

Local Council Representation Review

Submission
Guide



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About this guide

This guide contains important information about local council representation and the review process that will help you to make a submission.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the relevant council fact sheet located on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au. Direct links are available on the page 4 of this guide.

One vote, one value: why the review matters

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is committed to the principle of ‘one vote, one value’, which is enshrined in the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act). This means that every person’s vote counts equally. The VEC must undertake a representation review for each local council about every 12 years. Unscheduled reviews can also take place when required.

Representation reviews are an important part of democracy. They aim to ensure that all voters in a local council are fairly and equitably represented. Each local council representation review examines:

- the number of councillors
- whether the electoral structure of the local council should be subdivided into wards or unsubdivided
- if subdivided:
 - the number of wards
 - what the ward boundaries should be
 - the name of each ward
 - how many councillors should be elected for each ward.

Input from members of the public is a valued part of the review process. There are three main opportunities for you to have your say:

1. in a preliminary public submission
2. in a response submission to the preliminary report
3. if you have requested to speak in your response submission, at a public hearing to be held in your local area.

At the end of each review, the VEC submits a final report to the Minister for Local Government with a recommended electoral structure for the local council under review.

How recommendations are formed

The VEC is an impartial statutory authority and conducts the representation reviews independently of councils and the State Government.

The VEC's recommendation is not based on a 'straw poll' of the number of submissions supporting a particular option, but holistically takes into account:

- internal research specifically relating to the local council under review, including analysis of statistics collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and contributing to redivisions of state electoral districts
- the VEC's expertise in spatial analysis, demography and local government elections
- careful consideration of all input from the public in written and verbal submissions received during the review
- advice from consultants with extensive experience in local government administration.

Limitations of the review

A representation review cannot deal with the external boundaries of a local council or decide whether a local council should be divided or amalgamated with other local councils.

Current reviews

Review Commencement	Local Council	Website address
12 June 2019	Buloke Shire Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Bulokerr.html
	Campaspe Shire Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Campasperr.html
	Swan Hill Rural City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Swanhillrr.html
19 June 2019	Bayside City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Baysiderr.html
	Greater Dandenong City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Dandenongrr.html
	Kingston City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Kingstonrr.html
26 June 2019	Banyule City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Banyulerr.html
	Darebin City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Darebinrr.html
	Manningham City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Manninghamrr.html
3 July 2019	Maroondah City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Maroondahrr.html
	Murrindindi Shire Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Murrindindirr.html
	Whitehorse City Council	vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Whitehorserr.html

Types of submissions

Any person or group, including a council itself, can make a submission to the VEC.

Submissions must be written and can include a map. The VEC accepts submissions at two stages of the review process:

Stage one: preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions should address the number of councillors and the electoral structure of the local council.

Mapping submissions using Boundary Builder

The online submission form on the VEC website also includes a mapping tool called *Boundary Builder* during the preliminary stage. Using the tool, people can create and test their preferred electoral structures and boundaries for the local council with calculations based on current voter numbers. The map created with this tool can be included as part of an online submission.

Stage two: response submissions

Response submissions must address the options proposed by the VEC in the preliminary report. Generally, other electoral structures will not be considered at this stage.

Examples of public submissions made in previous reviews can be found in Annex 2 of this guide. However, it is important to note that your submission can be in any format and address any of the relevant issues in the proposed options.

Public hearing

People who make a response submission can also request to speak at a public hearing in support of their submission.

The public hearing is an opportunity for those who have requested to speak to expand on their views. Each speaker is given 10 minutes to address a panel normally comprising of three VEC staff. The panel usually includes a project officer, an external consultant and either the Electoral Commissioner or Deputy Electoral Commissioner. The panel can ask questions, seek clarification and gather further information from the speakers.

Anyone can attend the public hearing, but only those who have requested to speak in their response submission can speak. Participation in the public hearing is encouraged. The VEC can make special arrangements where necessary to assist people to take part in the public hearing. Requests will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The hearing will not be held if there are no requests to speak.

How to make a submission

All submissions, including those sent by post, must be received at the VEC by 5.00 pm on the day of the submission deadline.

Submission methods

Submissions can be made via:



the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au
direct links are available on page 4 of this guide
during the preliminary stage, the *Boundary Builder* tool is also available online



email
refer to the council fact sheet for the council specific email address



post to:
Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Required information

For your submission to be considered you must include your:

- full name
- postal or residential address.

All submissions will be published on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au and made available for public inspection at the VEC office (Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne). The VEC will remove personal information such as address, contact details, and signature from all public copies. However, the full name and locality of submitters will be published.

Submission Checklist

A submission checklist is included on page 15 of this submission guide and on each council fact sheet.

Issues to consider in your submission

Your submission may address one or both of the following:

- the number of councillors (between five and 12)
- the electoral structure of the council (subdivided or unsubdivided).

You may make a submission in support of the current number of councillors and/or electoral structure or in support of a different number of councillors and/or electoral structure. It is important that your submission provides reasons for your preferences.

This section provides an overview of issues for you to consider before making your submission.

Number of councillors

When making a submission about the number of councillors, there are three important guidelines that you need to keep in mind. These are:

1. The number of councillors must be between five and 12.

The Act prescribes that a local council must have between five and 12 councillors.

2. A consistent, State-wide approach must be taken to the total number of councillors.

As the number of voters in each local council varies significantly, and as populations change over time, the VEC is guided by its comparisons with local councils of a similar size and category (Metropolitan Melbourne; Interface; Regional Centres; and Country Victoria). Local councils that have a larger number of voters generally have a higher number of councillors. Please see the tables in Appendix 1 for information used for this comparison on each local council in Victoria.

The VEC also considers any special circumstances that may warrant the local council having more or fewer councillors than similar local councils. These might include:

- the nature and complexity of services provided by the Council
- geographic size and topography
- population growth or decline
- the social diversity of the local council, including:
 - cultural and linguistic diversity
 - socio-economic disparities
 - the number of non-residents
 - the number of communities of interest (see 'Communities of interest').

3. The number of voters represented by each councillor must be fair and equitable across the local council.

If the local council is divided into wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor **must be** within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor across the local council. This is required by the Act and ensures the principle of 'one vote, one value'.

EXAMPLE 1:

A subdivided local council has 100,000 people eligible to vote and a total of 10 councillors. The ward boundaries for this local council should be structured to ensure that each councillor represents the equivalent number of voters, approximately 10,000 (plus-or-minus 10%).

EXAMPLE 2:

A local council is subdivided into two wards, with 21,000 people eligible to vote and a total of seven councillors. Ward A has a voting population of 12,000 and Ward B has a voting population of 9,000. On this basis, Ward A should have four councillors, and Ward B should have three councillors. Each councillor then represents the equivalent number of voters (3,000).

The VEC also takes into account likely population changes to ensure ward boundaries provide equitable representation until the next review (reviews take place approximately every 12 years).

The population forecast for each local council under review is provided in the council fact sheet on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au. Direct links are available on page 4 of this guide.

Electoral structure of the local council

Your submission may also address the electoral structure of the local council, which can be:

- **unsubdivided**, with all councillors elected 'at large' by all the voters in the local council, or
- **subdivided into wards**, with one or more councillors elected by the voters in each ward.

If the local council is subdivided, your submission may also address:

- the number of wards
- where the ward boundaries should be placed
- the name of each ward
- how many councillors should be elected for each ward.

This section provides information about the potential advantages and disadvantages of each electoral structure as the VEC has heard from communities through these reviews.

Unsubdivided councils

Potential advantages

Promotes the concept of a council-wide focus with councillors being elected by, and concerned for, the local council as a whole, rather than parochial interests.

Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns.

Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election.

Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries.

If a councillor resigns or is unable to complete their term, a replacement councillor is elected through a countback system, negating the need for a by-election.

Potential disadvantages

May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented.

May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors.

Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters.

May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents in parts of the local council.

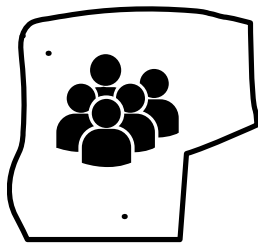
May be difficult for voters to assess the performance of individual councillors.

If only a few candidates contest the general election, the countback system may elect a candidate who only polled a small percentage of the vote.

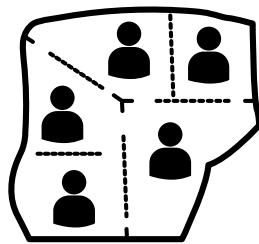
Subdivided councils

There are three ways to divide a council into wards:

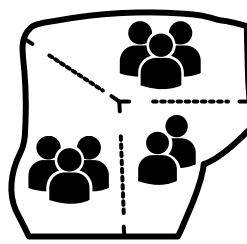
- single-councillor wards with one councillor representing each ward
- multi-councillor wards with several councillors representing each ward
- combinations of the two.



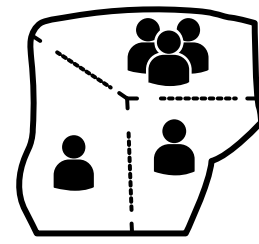
Unsubdivided



Single-councillor



Multi-councillor



Combination

Single-councillor wards

Potential advantages

Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives, easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues.

Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented.

Potential disadvantages

Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a council-wide perspective.

Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest and may be difficult to define.

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 as a result of population growth or decline.

Where major groups support candidates in multiple wards, it is possible that one group can dominate the council.

Multi-councillor wards

Potential advantages

Can accommodate a large community of interest.

Focus on issues may be broader than in single-councillor wards (though councillors may have a more local focus than in an unsubdivided local council).

Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided local council. Electors have a choice of councillors.

Councillors may share workloads more effectively.

Ward boundaries should be easy to identify and less susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline than in single councillor wards.

Potential disadvantages

Groups may form within the council leading to possible division between councillors.

Very specific local issues may not be addressed.

In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward.

Duplication may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads.

A combination of multi-councillor and single-councillor wards

Potential advantages

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 local council, and allows small communities to be separately represented.

Clear ward boundaries are more likely.

Potential disadvantages

Electors in single-councillor wards may feel under-represented because they only have one councillor, leading to a perception of unfairness.

Different vote counting systems within the same local council may seem inconsistent.

Different quotas would be required to elect councillors in multi-councillor and single-councillor wards, leading to a perception of inequality.

Electoral structures and vote counting

According to law, the structure of the council determines the vote counting system. You may wish to consider the impact of these counting systems in making your submission.

In single-councillor wards, the preferential system applies, which means a candidate must achieve an absolute majority (50% plus one) of the formal votes to be elected, otherwise the outcome will be determined based on preferences.

In multi-councillor wards or in unsubdivided local councils, proportional representation applies, and candidates are elected in proportion to their support within the electorate. The required quota of votes is reached by dividing the total number of formal votes by the number of vacancies plus one. Therefore, unlike the preferential vote counting system where only the candidate with the majority of votes is elected, other candidates representing groups or issues that have significant minority support may also be elected.

EXAMPLE:

An unsubdivided local council has seven councillor positions and therefore uses proportional representation. In this local council, any candidate achieving greater than 12.5% of the vote will be elected.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au/Elections/CountingTheVotes.html for more detailed information on the preferential and proportional counting systems.

Communities of interest

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’ that identify themselves based on a limited number of issues.

Communities of interest may occur where people are linked to each other geographically (for example, a town or valley) or economically (for example, people working in similar or mutually-dependent industries). Communities of interest may also appear where people share a number of special needs because of similar circumstances, such as newly arrived migrants (who may not have strong English language skills and require assistance with housing and finding employment); particular language or cultural groups; retirees; families or job seekers.

Communities of interest are an important consideration in electoral representation reviews as they have particular needs from their local council. It is important that communities of interest have the opportunity to be fairly represented by their council. There are a number of ways to take account of communities of interest, depending on how they are distributed geographically.

If a community of interest...	Then fair representation may be achieved by:
is in the same geographic area (for example, a town)	creating a ward with boundaries reflecting that community of interest.
is widespread across the local council (for example, job seekers)	creating multi-councillor wards with proportional representation.
is one of a number of small communities of interest	combining the communities of interest via an unsubdivided structure, so that any elected councillor would be responsible to all of these groups.

Ward boundaries

Ward boundaries must ensure that the statutory equality requirement is met. This means the number of voters represented by each councillor **must be plus-or-minus 10%** of the average number of voters per councillor across the local council.

Because representation reviews are scheduled approximately every 12 years, population growth areas often need to be spread across a number of wards to ensure that the voter-councillor ratios remain acceptable during this time. Fewer wards mean a larger average number of voters per ward and a greater tolerance to population changes.

Boundaries should always take into account communities of interest and follow clear lines (major roads, rivers, significant landmarks and existing locality boundaries) where possible.

If you make a preliminary submission online, you can use the *Boundary Builder* tool to build your preferred ward boundaries. The tool uses current voter numbers to calculate the deviations from the average number of voters per councillor of each of the wards you make. This means you can make sure your proposed electoral structure meets the requirements of the Act.

Ward names

Ward names are not the focus of the representation review, but they can play an important role in identifying and relating to wards in a subdivided electoral structure.

The VEC welcomes suggestions for ward names. The names must be relevant and specific to the ward to avoid any possible confusion with other wards. Some popular approaches include using:

- place names
- compass directions
- historic buildings
- natural features present in the ward
- names of pioneers and former prominent citizens
- Aboriginal names
- native flora or fauna.

If the community prefers alternative ward names to the current or new names suggested by the VEC, the Act allows ward names to be altered by an Order in Council.

Submission checklist

Use this checklist to help make your submission:



Required Information	Have you included your full name and address?	
	Do you understand that your submission will be made public, including your full name and locality?	
Preliminary Submissions	<i>If you are making a submission about the number of councillors (see page 7)</i>	
	Does your submission suggest a number of councillors between five and 12?	
	If the number of councillors you have suggested varies significantly from numbers in similar local councils, have you explained why?	
	<i>If you are making a submission about the electoral structure (see page 9)</i>	
	Have you indicated whether you want the local council to be subdivided or unsubdivided?	
	Have you explained why your preferred structure would best suit the local council?	
	<i>If you think that the local council should be subdivided into wards (see page 10)</i>	
	Have you indicated whether you want single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards or a combination of both?	
	Have you indicated where the ward boundaries should be located and provided reasons for these proposed boundaries?	
	Have you considered the number of voters in the proposed wards?	
If you have suggested ward names, have you given reasons for those names?		
Response Submission	Does your submission address the options recommended in the preliminary report?	
	Have you indicated whether or not you would like to speak about your submission at the public hearing?	

Appendix 1: Electoral structures of all Victorian councils

The tables below are sorted by current estimates of voters in descending order for each category (Metropolitan Melbourne; Interface; Regional Centres; and Country Victoria).

Metropolitan Melbourne

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Brimbank City	123	194,319	127,517	135,931	11	12,357	1 two-councillor ward 3 three-councillor wards
Boroondara City *	60	167,231	125,742	133,357	10	13,335	10 single-councillor wards
Moreland City	51	162,558	109,744	132,790	11	12,071	1 three-councillor ward 2 four-councillor wards
Monash City	81	182,618	120,779	123,695	11	11,245	1 two-councillor ward 3 three-councillor wards
Kingston City *	91	151,389	105,316	122,333	9	13,592	3 three-councillor wards
Melbourne City	36	135,959	104,929	119,595	9 [^]	13,288	Unsubdivided
Knox City	114	154,110	116,335	118,678	9	13,186	9 single-councillor wards
Whitehorse City *	64	162,078	111,384	117,705	10	11,770	5 two-councillor wards
Darebin City *	53	146,719	96,334	117,261	9	13,029	3 three-councillor wards
Frankston City	131	134,143	95,979	109,662	9	12,184	3 three-councillor wards

* The local council is undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2019–20.

[^] Councillors other than the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor.

Metropolitan Melbourne continued

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Glen Eira City	38	140,875	97,582	106,440	9	11,826	3 three-councillor wards
Greater Dandenong City *	130	152,050	93,970	101,846	11	9,258	1 two-councillor ward 3 three-councillor wards
Banyule City *	63	121,865	90,094	99,158	7	14,165	7 single-councillor wards
Moonee Valley City	44	116,671	88,394	94,682	9	10,520	3 three-councillor wards
Stonnington City	25	103,832	77,494	93,754	9	10,417	3 three-councillor wards
Port Phillip City	20	100,863	85,439	93,106	9	10,345	3 three-councillor wards
Manningham City *	114	116,255	85,748	89,624	9	9,958	3 three-councillor wards
Maroondah City *	61	110,376	77,739	87,817	9	9,757	3 three-councillor wards
Yarra City	20	86,657	65,512	81,669	9	9,074	3 three-councillor wards
Bayside City *	36	97,087	67,702	78,937	7	11,277	2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward
Hobsons Bay City	65	88,778	63,363	69,683	7	9,954	2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward
Maribyrnong City	31	82,288	52,543	65,202	7	9,314	2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward

* The local council is undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2019–20.

Interface

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Casey City *	407	299,301	165,057	212,291	11	19,299	1 single-councillor ward 5 two-councillor wards
Mornington Peninsula Shire	723	154,999	153,332	161,497	11	14,681	3 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward 2 three-councillor wards
Wyndham City	541	217,122	104,278	151,786	11	13,798	1 three-councillor ward 2 four-councillor wards
Whittlesea City *	489	197,491	110,011	148,487	11	13,498	1 three-councillor ward 2 four-councillor wards
Hume City	503	197,376	112,157	144,959	11	13,178	1 three-councillor ward 2 four-councillor wards
Yarra Ranges Shire	2,447	149,537	113,596	118,812	9	13,201	9 single-councillor wards
Melton Shire	527	135,443	85,682	99,690	9	11,076	1 two-councillor ward 1 three-councillor ward 1 four-councillor ward
Cardinia Shire *	1,281	94,128	53,794	77,196	9	8,577	1 two-councillor ward 1 three-councillor ward 1 four-councillor ward
Nillumbik Shire *	435	61,273	45,659	48,969	7	6,995	7 single-councillor wards
Mitchell Shire *	2,864	40,918	29,817	33,781	9	3,753	3 three-councillor wards

* The local council is undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2019–20.

Regional Centres

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Greater Geelong City	1,247	233,429	188,585	200,616	11	18,237	1 two-councillor ward 3 three-councillor wards
Greater Bendigo City	3,048	110,477	78,399	91,665	9	10,185	3 three-councillor wards
Ballarat City	740	101,686	77,625	84,783	9	9,420	3 three-councillor wards
Latrobe City	1,426	73,257	53,817	58,849	9	6,538	1 single-councillor ward 2 two-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Greater Shepparton City	2,422	63,837	44,701	46,359	9	5,151	Unsubdivided
Mildura Rural City	22,330	53,878	39,443	41,305	9	4,589	Unsubdivided
Wodonga City	433	39,351	29,002	32,230	7	4,604	Unsubdivided
Warrnambool City	120	33,655	26,116	27,497	7	3,928	Unsubdivided
Wangaratta Rural City	3,639	28,310	22,094	23,168	7	3,309	3 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Horsham Rural City	4,249	19,642	16,048	16,454	7	2,350	Unsubdivided
Benalla Rural City *	2,375	13,861	10,934	12,131	7	1,733	Unsubdivided
Ararat Rural City *	4,230	11,600	9,141	9,311	7	1,330	Unsubdivided

* The local council is undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2019–20.

Country Victoria

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Bass Coast Shire	864	32,804	42,592	46,280	9	5,142	3 three-councillor wards
Wellington Shire	10,989	42,983	42,355	43,171	9	4,796	3 three-councillor wards
East Gippsland Shire *	20,931	45,040	38,318	43,123	9	4,791	Unsubdivided
Baw Baw Shire	4,031	48,479	37,654	42,184	9	4,687	3 three-councillor wards
Macedon Ranges Shire	1,747	46,100	33,175	38,413	9	4,268	3 three-councillor wards
Surf Coast Shire	1,560	29,397	29,535	34,547	9	3,838	1 single-councillor ward 2 two-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Campaspe Shire *	4,519	37,061	28,118	31,345	9	3,482	3 single-councillor wards 2 three-councillor wards
South Gippsland Shire	3,305	28,703	27,654	29,505	9	3,278	3 three-councillor wards
Moorabool Shire	2,110	31,818	21,487	27,856	7	3,979	3 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Moira Shire *	4,045	29,112	22,307	25,086	9	2,787	Unsubdivided
Colac Otway Shire *	3,433	20,972	19,198	20,750	7	2,964	Unsubdivided
Golden Plains Shire *	2,704	21,688	14,228	18,567	7	2,652	Unsubdivided
Glenelg Shire *	6,212	19,557	16,333	17,570	7	2,510	Unsubdivided
Mount Alexander Shire	1,529	18,761	15,411	16,826	7	2,403	4 single-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward

* The local council is undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2019–20.

Country Victoria continued

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Hepburn Shire *	1,470	15,330	13,649	15,727	7	2,246	3 single-councillor wards 2 two-councillor wards
Swan Hill Rural City *	6,117	20,584	14,386	14,915	7	2,130	3 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Murrindindi Shire *	3,889	13,732	13,727	14,685	7	2,097	7 single-councillor wards
Moyne Shire *	5,478	16,495	12,420	14,424	7	2,060	Unsubdivided
Indigo Shire	2,044	15,952	12,920	13,725	7	1,960	Unsubdivided
Corangamite Shire	4,407	16,051	13,397	13,584	7	1,940	4 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Southern Grampians Shire *	6,652	15,944	13,151	13,436	7	1,919	Unsubdivided
Alpine Shire	4,787	12,337	11,562	11,929	7	1,704	Unsubdivided
Central Goldfields Shire	1,534	12,995	11,017	11,446	7	1,635	3 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward
Northern Grampians Shire *	5,918	11,439	10,540	10,882	7	1,554	2 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward 1 three-councillor ward
Strathbogie Shire	3,302	10,274	9,268	10,182	7	1,454	3 single-councillor wards 2 two-councillor wards
Mansfield Shire *	3,843	8,584	9,429	10,014	5	2,002	3 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward

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Country Victoria continued

Local Council	Area (km2)	Population (2016 Census)	Number of voters at last review	Current estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral Structure
Gannawarra Shire	3,732	10,549	9,031	9,044	7	1,292	2 single-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward 1 four-councillor ward
Loddon Shire	6,694	7,516	7,669	7,651	5	1,530	5 single-councillor wards
Pyrenees Shire	3,433	7,238	7,145	7,497	5	1,499	5 single-councillor wards
Yarriambiack Shire	7,158	6,674	6,094	6,024	7	860	2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward
Buloke Shire *	8,004	6,201	6,149	5,807	7	829	2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward
Towong Shire	6,673	5,985	5,512	5,525	5	1,105	Unsubdivided
Hindmarsh Shire	7,527	5,721	5,040	4,913	6	818	3 two-councillor wards
Queenscliffe Borough *	11	2,853	4,245	4,400	5	880	Unsubdivided
West Wimmera Shire	9,107	3,903	3,890	3,824	5	764	Unsubdivided

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Appendix 2: Sample submissions

Any person or group can make a submission to the VEC. There are many matters to be considered when determining the electoral structure of a local council and you might like to take all issues into account or just focus on one issue.

The sample submissions below should be considered as examples only to assist you in preparing your own submission. Submissions discussing or proposing ward boundaries can include maps or diagrams, but this is not required. Make sure your submission is limited to the scope of the review and includes reasons for your preferences.

Stage one: preliminary submission samples

Sample 1

The current number of councillors is appropriate for the local council under review, and is sufficient to provide fair and equitable representation for locals. The number of councillors is consistent with comparable regional local councils, and there are no major forecasts in population growth or increased communities of interest that would justify more councillors.

In terms of electoral structure, I strongly support the continuation of the unsubdivided structure. In 2004, before the Council was unsubdivided, there were seven single-member wards. One of the key issues with this structure was a tendency toward there not being a whole-of-Shire development agenda. Having five councillors who look after the needs of the entire Shire has greatly improved strategic planning and development for all areas of the Shire.

Sample 2

The council currently has five councillors, which is not enough to serve the current population—increasing to seven councillors would be more representative. Similarly, an electoral structure that includes multi-wards or is unsubdivided would allow for greater representation for the public. The current structure comprises five single-councillor wards. My experience has been that when a councillor is overworked or not interested in an issue, going to a councillor outside the ward is the only option.

Stage two: response submission samples

Sample 1

I support the preferred option outlined in the preliminary report that recommends increasing the number of councillors from seven to nine, and changes the electoral structure to include three wards, each with three councillors. This electoral structure reflects the growing population of the council area, and the three wards will ensure that all voters are fairly represented in the electorate. I don't wish to propose ward name changes. I don't wish to speak at the public hearing.

Sample 2

I do not agree with the preferred option outlined in the preliminary report, which recommends creating two two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward—rather than the current seven single-councillor wards. I believe this does not accurately reflect the communities of interest in the council area, which are determined largely by location. Each ward represents a unique part of the council area and voters know which councillor to go to. I believe this would be lost under the proposed structure. I would like to speak at the public hearing in support of my submission.

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