritage.

### **Option C (nine single-councillor wards)**

There were 24 response submissions in support of Option C. Supporters of this option argued that it more effectively represented the City's communities of interest, better enabled residents to connect with councillors, reduced the potential for conflict among councillors elected from the same ward and provided a greater opportunity that councillors would be knowledgeable and responsive to local issues.

The 24 submissions in favour of Option C included eight pro forma submissions supporting the submission made by the BRAG. Seven of the pro forma submissions stated that they would have supported the current seven-councillor electoral structure had this been proposed as an option in the preliminary report and the other one suggested increasing the number of councillors to nine was appropriate.

### **Accommodating population growth**

Some supporters of Option C felt that it catered for the City's growing population, though mainly because of the addition of two more councillors rather than the electoral structure. Jim Cramb, Noel Spink and Good Governance Banyule suggested in their individual submissions that population growth and/or the City's high voter-to-councillor ratio when compared with similar local councils justified increasing the number of councillors to nine.

Other submitters, including Banyule City Council, Stephen Koenig, Hesham Mobarek and Jenny Mulholland OAM argued that increasing the number of councillors for Banyule City Council was not necessary; some of these submitters suggested that the VEC had not provided sufficient evidence to support, or used an arbitrary standard to propose, the nine-councillor electoral structure options presented in the preliminary report.

### **Representing communities of interest**

Many of the submitters in support of Option C felt that a single-councillor electoral structure in general best represented the City's various communities of interest. In its submission, Banyule City Council suggested that Option C would deliver fair and equitable representation to voters and the City's communities of interest.

BRAG identified the diversity and social demography of the local council area to suggest that different geographical areas or suburbs had particular representation needs, which it argued were best met by a single-councillor electoral structure.

The Somali Australian Council of Victoria (SACOV) favoured Option C as they felt single-councillor wards provided high quality, accountable and responsive representation. SACOV also

argued that changing to multi-councillor wards could dilute the views and aspirations of the Somali community.

Cr Garotti suggested that the single-councillor ward structure enabled councillors to develop a good understanding of their ward and be a strong advocate for its residents. This was also the view put forward by various other submitters, including Banyule City Council, BRAG, Mr Spink, Mr Cramb, Ms Mulholland, David Mulholland Snr, Mr Mobarek and Helen Penna.

Good Governance Banyule argued Option C would be in the best interests of the community and suggested that the smaller wards would improve representation. Mr Harrison similarly argued that residents would benefit from having councillors concentrate on smaller areas, which would not be the case in a multi-councillor ward structure.

Some supporters of Option C, including Banyule City Council and Mr Koenig, argued that the City's good or consistently above average Community Satisfaction Survey results indicated that Banyule's residents were satisfied with the current single-councillor ward structure.

### **Diversity of representation**

Some in support of Option C felt the need to increase the diversity of Banyule City Council and believed that two more councillors had the potential to achieve this.

Watsonia Neighbourhood House suggested that the creation of two more wards had the potential to increase the diversity of councillors. SACOV argued that two additional wards would provide more opportunity for community representation on Council.

Other submitters, such BRAG, contended that single-councillor wards were better for diversity whereas multi-councillor wards would reduce diversity.

### **Connecting with councillors**

Numerous submitters felt that single-councillor wards enhanced opportunities for residents to engage with their elected councillors. Ms Mulholland argued, as did Mr Mulholland Snr, that single-councillor wards provide the best form of representation as residents know their local councillor. Leonie Morgan valued the accessibility of councillors and having a connection with them, and felt this would be less likely in larger, multi-councillor wards. BRAG suggested that in single-councillor wards residents generally know their elected councillor and feel comfortable approaching them.

Watsonia Neighbourhood House supported Option C, arguing that single-councillor wards provided the best opportunity to develop a positive relationship with their elected councillor who, in their experience, had been accessible and proactive in advocating for the community's needs. Watsonia Neighbourhood House also submitted that having to contact more councillors from the one ward would be a burden for the organisation. Watsonia Traders Association similarly felt that

a single-councillor electoral structure had enabled a positive relationship to be developed with their ward councillor.

Many submitters argued that Option C provided residents and other interests with a single point of contact in their elected councillors. Mr Mobarek, for example, argued it was beneficial to only have to connect with one councillor about a particular issue. Mr Mobarek also suggested that under a multi-councillor ward structure and due to his business and property interests, he might need to deal with nine councillors. Watsonia Traders Association suggested it was more convenient contacting the one councillor and felt that under Option A or B it would be more challenging having to connect and maintain a relationship with three councillors.

Mr Spink suggested that it was easier for residents to know who to contact under a single-councillor ward structure and less confusing than might be the case with multi-councillor wards. Cr Garotti felt that single-councillor wards enhanced the accountability of councillors for responsive and timely advice. He also argued that single-councillor wards reduced the chance of residents 'advice shopping'.

Many of those in support of Option C argued that for the above reasons single-councillor wards made councillors more accountable to voters and residents.

### **Councillor working relationships**

Submitters in support of Option C suggested that the single-councillor option facilitated better working relationships between councillors and a more even distribution of councillor workloads. Mr Harrison felt that conflict between councillors holding different views would be less likely to occur in a single-councillor electoral structure. Banyule City Council felt the current structure of single-councillor wards had fostered respectful and productive working relationships among councillors.

However, Cr Castaldo felt that under the current single-councillor ward structure, councillors tended to stay out of the business of other wards. He argued that because of this some residents were not always represented under the current single-councillor electoral structure.

Others suggested that under Option C councillor workloads would be better managed and evenly shared. Mr Spink suggested that Option C, by providing more councillors and smaller wards, would enable a fairer distribution of councillor workloads. This was particularly the case in Griffin Ward, which as Mr Spink pointed out under the current electoral structure, contained two of the City's major activity centres and entailed a greater workload for this councillor as a result.

### **Election outcomes**

Submitters in support of Option C argued that it would produce better election outcomes and were critical of Option A as it was felt multi-councillor wards discouraged independents, women and minority groups from running as candidates. This was the view put forward by BRAG, Ms

Mulholland and Mr Mulholland Snr in their respective submissions. BRAG further argued that local, independent candidates would have a better chance of being elected as the cost of campaigning would be less in the smaller wards of Option C when compared to the larger ones in Option A.

Mr Goodman argued against Option C as the addition of two more wards would exacerbate the situation of poorly contested elections. In contrast, Mr Harrison did not feel that uncontested elections were a major issue and more likely indicated that the incumbent councillor was doing a good job.

### **Ward boundaries**

Watsonia Neighbourhood House submitted that the ward boundaries in Option C were the most appropriate for representing communities of interest. However, arguing in favour of Option A, Hamish Florance suggested it was doubtful whether the single-councillor option would successfully cater for continued population growth without requiring ward boundary changes before the next scheduled representation review.

Some submitters in favour of Option C did not support the proposed ward boundaries. In its submission, Banyule City Council proposed a series of ward boundary changes, altering nearly all of ward boundaries in Option C. The Council's proposed changes appeared to be intended to align the wards with the City's suburbs. However, the Council did not provide voter numbers in support of its suggestions. Other submitters, including Cr Garotti, Mr Mobarek and Mr Koenig, supported the Council's proposed ward boundary changes.

Mr Mulholland Snr suggested that Upper Heidelberg Road would provide a more appropriate ward boundary between the proposed 'Griffin Ward' and 'Chelsworth Ward' in Option C.

BRAG proposed changes to some of the ward names presented under Option C:

- 'Chelsworth Ward' to be renamed 'Heathorn Ward' after the Ivanhoe identity, Margaret Heathorn OAM
- 'Sherbourne Ward' to be renamed 'Lasslett Ward' after the former President of Heidelberg RSL and World War II veteran, Fred Lasslett
- 'Olympia Ward' to be renamed 'Farrell Ward' after the nineteenth-century settler family, which established a home and farm in the area.

### **Public hearing**

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 25 September 2019 in the Hawdon, Olympia & Ibbott Rooms, Greensborough Service Centre, 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough. A list of people who spoke at the hearing can be found in Appendix 1.



Ten people had requested to speak at the public hearing, though, two speakers—Jabiri Ali, President of SACOV, and Cr Castaldo—were unable to attend.

Five speakers spoke in favour of Option C and three speakers in support of Option A. The major themes addressed by speakers were the appropriate number of councillors, communities of interest, diversity of representation, connecting with councillors, the working relationships between councillors, council-wide issues, election outcomes and ward boundaries.

### **Councillor numbers**

Brian Grace, a long-term resident speaking on behalf of Good Governance Banyule, supported Option C and highlighted the need for the Council to move to nine councillors, an increase his group felt was overdue and well supported in public submissions. Mr Grace argued that nine councillors would provide suitably sized wards and that more councillors would improve the accountability of the Council's processes and decision-making.

Chris Dixon, speaking on behalf of the Ivanhoe Branch of the ALP (which included 75 local branch members) and in favour of Option A, argued that it was time to move to nine councillors and that this was generally accepted among submitters and the community.

At the same time, a number of speakers argued for retention of the current structure of seven councillors. Cr Garotti spoke on behalf of Banyule City Council and stated that the Council favoured the current structure and argued that it was supported by various community groups and delivered cost-effective representation. Cr Garotti pointed out that it would cost the Council about \$40,000 per year for each additional councillor.

Mr Mobarek, a local resident, property and business owner, argued for seven councillors. Mr Mobarek suggested that Banyule City Council should have been compared with other local councils, such as Frankston City Council and Darebin City Council and not just those local councils with seven councillors, to determine the appropriate number of councillors; this he believed would have indicated that the voter-to-councillor ratio of Banyule City Council was not particularly high in comparison.

Mr Koenig, also a local resident and business owner, argued that the VEC's approach to determining the number of councillors was arbitrary and had little merit in the case of Banyule City Council. Mr Koenig felt that the current structure, with minor adjustments to ward boundaries, would have been sufficient to ensure fair and equitable representation.

Mr Mulholland, speaking on behalf of BRAG, maintained the view that the current structure of seven single-councillor wards was the most appropriate and was in line with what he suggested had been a small rate of population growth since 2007.

### **Communities of interest**

Mr Dixon argued that Option A would better cater for the more localised geographic communities of interest as well as broader interests, such as those related to the environment, connections with the rivers and parks in the local council area, sporting activities and the arts. Mr Harrington suggested that Option A was appropriate for communities of interest, particularly those located east of the Plenty River and within the proposed 'North East Ward', which as he argued, reflected a similar character and would likely attract councillors that share similar views. Mr Harrington also argued that three councillors working for one ward would provide better representation on the Council and at community events.

Mr Mulholland outlined the social demographics and diversity of the City to suggest the need for a structure able to respond differently to particular geographic areas; he argued that the current structure and/or Option C performed better on this account than the other options. Mr Mulholland also claimed that Option C would better represent communities of interest and would provide a better distribution of activity centres across the wards than either Option A or B. Mr Mulholland suggested that one of the dangers of Option A was that it could leave some areas without representation if all the councillors elected for a ward came from the same area.

Cr Garotti argued that Option C best represented the numerous and diverse communities of interest in Banyule, especially the suburbs of Montmorency, Ivanhoe, Bundoora, Watsonia and Heidelberg West.

### **Representing diversity**

The diversity of councillors and views represented on the Council were issues of importance for most speakers. Mr Grace, for example, suggested in support of Option C the need to improve diversity among councillors, particularly the low number of women candidates and councillors.

A major concern of the Ivanhoe Branch of the ALP, argued Mr Dixon, was the diversity of councillors and the need for the Council to better reflect the diversity of its community. Mr Dixon suggested that multi-councillor wards and Option A would provide the best chance for realising diversity of representation in terms of demography, outlook, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background and even general life interests. Mr Dixon did, however, identify concerns around Option B in that it ignored both diversity and community of interest, and it could create division along socio-economic lines. This was also a view presented by various other speakers.

Mr Goodman argued that multi-councillor wards improve diversity and, in particular, return a significantly higher percentage of women candidates when compared to single-councillor wards. Mr Goodman also suggested that the current Council lacks diversity and that Option A would help remedy this. In contrast, Mr Mulholland argued that a multi-councillor electoral structure would reduce diversity of councillors and representation.

Mr Mobarek felt that there had been a good level of diversity in representation over the years but suggested that this was not necessarily the case in terms of gender diversity. Cr Garotti pointed out the diversity of current councillors' backgrounds, but also suggested that more could be done to facilitate the participation of women in the Council's processes and as candidates at election. However, Cr Garotti claimed that changing the electoral structure would not affect the diversity of representation.

### **Connecting with councillors**

Mr Grace suggested the need to improve the way in which the Council and councillors engaged with the community, especially around development issues, and for the Council to be pressured to spend more of its current surplus on community facilities. In both cases he suggested that nine councillors would help achieve this.

Mr Mulholland argued that residents in single-councillor wards generally knew their ward councillor and usually felt comfortable approaching them (although it was also suggested residents can still contact any ward councillor). Mr Mulholland claimed, as did Mr Mobarek, that in smaller, single-councillor wards, councillors were more accountable to voters and the community. Cr Garotti suggested smaller wards enabled candidates and councillors to better get about in the local community and connect with residents. Cr Garotti also suggested that this enabled the Council to develop its job and internship program, which assists socially disadvantaged young people with employment, and that this would not have been possible under a multi-councillor ward electoral structure.

Mr Mobarek suggested that it was preferable to have a single point of contact rather than having to connect with multiple councillors. Because of his property and business interests, which would span multiple wards under Option A, Mr Mobarek could foresee having to contact as many as six councillors about various issues and believed this would be challenging. Mr Mobarek provided one example of a single-ward councillor, with knowledge of local issues and 'their finger on the pulse', successfully resolving a complex issue. Mr Mobarek also felt that having a single point of contact enabled him to prepare and respond to issues coming before the Council meeting in a timely manner.

According to Cr Garotti, the single point of contact reduced residents 'shopping' around for advice from elected councillors, which he argued could increase councillor workloads.

Mr Goodman refuted some of the claims made in support of Option C to argue that regardless of the electoral structure, there is always an incentive for candidates and councillors to effectively connect with communities and voters.

Mr Harrington argued that Option A and multi-councillor wards would improve the way in which councillors engaged with residents and communities, whereas Mr Koenig believed that multi-councillor wards would reduce the accessibility and accountability of councillors.

Cr Garotti argued that single-councillor wards better facilitated strong and supportive relationships between councillors and reduced competition between councillors. Mr Mobarek suggested that single-councillor wards created more manageable councillor workloads.

Mr Goodman presented the view that we should expect councillors to disagree and challenge one another and therefore this would not be a problem under Option A as others had suggested. Mr Goodman also refuted some of the arguments presented in support of Option C, suggesting that multi-councillor wards would not increase councillor workloads or allow hardworking councillors to do the work for 'lazy' councillors.

### **Councillor working relationships**

Cr Garotti suggested that the single-councillor ward structure had resulted in strong and supportive relationships among councillors.

Mr Harrington felt that Option A would better enable councillors to work together productively, share workloads, cover for each other as necessary and use one another as a sounding board when responding to local issues. Three councillors per ward would also increase the knowledge and expertise of councillors and provide more opportunity for the retention of knowledge, Mr Harrington suggested.

Mr Harrington argued that in relation to a specific local issue it was difficult for their ward councillor to represent residents' interests as the single councillor had to engage with and potentially convince all the other councillors. Mr Harrington also suggested that under a single-councillor ward structure it could be challenging for councillors focused on their ward to understand the issues in another ward.

### **Council-wide issues**

In support of Option A, Mr Dixon claimed that multi-councillor wards offered the benefits of having different inputs into decisions made in a certain ward and across the local council area and a greater potential for more strategic decision-making.

Mr Harrington argued that Option A would enable the Council to respond more effectively to major council-wide projects, such as the North East Link and the duplication of parts of the Hurstbridge Railway. Mr Harrington suggested that Option A would enable the Council and councillors to respond more effectively to these developments by not dividing the affected areas, as Option B or C would, and better enabling councillors to work together.

Supporters of Option C argued that the single-councillor ward electoral structure had delivered both local representation and council-wide initiatives.

### **Election outcomes**

Some speakers in support of Option C suggested multi-councillor wards encouraged party politics and benefited candidates with political affiliations. For example, Mr Mulholland contended that councillors with political affiliations would increase under a multi-councillor ward structure as it would be easier for political parties to be elected based on proportionality and that in larger wards campaign costs would be higher. This, Mr Mulholland suggested, would disadvantage independent candidates and those from minority groups.

Mr Goodman suggested that political party involvement in local government is not necessarily negative or detrimental to representation and that there is no reason to suggest the VEC should be acting to suppress party involvement.

In support of Option C, Mr Koenig argued that multi-councillor wards could result in the over-representation of minority groups and/or community division.

Cr Garotti responded to concerns about low numbers of candidates in some wards in previous elections and suggested that this was a potential downside of the current structure. However, Cr Garotti made the point that the low numbers of candidates and uncontested elections in some wards at previous elections could indicate that the community feels well represented.

Mr Dixon argued in support of Option A that there had been limited choice for voters under the single-councillor ward electoral structure and that those with more resources had tended to dominate elections anyway. Mr Dixon acknowledged that candidates would potentially have to work harder to get elected in larger wards and that either a single- or multi-councillor ward electoral structure could result in some communities feeling unrepresented. However, with reference to Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West and Bellfield, which contain very high percentages of disadvantaged households, and which Mr Mulholland claimed might be unrepresented in Option A, Mr Dixon argued that this area had enough voters to give these communities a good chance of electing a representative of their choosing. Mr Dixon added that under Option A, there would likely be a reasonable spread of candidates and councillors from across the ward. Mr Dixon also pointed out that in elections, a candidate can be elected by the difference of a handful of votes and in single-councillor wards this can leave a large section of the community feeling unrepresented.

### **Ward boundaries**

When questioned by the VEC's public hearing panel, Mr Grace was not too concerned about the prospect of ward boundaries splitting some communities in Option C as he felt the City as a whole is diverse and multicultural.

There was some support for the ward boundary changes put forward by Banyule City Council in its response submission. Both Mr Koenig and Mr Mobarek spoke in favour of the Council's proposed changes, particularly the boundary between 'Grimshaw Ward' and 'Bakewell Ward' and the boundary between 'Olympia Ward' and 'Ibbott Ward'.

Cr Garotti suggested that, on balance, it was preferable to have a single-councillor electoral structure with less than perfect ward boundaries than a multi-councillor ward structure.

Mr Mulholland reiterated the suggestions for ward name changes as presented in BRAG's response submission.

## Findings and recommendation

### The VEC's findings

The VEC considered a range of views expressed in submissions and conducted its own internal research to inform its final recommendations regarding the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure for Banyule City Council. In developing the following recommendation, the VEC considered factors such as the current and projected population and numbers of voters, communities of interest and any special circumstances that might apply to Banyule City Council.

### Number of councillors

The VEC put forward three options in its preliminary report, all consisting of nine councillors.

The VEC considered Banyule City Council's voter-to-councillor ratio, at 14,165, is one of the highest of all Victorian local councils and significantly higher than other Metropolitan Melbourne local councils with seven councillors. The VEC notes that the number of councillors on Banyule City Council has been at seven since council amalgamations in the 1990s. Population growth, while modest compared with other Metropolitan Melbourne local councils, has increased since this time. In 2006, about the time of the last review, the City's population numbered 114,866 and had grown to 121,865 by 2016. While this is not an especially high rate of growth, the VEC notes that the number of voters has increased by almost 10,000 voters since 2007 (from 90,094 to 99,158 currently). Moreover, population growth will continue at a projected rate of 0.8% per year to be 144,680 around the time of the next review.

The VEC considered findings from its last representation review of Banyule City Council in 2007, which initially proposed nine councillors as appropriate. The final recommendation was, however, for a seven single-councillor ward structure, as this was considered at the time to better cater for communities of interest than the proposed nine-councillor options. Presently the VEC does not consider that any seven-councillor structure will ensure fair and equitable representation for Banyule City Council voters more effectively than nine councillors. Indeed, the changes which have occurred in the City of Banyule since the last review, including demographic change and growth in higher density living, alongside the VEC's modelling of different electoral structures for this review, suggest a nine-councillor electoral structure is more appropriate for Banyule City Council.

The VEC considered the strong support for nine councillors in preliminary and response submissions and the compelling arguments presented in favour of an increase as important factors. Preliminary submissions in favour of increasing councillors to nine numbered twice as many as those supporting the retention of seven councillors, and a large number of submitters in support of a single-councillor electoral structure also favoured the nine single-councillor ward structure. Significantly, submitters favouring nine councillors included a sizeable number of

community groups. The VEC also notes arguments presented in favour of retaining seven councillors, which tended to downplay the growth and change that has occurred in the local council area since the last review and presented a less convincing case than those supporting nine councillors.

Due to the resident and voting population of Banyule City Council, its high voter-to-councillor ratio, the changing social demographics of the local council area and strong support in public submissions, the VEC determines that nine councillors is appropriate for ensuring fair and equitable representation for the voters of Banyule City Council.

### **Electoral structure**

In preliminary and response submissions an even spread of support for either a single- or a multi-councillor ward electoral structure was observed. The VEC considered the strength of the arguments in support of the different options alongside the VEC's representation review principles and research.

The VEC considered that strong arguments were presented by submitters and at the public hearing in support of both Options A and C, and that there was no support for Option B. On the strength of these arguments and the VEC's own research, it was considered that both Option A and Option C were valid electoral structures and that either would ensure fair and equitable representation for the voters of Banyule City Council.

#### ***Option A: Three three-councillor wards***

The VEC considered that Option A would more effectively accommodate current and projected population changes and reduce the risk that ward boundaries would need to be adjusted before the next scheduled review prior to the 2032 general election. The proposed ward boundaries mostly follow main roads and landmarks and would be easily identifiable to residents.

The VEC determined that Option A would likely provide voters with more choice at election time and reduce the chance of uncontested elections. Given low numbers of candidates and uncontested elections in some wards in the most recent three elections, this was an important consideration.<sup>23</sup> However, the VEC balanced these benefits with other considerations, such as representing the City's communities of interest.

The VEC determined that there is some uncertainty about Option A's benefits for voters, particularly in relation to the size of the wards and the various communities of interest brought together within the ward boundaries. The VEC considered that some communities might be left under- or un-represented in the larger wards of Option A. This was the view expressed by

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<sup>23</sup> In the 2016 elections Bakewell and Grimshaw Wards were uncontested and in 2012 Ibbott Ward was uncontested; Beale Ward had between two and three candidates stand at the past three elections and Ibbott Ward had two candidates stand in the 2008 and 2016 elections. See [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)



various community groups, some of which suggested that moving to multi-councillor wards would dilute their views and diminish the representation of their interests.

The VEC accepted arguments that the size of the wards in Option A could also present challenges for councillors connecting with residents and potentially disadvantage some candidates at election time. This is particularly significant for the City of Banyule due to the strong suburb-based identities observed by the VEC during the review process, large areas of land that are less populated and the observation that many residents value locally elected representatives.

The VEC acknowledged arguments in favour of Option A for increasing the scope of diversity. Public submissions, comparisons with similar Metropolitan Melbourne local councils and information provided by the Council at the public hearing suggest that Banyule City Council may not necessarily reflect the diversity of its community, particularly with regard to the number of women on the Council presently and for previous terms.

Nonetheless, while proportional representation vote counting provides a lower quota for candidates to be elected, there is no guarantee that extra diversity of councillors or views on the Council will be significantly achieved under Option A. The VEC considered that increasing the number of councillors to nine might go some way to increasing the opportunity for added diversity, and that nominating and electing candidates from diverse backgrounds is also the responsibility of voters.

#### ***Option B: Three three-councillor wards with different ward boundaries to Option A***

There was no support for Option B in public submissions and strong arguments presented by proponents of both options A and C against its adoption.

The VEC considered Option B to have wards defined along socio-economic lines so that many of the wealthier areas are in one ward and many of the more disadvantaged areas are in another. This has the potential to divide the City unfairly, might create divisions in the Council and could lead to inequitable councillor workloads. As such, the VEC did not consider Option B an appropriate structure to ensure fair and equitable representation for the voters of Banyule City Council.

#### ***Option C: Nine single-councillor wards***

The VEC's recommended electoral structure comprises nine single-councillor wards and was proposed as Option C in the preliminary report. The VEC considered that in many respects the current structure of single-councillor wards is working well for the voters of Banyule City Council and provides fair and equitable representation for the City's various communities of interest.

Option C was considered to capture communities effectively and would also achieve a good distribution of the City's activity centres, none of which are split by ward boundaries. The three

Major Activity Centres are each located in a separate ward in Option C, which is not the case under the current electoral structure.

Moreover, the VEC recommended a single-councillor ward electoral structure as part of the previous representation review in 2007 as the structure was determined to best ensure representation for the City's communities of interest. The VEC considered that this is largely still the case and the VEC does not lightly overturn its previous findings. However, it was determined that due to population growth the City would now best be served by nine single-councillor wards.

The VEC considered that single-councillor wards would have some advantages in the case of Banyule City Council, such as potentially enabling councillors to more easily engage with residents than might be the case in larger, multi-councillor wards. It also considered that the smaller wards provided through nine councillors as proposed in Option C would enhance the positive features of local representation. The VEC found that candidates campaigning for election might find it easier to connect with voters in the smaller wards proposed in Option C than in the larger wards of Option A or B.

The VEC heard that Banyule City Council voters value the single point of contact provided by single-councillor wards. It is understood that this electoral structure has facilitated good accountability and responsiveness of councillors to the interests of residents.

The VEC also received evidence that the smaller wards enable councillors to engage effectively with a number of community groups. The VEC observed the number of community groups that supported a single-councillor electoral structure in their submissions to this review and the strong suggestion that these groups have established good relationships with their ward councillor under the current single-councillor ward structure.

While many submitters suggested that single-councillor wards enhance the opportunity for independent and community-based candidates to stand for election and reduces the number of those with party political affiliation, the VEC did not consider these to be strong arguments. The VEC notes that this is a common argument presented for all kinds of electoral structures and the evidence is limited to suggest that either a single- or a multi-councillor ward electoral structure encourages or discourages partisan involvement.

Finally, the VEC determined that Option C would provide for much-needed change in the form of two more councillors, but by maintaining the current structure of single-councillor wards, would minimise the impact of change on voters.<sup>24</sup> And, although the VEC recognises the challenges associated with maintaining a large number of single-councillor wards over the long-term, it is confident in this instance that the electoral structure is sustainable.

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<sup>24</sup> Option C would impact 32,768 or one-third of Banyule City Council voters through the addition of two wards and proposed ward boundary changes.

### ***Option C ward boundaries***

The VEC considered that the ward boundaries proposed in Option C perform well in capturing communities of interest. For example, Ivanhoe is contained in the proposed 'Chelsworth Ward', Ivanhoe East, Eaglemont and Heidelberg are all within the proposed 'Griffin Ward', Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and most of Bellfield are within the proposed 'Olympia Ward' and Lower Plenty and most of Montmorency are in the proposed 'Sherbourne Ward'. In most cases the ward boundaries make good use of major roads and landmarks, such as the Plenty River, which residents are likely to be familiar with.

While the VEC determined that Option C would capture communities of interest reasonably well, it acknowledges that creating ward boundaries for nine single-councillor wards in a densely populated local council will inevitably divide some communities and require the use of some less identifiable ward boundaries. This is particularly the case with Bellfield, which is split between the proposed 'Olympia Ward' and 'Chelsworth Ward', Watsonia, which is split between the proposed 'Grimshaw Ward' and 'Bakewell Ward', and Rosanna, which is split three ways between the proposed 'Ibbott Ward', 'Hawdon Ward' and 'Griffin Ward'. Further, the ward boundary between the proposed 'Grimshaw Ward' and 'Bakewell Ward' is less clear than under the current structure. On balance, however, the VEC considered that the benefits of retaining single-councillor wards in Banyule City Council outweigh the drawbacks of the proposed ward boundaries. Overall, the VEC is confident that Option C represents the most viable and sustainable single-councillor electoral structure to ensure fair and equitable representation for the voters of Banyule City Council.

It is within these terms that the VEC assessed Banyule City Council's alternative ward boundaries proposed in its response submissions. Modelling of the Council's ward boundaries found that each of the proposed 'Bakewell Ward', 'Hawdon Ward' and 'Ibbott Ward' did not comply with the legislated requirement for each proposed ward to be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of number of voters per councillor. In addition, using the Council's boundary suggestions, the proposed 'Griffin Ward' (at -9.92% from the average) was also nearly outside the accepted tolerance.

Another response submission suggested changing to use Upper Heidelberg Road as the ward boundary between the proposed 'Chelsworth Ward' and 'Griffin Ward'. However, this boundary was also tested by the VEC and was found unviable for the same reasons as above.

The arguments provided in support of the Council's suggested boundary adjustments were, in most cases, reasonable. However, adjusting the other ward boundaries to bring three or four wards comfortably within the acceptable plus-or-minus 10% deviation compromises the structure of Option C and presented significantly negative flow-on effects for other wards that undermined the arguments behind the Council's suggestions.

### Ward names

The VEC acknowledged the interest within Banyule City Council for ward names that reflect the City's geography and history, such as ward names that recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage of the City. Differing views on final ward names were expressed through submissions, with no clear consensus of opinion. Accordingly, the VEC did not change the names in the recommended option since it was presented in the preliminary report. Should the community prefer alternative names to those provided, the Act provides for ward names to be altered by an Order in Council.

### Summary

On balance, the VEC determined that the benefits of Option A would not provide significantly improved representation when compared to a single-councillor ward electoral structure. The VEC found that Option C, with nine single-councillor wards, would be the most appropriate structure to ensure fair and equitable representation for Banyule City Council voters.

### The VEC's recommendation

**The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Banyule City Council consist of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.**

This recommendation is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the *Local Government Act 1989*. The model was designated as Option C in the VEC's preliminary report for this review.

Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

## Appendix 1: Public involvement

### Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions were made by:

Astbury, Donald John	Langdon, Cr. Craig
Banyule City Council	Mobarek, Hesham
Banyule Clean Energy Group	Moorhead, Gareth
Banyule Community Health	Olympic Adult Education (OAE)
Banyule Ratepayers Action Group Inc.	Pereira, Helen
Biaggini, Kevin	Permezel, Fiona
Bieber, Emily	Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
Carter, Robert	Smith, Rosemund
Conley, Andrew	Somali Australian Council of Victoria
Crowley, Patricia	Stokes, Don
Davis, Tim	Sustainable Macleod Inc.
Garotti, Councillor Rick	Transition 3081
Gentle, David	Watsonia Neighbourhood House
Good Governance Banyule	West Ivanhoe Sporting Club
Goodman, Matthew	
Harrison, Rowan	

### Response submissions

Response submissions were made by:

Astbury, Donald John	Castaldo, Councillor Peter
Banyule City Council	Compagnino, Robert and Tessarolo, Roberta
Banyule Ratepayers Action Group Inc.	Conley, Andrew
Biaggini, Kevin	Cooper, Peter and Kerry
Bieber, Emily	Cramb, Jim
Bryan, Jacqueline	Florance, Hamish
	Garotti, Councillor Rick

Gentle, David	Mulholland, David J. and Davidson, Sophie
Gillies, Greta	Mulholland, Jenny OAM
Good Governance Banyule	Newman, Adam
Goodman, Mary	Penna, Helen
Goodman, Matthew	Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
Green Liesel	Rodell, Bruce and Ruth
Harrington, Fred OAM	Ryman, Glen
Harrison, Rowan	Salins, Deborah and Andis
Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party	Somali Australian Council of Victoria
Johnson, Ann	Spink, Noel
Kennedy, Paul	Stanyong, Clement
Knoblock, Jorell	Tindill, Pamela and Stephen
Koenig, Stephen	Transition 3081
Lees, Suzanne	Watkin, Ken
Mobarek, Hesham	Watsonia Neighbourhood House
Moorhead, Gareth	Watsonia Traders Association
Morgan, Leonie	Willersdorf, Jeff and Rhonda
Mulholland, David Snr.	

## Public hearing

The following individuals spoke at the public hearing:

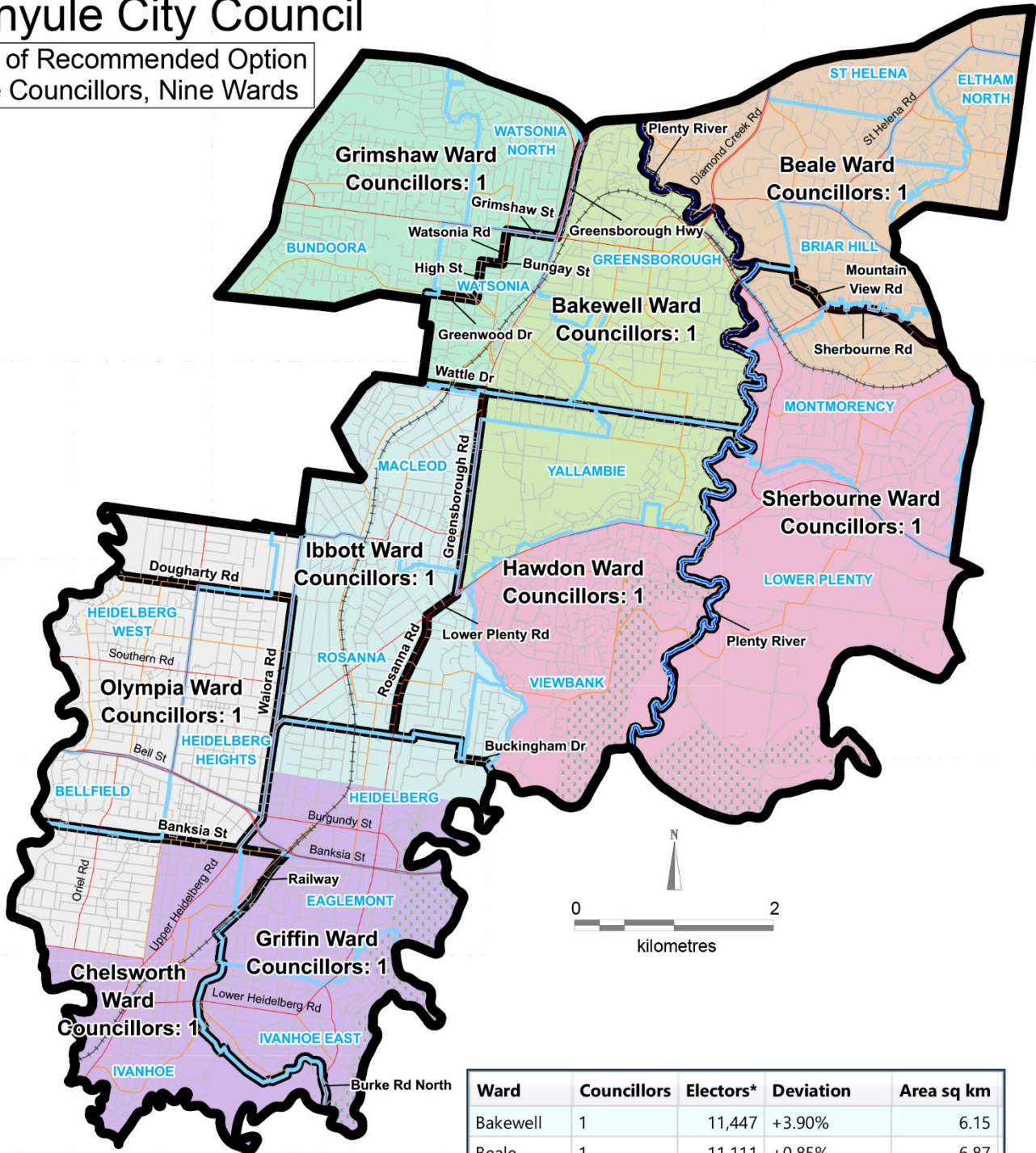
Dixon, Chris (President, Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party)	Harrington, Fred OAM
Garotti, Councillor Rick (Banyule City Council)	Koenig, Stephen
Goodman, Matthew	Mobarek, Hesham
Grace, Brian (Vice President, Good Governance Banyule)	Mulholland, David (Chairperson, Banyule Ratepayers Action Group Inc.)

## Appendix 2: Map

The map is provided on the next page.

# Banyule City Council

Map of Recommended Option  
Nine Councillors, Nine Wards



## Legend

Recommended Boundary

### Existing Wards

- Olympia
- Griffin
- Grimshaw
- Ibbott
- Bakewell
- Beale
- Hawdon

### Map Symbols

- Freeway
- Main Road
- Collector Road
- Road
- Unsealed Road
- Railway Line
- River/Creek
- Park/Reserve
- Lake
- Locality Boundary

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Bakewell	1	11,447	+3.90%	6.15
Beale	1	11,111	+0.85%	6.87
Chelsworth	1	10,539	-4.34%	5.24
Griffin	1	10,631	-3.51%	6.75
Grimshaw	1	11,395	+3.43%	5.96
Hawdon	1	11,481	+4.21%	9.01
Ibbott	1	10,386	-5.73%	6.1
Olympia	1	11,150	+1.20%	5.47
Sherbourne	1	11,018	+0.00%	11.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>99,158</b>	<b>-5.73% - +4.21</b>	<b>62.61</b>
<b>Average</b>		<b>11,018</b>		<b>6.96</b>

\*Elector numbers at 22 Feb 2019

Map prepared by:



Data use:



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Planning

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## Appendix 3: Public information program

### Advertising

In accordance with the Act, public notices of the review and the release of the preliminary report were placed in the following newspapers:

Newspaper	Notice of review	Notice of preliminary report
<i>Herald Sun</i>	Thursday 6 June	Wednesday 7 August
<i>Heidelberg Leader</i>	Tuesday 18 June	Tuesday 20 August
<i>Diamond Valley Leader</i>	Wednesday 19 June	Wednesday 21 August

### Media releases

A media release was prepared and distributed to local media to promote the commencement of the review. A further release was distributed with the publication of the preliminary report on.

A final media advisory was circulated on the publication date of this final report.

### Public information sessions

Public information sessions for people interested in the review process were held on:

- Wednesday 26 June 2019 in The McCubbin Room, The Centre Ivanhoe, 275 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe
- Tuesday 25 June 2019 in the Hawdon, Olympia & Ibbott Rooms, Greensborough Service Centre, 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough.

### Submissions guide

A submission guide was developed and made available on the VEC website, or in hardcopy on request, throughout the review timeline. The submission guide provided information about the review, the review timeline and how to make submissions to the review.

### Online submission tool

An online submission tool was developed and made available during the submission periods of the review. The tool allowed people to make a submission from the VEC website. During the preliminary submission stage, users also had the opportunity to map out their preferred subdivisions through the online submission tool using Boundary Builder. Boundary Builder included real elector numbers so that users could see if their preferred structures and numbers of councillors met the plus-or-minus 10% rule.

## **VEC website**

The VEC website delivered up-to-date information to provide transparency and facilitate public participation during the review process. All public submissions were published on the website.

## **Email and social media engagement**

The VEC delivered an information email campaign targeted at known community groups and communities of interest in the local council area. This included a reminder email at each milestone of the representation review process.

The VEC also published sponsored social media advertising that was geo-targeted to users within the local council area. This included advertising at both the preliminary submission and response submission stages. The total reach of these posts was 9,489 during the preliminary submission stage and 7,756 during the response submission stage.

## **Council communication resources**

The VEC provided the Council with a communication pack that included information on the review in various formats. While the council is encouraged to distribute this information and raise awareness about the review, the VEC is an independent reviewer and all communications resources include reference and links to the VEC website and core materials.

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