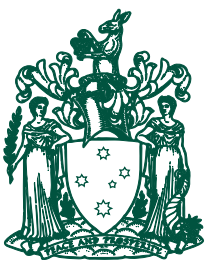


Victorian Electoral Commission

## **Report of local government electoral activity 2008-09**

### **Part III**

### **Report of local government electoral representation reviews conducted by the VEC between 2004 and 2008**



# VEC

October 2009



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## Foreword by the Electoral Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Victorian Electoral Commission Report of Local Government Electoral Activity 2008-09.

For the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), 2008 was the culmination of several years of activity relating to local government. This report provides an overview of the current year's activity, and review and analysis of the electoral representation and subdivision reviews that were conducted over a number of reporting periods.

In this report, the VEC has put forward a number of recommendations with the aim of further improving the efficiency of electoral administrative processes for local government elections.

Also noted are a number of other matters that were raised during the elections or during the electoral representation and subdivision reviews. Although these matters are beyond the scope of the VEC's responsibilities, the VEC made a commitment to include them in its report.

This report is presented in four parts, each dealing with a particular area of activity.

### **Part III is a report of local government electoral representation reviews conducted by the VEC between 2004 and 2008.**

In Spring 2003, the Parliament of Victoria passed the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) to include provisions for regular, independent reviews of the electoral structures for all Victorian local councils except for the City of Melbourne. Since then, 77 of Victoria's local councils have undergone reviews in accordance with that legislation – 39 in 2004-2005 and 38 in 2007-2008.

With almost the entire State having now been reviewed, the VEC considers it an appropriate time to reflect and report on that process. Included in Part III is commentary about the conduct of the reviews, the VEC's methodology and some analysis of the impact of structures and election outcomes.

### **Part IV is a report of local government electoral subdivision reviews conducted by the VEC in 2008.**

Electoral representation reviews (see Part III of this report) are scheduled to take place before every second general election. If, in the election between representation reviews, it is likely that there will be substantial variations within a municipality in the number of voters represented by each councillor, then subdivision reviews are designed to reduce the variations by adjusting ward boundaries.

The first subdivision reviews were conducted in 2008. Included in Part IV are details about how the reviews were conducted and the principles and methods used by the VEC to reach its recommendations.

**Part I is a report of the conduct of the 2008 local government elections.**

In 2008, after a rigorous tendering process involving extensive planning and preparation, the VEC was appointed to conduct elections for all 79 Victorian councils in November 2008. By July 2008 implementation of the election plan had commenced and the VEC 's focus was to ensure the successful conduct of the elections, which involved providing services to 70 councils, nearly 2,000 candidates and almost four million enrolled electors.

Part I contains an overview of the elections, providing an insight into the way the VEC managed the logistical challenges presented by such a large electoral event. Details of innovations in processes, products and services are included, along with key figures and results. A brief commentary on the impact and effectiveness of recent legislative changes and a number of recommendations are included for consideration by the Government.

**Part II is a report of the conduct of local government by-election and countbacks during 2008-09.**

The level of activity in this area was lower than usual due to the conduct of local government elections in November 2008 (see Part I of this report). Part II provides commentary about the two local government by-elections conducted during 2008-09, along with key figures and results. There were no countbacks conducted during the reporting period.

The VEC looks forward to assisting both Local Government Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria in their consideration of electoral matters and believes that the recommendations in this report will benefit such consideration. I take this opportunity to formally record my appreciation for the professional assistance provided by those two organisations, as well as that provided by the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office.

I would like to thank our contractors and suppliers for the exceptional support and service they provide, which contributes invaluable to the success of the VEC's activities.

Congratulations go to my staff for their efforts in ensuring that all VEC activity is carried out with care and diligence. Their commitment to providing Victorians with the opportunity to participate in our democracy at this important level of government was a key factor in the success of the local government elections across Victoria in 2008.



Steve Tully  
Electoral Commissioner

## Summary

The key findings in this report regarding the electoral representation reviews conducted between 2004 and 2008 are:

- a variety of structures was recommended by the VEC, including single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards, combinations of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures;
- in 57% of the reviews, the VEC recommended that the number of councillors remain the same;
- in 69% of the reviews, the electoral structure recommended was different to the pre-review structure;
- 47% of the municipalities reviewed had at least one ward outside the allowed 10% variation from the average number of voters per councillor at the commencement of their reviews and therefore legislation required that they be changed;
- in 58% of the reviews, the final recommendation was the same as the preliminary preferred option, with the response phase of the public consultation process resulting in changes in 42% of the reviews;
- to reach its recommendations, the VEC was required to develop a methodology and detailed principles, which it did primarily by reference to international and interstate comparisons;
- in determining the appropriate number of councillors for a municipality, the VEC's considerations included a comparison with other similar municipalities, the diversity of the population, councillors' workloads and the need to prevent tied votes;
- to apply these criteria, the VEC developed a three-step method which provided a consistent, State-wide approach and took into account the particular characteristics of the municipality under review;
- to determine the appropriate internal structures, the VEC's considerations included community of interest, the longevity of the potential structure, geographic factors, the number of voters in potential wards, the easy identification of ward boundaries and the model of representation;
- to apply these criteria, the VEC developed a method which included the use of mapping software and analysis of demographic statistics, mapping physical features and fieldwork conducted by the VEC;
- the VEC recommended boundaries for 276 wards, of which 270 were within the 10% variation permitted by legislation at the election after the review;
- six of the municipalities reviewed in 2004-2005 required subdivision reviews prior to the 2008 elections;
- feedback from participants suggested high levels of satisfaction with the VEC's public consultation process;
- 4,479 submissions were received for the 77 reviews, ranging from 5 in one council to 407 in another;
- the vast majority of submitters were private individuals;
- submissions were received supporting all types of structure;
- the VEC considered that the most valuable information to be provided by submissions was about local issues and local perspectives and therefore took account of the

submissions based on the weight and merit of arguments and the strength of evidence presented rather than as a “straw poll” of the community;

- in a number of reviews, submissions assisted the VEC by identifying additional issues or information that were not identified in VEC research, leading to changes in the VEC’s recommendations;
- the VEC’s communication products were improved as the process progressed in response to feedback, and surveys of stakeholders indicate that the VEC’s improvements were valuable;
- a number of concerns were raised by submitters about the VEC’s methods, use of data and principles;
- the VEC considers that some of these concerns rest on misunderstandings and has explored these in this report, with particular reference to election results from the 2004, 2005 and 2008 elections; and
- a number of issues beyond the scope of the reviews were repeatedly raised and have been documented in this report.



## **Matters for the Government to consider**

As a result of the reviews, the VEC has a number of recommendations for the Government to consider.

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Model of representation**

If the Government believes that the model of representation should be a primary factor in determining recommendations for representation reviews, then it should consider indicating this in legislation or regulations.

*See page 5.*

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Single body to conduct reviews**

The Government should consider modifying the Local Government Act so that the VEC is prescribed as the only body able to conduct electoral representation reviews within Victoria.

*See page 11.*

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Principles for determining the number of councillors**

The Government should consider confirming its approval of these principles for determining the number of councillors for municipalities during representation reviews:

- the diversity of the population;
- councillors workloads; and
- the desirability of preventing tied votes.

If the Government believes that other principles would be more appropriate, it should give consideration to including these in legislation or regulations.

*See page 19.*

### **Recommendation 4**

#### **Optional preferential vote counting**

The Government should consider modifying the Local Government Act so that votes are considered formal according to an optional preferential system.

*See page 31.*

### **Recommendation 5**

#### **Principles for determining internal electoral structures**

The Government should consider confirming its approval of these principles for determining the internal electoral structures of municipalities during representation reviews:

- communities of interest;
- the longevity of the structure;
- geographic factors;
- the number of voters in potential wards;
- the easy identification of ward boundaries;

- models of representation; and
- other factors relevant to the municipality under review.

If the Government believes that other principles would be more appropriate, it should give consideration to including these in legislation or regulations.

*See page 34.*

## **Recommendation 6**

### **Multiple preferred options**

The Government should consider amending the *Local Government Act 1989* s.219F(6) to allow the VEC to publish more than one preferred option in the Preliminary Report.

*See page 54.*

## **Recommendation 7**

### **Consideration of matters beyond the scope of the review.**

The Government should consider the following issues that were raised during the public consultation process, but are outside the scope of the review. . The VEC has not investigated these issues, but has included them in this report for the Government's consideration.

#### *(i) Changing the external boundaries*

In a number of municipalities, submitters suggested changing external ward boundaries. Most commonly, it was suggested that there was a need to divide the municipality into two new municipalities, although in a few cases, submitters also suggested amalgamating parts of one municipality with another. A number of submitters made reference to municipality boundaries before the restructures of the 1990s and wished to return to these.

The VEC notes that it became apparent that there were communities of interest in some parts of some municipalities which were quite distinct, particularly in the State's largest municipalities. In the City of Casey, for example, there is a large rural area, which contains around 10,000 voters and has little community of interest with dense urban areas like Narre Warren. In terms of population, this rural area is larger than many regional shires, yet it is only represented by one councillor out of eleven due to the size of the City of Casey as a whole. Similarly in the City of Greater Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula is quite different to urban Geelong and contains over 40,000 voters – which is more than most regional shires – yet is represented by only four councillors out of twelve.

Other municipalities in which there were multiple calls for dividing the municipality included:

- separating Phillip Island from the mainland area of Bass Coast Shire;
- splitting Northern Grampians Shire into a Stawell-focused municipality and a St Arnaud-focused municipality; and
- removing the Rosedale area of Wellington Shire.

During the Borough of Queenscliffe review, some submitters pointed out that the town of Point Lonsdale is divided between the Borough of Queenscliffe and the City of Greater Geelong. It was suggested that all of Point Lonsdale should be included in the Borough of Queenscliffe.

The Government may wish to note these situations and consider a review of the external boundaries of municipalities in Victoria.

*(ii) A larger range of councillor numbers*

Some submitters felt that the range of councillor numbers permitted by legislation (5-12) was not sufficient. In some cases, they argued for smaller numbers. In a larger number of cases, people expressed the view that more than twelve councillors would be appropriate for their municipality.

The VEC notes that there are some very large, fast-growing municipalities where it may be difficult to achieve fair and equitable representation under the current legislation. The City of Casey is a prominent example. With the largest population (and second largest number of voters) in Victoria and one of the highest growth rates in Australia, Casey presents significant challenges to its councillors. The City of Greater Geelong is in a similar position, and one submitter there suggested an increase to 16 councillors as well as the excision of part of the municipality. The upper limit of 12 councillors imposed by the Act means that each councillor has to represent a very large and rising number of voters.

The Government might give consideration as to whether or not it should amend the Act to allow for more than 12 councillors where municipalities have more than a nominated number of voters.

*(iii) Councillors' remuneration*

Another issue beyond the scope of the reviews was councillors' remuneration. In some cases, arguments were put to the VEC that the workload of councillors was such that they were required to attend to their council duties on a full-time basis, and therefore required remuneration that would enable them to do this.

A number of submissions also advocated councillors' positions officially being considered full-time positions.

The VEC has not been able to assess the validity of these claims regarding councillors' workloads, but does note the argument put forward that some councillors' wards are larger than State electorates.

*(iv) Candidates' membership of political parties*

Some submitters believed that it was important for candidates' political party affiliations to be made known to the voters (e.g. by being printed on the ballot papers). The VEC has not been able to assess the extent to which political parties are involved in local government, but does note that a number of candidates at local council elections also stand in State elections as endorsed members of political parties.

*(v) Where candidates live*

Some submissions suggested that candidates should only be allowed to stand for the ward in which they live. Others suggested that the localities in which candidates are enrolled be printed on the ballot papers.

*(vi) Dummy candidates*

The issue of "dummy candidates" caused concern to submitters in many municipalities, and there were multiple calls for the government to somehow solve this issue. As mentioned in Section 7.4 of this report, the VEC has no way of reliably identifying "dummy candidates" and cannot assess the extent to which this is a problem.

*(vii) Different voting system options*

A number of amendments to the existing voting system were advocated in the review process, including:

- a change to counting votes by the “first past the post” method (some argued that this delivered fairer results);
- a return to rotating annual elections in multi-councillor wards (as an alternative to proportional representation, which was considered unfair by some); and
- making voting optional preferential (it was argued that this would remove one of the concerns that the VEC has about larger wards and therefore enable it to create multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided municipalities in situations where it would not do so under the current legislation; it was argued that this would give voters a wider range of choices at election time).

Many submitters felt that proportional representation was an inappropriate system, as discussed in Section 7.4.

A significant number of submissions advocated for directly electing the mayor.

There were also submitters who wished for their council election to be run by either postal or attendance voting. Some hoped that the VEC might be able to enforce a particular system as part of its recommendations and some hoped that the Government might eliminate one of the options from the legislation. There were supporters and opponents for both systems.

One submission advocated for electronic voting for the vision impaired in local council elections.

*(viii) A broader review*

Some submissions suggested that the electoral representation review was a good opportunity to review the operations of the council more widely and to consider other factors such as whether or not the council’s administrative and governance processes provide the best outcomes for voters.

A large number of submitters believed that their rates were higher than they should be, and advocated for an independent review of their rates.

In many municipalities, submitters raised very specific issues (e.g. concerns about the state of bridges, concerns about subdivisions that they considered inappropriate and issues with waste collection, concerns about the council holding meetings closed to the public).

## 1. Introduction

In Spring 2003, the Parliament of Victoria passed the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) to include provisions for regular, independent reviews of the electoral structures for all Victorian local councils except for the City of Melbourne. Since then, 77 of Victoria's local councils have undergone reviews in accordance with that legislation – 39 in 2004-2005 and 38 in 2007-2008. With almost the entire State having now been reviewed, the VEC considers it an appropriate time to reflect and report on that process.

In particular, this report seeks to provide an analysis of:

- how the reviews were conducted;
- what the VEC recommended;
- the principles and methods used by the VEC to come to its recommendations;
- concerns raised during the reviews by various stakeholders;
- matters raised in the reviews that were beyond the reviews' scope;
- the results of 908 surveys conducted between 2004 and 2008 of stakeholders in the process; and
- what we can learn about the reviews from the results of the 2004, 2005 and 2008 local council elections.

This report is intended both to explain how the VEC has conducted the reviews and what learnings and changes it has made through the process.

The VEC made a number of observations during the course of the reviews, leading to refinements in the VEC's processes and method. These improvements were made both in response to feedback and as a result of internal assessment as the reviews were completed. The changes implemented by the VEC throughout the process did not compromise consistency in the application of principles.

The key changes implemented during the period of reviews were:

- more explanation of the VEC's methodology;
- more detailed explanations of how the VEC arrived at particular recommendations;
- more detailed analyses of submissions and feedback on how they influenced the recommendations;
- improved use and analysis of data; and
- a wider range of options put forward in the Preliminary Reports.

One of the recurrent criticisms made of the VEC was that its methodology was not clear enough. One of the key intentions of this report is to discuss the VEC's methodology in more detail than would be practical in a Preliminary or Final Report for a particular review and to put this methodology into the public domain for comment. Many concerns were raised about the process, and it is hoped that this report will address many of them, as well as dispel some of the misunderstandings that arose during the reviews.

In 2006, the VEC prepared a detailed report looking at some of these issues as they applied to the municipalities reviewed in 2004 and 2005. Brief comments about the 2007-2008 reviews were also included in the Local Government Electoral Activity Reports for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. The intention of this report is bring together the findings of those reports and provide additional details about the 2007-2008 reviews.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Municipal electoral structures 1993-2003

After the amalgamations of municipalities in 1993-1994, one of the tasks of the Commissioners for each municipality was to recommend the electoral structure to come into place at the first election of councillors for the new municipality. This included recommending the number of councillors, the electoral structure, and the boundaries of wards.

These recommendations were determined individually by each council using a variety of methods. The then Office of Local Government produced a guide as to the benefits and difficulties inherent in different structures and different numbers of councillors,<sup>1</sup> but this was informative rather than directive. The only limitations provided by the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) were:

- “A Council must consist of not fewer than 5 Councillors and not more than 12 Councillors” (s. 5B(1)); and
- If the municipal district is divided into wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors in the municipality (s.219D).

The Commissioners adopted a variety of techniques of public consultation in coming to their recommendations, including formal written submission processes, community workshops and electors voting on a number of possible structures.

As a result of this process, a wide variety of structures was established across Victoria, with similar municipalities often having quite different structures and different numbers of councillors.

Subsequent to the initial structures determined by the Commissioners, councils conducted their own electoral reviews, with the only restrictions being the same two restrictions as applied to the Commissioners. In many cases, the VEC prepared options for the council’s consideration under the council’s direction.

### 2.2 Independent electoral representation reviews

The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* was passed by the Parliament in Spring 2003 and received assent on 9 December 2003, providing for “independent reviews of electoral representation by all Councils on a regular basis to provide for fair and equitable representation” (s.219A).

According to section 219C of the Act, the first review for each council is to take place at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government and then reviews are to take place before every second election. In 2004 and 2005, the Minister gave notice that electoral representation reviews were to take place for 39 of Victoria’s municipalities. In 2007, the Minister gave notice for the remaining 39 municipalities covered by the Act (the City of Melbourne is not included) to take place. Of those, 38 were to take place in 2007-2008 and one (Surf Coast Shire) is scheduled to occur in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Local Government (1995).

<sup>2</sup> Surf Coast Shire was delayed because the VEC conducted a review of it in late 2003, prior to the passage of the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, on reference from the Minister. This review assisted in

The purpose of an electoral representation review as defined by the Act 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. Matters to be considered by the review are (s.219D):

- the number of councillors;
- the electoral structure of the municipality (whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and, if the municipality is to be subdivided, the number of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward); and
- if the recommendation is for the municipality to be divided into wards, boundaries for the wards that will:
- provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
- ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors.

The Act makes clear that the reviews are to be conducted independently of the council under review. It specifies that the council “cannot specify how the review is to be conducted” (s.219E) and that “subject to this section [219F], the reviewer may conduct the review in any manner that the reviewer considers appropriate”. The reviewer must make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who may then implement it. In all cases to date, the Minister has implemented the recommendation of the review.

### **2.3 The diversity of Victoria’s municipalities**

There is considerable diversity in the size of Victoria’s municipalities. The numbers of voters within municipalities varies between just over 4,000 to approximately 160,000. The area of the municipalities ranges from 11 km<sup>2</sup> to over 22,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Some municipalities are experiencing rapid population growth, while others are experiencing population decrease. In some cases, a substantial proportion of the population is older, whereas in others it is predominantly younger people or people with families. A large number of residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can be found in some municipalities, while a very small number of these people can be found in others. Some municipalities have large numbers of non-resident voters (68.8% in Churchill Ward, Bass Coast Shire at the 2008 elections), but others have very small numbers (2.6% in Robinvale Ward, Swan Hill Rural City).

Broadly, a number of quite distinct types of municipality have been identified, including:

- densely-populated suburban areas (e.g. Moreland, Port Phillip);
- urban-rural fringe areas (e.g. Macedon Ranges, Mornington Peninsula);
- areas containing both a densely-populated suburban area and an urban-rural fringe area (e.g. Casey, Melton);
- regional and rural cities with little rural hinterland (e.g. Wodonga, Warrnambool);
- regional and rural cities combined with substantial rural hinterland (e.g. Mildura, Ararat); and
- rural areas with no large urban areas (e.g. Towong, Golden Plains).

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developing the principles applied in conducting the reviews under the new legislation. The Surf Coast review is not included in statistics in this report, as it was not conducted under the same legislation.

In each type of municipality, it became evident during the course of the reviews that councils face quite different issues and voters have different representation needs. It is important to note that even within these categories there is considerable variety, due to differing geographic sizes, population sizes, demographics, land use and local issues.

This great variety means that a considerable number of factors were required to be taken into account in trying to identify the representation needs of the municipality under review. The public consultation process was crucial in communicating these issues to the VEC.

## **2.4 Representation in Victoria at the local government level**

The role of councillors is to represent not only the voters but the community as a whole. There is some debate, however, as to how this representation should be achieved by the electoral system. Burdess and O'Toole have put forward three slightly different models of representation that apply in the Victorian local government context:<sup>3</sup>

### *Interest representation*

In this model, elected representatives are seen as the personal advocates of their constituents. Voters expect their representatives to pursue the constituents' particular interests and hold them responsible for activities that hinder their interests. With this sort of model, in a subdivided municipality, voters take ownership of the particular councillor(s) that they voted for, expecting them to represent the particular interests of the ward.

### *Corporate representation*

With corporate representation, the representative body (i.e. the council) is seen as authorised to act for the electorate as a whole and to deliberate and make decisions on behalf of the voters. This is seen more often in levels of government with political parties, where a party as a team seeks authorisation from voters across electorates for a policy framework.

### *Mirror representation*

Mirror representation seeks to create a representative body whose make-up reflects the make-up of the constituents. That is, specific groups are represented on the council in proportions reflecting their proportions in the electorate by people who reflect those groups. With this model, voters would take ownership of the councillor that reflects their group most closely.

These different models of representation are important, as each has different implications for what is the most appropriate electoral system. Thus, interest representation is favoured by single-councillor wards to ensure accountability, but mirror representation is favoured by unsubdivided structures with proportional representation to most closely reflect the groups within a municipality rather than locations.<sup>4</sup> Unsubdivided municipalities, where all voters

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<sup>3</sup> Burdess *et al.* (2004), pp. 67f.; cf. Hearfield *et al.* (2009), pp. 63-66.

<sup>4</sup> Burdess *et al.* (2004), p. 69; Hearfield *et al.* (2009), pp. 65f.



vote for all councillors, or division into heterogeneous wards that each reflects the make-up of the municipality as a whole may best suit corporate representation.<sup>5</sup>

This has been apparent in the public consultation process and often submitters' disagreements about structures are based on different models of representation. Many of those submitters who believe only single-councillor wards can ever be effective do so because they expect to be represented through interest representation, whereas many of those arguing for multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided structures in all situations do so because they believe that mirror representation is appropriate.

Similarly, submitters arguing for larger numbers of councillors sometimes do so based on a belief in mirror representation, believing that the variety of different groups within the municipality requires a similar variety of councillors. On the other hand, submitters arguing for smaller numbers often conceive of the council as operating with corporate representation.

In Victoria, there is no framework mandating which model of representation is most appropriate for local councils. Different models have been favoured by various governments over time.<sup>6</sup> Individual councils have adopted a variety of models, and even within a municipality, there may be a range of expectations between different groups and individuals.

The VEC does not consider it to be within its role to decide which mode of representation is the most appropriate. The expectation within each municipality has been one factor among the many listed in Section 5.4 taken into account when making recommendations. Where a particularly strong expectation has become apparent through the public consultation process, this has been included in the VEC's considerations. This is discussed further in Section 5.4.

Although the model of representation is only one factor among many in the VEC's considerations, a substantial amount of the public debate about representation reviews deals with which model of representation is most appropriate. The VEC believes that it would benefit the process for the Government to indicate its views on the matter so that the VEC had some authority in considering this factor.

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Model of representation**

If the Government believes that the model of representation should be a primary factor in determining recommendations for representation reviews, then it should consider indicating this in legislation or regulations.

## **2.5 The VEC's involvement**

The Act specifies that each council must appoint an electoral commission to conduct the review (s.219E). In all 77 cases, the Victorian Electoral Commission was appointed. No other electoral commissions have expressed interest in undertaking the work.

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<sup>5</sup> Burdess *et al.* (2004), p. 72; cf. Cain (1984), pp. 64f. For a different perspective on representation and electoral systems, see Horowitz (2003), especially p. 124 and Weaver (2002), especially pp 113f.

<sup>6</sup> Burdess *et al.* (2004), pp. 69-75; O'Toole *et al.* (2003).

## **2.5 The VEC's involvement**

The Act specifies that each council must appoint an electoral commission to conduct the review (s.219E). In all 77 cases, the Victorian Electoral Commission was appointed. No other electoral commissions have expressed interest in undertaking the work.

Prior to the legislation, the VEC had almost ten years' experience working on municipal ward boundaries, having been contracted by many councils to prepare options for their consideration. VEC personnel have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has developed expertise in the use of sophisticated mapping software, conducting field research and preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with legislative approximate equality requirements and respect communities of interest. For the electoral representation reviews, the VEC also brought on staff with expertise in research and data analysis.

The VEC engaged two consultants with extensive experience in local government to provide advice for each of the reviews – Messrs Terry Maher and Vern Robson.

Mr Maher commenced his career in local government in 1963. Mr Maher has extensive municipal experience, having been employed by the Melbourne City Council and the former Ringwood and Essendon Councils. He also held the position of Chief Executive at Knox City Council from 1995-2001 and Croydon City Council from 1986-1994. Mr Maher was also interim Chief Executive of the Monash City Council at the time of municipal restructure. In 2002, Mr Maher was appointed by the Minister for Local Government to conduct a Commission of Inquiry into Surf Coast Shire Council which was completed in April 2003. He now provides consulting services to the public sector.

Mr Robson has worked in local government since 1955, and has been the Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer of the City of Warrnambool, the Chief Commissioner of the City of Ballarat, the Administrator of the Mansfield Shire Council and the Director of the Local Government Branch of the former Department of Infrastructure.

## **2.6 Costs for conducting Electoral Representation Reviews**

The VEC charged councils marginal costs for conducting electoral representation reviews. These included direct costs (costs incurred for advertising, printing, external consultants, etc.) and a portion of VEC staff costs. Advertising costs varied between councils as these were dependent upon the number of newspapers circulating within the municipality.

In some cases, council's requested community consultation products in addition to the standard products, ie, a leaflet drop to all households within the municipality. These extra products added additional costs to the review process. All funds received by the VEC for the conduct of the reviews were paid into consolidated revenue. Details of the individual amounts charged to councils are detailed in Appendix 10.

### 3. The VEC's recommendations

The VEC's recommendations for each review are listed in Appendix 1. This chapter summarises these recommendations across all reviews. Chapters 4-6 explain how the VEC reached these recommendations.

#### 3.1 Recommended structures

A range of structures was recommended by the VEC, dependant on the characteristics of the various municipalities.

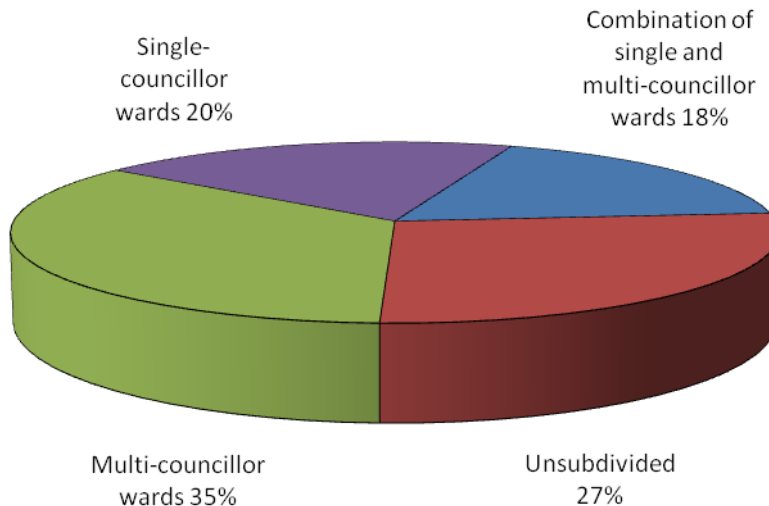


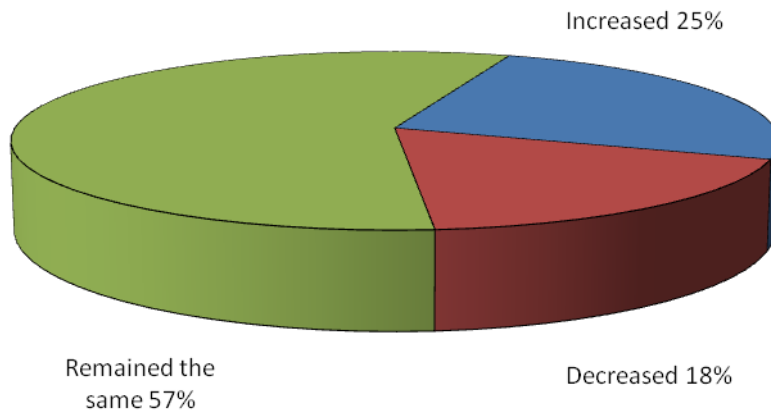
Figure 1: Types of structure recommended

Multi-councillor wards were the most common recommendation (recommended in 35% of cases overall), followed by unsubdivided structures, structures exclusively with single-councillor wards and combinations of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards. All possible structure types were recommended.

Comparing the 2007-2008 reviews to those in 2004-2005, the most notable observation is that the proportion of recommendations for single-councillor wards doubled in 2007-2008, from 13% to 26%. This may be a reflection of the fact that in 2007-2008, the VEC included the current structure as a preliminary option in most cases. Conversely, the proportion of recommendations consisting of a combination of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards dropped, from 23% in 2004-2005 to 16% in 2007-2008. The proportion of recommendations for unsubdivided municipalities and multi-councillor ward structures dropped in 2007-2008 only by relatively small amounts – 2% and –4% respectively.

#### 3.2 Numbers of councillors recommended

Across all reviews in 2004-2005 and 2007-2008, an increase was recommended in 19 cases (25%), a decrease recommended in 14 cases (18%) and a recommendation to remain the same put forward in 44 instances (57%). There was not a significant difference in the proportions of recommendations for increase, decrease or no change when comparing the 2007-2008 reviews and the 2004-2005 reviews.



*Figure 2: Number of councillors recommended*

Overall, as a result of the reviews, the number of councillors in Victoria increased by 8 from 623 to 631<sup>7</sup>. Of the legislatively-permitted range of councillor numbers (5 to 12 inclusive), all numbers were recommended except for 8. The even numbers, however, were only recommended in a small number of cases.

### **3.3 Changes to the electoral structure**

In 69% of the reviews, the VEC recommended changes to the electoral structure.<sup>8</sup> The proportion of reviews resulting in a recommendation for change was almost identical between the 2007-2008 round and the 2004-2005 round.

It should be noted that 47% of municipalities contained one or more wards that were outside the allowable 10% variation (in terms of number of voters represented by councillors) at the start of their reviews. A further 12% of municipalities had at least one ward with a deviation between 9 and 10% when their reviews began. See further detail in Appendix 2.

In these reviews, changes were necessary to meet legislative requirements. In some cases, it was not possible to redraw the boundaries in a meaningful way if recommending the original structure. This was especially the case where more than one ward was outside the 10% allowance (the Shire of Melton was the most extreme instance of this, with six of its seven wards outside the allowed variation at the start of the review). More substantial changes were required in these reviews.

<sup>7</sup> This includes nine councillors for the City of Melbourne, which is not required by legislation to be reviewed, and nine for Surf Coast Shire, which has not been reviewed under the current legislation.

<sup>8</sup> For these statistics, if the municipality had a seven single-councillor ward structure both before and after the review, it has been counted as maintaining the same structure, even if the ward boundaries were altered. If the structure remained the same (i.e. single-councillor wards) but the number of councillors differed, the structures have been classified as different, as in most cases altering the structure is a necessary consequence of altering the number of councillors.

### 3.4 Options recommended

An important part of the process of developing an option for recommendation is the public consultation process (detailed in Chapter 6). As part of this, the VEC puts forward a preliminary preferred structure and generally a number of preliminary alternative structures (usually between one and three models) in a Preliminary Report for public comment. In most cases, one of these structures is recommended to the Minister for Local Government in the Final Report. In some of the 2004-2005 reviews, following the public comments on the preliminary option, the VEC came to the view that there was a better option than any of the preliminary options and recommended a somewhat different structure to any of the preliminary options. During the 2007-2008 reviews, when the VEC considered that a different structure to any of the preliminary options was preferable, the VEC published that option in an Addendum Report and called for public comment. This happened in five reviews, and in three of those, this additional option was the VEC's final recommendation.

In 58% of cases, the VEC's final recommendation was the same as its preliminary recommendation. The VEC changed its view as a result of the public feedback in 42% of the reviews, with one of the preliminary alternative options being recommended in 33% of the reviews and either a new structure<sup>9</sup> or an additional option which had been released for public comment being recommended in the remaining 9% of reviews.

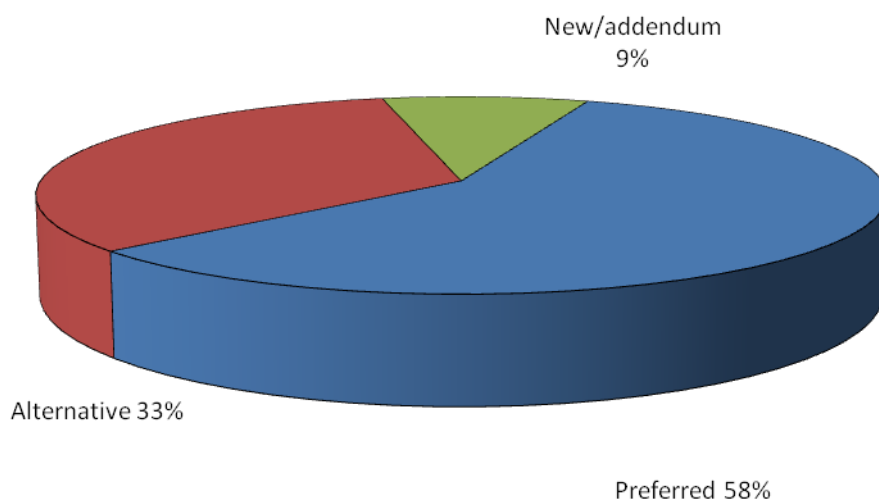


Figure 3: Options recommended

The proportions on this matter are quite different between the 2007-2008 reviews and the 2004-2005 reviews. In 2004-2005 the preliminary preferred model was recommended 69% of the time, compared to 47% in 2007-2008, and a preliminary alternative option was recommended 21% of the time in the 2004-2005 reviews compared to 45% of the time in the 2007-2008 reviews. One of the major reasons for this is the fact that a larger number of alternative options was put forward in the preliminary phase during the 2007-2008 reviews.

<sup>9</sup> Only cases of substantial variation have been included as "new" – in a much larger number of cases, minor boundary alterations to preliminary structures or changes to ward names were adopted in the final recommendation.

## 4. How the VEC reached those recommendations

### 4.1 Legislation

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) specifies a number of elements to be included in the review process. Section 219F specifies that the reviewer must:

- publish a notice informing people of the review and inviting written preliminary submissions;
- after considering the preliminary submissions, prepare a Preliminary Report containing a preferred option and, if the reviewer considers it appropriate, alternative options;
- publish a notice about the Preliminary Report, make it publicly available and invite people to submit written submissions in response; and
- after considering submissions and giving any person who so requests an opportunity to be heard in person, prepare a Final Report.

The Act specifies that, subject to s.219F, the reviewer “may conduct the review in any manner that the reviewer considers appropriate.” It also specifies that the council may participate in the process.

The Act indicates that the following matters should be taken into account when conducting reviews:

- the structure should provide “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council” (s.219D);
- the number of councillors represented by each councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors in the municipality (s.219D); and
- submissions from the public should be considered (s.219F).

The Act provides for reviews to take place before every second council election. If the number of voters represented by a councillor is likely to be outside the allowed 10% variation from the average at an upcoming election and no review is scheduled, the Act also allows for a subdivision review to adjust ward boundaries (ss.219H-0).

In addition to providing for regular, independent electoral representation reviews, the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* also brought about an important change to the way votes are counted in unsubdivided municipalities and multi-councillor wards. When the electoral structures for Victoria’s municipalities were being determined in the mid-1990s, the vote counting system for unsubdivided municipalities and multi-councillor wards was exhaustive preferential. The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* changed that to proportional representation. These two systems represent communities differently. Therefore, multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures may now be advantageous in situations where they were not advantageous at the time of the Commissioners.

### 4.2 Interpreting the legislation

Although the legislation sets out at a high level how the process should work, it provides little guidance as to what criteria the reviewer should use in order to make its recommendations. The 10% voter number variation criterion is precise and clear, but “fair and equitable representation” is open to a wide variety of interpretations. For example,

Blau lists five common different interpretations of “fairness” with reference to electoral matters and an additional three interpretations that have formed the basis of people’s thinking less commonly.<sup>10</sup>

The VEC was therefore required to develop a set of principles and a practical method for applying these principles to particular municipalities which it believed to be a reasonable interpretation of the need to recommend structures providing “fair and equitable representation”. Chapter 5 provides details of the principles and methods devised by the VEC. In developing these principles and methods, the VEC had an eye to how similar reviews were conducted interstate and overseas (see Section 4.3).

The legislation also specifies that submissions from the public should be taken into account, but does not specify how they should be taken into account. Consequently, the VEC had to determine how to get the most value from the public consultation process. Chapter 6 describes how the VEC approached public consultation and how the consultation contributed to the VEC’s recommendations.

A significant number of participants in the process have disagreed with the principles and method devised by the VEC, and with the way that it takes account of public submissions (see Chapter 7). The VEC has developed what it considers to be a reasonable interpretation of the legislation, but notes that the legislation is open to other interpretations. The VEC believes that some confusion could be removed from the process if the Government were to provide clear guidance in the legislation about what matters are to be considered.

This recommendation was put to the Minister in the VEC’s Final Report on the 2004-2005 Reviews. In response, the Minister advised that it would not be desirable to amend legislation while the first round of reviews was still underway, but that the recommendation would be considered once the current cycle was completed. The VEC suggests that now would be an ideal opportunity to consider this matter.

Due to it being the only body conducting the reviews, the VEC has been able to apply the same principles and method throughout Victoria in conducting its reviews. This has provided a degree of fairness across Victoria, enabling all Victorians to have systems of representation in accordance with the same principles. However, the VEC notes that the Act allows councils to appoint any electoral commission within Australia to undertake the work. If another electoral commission were to tender for the work and be appointed, it may conduct the review according to quite different principles. If this were to happen, voters in similar circumstances in different parts of Victoria could have quite different systems of representation. The VEC believes that this could lead to a degree of unfairness for Victorians and should be prevented.

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Single body to conduct reviews**

The Government should consider modifying the Local Government Act so that the VEC is prescribed as the only body able to conduct electoral representation reviews within Victoria.

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<sup>10</sup> Blau (2004), pp. 167f. and n. 1, p. 179.

### 4.3 Interstate and international comparisons

In determining how to conduct the reviews, the VEC examined the ways that similar reviews are conducted at local, State and Federal level in other Australian states and internationally. Legislation in some other jurisdictions provides more guidance as to what matters should be considered. The South Australian *Local Government Act 1999* (s.33(1)), for example, lists the following factors to be considered:

- the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind;
- the population of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the topography of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the proposal and their elected representatives;
- the nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future;
- the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Wards must also maintain the “one vote, one value” principle, with variations limited to 10% (s.33(2)), as in Victoria.

Similarly, the Western Australian *Local Government Act 1995* (schedule 2.2(8)) specifies that the following criteria are to be taken into account when deciding ward boundaries:

- community of interests;
- physical and topographic features;
- demographic trends;
- economic factors; and
- the ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards.

Very similar criteria recur at the Federal level and at the State level throughout Australia,<sup>11</sup> although some add criteria particular to the nature of the State or Territory. Western Australia, for example, also factors in distance from the capital and land use<sup>12</sup> and the Northern Territory factors in areas of Aboriginal land interest<sup>13</sup>. Equality of representation is also an important factor, with a range of variations permitted similar to the 10% variation rule for wards in Victoria. In New South Wales, the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* specifies the advice of a “recognised demographer” must be considered, again emphasising the importance of an independent assessment of demographic patterns.

It can be seen from this comparison that there are a number of factors that recur repeatedly. In the absence of specific criteria in Victoria’s Local Government Act, the VEC

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<sup>11</sup> See further Economou and Ghazarian (2006).

<sup>12</sup> *Electoral Distribution Act 1947* (ss.7 and 9).

<sup>13</sup> *Electoral Act 2004* (s.140)



has been able to make reasonable interpretations of what constitutes fairness of representation based on those factors specified elsewhere in Australia.

Internationally, similar factors also often reappear, especially community of interest,<sup>14</sup> which is an important basis for most electoral system divisions. Two other factors appear in other nations which are not specified in Australian legislation – the shape of electorates and political criteria.

In the UK and some US states, compactness is considered an important attribute for an electorate.<sup>15</sup> This is usually considered an important safeguard against gerrymandering.<sup>16</sup> Given that the VEC is an independent body, the shape of wards has not been a concern from that perspective. The shape is taken into account in as much as it reflects other considerations such as means of communication, travel and topography, and this often leads to compact wards. However, there are times when compactness is not compatible with communities of interest,<sup>17</sup> and in these cases the VEC has not worried about creating compact wards, as can be seen from Goulburn Weir Ward in Strathbogie Shire or Rochester Ward in Campaspe Shire for example.

In some cases, it is considered appropriate to consider past voting patterns when drawing boundaries. The principles underlying this are<sup>18</sup>:

- that the parties elected by a structure should be in proportion to their support in the electorate (for example, if the support for a party is split across two single-member wards, and is a minority in both wards, that is considered to provide less fair representation than placing those supporters in a ward of their own where they would be able to elect a representative); or
- that each party should have a fair proportion of safe, marginal and unwinnable seats relative to the other parties.

A related principle is that it is advantageous to create electorates that are more competitive (as estimated based on past results) to encourage responsiveness on the part of candidates.<sup>19</sup>

The VEC considers that this would be a very difficult factor to calculate for local councils, where parties have no official role. Moreover, this is not a factor generally considered in Australia. The VEC believes that it is not appropriate for an electoral commission to make determinations as to what the electoral outcomes should be, and therefore does not factor in past voting patterns. However, the VEC does agree that a council's make-up should reflect the wishes of the municipality and that the example given above is not fair representation. For this reason, the VEC tries not to split communities of interest, which it believes are connected to voting patterns, and considers that multi-councillor wards and

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<sup>14</sup> Though compare the USA's hesitation regarding communities of interest, as reflected in the three-pronged "Gingles test" – see Leib (1998), p. 687.

<sup>15</sup> Horn (1999), p. 943.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion and exploration of the using compactness as a criterion for preventing gerrymandering, see Altman (1998).

<sup>17</sup> Altman (1998), pp. 1002f., 1006.

<sup>18</sup> Horn (1999), p. 944.

<sup>19</sup> Cain (1984), pp. 67f.

unsubdivided structures with proportional representation are particularly effective at avoiding these situations.<sup>20</sup>

With the exception, therefore, of compactness and voting patterns, the VEC incorporated these ideas from best practice and legislation in other jurisdictions and the academic literature to develop its own methodology.

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Horn (1999), p. 944.

## 5. The VEC's methodology

### 5.1 Main principles

The VEC adopted three main principles to form the basis for its recommendations, as described in the Guide for Submissions:

*1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality*

Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of a representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

*2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors*

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC has adopted as a guide the numbers of councillors in similar-sized municipalities of similar categories within Victoria. In addition, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant the municipality having more or fewer councillors than similar municipalities.

*3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible*

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest. The electoral structure should be designed to take these into account where practicable. This is important for assisting the elected councillors to be effective representatives of the people in their particular municipality.

Whilst the VEC adopted these as its major principles, it also accepted that there were a number of pragmatic considerations that should also be taken into account, in line with general practice in these matters. These include issues such as creating readily-identifiable boundaries and designing wards that are of a practical size for candidates and elected councillors.

Broadly speaking, there are two major elements to be decided in an electoral representation review – the number of councillors and the internal divisions (if any). In practice, these two factors are very closely linked. The number of wards and possible boundaries of wards vary considerably depending on the total number of councillors. This dependence is made particularly strong by the rule that where there are wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors in the municipality.

In making recommendations, it is possible to decide these elements in either order. That is:

- a reviewer could determine the most appropriate number of councillors for a municipality and then select the structure that provides the fairest and most equitable structure within the constraints imposed by the number of councillors; or
- a reviewer could decide where the boundaries should be within a municipality and then select the number of councillors that best fits these boundaries.

In general, the VEC favoured the former method, as it believed that there were other, more important factors for determining the number of councillors than what number led to the best ward structures (most notably, representing diversity to an appropriate degree and providing reasonable workloads for councillors). However, the VEC did not rigidly apply this approach and in a number of cases, its recommendation as to the number of councillors was in part determined by the ward structure provided by that number of councillors.

In most cases, however, the VEC's decision-making process was broken down into two distinct steps – determining the appropriate number of councillors; and determining the appropriate internal structures.

## **5.2 Detailed principles for determining the appropriate number of councillors**

In order to determine a number of councillors that would provide fair and equitable representation in a municipality, the VEC considered that it was essential to develop a set of rational considerations to be applied in a consistent, State-wide manner. The VEC considers that there are three major factors that should be considered:

- the diversity of the population;
- councillors' workloads; and
- the desirability of preventing tied votes.

### *Population diversity*

Firstly, within practical limitations, there should be the opportunity for voters to elect councillors representing the diversity of the municipality. That is, major communities of interest within a municipality should be understood by the council and represented according to their wishes.

The VEC considers that the primary indicator of a municipality's diversity is its population size and the type of municipality. That is, the more people there are in a municipality, the larger the number of communities of interest there are likely to be, both geographic and non-geographic. The type of municipality also needs to be taken into account when considering diversity, as a rural municipality with a geographically dispersed population and towns which have very different characters may have a larger diversity of needs than an equivalent sized population living in a densely-populated metropolitan area.

There may also be other factors leading to population diversity in a municipality due to differences within the population, such as differences in age, background or economic status.

Taking into account these factors, the VEC considers that the more diverse a municipality is, the larger the number of councillors should be. This is particularly important if the council is to represent the voters through mirror representation (see Section 2.4).

### *Councillors' workloads*

Secondly, the councillors' workloads need to be reasonable for them to effectively represent their constituents. The VEC considered the following to be the major factors affecting councillors' workloads:

### *The number of voters*

Put simply, the more voters there are, the more likely it is that councillors will have a greater number of issues to address.

### *The type of municipality*

In rural municipalities, councillors' interaction with the community is generally closer and more personal than in metropolitan municipalities. The combination of expectations of voters and councillors, the greater distances to be covered in the country and rural councils' more limited staff resources generally mean that a rural municipality needs more councillors per voter than a metropolitan municipality. A municipality with both rural and urban areas will have different needs again.

### *The geographic size, shape and topography*

Local councils offer a vast range of services, functions and responsibilities. The management of these functions is often complicated by the population, topography and size of the municipality. Geographically-large municipalities can increase councillors' workloads, as councillors have to travel large distances to meet with residents or investigate issues. If the shape or topography of a municipality makes travel difficult, that can also mean increased travel time for councillors.

### *The population growth rate*

If the population of a municipality is increasing or decreasing rapidly, councillors' workloads can be increased. In either case, there may be major strategic and land use planning issues which need to be addressed. Population change can also lead to issues with social diversity as new groups with new needs move into a municipality. These factors may increase councillors' workloads compared to councillors in municipalities with stable populations.

### *The social diversity of the municipality*

Increased social diversity means a larger number of communities of interest that should be represented on a council and therefore requires a larger number of councillors. Social diversity can also lead to an increase in councillors' workloads from the fact that there is a larger number of community views to be understood and considered when making decisions.

### *The presence of high-needs or low-needs groups*

Councillors' workloads can be increased where there are groups with high needs from councils, such as older people, younger people, an especially mobile or transient population, socially disadvantaged groups or culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The presence of a high proportion of these groups in a municipality may mean that the council has to provide additional services and may need to take time to understand the needs of these groups and evaluate programmes set up to help them.

In contrast, the presence of low-needs groups may reduce the number of councillors required. In the case of Wellington Shire, there is a large number of non-resident, non-ratepayers included on the voters' roll who own land within the municipality that cannot be built on. These people have little connection with the municipality

and have no needs from the council. In some municipalities, there are significant numbers of non-resident ratepayers with fewer needs from the council, thereby reducing the workload compared to other councils of the same type with similar numbers of voters. In other municipalities, however, significant numbers of non-resident ratepayers do not reduce councillors' workloads.

Where these factors indicated that councillors' workloads were likely to be higher or lower than would ordinarily be expected, the VEC considered that there should be more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case.

### *Preventing tied votes*

A third factor considered is the risk of deadlocks when the council has to make decisions. Although the Act permits any number of councillors between 5 and 12 inclusive, the VEC is generally reluctant to recommend a total number of councillors which is even. An even number of councillors in total increases the risk that the council may be deadlocked when voting on matters, which can only be resolved by the mayor using a casting vote. This effectively gives one councillor twice the voting power of any of the others. The VEC does not consider such a situation to be conducive to fair or equitable representation. The issue can be further exacerbated when the decision as to who should be mayor is deadlocked and decided by lot. This was a regular feature in Hobsons Bay City Council<sup>21</sup> and has occurred elsewhere as well<sup>22</sup>. A number of submissions from the City of Hobsons Bay, Wangaratta Rural City and Murrindindi Shire shared the VEC's concerns about these matters.

The VEC notes that some councils have put in place protocols to deal with these situations, such as deciding that any motion where a tied vote occurs is automatically lost. Other councils, though, do not have any such protocols and the VEC notes that the council can dispense with protocols like these at any point.

For these reasons, the VEC generally favoured structures with uneven numbers of councillors. In four cases, however, the VEC considered that the advantages of proposed structures with even numbers of councillors outweighed the risk of deadlocks. These were situations where a number of the following criteria were met:

- the council had an even number of councillors before the review, with no history of major problems arising from tied votes;
- the council had established representation processes dependent on voters' familiarity with their particular wards, and there has been an even number of wards for a long time;
- communities of interest were captured significantly better by an electoral structure with an even number of councillors, compared to the possible structures with an uneven number; and
- the numbers of voters were on the cusp between two ranges (or, in the case of the City of Greater Geelong, the largest in the State).

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<sup>21</sup> "In the past six years, there have been four deadlocks in mayoral elections, meaning the mayor had to be chosen by lot. As well, there have been frequent deadlocks in voting on issues." – Mawbey (20/4/2004).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. in Moyne Shire – see Scopelianos (12/12/2007).

## *Conclusion*

The VEC believes that these principles are best practice for determining the appropriate number of councillors for a municipality. In the absence of any indication from the Government to the contrary, the VEC will continue to base its recommendations on these principles.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Principles for determining the number of councillors**

The Government should consider confirming its approval of these principles for determining the number of councillors for municipalities during representation reviews:

- the diversity of the population;
- councillors' workloads; and
- the desirability of preventing tied votes.

If the Government believes that other principles would be more appropriate, it should give consideration to including these in legislation or regulations.

### **5.3 A method for applying these considerations about the appropriate number of councillors**

To apply these considerations in practice, the VEC considered it important to develop a method that provided both a consistent, State-wide approach and also took into account the particulars of the municipality under review. To achieve this, the VEC developed a two-step method, in which the first step took into account the State-wide element and the second the particular characteristics of the municipality.

#### *Step one: a State-wide baseline*

The first step consisted of comparing the municipality under review to other similar municipalities. In many cases, when comparing municipalities with others of the same type with similar numbers of voters, a clear trend in terms of the number of councillors could be seen – that is, other similar municipalities had the same number of councillors. However, the great variety in the original structures established by the Commissioners (see Section 2.1) meant that, in some cases, the pattern was less clear or that there were a number of anomalies within the pattern.

In such cases, the VEC relied on an alternative approach, in which municipalities were divided into bands according to their type and the population size. This required an accurate determination of the number of voters in Victoria's municipalities. To do this, data had to be loaded into the VEC's Electoral Boundaries Management System (see Section 5.5) from two sources. The number of resident voters could be extracted from the VEC's State enrolment register. A list of non-resident voters (i.e. people who own property in a municipality but live in a different municipality), nominees of corporations and other council-entitled voters was supplied by each council at the start of its review. The list was then checked for duplicates and other errors before being added to the system. This process enabled a very accurate picture of the number and distribution of voters in the municipality at the time of the review.

When the number of voters had been determined, the municipalities were grouped into four types:

- metropolitan;
- metropolitan/rural fringe;
- regional with urban areas; and
- rural.

Full lists of these divisions were presented in the Guide for Submissions for each review and are also included in this report as Appendix 3. Within these divisions, municipalities were ordered according to the number of voters and then ranges were set for each number of councillors, with the smallest number of councillors being associated with the smallest numbers of voters and the largest number of councillors with the largest number of voters.

There are three important elements of this approach to note.

Firstly, the municipalities were divided into type, so that only similar municipalities were compared. The variety of Victoria’s municipalities in terms of population size, geography and other circumstances (see Section 2.3) means that a comparison of all municipalities without such a division would be meaningless.

Secondly, bearing in mind those factors outlined in Section 5.2, it was considered that it was not appropriate for each category to be divided into bands with the full range of councillors permitted by legislation. That is, it was not considered appropriate that the smallest densely-populated suburban area have five councillors, as that would be insufficient to represent the municipality’s diversity and create an excessive workload. Nor was it considered appropriate that the largest rural area have 12 councillors, as this would be more than required. Therefore, the minima and maxima were set as follows:

<b>Type:</b>	<b>Range of voter numbers*:</b>	<b>Range of councillor numbers:</b>
metropolitan	48,005-121009	7-11
metropolitan/rural fringe	39,003-135,806	7-11
regional with urban area	9,141-159,993	7-12
rural	4,245-38,488	5-9

\* as at the time of the review

*Table 1: Range of councillor numbers by municipality type*

Thirdly, it was essential to work in terms of bands rather than in terms of voter to councillor ratios. The Local Government Commission’s report *The Restructure of Local Government in Victoria: Principles and Programme* (1986) recommended that municipalities be structured so that certain ratios of voters to councillors be used as maxima<sup>23</sup>. In some of its early reviews, the VEC did make some decisions by reference to ratios. However, the limitations of this became apparent over time given the variation in the population sizes between municipalities relative to the legislative limitation that councils must only have between 5 and 12 councillors.

Metropolitan municipalities, for example, vary in population size from approximately 48,000 to 122,000 (see Appendix 3). The highest possible voter to councillor ratio for a

<sup>23</sup> 10,000:1 for metropolitan municipalities, 5,000:1 for municipalities including provincial cities or towns and 2,000:1 for municipalities without a major urban centre – Local Government Commission (1986), p. 34.



municipality with 48,000 voters would be 9,600:1 (with five councillors), but the lowest possible voter to councillor ratio that could be given to a municipality with 122,000 voters would be 10,167:1 (with twelve councillors). These ratios become even more disparate if one accepts the VEC's concerns about giving a municipality an even number of councillors (e.g. 12) or if one accepts the VEC's concerns that giving a metropolitan municipality only five councillors would be insufficient – given the 7-11 range of councillor numbers for metropolitan municipalities, the voter to councillor ratios must vary between 6,857:1 and 11,091:1. As can be seen from these considerations, it is simply not possible to create consistent voter to councillor ratios across municipalities.

*Step two: the particulars of the municipality*

This second step involved looking at whether any special circumstances in the municipality under review meant that it stood out from the others in the comparison. The most common of these factors taken into account by the VEC during this step were:

- the geographic size, shape and topography;
- the population growth rate;
- the social diversity of the municipality; and
- the presence of high-needs or low-needs groups.

Often, the public submission process was essential for identifying these factors. However, the VEC also sought other sources for this information.

To determine the population growth rate, the VEC looked at data from a number of sources. A range of data provided by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) was used to estimate likely population changes. The Victoria in Future Project (and interim estimates prior to its 2004 release) and Know Your Area provided information about population growth or decline for each municipality as a whole between the time of the review and the time of the next scheduled review. This growth or decline rate was compared to other similar municipalities as one of the considerations when deciding the appropriate number of councillors.

DSE also provided spatial data indicating areas in which new housing development was taking place, the number of lots expected in that area and the scope of time within which the development was estimated to take place. These data were combined with development projections supplied by the council to get a picture of what growth was happening in the municipality. Fieldwork was also done by VEC staff to verify the status of projected developments where required.

In terms of social diversity and high-needs and low-needs groups, the 2001 and 2006 Censuses were important sources of information. They enabled the VEC to identify a number of issues that could indicate differences from other municipalities – especially with regard to population density, economic profile and the presence of unusual proportions of high-needs groups, such as those identified in Section 5.2 above.

Population estimates and demographic studies are further discussed in Section 5.5 below.

Where these factors varied from the norm by a significant extent, the VEC decreased or increased the number of councillors accordingly. For example, Buloke and Yarriambiack Shires warranted five councillors based on their population size and type, but the VEC recommended seven due to their large size. The population growth and the presence of special-needs groups (such as older people, culturally and linguistically diverse groups and

socio-economically disadvantaged groups) in the Cities of Greater Dandenong and Moreland meant that larger numbers of councillors were recommended there than in other municipalities with similar numbers of voters.

#### *Step three: communities of interest*

In most cases, the first two steps were sufficient to determine the appropriate number of councillors. The VEC was then able to develop various potential electoral structures with that number of councillors as a basis. In nineteen reviews (25%), however, the VEC's preliminary options differed with respect to the numbers of councillors. In these cases, the VEC considered that there were particular advantages to the electoral structures enabled by the different numbers of councillors in terms of how they represented communities of interest. The VEC therefore considered that it was worthwhile to present the different options for public comment. These municipalities were also generally ones where:

- the number of councillors before the review was different to what was suggested by steps 1 and 2 of the VEC's method; and/or
- the number of voters was towards the edge of the limits between two ranges of councillor numbers.

In some reviews where this occurred, the number of councillors became the issue on which most of the public input focused. As a result of this, in a number of these cases, the VEC received minimal feedback about internal structures. In some reviews, it was difficult to differentiate between arguments about the number of councillors and arguments about the internal structure. These factors made the VEC hesitant about putting forward preliminary options with different numbers towards the end of the 2004-2005 reviews.

In the 2007-2008 reviews, however, the VEC included the existing structure (or an adaptation of the existing structure to meet the legislative requirements about voter numbers) as a preliminary option in most of the reviews (see Section 6.4). In cases where the number of councillors before the review differed from what was suggested by steps 1 and 2 of the VEC's process, this often meant that the VEC was putting out preliminary options with different numbers of councillors (the existing structure, plus the results of its own deliberations).

Where the feedback on the preliminary options convinced the VEC that there were substantial benefits to the structure with a number of councillors different to what was suggested by steps 1 and 2, the VEC recommended that number of councillors.

#### **5.4 Detailed principles for determining appropriate internal structures**

Having determined an appropriate number of councillors (or, in some cases, an appropriate range of numbers), the VEC then turned to the internal electoral structure. Legislation permits four types of structure:

- single-councillor wards;
- multi-councillor wards;
- combinations of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards; and
- unsubdivided municipalities.

The legislation does not provide any guidance as to what factors should be considered or in what circumstances which structures are most appropriate, other than the general guidelines regarding the reviews, as set out in Section 4.1. The VEC therefore developed a

set of principles as to what electoral structures provide fair and equitable representation in what circumstances.

*Differences between the structure types*

Underlying these principles was the VEC's view on the differences between the various structures available. A list of the characteristics commonly considered to be associated with the possible electoral structures, based on a paper by the Office of Local Government<sup>24</sup> and the VEC's research, is provided in the VEC's Guide for Submissions.

	Positive Features	Less Positive Features
Unsubdivided structures	Promotes the concept of a municipality-wide focus, with councillors being elected by and concerned for the municipality as a whole, rather than parochial interests.	May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented.  May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the municipality.
	Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns.	May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors.  May be difficult for voters to assess the performances of individual councillors.
	Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election.	Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters.
	Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries.	
	Results in a simple, less expensive voters' roll for elections as compared with separate voters' rolls for individual wards.	
Single-councillor wards	Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives, easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues.	Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a perspective of what policies benefit the municipality as a whole.
	Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented.	Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest, and may be difficult to define.

<sup>24</sup> Office of Local Government (1995).

	It is less likely that one particular point of view or sectional interest will dominate the Council.	
		Voters may have a restricted choice of candidates in elections for individual wards.
		Small populations in each ward may make ward boundaries more susceptible to change caused by demographic shifts.
Multi-councillor wards	This structure supports the accommodation of a whole community of interest (such as a sizeable town or group of suburbs) within a ward.	
	Focus on issues may be broader than for single-councillor wards (though councillors may be more locally focussed than in an unsubdivided municipality).	Very local issues may be overridden. Groups may form within the council based on multi-councillor wards, leading to possible division between councillors.
	Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided municipality.	In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward.
	Electors have a choice of councillor to approach. Councillors may share workloads more effectively.	Duplication or gaps may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively.
	Ward boundaries are likely to be easy to identify and less susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline than for single-councillor wards.	
		It may be easier for candidates to be elected as part of a voting ticket than as individuals.

Combinations of single- and multi-councillor wards	A large community of interest can be included within a multi-councillor ward, and a smaller community of interest can be included within a single-councillor ward. This structure accommodates differences in population across a municipality, and allows small communities to be separately represented.	Electors in single-councillor wards may expect that their councillors will be more influential than their numbers suggest.
	Clear ward boundaries are more likely.	

*Table 2: Positive and less positive features of different electoral structures*

Overall, it is important to note that the VEC believes that no one type is better or worse than the others in an absolute sense, but, rather, that each of the four types of structure may be appropriate in different circumstances.

In practice, there are successful councils based on all four types of structure. Each year the Department of Planning and Community Development conducts a survey measuring individuals' level of satisfaction with their local councils.<sup>25</sup> The VEC has analysed the data from the 2006 and 2007 surveys on three areas:

- satisfaction with the overall performance of the council;
- satisfaction with the advocacy and community representation of the council; and
- satisfaction with the council's performance regarding community engagement in decision making.

The VEC has aggregated these results according to electoral structure and it can be seen from this that there is no significant difference on any of these three dimensions between the different electoral structures:

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/Web20/dvclgv.nsf/AllDocs/533532B547C45076CA2571700031ED6E?OpenDocument>. Data are not available for Maribyrnong or Nillumbik.

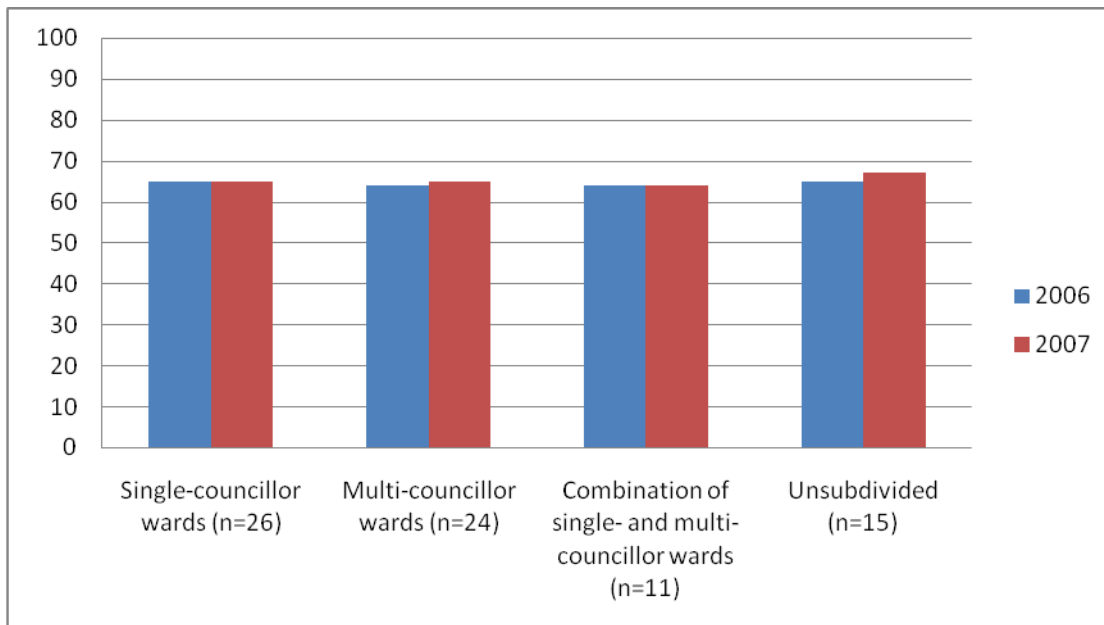


Figure 4: Satisfaction with overall performance

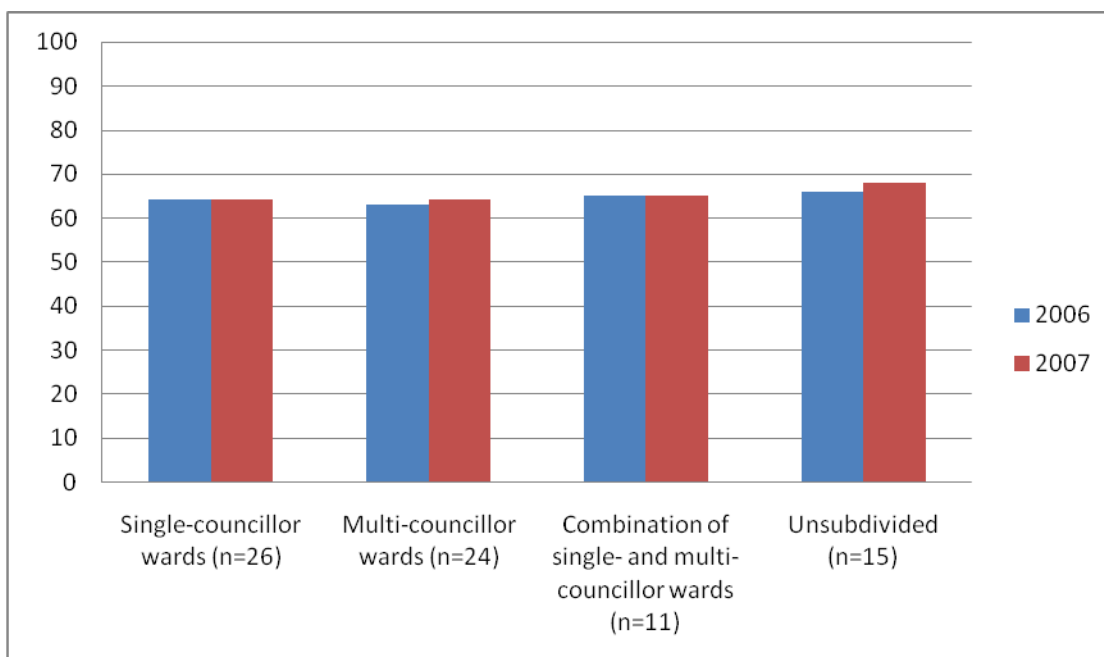


Figure 5: Satisfaction with advocacy and community representation

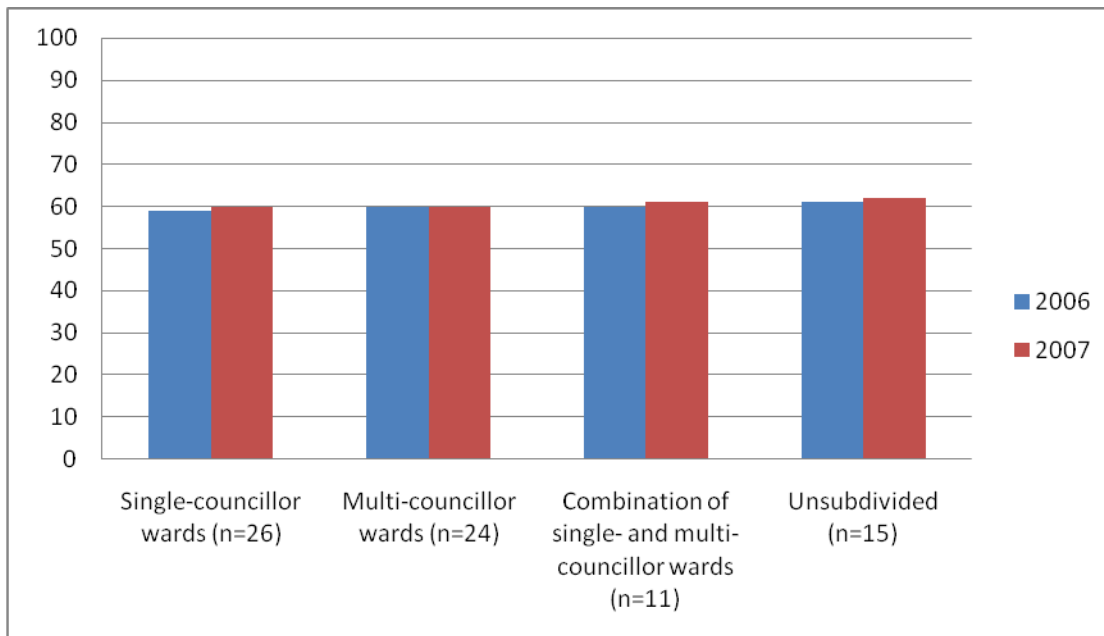


Figure 6: Satisfaction with community engagement in decision making

It is clear that on all three of these criteria there are no statistically-relevant differences between the different types of structure in general. That is not to say that it does not matter which structure a particular municipality has – what works well in one set of circumstances may be less effective in another. Therefore, it is the VEC’s role to work out which structure best suits which circumstances. The criteria by which it did that are set out in this section. As the above data show, all structures permitted by the Act can work effectively and therefore all types of structure were recommended during the reviews (see Section 3.1).

#### Community of interest

As a primary guiding principle, the VEC took the concept of community of interest. This concept is generally used in reviews of this nature (see Section 4.3). The VEC considers that an essential part of providing fair and equitable representation consists in providing the opportunity for communities of interest to be represented according to their wishes. People with communities of interest are likely to have similar needs from their council, whereas people who do not share a community of interest are more likely to have different needs from their council. Therefore, the VEC considers it important that communities of interest be kept together and not separated by the electoral structure, to maximise their ability to be represented in accordance with their wishes.

In order to apply this, though, the concept of community of interest first needs to be defined. A number of definitions have been put forward.<sup>26</sup> These definitions can generally be grouped into two categories. The first kind of definition sees a community of interest as a *type of group*. An example of this sort of definition is “a territorially defined group of people with common economic, social, political or cultural interests.”<sup>27</sup> This definition suggests a strong link between geography and communities of interest. Communities of

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Balmer (1996), Fulcher (1991) and Wood and Cotgrove (1995).

<sup>27</sup> Leib (1998), p. 689.

interest of this type may be commonly found in regional areas, where a town or group of towns may constitute such a community of interest.

The other type of definition focuses on community of interest as a *quality* that two areas may or may not share. For example, Balmer<sup>28</sup> sees community of interest as “the extent and nature of the linkages shared by people and organisations within a definable area.” The key factor about this definition is that community of interest is not absolute in an area, but can be stronger or weaker. That is, three localities may all share a community of interest to some degree, but two may have a stronger community of interest than the third. The VEC has found this approach to understanding community of interest particularly valuable, especially in urban areas where communities of interest may be less geographically defined. In many municipalities, there is a community of interest across the entire municipality. In constructing wards, therefore, the VEC has found it particularly valuable to think not in terms of whether or not there is a community of interest, but rather in terms of which areas have the strongest communities of interest.

The VEC used the following as a general definition, which it published in its Guide for Submissions:

*Communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns or aspirations. They are different from “interest groups” or “pressure groups” which may only have one issue in common (or a very limited number of issues). The communities of interest to which people belong are often also an important part of their self-identity.*

*Communities of interest may occur where people are linked with each other geographically (e.g. a town or valley) or economically, such as where people work in similar industries (e.g. tourism) or where people work in mutually-dependant industries (e.g. fruit growers, transporters and canners). Communities of interest may also appear where people share a number of special needs because of similar circumstances (such as new immigrants, who may have little English, require assistance with housing and need help finding employment). Communities of interest may also include ethnic groups, retired people, the unemployed or many other groupings of people.*

An additional complexity to understanding communities of interest comes from the distinction between subjectively-defined communities of interest and objectively-defined communities of interest. Subjectively-defined communities of interest are perceived by their members and are best seen where groups actively pursue common goals.<sup>29</sup> Objectively-defined communities of interest may be determined by external observers through examining people’s behaviour or demographic make-up.<sup>30</sup>

Self-perceived and objectively-determined communities of interest do not necessarily coincide.<sup>31</sup> However, the VEC considers that both of these sorts of community of interest are important, and therefore seeks information on both sorts of community of interest. The

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<sup>28</sup> Balmer (1996). Cf. Wood *et al.* (1995), p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Wood *et al.* (1995), p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Horn (1999), pp. 942f.; Walmsley (1985), pp. 24ff.

<sup>31</sup> Fulcher (1991); Wild (1985), p. 9.



VEC considers the best ward structures to be those that represent the best balance of these objectively-determined factors and the electors' sense of belonging.

It is important to note in terms of representing communities of interest that there are different expectations depending on which of the models of representation one adopts – interest, corporate or mirror representation (see Section 2.4). Interest representation best suits where there is a high degree of community of interest within an area. For corporate representation, heterogeneous wards containing multiple communities of interest may be most suitable. For mirror representation, it is important to create a system that enables major communities of interest to each elect their own representative to reflect them. The effect of models of representation on recommending electoral structures is discussed further below.

Putting these considerations together, the VEC developed these general guidelines for treating communities of interest:

<b>If:</b>	<b>then fair representation may best be achieved by:</b>
<i>a community of interest is compact geographically,</i>	<i>creating a ward with boundaries reflecting that community of interest.</i>
<i>a community of interest is a widespread minority,</i>	<i>creating multi-councillor wards with proportional representation.</i>
<i>there are numerous minority communities of interest within a municipality,</i>	<i>combining the communities of interest, so that any elected councillor would be responsible to all of these groups.</i>

Table 3: Guidelines regarding community of interest

In order to apply this, it was important to differentiate the various communities of interest within a municipality and to identify both the geographic and non-geographic communities of interest. Data such as Census figures, physical features and fieldwork were used to determine communities of interest objectively (see Section 5.5). The public submissions process was considered key for identifying self-perceived communities of interest (see Chapter 6). Where large numbers of diverse community groups support a particular structure (as happened particularly in Mornington Peninsula Shire), the VEC considers such support a good indication that the structure reflects subjective communities of interest. Such groups fit the model of self-determined groups actively pursuing common interests.

In addition to considering communities of interest, the VEC took into account a number of other factors in deciding on the appropriateness of a potential structure. The most common of these were as follows.

#### *The longevity of the structure*

The VEC considers it generally desirable that wards be designed to last until the next scheduled representation review (i.e. for two elections). In practice, given the 10% variation rule, this means keeping the number of voters represented by each councillor within the 10% tolerance for at least eight years. This assists voters to become familiar with their councillor (and *vice versa*) where councillors have multiple terms,<sup>32</sup> and also helps

<sup>32</sup> Horn (1999), p. 944.

to provide fairness and equity of representation in the longer term by maintaining the “one vote, one value” principle across the municipality.

Achieving a long-lasting structure may mean combining growth areas with non-growth areas or it may mean creating multi-councillor wards, which are better able to absorb growth in parts without violating the 10% variation rule. Single-councillor wards are more susceptible to breaking the 10% rule, especially in sparsely-populated areas, where a small movement of people into or out of a ward may change the percentage significantly.

Longevity is also facilitated by setting negative deviations in high-growth wards and positive deviations in low-growth wards at the time of the review, so that wards might stay within the 10% variation for longer. In a number of high-growth areas, the VEC also used estimates of the number of voters expected to be eligible to vote at the next election, rather than the number of voters eligible at the time of the review, as the basis for its structures.<sup>33</sup> In six cases, the combination of these factors led to wards being outside the 10% variation at the time of the first election using the new structures. These incidents are discussed further in Section 5.6.

Although the longevity of a structure is one factor that the VEC takes into account in recommending structures, it is not the only factor nor is it the most important factor. There have been a number of reviews where the VEC recommended structures which it considered unlikely to stay within the 10% variation permitted for two terms. In these cases, it was considered that other advantages of a structure (such as reflecting communities of interest or providing wards of a manageable size) outweighed the advantage of a longer-lasting structure.

The legislation does allow for ward boundaries to be reviewed after one term through a subdivision review if it appears that a municipality will have wards outside the 10% tolerance at the time of the next election. Eight of the 39 municipalities reviewed in 2004-2005 had subdivision reviews conducted in 2008, of which six required boundary changes. These are described in Part IV of this report.

### *Geographic factors*

In some cases, travel around a municipality may be made more difficult by the geographic size of a municipality or its topography (e.g. because a mountain range makes travel from one area to another difficult). This can impact on councillors’ ability to service the community. In such circumstances, the VEC considered an unsubdivided structure or multi-councillor wards more appropriate than single-councillor wards, as these structures facilitate councillors sharing the workload of travel.

In some cases, where wards can be developed that fit with communities of interest, subdividing of the municipality into wards can also help with the issue of managing travel around a large municipality, by reducing the expectation that all councillors travel to all parts of the municipality on a regular basis. This was a factor in deciding to subdivide some of the geographically longer municipalities, such as Yarriambiack and Buloke Shires.

In other circumstances, however, subdividing a municipality may lead to a large variation in ward sizes due to the population distribution. As this could result in very uneven workloads for councillors, this is generally not considered desirable. If the Rural City of Mildura were divided into single-councillor wards, for example, one single-councillor ward

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<sup>33</sup> This is permitted by s.219D(1) of the Act.

would have to cover almost the entire area of the municipality. Similarly, some of the preliminary options for East Gippsland Shire included a two-councillor ward covering 87% of the area of the Shire. The VEC considered that in such cases subdivided structures would prove a hindrance to effective representation of voters, and therefore recommended unsubdivided structures, allowing all councillors to share the workload of travel to the sparsely-populated areas of the municipality.

#### *Too many voters*

The VEC was reluctant to recommend wards or unsubdivided structures with too many voters in them. Where there are larger numbers of voters:

- it may be impractical for candidates to canvass the electorate; and
- there is likely to be a larger number of candidates, leading to ballot papers with larger numbers of candidates – the current formality rules for local council elections require voters to indicate their preference for every candidate, making it more difficult for voters to fill in their ballot papers and generally leading to higher proportions of informal votes.<sup>34</sup>

These factors are not conducive to fair representation.

The largest wards created by the VEC were in Moreland City, where two wards exceeded 38,000 voters. The largest unsubdivided municipality was Greater Shepparton City with slightly over 40,000 voters. The VEC considered these structures to be the most appropriate in the circumstances, but would be reluctant to create multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided structures with more voters than in these cases. In the City of Greater Geelong, for example, it was recognised in the Preliminary Report that the most appropriate structure from the perspective of communities of interest was four three-councillor wards, but this structure was not preferred or (ultimately) recommended in large part because the wards would have each contained approximately 40,000 voters (with an estimated population growth rate of 9.6% between 2008 and 2016).

This difficulty could be avoided if changes were made to the formality rules, so that voting is optional preferential. With that system, a larger number of candidates on a ballot paper would not necessarily lead to higher informality rate. The VEC could therefore be more open to creating larger wards where they would better represent communities of interest.

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **Optional preferential vote counting**

The Government should consider modifying the Local Government Act so that votes are considered formal according to an optional preferential system.

#### *Too few voters*

On the other end of the scale, where there is only a very small population, the VEC was hesitant about single-councillor wards, as there is a higher probability of uncontested elections. In some cases, this could be clearly seen from previous elections in the municipality under consideration (e.g. Central Goldfields Shire, where three of the five wards were uncontested in 2003, and two of the five were uncontested in 2000). The VEC considers that representation is likely to be fairer when voters have a choice of candidates,

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<sup>34</sup> Burdess *et al.* (2004), p. 73.

and therefore tends to prefer multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided structures in these cases.

### *The easy identification of ward boundaries*

Where possible, the VEC recommends wards with clear, readily-identified boundaries. This makes it easier for voters to know which wards they are in and therefore who their councillors are. In line with general best practice, the VEC has developed the following hierarchy for ward boundaries, with the top factor being considered the best possible type of boundary:

- rivers;
- railways;
- roads;
- park boundaries;
- property boundaries;
- locality boundaries;
- road reserves; and
- other features.

However, the VEC notes that the need to capture communities of interest often over-rides this hierarchy. In Central Goldfields Shire, for example, a road reserve was used for one boundary because it neatly captured Maryborough. At other times, the actual situation on the ground may lead to a reassessment of the appropriateness of a type of boundary. In Cardinia Shire, for example, power lines were used as a boundary because in this case they very clearly delineate the rural and urban areas and are also the Melbourne 2030 boundary.

Easily-identifiable boundaries can sometimes be very difficult to establish if the VEC is considering a large number of small wards, as it may not be possible to use clear boundaries and stay within the 10% variation rule. In such cases, either indistinct boundaries have been used or different structures recommended.

### *Models of representation*

The model of representation most suited to a municipality was one factor in consideration for some reviews (see Section 2.4 for a categorisation of the different models of representation). In some municipalities, there was a clear expectation that individual councillors would advocate on behalf of particular communities of interest (e.g. tourism, elderly residents). Therefore there was an expectation for mirror representation. Where these interests are not geographically compact, mirror representation is best achieved by unsubdivided structures or multi-councillor wards.

In other municipalities, submitters had strong expectations that councillors would represent all of the interests of a ward and that voters could have one point of responsibility on the council for everything the council did in that area. This was especially the case in municipalities containing smaller high-needs areas which required particular attention – in the Cities of Banyule and Maribyrnong, for example, it was argued that there needed to be a councillor dedicated to the high-needs areas who could become knowledgeable about all of the issues affecting those areas and be held accountable for how the councils dealt with the areas. In other municipalities, such as the City of Boroondara and Mornington Peninsula Shire, submitters advocated very strongly for councillors to represent very local issues and the councils had established processes for

identifying and understanding broader issues that did not rely on particular councillors representing them. In those cases, there was an expectation for interest representation, which was best catered for by single-councillor wards.

Where the VEC received strong input in the public consultation process about what model of representation worked best in a municipality, this was one element factored into the VEC's considerations.

#### *Other factors*

In cases where the municipality is to be divided into multi-councillor wards, the VEC considers it preferable for the wards to have the same number of councillors in each. This factor, however, only comes into play where all other factors are equal. If communities of interest are more fairly and equitably represented by a different structure, then that structure is recommended instead. This factor is also not something taken into account when determining the appropriate number of councillors – where the VEC's principles and method indicate that 5, 7 or 11 councillors in total are the most appropriate for a council, that number is recommended, even though it is not possible to divide a municipality into multi-councillor wards with the same number of councillors in each in such circumstances.

Some submitters suggested structures which subdivided a municipality into two distinct groups (usually a rural ward and an urban ward). The VEC was reluctant to recommend such structures as it was concerned that they would lead to an "us versus them" mentality between councillors. This could lead to the dominance of the smaller ward by the larger ward. The VEC therefore did not recommend such structures.

In a number of reviews, the VEC has considered that there are distinct geographic communities of interest, but has not been able to create wards that reflect these communities of interest and also comply with the 10% variation rule. In these cases, the VEC has generally recommended an unsubdivided structure or multi-councillor wards. The VEC considers this to be a better solution than creating wards that do not broadly align with communities of interest. Multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures do allow representation of major geographic communities of interest if voters wish (see Appendix 7), though voters may choose their candidates based on other factors if they prefer.

In the case of Latrobe City, the VEC explored a variety of electoral structures with different arrangements of multi-councillor and single-councillor wards. In all cases, the options split communities of interest or combined communities of interest inappropriately, and the municipality was considered too large to be unsubdivided. Ultimately, the VEC recommended single-councillor wards, even though it acknowledged that structure to have disadvantages from a community of interest perspective. In that case, where the different proposed structures could not be differentiated based on the success with which they reflected communities of interest, the VEC considered it most appropriate to select the structure which was closest to the existing structure, as it considered that the disadvantages of change were not outweighed by any potential advantages.

In two cases (Pyrenees Shire and the City of Casey), certain areas within the municipality did not share newspapers with other parts of the municipality. In these cases, this was one factor contributing to the VEC's choice of structure, as it was considered less favourable to join together areas that do not share media, as this may make it difficult for a candidate to canvass an entire ward.

## *Conclusion*

The VEC considers that the principles that it has developed are an appropriate method for determining internal electoral structures. In the absence of any indication from the Government to the contrary, the VEC will continue to base its recommendations on these principles.

### **Recommendation 5**

#### **Principles for determining internal electoral structures**

The Government should consider confirming its approval of these principles for determining the internal electoral structures of municipalities during representation reviews:

- communities of interest;
- the longevity of the structure;
- geographic factors;
- the number of voters in potential wards;
- the easy identification of ward boundaries;
- models of representation; and
- other factors relevant to the municipality under review.

If the Government believes that other principles would be more appropriate, it should give consideration to including these in legislation or regulations.

## **5.5 A method for applying these considerations about internal structures**

### *The use of mapping software*

With the above considerations in mind, the VEC's mapping team developed a number of models for each municipality under review. The models were developed using mapping and boundary software, primarily the Electoral Boundaries Management System (EBMS), software initially developed by the Office of the Surveyor-General for the Australian Electoral Commission and since adapted and extensively modified by the VEC. This software combines spatial data with enrolment figures to calculate the number of voters in a potential ward structure and the deviations of that potential ward from the average number of voters represented by all councillors for the municipality. EBMS can also be loaded with projected population changes to estimate changes in the numbers of voters in a ward and thereby assess how long a ward is likely to last before it breaks the 10% variation rule.

As detailed in Section 5.3 above, EBMS was loaded with data from a number of different sources:

- the State enrolment register provided details of the voters living within the municipality;
- the council under review supplied a list of non-resident voters (i.e. people who own property in a municipality but live in a different municipality), nominees of corporations and other council-entitled voters;
- the Department of Sustainability and Environment provided spatial data indicating where new housing development was taking place, how many lots were

- expected in that area and the period within which the development was estimated to take place; and
- the councils were asked to provide as much information as they could about the location and number of proposed property subdivisions and housing developments over the next eight years and the expected year of completion.

The first two sources were used to determine the number of voters in each existing and potential ward at the time of the review. From these data the VEC could see whether the existing wards were outside the 10% variation allowed and could assess the viability of potential recommendations.

To determine the number of voters at the next election and beyond, the last two sources were used, along with any modifications suggested by the fieldwork conducted by the VEC. The combination of these sources also formed the basis for assessing the longevity of wards, and was useful where it was felt appropriate to combine fast-growing areas and slow-growing areas in wards (see Section 5.4).

Where accurate and comprehensive development information was provided by the council, the VEC was best able to predict voter numbers. There were difficulties obtaining housing development data from some councils. The VEC is aware that the sensitivities associated with developments in their preliminary stages may have created difficulties for some councils.

EBMS uses census collection districts as its base unit. In the 2004-2005 reviews, where it was not practicable to use census collection districts as boundaries, the VEC split the census collection districts and estimated the number of voters in each fragment. The estimate was made by examining the property grid and distributing voter numbers in proportion to the amount of property parcels within each fragment. This generally proved reliable, except in Central Goldfields Shire, where the concentration of parcels no longer held a strong correlation with elector density due to a “ghost town” effect – that is, the parcel density reflected population density in the town of Talbot at an earlier period of time (see Section 5.6).

During the 2007-2008 reviews, the VEC prevented this problem recurring by altering the way it dealt with this situation. Instead, the VEC translated all electors’ addresses on the enrolment register into specific points on Earth represented by longitude and latitude. The VEC could then accurately count the number of electors enrolled in any particular area, regardless of whether or not it corresponded to a census collector district. As a result of this change, there were no repeats of what happened in Central Goldfields Shire in 2005.

In all cases, the number of voters in each census collector district of a municipality was made available to the public by the VEC early in the review process. The VEC also made public the number of voters in each ward of the pre-review structure and the deviation of that ward from the average. From mid-2007, the VEC made available a map of each municipality showing the number of voters in each locality. All of these products were provided to help any interested parties to model their own structures should they wish.

#### *Assessing different possible models*

The VEC’s mapping team used EBMS to develop a number of models for consideration for each review. Where models met legislative requirements and good boundary-drawing principles, they were internally assessed by the VEC against the criteria set out in Section

5.4. Also assessed were the pre-review structure and structures suggested by public submissions. The structures that were considered to have most merit were then circulated to the public for feedback in the Preliminary Report.

In order to assess which models to release to the public, it was important for the VEC to understand a reasonable amount of information about the municipality.

Public submissions were an especially valuable source of data for this, and the VEC especially encouraged submitters to provide information about the particular circumstances of the municipality and what and where submitters considered the municipality's communities of interest to be. The use of public submissions is discussed further in Chapter 6.

In addition to the public submissions, the VEC turned to a variety of other sources for information. These included:

- demographic statistics;
- mapping physical features; and
- fieldwork conducted by the VEC.

Other sources of information were also used where available. It is important to note that each of these sources has its limitations in terms of accuracy and usefulness. For this reason, the VEC did not rely on any single source for its understanding, but used each as one step in building as complete a picture as practicable of the municipality under review.

The public consultation process was also considered an essential component in identifying limitations in the VEC's reasoning. The VEC provided summaries of its analyses of the municipality in the Guide for Submissions and in its Preliminary Reports, giving stakeholders an opportunity to respond to or correct any deficiencies in the VEC's data.

Boundaries were often adjusted in response to comments made in submissions, information gathered at public hearings and any additional research that revealed potential improvements. The redrawing and adjustment of models is an iterative process throughout the review period.

#### *Identifying communities of interest*

The most important information for the VEC to identify was what communities of interest existed and how they were distributed geographically. Researchers in other contexts use a wide variety of measures to identify communities of interest. The VEC adopted from those measures the ones that it could use given the time and budget constraints of the representation review process.

For subjective communities of interest, the VEC relied primarily on submissions. In some cases, the VEC was also presented by research previously undertaken by others (most often the council) about what people perceived their community of interest to be.

The main measures the VEC used for objective communities of interest were:

- similar demographic features (age, income, employment status, whether households were single people, families with children or older couples, religious affiliation, place of birth, new arrivals to Australia, etc.);
- when houses were built (usually relevant in areas with both long-established communities and new estates);



- land use (especially urban and rural or green wedge, but also different types of farming within rural areas);
- shared facilities (such as schools, shopping centres, recreation facilities, entertainment venues, religious institutions); and
- geographic constraints and connections (i.e. areas within which people can easily travel).

The VEC considered that, although other measures (such as sporting team support, school bus routes, neighbourhood watch areas, traffic patterns, questionnaires of residents) could be useful, this information was not readily available and the VEC did not have the resources within the budget and timeframe of the representation reviews to research these matters.

A number of types of community of interest recurred in multiple reviews. In some regional municipalities, there was a distinction between a city and the rural area around it. In cases where there was a strong sense of interdependence between a rural area and a city within the municipality, the VEC considered there to be a community of interest between the rural and urban areas and often combined these into an unsubdivided structure. This could be seen especially where the rural population relied on one town as a major focus for activities such as shopping, entertainment and education, and much of the industry and commerce of the urban population relied on the products of the rural population.

In other cases, the rural population was focused on multiple towns within the municipality or on service centres outside the municipality (including Melbourne for some municipalities like Mitchell and Macedon Ranges Shires). In some regional municipalities, different types of farming with different needs took place in different areas. The VEC often considered there to be less community of interest between the areas of the municipality in such circumstances and therefore recommended a division into wards.

In areas on the fringe of Melbourne, the green wedge areas often formed a quite distinct community of interest to the metropolitan areas. In a number of metropolitan municipalities, socio-economically disadvantaged areas were highlighted as important communities of interest to be represented and in others it was considered important to differentiate between new growth areas and older, established suburbs, as these were considered to have different interests and needs.

In metropolitan municipalities, community hubs, especially activity centres identified in the Melbourne 2030 plan, often formed the focal points for communities of interest, and the VEC was careful not to split them and joined the hub with its catchment area in a ward when possible.

In addition to these factors, a great many other communities of interest were identified in Victoria's municipalities and every municipality proved to be a unique combination.

### *Demographic statistics*

Data from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses provided a wealth of information about the differences between areas within most municipalities. Many metropolitan councils already had Census data for their municipalities broken down into smaller areas by the company Profile ID. For regional areas, Census data are provided broken down by major towns and the rural areas by the Department of Sustainability and Environment through its Towns in Time project. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' MapStats also provided very useful information identifying demographic differences within municipalities.

The VEC used these data to help it identify communities of interest. Factors such as age, English proficiency and numbers of children were examined and used to identify which suburbs or towns were demographically similar and which were demographically distinct. For ease of reference, these factors were sometimes charted. An example from Casey City is shown below.

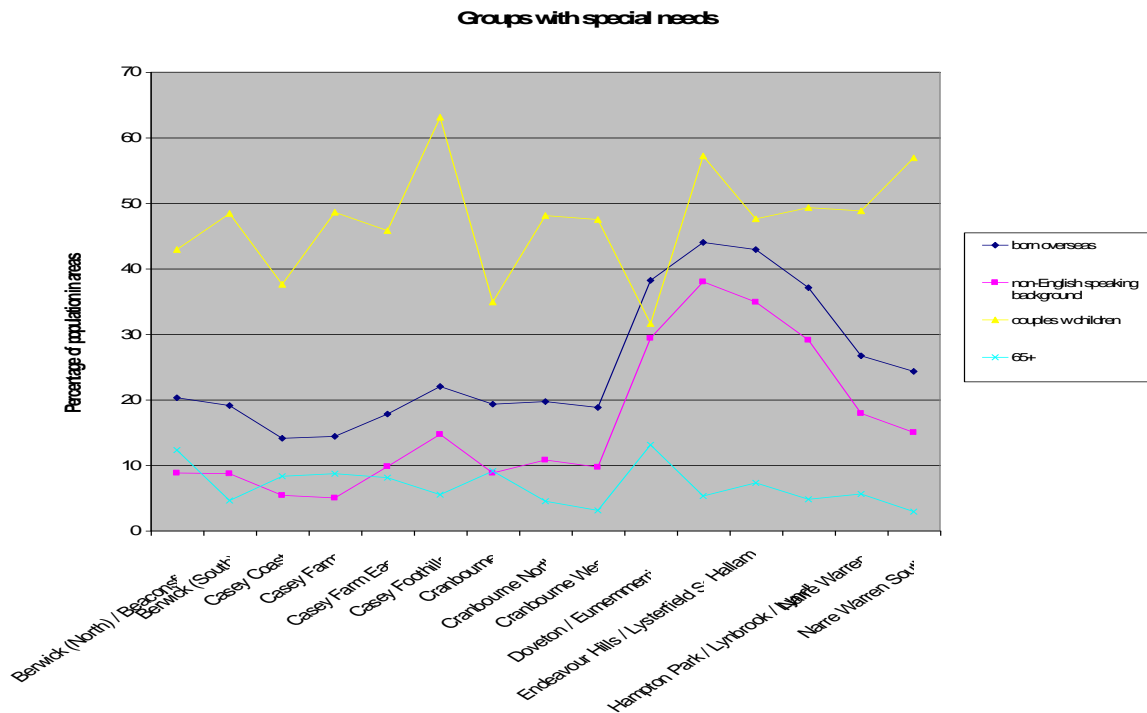


Figure 7: The distribution of groups with special needs in Casey City

This chart identifies a number of communities of interest within Casey City. It can clearly be seen from this example that substantially higher proportions of people from a non-English speaking background can be found in Doveton/Eumemmerring, Endeavour Hills/Lysterfield South, Hallam and Hampton Park/Lynbrook/Lyndhurst compared to the other areas. Similarly, while there are high proportions of couples with children in the “Casey Foothills”, Endeavour Hills/Lysterfield South and Narre Warren South, there are lower proportions in the more established areas of “Casey Coast”, Cranbourne and Doveton/Eumemmerring.

This sort of information helped the VEC to build a picture of the communities of interest within a municipality and therefore which areas it was more appropriate to combine within wards, and which to separate.

### Mapping physical features

In addition to looking at statistics, the VEC looked at physical features within a municipality as a guide to identifying communities of interest. Features such as parkland, major and minor roads, rivers and creeks and elevations are often factors that link or separate communities. The route of a major road, for example, may determine where people shop, go to school and interact socially, thereby giving them common interests. A mountain range or river with few crossings, on the other hand, may limit the interaction

between people on either side with the people or amenities on the other side and may therefore indicate separate communities of interest.

The VEC also prepared maps showing property grids, proposed housing subdivisions and urban growth boundaries. This helped the VEC to see patterns of population density and land use, which can also help reveal communities of interest.

An additional analysis that the VEC introduced in 2005 was the mapping of amenities. Facilities such as schools, healthcare centres, childcare facilities and recreation centres were plotted on maps from Melway data. In suburban areas, this could often help to identify communities of interest, by showing which areas associated with each other and which did not. It could also serve as a useful tool in identifying appropriate boundaries for a ward. Below are two examples of this sort of work – from the Cities of Brimbank and Casey.

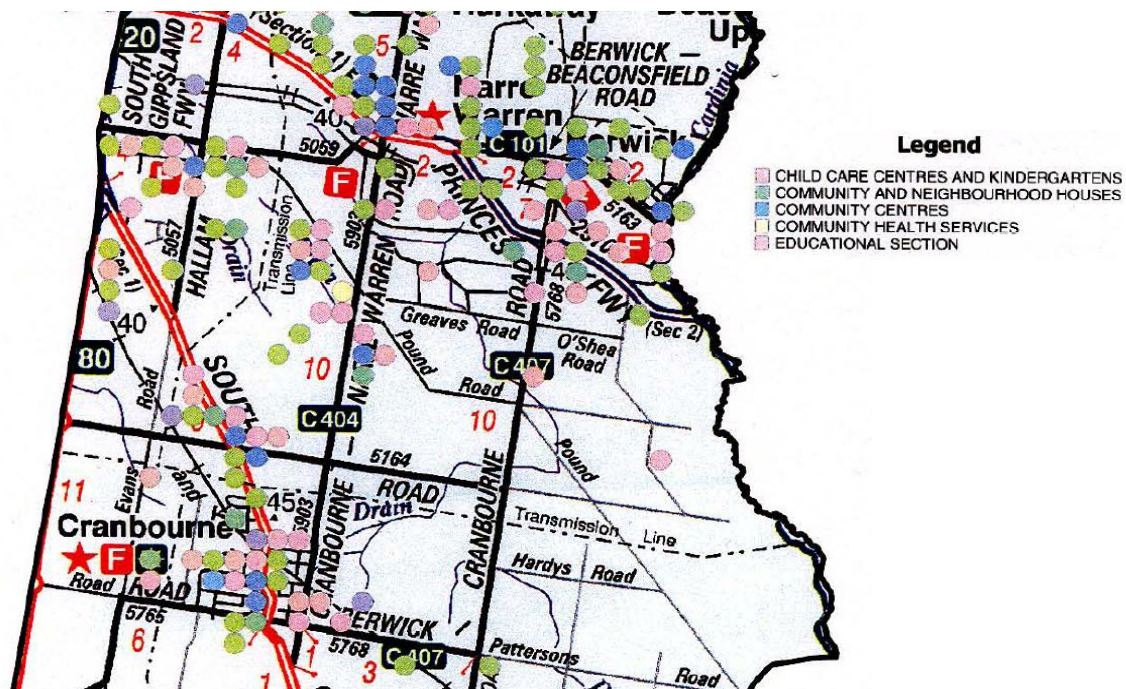


Figure 8: Extract from the map of amenities for the City of Casey<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> © VicRoads, VicRoads Country Street Directory of Victoria edition 5, Map No. 95.

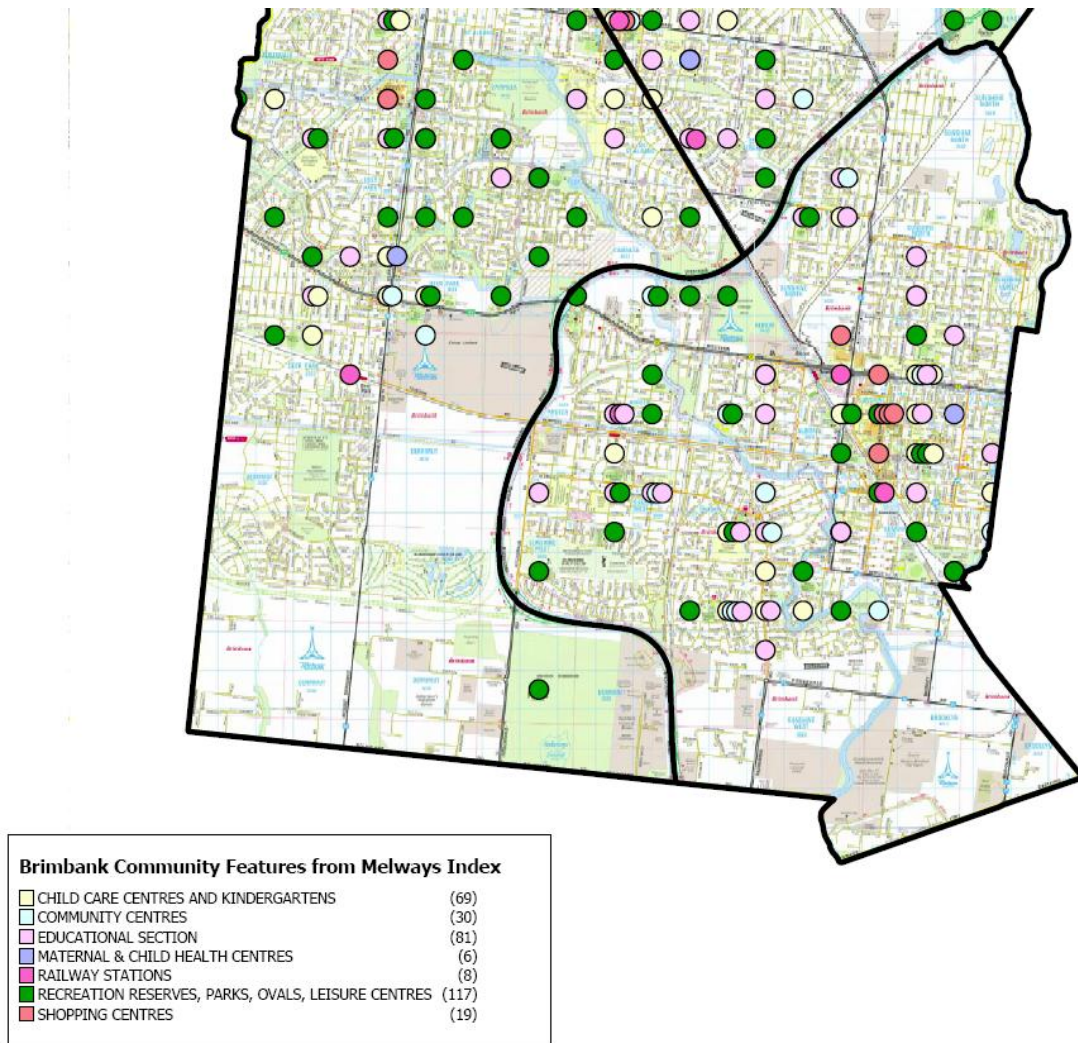


Figure 9: Extract from the map of amenities for the City of Brimbank<sup>36</sup>

These maps show the concentrations of services in particular areas, which are likely to be focal points for communities of interest. Communities of interest will generally surround such focal points, so these concentrations can be used as the central points of wards when drawing boundaries (taking into account factors such as obstacles to travel). These two maps show a marked difference in the role of the freeway with respect to communities of interest. In both cases the freeway is a barrier to travel, but in the City of Casey it is clear that people must regularly traverse it to reach various amenities, most notably the Fountain Gate Shopping Centre and central Berwick. Conversely, in the City of Brimbank, there is much less motivation for people in the Sunshine area to cross the Western Ring Road, as many amenities are available without crossing it and few are available immediately on the other side of it. For these reasons, the VEC saw the freeway as a meaningful ward boundary in the City of Brimbank, and felt comfortable combining suburbs on either side of the freeway in the City of Casey.

<sup>36</sup> © Melway Publishing Pty Ltd, *Melway Greater Melbourne Street Directory*, edition 33 (2006). Map Refs: 13, 14, 25, 26.

### *Fieldwork conducted by the VEC*

The VEC visited all municipalities, often multiple times, to conduct fieldwork during the review process. Fieldwork enabled VEC staff to observe factors such as:

- edges of populated areas;
- housing density;
- the nature of the houses in different areas (e.g. size, age, quality);
- land use;
- major thoroughfares;
- the progress of housing developments; and
- natural features that might serve as appropriate boundaries or lend themselves to ward names.

This information assisted the VEC to identify appropriate ward boundaries and physical features that may indicate communities of interest. Visiting development areas indicated by DSE and the council allowed the VEC to assess what stage the development was at (i.e. were roads marked out, blocks cleared, houses being built etc.) to determine roughly how soon voters were likely to be registered at those addresses.

In conducting this work, the VEC used a GPS tracker connected to a PDA, making it easy for potential boundaries to be followed and redrawn and for development areas to be accurately marked and noted.

### *Other sources*

Where available, the VEC also considered the reports made to the Minister for Local Government when the Commissioners made their recommendations on electoral structures in the 1990s. These reports would often provide an analysis of the municipality in terms of its communities of interest. The reports could also be used to compare the municipality then with the data the VEC had accumulated about the municipality at the time of the review. In some cases, such a comparison could show whether the reasons for the original structure were still valid or whether circumstances had changed substantially in the intervening time.

A range of other sources were used when needed for particular municipalities. Vinson (1999) was useful for identifying differences between areas within some municipalities. Department of Infrastructure (2000) provided helpful information about expected changes in the age break-down for municipalities. An examination of municipality boundaries before the amalgamations in the 1990s often helped the VEC to understand the background. Council reports and local media also indicated some of the issues occurring in municipalities that might indicate special circumstances or features that needed to be included in the VEC's considerations.

### *Balancing the factors*

It is worth emphasising that, in assessing the possible models, the factors outlined in Section 5.4 often contradicted each other. In Mitchell Shire, for example, it was not possible to create wards that both reflected communities of interest and also combined growth and non-growth areas. Growth was focused in the southern part of the municipality, which was socially quite different to the northern areas where there was less growth. In



such cases, the VEC has recommended what it considers to be the best balance of considerations.

## 5.6 The 10% variation rule

The Act states that the number of voters represented by any councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors for a municipality (s.219D). The number of voters used can be either the number at the time of the review or the number of voters predicted enrolled on the entitlement date for the next election. This rule is consistent with the “one vote, one value” principle, and some cap on variation is a feature of most legislation governing similar reviews (see Section 4.3). In practice, this rule has had a major impact on what internal structures are recommended, as the 10% limit is prescribed in the legislation (s.219D) and therefore inviolable.

The 10% variation rule strongly constrains the possible boundaries for a ward. Wards have to be drawn such that quite narrow ranges of numbers of voters are in each one, regardless of particular circumstances. In practice, this has left the VEC having to choose between including a small part of one community of interest in a ward with a quite different community of interest (e.g. including a small rural area within an urban ward or vice versa) or selecting a completely different ward structure.

In Alpine and Wellington Shires, for example, the VEC considered that there were significant different communities of interest within the municipalities, but the 10% variation rule made it impossible to capture them. In both cases, this was one of the factors leading the VEC to recommend an unsubdivided structure. Multi-councillor wards were recommended in other similar circumstances.

In other cases, such as Mornington Peninsula Shire and the City of Whitehorse, the VEC had to use minor roads and similarly awkward ward boundaries in order to meet the legislative requirement. In the case of the City of Geelong, the VEC recommended ward boundaries that split communities of interest because it was not possible to provide single-councillor wards or two-councillor wards that met the 10% variation without splitting communities of interest and the population was such that larger wards were not practicable.

The VEC notes that ensuring a roughly even number of voters in each ward is a consideration in most boundary reviews in Australia and internationally. This rule does vary in some cases. In Queensland, for example, a reviewer is permitted to exceed the average by 20% in sparsely-populated areas of municipalities.<sup>37</sup> In England, electoral equality is expected to be ensured “as nearly as may be”, but in the case of Birmingham City, for example, it seems that representing communities was considered more important than ensuring equality.<sup>38</sup>

As outlined above, some latitude is provided by the Act, in that the reviewer can consider either “the number of voters at the time of the review or the number of voters projected to be voters on the entitlement date for the next general election” (s.219D). In general, the VEC has used the number of voters at the time of the review, as this is known quite accurately, whereas population projections are by their nature less precise (see Section 5.7 for some examples of difficulties the VEC has experienced in making predictions). In a number of the fast-growing municipalities, however, the VEC has used the number of

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<sup>37</sup> *Local Government Act 1993* (s.286).

<sup>38</sup> Thrasher *et al.* (2004), pp. 74-7. Cf. The Electoral Commission (2002), p. 17.

projected voters in an effort to create wards that are more likely to last longer and reduce community confusion.

In total, the VEC recommended boundaries for 276 wards. Of these, 270 were within the 10% variation at the election after the review. Six of the municipalities reviewed in 2004-2005 required subdivision reviews prior to the 2008 elections.

### **5.7 Cases exceeding the 10% variation**

It is worth briefly noting the reasons why, in six cases, the number of voters in some wards exceeded the 10% variation rule at the time of the election after the review.

#### *City of Maribyrnong – Sheoak Ward*

Sheoak Ward in the City of Maribyrnong was set with a high deviation of +10.51% at the time of the review (2005). The rationale behind this was to cater for the high housing growth identified in the other areas of the municipality and limited growth in Sheoak Ward that was expected between the time of the review and the next election. This pattern produced a drop in the deviation for Sheoak Ward as predicted. However, this drop did not happen as quickly as anticipated. Consequently Sheoak Ward was +10.38% at the time of the municipal election in November 2005. Since then, the trend has continued in the anticipated direction. The deviation had reduced to +9.90 at the 2008 election.

In the City of Maribyrnong, a single-councillor ward structure was recommended. The VEC notes that single-councillor ward structures are intrinsically more difficult to keep in correct proportions, as small elector additions or subtractions in one ward have more immediate effects on the deviation from the average in the other wards.

#### *Cardinia Shire – Ranges Ward*

A similar situation occurred in Cardinia Shire. At the time of the review in 2005, the Ranges Ward deviation was set at +13.35%. This was to offset the massive amounts of subdivisional growth expected in Central Ward (covering Pakenham) between the time of the review and the election. Again, the growth in Central Ward and therefore the relative drop in Ranges Ward was not as fast as predicted and at the time of the election in November 2005, Ranges Ward was at +11.85%. The expected growth did occur – so much so that a subdivision review was required before the 2008 elections. The review did not alter the boundaries for Ranges Ward, and the deviation at the 2008 elections was -0.93%.

#### *City of Casey – Balla Balla Ward*

The deviation for Balla Balla Ward was set at -11.87% in 2005 at the time of the review. This was to cater for the growth predicted in the outlying areas of Cranbourne. Once again, the growth did not occur as quickly as expected and the ward deviation was only at -10.43% at the time of the November 2005 election. By the time of the 2008 elections, the deviation had dropped to -7.24% (a subdivision review occurred in 2008 but did not change the boundaries for Balla Balla Ward).

#### *Central Goldfields Shire – Tullaroop Ward*

At the time of the review in 2005, the deviation for Tullaroop Ward was estimated at +3.06% and the deviation for Daisy Hill Ward was estimated at +5.92%. At the election, the actual deviation for the Tullaroop Ward was +10.34% and the actual deviation for the Daisy Hill Ward was +0.79%. Both wards were set at the positive end of the deviation scale as

projections indicated that the deviation for these wards would decline before the next review was due. That trend has, in fact occurred, and the deviations for Tullaroop and Daisy Hill Wards at the 2008 elections were +9.65% and -2.42% respectively.

In rural municipalities where single member wards are implemented, moving a small number of voters between wards has a far greater impact on the deviation than in a larger municipality. In the case of modelling the boundary between the Tullaroop and Daisy Hill Wards, it was necessary to make an estimate regarding the number of voters enrolled in an area to the east of the township of Talbot, as the recommended boundary split a census collector district. Estimates were made by reference to the density of the property cadastre to determine where the enrolled electors were likely to be located. Generally, this method provides an accurate estimate for modelling boundaries. However, in the case of the area to the east of the township of Talbot, the property cadastre did not give an accurate picture of where the enrolled electors actually lived, as several properties bordering the township turned out to be uninhabited. This resulted in fewer electors being in Daisy Hill Ward and more in Tullaroop Ward than was estimated. The VEC notes that the translation of all addresses into specific points on Earth data, which occurred prior to the 2007-2008 reviews, meant that this sort of error did not recur.

#### *City of Knox – Taylor Ward*

In predicting the growth in voter numbers for the City of Knox, the VEC's projection model did not take sufficient account of short term growth that would occur. As a result, Taylor Ward had a deviation of +11.43% at the 2008 elections. This was an error on the part of the VEC and administrative checks have been put in place to ensure that the same error does not recur in future reviews.

#### *City of Port Phillip – Carlisle Ward*

As mentioned above (Section 5.3), the VEC determines the numbers of voters in a municipality by combining the electors on the State electoral register with a list of people with other entitlements provided by the council. In the City of Port Phillip reviews, the file provided by the Council did not contain all entitled electors. At the time of the election there were 5,761 more non-resident electors on the roll than in the information provided by the Council at the time of the review. Consequently, Carlisle Ward had a deviation of +12.92% at the 2008 election. It is VEC practice to make enquiries where it appears that the number of CEO list records provided by the council significantly differs from the last time that a roll was prepared, and this practice will be continued in order to help reduce the likelihood of such errors recurring.

### **5.8 Ward names**

Where the VEC has recommended structures with wards, it is required to name these wards. On this matter, the VEC is very heavily influenced by suggestions in public submissions. Where the VEC has put forward more than one subdivided preliminary option, it has generally provided different names in each model to stimulate public debate. The reaction of submissions in response to the report is a major consideration when the VEC makes its final recommendation.

When assessing suggestions from the public, or when the VEC is required to provide suggestions due to a lack of proposals from the public, it has recourse to the naming principles described in the Department of Sustainability and Environment's *Guidelines for*



*Geographic Names Victoria*.<sup>39</sup> To avoid any possible confusion, the VEC also endeavoured to ensure that recommended ward names would not be confused with the names of electorates at State or Federal level.

In some cases, there were large numbers of different ward names suggested and substantial public debate on the issue. In cases where the VEC considered that further investigation and public consultation on the matter were warranted, the VEC instead suggested neutral names (such as North, Central and South) with the suggestion that the Council could further investigate the matter and make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government to change the names should it see fit. The VEC notes that, to date, no councils have changed ward names subsequent to their reviews.

This has led to some repetition of names across Victoria. There are currently ten Central Wards across different municipalities. Given the administrative confusions that occurred between Taylors Ward in the City of Brimbank and Taylor Ward in the City of Knox and between Altona South and Altona East Wards in the City of Hobsons Bay during the 2008 elections, the VEC will give consideration to avoiding recommending similar names in future reviews. At the same time, however, the VEC is mindful of traditions and important local associations behind names in some cases and will balance factors such as these against the desirability of avoiding similar names.

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<sup>39</sup> Department of Sustainability and Environment (2004).

## 6. The public consultation process

### 6.1 Legislation

The legislation requires the reviewer to take public submissions into account in making its recommendations (s.219F). As outlined in Section 4.1, the Act provides a basic structure for conducting the reviews, which includes the following steps:

- informing people of the review and inviting written preliminary submissions;
- publishing a Preliminary Report;
- inviting written submissions in response to the Report (“response submissions”);
- providing an opportunity for any person submitting a response submission to be heard in person; and
- preparing a Final Report for the Minister.

Outside those constraints, the reviewer may conduct the review however it sees fit.

### 6.2 The type of public engagement to be undertaken

The legislation does not specify in what capacity submissions should be considered or what weight they should be given.

The International Association for Public Participation has developed a “Public Participation Spectrum” that categorises the possible types of public engagement. This model is further explored in the Department of Sustainability and Environment’s *Effective Engagement: Building Relationships with Community and Other Stakeholders*. The spectrum sets out five levels of community engagement<sup>40</sup>:

Level:	Goal:
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Table 4: The IAP2’s “Public Participation Spectrum”

The method for interacting with the public specified in the legislation involved techniques typically associated with consultation and the VEC came to the view that consultation was the appropriate level of public engagement for the electoral representation review process. The VEC engaged in some activities that were additional to those set out in the legislation, such as holding public information sessions and producing and distributing a Guide for

<sup>40</sup> Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005), Book 1, p. 27.

Submissions and a leaflet or newsletter article (see Section 6.3), but still kept the approach in line with consultation.

There are a number of reasons why adopting a higher level of public engagement may not be appropriate for the reviews. Higher levels of public consultation are generally more time-consuming and would have been difficult or impossible in the time-frames allowed for conducting the reviews. A higher level of engagement may also have added to the cost of the reviews, which many councils already found burdensome. A fair degree of understanding would be required before informed debate about representation review matters could take place (for example, about vote counting systems and demographic analyses). The VEC's Guide for Submissions covering the basic issues is approximately 25 pages in length. Community members would need to absorb more detailed information if some of the higher levels of public engagement were to be adopted. Electoral representation reviews were also not issues that interested large numbers of the public, and those who were interested were often closely associated with the council, councillors or prospective candidates rather than representing a broad cross-section of the community. It was also considered important that the ultimate recommendation should be made by an independent and unbiased body to provide a level playing field for the democratic process.

Therefore, the VEC took a consultation approach to the public engagement process. A key element of this approach was that the VEC would not use the public submissions as a "straw poll" to represent the whole of the municipality. This was particularly important given that the number of people making submissions was very small compared to the number of voters in a municipality and was sometimes very small in absolute terms. In addition, as mentioned above, the submitters did not necessarily represent all of the community, and the VEC considered that it had a duty to ensure fair and equitable representation for all members of the community and not just the most vocal.

In addition, in some cases, submitters could have been perceived as having a vested interest in the outcome. It is noteworthy that 81% of preliminary submissions from councils supported the existing structure. A key element of the legislation is that it is intended to take the decision out of the hands of people with vested interests and put it into the hands of an independent party. As John Thwaites, Minister for Environment, said in his second reading speech<sup>41</sup>:

*The existing requirements for the review of electoral structures are seriously deficient. At present the electoral boundaries for local councils are reviewed by the councils themselves, and where councils are unsubdivided, reviews are only conducted at the discretion of councils.*

*At other levels of government these types of reviews are conducted at arms length from the elected body to ensure independence and probity. Considerable concern was expressed in public submissions about the current system.*

The Act also specifies that the council under review cannot specify how the review is to be conducted (s.219E, cf. s.219F(1)).

Moreover, it was possible during the submission process to make it appear that some options had more support than they really did. A number of examples of this were encountered. In one case, it became publicly known that a person had sent in submissions under a number of aliases. In several other cases, it was apparent that a number of the

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<sup>41</sup> *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, Assembly, 15 October 2003, p. 1029.

people signing form letters did not fully understand what they were signing. For example, in some cases when submitters were sent letters acknowledging receipt of their submissions, they contacted the VEC in some confusion and were clearly unaware of what had been submitted. In other cases, acknowledgment letters were returned to sender with the person unknown at that address.

For these reasons the VEC believed that it would be inappropriate to base its recommendations on a “straw poll” of the number of submissions supporting particular models, and also developed its own means of learning about the municipality independently of the public consultation process (see Chapter 5).

Nonetheless, submissions from the public were a very valuable source of information for the VEC. Given the limitations of the process, however, submissions to the VEC were taken into account based on the weight and merit of the arguments and the strength of the evidence presented. Because of this approach, form letters had no more impact on the final recommendation than if only one letter had been received. People sending in large numbers of submissions under aliases and similar practices were also prevented from having undue influence on the process.

Two particular responsibilities were placed on the VEC as a result of this approach. Firstly, it became very important to closely examine and assess *the reasons* behind submitters’ suggestions. To this end, the VEC spent a considerable amount of time asking questions at public hearings, in an effort to make submitters’ reasoning as clear as possible. This was particularly important given the complexity of some of the issues involved. For example, a number of submissions were received which rejected multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures based on people’s experiences at previous elections. In some cases, these experiences were of elections in which votes were counted using the exhaustive preferential system, whereas from 2004 proportional representation was used instead. This fact, unknown to many submitters, affected the strength of the arguments put forward in some cases.

Secondly, this approach made it very important for the VEC to develop as many objective measures of the situation in municipalities as possible. If the VEC is not to rely entirely on submitters for information and conclusions, it is important that it develop techniques for understanding the situation that are sound and robust. This approach has assisted in the development of the techniques discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.5, which have sought to provide as much objective data as possible. Nonetheless, the VEC recognises that these techniques are not perfect and considers that one of the key roles for public submissions is to test the VEC’s research and conclusions and to identify any flaws that have arisen during the review.

It is interesting to explore a few cases where public submissions effectively fulfilled this role:

- in Pyrenees Shire, the VEC changed from its preferred option of an unsubdivided municipality to single-councillor wards as a result of public submissions providing evidence of the diversity of the municipality and the lack of Shire-wide media; ward boundaries were also redrawn in light of evidence presented about communities of interest;
- in the City of Brimbank, the VEC adjusted ward boundaries based on submissions explaining that Delahey had quite different interests to St Albans, which was then confirmed by VEC research; and

- in the City of Maribyrnong, the preliminary alternative option was recommended instead of the preliminary preferred option in the light of submitters providing an explanation of the difficulties in accessing and representing people from the municipality's less advantaged communities.

Overall, as discussed in Section 3.4, the public consultation process altered the VEC's view of what the most appropriate structure was in 42% of the reviews, which clearly highlights the value that the public input had in improving the recommendations.

### **6.3 The VEC's approach**

The legislation mandates that there be two rounds of public consultation, which the VEC refers to as a preliminary and a response phase. In the 2007 and 2008 reviews, the VEC introduced a third phase – an addendum phase – in a small number of reviews.

#### *The preliminary phase*

The preliminary phase takes place at the start of the review and asks people to provide written submissions. The VEC uses this as an initial round of research to learn about the circumstances in the municipality. People are alerted to the review through:

- advertising in local newspapers;
- distributing media releases to local newspapers and (where appropriate) radio stations;
- providing a spokesperson for interviews by any newspapers or radio stations;
- placing an advertisement in *The Age* and the *Herald-Sun* advising people when groups of reviews commence; and
- publishing information on the VEC's website.

The VEC took advice from each council as to which newspapers and radio stations were the most appropriate for the municipality.

The VEC also offered the councils a number of other products for them to select, including:

- articles for council newsletters;
- information for council's websites; and
- a leaflet, which could be delivered to households, posted to voters, distributed to community groups or made available at council locations.

During the preliminary stage, the VEC does not express any particular preferences for what it considers to be the most appropriate structure, but encourages participants to provide any information that they consider relevant. To assist participants, the VEC:

- conducts at least one information session within the municipality, explaining the process and responding to questions from the community;
- produces and distributes a substantial Guide for Submissions for each municipality, which outlines the process, provides background data on the municipality and provides an explanation of some of the primary issues considered in reviews;
- provides information about the number of voters in the current wards, the number of voters in each census collector district and, from 2007, the number of voters in each locality; and
- establishes a helpline for responding to community questions.

Where councils advised that it would be advantageous to provide information sessions at more than one location within the municipality, the VEC provided multiple sessions.

The intention of the VEC's efforts at this stage of the process was to provide people with the information that they required to make a constructive contribution to the process. As the reviews progressed, the products were refined to be more helpful as the VEC identified areas where participants required more information. In particular, the Guide for Submissions grew from being around 16 pages long in the first reviews to around 26 pages by the final reviews (see further Section 6.4).

After the submissions have closed, the VEC takes what it has learnt through the public consultation and its own research and produces a Preliminary Report with a number of options. People are made aware of the report through:

- an advertisement placed in local newspapers describing the preliminary options, advising people about the report and inviting public comment;
- media releases distributed to local newspapers and (where appropriate) radio stations; and
- a spokesperson being available for interviews by any newspapers or radio stations.

The report is made freely available from the VEC's website, at the VEC's office and at the council office, and any people requesting copies from the VEC can have copies mailed to them at no charge.

#### *The response phase*

People were invited to respond to the report with written submissions, and, if they requested, were provided with the opportunity to address a panel of VEC staff at a public hearing. Each submitter was allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes, followed by questions from the VEC panel.

During the first reviews, a small advertisement was placed in local papers advising people about the public hearing. However, this practice was discontinued as it was considered to add little value to the process.

At this stage of the process, the VEC tries to focus public response on the options that are provided in the report. However, there were a number of cases where a new option or a modification of one of the VEC's options was suggested at the response phase of the process which the VEC considered to have substantial merit. During the 2004-2005 reviews, where the VEC considered that the new option was better than any of the preliminary options that it put forward, the VEC recommended this new option in its Final Report without giving the public an opportunity to comment on it. This caused a degree of disquiet in a small number of cases (most notably Loddon Shire), and after the 2004-2005 reviews, the VEC committed to providing people with the chance to comment on any such options in future reviews where such occurred.

Thus, during the 2007-2008 reviews, where this situation occurred, the VEC ran a third round of public consultation – an addendum phase. To try to prevent this occurring, the VEC also provided a larger number of options in the Preliminary Report (see further Section 6.4). Where the VEC felt confident that one of the preliminary options was appropriate, the VEC recommended this option to the Minister in a Final Report with no further public consultation.

### *The addendum phase*

During five of the 2007-2008 reviews, the VEC considered that an option which arose during the response phase was of sufficient merit and substantially different to the models already presented to warrant seeking public comment on it. To enable this, the VEC:

- produced an Addendum Report providing a description of the additional option, which was made available via the same means as the Preliminary Report;
- placed an advertisement in local newspapers describing the additional option, advising people about the report and inviting public comment;
- distributing media releases to local newspapers and (where appropriate) radio stations;
- sent letters to all response submitters alerting them to the additional option and inviting comment; and
- providing a spokesperson for interviews by any newspapers or radio stations.

People were invited to provide written comments on the additional option and were given at least two weeks to do so from the date on which the option was made known to the public.

### *Submissions and transparency*

In all three rounds, people could supply written submissions via mail, fax or email. All submissions were published to the website with the submitter's name and locality (but not their street address or other personal details). If a submission was provided without a person's name, address and phone number, it was not accepted unless those details were later supplied. These steps were considered important to ensure transparency in the process.

Similarly, although only people who had provided submissions were permitted to speak at the public hearings, any person could attend so that the entire process was visible to interested parties. In a number of cases, submitters requested *in camera* hearings with the panel. In all cases, the VEC declined this in order to maintain complete transparency in the public consultation process.

### *Sessions for council officers*

The VEC also ran three information sessions for council officers and councillors in 2007, which were attended by 49 representatives. These sessions explored matters to do with the reviews, including:

- how proportional representation works;
- the legislative framework and the process for conducting electoral representation reviews;
- a summary of the 2004-2005 reviews;
- the VEC's considerations and methodology in conducting reviews;
- issues that have arisen in previous reviews; and
- issues that are beyond the scope of the reviews.

## **6.4 Changes to communication products**

The VEC continually reviewed and amended its communication products during the reviews.

Towards the end of 2007, the VEC undertook a review of the advertisements and media releases used in the representation reviews. The review was done through media research and an analysis of comments on the surveys of participants (see Section 6.6).

As a result of this research, it was determined that the advertisements contained more information than was required. Consequently, they could appear wordy and confusing, and many of the original advertisements were lost amongst the articles when they appeared on the page of a newspaper. The advertisements were therefore redesigned to increase readability and clarity.

As well as reviewing the advertisements, an audit was conducted of the way that the VEC's media releases were picked up by local newspapers. The content of the releases was revised to increase the amount of take-up by the papers.

The audit of newspaper coverage also revealed that articles about the preliminary options often fail to present the view of the VEC. When asked by journalists for comments on the reasons for the preliminary options, it has been the VEC's policy to refer journalists to the reports rather than provide a specific comment, as there are often multiple, complex reasons for the VEC's recommendations that are difficult to reduce to a one or two sentence quote. In some cases, journalists will look through the reports and quote text from them. In many cases, however, they simply include quotes from the council or vocal citizens without any response from the VEC.

As a consequence of this, in a number of reviews where the council expressed very strong views against the VEC's preferred options, there was a significant amount of publicity against the preliminary options, without any publicity in favour of them. This situation may have led to a significant bias in the submissions from the public, especially as 11% of surveyed submitters did not receive a copy of the report, with 68% of those people saying that they felt sufficiently informed by newspaper advertising and articles.

The audit also revealed that while the reviews received excellent publicity in the newspapers of some municipalities, in others there was nothing about the reviews in the papers other than the paid advertisements. In all reviews, the VEC sends media releases to all news outlets recommended by the council.

Changes were also made to the Guides for Submissions in light of the feedback received during the reviews. During the 2004-2005 reviews, the VEC added additional information about:

- the background to the reviews (including how the current structures came about and some information about the VEC);
- the purpose of an electoral representation review;
- the basis for the VEC's recommendations;
- the concept of communities of interest; and
- demographics of the municipality under review.

In 2007, several new sections were added to assist people to contribute more knowledgeably to the reviews:

- information about the panel aiding the Electoral Commissioner in his decision-making;
- a discussion of governance-related issues and their impact on the appropriety of different electoral structures;



- more background information about the municipality under review; and
- a description of the recommendations and the reasons behind the recommendations for reviews of similar municipalities.

As a result of these changes, the Guide for Submissions went from being a 15 page document in the first round of reviews to approximately 25 pages by the last reviews

All of these additions were added to assist people with writing their submissions, so that they were better informed about the process and the VEC's considerations and had easier access to some of the statistical data that the VEC use in making their recommendations. The VEC notes people's high level of satisfaction with the guides (see Section 7.1) and believes that these changes helped people to make more informed and useful submissions to the process.

Changes also occurred with the Preliminary and Final Reports. The VEC substantially expanded the sections summarising the submissions from the public and the sections providing explanations for the VEC's recommendations in the particular case. These changes were intended to make the VEC's methods and reasoning clearer. Some submitters also made reference to the fact that, although the VEC talked extensively about communities of interest, in many early reports it did not provide many details of what it considered the communities of interest to be. The VEC addressed this with more detailed descriptions, to help submitters understand the VEC's reasons and to provide them with the opportunity to provide the VEC with any information that it did not have.

These changes led to a significant improvement in the survey respondents' assessment of the Preliminary Report (no surveys were conducted on people's response to the Final Reports), as detailed in Section 7.1.

The VEC notes that this did require some additional resourcing, and this added to the cost of the reviews. However, the VEC considers this to have been worthwhile given the increased quality and transparency of the public consultation process.

In the 2007-2008 reviews, the VEC also generally included more preliminary options in each review than it did in the 2004-2005 reviews. This provided a larger number of options for people to discuss and therefore aided the public debate process.

In most cases in 2007-2008, the VEC also included the pre-review structure (or a modified version of it where it did not meet the 10% voter number variation allowance). There were two reasons for this. Firstly, in a number of the 2004-2005 reviews where the VEC did not put forward the existing structure as one of the preliminary options, many submissions advocated for it anyway. At the same time, however, submitters advocating for a different option did not see a need to argue the merits of what they preferred compared to the pre-review structure because the pre-review structure was not "on the table". Including the pre-review structure as one of the preliminary options helped all participants to focus on the same issues.

Secondly, some participants in 2004-2005 felt that by not including the existing structure, the VEC denied them an opportunity to argue their case for it relative to the VEC's preliminary options. As the VEC did seek to arrive at the best possible outcome, it was pleased to provide people with the opportunity to present arguments in favour of the existing structure.

One limitation that the VEC did encounter with this stage of the process, however, was the fact that the legislation requires the VEC to differentiate between a preferred and alternative preliminary options. In some cases, the VEC did have very clear preliminary preferences, and this system of differentiating them helped the public consultation process by making the VEC’s view clear. In other cases, however, there were multiple options which the VEC considered to be of equal merit at the preliminary stage and the VEC was keen to use the consultation process to differentiate those options. The VEC believes that the process would be made more effective if it was allowed to decide whether to have only one preferred option or to have multiple preferred options.

**Recommendation 6**  
**Multiple preferred options**

The Government should consider amending the *Local Government Act 1989* s.219F(6) to allow the VEC to publish more than one preferred option in the Preliminary Report.

### 6.5 The participants

Appendix 4 summarises the number of submitters who participated in each representation review, and the number of submissions for each review received from councils, councillors, community/business/political groups and private individuals.

Across the 77 reviews conducted, a total of 4,479 submissions were received (2,570 in 2004-2005 and 1,909 in 2007-2008). This varied considerably from one council to another, ranging from 5 (in West Wimmera Shire) to 407 (in the City of Hobsons Bay).

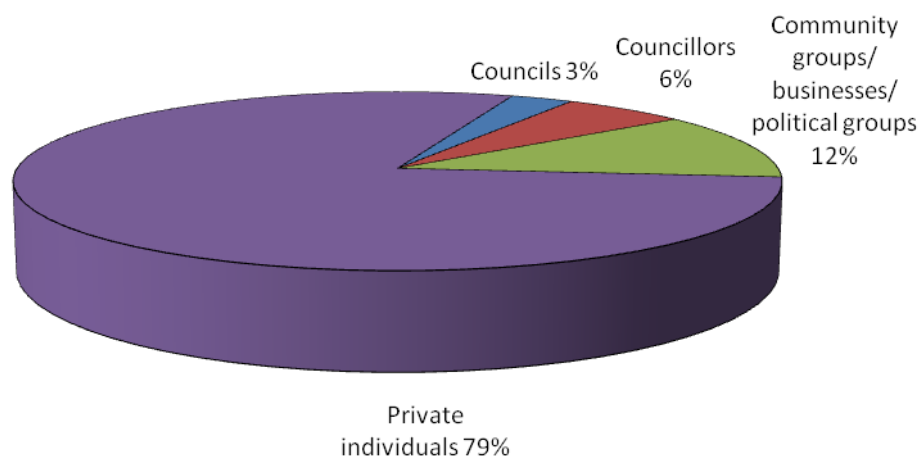


Figure 10: Sources of the submissions across all reviews

The proportions of different categories of participant were relatively similar between 2004-2005 and 2007-2008, although there was some increase in the number of community groups, business and political groups participating in 2007-2008.

There was a total of 1,115 form letters received across the reviews. The majority of those (893 submissions), however, were received during the 2004-2005 reviews. The proportion of submissions that were form letters dropped substantially from nearly 35% in 2004-2005 to 12% in 2007-2008. The VEC believes that its improved communication products (see Section 6.4) contributed to that change.

It is specified in the Act (s.219F) that councils may contribute to the review process and most councils contributed both a preliminary and a response submission. Seven councils in total chose not to contribute a submission at any stage and twelve councils put forward only one submission. In some of these cases, the council explained that they considered it more appropriate for the process to be conducted without the council's input as they considered there to be a conflict of interest. The VEC notes that councils strongly tended to favour the existing structures (81% of councils' preliminary submissions supported the existing structure) but also notes that many councils provided significant quantities of useful local information that helped the VEC to understand the municipality.

Councillors often contributed personal submissions as well, in some cases supporting the council's submission and in other cases advocating alternative options. Individual councillors contributed their own submissions in 66 of the 77 reviews.

Overall, there were significantly more response submissions than preliminary submissions. Response submissions and comments on additional options constituted 65% of all submissions. This trend may reflect a growing awareness in communities of reviews taking place. It may also be easier for many submitters to provide input after the concrete options have been released in the Preliminary Reports than before then. Campaigns of form letters are also more common during the response phase, which can increase the number of submissions substantially.

It should be noted, however, that the pattern differed substantially from one review to another, and there were actually more preliminary submissions than response submissions and comments on additional options in 25 (32%) of the reviews.

An important fact to note about the public submissions is that in very few cases were they unanimous in their support of one structure or any particular number of councillors.

## **6.6 Effectiveness of the communications campaign elements**

The VEC conducted voluntary, anonymous, written surveys of participants in many of the reviews – 18 of the 2004-2005 reviews and all 38 of the 2007-2008 reviews. In total, 908 surveys were returned (301 from the 2004-2005 reviews and 607 from the 2007-2008 reviews). In 2004-2005, participants were surveyed at four stages of the process:

- if they attended the information sessions;
- if they requested a Guide for Submissions;
- if they sent in a submission in response to the Preliminary Report; and
- if they attended the public hearing.

In 2007-2008, the second and third of those surveys was combined into one survey so that people were only surveyed at three stages:

- if they attended the information sessions;
- if they sent in a submission in response to the Preliminary Report; and
- if they attended the public hearing.

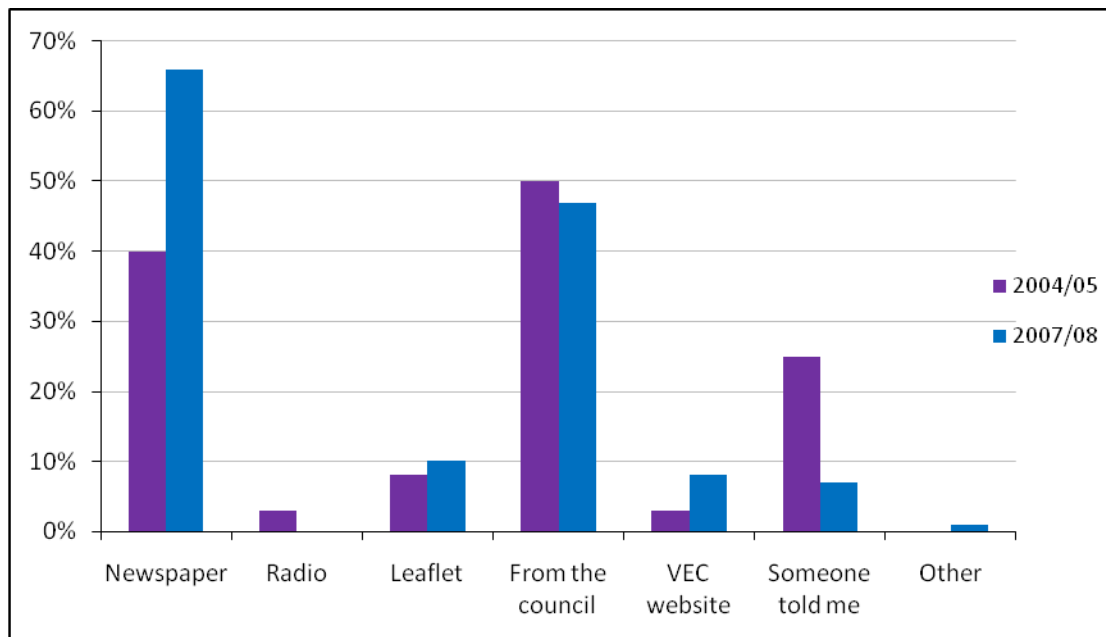
The surveys were designed to provide details about the process rather than the outcomes of the review, and therefore limited the scope of the questions to the review processes, rather than the respondents' satisfaction as a whole. Responses were voluntary and anonymous at all stages. No feedback was sought from people regarding the Final Reports, as it was

believed that people’s assessment of the reports might be distorted by their view of the outcome of the review.

As discussed in Section 6.4, the VEC made some alterations to a number of its products in 2007-2008 in response to some of the comments included on the surveys issued during the reviews conducted in 2004-2005. Comparing some of the results from the 2004-2005 surveys with those completed in 2007-2008 shows that these modifications did achieve what the VEC had hoped. When the next reviews commence in 2011, the VEC will look for further improvements that it can make based on the 2007-2008 survey results.

#### *Sources of information about the reviews*

The survey questions regarding the information sessions, preliminary reports and the public hearings provided some insight into the effectiveness of the communications campaigns. Figure 11 shows the importance of the various communication channels in informing the public of the information sessions (at the start of the review process), Figure 12 gives an indication of the sources used for obtaining copies of the Preliminary Reports and Figure 13 shows the effectiveness of the different channels for informing people about the public hearings (at the end of the process).



*Figure 11: How did you find out about the information session?*

In the 2007-2008 reviews, greater awareness about the information session was generated through material presented in newspapers than in 2004-2005. This includes both advertising and editorial content. In both review periods, similar proportions of respondents reported being informed through the information leaflet and by the council, while the numbers selecting “someone told me” declined in 2007-2008. Radio rated as a very small source of information in 2004-2005 but was not selected at all in 2007-2008. Conversely, the VEC website was a greater source of information in 2007-2008 than in 2004-2005. Responses for this graph total more than 100% due to some respondents selecting more than one source.

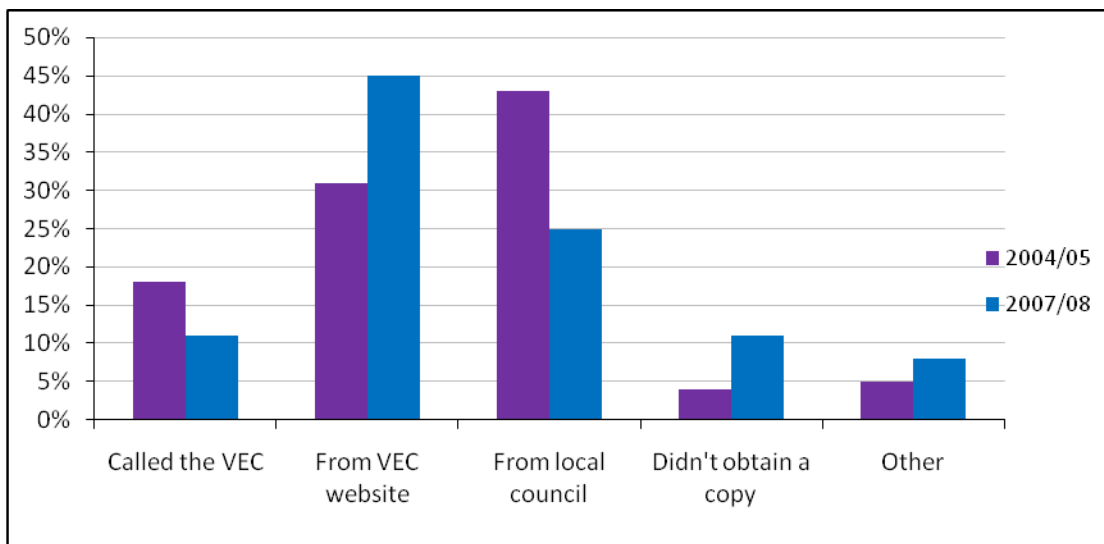


Figure 12: How did you get a copy of the Preliminary Report?

The graph in Figure 12 indicates that the VEC’s website became a more utilised source for people to obtain a copy of the Preliminary Report in 2007-2008 compared to 2004-2005, with the website becoming the most common source in 2007-2008. In 2007-2008, a significantly greater number did not obtain copies of the Preliminary Report before making submissions, but the VEC notes that approximately 36% of such respondents were involved in only two reviews (the Cities of Moonee Valley and Boroondara).

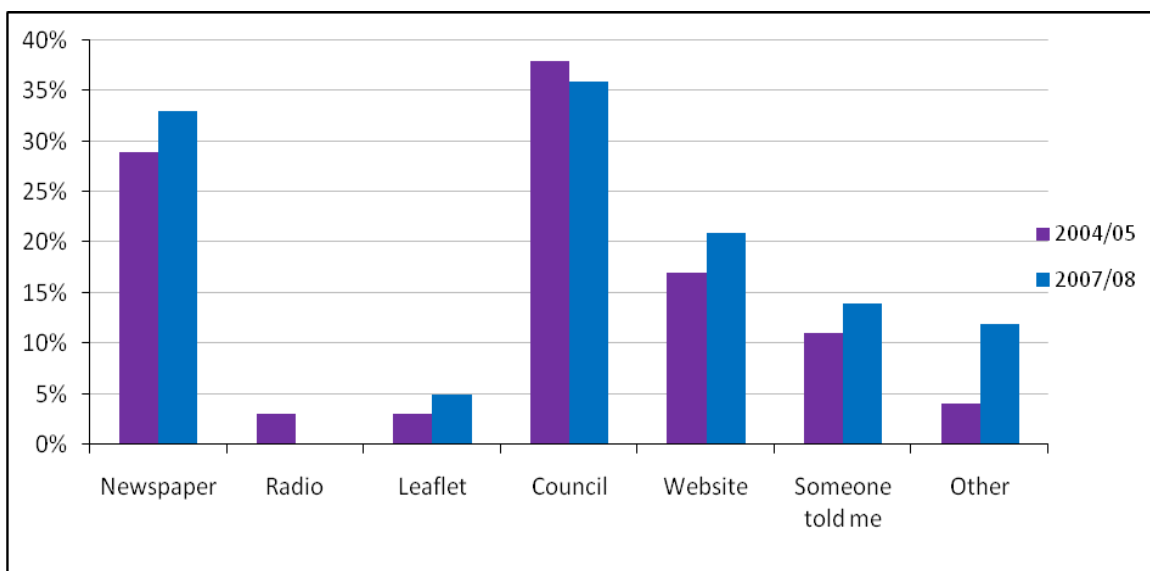


Figure 13: How did you find out about the public hearing?

As with the information session, in 2007-2008 a greater proportion of respondents found out about the public hearing via the newspaper and the VEC’s website than in 2004-2005. The council informed the greatest proportion of respondents in both sets; this may indicate that by this stage of the review, councils have often published their own information on the review and it has been discussed at council meetings. “Other” rated as a higher response in 2007-2008, with respondents variously saying that they found out about the public hearing through a council newsletter, a VEC acknowledgement of submission letter, and the Guide for Submissions, amongst other things.

At the outset of the reviews, newspapers were very important in informing people about the information sessions. As the reviews progressed however, it was observed that councils, the VEC website and word-of-mouth became progressively more important sources of information for people to find out about the reviews' different stages.

As previously mentioned, the newspaper advertisements and media releases were redesigned for the final round (round 4) of the 2007-2008 reviews. A comparison of this final round with rounds 1 to 3 shows that a slightly higher proportion of people were informed about the information sessions and the public hearings via the newspaper after the material had been redesigned.

Despite evidence showing that an increasing number of people are accessing material from the VEC's website, a number of comments were made about the difficulties of obtaining the reports from the website, especially for people in rural areas with dial-up internet access. It was suggested by a number of respondents that the VEC should not rely too heavily on the internet as a vehicle for information dissemination, especially as many participants in the review process are not necessarily computer literate. The VEC takes this concern seriously and always provides alternative means by which people can acquire the information products published on its website.

It was interesting to note that no respondent reported being informed about the reviews through radio in 2007-2008 while a small number were in 2004-2005, even though the VEC sent media releases to a number of local stations and participated in a number of interviews which were broadcast over both review periods.

The advertisements, media releases and leaflets were primarily designed to inform people that the review was happening and to encourage them to find out more and participate. The Guide for Submissions and Preliminary Report, however, were also designed to help people participate effectively in the process by providing many more details about the VEC's considerations and preliminary options.

The surveys indicated that these products were relatively well used. Across all surveys, 76% of preliminary submitters obtained a copy of the Guide for Submissions, and 81% of respondents providing a response submission obtained a copy of the Preliminary Report.

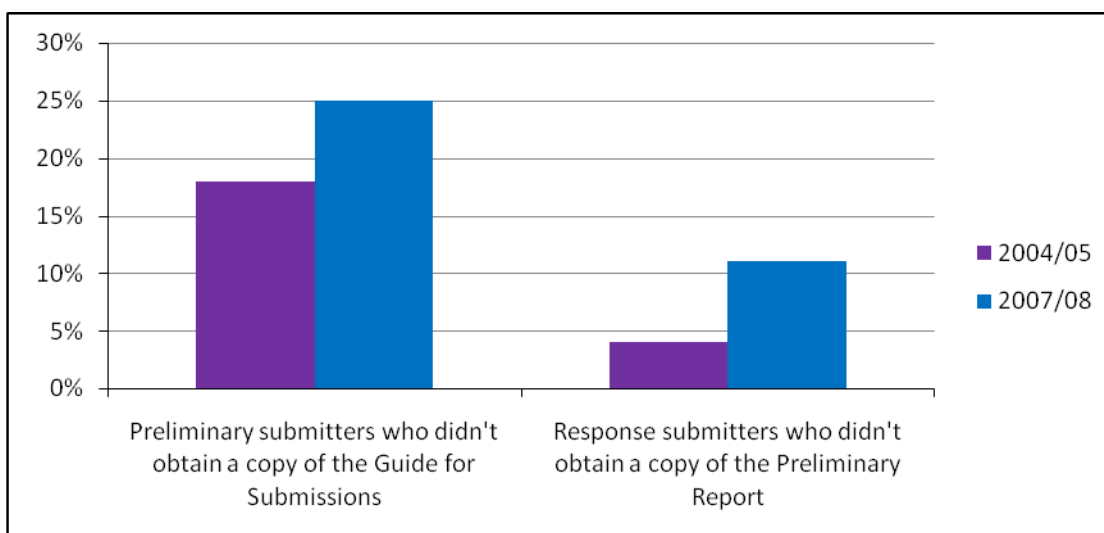


Figure 14: Did you obtain a Guide for Submissions or Preliminary Report?

The VEC believes that these figures may not be entirely representative. Although all submitters were sent a survey, responding to it was optional. In some municipalities, there were very high return rates, but in others they were extremely low. In the City of Boroondara, for example, only 32 of the 213 surveys were returned.

The VEC will continue to look for ways to promote these products in future reviews.

### **6.7 Case Study: The City of Boroondara – “Keeping Local Government Local”**

The VEC notes that there is a significant variation in how councils participate in the reviews. Some stay at arm’s length from the process and do not participate at all, while others strongly advocate for a particular outcome. Most fall somewhere between these two extremes.

During the review of the City of Boroondara, the Council launched an extensive information campaign advising people of the review and expressing its view on the most appropriate electoral structure. Although a number of councils produced their own materials explaining the council’s view on the process, the Boroondara City Council’s campaign was significantly more extensive than all others. This campaign is worth some discussion, as it highlights a number of issues with the review process.

The materials produced by the Council included:

- posters displayed in various locations throughout the municipality;
- a leaflet (differing from the one created by the VEC) distributed to key locations;
- a Frequently Asked Questions document placed on the Council’s website and distributed to locations throughout the municipality;
- five information sessions;
- information in the Council’s regular space in the *Progress Leader*;
- a recorded message on the Council’s telephone line;
- a special edition of the “News Update” about the review, distributed to households in some wards in February 2008;
- an article in the May 2008 “News Update” about the review, distributed to households in some wards;
- articles in the December 2007/January 2008, February 2008, March 2008, April 2008 and May 2008 editions of the Council newsletter, the *Boroondara Bulletin*;
- media releases distributed to local media and on the Council’s website; and
- “Fact Sheets” about the review distributed by the Council.

The Council also passed its information to community groups to encourage their participation in the process and provided information to council staff.

The campaign is in a number of ways similar to the campaign run by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council in 2005. At a forum held by the VLGA in September 2007, a representative of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council listed the key points from their experience as including<sup>42</sup>:

- *Involving the elected Council and agreeing on a position, including agreement by each individual Councillor.*

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<sup>42</sup> Buck (2007).

- *Gaining commitment of all staff, CEO, Directors, Managers and others and having them all 'sing the same tune'.*
- *Do your home work, understanding and communicating your Council's 'unique' position and being single minded on the outcome.*
- *Getting community support by developing a communications campaign. We included publicity in Peninsula Wide, press releases, writing to clubs, organizations, politicians and individuals on the importance, Council's position and seeking support.*
- *Develop a theme. We used 'The Ten Tests of Effective Local Government'*
- *Obtaining support from influential community people and groups.*

Campaigns of this nature do appear to increase the amount of public involvement in the review process. During the review of Mornington Peninsula Shire, the VEC received 77 preliminary submissions and 176 response submissions, and 40 people spoke at the public hearing. For the City of Boroondara, the VEC received 213 preliminary submissions and 158 response submissions, and 32 people spoke at the public hearing, which went for over seven hours. These are uncommonly large numbers, as can be seen from Appendix 4, especially when one bears in mind that there were relatively few form letters.

The VEC notes that the products were created independently of the VEC by the Council and were strongly in favour of the option preferred by the Council (the existing single-councillor ward structure with minor boundary adjustments). The VEC does not dispute the Council's right to publicise its point of view on the options, but notes that:

- a number of products were produced with the appearance of being neutral, but contained selective information;
- the campaign played on people's emotions, particularly fear and outrage; and
- there were some suggestions that the VEC was acting inappropriately.

As an example, the Boroondara City Council produced a series of "Fact Sheets", which had the appearance of providing neutral information, but were quite selective in the information they provided. The "Single-member wards –v– multi-member wards"<sup>43</sup> factsheet provided lists of the benefits and drawbacks of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards. However, there were 7 benefits and 0 drawbacks listed for single-councillor wards and 2 benefits and 7 drawbacks listed for multi-councillor wards.<sup>44</sup> In addition, this fact sheet listed as one of the advantages of single-councillor wards as that they provide "representatives who live locally," whereas it was explained that for multi-councillor wards "The elected members may live within the ward, however there is no requirement." In fact, legislation governing who is entitled to stand for election in a ward does not differ between the electoral structures.

Parts of the campaign targeted the emotions of fear and outrage. A special edition of the *News Update* during the preliminary phase explained that "Unless residents take action it could mean more red-tape, slower decision making and an increase in costs," and that the "VEC track record" included "Councillors less accessible" and "Local issues overridden".<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Boroondara City Council (2008a).

<sup>44</sup> On this point, it is worth comparing the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's "ten tests of effective local government". These "tests" were such that single-councillor wards passed every one of them and multi-councillor wards failed every one of them – see Buck (2007).

<sup>45</sup> Boroondara City Council (2008b).



During the response phase, a media release was distributed with the heading “Community Ignored on Electoral Representation Review” with the Mayor, Cr Coral Ross, quoted as saying, “The VEC received the highest number ever of public submissions for the Boroondara review and our community presented well-reasoned arguments that focused on local interests – the VEC has simply ignored the community.”<sup>46</sup>

The campaign was also designed to appeal to multiple audiences – the poster range included pictures of a young family, an older couple, children playing sport, a multicultural event, various small businesspeople and an artist. These were accompanied by slogans suggesting that such things were under threat such as “If you love arts and culture in Boroondara, local representation supports your cultural activities.”

Suggestions were also made that the VEC was acting inappropriately and not acting impartially. A fact sheet published by the Council suggested that “The VEC’s report shows a prejudice towards the proportional representation voting system when the VEC’s brief from the State government is not to determine voting systems but to determine structures” and that “It is not the job of an unelected body to form an opinion on tied votes.”<sup>47</sup>

It is worth noting that the information campaign run by the Boroondara City Council was significantly larger than the one run by the VEC. The Council was said to have spent approximately \$40,000 on its information campaign,<sup>48</sup> but the VEC’s budget for its information campaign was less than \$13,000. This came about because the VEC’s information campaign has to be paid for by the Council, which means that the Council was able to set the VEC’s budget as well as its own. As a result of this, people were significantly more exposed to the Council’s materials than the VEC’s.

It is because of situations like this, among others, that the VEC does not make its decision based on a “straw poll” of submitters. The VEC, however, does consider it unfortunate when situations like this arise, as they reduce the potential value from the public consultation process by discouraging informed debate. Nonetheless, the VEC believes that the public consultation process is a valuable part of the process.

The VEC also notes that there were a number of submissions in both the Mornington Peninsula Shire and City of Boroondara reviews who expressed concern about the councils’ actions in these reviews. The concern came from two sources – some felt that the council had a duty to present things in an impartial manner and some considered that the amount of public money spent on promoting a particular option was inappropriate.

Overall, the VEC notes that while strategies like these may increase participation, they do not necessarily improve the public consultation process, as they do not necessarily increase the quantity or depth of local information that is brought to the VEC’s attention. While a campaign playing on emotions is also apparently an effective tool in motivating interest in the review process, it is not a technique that the VEC could employ, as it is important for the VEC to remain impartial and analytical in its presentation and description of options.

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<sup>46</sup> Boroondara City Council (2008c).

<sup>47</sup> Boroondara City Council (2008d).

<sup>48</sup> Carmona (2008).

## **7. Issues arising from the VEC's approach**

The VEC received a considerable amount of feedback on the reviews from the following sources:

- the surveys conducted by the VEC;
- submissions, especially submissions in response to the Preliminary Report;
- letters to the VEC or to members of Parliament; and
- articles in newspapers.

Many points were raised over the course of the reviews. The VEC's intention is to discuss the most commonly-raised issues in this chapter. In many cases, issues were raised in more than one review. Many less commonly-raised issues were discussed in individual reports.

In responding to these concerns, the VEC has undertaken research into a number of matters to test whether or not the theoretical concerns raised are borne out in practice. This research is presented in the appendices of this report and discussed in this chapter.

### **7.1 Feedback on the process and products**

As detailed in Section 6.6, participants were surveyed at a number of key points in the process. The surveys provided some insight into how participants viewed the public consultation process and the products underlying it. Results are provided below, with differentiation made between results from the 2004-2005 round of reviews and the 2007-2008 round, to highlight changes that occurred between the rounds.

#### *The information session and Guide for Submissions*

For many participants, the information session and Guide for Submissions were the primary source of information about the reviews at the beginning. It was therefore very important that they effectively communicated what the review was about and aided people in making a useful contribution to the process.

As can be seen from Figure 15, respondents were very favourable about the information sessions, with over 97% of respondents considering the sessions helpful in understanding what the reviews would examine and how to make a submission in both 2004-2005 and 2007-2008.

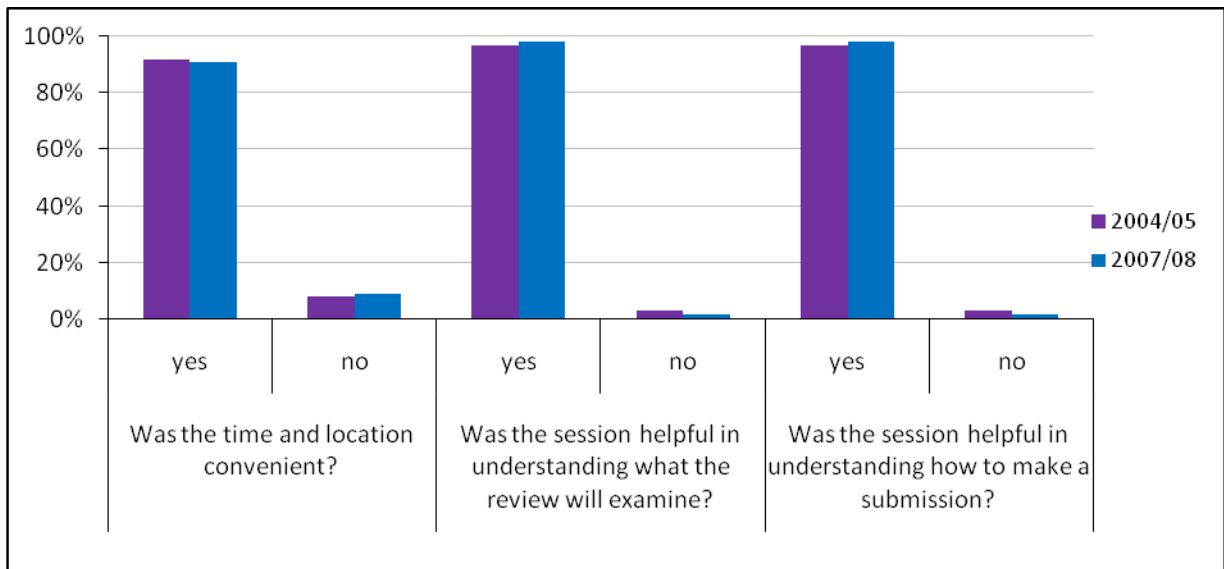


Figure 15: Was the information session convenient and helpful?

Generally people were also happy with the times and locations, although some commented that it was difficult for working people to get to the sessions (which were mostly held between 6 and 7 pm), especially in rural areas where distances to travel were greater. Some also suggested that there should be a larger number of sessions in some (especially rural) municipalities. The VEC notes that the number and location of information sessions was determined based on advice from the particular councils.

Similarly high levels of satisfaction were recorded with the Guide for Submissions, with over 95% of respondents finding the guide useful in both 2004-2005 and 2007-2008, as can be seen from Figure 16.

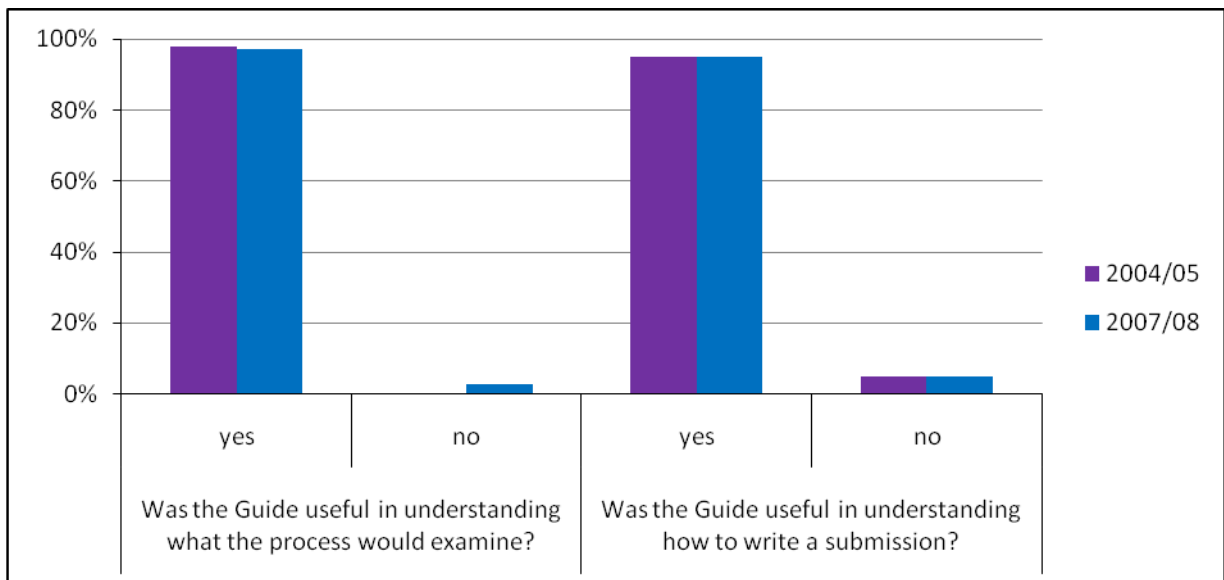


Figure 16: Was the Guide for Submissions useful?

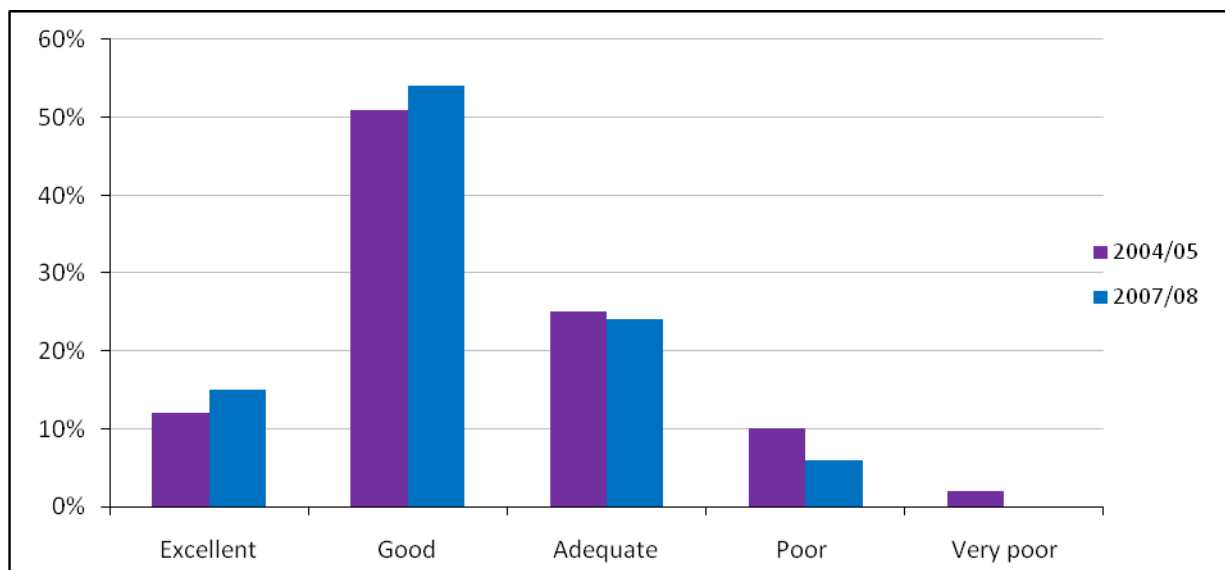
Comments on the surveys included both some people wanting more information in the Guides and some considering them too long. As noted in Section 6.4, the VEC made a number of changes to the Guides for Submission between the 2004-2005 round and the 2007-2008 round. Although the surveys do not indicate higher levels of public approval as

a result of those changes, the VEC considers these changes to have been valuable based on the submissions it received providing more of the type of information that the VEC found most useful.

### *The Preliminary Report*

Participants' next interaction with the VEC was the Preliminary Report, which provided a description of the VEC's preliminary options and an explanation as to why those options were preferred. Overall, the Preliminary Reports were very well received. In all of the categories surveyed, respondents rated the Preliminary Reports more favourably in 2007-2008. The VEC believes that this is most likely a result of the changes that were made to the reports between the 2004-2005 round and the 2007-2008 round (see Section 6.4).

In terms of the clarity and layout of the reports, 88% of respondents from 2004-2005 viewed the reports to be "excellent", "good" or "adequate", and the total in these categories increased to 93% in 2007-2008. In 2007-2008, none considered the clarity and layout "very poor".



*Figure 17: How would you rate the Preliminary Report in terms of clarity and layout?*

Regarding the amount of detail and length in the Preliminary Reports, Figure 18 indicates high levels of satisfaction on this criterion. While the changes that occurred between the rounds did increase the number of respondents who considered the reports to have too much detail, the number considering there to be too little detail halved to only 11%.

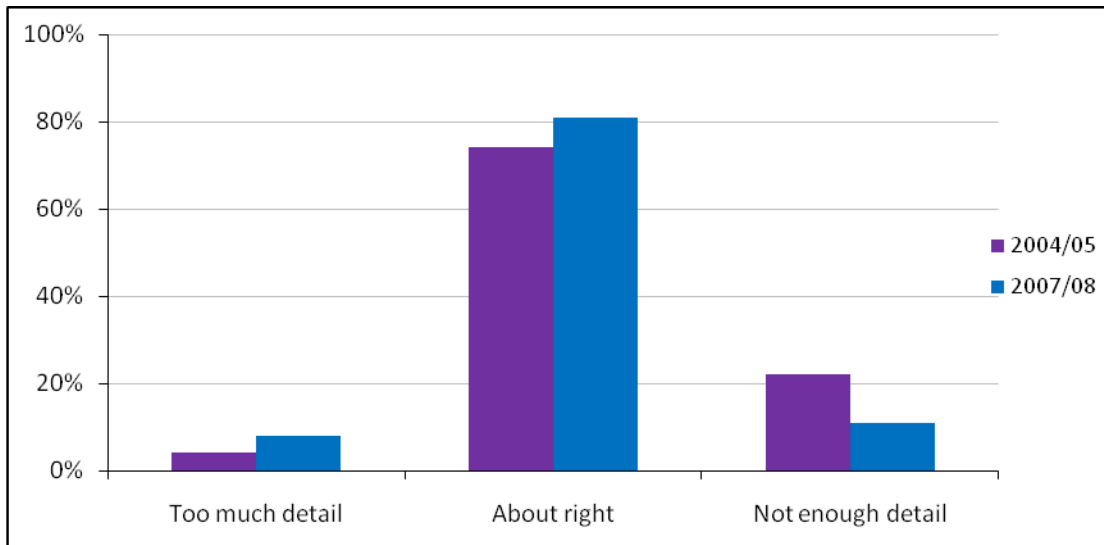


Figure 18: How would you rate the Preliminary Report in terms of the amount of detail and length?

The most controversial aspects of the Preliminary Reports from the respondents' perspective were the use of data and evidence and the analysis of submissions. These were areas that the VEC identified as having potential for improvement following the 2004-2005 reviews, and the changes that the VEC made did substantially increase people's level of satisfaction with these aspects of the reports.

Overall, in 2007-2008, 72% of respondents viewed the reports to be adequate or better on this indicator, a distinct improvement from 58% in 2004-2005. There remained, however, a number of respondents who considered the reports to be poor or very poor in this respect, and the VEC will continue to look for ways to reduce this number.

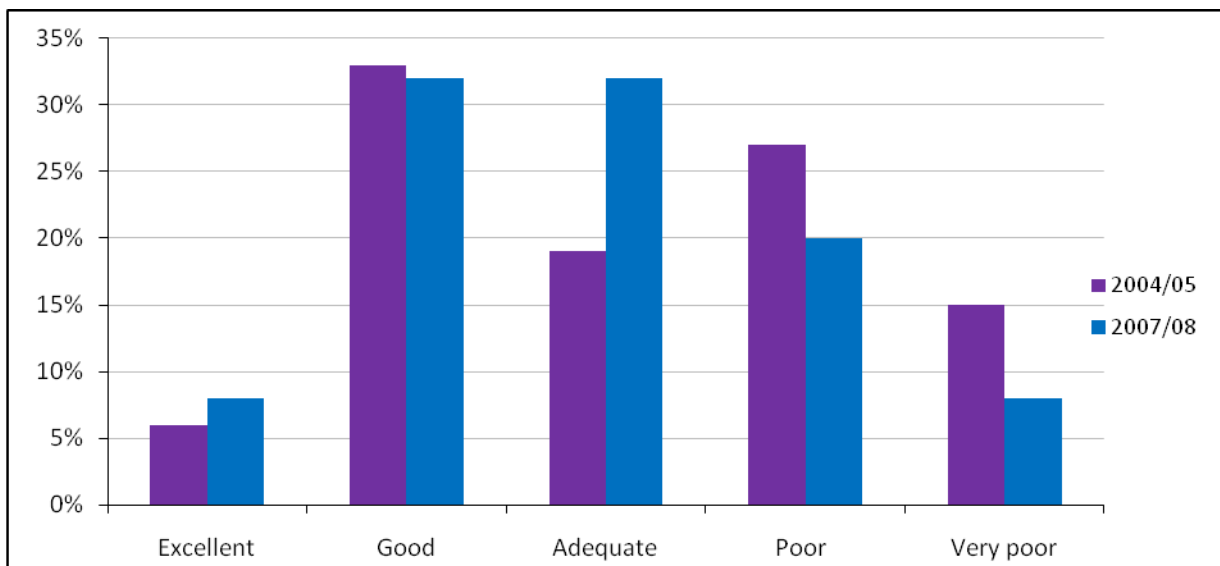


Figure 19: How would you rate the Preliminary Report in terms of use of data and evidence?

The particulars of this element are dealt with further below in Section 7.3.

A similar pattern emerges regarding the analysis of submissions in the reports. Again there was a variety of different assessments by respondents, and again a substantial increase in

people’s satisfaction level between the 2004-2005 round and the 2007-2008 round. In 2007-2008, 79% of respondents considered the analysis of submissions adequate or better, whereas in 2004-2005 only 69% rated the analysis thus. Most notably, the proportion of respondents considering the analysis to be very poor dropped from 14% to 3%. On the other hand, the number of respondents considering the analysis to be excellent also dropped from 14% to 6%.

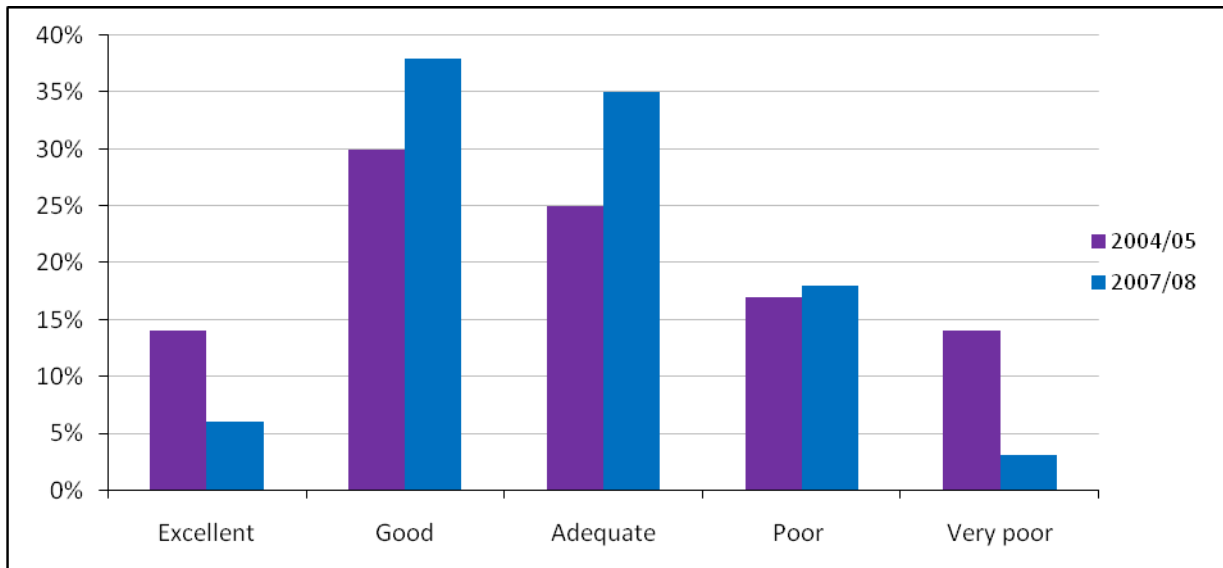


Figure 20: How would you rate the Preliminary Report in terms of the analysis of submissions?

Some comments suggested that a summary of each individual submission would be an appropriate addition to the reports. Others suggested that all of the points raised in particular submissions (e.g. the Council’s) should be addressed point by point, with the reasons for rejecting each. Other comments indicated a desire for the VEC to provide more justification for its recommendations and provide more details of its demographic analyses, the reasons behind its recommendations and the reasons for it disagreeing with submissions. The VEC notes these comments, but also notes that it must balance some people’s desire for more information with the need to keep the report readable and the costs of the review reasonable. With the 2007-2008 reports, 81% of respondents considered the length of the reports and the detail contained within them to be appropriate (see Figure 18).

Overall, some people considered the reports too repetitive and the language too “bureaucratic”. It was suggested that the reports could be made easier to read and that more data should be presented in dot point form or as tabular summaries. The VEC has taken on board these suggestions and will review how it prepares reports prior to the next reviews in 2011-2012.

#### *The public hearing*

Responses to questions about the public hearing were overwhelmingly positive, with people considering the amount of time (10 minutes per speaker) fair and the hearing as a whole to be helpful.

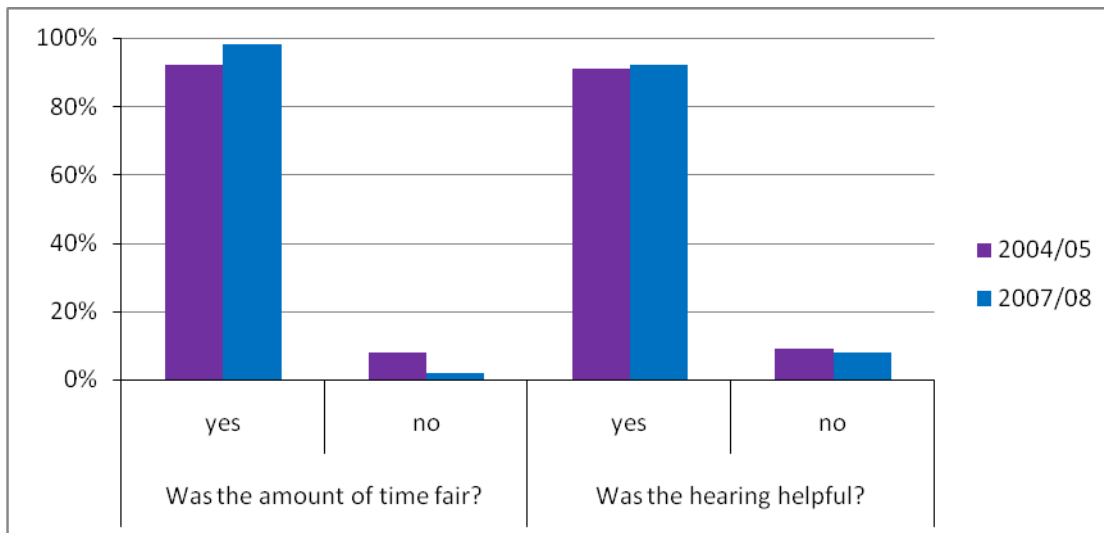


Figure 21: What were your views of the public hearing?

People appeared to be very satisfied with the organisation and conduct of the public hearings. Some comments were made to the effect that audience members should be allowed to ask questions of speakers and the VEC panel or that the VEC should give a presentation explaining how it reached its preliminary recommendations. The VEC notes, however, that the public hearings are not public meetings and that their purpose is to gather feedback from the public on the options rather than to partner with the public in the decision-making process (see further on the VEC’s approach to public consultation in Section 6.2). The VEC considers that the reports are the most appropriate vehicle for explaining its findings, as they provide the opportunity for issues to be explained in a careful and detailed manner. People were welcome to raise questions in their submissions or at the public hearing, and the VEC endeavoured to deal with these questions in the reports.

It was also suggested a number of times that microphones be used and that extra material (by way of maps, background information on submitters or other further information) be provided. Some respondents suggested that material be displayed on overhead projectors. The VEC will look into these options in the future and adopt those that are practicable.

### *The Final Report*

Feedback was not sought from participants about the Final Reports, as it was considered that it would be more difficult at that stage for people to differentiate between the quality of the process and products and their view of the result of the process. It was therefore considered that any results from surveys about the Final Reports would likely be of less value.

## **7.2 Criticisms of method**

Through the various channels by which the VEC received feedback, a number of criticisms were made about the way that the VEC conducted the reviews.

### *Explanations of the VEC’s reasoning*

Over the course of the reviews, a number of people expressed the view that the VEC did not explain its methodology or the reasons why it reached the conclusions it did sufficiently.

The VEC considers that effective communication of its methodology and the reasoning behind its preliminary options is a key element of the public consultation process and takes this concern very seriously.

Throughout the process, the VEC has given consideration to criticisms of this nature and has continually altered its products to address them. Many of the changes described in Section 6.4 were designed to meet these concerns. The VEC notes that the surveys on the Preliminary Reports indicate increased levels of satisfaction with the reports (see Section 7.1), with 81% of respondents in the 2007-2008 reviews considering the amount of detail and length of the reports “about right”.

The VEC remains continually alert for ways to explain its reasoning more effectively, and will explore some of the suggestions in the surveys.

#### *Concerns that the VEC did not listen to submitters*

Throughout the process, the claim was made repeatedly that the VEC did not listen to submitters, and the VEC believes that it primarily came about for two reasons:

- the VEC did not provide enough feedback in its earlier reports explaining how its recommendations related to the ideas put forward in the submissions; and
- the VEC did not always recommend the option preferred by the majority of the submitters.

One submitter expressed the first point in a submission in response to one of the VEC’s earlier reports:

*Like many other residents of the Rural City of Wangaratta I find it difficult to see how the Commission reached its recommendations in the preliminary report for the Rural City of Wangaratta on the basis of the submissions. I must only conclude that some weighting was applied to the submissions based on representation and some to VEC views, but cannot locate any reference to such an approach in the methodology. As you will appreciate the lack of correlation between the submissions as analysed in the preliminary report and the recommendations must cause me to wonder whether the outcome is pre ordained.*

As a result of the feedback, the VEC increased the amount of explanation in its later reports. One of the key areas that was improved was feedback on submitters’ ideas and an analysis of why the VEC was more influenced by some arguments than by others.<sup>49</sup> Later reports provided more detailed accounts of public views and sought to make explicit how these views relate to the VEC’s recommendations and why the VEC did or did not accept them. Though acknowledging that there remains room for improvement, the VEC notes the significant improvement in respondents’ views of the VEC’s analysis of submissions (see Section 7.1).

The fact remains, however, that the VEC did not always recommend what the majority of voters preferred. This was not because the VEC did not listen to and consider the views raised in submissions. It was rather because the consultation process conducted by the VEC

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<sup>49</sup> The importance of this step is emphasised by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005, p. 33). As general guidelines for community consultation, it includes “Provide feedback on the results of consultation” and “Ensure and demonstrate that the views of those consulted are taken into account in the outcome.”



was such that making a recommendation based on a “straw poll” of submitters would not have been fair. The reasons for this have been explored in Section 6.2.

All submissions were analysed and considered, and often influenced the outcomes through the information and analysis they provided, even if their preferred solution was not the one recommended by the VEC. The VEC’s preferred recommendation changed as a result of response submissions and comments on additional options in 42% of cases (see Section 3.4).

Some people suggested that the reason that the VEC’s recommendation differed from the preference of the majority of submitters was that the VEC had a pre-determined outcome and was just “going through the motions” of public consultation. The 42% of reviews in which the outcome changed as a result of the public consultation, however, show that public input could alter the outcomes.

A number of participants suggested that the review process should include a plebiscite. During the restructure of the 1990s, the Commissioners in a number of municipalities conducted plebiscites to determine the electoral structure and number of councillors prior to the first elections under the new arrangements. However, the VEC believes that the current arrangements, whereby recommendations come about from a combination of the VEC’s research, the VEC’s expertise and public input, is likely to lead to better outcomes, given the complexity of matters connected with the review. As explained in Section 6.2, there are a number of reasons why adopting a different model of public engagement may not be appropriate.

#### *The silent majority*

A similar criticism that was levelled against the VEC a number of times was that a lack of submissions indicated that people were happy with the existing structure. For example, one submission for the Mitchell Shire review argued:

*Out of 30,000 residents only 32 submissions were received .... In this shire it is abundantly clear on other controversial issues unless people are unhappy with a situation they do not complain therefore 29,968 people are satisfied with the council structure as it is.*

In fact, there may be many reasons why people do not participate in the representation review process, ranging from a lack of interest, to a lack of time because of other commitments, to a belief that their views have been adequately expressed by others. The VEC therefore does not consider it appropriate to assume what the silent majority is thinking and does not make its decisions on this basis.

#### *The VEC changed its recommendation at the last minute and did not provide the community with the opportunity to respond to the final model*

In four municipalities (the City of Brimbank, the City of Casey, Corangamite Shire and Loddon Shire) during the 2004-2005 reviews, the VEC made final recommendations that were substantially different to its preliminary options. In the case of Loddon Shire (and the City of Brimbank to a lesser extent), this caused a considerable amount of disquiet on the part of some stakeholders. It was considered inappropriate because it did not provide an opportunity for people with local knowledge to comment on the final model, thereby removing that check on the VEC’s information and reasoning.

The VEC notes that its actions complied with all legislative requirements, but believes that there was scope for improving its process in such occurrences. Therefore, where this situation arose during the 2007-2008 reviews, the VEC published an Addendum Report and sought public feedback on the additional option (see Section 6.3) before reaching its final recommendation. This occurred five times (Baw Baw Shire, the City of Bayside, Buloke Shire, Glenelg Shire and Moira Shire). Across the five municipalities, a total of 75 submissions were received as comments on the Addendum Report.

This addition to the process was well received by participants and proved useful in terms of the outcomes – in two of the five cases, information provided during the addendum phase made it clear that the additional option would not be the most appropriate, and the VEC’s final recommendation was one of the preliminary options instead. The VEC will continue this practice in future reviews where this situation arises.

#### *Concerns about the VEC making its decisions by applying a formula*

Some submissions expressed concern that the VEC simply used a formula to arrive at a solution, rather than taking account of the particulars of the municipality under review. The VEC hopes that the detailed discussion of method in Chapter 5 will help to show that this concern is unfounded. Certainly, the VEC’s considerations have *begun* with comparison to other municipalities, but by no means is that the only component of the process. As mentioned above, in 42% of reviews the final recommendation differed from the preliminary preferred option. Equally, it is worth noting the variety of options recommended by the VEC (see Section 3.1 and Appendix 1).

#### *Allegations of inconsistency*

Conversely, some people criticised the VEC for being inconsistent in its decisions, i.e. making different recommendations in cases where the data were similar. Again, the VEC emphasises that its decisions were made both by reference to consistent, State-wide principles *and also* with regard to the particulars of a municipality.

#### *Allegations of bias*

Concern was expressed a number of times throughout the process that the VEC had a bias towards unsubdivided structures and proportional representation. The variety of types of structure recommended by the VEC can be seen in Figure 1 of Section 3.1. Certainly, the majority of recommendations have been for unsubdivided structures or multi-councillor wards. However, 38% of recommendations have included at least one single-councillor ward. The principles which led to these recommendations have been set out above and the VEC would emphasise that these are derived from best practice in other jurisdictions.

#### *Integrity of submissions*

This issue arose particularly in response to one review, in which it became known that some submissions were submitted under aliases.<sup>50</sup> It was felt that this undermined the validity of the public consultation process, in that it distorted the apparent public opinion.

This would be a severe problem if the VEC were making recommendations based on “straw polls” of the electorate. As discussed in Section 6.2, however, the VEC does not make its

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Mawbey (29/6/2004).

recommendations based on the number of submissions supporting particular views, but on the strength of the arguments. The fact that it is possible to provide bogus submissions and form letters that may distort the apparent public opinion is one reason for which the VEC adopted this approach. Given this approach, the VEC does not believe that bogus submissions impact on the integrity of the decision-making process – arguments do not become stronger because somebody sends them in under two or more different names.

Where it became apparent that submissions received by the VEC were bogus, the VEC removed them from its website and did not include them in its reporting.

#### *Submissions from outside the municipality*

Similarly, some participants considered it inappropriate that the VEC accepted submissions from outside the municipality. Some parties contributed submissions to multiple reviews for which they did not have any personal connection. These submissions were generally based on general principles that they believed about electoral systems. The Act specifies that “any person” can make a preliminary or response submission (s.219F) and makes no suggestion that only certain stakeholders can participate.

Once more, however, the fact that the VEC does not make its recommendations based on the number of submissions supporting particular options mitigates any possible bias that comes from people outside the municipality participating in the process. The suggestions presented by these participants are judged on the strength of the arguments and evidence contained within the submissions. The VEC notes that one of the key types of information that it seeks from public submissions is information specifically about the municipality under review. Residents of the municipality and other similar stakeholders (e.g. non-resident property owners) are generally more able to provide strong evidence-based arguments about the particulars of the municipality.

#### *The weight given to councils’ views*

Some councils felt that the process should have given more weight to their views. Some felt that it was inappropriate for councils to have to pay for a review without being able to direct the outcome. Others considered that a council’s detailed knowledge of its municipality warranted more significance in the considerations. As one council explained:

*... most councils have access to data, local knowledge and growth patterns which have significant validity in determining logical, fair and equitable boundaries. Councillors, Council staff and community groups have an intimate and extensive working knowledge of the key elements of the communities they represent and can constructively value add to the process which should be directed toward collaboration rather than what may be perceived as adversarial approaches.*

The VEC accepts that councils do have a good understanding of the nature of their municipality, and encourages them to share it through the submission process and public hearing. At the same time, however, the VEC recognises that councillors may have a vested interest in the electoral structures of their municipalities. The boundaries of State and Federal electorates are decided by independent bodies rather than by the politicians to avoid this conflict of interest, and the Government’s stated intentions in introducing the *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003* included ensuring independence and probity in the review process by having it conducted at arm’s length from the council (see Section 6.2). Although the council pays for the electoral representation review process, the

Act makes it clear that the process is to be conducted independently and not at the council's direction (219E(2)a).

For these reasons, the VEC considers it very important to pay attention to the council's views on the matter, but believes that, as with all other submissions, they should be given weight in accordance with the strength and merit of the arguments and not simply because of who they are. The VEC also considers it important that the council participate through the same means as all other participants to ensure transparency and fairness in the process.

#### *The timeline*

A number of participants believed that the timelines were insufficient to allow them to consider the issues and make submissions. This was particularly the case for community groups, some of which reported that more time was needed to consult their members and prepare representative submissions. The VEC notes that in some reviews, significant numbers of submissions were received shortly after the close of submissions (27 preliminary submissions in Boroondara City Council review).

The total length of time between the first information being published and the VEC making its final recommendation is generally 3-3.5 months (or slightly longer with an addendum phase). Overall the VEC believes that to be an appropriate length of time for a review of this nature and is therefore reluctant to extend the timeline.

#### *The extent of the publicity campaign*

A recurrent comment on the surveys at all stages of the process was that there should be more publicity. In some municipalities there were particular areas which received less information than others, due to there being fewer media covering that part of the municipality and this was a cause of concern for some people.

One suggestion that was made for improving public awareness of the reviews was that a leaflet should be sent to all voters or delivered to all households in the municipality. This did occur during some reviews (wherever the council requested it), more commonly in 2004-2005. The VEC highly recommended delivering leaflets to households in municipalities where there were no other communication products (such as council newsletters) delivered to all households during the review period. Wherever there was such a product, the VEC supplied an article to be published in it.

Suggestions for other channels of publicity included radio and television advertising, approaching community groups and community leaders, consulting local businesses and holding public meetings. The VEC agrees that these channels may increase the level of public awareness and participation and notes that in the City of Boroondara, where the Council undertook its own information campaign, there was a higher level of public participation than in most municipalities (see Section 6.7).

The VEC notes, however, that there can also be a substantial cost associated with additional publicity. In undertaking the reviews, the VEC is mindful of the fact that the costs are borne by the council and that additional publicity beyond the VEC's standard suite of products may become an onerous cost for some councils. The VEC has therefore allowed each council to choose what (if any) publicity it considers appropriate in addition to the standard products. If a council considers that additional channels are important, the VEC is happy to use those channels.

### 7.3 Criticisms of the use of data

As shown in Section 7.1, most of the people surveyed considered the use of data and analysis in the reports to be adequate, good or excellent. However, a significant number of respondents considered it poor or very poor, especially during the 2004-2005 reviews. This is another area that the VEC sought to improve as it gained more experience with conducting reviews. Although the use of statistical data was a fundamental element of conducting the reviews from the beginning, the VEC gained access to new data sources and developed better ways of analysing data as the reviews continued. The VEC believes this provided it with a stronger and more objective basis for making its decisions.

Specific concerns often involved the VEC not conducting extensive research and not investigating particular types of data. It was sometimes claimed that the VEC could not understand the community dynamics merely from conducting a “desk study”, and that more in-depth research should be carried out. In many cases, there are sorts of data that are relevant in one municipality which are less meaningful as indicators of communities of interest in other municipalities. For example, in Mitchell Shire it was suggested that the wards should reflect water distribution areas, as these were an important part of communities of interest in that municipality.

The VEC considers that one of the most important benefits of the public consultation process is that it is the best way for the VEC to learn about any such matters that it does not pick up from its own research. The VEC’s products encourage people to provide area-specific information in their submissions. The improvements to the Guides for Submissions made during the course of the reviews included adding sections providing examples of the sorts of area-specific information that the VEC finds particularly useful in order to help people to provide such information.

Some submitters questioned the data sources used by the VEC. In Yarriambiack Shire, for example, a number of submitters disputed DSE’s estimates that the population is likely to decline by 8.31% between 2004 and 2012. In this case, the VEC encouraged people in its preliminary report to supply more reliable data. However, whilst some suggestions were made in response, the VEC notes that no expert opinions confirming that population growth was likely to occur and no expert opinions discounting the DSE’s reasons for believing that the population would decline were presented. As the VEC does not have expertise in predicting population growth, it felt that it was not in a position to dismiss the DSE’s prediction. The VEC notes that the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>51</sup> estimates that the Yarriambiack Shire’s population did in fact decrease by 4.5% between 2004 and 2008, confirming DSE’s estimates.

Some submitters more generally raised concerns about the data that the VEC used to determine communities of interest as being insufficient. The VEC notes that a great many factors can be used to determine communities of interest. In practice, the VEC must restrict itself to those factors for which data can be readily and affordably ascertained. Analyses of factors such as telephone traffic, commuter patterns and surveys of people’s perceptions of community of interest can certainly be valuable tools, but are time-consuming and expensive. The VEC does not believe that these further processes could be completed within the current time-frames or accommodated within the budgets of reviews.

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<sup>51</sup> ABS Cat. No. 3218.0, *Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2003-04* and *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2007-08*.

One factor that was mentioned on this issue in the comments of a number of surveys from early 2007 was that people were dissatisfied with the VEC using data from the 2001 Census at the time rather than the more recent 2006 Census. This may have contributed to the views of some of the respondents who considered the use of data and evidence to be poor or very poor. The VEC notes that the data from the 2006 Census were not released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics until 27 June 2007 and that the VEC was therefore unable to present that information in the reviews prior to that. For all reviews commencing after that date, the VEC did use data from the 2006 Census.

#### **7.4 Criticisms of the VEC's principles**

Many submitters and commentators expressed concern about some of the VEC's principles. The major concerns that recurred regularly are each discussed below.

##### *"If it ain't broke, don't fix it"*

People who were satisfied with the pre-existing system often cited some variation of this adage in their submissions to the VEC and suggested that the VEC should not change the structure unless it could prove that the existing structure was not providing fair and equitable representation. The VEC, however, did not believe that this was an appropriate principle to adopt. Even if a structure is providing good representation, a different structure may provide better representation. Moreover, the VEC considered it important to have an objective State-wide basis for its recommendations so that similar municipalities were represented by similar structures.

The VEC always included the current structure of a municipality in its considerations and took into account the reasons for which that structure was recommended, where that information was available. In the 2007-2008 reviews, the current structure proportional representation a structure very similar to it was also one of the preliminary options in the vast majority of reviews. This provided people with a clear opportunity in both the preliminary and response phases to present arguments in favour of that structure.

Where the pre-review structure fitted with the VEC's principles, the VEC did not recommend changes. Indeed, it should be noted that in 32% of the reviews, the final recommendation was for the structure to stay the same (see Section 3.3). In municipalities where the structure was relatively new, such as Strathbogie Shire, the VEC was more reluctant to change it, as it does see some benefit in continuity of electoral structures. Where the VEC is unable to find any structure that it considers fit its principles well (as happened in the Latrobe City Council review), the VEC recommended the pre-review structure as it did not consider change to be appropriate where there was no clear benefit.

It should also be noted that in 69% of the reviews, the pre-review electoral structures either violated the 10% variation rule or were close to violating it, meaning that at least some change was necessitated by law. As discussed in Section 3.3, in some cases simply redrawing the boundaries of the pre-review structure to accommodate the population changes did not lead to a structure reflecting communities of interest, even when the pre-review structure was appropriate.

##### *Concerns about unsubdivided structures and multi-councillor wards*

Many submitters expressed concern that multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures were by their nature never appropriate. Such submitters usually had a very definite view of

representation in terms of interest representation rather than in terms of corporate or mirror representation (see Section 2.4).<sup>52</sup>

Some of the most common of these concerns were that multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures:

- do not provide as much accountability as single-councillor wards, because each councillor is not individually held accountable at an election and can “pass the buck” to other councillors within the ward if anything goes wrong;
- enable one or more councillors to slack off and leave the others to do the work;
- are too large to enable councillors to intimately know their areas;
- prevent some candidates from running or being elected because the wards will be too large for them to effectively canvass;
- will lead to there being too many candidates on ballot papers for voters to be able to select from;
- will lead to people being elected on tickets;
- make it easier for political parties to become involved because only parties will have the resources to enable candidates to canvass such large electorates; and
- may not return a geographic spread of councillors (e.g. all councillors may come from the urban area of a municipality).

The VEC accepts some of these issues as valid concerns, but notes that there are also positive features to multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures. Indeed, all of the permitted electoral structures have both positive and less positive features (see Section 5.4). The VEC acknowledges this but considers that all of the structures allowed by legislation are appropriate in certain circumstances and that none should be ruled out *per se*. Overall, the community satisfaction surveys do not indicate that any one type of structure is superior to the others in general (see Section 5.4).

It is worth noting that the VEC has reviewed all kinds of structures across Victoria and has found supporters and detractors for all of them. Many people in multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided municipalities have sent in submissions expressing satisfaction with the representation provided by those structures. Councillors from all types of municipalities have expressed the view that their structure works effectively.

As the concerns listed above occurred in a number of different reviews, each of these is worth some more detailed investigation.

#### *Accountability*

The VEC acknowledges that accountability functions differently in single-councillor wards and multi-councillor wards/unsubdivided structures. Although councillors in multi-councillor wards/unsubdivided structures may be less accountable to specific geographic areas, that does not mean that they are not accountable to the electorate, nor that it is impossible to assess their performance. Many councils with multi-councillor wards/unsubdivided structures adopt portfolio systems, in which councillors take responsibility for particular areas of the council’s services. In addition, councillors in multi-councillor wards/unsubdivided structures are accountable to a larger number of people.

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<sup>52</sup> The article written by the Hon. Alan Hunt provides a good example of this – see Hunt (2005).

### *Councillors' commitment*

Although people in municipalities with single-councillor wards often raised concerns that some councillors in a multi-councillor ward might not pull their weight in terms of their workloads, this was rarely raised as a problem in municipalities with multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided municipalities. Moreover, the VEC notes that it is possible for individual councillors to “slack off” in single-councillor wards as well. If that does occur in a single-councillor ward structure, the voter may be left with no representative of his or her viewpoint. If that occurs in multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided structures, there will be other councillors on the council with responsibility for representing that person or area.

### *Wards are too large*

Some people were concerned that councillors in larger wards or unsubdivided structures would be less able to know their areas, and some local issues would not be adequately represented. Similarly, some people were concerned that such electorates would be too large for candidates to canvass or that there would be too many candidates on ballot papers.

The VEC acknowledges that these issues can arise if electorates become too large. There is certainly a correlation between the number of candidates on a ballot paper and the level of informality, as can be seen in Part I, Section 6.31.

A common concern amongst submitters was that if the wards are too large then some prospective candidates who would have run in a small ward might not run in a larger ward. As can be seen in Appendix 5, there is a tendency towards smaller numbers of candidates per vacancy as the number of vacancies in a ward/municipality increases. However, the VEC notes that it is not a straightforward relationship (e.g. three-councillor wards tend to have more candidates). Broadly, the ratios seem to be relatively consistent within the three categories of: single-councillor wards; multi-councillor wards; and unsubdivided municipalities. There are, however, differences between these three categories.

It is also important to note that in some cases the sample size is relatively small, so that the pattern in future elections may be different.

Nonetheless, the VEC acknowledges that there can be difficulties with wards past a certain size. As described in Section 5.4, the VEC does include these factors in its considerations and is reluctant to recommend electorates that are too large. The VEC also acknowledges that other advantages of an electoral structure (such as combining communities of interest) have to be balanced against these concerns.

### *Voting tickets*

Appendix 6 explores how successful “voting tickets” were in the 2005 and 2008 elections in unsubdivided municipalities. As the VEC explained in its reports, proportional representation is much less susceptible to candidates being elected on tickets than the system of vote counting used before 2004 (the “exhaustive preferential” system).

Appendix 6 looks at the first three elected candidates in each municipality and examines whether or not their second preference (as indicated on the candidate statements that they supplied to the VEC) was elected. The results confirm the VEC’s



predictions, showing that many second preferences did not get elected, or, where they did, it was often towards the end of the vote counting, thereby preventing a ticket from having dominance in a council.

It is also worth noting in this context the VEC's research indicating that the majority of voters do not follow candidates' indications of preferences (see Part I, Section 6.16 and Part I, Appendix 4).

#### *Political party involvement*

Regarding party involvement, the VEC notes that parties are involved in some municipalities and not others, and that party involvement does not necessarily flow from the electoral structure – i.e. there are multi-councillor ward structures with and without party involvement and single-councillor ward structures with and without party involvement. The VEC has received submissions from local branches of political parties and current and former members of parliament supporting single-councillor wards (as well as others supporting multi-councillor wards).

Primarily, though, the VEC notes that it has not taken this factor into account as it is not for the VEC to decide whether or not it is appropriate for parties to be involved in councils. That is a decision for voters. The VEC notes that it is certainly possible for councillors to be elected in large multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided municipalities without having party affiliation if the voters so choose.

#### *A geographic spread of councillors*

In municipalities where it was proposed that they be changed to an unsubdivided structure, there were often concerns that such a structure would leave areas of the municipality unrepresented. In particular, it was often suggested that an unsubdivided rural municipality may end up with all of the councillors coming from the urban area or all coming from the rural area.

Appendix 7 explores this possibility by looking at the results of the 2004, 2005 and 2008 elections in unsubdivided municipalities. It compares where elected councillors live with the population distribution, to see whether large towns or rural areas are over-represented or under-represented. What can be seen is that there is a reasonably close relationship between the population distribution and the distribution of councillors in most municipalities. This suggests that unsubdivided structures and proportional representation do not lead to dominance by particular areas within municipalities, but allow a geographic spread of councillors if that is what voters want.

#### *Concerns about wards with even numbers of councillors*

The VEC recommended two-councillor and four-councillor wards in a number of cases. Some concern was expressed about wards with even numbers of councillors by some participants in the process. This concern came from two related factors:

- even numbers of councillors may fail to represent a majority viewpoint if the majority is fairly small (i.e. in a two-councillor ward, one group with the support

- of 34% of the electorate would achieve the same level of representation as a group with support of 66% of the electorate);<sup>53</sup> and
- even numbers of councillors might vote evenly against each other, thereby cancelling each other's vote and effectively leaving a ward without representation in the voting.

Firstly, the VEC notes that whatever the number of councillors, there will be potential for one councillor to be elected with considerably fewer votes than another, so long as they both achieve the required quota. For example, in a three-councillor ward, a group with the support of 48% of the electorate could achieve the same level of representation as another group with the support of only 26% of the electorate. The remaining 26% of voters with a different viewpoint could also have the same level of representation as the group with 48% support. The extent of the discrepancy in voter support which can elect a person varies according to the number of councillors. The above scenarios, however, are extreme examples and discrepancies are unlikely to be as great in practice as in these examples.

Secondly, this concern is only really an issue when most voters are polarised into two distinct groups. Although this sort of polarisation is typical at State and Federal levels, local council elections are rarely contested on the basis of two opposing viewpoints. Rather, local council elections tend to be campaigned on an array of localised issues. The intention of the electoral system of a local council is not to show which of two competing groupings has more support than the other, but rather to provide a spread of representation of the voters on a range of issues. It is therefore not meaningful to talk about an election outcome representing a majority viewpoint for a ward at the local government level.

This can be seen in practice in councillors' voting patterns. Many agenda items are passed by councils unanimously and do not involve councillors from the same ward opposing each other. Where divisions have been called and councillors' support for or opposition to items is recorded, however, it is possible to see whether or not councillors from two-councillor wards perpetually oppose each other. Appendix 8 provides details of the voting patterns of councillors from two-councillor wards in three Victorian municipalities in 2007-2008. It can be seen from these results that the extent to which any two councillors in a two-councillor ward will oppose or support each other in voting varies considerably. Overall, the councillors in that sample opposed each other only 37.8% of the time when both were present. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the concern that councillors from a two-councillor ward would be constantly deadlocked is not borne out in practice.

#### *Concerns about some wards having more councillors than others*

In a number of reviews, the VEC has recommended structures where the various wards have different numbers of councillors. In these cases, people have been primarily concerned that:

- people within the larger ward may have more representation than people within a smaller ward;
- it would be easier to be elected in a larger ward;
- councillors in a larger ward might form a voting bloc; and

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<sup>53</sup> These issues are explored in some depth in Howatt (1958).

- where there is a mix of multi-councillor and single-councillor wards, people might be confused by there being different systems within one municipality.

As discussed in Section 5.4, where all other factors are equal, the VEC generally prefers a structure in which all wards have the same number of councillors. This is not possible, though, where 5, 7 or 11 councillors in total are recommended. The VEC would also not recommend such a structure if it failed to capture communities of interest fairly and equitably. Where possible within the constraints of providing meaningful boundaries, the VEC also endeavours to place the ward with the larger number of councillors in the area with the most diversity and so to provide the opportunity in that way as well for communities of interest to be represented according to their wishes.

At any rate, the VEC considers that some of the issues listed above are not as much of a cause for concern as some submitters believe.

#### *Differences in representation*

Some people have suggested that if a decision affects an area in a three-councillor ward, there may be three councillors who all support the area, whereas if that same decision adversely affects an area in a two-councillor ward, there may be only two councillors to support that area. They argue that there is consequently an inequity in the level of representation.

The VEC notes that it endeavours to group together areas with communities of interest in wards and to avoid grouping areas with no community of interest. Therefore what affects one part of a ward should generally have some impact on all parts of the ward. If the same areas were divided into single-councillor wards, we would therefore expect to see the same pattern of voting as we see with the multi-councillor wards.

Perhaps more importantly, though, proportional representation is likely to return councillors representing different perspectives and bloc voting is not generally a feature of multi-councillor wards (see below), mitigating this concern.

#### *Differences in election chances*

Some people believed that it would be easier to be elected in a larger ward than in a smaller ward, because the quota of votes required to be elected would be a smaller proportion of the total number. The VEC notes, however, that although the proportion of votes required is smaller, the number of votes is still roughly the same, as a larger ward has more people in it. Therefore, a candidate still has to convince approximately the same number of voters. Moreover, there are generally more candidates competing in a larger ward. For these reasons, the VEC does not consider it easier to be elected in a larger ward than in a smaller ward.

#### *Voting blocs*

People also expressed concern that councillors from a multi-councillor ward might form a voting bloc and dominate smaller wards. This has particularly been a concern in municipalities where an urban area has been included in one multi-councillor ward and the rural area has been divided into smaller wards, as for example in Cardinia Shire.

The reality of the legislation, however, is that an urban area will have the same number of councillors representing it no matter what the structure (unless the VEC deliberately splits communities of interest), as the number of councillors must be relative to the number of electors. The VEC sees no reasons why councillors would be more likely to form a voting bloc if they come from one multi-councillor ward than if they came from several single-councillor wards representing similar interests.

In addition, the way that proportional representation (which applies in multi-councillor wards) operates means that councillors with quite different viewpoints are likely to be elected within one ward, so the councillors within a ward are less likely to form voting blocs than councillors in different wards. This is borne out in the research presented in Appendix 8, which looks at voting patterns in two-councillor wards. From that sample of wards, when divisions were called, councillors from the same ward disagreed rather than voted as a bloc 37.8% of the time.

A related concern is that particular combinations of different-sized wards (e.g. two two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward) might deliver a council in which one councillor may have undue power due to continually holding the balance of power. This scenario is predicated on the idea that the councillors in the two-councillor wards will regularly oppose each other. As discussed above, the VEC does not see this as a necessary feature of two-councillor wards.

#### *Voter confusion*

Where municipal structures have included both single-councillor wards and multi-councillor wards, some people have expressed concern that voters would be confused by having different voting systems. The VEC notes that ballot papers look the same and are filled out in the same way by either method, and should not cause confusion from that perspective.

As a related point, people have suggested that voters may be confused if some voters only have one ward councillor to approach, but other voters have multiple councillors that they can approach. The VEC considers this unlikely to cause much confusion, as no person is entitled to vote in more than one ward within a municipality. Moreover, the VEC notes that voters are not restricted to only approaching their ward councillor, and that councillors represent municipality-wide portfolios in addition to their own wards in many subdivided municipalities (e.g. the City of Greater Geelong or the Rural City of Wangaratta prior to its 2004 review). In such cases, the appropriate councillor to approach is not necessarily determined by ward boundaries.

#### *A change will lead to all new councillors at the next election*

The results of the 2004, 2005 and 2008 elections indicated that a change to the electoral structure does not make it more difficult for councillors to be re-elected. The success rates for incumbents are listed in Appendix 9. Incumbent councillors who stood had a 76% success rate at the 2004 and 2005 elections in those municipalities that had undergone reviews recommending changes to the electoral structure in 2004-2005. Incumbents from municipalities which had been changed as a result of reviews in 2007-2008 who stood in 2008 had a 73% success rate. This compares to a 74% (2004-2005) and a 70% (2008) success rate in the other municipalities at those elections

The VEC notes that the difference between these success rates is not statistically significant. However, these results clearly indicate that a change to the electoral structure does not make it any more likely that there will be an across-the-board change in the councillors.

#### *The municipality cannot afford a change in councillors*

This concern was generally raised in reference to proposed increases in the number of councillors. The VEC accepts that an increase to the number of councillors can lead to an increase in costs for councils. While the VEC is sympathetic to the demands on councils' budgets, it has to date put little weight on this factor.

#### *Governance issues should be given more consideration*

Although a number of governance issues are given consideration in the process, some submitters believed that governance matters should play a larger role in the VEC's decision-making process.

#### *Effective council*

In a number of reviews, it was argued that the current structure has provided a successful council and that any change to the structure could lead to disharmony. This was particularly argued in Northern Grampians Shire, where some submitters believed that the councillors' ability to work together came primarily from the electoral structure dividing the municipality into two wards.

#### *Tensions from old boundaries*

The VEC proposed ward boundaries that were similar to the boundaries of the municipalities before the restructure of the 1990s in some reviews. This concerned some submitters, who believed that implementing such ward boundaries could reignite tensions that had existed at the time of the restructure.

#### *Faster and more efficient decision-making*

Some submitters argued that fewer councillors are always better, believing that a smaller number of people are able to reach a decision faster and more efficiently than a larger group.

The VEC considers and takes on board these concerns, but believes that governance is a secondary consideration to ensuring fair and equitable representation. The VEC notes that the Act only makes reference to fair and equitable representation. Whilst the VEC appreciates the importance of an effective council, it does not agree that a harmonious council which is able to make fast decisions is necessarily consistent with fair and equitable representation. The VEC considers that fair and equitable representation requires the consideration of the different viewpoints and communities of interest in the municipality and acknowledges that considering a broader range of perspectives may lengthen the decision-making process and make it more difficult.

#### *Uncontested wards are an indicator of satisfaction*

As explained in Section 5.4, the VEC considered uncontested elections to be one factor indicating that a change to the existing structure may provide fairer representation, as it may provide voters with a wider range of candidates from which to choose. Some

submitters argued that this was an inappropriate criterion, as they believed that uncontested wards indicated satisfaction with incumbent candidates. While the VEC acknowledges that this may be the case in some instances, if an incumbent candidate is popular with the electorate, the candidate should still be able to be elected in a multi-councillor ward structure as in a single-councillor ward structure. As shown in Appendix 9, incumbents' success rates at elections are not harmed by changes to the electoral structure. Therefore, the VEC sees no reason to change its approach based on the fact that elections may be uncontested due to voters' satisfaction with the incumbent.

Moreover, uncontested elections do cause concern for some submitters who have indicated that they do not feel satisfied when their wards are uncontested.

*The VEC's interpretation of the Act with respect to the total number of councillors is a generous interpretation*

This claim was made particularly with reference to the VEC's principles of correlating the number of councillors with the number of voters and the VEC's reluctance to recommend even numbers in total. The VEC acknowledges that the Act is indeed silent on these matters, other than to indicate that the number of councillors should be such as to provide fair and equitable representation (which is itself not defined and is open to many different interpretations – see Section 4.2). The VEC has therefore been required to make interpretations. As explained in Section 4.3, the VEC's interpretations have been based on best practice in other jurisdictions in Australia and abroad, which the VEC considers to be a reasonable way to interpret the Act. The fact that all of the VEC's recommendations have been accepted by the Minister provides some support for this approach.

It could be advantageous, however, for the Government to explicitly provide guidance on these matters – as explained in Recommendation 3.

*Single-councillor wards/multi-councillor wards/unsubdivided structures will lead to an increase in dummy candidates*

Various submitters expressed concern that a different structure would lead to an increase in the number of "dummy candidates", that is, candidates who only stand in order to channel their preferences to other candidates and have no desire to be elected themselves. Some submitters believed that single-councillor wards encouraged "dummy candidates"; others believed that multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided structures encouraged them.

The VEC has not been able to make any assessment of the validity of these claims, as it is not possible to differentiate reliably which candidates are "dummy candidates". It does, however, note the differences in the ratios of candidates to vacancies in different structures (see Appendix 5).

## **8. Future directions**

On the whole, the VEC believes that it has developed an appropriate method for conducting electoral representation reviews. The review process adopted by the VEC is consistent with best practice as conducted by commissions in other States in Australia and with reviews conducted at State and Federal levels in Australia and elsewhere. As explained in its recommendations, the VEC considers that guidance from the Government as to what it considers to be appropriate would be helpful for the review process.

This report has been prepared for the Minister for Local Government. However, the VEC believes that it would be appropriate for the information to be in the public domain. This would both provide a higher degree of transparency in the process and give people an opportunity to suggest improvements in the process. The VEC therefore seeks the Minister's support to make the report publicly available. The VEC believes the period between reviews to be a good opportunity to consider and make changes to its methodology and practices.

In preparing for the next round of reviews in 2011, the VEC will also be looking for other ways to improve the process and its reporting on the process, particularly bearing in mind the learnings contained in this report.

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## Appendix 1: The VEC's recommendations

Municipality	Structure before review	Structure after review	Option recommended*
Alpine	5 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	Preferred
Ararat	7 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Ballarat	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Banyule <sup>†</sup>	7 single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	alternative
Bass Coast <sup>†</sup>	7 single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	alternative
Baw Baw	9 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 3 two-councillor wards	new/addition
Bayside	9 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 2 two-councillor wards	new/addition
Benalla	7 single-councillor wards	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Boroondara <sup>†</sup>	10 single-councillor wards	10 single-councillor wards	alternative
Brimbank	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	new/addition
Buloke	3 three-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 2 two-councillor wards	new/addition
Campaspe	5 single-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor wards	2 three-councillor wards + 3 single-councillor wards	preferred
Cardinia	7 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 1 two-councillor ward + 2 single-councillor wards	preferred
Casey	11 single-councillor wards	5 two-councillor wards + 1 single-councillor ward	new/addition
Central Goldfields	5 single-councillor wards	1 four-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	preferred
Colac Otway	2 single-councillor wards, 1 two-councillor ward + 1 three-councillor ward	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Corangamite	5 two-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 4 single-councillor wards	new/addition
Darebin	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
East Gippsland	2 four-councillor wards	9 councillors, unsubdivided	alternative
Frankston	7 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Gannawarra	3 single councillor wards + 2 two-councillor wards	2 single-councillor wards, 1 two-councillor ward + 1 three-councillor ward	alternative

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Structure before review</b>	<b>Structure after review</b>	<b>Option recommended*</b>
Glen Eira <sup>†</sup>	3 three-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Glenelg	9 single-councillor ridings	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Golden Plains	9 single-councillor ridings	7 councillors, unsubdivided	alternative
Greater Bendigo	7 single-councillor wards	9 single-councillor wards	preferred
Greater Dandenong	11 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	preferred
Greater Geelong <sup>†</sup>	12 single-councillor wards	12 single-councillor wards	alternative
Greater Shepparton	7 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Hepburn	5 single-councillor wards	2 two-councillor wards + 3 single-councillor wards	alternative
Hindmarsh <sup>†</sup>	3 two-councillor wards	3 two-councillor wards	preferred
Hobsons Bay	4 two-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	preferred
Horsham	7 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Hume	9 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 3 two-councillor wards	preferred
Indigo	7 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Kingston	7 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Knox <sup>†</sup>	9 single-councillor wards	9 single-councillor wards	alternative
Latrobe <sup>†</sup>	9 single-councillor wards	9 single-councillor wards	alternative
Loddon	6 single-councillor wards	1 two-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	new/addition
Macedon Ranges	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Manningham	4 two-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Mansfield	1 two-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	1 two-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	preferred
Maribyrnong <sup>†</sup>	7 single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	alternative
Maroondah	7 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Melton	7 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 2 two-councillor wards	preferred
Mildura	9 councillors, unsubdivided	9 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Structure before review</b>	<b>Structure after review</b>	<b>Option recommended*</b>
Mitchell	5 single-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Moira	3 three-councillor wards	9 councillors, unsubdivided	alternative
Monash	8 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	preferred
Moonee Valley	7 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Moorabool	1 three-councillor ward + 4 single-councillor wards	1 four-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	preferred
Moreland	10 single-councillor wards	2 four-councillor wards + 1 three-councillor ward	preferred
Mornington Peninsula	9 single-councillor wards	11 single-councillor wards	alternative
Mount Alexander	7 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 4 single-councillor wards	preferred
Moynes	5 two-councillor ridings	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Murrindindi	6 single-councillor ridings	7 single-councillor wards	alternative
Nillumbik	9 single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	preferred
Northern Grampians	1 six-councillor ward + 1 three-councillor ward	1 three-councillor ward, 1 two-councillor ward + 2 single-councillor wards	alternative
Port Phillip <sup>†</sup>	7 single-councillor wards	7 single-councillor wards	preferred
Pyrenees	7 single-councillor wards	5 single-councillor wards	alternative
Queenscliffe	7 councillors, unsubdivided	5 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
South Gippsland	7 single-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Southern Grampians	7 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Stonnington	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Strathbogie	7 single-councillor wards	1 two-councillor ward + 5 single-councillor wards	alternative
Swan Hill	3 two-councillor wards + 1 single-councillor ward	1 four-councillor ward + 3 single-councillor wards	alternative
Towong	5 councillors, unsubdivided	5 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Wangaratta	6 single-councillor wards + 1 two-councillor ward	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Warrnambool	7 single-councillor wards	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Wellington	9 councillors, unsubdivided	9 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Structure before review</b>	<b>Structure after review</b>	<b>Option recommended*</b>
West Wimmera	5 councillors, unsubdivided	5 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Whitehorse	5 two-councillor wards	5 two-councillor wards	alternative
Whittlesea	9 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	preferred
Wodonga	5 councillors, unsubdivided	7 councillors, unsubdivided	preferred
Wyndham	7 single-councillor wards	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Yarra	4 two-councillor wards + 1 single-councillor ward	3 three-councillor wards	alternative
Yarra Ranges <sup>†</sup>	9 single-councillor wards	9 single-councillor wards	preferred
Yarriambiack	2 three-councillor wards + 3 single-councillor wards	1 three-councillor ward + 2 two-councillor wards	preferred

\* preferred = preliminary preferred option;  
alternative = one of the preliminary alternative options;  
new/addition = substantially new option (2004-2005) or additional option from the Addendum Report (2007-2008); does not include cases where minor boundary adjustments or changes to ward names were made

<sup>†</sup>same structure, but with different boundaries

## Appendix 2: Ward variations from the average number of voters per councillor

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
Alpine Shire	unsubdivided	5	11,198		unsubdivided	7	11,409	
	Total	5	11,198		Total	7	11,409	
	Average		2,240		Average		1,630	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Brimbank City	Casuarina	1	13,317	+2.31%	Grasslands	3	30,794	-2.99%
	Derrimut	1	13,277	+2.01%	Harvester	3	29,131	-8.23%
	Furlong	1	12,659	-2.74%	Horseshoe Bend	2	22,941	+8.40%
	Glengala	1	11,560	-11.19%	Taylors	3	33,527	+5.62%
	Kororoit	1	14,125	+8.52%	Total	11	116,393	
	McKay	1	11,680	-10.26%	Average		10,581	
	Overnewton	1	15,344	+17.89%				
	Padley	1	10,916	-16.13%				
	Robertson	1	14,262	+9.57%				
	Total	9	117,140					
	Average		13,016					
<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>				
Cardinia Shire	Beacon Hills	1	6,107	+9.60%	Bunyip	1	5,877	+4.05%
	Bunyip	1	4,906	-11.95%	Central	3	15,686	-7.43%
	Emerald	1	4,911	-11.86%	Port	1	5,340	-5.46%
	Pakenham	1	7,624	+36.83%	Ranges	2	12,635	+11.85%
	Ranges	1	5,124	-8.04%	Total	7	39,538	
	Toomuc	1	5,395	-3.18%	Average		5,648	
	Westernport	1	4,936	-11.41%				
	Total	7	39,003					
	Average		5,572					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Casey City	Araluen	1	13,000	+5.30%	Balla Balla	1	11,226	-10.43%
	Balla Balla	1	11,183	-9.42%	Edrington	2	26,548	+5.92%
	Brechin	1	12,315	-0.25%	Four Oaks	2	24,158	-3.62%
	Edrington	1	12,832	+3.94%	Mayfield	2	22,695	-9.46%
	Four Oaks	1	11,715	-5.11%	River Gum	2	26,387	+5.27%
	Mayfield	1	11,920	-3.45%	Springfield	2	26,845	+7.10%
	Myuna	1	11,464	-7.14%	Total	11	137,859	
	Oatlands	1	12,543	+1.60%	Average		12,533	

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	River Gum	1	12,224	-0.99%				
	Springfield	1	13,525	+9.55%				
	Strathard	1	13,085	+5.99%				
	Total	11	135,806					
	Average		12,346					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>							
Central Goldfields Shire	Central A	1	2,386	+8.16%	Daisy Hill	1	1,583	+0.79%
	Central B	1	2,166	-1.81%	Flynn	1	1,666	+6.08%
	Central C	1	2,299	+4.22%	Maryborough	4	6,012	-4.30%
	North	1	2,011	-8.84%	Tullaroop	1	1,733	+10.34%
	South	1	2,168	-1.72%	Total	7	10,994	
	Total	5	11,030		Average		1,571	
	Average		2,206					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Corangamite Shire	Central	2	2,713	-2.84%	Central	3	5,820	-1.28%
	North	2	2,712	-2.88%	Coastal	1	1,819	-7.44%
	South	2	3,206	+14.81%	North	1	2,043	+3.96%
	South Central	2	2,631	-5.78%	South-Central	1	2,097	+6.71%
	West	2	2,700	-3.31%	South-West	1	1,977	+0.60%
	Total	10	13,962		Total	7	13,756	
	Average		1,396		Average		1,965	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 9-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-2004</i>			
Frankston City	Baxter	1	11,787	-2.33%	East	3	29,022	+1.46%
	Boonerwung	1	16,048	+32.98%	North-West	3	29,313	+2.47%
	Klauer	1	11,173	-7.42%	South-West	3	27,481	-3.93%
	Liardet	1	10,635	-11.87%	Total	9	85,816	
	McClelland	1	13,411	+11.13%	Average		9,535	
	McComb	1	10,023	-16.95%				
	Oliver	1	11,402	-5.52%				
	Total	7	84,479					
	Average		12,068					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Glen Eira City	Jasper	3	31,095	-0.60%	Camden	3	30,619	-3.49%
	Mackie	3	31,680	+1.27%	Rosstown	3	32,708	+3.10%
	Orrong	3	31,079	-0.65%	Tucker	3	31,851	+0.39%
	Total	9	93,854		Total	9	95,178	

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Average		10,428		Average		10,575	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Greater Bendigo City	Diamond Hill	1	11,026	+3.01%	Eaglehawk	1	8,962	+3.68%
	Eaglehawk	1	9,655	-9.80%	Eppalock	1	8,870	+2.62%
	Eppalock	1	11,844	+10.65%	Epsom	1	8,170	-5.48%
	Fortuna	1	10,462	-2.26%	Flora Hill	1	9,004	+4.17%
	Grassy Flat	1	10,553	-1.41%	Golden Square	1	9,216	+6.62%
	Sandhurst	1	10,788	+0.78%	Kangaroo Flat	1	8,328	-3.65%
	Whipstick	1	10,599	-0.98%	North West Plains	1	8,314	-3.81%
	Total	7	74,927		Sandhurst	1	8,965	+3.72%
	Average		10,704		Strathfieldsaye	1	7,963	-7.87%
					Total	9	77,792	
					Average		8,644	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 22-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-2004</i>			
Greater Shepparton City	unsubdivided	7	40,176		unsubdivided	7	40,271	
	Total	7	40,176		Total	7	40,271	
	Average		5,739		Average		5,753	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Hindmarsh Shire	East	2	1,784	+0.90%	East	2	1,745	+0.65%
	North	2	1,799	+1.81%	North	2	1,724	-0.56%
	West	2	1,723	-2.49%	West	2	1,732	-0.10%
	Total	6	5,306		Total	6	5,201	
	Average		884		Average		867	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Hobsons Bay City	Wedge	2	17,272	+8.33%	Altona	1	9,594	+5.91%
	Langhorne	2	15,924	-0.13%	Altona Meadows	1	8,832	-2.50%
	Blackshaw	2	15,508	-2.73%	Altona North	1	9,220	+1.79%
	Hall	2	15,071	-5.48%	Seabrook	1	9,107	+0.54%
	Total	8	63,775		Spotswood	1	8,444	-6.78%
	Average		7,972		Williamstown	1	8,996	-0.69%
					Williamstown North	1	9,215	+1.73%
					Total	7	63,408	
					Average		9,058	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 5-Nov-2003</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-2004</i>			



Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
Horsham Rural City	unsubdivided	7	14,610		unsubdivided	7	14,594	
	Total	7	14,610		Total	7	14,594	
	Average		2,087		Average		2,085	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Hume City	Airport	1	9,287	-12.30%	Airport	2	21,682	-1.56%
	Aitken	1	10,927	+3.19%	Aitken	3	31,917	-3.40%
	Evans	1	10,503	-0.81%	Jacksons Creek	2	23,253	+5.57%
	Jackson	1	11,347	+7.16%	Merri	2	22,268	+1.10%
	Maygar	1	10,343	-2.32%	Total	9	99,120	
	Merri Merri	1	11,789	+11.33%	Average		11,013	
	Ningulabul	1	9,493	-10.35%				
	Shankland	1	9,841	-7.06%				
	Woodlands	1	11,767	+11.12%				
	Total	9	95,297					
	Average		10,589					
<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>				
Indigo Shire	unsubdivided	7	11,553		unsubdivided	7	11,816	
	Total	7	11,553		Total	7	11,816	
	Average		1,650		Average		1,688	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Loddon Shire	Boort	1	1,298	-5.81%	Boort	1	1,471	-7.73%
	East Loddon	1	1,293	-6.17%	Kooyoora	2	3,220	+0.99%
	Inglewood	1	1,443	+4.72%	Terrick	1	1,618	+1.49%
	Pyramid Hill	1	1,294	-6.10%	Wedderburn	1	1,662	+4.25%
	Tarnagulla	1	1,530	+11.03%	Total	5	7,971	
	Wedderburn	1	1,407	+2.10%	Average		1,594	
	Total	6	8,265					
	Average		1,378					
<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>				
Macedon Ranges Shire	Barringo	1	3,129	+5.98%	East	3	9,840	-1.45%
	Black Forest	1	3,075	+7.60%	South	3	9,857	-1.28%
	Bullengarook	1	3,487	+4.78%	West	3	10,258	+2.73%
	Campaspe	1	3,167	-4.84%	Total	9	29,955	
	Hanging Rock	1	3,096	-6.97%	Average		3,328	
	Jacksons Creek	1	3,318	-0.30%				

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Monegetta	1	3,557	+6.88%				
	Mt William	1	3,767	+13.19%				
	Pastoria	1	3,352	+0.72%				
	Total	9	29,948					
	Average		3,328					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Maribyrnong City	Bluestone	1	6,297	-8.18%	Bluestone	1	6,781	-1.97%
	Ironbark	1	7,330	+6.88%	Ironbark	1	6,590	-4.73%
	River	1	7,750	+13.01%	River	1	6,397	-7.52%
	Saltwater	1	7,012	+2.25%	Saltwater	1	7,370	+6.55%
	Sheoak	1	6,995	+2.00%	Sheoak	1	7,635	+10.38%
	Stony Creek	1	6,542	-4.61%	Stony Creek	1	6,443	-6.85%
	Wattle	1	6,079	-11.36%	Wattle	1	7,204	+4.15%
	Total	7	48,005		Total	7	48,420	
	Average		6,858		Average		6,917	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Mildura Rural City	unsubdivided	9	34,944		unsubdivided	9	35,580	
	Total	9	34,944		Total	9	35,580	
	Average		3,883		Average		3,953	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Mitchell Shire	Glenburnie	1	3,518	+9.56%	Central	3	7,726	+0.60%
	New Crossing Place	2	5,942	-7.47%	North	3	8,225	+7.10%
	Panyule	1	2,945	-8.28%	South	3	7,089	-7.70%
	Piper	1	3,084	-3.96%	Total	9	23,040	
	Pretty Sally	1	3,485	+8.53%	Average		2,560	
	Willowmavin	1	3,502	+9.06%				
	Total	7	22,476					
	Average		3,211					
<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>				
Monash City	Central	1	15,736	+6.44%	Glen Waverley	2	21,152	-2.62%
	Damper	1	14,197	-3.97%	Mount Waverley	3	34,655	+6.36%
	Huntingdale	1	15,792	+6.82%	Mulgrave	3	30,320	-6.94%
	Jell	1	14,481	-2.05%	Oakleigh	3	33,339	+2.32%
	Napier	1	14,148	-4.30%	Total	11	119,466	
	University	1	15,502	+4.86%	Average		10,861	

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Warrigal	1	14,720	-0.43%				
	Wellington	1	13,698	-7.35%				
	Total	8	118,274					
	Average		14,784					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Moorabool Shire	Bacchus	3	8,337	-4.30%	Bungal	1	3,120	+8.56%
	Bungal	1	2,853	-1.76%	East Moorabool	4	11,142	-3.08%
	Pentland	1	3,230	+11.23%	West Moorabool	1	2,830	-1.53%
	West Moorabool	1	2,734	-5.85%	Woodlands	1	3,026	+5.29%
	Woodlands	1	3,174	+9.30%	Total	7	20,118	
	Total	7	20,328		Average		2,874	
	Average		2,904					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 14-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-04</i>			
Moreland City	Box Forest	1	11,835	+9.49%	North-East	4	37,189	-3.76%
	Glencairn	1	10,009	-7.40%	North-West	4	37,825	-2.12%
	Grandview	1	11,127	+2.94%	South	3	31,256	+7.84%
	Hoffman	1	10,915	+0.98%	Total	11	106,270	
	Lincoln Mills	1	9,932	-8.11%	Average		9,661	
	Lygon	1	11,606	+7.37%				
	Merri	1	10,982	+1.60%				
	Moonah	1	10,494	-2.91%				
	Newlands	1	10,196	-5.67%				
	Westbreen	1	10,996	+1.73%				
	Total	10	108,092					
	Average		10,809					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 31-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-04</i>			
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Bittern	1	14,406	-3.70%	Balcombe	1	13,339	+8.50%
	Fingal	1	16,098	+7.61%	Cerberus	1	11,387	-7.38%
	Mornington	1	16,282	+8.84%	Kangerong	1	12,507	+1.73%
	Mt Eliza	1	13,010	-13.03%	Mornington	1	13,186	+7.25%
	Mt Martha	1	15,668	+4.74%	Mount Eliza	1	12,988	+5.64%
	Nepean	1	16,387	+9.55%	Point Nepean	1	12,490	+1.59%
	Rosebud	1	15,002	+0.29%	Red Hill	1	11,533	-6.19%
	Rye Beach	1	14,296	-4.43%	Rosebud	1	12,856	+4.57%

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Tyabb	1	13,485	-9.85%	Rye	1	12,128	-1.35%
	Total	9	134,634		Truemans	1	11,519	-6.30%
	Average		14,959		Watsons	1	11,302	-8.07%
					Total	11	135,235	
					Average		12,294	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Mount Alexander Shire	Barker	1	2,045	-2.43%	Calder	1	2,033	-3.92%
	Calder	1	2,348	+12.02%	Castlemaine	3	6,525	+2.80%
	Campbell	1	2,049	-2.24%	Coliban	1	2,051	-3.07%
	Coliban	1	2,085	-0.52%	Loddon	1	2,160	+2.09%
	Forest	1	1,906	-9.06%	Tarrengower	1	2,042	-3.49%
	Loddon	1	2,166	+3.34%	Total	7	14,811	
	Tarrengower	1	2,076	-0.95%	Average		2,116	
	Total	7	14,675					
	Average		2,096					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Pyrenees Shire	De Cameron	1	1,048	+1.73%	Avoca	1	1,414	-0.66%
	Avoca	1	1,060	+2.90%	Beaufort	1	1,516	+6.51%
	Glenmona	1	1,010	-1.96%	Goldsmith	1	1,376	-3.33%
	Mitchell	1	883	-14.28%	Mitchell	1	1,368	-3.89%
	Beaufort	1	1,157	+12.31%	Warrenmang	1	1,443	+1.38%
	Stoneleigh	1	1,051	+2.02%	Total	5	7,117	
	Snake Valley	1	1,002	-2.73%	Average		1,423	
	Total	7	7,211					
	Average		1,030					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 9-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-04</i>			
South Gippsland Shire	Coastal Promontory	2	5,919	-3.52%	Coastal-Promontory	3	8,733	+0.11%
	Corner Inlet	1	3,327	+8.44%	Strzelecki	3	8,595	-1.47%
	Drumdlemara	1	2,778	-9.45%	Tarwin Valley	3	8,843	+1.37%
	Grand Ridge	1	3,373	+9.94%	Total	9	26,171	
	Korumburra	1	3,035	-1.08%	Average		2,908	
	Leongatha	1	2,636	-14.08%				
	Strzelecki	1	3,364	+9.65%				
	Tarwin Valley	1	3,180	+3.65%				
	Total	9	27,612					

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Average		3,068					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			

Stonnington City	Armadale	1	8,340	-3.95%	East	3	26,122	+1.16%
	Chapel	1	9,217	+6.15%	North	3	26,144	+1.25%
	Como	1	8,233	-5.18%	South	3	25,201	-2.41%
	Greville	1	9,686	+0.03%	Total	9	77,467	
	Hawksburn	1	8,512	-1.97%	Average		8,607	
	Hedgeley Dene	1	8,397	-3.30%				
	Malvern Valley	1	8,997	+3.61%				
	Orrong	1	9,368	+7.89%				
	Wattletree	1	8,398	-3.28%				
	Total	9	79,148					
	Average		8,794					
		<i>Voter statistics as at 19-Nov-2003</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-2004</i>		
Strathbogie Shire	Goulburn Weir	1	1,549	+18.43%	Goulburn Weir	1	1,288	+1.42%
	Honeysuckle Creek	1	1,206	-7.80%	Honeysuckle Creek	1	1,186	-6.61%
	Lake Nagambie	1	1,235	-5.58%	Hughes Creek	1	1,367	+7.64%
	Mount Wombat	1	1,406	+7.49%	Lake Nagambie	1	1,363	+7.32%
	Porcupine Hill	1	1,171	-10.47%	Mount Wombat	1	1,271	+0.08%
	Seven Creeks North	1	1,380	-7.80%	Seven Creeks	2	2,415	-4.92%
	Seven Creeks South	1	1,208	-7.65%	Total	7	8,890	
	Total	7	9,155		Average		1,270	
	Average		1,308					
		<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>		
Towong Shire	unsubdivided	5	5,482		unsubdivided	5	5,435	
	Total	5	5,482		Total	5	5,435	
	Average		1,096		Average		1,087	
		<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>		
Wangaratta Rural City	Appin	1	2,571	+1.46%	unsubdivided	7	20,496	
	King	2	4,895	-3.39%	Total	7	20,496	

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Merriwa	1	2,478	-2.21%	Average		2,928	
	Ovens	1	2,651	+4.62%				
	Warby	1	2,872	+13.34%				
	West End	1	2,455	-3.12%				
	Yarrunga	1	2,352	-7.18%				
	Total	8	20,274					
	Average		2,534					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Warrnambool City	Botanic	1	3,508	+3.27%	unsubdivided	7	22,735	
	Cassady	1	3,165	-6.83%	Total	7	22,735	
	Levy's	1	3,423	+0.77%	Average		3,248	
	Pertobe	1	3,308	-2.62%				
	Proudfoot	1	3,097	-8.83%				
	Sherwood	1	3,811	+12.19%				
	Wollaston	1	3,465	+2.00%				
	Total	7	23,777					
	Average		3,397					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 22-Jan-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-04</i>			
Wellington Shire	unsubdivided	9	41,658		unsubdivided	9	41,388	
	Total	9	41,658		Total	9	41,388	
	Average		4,629		Average		4,599	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
West Wimmera Shire	unsubdivided	5	4,279		unsubdivided	5	4,113	
	Total	5	4,279		Total	5	4,113	
	Average		856		Average		823	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Whittlesea City	Central	1	9,311	-1.47%	East	3	30,515	+3.71%
	East	1	9,958	+5.38%	North	3	29,190	-0.79%
	East Central	1	9,652	+2.14%	West	3	28,564	-2.92%
	North	1	11,848	+25.38%	Total	9	88,269	
	North Central	1	8,459	-10.49%	Average		9,808	
	South	1	9,674	+2.37%				
	South Central	1	8,331	-11.84%				
	South West	1	9,133	-3.35%				
	West	1	8,684	-8.11%				
Total	9	85,050						

Municipality Name (2004-2005 reviews)	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at 2004/2005 general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Average		9,450					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Wodonga City	unsubdivided	5	24,094		unsubdivided	7	24,477	
	Total	5	24,094		Total	7	24,477	
	Average		4,819		Average		3,497	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Wyndham City	Armstrong	1	9,663	-7.50%	Chaffey	3	24,878	-0.97%
	Chaffey	1	9,587	-8.22%	Iramoo	3	24,910	-0.84%
	Chirnside	1	12,729	+21.86%	Truganina	3	25,574	+1.80%
	Cowie	1	10,796	+3.35%	Total	9	75,362	
	Iramoo	1	10,468	+0.21%	Average		8,374	
	Tarneit	1	10,209	-2.27%				
	Truganina	1	9,673	-7.40%				
	Total	7	73,125					
	Average		10,446					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 28-Jan-2005</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			
Yarra City	Carringbush	2	13,544	+1.20%	Langridge	3	19,589	-4.30%
	Docker	2	13,449	+0.49%	Melba	3	22,054	+7.74%
	Mackillop	2	14,666	+9.59%	Nicholls	3	19,764	-3.44%
	Merri	1	6,111	-8.68%	Total	9	61,407	
	Nicholson	2	12,454	-6.94%	Average		6,823	
	Total	9	60,224					
	Average		6,692					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 12-Feb-2004</i>				<i>Election Date: 27-Nov-2004</i>			
Yarriambiack Shire	Beulah	1	655	-15.81%	Dunmunkle	2	2,040	+6.08%
	Dunmunkle	3	2,203	-5.66%	Hopetoun	2	1,843	-4.17%
	Hopetoun	1	792	+1.80%	Warracknabeal	3	2,848	-1.27%
	Lascelles	1	733	-5.78%	Total	7	6,731	
	Warracknabeal	3	2,615	+12.08%	Average		962	
	Total	9	6,998					
	Average		778					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Sep-2004</i>				<i>Election date: 26-Nov-2005</i>			

Election Date: 29-Nov-2008

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
Ararat Rural City	unsubdivided	7	9,141		unsubdivided	7	9,053	
	Total	7	9,141		Total	7	9,053	
	Average		1,306		Average		1,293	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 12-Dec-2007</i>							
Ballarat	Alfredton	1	7,291	+1.95%	Central	3	22,073	-2.08%
	Buninyong	1	7,176	+0.35%	North	3	22,773	+1.02%
	Caledonian	1	7,071	-1.12%	South	3	22,778	+1.05%
	Canadian	1	6,977	-2.44%	Total	9	67,624	
	Central	1	6,452	-9.78%	Average		7,514	
	Learmonth	1	7,304	+2.14%				
	Nerrina	1	7,726	+3.04%				
	Sebastopol	1	7,420	+3.76%				
	Wendouree	1	6,944	-2.90%				
	Total	9	64,361					
	Average		7,151					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 30-Oct-2006</i>							
Banyule	Bakewell	1	12,223	-5.03%	Bakewell	1	12,366	-5.81%
	Beale	1	12,898	+0.21%	Beale	1	13,111	-0.14%
	Griffin	1	14,161	+10.03%	Griffin	1	12,987	-1.08%
	Grimshaw	1	12,743	-0.99%	Grimshaw	1	13,258	+0.98%
	Hawdon	1	13,079	+1.62%	Hawdon	1	13,554	+3.24%
	Ibbott	1	12,877	+0.05%	Ibbott	1	13,754	+4.76%
	Olympia	1	12,113	-5.89%	Olympia	1	12,874	-1.94%
	Total	7	90,094		Total	7	91,904	
	Average		12,871		Average		13,129	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Feb-2007</i>							
Bass Coast	Anderson	1	5,081	-7.59%	Anderson	1	5,559	+0.83%
	Churchill	1	5,295	-3.70%	Churchill	1	5,214	-5.42%
	Hovell	1	5,319	-3.26%	Hovell	1	5,267	-4.46%
	Leadbeater	1	5,468	-0.55%	Leadbeater	1	5,264	-4.52%
	McHaffie	1	5,315	-3.33%	McHaffie	1	5,378	-2.45%
	Thompson	1	5,850	+6.40%	Thompson	1	5,938	+7.71%
	Townsend	1	6,160	+12.03%	Townsend	1	5,971	+8.31%
	Total	7	38,488		Total	7	38,591	
	Average		5,498		Average		5,513	



Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	<i>Voter statistics as at 02-Jan-2008</i>							
Baw Baw	Bloomfield	1	3,127	-5.47%	Drouin	2	6,405	-7.15%
	Drouin	1	3,918	+18.44%	Mount Worth	2	7,328	+6.23%
	Lardner	1	3,687	+11.46%	North	2	7,419	+7.55%
	Longwarry	1	3,527	+6.62%	Warragul	3	9,890	-4.42%
	Mount Worth	1	3,053	-7.71%	Total	9	31,042	
	Tarago	1	3,135	-5.23%	Average		3,449	
	Thomson	1	3,301	-0.21%				
	Warragul East	1	3,205	-3.11%				
	Warragul West	1	2,819	-14.78%				
	Total	9	29,772					
	Average		3,308					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 15-Jun-2007</i>							
Bayside	Abbott	1	7,226	-3.94%	Central	3	28,447	-3.82%
	Charman	1	7,364	-2.11%	Northern	2	20,464	+3.78%
	Clayton	1	7,577	+0.73%	Southern	2	20,099	+1.93%
	Dendy	1	7,081	-5.87%	Total	7	69,010	
	Ebden	1	7,276	-3.28%	Average		9,859	
	Mair	1	8,045	+6.95%				
	Moysey	1	7,126	-5.27%				
	Smith	1	8,158	+8.45%				
	Were	1	7,849	+4.34%				
	Total	9	67,702					
	Average		7,522					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 02-Jan-2007</i>							
Benalla Rural City	Churchill	1	1,574	+0.77%	unsubdivided	7	11,265	
	Dunlop	1	1,470	-5.89%	Total	7	11,265	
	Islands	1	1,768	+13.19%	Average		1,609	
	Lake Benalla	1	1,547	-0.96%				
	Lake Mokoan	1	1,623	+3.91%				
	Mount Samaria	1	1,508	-3.46%				
	Winton	1	1,444	-7.55%				
	Total	7	10,934					
	Average		1,562					
		<i>Voter statistics as at 15-Jun-2007</i>						
Boroondara	Bellevue	1	11,794	-2.54%	Bellevue	1	11,754	-2.54%
	Cotham	1	12,119	+0.15%	Cotham	1	12,102	+0.35%
	Gardiner	1	11,807	-2.43%	Gardiner	1	11,754	-2.54%
	Glenferrie	1	12,582	+3.98%	Glenferrie	1	12,483	+3.51%

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Junction	1	12,451	+2.89%	Junction	1	12,323	+2.18%
	Lynden	1	12,099	-0.02%	Lynden	1	12,069	+0.07%
	Maling	1	12,068	-0.27%	Maling	1	12,073	+0.11%
	Maranoa	1	11,889	-1.75%	Maranoa	1	11,760	-2.49%
	Solway	1	12,127	+0.22%	Solway	1	12,195	+1.12%
	Studley	1	12,073	-0.23%	Studley	1	12,083	+0.19%
	Total	10	121,009		Total	10	120,596	
	Average		12,101		Average		12,060	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 17-Dec-2007</i>							
Buloke	Lower Avoca	3	2,128	+3.82%	Lower Avoca	2	1,878	+8.13%
	Mallee	3	2,083	+1.63%	Mallee	2	1,657	-4.60%
	Mount Jeffcott	3	1,938	-5.45%	Mount	3	2,544	-2.35%
	Total	9	6,149		Total	7	6,079	
	Average		683		Average		868	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 05-Dec-2006</i>							
Campaspe	Central	1	4,081	+1.60%	Echuca	3	9,672	+3.39%
	Deakin	1	3,972	-1.12%	Kyabram-Deakin	3	8,840	-5.51%
	Echuca	2	8,577	+6.76%	Rochester	1	3,157	+1.24%
	Kyabram	1	4,058	+1.02%	Waranga	1	3,089	-0.94%
	Waranga	1	3,661	-8.86%	Western	1	3,307	+6.05%
	Western	1	3,769	-6.17%	Total	9	28,065	
	Total	7	28,118		Average		3,118	
	Average		4,017					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-May-2007</i>							
Colac Otway	Colac	3	8,276	-0.57%	unsubdivided	7	19,225	
	Murray	1	2,566	-6.45%	Total	7	9,225	
	Otway	2	5,586	+1.82%	Average		2,746	
	Warrion	1	2,770	+0.98%				
	Total	7	19,198					
	Average		2,743					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 1-Jan-2007</i>							
Darebin	Barunah	1	10,882	+1.67%	Cazaly	3	33,208	+0.94%
	Cazaly	1	10,968	+2.47%	La Trobe	3	31,002	-5.76%
	Clifton	1	11,321	+5.77%	Rucker	3	34,484	+4.82%
	James	1	10,572	-1.23%	Total	9	98,694	
	La Trobe	1	10,895	+1.79%	Average		10,966	
	Merrilands	1	9,972	-6.84%				
	Oakhill	1	9,764	-8.78%				

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Rucker	1	11,922	+11.38%				
	Spring	1	10,038	-6.22%				
	Total	9	96,334					
	Average		10,704					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 09-Jan-2007</i>							
East Gippsland	Banksia	4	19,967	+4.22%	Unsubdivided	9	37,586	
	Waratah	4	18,351	-4.22%	Total	9	37,586	
	Total	8	38,318		Average		4,176	
	Average		4,790					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 25-May-2007</i>							
Gannawarra	Avoca	1	1,235	-6.67%	Avoca	1	1,329	+3.21%
	Bannagher	1	1,198	-9.47%	Murray	1	1,349	+4.76%
	Murray	1	1,416	+7.01%	Patchell	3	3,555	-7.98%
	Wandella	2	2,916	+10.18%	Yarran	2	2,781	+7.98%
	Yarran	2	2,498	-5.61%	Total	7	9,014	
	Total	7	9,263		Average		1,288	
	Average		1,323					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-Jun-2004</i>							
Glenelg	Cobboboonee	1	1,749	-3.64%	unsubdivided	7	16,504	
	Dutton	1	1,830	+0.83%	Total	7	16,504	
	Fawthrop	1	1,954	+7.66%	Average		2,358	
	Flinders	1	1,867	+2.87%				
	Gilmore	1	1,652	-8.98%				
	Grant	1	1,910	+5.23%				
	Henty	1	1,849	+1.87%				
	Mitchell	1	1,571	-13.44%				
	Mt Clay	1	1,951	+7.49%				
	Total	9	16,333					
	Average		1,815					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 11-Dec-2006</i>							
Golden Plains Shire	Bannockburn	1	2,014	+27.39%	unsubdivided	7	14,447	
	Break-O-Day	1	1,388	-12.21%	Total	7	14,447	
	Forest	1	1,566	-0.95%	Average		2,064	
	Haddon	1	1,504	-4.87%				
	Ranges	1	1,635	+3.42%				
	Rivers	1	1,514	-4.24%				
	Ross Creek	1	1,528	-3.35%				
	Valley	1	1,538	-2.72%				
	Woody Yaloak	1	1,541	-2.53%				

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Total	9	14,228					
	Average		1,581					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 01-Jan-2007</i>							
Greater Dandenong	Cleeland	1	7,782	-8.90%	Lightwood	3	25,081	+0.40%
	Dandenong	1	8,395	-1.73%	Paperbark	3	25,772	+3.17%
	Dandenong North	1	8,908	+4.28%	Red Gum	3	22,664	-9.27%
	Keysborough	1	7,994	-6.42%	Silverleaf	2	18,076	+8.54%
	Keysborough	1	10,454	+22.37%	Total	11	91,593	
	Lyndale	1	8,334	-2.44%	Average		8,327	
	Noble Park	1	8,864	+3.76%				
	Noble Park North	1	8,881	+3.96%				
	Springvale Central	1	7,999	-6.36%				
	Springvale North	1	7,976	-6.63%				
	Springvale South	1	8,383	-1.87%				
	Total	11	93,970					
	Average		8,543					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 01-Feb-2008</i>							
Greater Geelong	Austin	1	12,834	-3.74%	Austin	1	13,406	+0.18%
	Beangala	1	16,454	+23.41%	Beangala	1	12,640	-5.54%
	Brownbill	1	11,514	-13.64%	Brownbill	1	12,949	-3.23%
	Buckley	1	14,980	+12.35%	Buckley	1	13,715	+2.49%
	Cheetham	1	13,381	+0.36%	Cheetham	1	13,254	-0.95%
	Corio	1	11,699	-12.25%	Corio	1	13,560	+1.33%
	Coryule	1	15,523	+16.43%	Coryule	1	13,077	-2.28%
	Cowie	1	12,238	-8.21%	Cowie	1	13,491	+0.82%
	Deakin	1	14,368	+7.76%	Deakin	1	13,455	+0.55%
	Kardinia	1	11,563	-13.27%	Kardinia	1	14,016	+4.74%
	Kildare	1	12,013	-9.90%	Kildare	1	12,375	-7.52%
	Windermere	1	13,426	+0.70%	Windermere	1	14,643	+9.43%
	Total	12	159,993		Total	12	160,581	
	Average		13,333		Average		13,382	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 17-Dec-2007</i>							
Hepburn	Birch	1	2,784	+1.99%	Birch	2	3,982	+1.05%
	Cameron	1	2,599	-4.79%	Cameron	1	1,967	-0.17%
	Coliban	1	2,937	+7.59%	Coliban	1	1,891	-4.02%
	Creswick	1	2,590	-5.12%	Creswick	2	4,010	+1.76%
	Holcombe	1	2,739	+0.34%	Holcombe	1	1,942	-1.44%
	Total	5	13,649		Total	7	13,792	
	Average		2,730		Average		1,970	

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	<i>Voter statistics as at 05-Dec-2006</i>							
Kingston	Barton	1	14,931	-0.76%	Central	3	36,425	+0.63%
	Braeside Park	1	16,513	+9.76%	North	3	35,251	-2.61%
	Carrum Carrum	1	15,355	+2.06%	South	3	36,915	+1.98%
	Clarinda	1	15,205	+1.06%	Total	9	108,591	
	Como	1	13,901	-7.60%	Average		12,066	
	Hawker	1	14,545	-3.32%				
	Patterson River	1	14,866	-1.19%				
	Total	7	105,316					
	Average		15,045					
		<i>Voter statistics as at 02-Jan-2007</i>						
Knox	Baird	1	11,315	-6.33%	Baird	1	12,096	-2.17%
	Chandler	1	11,472	-5.03%	Chandler	1	11,628	-5.95%
	Collier	1	11,748	-2.74%	Collier	1	11,721	-5.20%
	Dinsdale	1	11,611	-3.88%	Dinsdale	1	11,449	-7.40%
	Dobson	1	12,381	+2.50%	Dobson	1	12,768	+3.27%
	Friberg	1	12,516	+3.61%	Friberg	1	12,945	+4.70%
	Scott	1	12,835	+6.25%	Scott	1	13,103	+5.98%
	Taylor	1	13,195	+9.23%	Taylor	1	13,777	+11.43%
	Tirhatuan	1	11,643	-3.61%	Tirhatuan	1	11,791	-4.64%
	Total	9	108,716		Total	9	111,278	
	Average		12,080		Average		12,364	
		<i>Voter statistics as at 08-Jan-2007</i>						
Latrobe	Burnett	1	6,203	+6.73%	Burnet	1	6,093	+4.28%
	Dunbar	1	5,657	-2.67%	Dunbar	1	5,637	-3.52%
	Farley	1	5,792	-0.35%	Farley	1	6,053	+3.60%
	Firmin	1	5,782	-0.52%	Firmin	1	5,776	-1.14%
	Galbraith	1	5,908	+1.65%	Galbraith	1	5,547	-5.06%
	Gunyah	1	6,272	+7.91%	Gunyah	1	5,637	-3.52%
	Merton	1	6,145	+5.73%	Merton	1	6,063	+3.77%
	Rintoull	1	5,242	-9.81%	Rintoull	1	5,907	+1.10%
	Tanjil	1	5,308	-8.67%	Tanjil	1	5,872	+0.50%
	Total	9	52,309		Total	9	52,585	
	Average		5,812		Average		5,843	
		<i>Voter statistics as at 15-Jun-2007</i>						
Manningham	Heide	2	19,144	-10.70%	Heide	3	29,136	+1.78%
	Koonung	2	20,366	-5.00%	Koonung	3	28,403	-0.78%
	Mullum Mullum	2	23,659	+10.37%	Mullum	3	28,342	-1.00%
	Ruffey	2	22,579	+5.33%	Total	9	85,881	

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	Total	8	85,748		Average		9,542	
			10,719					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 02-Jan-2007</i>							
Mansfield	Bonnie Doon	1	1,834	-2.75%	Bonnie Doon	1	1,881	-1.77%
	Jamieson	1	2,054	+8.92%	Jamieson	1	2,069	+8.05%
	Mansfield	2	3,598	-4.60%	Mansfield	2	3,670	-4.17%
	Tolmie	1	1,943	+3.03%	Tolmie	1	1,954	+2.05%
	Total	5	9,429		Total	5	9,574	
	Average		1,886		Average		1,915	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 23-May-2007</i>							
Maroondah	Arrabri	1	11,694	+5.30%	Arrabri	3	26,531	+1.86%
	Clocktower	1	10,222	-7.96%	Mullum	3	26,134	+0.34%
	Eastfield	1	11,291	+1.67%	Wyreena	3	25,474	-2.20%
	Loughnan's Hill	1	10,504	-5.42%	Total	9	78,139	
	Mullum	1	10,376	-6.57%	Average		8,682	
	Wyreena	1	10,924	-1.63%				
	Yarrunga	1	12,728	+14.61%				
	Total	7	77,739					
	Average		11,106					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 13-Dec-2007</i>							
Melton	Cambridge	1	9,942	+15.89%	Cambridge	2	17,638	-2.58%
	Cochrane	1	8,569	-0.12%	Coburn	3	28,605	+5.33%
	Courthouse	1	6,547	-23.69%	Watts	2	17,126	-5.41%
	Pennyroyal	1	7,530	-12.23%	Total	7	63,369	
	Reservoir	1	7,152	-16.64%	Average		9,053	
	Sugargum	1	13,064	+52.28%				
	Watts	1	7,250	-15.49%				
	Total	7	60,054					
	Average		8579					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 13-Dec-2007</i>							
Moirā	Central	3	7,239	-2.64%	unsubdivided	9	22,477	
	East	3	7,949	+6.90%	Total	9	22,477	
	West	3	7,119	-4.26%	Average		2,497	
	Total	9	22,307					
	Average		2,479					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 04-Jun-2007</i>							
Moonee Valley City	Deakin	1	11,366	-1.17%	Central	3	28,776	+6.14%
	Debney	1	9,944	-13.54%	South	3	27,093	-0.06%
	Hicks	1	11,743	+2.10%	West	3	25,462	-6.08%

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
	McCracken	1	11,671	+1.48%	Total	9	81,331	
	Napier	1	12,404	+7.85%	Average		9,037	
	Phelan	1	10,920	-5.05%				
	Ramsay	1	12,459	+8.33%				
	Total	7	80,507					
	Average		11,501					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 07-Jan-2008</i>							
Moynes	Eumeralla-Hawkesdale	2	2,332	-6.12%	unsubdivided	7	13,486	
	Hopkins-Childers	2	2,430	-2.12%	Total	7	13,486	
	Koroit	2	2,825	+13.73%	Average		1,927	
	Mortlake	2	2,260	-9.02%				
	Port Fairy	2	2,573	+3.58%				
	Total	10	12,420					
	Average		1,242					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 17-Apr-2007</i>							
Murrindindi	Cathedral	1	2,435	+6.43%	Cathedral	1	2,001	+0.91%
	Cheviot	1	2,111	-7.73%	Cheviot	1	1,842	-7.10%
	Dennis	1	2,344	+2.46%	Eildon	1	1,902	-4.08%
	King Parrot	1	2,254	-1.48%	King Parrot	1	2,061	+3.94%
	Koriella	1	2,482	+8.49%	Kinglake	1	2,089	+5.35%
	Red Gate	1	2,101	-8.17%	Koriella	1	1,875	-5.44%
	Total	6	13,727		Red Gate	1	2,110	+6.41%
	Average		2288		Total	7	13,880	
					Average		1,983	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 29-May-2007</i>							
Nillumbik	Allwood	1	4,893	-3.55%	Blue Lake	1	6,595	+1.74%
	Coleman	1	5,503	+8.47%	Bunjil	1	6,352	-2.01%
	Cottle	1	4,929	-2.84%	Edendale	1	6,724	+3.73%
	Edendale	1	5,151	+1.53%	Ellis	1	5,950	-8.21%
	Ellis	1	5,269	+3.86%	Sugarloaf	1	6,889	+6.28%
	Lenister	1	4,641	-8.52%	Swipers Gully	1	6,485	+0.05%
	Sutherland	1	5,678	+11.92%	Wingrove	1	6,379	-1.59%
	Wingrove	1	4,781	-5.76%	Total	7	45,374	
	Yanakie	1	4,814	-5.11%	Average		6,482	
	Total	9	45,659					
	Average		5,073					
	<i>Voter statistics as at 17-Dec-2007</i>							

Municipality Name	Statistics prior to representation review				Statistics at last general election			
	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average	Ward Name	Councillors	Total Voters	Deviation from the average
Northern Grampians	Bolangum	3	3,598	-98.14%	Central	1	1,557	+1.60%
	Grampians	6	6,942	-98.20%	Kara Kara	2	3,064	-0.03%
	Total	9	10,540		South West	1	1,569	+2.39%
	Average		1,171		Stawell	3	4,537	-1.31%
					Total	7	10,727	
					Average		1,532	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 05-Dec-2006</i>							
Port Phillip	Albert Park	1	8,714	-12.51%	Albert Park	1	11,229	+3.19%
	Alma	1	9,267	-6.96%	Carlisle	1	12,288	+12.92%
	Blessington	1	9,523	-4.38%	Catani	1	10,726	-1.43%
	Emerald Hill	1	12,530	+25.81%	Emerald Hill	1	9,869	-9.31%
	Ormond	1	9,386	-5.76%	Junction	1	10,471	-3.78%
	Sandridge	1	11,308	+13.54%	Point Ormond	1	11,780	+8.25%
	St Kilda	1	8,990	-9.74%	Sandridge	1	9,810	-9.85%
	Total	7	69,718		Total	7	76,173	
	Average		9,960		Average		10,882	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 14-May-2007</i>							
Queenscliffe	unsubdivided	7	4,245		unsubdivided	5	4,196	
	Total	7	4,245		Total	5	4,196	
	Average		606		Average		839	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 29-Nov-2007</i>							
Southern Grampians	unsubdivided	7	13,151		unsubdivided	7	13,329	
	Total	7	13,151		Total	7	13,329	
	Average		1,879		Average		1,904	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 07-Dec-2006</i>							
Swan Hill Rural City	Castle Donnington	2	4,266	+3.79%	Central	4	8,241	-0.48%
	Lakes	2	4,344	+5.69%	Lakes	1	2,073	+0.14%
	Murray-Mallee	2	3,877	-5.63%	Murray-Mallee	1	2,099	+1.39%
	Robinvale	1	1,899	-7.60%	Robinvale	1	2,078	+0.38%
	Total	7	14,386		Total	7	14,491	
	Average		2,055		Average		2,070	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 24-Apr-2007</i>							
Whitehorse	Central	2	21,180	-4.92%	Central	2	22,062	-1.19%
	Elgar	2	22,350	+0.33%	Elgar	2	22,821	+2.21%
	Morack	2	22,293	+0.07%	Morack	2	22,098	-1.03%
	Riversdale	2	21,772	-2.27%	Riversdale	2	21,574	-3.38%
	Springfield	2	23,789	+6.79%	Springfield	2	23,084	+3.39%
	Total	10	111,384		Total	10	111,639	



<b>Municipality Name</b>	<b>Statistics prior to representation review</b>				<b>Statistics at last general election</b>			
	<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Total Voters</b>	<b>Deviation from the average</b>	<b>Ward Name</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Total Voters</b>	<b>Deviation from the average</b>
	Average		11138		Average		11,164	
	<i>Voter statistics as at 03-Jan-2007</i>							
Yarra Ranges	Billanook	1	11,764	+1.88%	Billanook	1	12,033	+2.54%
	Chandler	1	10,779	-6.65%	Chandler	1	10,871	-7.36%
	Chirnside	1	11,825	+2.40%	Chirnside	1	11,914	+1.53%
	Lyster	1	10,937	-5.29%	Lyster	1	11,163	-4.87%
	Melba	1	12,402	+7.40%	Melba	1	12,868	+9.65%
	O'Shannassy	1	12,072	+4.54%	O'Shannassy	1	12,200	+3.96%
	Ryrie	1	11,981	+3.76%	Ryrie	1	12,035	+2.56%
	Streeton	1	11,179	-3.19%	Streeton	1	11,310	-3.62%
	Walling	1	10,987	-4.85%	Walling	1	11,221	-4.38%
	Total	9	103,926		Total		105,615	
	Average		11547		Average		11,735	
		<i>Voter statistics as at 15-Jun-2007</i>						

### Appendix 3: Population and geographic sizes of Victoria's municipalities by type

<b>Metropolitan Municipalities</b>					
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Number of voters *</i>	<i>Number of councillors</i>	<i>Number of voters per councillor</i>	<i>Population (2006 Census)</i>
Maribymong	31	48,005	7	6,858	63,141
Yarra	20	60,224	9	6,692	69,330
Hobsons Bay	65	63,775	7	9,028	81,459
Bayside	37	67,702	7	9,672	87,936
Port Phillip	21	69,718	7	9,960	85,096
Maroondah	61	77,739	9	8,638	99,200
Stonnington	26	79,148	9	8,794	89,883
Moonee Valley	44	80,507	9	8,945	107,090
Frankston	129	84,479	9	9,387	117,801
Manningham	113	85,748	9	9,528	109,915
Banyule	63	90,094	7	12,871	114,866
Glen Eira	39	93,854	9	10,428	124,083
Greater Dandenong	129	93,970	11	8,543	125,520
Darebin	53	96,334	9	10,704	128,067
Kingston	92	105,316	9	11,702	134,626
Moreland	51	108,092	11	9,827	135,764
Knox	114	108,716	9	12,080	146,740
Whitehorse	64	111,384	10	11,138	144,768
Brimbank	123	117,140	11	10,649	168,215
Monash	81	118,274	11	10,752	161,241
Boroondara	60	121,009	10	12,101	154,450

<b>Metropolitan/Rural Fringe Municipalities</b>					
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Number of voters *</i>	<i>Number of councillors</i>	<i>Number of voters per councillor</i>	<i>Population (2006 Census)</i>
Cardinia	1,282	39,003	7	5,572	57,115
Nillumbik	432	45,659	7	6,523	59,792
Melton	528	60,054	7	8,579	78,912
Wyndham	542	73,125	9	8,125	112,695
Whittlesea	490	85,050	9	9,450	124,647
Hume	503	95,297	9	10,589	147,781
Yarra Ranges	2,466	103,926	9	11,547	140,217
Mornington Peninsula	726	134,634	11	12,239	136,482
Casey	397	135,806	11	12,346	214,960

<b>Regional Municipalities with Urban Areas</b>					
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Number of voters *</i>	<i>Number of councillors</i>	<i>Number of voters per councillor</i>	<i>Population (2006 Census)</i>
Ararat	4,208	9,141	7	1,306	11,255
Benalla	2,350	10,934	7	1,562	13,523
Swan Hill	6,114	14,386	7	2,055	20,633
Horsham	4,264	14,610	7	2,087	18,492
Wangaratta	3,646	20,274	7	2,896	26,390
Wodonga	434	24,094	7	3,442	33,010
Warrnambool	120	23,777	7	3,397	30,392
Mildura	22,084	34,944	9	3,883	49,815
Greater Shepparton	2,421	40,176	7	5,739	57,089
Latrobe	1,425	52,309	9	5,812	69,329
Ballarat	739	64,361	9	7,151	85,196
Greater Bendigo	2,999	74,927	9	8,325	93,252
Greater Geelong	1,279	159,993	12	13,333	197,479

<b>Rural Municipalities</b>					
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Number of voters*</i>	<i>Number of councillors</i>	<i>Number of voters per councillor</i>	<i>Population (2006 Census)</i>
Queenscliffe	11	4,245	5	849	3,018
West Wimmera	9,108	4,279	5	856	4,475
Hindmarsh	7,521	5,306	6	884	6,039
Towong	6,661	5,482	5	1,096	6,019
Buloke	7,998	6,149	7	878	6,853
Yarriambiack	7,324	6,998	7	1,000	7,520
Pyrenees	3,433	7,211	5	1,445	6,558
Loddon	6,695	8,265	5	1,653	7,836
Strathbogie	3,302	9,155	7	1,308	9,295
Gannawarra	3,735	9,263	7	1,323	11,296
Mansfield	3,841	9,429	5	1,886	7,191
Northern	5,728	10,540	7	1,506	11,912
Central Goldfields	1,533	11,030	7	1,576	12,323
Alpine	4,790	11,198	7	1,600	12,001
Indigo	2,042	11,553	7	1,650	14,798
Moyne	5,479	12,420	7	1,774	15,453
Southern	6,653	13,151	7	1,879	16,638
Hepburn	1,472	13,649	7	1,950	13,732
Murrindindi	3,880	13,727	7	1,961	13,672
Corangamite	4,403	13,962	7	1,995	16,616
Golden Plains	2,702	14,228	7	2,033	16,450
Mount Alexander	1,529	14,675	7	2,096	17,066
Glenelg	6,213	16,333	7	2,333	19,759
Colac Otway	3,434	19,198	7	2,743	20,295
Moorabool	2,110	20,328	7	2,904	25,474
Moira	4,044	22,307	9	2,479	27,087
Mitchell	2,861	22,476	9	2,497	30,928
Surf Coast	1,552	n/a	9	n/a	21,771
South Gippsland	3,309	27,612	9	3,068	25,737
Campaspe	4,518	28,118	9	3,124	36,209
Baw Baw	4,026	29,772	9	3,308	37,179
Macedon Ranges	1,747	29,948	9	3,328	38,360
East Gippsland	20,930	38,318	9	4,624	40,037
Bass Coast	865	38,488	7	5,498	26,548
Wellington	11,002	41,658	9	4,213	40,080

\* at the time of the last representation review

#### Appendix 4: Number of participants in electoral representation reviews

Municipality (2004-2005 reviews)	Preliminary submissions	Response submissions	Submissions submitted by				Form letters
			council	councillors	community groups/businesses	private individuals	
Alpine	18	5	2	2	4	15	-
Brimbank	4	10	-	-	5	9	-
Cardinia	7	12	2	-	5	12	-
Casey	13	29	2	4	7	29	9
Central Goldfields	8	4	2	1	2	7	-
Corangamite	9	35	2	8	15	19	-
Frankston	16	8	2	-	2	20	-
Glen Eira	8	6	-	2	4	8	-
Greater Bendigo	13	14	2	6	2	17	-
Greater Shepparton	23	15	2	6	2	28	-
Hindmarsh	9	5	2	2	2	8	-
Hobsons Bay	104	303	1	8	14	384	251
Horsham	5	1	2	-	1	3	-
Hume	14	9	2	3	7	11	-
Indigo	17	6	2	3	3	15	-
Loddon	7	7	2	1	3	8	-
Macedon Ranges	18	19	2	3	3	29	-
Maribyrnong	11	14	1	6	5	13	-
Mildura	5	7	1	2	3	6	-
Mitchell	32	301	2	7	6	318	279
Monash	3	5	-	-	4	4	-
Moorabool	26	152	1	8	10	159	73
Moreland	49	85	1	10	7	116	-

Municipality (2004-2005 reviews)	Preliminary submissions	Response submissions	Submissions submitted by				Form letters
			council	councillors	community groups/businesses	private individuals	
Mornington Peninsula	77	176	2	12	46	193	-
Mount Alexander	12	3	2	1	2	10	-
Pyrenees	7	43	2	3	12	33	-
South Gippsland	18	9	2	4	3	18	-
Stonnington	23	100	-	7	13	103	-
Strathbogie	12	10	1	4	2	15	-
Towong	15	8	2	3	2	16	-
Wangaratta	29	24	2	9	5	37	-
Warrnambool	21	8	2	2	2	23	-
Wellington	16	12	-	5	3	20	-
West Wimmera	3	2	2	-	1	2	-
Whittlesea	141	208	2	10	13	324	281
Wodonga	20	23	2	8	3	30	-
Wyndham	3	15	2	1	4	11	-
Yarra	15	31	2	3	10	31	-
Yarriambiack	9	6	2	1	4	8	-
<b>Total 2004-2005:</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>1730</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1545</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>2112</b>	<b>893</b>
<b>Proportion of total submissions:</b>	32.7%	67.3%	2.4%	6.0%	9.4%	82.2%	34.7%

Municipality (2007-2008 reviews)	Preliminary submissions	Response submissions*	Submissions submitted by				Form letters/ surveys
			council	councillors	community groups/businesses	private individuals	
Ararat	11	13	1	2	8	13	-
Ballarat	11	14	2	-	4	19	-
Banyule	19	58	2	5	8	62	12
Bass Coast	28	27	2	1	12	40	-
Baw Baw	6	23	2	3	7	17	-
Bayside	12	44	3	6	6	41	-
Benalla	21	25	-	4	4	38	-
Boroondara	213	157	2	12	20	336	27
Buloke	5	25	3	8	10	9	-
Campaspe	9	22	2	3	8	18	-
Colac Otway	24	6	1	4	6	19	-
Darebin	31	53	2	6	13	63	-
East Gippsland	6	14	1	1	3	15	-
Gannawarra	6	9	2	3	6	4	-
Glenelg	10	38	2	2	7	37	-
Golden Plains	5	10	2	2	3	8	-
Greater Dandenong	14	19	2	5	3	23	-
Greater Geelong	18	30	2	4	12	30	-
Hepburn	6	17	-	2	4	17	-
Kingston	20	33	2	2	8	41	16
Knox	10	22	2	4	14	12	-
Latrobe	13	40	2	1	9	41	-
Manningham	12	10	2	2	5	13	-

Municipality (2007-2008 reviews)	Preliminary submissions	Response submissions*	Submissions submitted by				Form letters/ surveys
			council	councillors	community groups/businesses	private individuals	
Mansfield	11	2	2	-	1	10	-
Maroondah	12	30	3	7	7	25	-
Melton	6	6	2	-	6	4	-
Moira	4	8	2	2	2	6	-
Moonee Valley	15	199	2	3	9	200	167
Moyne	6	11	2	3	6	6	-
Murrindindi	8	16	1	4	4	15	-
Nillumbik	47	50	2	6	16	73	-
Northern Grampians	7	13	2	3	6	9	-
Port Phillip	37	25	2	-	26	34	-
Queenscliffe	11	24	1	1	6	27	-
Southern Grampians	33	14	2	5	5	35	-
Swan Hill	5	19	1	2	9	12	-
Whitehorse	13	16	2	1	6	20	-
Yarra Ranges	19	23	2	6	12	22	-
<b>Total 2007-2008</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Proportion of total submissions:</b>	39.0%	61.0%	3.6%	6.5%	15.8%	74.1%	11.6%
<b>Total 2004-2008:</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>2895</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>3526</b>	<b>1115</b>
<b>Proportion of total submissions:</b>	35.4%	64.6%	2.9%	6.3%	12.1%	78.7%	24.9%

\* includes comments on the Addendum Report



## Appendix 5: Number of candidates per vacancy according to electorate size

This table includes results of the 2004, 2005 and 2008 elections, excluding the City of Melbourne.

	Total vacancies	Number of candidates	Average number of candidates per vacancy
Single-councillor wards	434	1662	3.8
Two-councillor wards	156	471	3.0
Three-councillor wards	345	1122	3.3
Four-councillor wards	44	117	2.7
Five-councillor municipalities	25	48	1.9
Six-councillor wards	6	11	1.8
Seven-councillor municipalities	168	341	2.0
Nine-councillor municipalities	72	135	1.9

## Appendix 6: The success of elected candidates' second preferences in contested unsubdivided municipalities at the 2004, 2005 and 2008 elections

This table looks at the second preferences (as indicated in their candidate statements) of the first three elected candidates in unsubdivided municipalities and examines whether or not those candidates were also successful.

2004/2005 elections									
Municipality	First elected	Second preference	Elected	Second elected	Second preference	Elected	Third elected	Second preference	Elected
Alpine	VONARX, Jan	MAUTONE, Nino	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )	BEST, Bill	RANDELL, Andrew	No	LEE, Greg	PEARCE, Daryl	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )
Ararat	ALLGOOD, Gwenda Mary	Not submitted	-	HOOPER, Paul	Not submitted	-	CUNNINGHAM, John	Not submitted	-
Greater Shepparton	HOULIHAN, Jenny	WILSON, Bruce	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	WILSON, Bruce	HOULIHAN, Jenny <i>3<sup>rd</sup> pref</i> McCARTY, Jaclyn	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> )  No	HAZELMAN, Chris	GRAY, John Philip Cameron	No
Horsham	GROSS, Bernard	Not submitted	-	BIRD, Gary	Not submitted	-	MACINNES, Roslyn	Not submitted	-
Indigo	uncontested								
Mildura	CROUCH, Tom	HEINTZE, Damien	No	NICHOLS, Susan	ECKEL, Mark	Yes (7 <sup>th</sup> )	PEART, Sharyon	MORRISON, Sharon	Yes (8 <sup>th</sup> )
Queenscliffe	uncontested								
Southern Grampians	ROBERTSON, Don	Not submitted	-	TEMPLETON, Howard M.	Not submitted	-	NEWBOULD, Charlie	KENNY, Judy	No
Surf Coast	GROSSMAN, Keith	TUTT, Jim	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	DAVIDSON, Beth	MEARS, Libby	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )	TUTT, Jim	GROSSMAN, Keith	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Towong Shire	FRASER, Mary	Not submitted	-	JOYCE, Peter Anthony	FORREST, Terry	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	MITCHELL, John	Not submitted	-

2004/2005 elections									
Municipality	First elected	Second preference	Elected	Second elected	Second preference	Elected	Third elected	Second preference	Elected
Wangaratta	PAINO, Roberto	TATULASCH-WILI, Tanya	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	JOYCE, Don	YOUNG, Bernard	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )	TATULASCH-WILI, Tanya	YOUNG, Bernard	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )
Warrnambool	PHILLPOT, Glenys	ATKINSON, David	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	DAFFY, John Patrick	PAYNE, Steve	No	ATKINSON, David	Not submitted	-
Wellington	McCUBBIN, Darren	RIPPER, Beth	Yes (7 <sup>th</sup> )	HOLE, Malcolm	GARLICK, Peter	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )	GAULT, Peter David	AMOS, Jeff	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )
West Wimmera	uncontested								
Wodonga	MAHOOD, Lisa	Not submitted	-	MAHONY, John	Not submitted	-	SPEEDIE, Anna	HANUSKA, Jenny	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )

2008 elections									
Municipality	First elected	Second preference	Elected	Second elected	Second preference	Elected	Third elected	Second preference	Elected
Alpine	VONARX, Jan	ROPER, Peter W.	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	ROPER, Peter W.	KEEBLE, Tony	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )	MAUTONE, Nino	CAIN, Narda	Yes (7 <sup>th</sup> )
Ararat	ALLGOOD, Gwenda	Not submitted		McKENZIE, Colin	Not submitted		MARIAN, Andrea	GATHERCOLE, Mikhael	No
Benalla	HILL, Bill	DUNN, Peter	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )	CLARIDGE, Pat	ALEXANDER, Barbara	Yes (7 <sup>th</sup> )	FIRTH, Donald	DAVIS, Peter	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )
Colac Otway	CROOK, Brian Leslie Paul	Not submitted		HART, Stephen	HART, Stuart	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	HART, Stuart	HART, Stephen <i>3<sup>rd</sup> pref</i> SPENCE, Rodney	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )  No
East Gippsland	URIE, Mendy	ANDERSON, Trudy	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	ANDERSON, Trudy	NEAL, Peter William	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	ROWE, Jane	NETTLETON, Robert	No
Glenelg	WHITE, Geoff	WILSON, Gilbert Desmond	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	WILSON, Gilbert Desmond	WHITE, Geoff <i>3<sup>rd</sup> pref</i> HALLIDAY, Robert R.	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> )  Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	HALLIDAY, Robert R.	KERR, Charles	No
Golden Plains Shire	McARTHUR, Bill	COTSELL, David	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	COTSELL, David	McARTHUR, Bill <i>3<sup>rd</sup> pref</i> JONES, Jennifer	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> )  No	KNIGHT, Kevin	McARTHUR, Bill <i>3<sup>rd</sup> COTSELL, David</i> <i>4<sup>th</sup> JONES, Jennifer</i>	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )  No

2008 elections									
Municipality	First elected	Second preference	Elected	Second elected	Second preference	Elected	Third elected	Second preference	Elected
Greater Shepparton	DOBSON, Geoffrey	RYAN, Kevin Gunna	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	RYAN, Kevin Gunna	HAZELMAN, Chris	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	HOULIHAN, Jenny	TERLICH, Dallas	No
Horsham	BIRD, Gary James	Not submitted	-	GROSS, Bernard	Not submitted	-	RYAN, Michael	Not submitted	-
Indigo	GRAHAM, Peter	LAWRENCE, Gregory	No	CROUCHER, Peter	ISSELL, Vic	Yes (7 <sup>th</sup> )	MURDOCH, Barb	Not submitted	
Mildura	THORBURN, Max	HILTON-WOOD, Fiona	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	ARNOLD, John	KNIGHT, Vernon	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	KNIGHT, Vernon	PEART, Sharyon	No
Moira	Mc KENZIE, David	COX, Edward J.	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	KEENAN, Brian	MANSFIELD, Peter	No	COX, Edward J.	Mc KENZIE, David <i>3<sup>rd</sup> pref</i> WOLFE, Michael	Yes (1 <sup>st</sup> )  No
Moyne	DOUKAS, Jim	COCKAYNE, Brian	No	PARKER, Jill	CHRISTIE, Leslie	No	PURCELL, James	PARKER, Jill	Yes (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Queenscliffe	DAVIES, Lloyd	MITCHELL, David	Yes (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	MERRIMAN, Bob	BUTLER, Helene	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	MITCHELL, David	BREARLEY, Deborah	No
Southern Grampians	RENTSCH, Marcus	Not submitted	-	PENNY, Bob	Not submitted	-	ROBERTSON, Don	Not submitted	-
Surf Coast	WEBSTER, Dean	McKiterick, BRIAN	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )	COKER, Libby	McKiterick, BRIAN	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )	MEARS, Libby	NORTHEAST, Simon	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )
Towong	FRASER, Mary	Not submitted	-	WORTMANN, David J.	Not submitted	-	JOYCE, Peter Anthony	ENEVER, Laurence	No
Wangaratta	McINERNEY, Lisa	GRIFFITHS, Anthony	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	PAINO, Roberto	WRIGHT, Walter	No	PARISOTTO, Rozi	CHAMBERS, Kerrin	No
Warrnambool	ASKEW, Rob	JENSEN, Heather	No	HULIN, Peter J	SYCOPOULIS, Peter	No	LOWE, Jennifer	OWEN, Lisa Anne	No

**2008 elections**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>First elected</b>	<b>Second preference</b>	<b>Elected</b>	<b>Second elected</b>	<b>Second preference</b>	<b>Elected</b>	<b>Third elected</b>	<b>Second preference</b>	<b>Elected</b>
Wellington	HOLE, Malcolm	AMOS, Jeff	Yes (5 <sup>th</sup> )	McCUBBIN, Darren	COOK, Gregg	Yes (6 <sup>th</sup> )	ROSSETTI, Scott	O'BRIEN, Leo	Yes (4 <sup>th</sup> )
West Wimmera	WAIT, Warren	Not submitted	-	MEYER, Bruce H.	Not submitted	-	HAWKINS, Ron	Not submitted	-
Wodonga	MAHOOD, Lisa	Not submitted	-	WANGMAN, Rodney	Not submitted	-	SPEEDIE, Anna	HANUSKA, Jennifer	No

## Appendix 7: The proportions of councillors from localities in unsubdivided municipalities compared to the proportions of residents

Municipality	Locality	Councillors from this locality (2004/2005)	Councillors from this locality (2008)	Proportion of population at the 2006 Census <sup>†</sup>
Alpine Shire	Bright	0	1 (14%)	17%
	Dinner Plain	0	0	6%
	Mount Beauty	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	14%
	Myrtleford	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	20%
	Porepunkah	0	0	4%
	Rural balance*	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	36%
	Tawonga	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2%
* including Buffalo River, Eurobin and Wandiligong				
Ararat Rural City	Ararat	5 (71%)	5 (71%)	64%
	Lake Bolac	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2%
	Rural balance*	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	32%
	Willaura	0	0	2%
	* including Moyston			
Benalla Rural City	Benalla	n/a	5 (71%)	68%
	Rural balance	n/a	2 (29%)	32%
Colac-Otway Shire	Apollo Bay	n/a	1 (14%)	6%
	Birregurra	n/a	0	2%
	Colac/Elliminyt	n/a	3 (43%)	53%
	Rural balance*	n/a	3 (43%)	38%
	* including Beeac, Cressy, Forrest, Marengo and Skenes Creek			
East Gippsland Shire	Bairnsdale	n/a	1 (11%)	28%
	Lakes Entrance	n/a	1 (11%)	14%
	Mallacoota	n/a	0	2%
	Orbost	n/a	0	5%
	Paynesville	n/a	0	8%
	Rural balance*	n/a	7 (78%)	42%
	* including Bruthen, Buchan, Cann River, Eagle Point, Lake Tyers Beach, Lindenow, Marlo, Metung, Newlands Arm, Nowa Nowa, Omeo and Swifts Creek			
Glenelg Shire	Casterton	n/a	2 (29%)	8%
	Heywood	n/a	1 (14%)	6%
	Portland	n/a	3 (43%)	50%
	Rural balance*	n/a	1 (14%)	35%

Municipality	Locality	Councillors from this locality (2004/2005)	Councillors from this locality (2008)	Proportion of population at the 2006 Census <sup>†</sup>
	* including Dartmoor, Merino and Narrawong.			
Golden Plains Shire	Bannockburn	n/a	0	15%
	Batesford	n/a	0	3%
	Enfield	n/a	0	2%
	Inverleigh	n/a	0	3%
	Lethbridge	n/a	0	3%
	Linton	n/a	1 (14%)	2%
	Rural balance*	n/a	6 (86%)	65%
	Teesdale	n/a	0	6%
	* including Meredith, Napoleons, Scarsdale and Smythesdale			
Greater Shepparton City	Mooroopna	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	13%
	Rural balance*	1 (14%)	0	29%
	Shepparton	4 (57%)	5 (71%)	52%
	Tatura	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	6%
	* including Acadia Downs, Dookie, Kialla West, Lemnos, Merrigum, Murchison and Tallygaroopna			
Horsham Rural City	Horsham	3 (43%)	4 (57%)	73%
	Natimuk	1 (14%)	0	2%
	Rural balance*	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	25%
	*including Drung, Noradjuha and Quantong			
Indigo Shire	Barnawartha	uncontested	0	3%
	Beechworth	uncontested	2 (29%)	18%
	Chiltern	uncontested	1 (14%)	8%
	Rural balance	uncontested	3 (43%)	44%
	Rutherglen	uncontested	1 (14%)	14%
	Tangambalanga	uncontested	0	3%
	Wahgunyah	uncontested	0	5%
	Yackandanda	uncontested	0	5%
Mildura Rural City	Irymple	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	3%
	Merbein	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	4%
	Mildura	4 (44%)	5 (56%)	58%
	Ouyen	0	0	2%
	Red Cliffs	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	5%
	Rural balance*	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	28%
	* including Cabarita, Murrayville, Nangiloc, Underbool, Walpeup and Yelta			



Municipality	Locality	Councillors from this locality (2004/2005)	Councillors from this locality (2008)	Proportion of population at the 2006 Census <sup>†</sup>
Moirra Shire	Cobram	n/a	3 (33%)	19%
	Nathalia	n/a	0	5%
	Numurkah	n/a	0	14%
	Rural balance*	n/a	2 (22%)	41%
	Yarrawonga	n/a	4 (44%)	21%
* including Barmah, Bundalong, Katamite, Katunga, Strathmerton, Tungamah and Wunghu				
Moyne Shire	Koroit	n/a	1 (14%)	10%
	Mortlake	n/a	1 (14%)	6%
	Port Fairy	n/a	1 (14%)	17%
	Rural balance*	n/a	4 (57%)	67%
* including Macarthur and Peterborough				
Borough of Queenscliffe	Queenscliff	uncontested	3 (60%)	not available
	Point Lonsdale	uncontested	2 (40%)	not available
Southern Grampians Shire	Coleraine	2 (29%)	0	6%
	Dunkeld	0	0	3%
	Hamilton	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	57%
	Penshurst	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	3%
	Rural balance*	2 (29%)	2 (29%)	32%
*including Balmoral, Branxholme, Cavendish, Glenthompson, Pigeon Ponds, Strathkellar and Tarrington				
Surf Coast Shire	Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	5%
	Anglesea	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	10%
	Lorne	0	0	5%
	Moriac	0	0	3%
	Rural balance*	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	26%
	Torquay	3 (33%)	2 (22%)	45%
	Winchelsea	2 (22%)	1 (11%)	6%
* including Jan Juc				
Towong Shire	Bellbridge	0	0	6%
	Bethanga	1 (20%)	0	3%
	Corryong	0	0	20%
	Rural balance*	4 (80%)	4 (80%)	55%
	Tallangatta	0	1 (20%)	16%
* including Cudgewa, Eskdale, Tallangatta Valley, Tintalra, Towong Upper and Walwa				

Municipality	Locality	Councillors from this locality (2004/2005)	Councillors from this locality (2008)	Proportion of population at the 2006 Census†
Wangaratta Rural City	Glenrowan	1 (14%)	0	1%
	Rural balance*	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	35%
	Wangaratta	5 (71%)	5 (71%)	64%
	* including Bobinawarrah, Eldorado, Milawa, Moyhu, Oxley and Springhurst			
Warrnambool City	Allansford	0	0	2%
	Bushfield - Woodford	0	0	2%
	Rural balance	0	1 (14%)	4%
	Warrnambool	7 (100%)	6 (86%)	93%
Wellington Shire	Briagolong	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	1%
	Heyfield	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	4%
	Loch Sport	0	0	2%
	Maffra	0	1 (11%)	10%
	Rosedale	0	0	3%
	Rural balance*	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	39%
	Sale	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	33%
	Stratford	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	3%
	Yarram	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	4%
	* including Alberton, Coongulla, Golden Beach-Paradise Beach, Longford, Port Albert, Robertsons Beach, Seaspray, Stradbroke and Tinamba			
West Wimmera Shire	Apsley	uncontested	0	4%
	Edenhope	uncontested	2 (40%)	17%
	Gorokey	uncontested	0	6%
	Harrow	uncontested	0	2%
	Kaniva	uncontested	2 (40%)	17%
	Rural balance	uncontested	1 (20%)	55%
Wodonga City	Baranduda	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	4%
	Rural balance*	0	2 (28%)	6%
	Wodonga	6 (86%)	4 (57%)	90%
	* including Bonegilla			

† Source: Department of Planning and Community Development, *Towns in Time*  
(<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/dsenres.nsf/FID/-E05D934749B13CE2CA256D3B0005539F?OpenDocument>)

## Appendix 8: Voting patterns of councillors in two-councillor wards

This table examines whether councillors in two-councillor wards voted differently or the same way when divisions were called.

Ward	Opposed	Same	Only 1 present
<i>Brimbank City Council*</i>			
Horseshoe Bend	9	4	2
<i>Casey City Council†</i>			
Edrington	5	61	16
Four Oaks	16	57	9
Mayfield	48	30	5
River Gum	20	60	2
Springfield	44	20	18
<i>Whitehorse City Council‡</i>			
Central	4	6	2
Elgar	6	6	0
Morack	0	7	5
Riversdale	1	8	3
Springfield	6	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Proportion of divisions where both councillors are present</b>	37.8%	62.2%	

\* 14 August 2007 - 25 November 2008 (15 divisions)

† 22 January 2008 - 24 June 2008 (82 divisions)

‡ 16 April 2007 - 17 November 2008 (12 divisions)

## Appendix 9: Number of incumbents re-elected in reviewed and altered municipalities at the election after the review

Municipality (reviewed 2004-2005)	Incumbent councillors standing	Incumbent councillors returned	New councillors	Success rate of incumbents
Alpine Shire	3	2	5	67%
Brimbank City	7	4	7	57%
Cardinia Shire	7	4	3	57%
Casey City	8	6	5	75%
Central Goldfields Shire	4	4	3	100%
Corangamite Shire	4	4	3	100%
Frankston City	5	5	4	100%
Glen Eira City	4	1	8	25%
Greater Bendigo City	6	4	5	67%
Hobsons Bay City	6	6	1	100%
Hume City	7	5	4	71%
Loddon Shire	3	3	2	100%
Macedon Ranges Shire	6	4	5	67%
Mitchell Shire	6	5	4	83%
Monash City	5	3	8	60%
Moorabool Shire	4	3	4	75%
Moreland City	6	3	8	50%
Mornington Peninsula Shire	6	6	5	100%
Mount Alexander Shire	4	3	4	75%
Pyrenees Shire	7	4	1	57%
South Gippsland Shire	9	5	4	56%
Stonnington City	7	7	2	100%
Strathbogie Shire	6	6	1	100%
Wangaratta Rural City	7	4	3	57%
Warrnambool City	4	4	3	100%
Whittlesea City	7	5	4	71%
Wodonga City	2	2	5	100%
Wyndham City	5	4	5	80%
Yarra City	5	5	4	100%
Yarriambiack Shire	5	5	2	100%
<b>Total reviewed 2004-05, changed structure</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Total reviewed 2004-05, unchanged structure</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Total not reviewed 2004-05</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>75%</b>

Municipality (reviewed 2007-2008)	Incumbent councillors standing	Incumbent councillors returned	New councillors	Success rate of incumbents
Ballarat City	7	2	7	29%
Baw Baw Shire	6	3	6	50%
Bayside City	6	4	3	67%
Benalla Rural City	5	4	3	80%
Buloke Shire	5	4	3	80%
Campaspe Shire	4	3	6	75%
Colac Otway Shire	2	1	6	50%
Darebin City	5	4	5	80%
East Gippsland Shire	5	3	6	60%
Gannawarra Shire	5	5	2	100%
Glenelg Shire	5	4	3	80%
Golden Plains Shire	8	6	1	75%
Greater Dandenong City	9	8	3	89%
Hepburn Shire	4	3	4	75%
Kingston City	5	3	6	60%
Manningham City	6	3	6	50%
Maroondah City	7	4	5	57%
Melton Shire	5	4	3	80%
Moira Shire	5	5	4	100%
Moonee Valley City	5	4	5	80%
Moyne Shire	6	3	4	50%
Murrindindi Shire	6	3	4	50%
Nillumbik Shire	4	4	3	100%
Northern Grampians Shire	6	2	5	33%
Borough of Queenscliffe	1	1	4	100%
Swan Hill Rural City	7	5	2	71%
<b>Total reviewed 2007-08, changed structure</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Total reviewed 2007-08, unchanged structure</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Total not reviewed 2007-08</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>74%</b>

## Appendix 10: Amounts charged to Councils by the VEC for conducting Electoral Representation Reviews

2004 -2005		2007-2008	
Alpine	\$27,859	Ararat Rural City	\$26,918
Brimbank City	\$32,602	Ballarat City	\$30,133
Cardinia	\$21,177	Banyule City	\$29,842
Casey City	\$33,554	Bass Coast	\$30,685
Central Goldfields	\$24,159	Baw Baw	\$34,249
Corangamite	\$17,534	Bayside City	\$29,201
Frankston City	\$37,349	Benalla Rural City	\$26,280
Frankston City	\$30,301	Boroondara City	\$36,124
Glen Eira City	\$32,360	Borough of Queenscliffe	\$30,348
Greater Bendigo City	\$24,361	Buloke	\$30,058
Greater Shepparton City	\$44,463	Campaspe	\$29,285
Hindmarsh	\$23,813	Colac Otway	\$31,529
Hobsons Bay City	\$30,205	Darebin City	\$33,216
Horsham Rural City	\$21,336	East Gippsland	\$28,796
Hume City	\$22,789	Gannawarra	\$28,798
Indigo	\$29,572	Glenelg	\$34,374
Loddon	\$23,159	Golden Plains	\$31,142
Macedon Ranges	\$28,016	Greater Dandenong City	\$34,553
Maribyrnong City	\$24,928	Greater Geelong City	\$35,835
Mildura Rural City	\$23,968	Hepburn	\$30,111
Mitchell	\$25,258	Kingston City	\$40,683
Monash City	\$26,908	Knox City	\$35,294
Moorabool	\$20,842	Latrobe City	\$28,733
Moreland City	\$29,021	Manningham City	\$28,083
Mornington Peninsula	\$26,337	Mansfield	\$27,261
Mount Alexander	\$23,089	Maroondah City	\$29,542
Pyrenees	\$18,170	Melton	\$29,007
South Gippsland	\$37,084	Moonee Valley City	\$29,487
Stonnington City	\$36,119	Moria	\$34,039
Strathbogie	\$27,575	Moyne	\$31,517
Towong	\$22,923	Murrindindi	\$30,141
Wangaratta Rural City	\$22,018	Nillumbik	\$29,557
Warrnambool City	\$18,172	Northern Grampians	\$29,294
Wellington	\$36,953	Port Phillip City	\$30,866
West Wimmera	\$24,105	Southern Grampians	\$26,973
Whittlesea City	\$22,798	Swan Hill Rural City	\$31,007
Wodonga City	\$27,427	Whitehorse City	\$28,566
Wyndham City	\$21,945	Yarra Ranges	\$36,989
Yarra City	\$53,633		
Yarriambiack	\$26,025		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,099,905</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,178,518</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$27,498</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>\$31,014</b>



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