

FINAL REPORT
Electoral Representation Review
for the
Greater Shepparton City Council



4 October 2004

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1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is required under the legislation for the electoral representation review to make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the voters of Greater Shepparton City (s.219D *Local Government Act 1989*).

The VEC recommends that Greater Shepparton City consist of seven councillors to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

This recommended structure is indicated in the map on the back page of this report.

2 Background

2.1 Legislative basis

The *Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003*, which amended the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), was passed by the Parliament in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. In accordance with this new legislation, the Greater Shepparton City Council received notice pursuant to s.219C of the Act from the Minister for Local Government that an electoral representation review was to be conducted for Greater Shepparton City. The notice appeared in the *Victoria Government Gazette* on 13 May 2004.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. On 10 June 2004, Greater Shepparton City Council appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

The purpose of an electoral representation review is to recommend an electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council. Matters to be considered by the review are:

- a) the number of councillors;
- b) 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
- c) if the recommendation is for the municipality to be divided into wards, boundaries for the wards that will:
 - i. provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
 - ii. 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.

2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews

The VEC has ten years' experience in working on municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils to prepare options for their consideration. VEC staff have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has used sophisticated mapping software, conducted field research and

has developed expertise in preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with legislative approximate equality requirements and respect communities of interest.

The VEC has engaged Mr Terry Maher to provide expertise in the field of local government in undertaking this review.

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. More recently, 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.

2.3 Municipality profile

Greater Shepparton City was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of the City of Shepparton, the Shire of Shepparton and parts of the shires of Rodney, Euroa, Goulburn, Tungamah, Violet Town and Waranga. It includes the urban area of Shepparton and the towns of Mooroopna and Tatura.

At the 2001 Census, the population of the municipality was distributed in the following way:

Shepparton	52.4%	Arcadia Downs	0.5%
Mooroopna	12.5%	Tallygaroopna	0.5%
Tatura	5.3%	Dookie	0.5%
Murchison	1.2%	Kialla West	0.3%
Merrigum	0.8%	Rural balance	25.9%

Agriculture, food-processing and associated industries account for much of the employment in Greater Shepparton. The road transport industry is also important. Unemployment levels are similar to those of regional Victoria as a whole. Home ownership levels in Greater Shepparton are below the average for regional Victoria.

The population of Greater Shepparton is culturally diverse, with over 7% of the population born in non-English speaking countries.

As is the case in many large regional cities, there is a substantially higher proportion of 18-34 year olds than in shires without cities, such as Strathbogie or Moira.

Between 2004 and 2012, population growth is expected to be greater than regional cities as a whole, and the age structure of the population is expected to change as in regional Victoria in general, with people over 45 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

(Sources: Department of Infrastructure: *Victoria in Future*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Regional Victoria in Fact 2001*; Greater Shepparton Regional Guide; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Towns in Time*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Know Your Area*).

2.4 Current electoral structure

Greater Shepparton City is currently represented by seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

3 Electoral representation review process

Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989* specifies that the purpose of an electoral representation review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.” To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

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.

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- the VEC’s experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- the VEC’s expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, and also considering other factors, such as the best possible representation for the various communities of interest in the municipality under review.

In considering public submissions, the VEC values the local knowledge and local perspectives that are presented. The VEC believes it important to consider the issues and information presented in submissions, as well as the arguments for particular structural

models. In reaching its recommendations, the VEC seeks to combine the information gathered through public submissions with its own research in order to achieve what it considers to be a fair and equitable result until the next review period. The VEC does not make its recommendations based on a “straw poll” of the number of submissions supporting a particular option.

Further details about issues considered by the VEC can be found in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of this report and in the Guide for Submissions (Appendix 9.3).

4 Public involvement

4.1 Public information

The VEC informed the community about the electoral representation review through:

- advertising in newspapers;
- conducting an information session at Shepparton on 13 July 2004, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the Greater Shepparton community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- developing and issuing an information leaflet for voters in Greater Shepparton;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a help line for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions;
- releasing a Preliminary Report on 17 August 2004 and making the Report available at the Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- publishing all submissions in response to the Preliminary Report on the VEC website; and
- conducting a public hearing at Shepparton on 14 September 2004.

4.2 Advertising

In accordance with s.219F(4) of the Act, the VEC published the following advertisements for the electoral representation review:

- a public notice of the review, detailing the process, appeared in the *Shepparton News* and the *Tatura Guardian* on 29 June and in *The Shepparton Adviser* on 30 June 2004;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the Greater Shepparton review, appeared in the *Melbourne Herald Sun* on 30 June 2004; and
- a notice of the Preliminary Report appeared in the *Shepparton News* and the *Tatura Guardian* on 17 August and in *The Shepparton Adviser* on 18 August 2004.

See Appendix 9.1.

4.3 Media releases

Media releases designed to supplement the paid advertising were distributed to the *Shepparton News*, the *Tatura Guardian* and *The Shepparton Adviser* on 25 June and 17 August 2004. See Appendix 9.2.

4.4 Information leaflet

The VEC distributed an information leaflet to all voters from 28 June 2004. See Appendix 9.3.

4.5 VEC website

The VEC used its website to deliver information and to provide transparency in the review process. All preliminary submissions and submissions in response to the Preliminary Report were posted to the website to facilitate public access to this information. The VEC website can be viewed at www.vec.vic.gov.au

4.6 Helpline

The VEC established a helpline to assist with public enquiries concerning the electoral representation review process.

4.7 Guide for Submissions

The VEC developed and distributed its Guide for Submissions to help those persons interested in making submissions. A copy of the Guide is attached. See Appendix 9.4.

5 Preliminary Report

In accordance with s.219F(6) of the Act, the VEC produced a Preliminary Report containing its proposed options for Greater Shepparton City. In developing these proposed options, the VEC considered preliminary submissions made by various persons and groups, as well as various other relevant factors.

5.1 Preliminary submissions

By the closing time for submissions (26 July 2004 - 5.00 pm), the VEC had received 23 preliminary submissions.

A diversity of views was expressed regarding the number of councillors. Support ranged from a total of 7 to 9 councillors (the Act states that a council must consist of between 5 and 12 councillors). Seven was the most favoured number. Opinion also varied regarding options for the electoral structure and voting system. Some submissions favoured the municipality remaining unsubdivided. Other submissions preferred subdivision, with a variety of different configurations suggested, including single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards and a mixture of both.

See Appendix 9.5 for details of those persons and groups making preliminary submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

5.2 VEC research

In addition to information provided in submissions, the VEC conducted its own research. The VEC conducted research into the demographics of the municipality, using a number of data sources including the 2001 Census. The VEC also took into

account changes predicted by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Infrastructure. Summaries of some of this research were published in the Guide for Submissions, the Preliminary Report and in Section 2.3 of this report.

Development projections based on information presented by the Council were also taken into consideration. Extensive field work was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC. In addition, the VEC examined the considerations of Greater Shepparton City's Commissioners when they recommended the current structure in 1996.

5.3 Recommended options

Having considered the issues outlined in the preliminary submissions and all other relevant factors, the VEC proposed two options in its Preliminary Report for public comment.

The VEC's preferred option was:

- **That Greater Shepparton City consist of seven councillors to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.**

The VEC's alternative option was:

- That Greater Shepparton City consist of seven councillors to be elected from one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards.

Detailed maps of these two options, showing recommended ward boundaries, were included in the Preliminary Report.

6 Response submissions

In accordance with s.219F(7) of the Act, the VEC invited written submissions in response to the Preliminary Report.

By the close of submissions, 8 September 2004 – 5.00 pm, the VEC had received fifteen response submissions.

Twelve submissions supported the preferred option, two submissions supported the alternative option and one supported a variation on the alternative option. There were no disagreements about the proposed number of councillors.

Submissions in favour of the preferred option argued that an unsubdivided structure has worked well since its introduction in 1997. They suggested that it has created a unified outlook. They argued that this is particularly important in Greater Shepparton, where the municipality is one community of interest and the urban area of Shepparton is a focus for the entire municipality. They also argued that an unsubdivided structure has successfully represented the municipality's diversity and enabled the council to look after communities of interest and the municipality as a whole. Various other advantages of an unsubdivided structure that are not specific to Greater Shepparton were also cited.

Submissions also favoured the preferred option because they felt that the alternative option could have negative consequences for the municipality. It was argued that the alternative option would activate old rivalries between the areas east and west of the Goulburn River and that it would lead to an urban versus rural conflict. Moreover, it was suggested that the urban councillors would always have a majority over the rural councillors, resulting in a bias towards the urban communities. It was also put to the VEC

that the proposed rural wards were too large to effectively capture communities of interest.

Those submissions preferring the alternative model did so because it would guarantee a spread of representation. One submission also suggested that it would act as a check on councillors voting in a block, would encourage the council to be more open to the public and may help to provide an Aboriginal councillor.

One submission proposed that the alternative option be altered so that there be one fewer councillor in the urban Shepparton Ward and one extra councillor in the North West Ward (the Mooroopna-Undera area). The VEC notes the legislative requirement that each councillor *cannot* represent more than $\pm 10\%$ of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality. This requirement means that this suggested variation would not be possible – there are too few voters in the North West Ward to support two councillors and too many voters in the urban area to be represented by only three councillors.

See Appendix 9.5 for details of those persons and groups making response submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

7 Public hearing

A public hearing was held at the Eastbank Centre, Shepparton, on 14 September 2004 at 6.30 pm. All persons and groups who had made submissions in response to the VEC's Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions, and three chose to do so. Members of the public were invited to attend. All three presenters spoke in favour of the VEC's preferred option. Presentations emphasised the importance of a "whole of municipality" approach and the effectiveness of a council of seven. They also suggested that subdivision could lead to tensions between different parts of the municipality and that the rural wards proposed in the VEC's alternative option each capture a number of unrelated communities of interest. In contrast, it was argued, all parts of Greater Shepparton have interests in common with the urban area, making an unsubdivided structure particularly appropriate in this case.

8 Findings and recommendation

The Act states that the purpose of the review is to consider two matters. The first matter is the number of councillors for the municipality and the second matter is the electoral structure of the municipality.

8.1 Number of councillors

Issues considered by the VEC

The legislation provides that a council must consist of between 5 and 12 councillors (s.5B(1)). It does not, however, prescribe the matters to be considered by the reviewer in recommending the number of councillors for a municipality.

The VEC has therefore been required to identify the appropriate matters to take into account when considering the number of councillors.

In terms of voter numbers, Victorian municipalities vary from 4,077 to 160,368. The VEC applies the legislative provisions relating to numbers of councillors in a logical way, with those councils that have the largest number of voters having the most councillors, and those councils that have the least number of voters having the fewest councillors.

In most cases, the electoral structure and the number of councillors were established by the Commissioners when local government was restructured between 1993 and 1995. Commissioners did not have the benefit of a State-wide reference when considering the appropriate number of councillors for their respective municipalities. The result was a degree of disparity in councillor numbers for similar types of municipalities. The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and the councillor to voter ratio. The table differentiates between rural, regional and metropolitan councils in recognition of the different circumstances and needs between these categories of councils. The table has been a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors and was made available to the public in the Guide for Submissions. The information has enabled the VEC to compare a council being reviewed with councils with similar voter numbers and areas.

The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is anticipated to increase or decline in the period between reviews (eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment have been used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a council to have more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case. Public submissions provide valuable information regarding any such issues or circumstances.

The VEC's findings

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC found seven to be the appropriate number of councillors. The VEC noted that a number of other large regional and rural cities have similar numbers of voters per councillor. The VEC formed the opinion that seven councillors is sufficient to represent the diversity of the Greater Shepparton community.

As previously stated, no submission in response to the Preliminary Report objected to Greater Shepparton having seven councillors. The VEC has formed the view that seven elected representatives will be sufficient to represent Greater Shepparton in a fair and equitable manner for the next eight year period.

8.2 Electoral structure

Issues considered by the VEC

Provisions within the Act allow for a municipality to be unsubdivided, with all councillors elected "at large" by all voters, or for a municipality to be subdivided into a number of wards. If wards have only one councillor, councillors are elected using preferential voting. Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers the same way.

If the municipality is subdivided into wards, there are three options available:

-
- single-councillor wards;
 - multi-councillor wards; and
 - a combination of both single-councillor and multi-councillor wards.

Boundaries for wards must:

- 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 per councillor for the municipality.

In addition to the legislative requirements, a number of other factors were considered when evaluating subdivided structures. These factors included:

- communities of interest (Communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns. They may occur where people are linked with each other geographically, economically or through having particular needs.);
- spreading developing areas over a number of wards;
- using logical boundaries such as main roads, physical features and existing boundaries for easy identification of wards; and
- taking account of likely population changes.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance between these criteria.

The VEC's findings

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC put forward a preferred option for Greater Shepparton City of seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided municipality. The VEC also presented an alternative option involving seven councillors elected from one four-councillor urban ward and three single-councillor rural wards.

Unsubdivided electoral structure

The VEC proposed an unsubdivided structure as its preferred option because it believed that the geographic and demographic particulars of Greater Shepparton are best served by an unsubdivided structure. When the Commissioners recommended that Greater Shepparton be unsubdivided in 1996, some of the key issues on which their recommendation were based included:

- encouraging councillors to think on the municipal scale rather than parochially;
- ensuring that sparsely populated rural areas are represented by being the responsibility and concern of all councillors;
- avoiding a division between the east and west of the municipality; and
- making all councillors responsible for the municipality's diversity.

The VEC is of the opinion that these issues still apply to Greater Shepparton. This view was confirmed in the submission process.

The VEC also considers an unsubdivided structure to be particularly appropriate to Greater Shepparton for two main reasons. Firstly, an unsubdivided municipality allows for both geographic and non-geographic communities of interest to be represented. The VEC considers this particularly appropriate given the diversity in Greater

Shepparton. Secondly, Greater Shepparton is a relatively compact municipality, with a high level of inter-dependence across the entire municipality. An unsubdivided structure would enable all voters to vote for all candidates, which is thought to be particularly important when there is such inter-dependence.

A number of submissions favoured this model for these and other reasons, as outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of this Report.

A major reason for submissions preferring a subdivided municipality was to ensure a spread of representation on the council. The VEC believes that this is likely to occur, if voters want it to, under proportion representation in an unsubdivided municipality. Proportional representation will apply from the next election in unsubdivided municipalities. It has some important differences to the exhaustive preferential system, which operated in previous Council elections in unsubdivided municipalities. Some of the key differences between proportional representation and the exhaustive preferential system are summarised in this table:

Exhaustive Preferential	Proportional Representation:
Candidates with 49% of the primary vote (or less) may end up not being elected if preferences do not flow their way.	Any candidate receiving more than 12.5*% of the primary vote will automatically be elected.
Second and subsequent preferences are passed on to other candidates at full value, even if one's first preference candidate is elected.	Second and subsequent preferences are passed on at a reduced value if one's first preference candidate is elected.

* in an unsubdivided municipality with a total of seven councillors

The VEC is of the understanding that proportional representation should return candidates that are more representative of voters' choices. The VEC considers that proportional representation should enable a geographic spread of candidates if sufficient numbers of voters desire it.

In light of the above discussion, the VEC considers that an unsubdivided structure will best suit Greater Shepparton City. The VEC is confident that an unsubdivided municipality with seven councillors will provide Greater Shepparton City voters with fair and equitable representation for at least the next eight years.

Subdivided electoral structure

The VEC proposed a subdivided ward structure as an alternative option. The high level of inter-dependence across the municipality means that the entire municipality can be considered to have one over-arching community of interest. At the same time, however, there are also a number of smaller communities of interest within the municipality. Most notably, there is an important divide between the urban and rural population. The VEC constructed the alternative option to reflect that situation as well as possible within the legislative requirements.

A number of concerns were raised about this option, as set out in Sections 6 and 7. In particular, the VEC agrees that this option:

- may entrench an uneven split between rural and urban voters; and

-
- would have to combine multiple communities of interest into single-member wards so that voter numbers met legislative requirements.

The latter point can be seen, for example, in the fact that the sparsely populated East Ward would have to include places as distinct as Tallygaroopna, Dookie and Kialla West.

The VEC considers these to be major disadvantages for this option.

The main benefit of a subdivided structure is that it ensures a spread of representation. However, the VEC believes that this is likely to occur in Greater Shepparton under proportional representation if voters choose it. Moreover, the VEC considers the benefits of an unsubdivided structure to outweigh this benefit of subdivision. Therefore, the VEC believes that a subdivided structure will not represent Greater Shepparton City as fairly and equitably as an unsubdivided structure.

8.3 Recommendation

Having considered submissions and all relevant factors, the VEC recommends that Greater Shepparton City consist of seven councillors to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

Doug Beecroft

Acting Electoral Commissioner

9 Appendices

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review

Electoral Representation Review Greater Shepparton City Council

The Minister for Local Government has given notice under section 219C of the *Local Government Act 1989* that there is to be an electoral representation review of the Greater Shepparton City Council. The Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the independent review.

What is the review about?

The aim of the review is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for the voters of Greater Shepparton. The VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether the City should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and
- if the City is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Information about the review is being delivered to residents and other voters.

What will the VEC consider?

The VEC will consider the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and evidence in public submissions will assist the review.

Any person or group may make a written submission to the VEC regarding electoral representation for Greater Shepparton. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions first.

Key Steps in the Review

Step 1 – Information session, 7.30 pm, Tuesday, 13 July 2004

Function Room 2, Eastbank Centre, 70 Welsford St, Shepparton

Step 2 – Preliminary submissions. Deadline: 5.00 pm, Monday, 26 July 2004

Step 3 – Preliminary Report, released Tuesday, 17 August 2004

Step 4 – Response submissions. Deadline: 5.00 pm, Wednesday 8 September 2004

Step 5 – Public hearing, 6.30 pm, Tuesday, 14 September 2004

Alex Rigg Meeting Room, Eastbank Centre, 70 Welsford St, Shepparton

Step 6 – Final Report, released Monday, 4 October 2004

The VEC will lodge a final report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government.

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission

Electoral Representation Reviews

The Minister for Local Government has given notice under section 219C of the *Local Government Act 1989* that there are to be electoral representation reviews of the following councils:

- Indigo Shire Council
- Towong Shire Council
- City of Wodonga Council
- Alpine Shire Council
- Greater Shepparton City Council
- Rural City of Wangaratta Council
- Strathbogie Shire Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council
- Frankston City Council

The councils have appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the reviews.

What are the reviews about?

The aim of the reviews is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for the voters of these municipalities. For each municipality, the VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and
- if the municipality is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. Under a single-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected using preferential voting. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers in the same way.

What will the VEC consider?

The VEC will consider the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and evidence in public submissions will assist the review.

Any person or group may make a written submission to the VEC regarding electoral representation for these municipalities. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions first.

Making a submission

Further information about making a submission can be found in the Guide for Submissions. Submissions can be made by mail, fax or email. Submissions must reach the VEC by 5.00 pm on the following dates:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| • Indigo Shire: | 19 July 2004 | • Strathbogie Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • Towong Shire: | 19 July 2004 | • Mitchell Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • City of Wodonga: | 19 July 2004 | • Macedon Ranges Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • Alpine Shire: | 26 July 2004 | • South Gippsland Shire: | 9 August 2004 |
| • Greater Shepparton City: | 26 July 2004 | • Wellington Shire: | 9 August 2004 |
| • Rural City of Wangaratta: | 26 July 2004 | • Frankston City: | 9 August 2004 |

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission

For release from Tuesday, 17 August 2004

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW: PRELIMINARY REPORT RELEASED

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) today released its Preliminary Report on electoral representation for Greater Shepparton City. The VEC's preferred option is to have seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided council. An alternative option of seven councillors elected from one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards is also presented for public comment.

The Report has been released and is available on the VEC's web site at www.vec.vic.gov.au. The Report is also available at the Greater Shepparton Council Offices, 90 Walsford Street, Shepparton, and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic., 3000.

People have until 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 8 September 2004 to lodge submissions with the VEC regarding its Preliminary Report.

People who wish to speak publicly in support of their submissions will have an opportunity to do so at a public hearing at the Alex Rigg Meeting Room, Eastbank Centre, 70 Walsford Street, Shepparton, on Tuesday, 14 September 2004 at 6.30 pm.

The VEC's Final Report and recommendations will be lodged with the Minister on Monday, 4 October 2004.

Any person who requires additional information can visit www.vec.vic.gov.au, contact the VEC on 13 18 32, or write to the VEC at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic., 3000.

– ENDS –

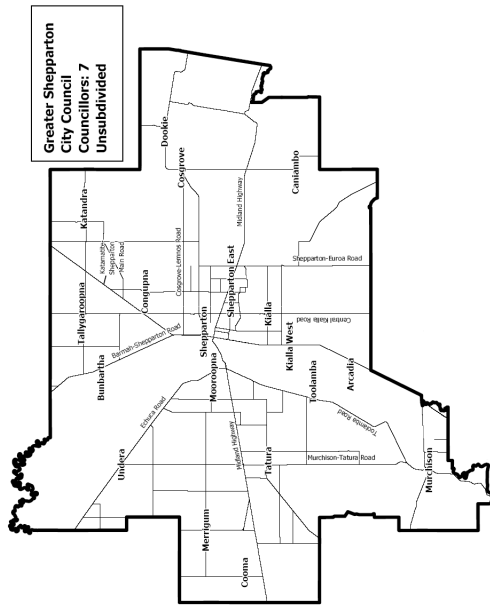
For further media information:

Chris Gribbin
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0737

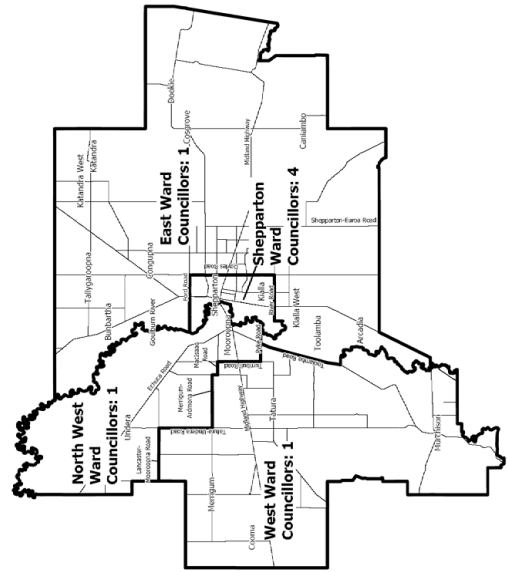
Media Fact Sheet

MAPS OF RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY

PREFERRED OPTION: SEVEN COUNCILLORS, UNSUBDIVIDED



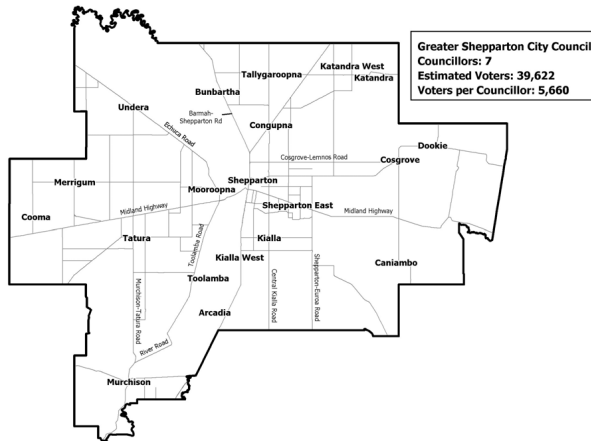
ALTERNATIVE OPTION: ONE FOUR-COUNCILLOR WARD AND THREE SINGLE-COUNCILLOR WARDS



9.3 Information leaflet

Current structure of Greater Shepparton

Greater Shepparton currently has seven councillors, elected from an unsubdivided municipality. Below is a map showing the City boundaries and the estimated number of voters as at 10 May 2004.



How to make a submission


Get the Guide for Submissions by telephoning the VEC on 13 18 32 or by checking our website at www.vec.vic.gov.au

Send your submissions to the VEC in one of the following ways:

- post to Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000; or
- email to greatershepparton.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- fax to 9629 9330.

Electoral Representation Review of Greater Shepparton City Council



Conducted by the
Victorian Electoral Commission 

Why is this review being undertaken?

The Minister for Local Government has given notice that there is to be an electoral representation review of Greater Shepparton. The Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the independent review. The VEC aims to ensure fair and equitable representation for voters in Greater Shepparton.

What will the review recommend?

The VEC will make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- the electoral structure of the City (whether it should be unsubdivided or divided into wards, how many wards there should be, and the number of councillors per ward); and
- the boundaries of the wards (if the City is to be divided into wards).

Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. Under a single-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected using preferential voting. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers the same way.

What will the VEC consider?

In conducting its review, the VEC will consider such factors as the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. The VEC will consider a range of information including arguments and evidence in public submissions.

Key steps in the review

Step 1 Information Session

Tuesday, 13 July 2004
Function Room 2,
Eastbank Centre,
70 Welsford St,
Shepparton – 7.30 pm

Anyone interested in making a submission should attend.

Step 4 Response Submissions

Deadline:
Wednesday, 8 September 2004

Any person or group may make a submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report.

Step 2 Preliminary Submissions

Deadline:
Monday, 26 July 2004

Any person or organisation may make a submission to the VEC. The VEC recommends consulting the Guide for Submissions.

Step 5 Public Hearing

Tuesday, 14 September 2004
Alex Rigg Meeting Room,
Eastbank Centre,
70 Welsford St,
Shepparton – 6.30 pm

People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

Step 3 Preliminary Report

Tuesday, 17 August 2004

The VEC will release a preliminary report containing its preferred option(s).

Step 6 Final Report

Monday, 4 October 2004

The VEC will lodge a final report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government. The Report will be publicly available.

Electoral representation review for Greater Shepparton City

Guide for Submissions



Conducted by the

Victorian Electoral Commission

Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000

Telephone: 13 18 32

Fax: 9629 9330

Email: greatershepparton.review@vec.vic.gov.au

Website: www.vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission 

CHECKLIST:

Before you send in your submission:

- Have you included your name, address and telephone contact number?
- Do you understand that your submission will be made public (see page 5)?
- Have you given reasons for the model(s) you are suggesting?

If you are making a **response submission** to the Preliminary Report:

- Have you restricted your discussion to the models proposed in the Preliminary Report?
- Have you indicated whether or not you would like to speak to the submission at the public hearing (see page 5)?

In writing your submission, you might like to consider the following questions (you do not need to answer every question in order to make a useful submission):

The number of councillors (see page 9):

- Have you suggested a number between 5 and 12 (as required by legislation)?
- If the voter to councillor ratio you have suggested varies substantially from the State-wide average for that type of municipality, have you explained why?

The electoral structures (see pages 11-15):

- Have you indicated whether you want the municipality to be subdivided or unsubdivided?
- Have you explained why your preferred structure would best suit your municipality?

If you think that the municipality should be **subdivided** into wards (see pages 12-15):

- Have you indicated whether you want single-member wards, multi-member wards or a combination of both?
- Have you suggested ward names and given reasons for those names (see page 16)?

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Background

What is an electoral representation review?

An electoral representation review examines the electoral structure of a local council. It considers:

- the number of councillors in a municipality;
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided; and
- if it should be subdivided, what the ward boundaries should be.

In addition, the review must make sure that, within each municipality, the number of voters represented by each councillor in each ward is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor. That way, each person's vote has the same value.

Another important element to these considerations is that, according to the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), wards with only one councillor must elect that councillor using preferential voting, and wards with two or more councillors must elect them via proportional representation. If a municipality is unsubdivided, then all of its councillors must be elected using proportional representation.

When do representation reviews take place, and who conducts them?

The Local Government Act specifies that:

- electoral representation reviews must be conducted before every second council election; and
- a council must appoint an Electoral Commission to undertake the review.

On completion of the review, the Electoral Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who then has the power to act on it.

This system of electoral representation reviews came into effect at the end of 2003 as a result of amendments to the Act. The first representation review for each municipality under this system takes place at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government by a notice in the *Victoria Government Gazette*.

On 13 May 2004, the Minister for Local Government gave notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act that an electoral representation review is to be conducted for Greater Shepparton. The Greater Shepparton City Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the review.

The VEC is an independent statutory authority and, in accordance with the Act, conducts reviews independently of both councils and the State government.

How did the current electoral structures come about, and on what were they based?

The electoral structures currently in place in municipalities across Victoria are diverse. This is because the present structures were determined individually for each municipality by the commissioners appointed during the restructures of the 1990s. The commissioners did not have any state-wide reference available to them when considering the appropriate number of councillors or the appropriate electoral structures for their municipalities. As a consequence, there are substantial differences between similar municipalities across Victoria. Subsequent to these reforms, councils have conducted their own electoral reviews.

The review process

Monday, 7 June 2004	the review begins	The VEC begins conducting research and preparing material for the public.
29 and 30 June 2004	notification of the public	A notice detailing the process for the review and calling for submissions is placed in the <i>Tatara Guardian</i> , <i>The Shepparton Adviser</i> and the <i>Shepparton News</i> .
7.30 pm, Tuesday, 13 July 2004	information session	A leaflet outlining the purpose and process of the review is mailed to all electors of Greater Shepparton. An information session on the review process is held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Function Room 2, Eastbank Centre, 70 Welsford Street, Shepparton Anyone interested in making a submission is advised to attend.
5.00 pm, Monday, 26 July 2004	closing date for preliminary submissions	Preliminary submissions are your chance to contribute your views and local knowledge about any issues relevant to the review. See details in the next section.
Tuesday, 17 August 2004	Preliminary Report released	Based on the VEC's research, including information presented by the public, the VEC formulates a series of different models for how the electoral structure of Greater Shepparton could be arranged. The models which best fit the VEC's aim of fairness and equity of representation are presented and explained in the Preliminary Report. For details of how to get a copy of the Report, see below.
5.00 pm Wednesday, 8 September 2004	closing date for response submissions on the Preliminary Report	Any person or group, including the Council, may make a response submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report. This is your chance to present any additional arguments regarding which of the VEC's models you believe best represents the people of Greater Shepparton.
6.30 pm, Tuesday, 14 September 2004	public hearing	A public hearing is held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alex Rigg Meeting Room, Eastbank Centre, 70 Welsford Street, Shepparton People who state in their response submissions to the Preliminary Report that they want to speak in support of their submissions may do so at this public hearing.
Monday, 4 October 2004	Final Report	After considering any written submissions relating to the Preliminary Report, and information provided at the public hearing, the VEC prepares a Final Report making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government. For details of how to get a copy of the Final Report, see below.
		The Minister for Local Government considers the VEC's recommendations and may make a determination. Any determination will take effect at the next Council election.

What is the purpose of a representation review?

Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989* specifies that the purpose of a representation review is to achieve "fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council."

To achieve this, the VEC has three main duties:

- Duty 1: to make sure 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, that can lead to some wards having larger or smaller populations. 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 in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

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

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC tries to bring the ratio of voters to councillors to comparable levels as for other similar municipalities across Victoria. At the same time, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant increasing or reducing the number of councillors from what would otherwise be the case.

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

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest (see page 10). The electoral structure should be designed to take account of the main communities of interest. This is important for assisting councils to be effective representatives of the people in their municipalities.

What can't a representation review do?

The review cannot deal with the external boundaries of the municipality, or such matters as whether the municipality should be divided into two separate municipalities or amalgamated with another municipality.

On what does the VEC base its recommendations?

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors. The VEC:

- conducts its own research;
- draws on its experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- draws on its expertise at mapping, demography and local government; and
- carefully considers all input from the public.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC's recommendations are not made by a "straw poll" of the number of submissions supporting particular models. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, but also considering other factors, such as giving representation to communities of interest (including those communities of interest which may not be particularly vocal).

Making a submission

Any person or group, including the Council, may make a submission to the VEC. Submissions do not have to be elaborate documents; a short letter is perfectly acceptable, as long as it addresses matters within the scope of the review (see the checklist inside the front cover of this document).

When can people make submissions?

The VEC accepts submissions at two stages of the review process:

Preliminary submissions should address matters relating to the number of councillors and the electoral structure of the municipality. At this stage, people can suggest any possible models within the constraints as explained in the "Matters to consider" section of this document. The most helpful submissions are generally those which provide clear explanations or evidence for particular viewpoints. Preliminary submissions must be received at the VEC by **5.00 pm, Monday, 26 July 2004**. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Response submissions on the Preliminary Report should address matters relating to the models proposed by the VEC in the Preliminary Report. Alternative models will not generally be considered at this stage. Response submissions should indicate whether the person making the submission wishes to speak at a public hearing in support of his or her submission. Response submissions must be received at the VEC by **5.00 pm, Wednesday, 8 September 2004**. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

There will be a **public hearing** for people who want to speak in support of their response submissions on **Tuesday, 14 September 2004**.

Where should submissions be sent?

Submissions can be sent to the VEC in the following ways:

- posted to Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000;
- emailed to greater/shepparton.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to 9629 8330.

Submissions must include the name, address and telephone contact number of the person making the submission. Without this information, the submission will not be accepted.

Public access to submissions

Once lodged, submissions will be available to the public at:

- the VEC office at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne; and
- the VEC website www.vec.vic.gov.au

The VEC will publish all submissions received by the due date on its website. The name and locality of the person making the submission will also be published. The person's telephone number, street address and signature will not be published. The reason for making submissions available to the public is to ensure transparency in the electoral representation review process.

Getting copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports

Copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports will be available from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au, by contacting the VEC on 13 18 32, and at the Greater Shepparton City Council offices, 90 Welford Street, Shepparton.

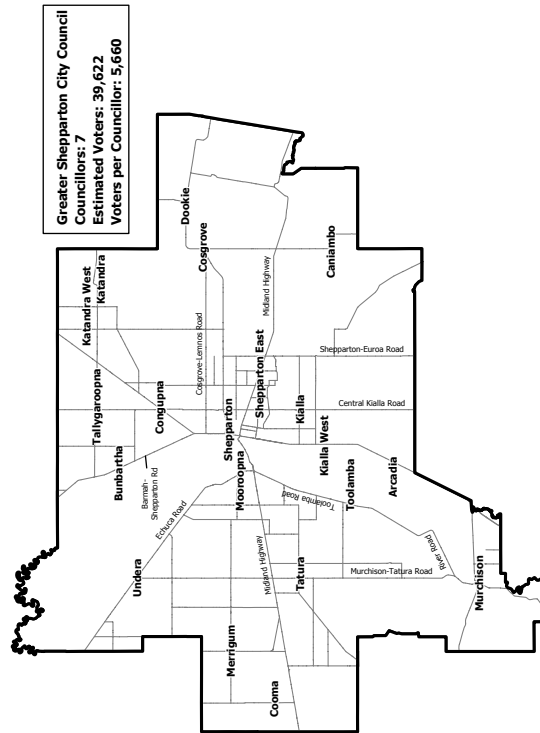
When the Preliminary Report is released, a notice in the *Tatura Guardian*, *The Shepparton Adviser* and the *Shepparton News* will specify how people can make a written submission in response to the Report.

The Preliminary Report will be available from Tuesday, 17 August 2004.

The Final Report will be released on Monday, 4 October 2004.

Current structure of Greater Shepparton

Greater Shepparton currently has seven councillors, elected from an unsubdivided municipality. The map shows the current municipality boundaries and the estimated number of voters as at 31 May 2004. Updated voter numbers will be available shortly from the VEC's website, by telephoning the VEC or at the Information Session.



Greater Shepparton at a glance

Greater Shepparton City was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of the City of Shepparton, the Shire of Shepparton and parts of the shires of Rodney, Euroa, Goulburn, Tungamah, Violet Town and Waranga. It includes the city of Shepparton and the towns of Mooroopna and Tatura.

At the 2001 Census, the population of the municipality was distributed in the following way:

Shepparton	52.4%
Mooroopna	12.5%
Tatura	5.3%
Murchison	1.2%
Merrigum	0.8%
Arcadia Downs	0.5%
Tallygaroopna	0.5%
Dookie	0.5%
Kialla West	0.3%
Rural balance	25.9%

Agriculture, food-processing and associated industries account for much of the employment in Greater Shepparton. The road transport industry is also important. Unemployment levels are similar to those of regional Victoria as a whole. Home ownership levels in Greater Shepparton are below the average for regional Victoria.

The population of Greater Shepparton is culturally diverse, with over 7% of the population born in non-English speaking countries.

As is the case in many large regional cities, there is a substantially higher proportion of 18-34 year olds than in shires without cities, such as Strathbogie or Moira.

Between 2004 and 2012, population growth is expected to be greater than regional cities as a whole, and the age structure of the population is expected to change as in regional Victoria in general, with people over 45 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

(Sources: Department of Infrastructure: *Victoria in Futures*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Regional Victoria in Fact 2001*; Greater Shepparton Regional Guide; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Towns in Time*).

Size¹:	Greater Shepparton:	Regional cities (medians):	Regional shires without cities (medians):
Area (square kilometres):	2,422	2,388	3,891
Population ² :	59,589	32,077	15,805
Population density (people/square km):	24.60	27.82	3.75
Voters:	39,622	23,908	13,850
Average voters per councillor:	5,660	3,738	2,190

Economic profile¹:

Major industries (percentages of workforce):	Greater Shepparton:	Regional Victoria:
<i>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</i>	12.5	11.2
<i>Manufacturing</i>	15.7	13.4
<i>Transport and storage</i>	3.8	3.5
<i>Retail trade</i>	16.8	15.3
<i>Accommodation, cafes, restaurants, cultural and recreation services</i>	4.5	6.9
<i>Property and business services</i>	6.4	6.6
<i>Government administration and defence</i>	1.9	3.3
<i>Health and community services</i>	10.4	10.8
Unemployment rate:	7.3%	7.4%
Households earning under \$500/week:	31.1%	34.6%

Population profile¹:

Age groups (percentages of the population):	Greater Shepparton:	Regional cities:	Regional shires without cities:
<i>0-17 years old</i>	28.5	26.64	27.27
<i>18-34 years old</i>	22.5	22.24	17.76
<i>35-49 years old</i>	22.0	21.74	22.53
<i>50+ years old</i>	27.0	29.37	32.44
Expected population growth (2004-2012):	8.30%	6.95%	4.79% ⁴

- 1 – statistics from 2001 Census
- 2 – based on ABS estimates as at June 2003
- 3 – based on 2003 interim projections from the Department of Sustainability and Environment
- 4 – excluding Cardinia

Matters to consider when preparing submissions

There are many matters to be considered when determining the electoral structure of a municipality. In your submission, you might try to take all of the issues into account, or you might just concentrate on one issue that you wish to bring to the VEC’s attention. The VEC’s job is to look at all of the relevant matters and to reach the best overall solution, based both on its own research and submissions received from the public.

Below are some of the main matters you might like to consider.

How many councillors should there be?

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, the number of councillors in every municipality must be between five and twelve inclusive (s.5B(1)). The Act does not specify how to decide what is the appropriate number, but the VEC has identified the following matters to consider.

Parliament has provided a range for the number of councillors to allow for municipalities with large numbers of voters and municipalities with smaller numbers. The numbers of voters in each municipality vary across Victoria from 4,077 to 160,368. The VEC applies these provisions of the Act in a logical way, with those municipalities that have the largest numbers of voters having the most councillors, and those municipalities that have the least numbers of voters having fewer councillors.

The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and its voter to councillor ratio (see the end of this document). The table differentiates between rural, regional and metropolitan municipalities. This table is a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors by recognising the different circumstances and needs of these categories of municipalities. This information enables the VEC to compare the municipality being reviewed to other municipalities with similar voter numbers and areas.

The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is expected to increase or decline in the period between reviews (eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment are used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a municipality to have more councillors than would otherwise be the case. These might include such issues or circumstances as:

- significant population growth within the municipality;
- an especially mobile or transient population;
- cultural and linguistic diversity within the community;
- a large proportion of older residents who may have special interests and needs;
- a wide geographic distribution of voters within a large municipality; or
- a large number of communities of interest (see below).

The table at the end of this document shows the numbers of councillors and the voter to councillor ratios for the various types of municipalities in Victoria.

Communities of interest

An important part of achieving “fair and equitable representation” is making sure that communities of interest are appropriately represented. 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.

Communities of interest are important in electoral representation reviews when they have similar needs from their local government. In such cases, it is important to endeavour to ensure that communities of interest have the opportunity to be fairly represented on councils. There are a number of ways to take account of communities of interest, depending on how they are distributed geographically. For example:

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

There are also many other ways to take communities of interest into account.

Should the municipality be unsubdivided or divided into wards?

A municipality can either be unsubdivided, with all councillors elected “at large” by all of the voters, or it can be subdivided into a number of wards. Both electoral structures have advantages and disadvantages, and which structure is best for any individual municipality will depend on the municipality’s particular circumstances.

Greater Shepparton is currently unsubdivided, with seven councillors representing the whole municipality.

The following tables list characteristics that are commonly considered to be associated with the different possible electoral structures and may be of use in deciding which structure most suits your municipality.

The table at the end of this document lists all of Victoria’s municipalities and their electoral structures.

Unsubdivided municipalities

Of Victoria’s 79 municipalities, 14 are unsubdivided. Unsubdivided municipalities must elect their councillors by proportional representation (see more on this point below).

The possible features of an unsubdivided municipality can be portrayed as follows:

Positive Features	Less Positive Features
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.	

Options for division into wards

If the municipality is to be divided into wards, there are three options:

- single-member wards;
- multi-member wards; and
- combinations of single and multi-member wards.

The Local Government Act specifies that wards with only one representative must elect that representative via preferential voting, whereas multi-member wards and unsubdivided municipalities must elect their representatives via proportional representation. As far as voters are concerned on the day, it makes no difference. In practice, ballot papers look the same and are filled out in the same way, regardless of whether the candidates are being elected by proportional representation or by preferential voting. Whether a ward elects councillors via proportional representation or preferential voting can sometimes make a difference as to whether or not communities of interest are fairly represented.

Single-member wards

More than half (43) of Victoria’s municipalities are made up entirely of single-member wards.

The possible features of single-member wards can be portrayed as follows:

Positive Features	Less Positive Features
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.
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-member wards

Eleven of Victoria’s municipalities have multi-member wards. A multi-member ward structure results in fewer but larger wards than a single-member ward structure. The possible features of multi-member wards can be portrayed as follows:

Positive Features	Less Positive Features
This structure supports the accommodation of a whole community of interest (such as a sizeable town or group of suburbs) within a ward.	Very local issues may be overridden. Groups may form within the council based on multi-member wards, leading to possible division between councillors.
Focus on issues may be broader than for single-member wards (though councillors may be more locally focussed than in an unsubdivided municipality).	In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward. Duplication or gaps may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively.
Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided municipality. Electors have a choice of councillor to approach. Councillors may share workloads more 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-member wards.	It is easier for candidates to be elected as part of a voting ticket than as individuals.

Combination of single-member and multi-member wards

Eleven of Victoria’s municipalities have a mixture of single-member and multi-member wards.

The possible features of a combined system can be portrayed as follows:

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

Voting systems

The voting system is another important factor to take into account when considering whether to have single-member wards, multi-member wards or unsubdivided municipalities. In single-member wards, councillors must be elected by preferential voting. In unsubdivided municipalities and multi-member wards, councillors must be elected by proportional representation. Under either system, people still vote in the same way. The only differences are the way that the votes are counted.

When there are single-member wards, the **preferential system** applies. Under the preferential system:

- a candidate must achieve an absolute majority (50% plus one) of the formal votes to be elected;
- if a candidate obtains an absolute majority of the first-preference votes, then that candidate is elected;
- if no candidate obtains an absolute majority of first-preference votes, preferences have to be distributed:
 - the candidate with the lowest number of first-preference votes is declared to be a defeated candidate, and that candidate’s votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the second preferences on the ballot papers;
 - the process of excluding the lowest candidate and distributing that candidate’s preferences to the remaining candidates continues until one candidate has an absolute majority of votes, and is declared elected.

Under this system, the way in which voters allocate their preferences can be just as important as where they place their first-preference votes. Candidates advise voters (through how-to-vote cards and candidate statements) about how to order their preferences, and may negotiate with other candidates about the order of preferences. In some cases, candidates have informal “running mates” to help with the flow of preferences to them.

When there are multi-member wards or unsubdivided municipalities, **proportional representation** applies. The basis of proportional representation is that candidates are elected in proportion to their support. Under the proportional representation system:

- to be elected, a candidate must obtain a “quota”, which is calculated by dividing the total number of votes by one more than the number of vacancies, and then adding one (for example, in an election for 3 vacancies with 800 votes cast, the quota would be 201);
- when a candidate receives more votes than a quota, the surplus votes are distributed to the continuing candidates at a reduced value, calculated by dividing the surplus votes by the total votes for the candidate (for example, if a candidate achieved 300 votes and the quota was 201 votes, the candidate’s surplus would be 99, and ballot papers would be transferred to the remaining candidates at a value of 99 divided by 300);
- when all surplus votes have been distributed and there are still vacancies to be filled, preferences are distributed from the lowest-scoring candidates until a candidate has a quota.

This system means that any candidate who obtains a quota, either through first-preference votes or through the flow of preferences, is elected. In effect, candidates representing large minorities are likely to be represented as well as candidates representing majorities.

Under this system, candidates may group together and advise their supporters to follow a ticket in their preferences. However, such a group is unlikely to win all the vacancies in a ward or unsubdivided municipality unless it has overwhelming support.

How should ward boundaries be drawn?

Getting the numbers right

If Greater Shepparton is to be divided into wards, the ward boundaries must comply with legal requirements. Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires that:

- the number of voters represented by each Councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters per Councillor for that municipality; and
- the ward boundaries must provide a fair and equitable division of the municipal district.

Where there are multi-member wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor for such wards is taken to be the total number of voters for the ward divided by the number of councillors for the ward. For instance, if there are 3 councillors and 12,000 voters for a ward, the number of voters represented by each councillor will be 4,000, that is 12,000 divided by 3.

Ward boundaries **must** meet the approximate equality requirement set by the Act. The number of voters represented by each councillor cannot be more than 10% outside the average number for all councillors.

Other considerations

The Act does not prescribe any more details to define what constitutes a fair and equitable division of the municipality. However, the following criteria are useful in considering and (where possible) deciding on proposed ward boundaries:

- the boundaries should take account of communities of interest;
- the boundaries should follow clear lines, such as major roads, rivers and other natural features;
- growing areas should not be concentrated into one ward, but should be spread over several wards; and
- the boundaries should take account of likely population changes, by setting the number of voters in wards with high growth potential somewhat below the average, and the number of voters in wards with little growth potential somewhat above the average. This approach will help ensure that the boundaries stay within the 10% tolerance for a longer period, avoiding the need for frequent redrawing of boundaries.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance among these criteria.

What should wards be called?

There is a variety of possible approaches to the naming of wards, including:

- **Place names:** A number of municipalities name their wards after localities in the wards. This approach is useful where ward boundaries closely align with localities. However, it can lead to people in smaller localities within a ward feeling overlooked, and may cause confusion if the locality that a ward is named after cuts across a ward boundary;
- **Compass directions:** This is the current approach in, for example, the City of Whittlesea, where the wards are Central, East, East Central, North, North Central, South, South Central, South West and West. It is straightforward. It is of most use where the location of the wards is closely aligned to compass directions;
- **Names of historic buildings:** This is a way of celebrating the municipality's heritage;
- **Names of natural features:** Using the names of natural features such as hills or streams can be a way of identifying wards without the complications of locality names. The features would need to be well known and relevant to the particular wards;
- **Names of pioneers and former prominent citizens:** This is a way of recognising important former residents. It is most appropriate when the person is closely associated with the area covered by the ward; and
- **Aboriginal names:** This is a way of recognising the municipality's Aboriginal heritage. However, the use of Aboriginal names could be seen as being tokenistic if the names are not relevant to areas within the municipality.

Table: Profiles of municipalities

Estimates as at 31 May 2004 (unless otherwise indicated)

Metropolitan (including outer metropolitan)					
Municipality	Area (km ²)	Number on roll	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral structure
Banyule	62	90,989	7	12998	Single-member wards
Bayside	37	67,025	9	7447	Single-member wards
Boroondara	60	122,181	10	12218	Single-member wards
Brimbank	123	119,910	9	13323	Single-member wards
Casey	410	134,072	11	12188	Single-member wards
Darebin	53	98,551	9	10950	Single-member wards
Frankston*	130	90,910	7	12987	Single-member wards
Glen Eira	39	94,952	9	10550	3 three-member wards
Greater Dandenong	129	94,387	11	8581	Single-member wards
Hobsons Bay*	64	63,197 [†]	8	7900	4 two-member wards
Hume	504	98,763	9	10974	Single-member wards
Kingston	91	107,800	7	15400	Single-member wards
Knox	114	110,342	9	12260	Single-member wards
Manningham	113	86,429	8	10804	Single-member wards
Maribyrnong	31	48,346	7	6907	Single-member wards
Maroondah	61	77,306	7	11044	Single-member wards
Melbourne	36	64,000 [†]	9	7111	Unsubdivided
Melton	527	45,855	7	6551	Single-member wards
Monash	81	121,239	8	15155	Single-member wards
Moonee Valley	44	91,235	7	13034	Single-member wards
Moreland*	51	108,092 [†]	10	10809	Single-member wards
Mornington Peninsula	723	136,448	9	15161	Single-member wards
Willumbik	433	44,009	9	4890	Single-member wards
Port Phillip	21	73,812 [†]	7	10545	Single-member wards
Stonnington*	26	78,642 [†]	9	8738	Single-member wards
Whitehorse	64	111,679	10	11168	5 two-member wards
Whittlesea	490	85,755	9	9528	Single-member wards
Wyndham	542	70,220	7	10031	Single-member wards
Yarra*	20	60,097 [†]	9	6677	1 single-member ward & 4 two-member wards
Yarra Ranges	2,470	105,475	9	11719	Single-member wards
Average (median)	73	91,112	9	10,880	

* under review

[†] as at 2004 representation review

[‡] as at previous election

Regional Cities, Rural Cities and Boroughs

Municipality	Area (km ²)	Number on roll	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral structure
Ararat	4,210	9,586 [†]	7	1369	Unsubdivided
Bairarat	740	67,490	9	7499	Single-member wards
Benalla	2,354	11,768	7	1681	Single-member wards
Greater Bendigo*	2,999	77,291	7	11042	Single-member wards
Greater Geelong	1,247	160,368	12	13364	Single-member wards
Greater Shepparton*	2,422	39,622	7	5660	Unsubdivided
Horsham	4,249	14,520	7	2074	Unsubdivided
Latrobe	1,426	58,078	9	6453	Single-member wards
Mildura	22,082	36,082	9	4009	Unsubdivided
Queenscliffe	9	4,077	7	582	Unsubdivided
Swan Hill	6,116	14,365	7	2052	1 single-member ward & 3 two-member wards
Wangaratta*	3,639	21,599	8	2700	6 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward
Warrambool*	121	24,274 [†]	7	3468	Single-member wards
Wodonga*	433	23,542	5	4708	Unsubdivided
Average (median)	2,388	23,908	7	3738	

* under review

[†] as at 2004 representation review

[‡] as at previous election

Regional Shires					
Municipality	Area (km ²)	Number on roll	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral structure
Alpine*	4,832	11,107	5	2221	Unsubdivided
Bass Coast	864	37,199	7	5314	Single-member wards
Baw Baw	4,032	30,563	9	3396	Single-member wards
Buloke	8,004	6,734	9	748	3 three-member wards
Campaspe	4,519	30,568	7	4367	5 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward
Cardinia	1,280	37,740	7	5391	Single-member wards
Central Goldfields	1,534	11,390	5	2278	Single-member wards
Colac Otway	3,433	20,414	7	2916	2 single-member wards, 1 two-member ward & 1 three-member ward
Corangamite*	4,404	13,985 ¹	10	1399	5 two-member wards
East Gippsland	20,931	36,993	8	4624	2 four-member wards
Gannawarra	3,732	9,917	7	1417	3 single-member wards & 2 two-member wards
Glenelg	6,210	18,515	9	2057	Single-member wards
Golden Plains	2,704	13,850	9	1539	Single-member ridings
Hepburn	1,470	13,733	5	2747	Single-member wards
Hindmarsh	7,550	5,335	6	889	3 two-member wards
Indigo*	2,044	11,325	7	1618	Unsubdivided
Loddon	6,694	8,406	6	1401	Single-member ridings
Macedon Ranges*	1,747	30,386	9	3376	Single-member wards
Mansfield	3,891	9,217	5	1843	3 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward
Mitchell*	2,862	22,274	7	3182	5 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward
Moira	4,045	20,686	9	2298	3 three-member wards
Moorabool*	2,110	20,391 ¹	7	2913	4 single-member ridings & 1 three-member riding
Mount Alexander	1,529	15,332	7	2190	Single-member wards
Moyne	5,478	13,909	10	1391	5 two-member ridings
Murrindindi	3,877	13,714	6	2286	Single-member ridings
Northern Grampians	5,728	10,931	9	1215	1 three-member ward & 1 six-member ward
Pyrenees*	3,433	7,224 ¹	7	1032	Single-member ridings
South Gippsland*	3,295	28,669	9	3185	7 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward
Southern Grampians	6,652	13,186	7	1884	Unsubdivided
Strathbogie*	3,302	9,065	7	1295	Single-member wards

Municipality	Area (km ²)	Number on roll	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor	Electoral structure
Surf Coast ³	1,553	25,457	9	2829	Unsubdivided
Towong*	6,673	5,218	5	1044	Unsubdivided
Wellington*	10,989	37,666	9	4185	Unsubdivided
West Wimmera	9,107	4,256	5	851	Unsubdivided
Yarriambiack	7,310	7,222	9	802	3 single-member wards & 2 three-member wards
Average (median)	3,891	13,850	7	2190	

* under review

¹ as at 2004 representation review² reviewed 2003 – Structure to come into effect at next election

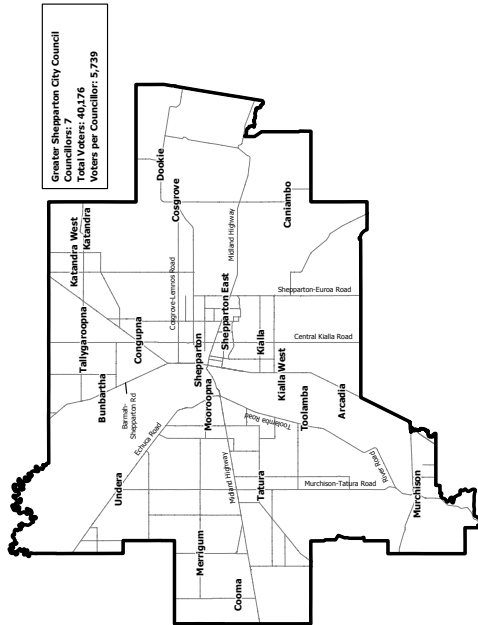
About the VEC

The Victorian Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established under Victoria's *Electoral Act 2002*. The VEC is not subject to ministerial direction or control in the performance of its responsibilities. The VEC's main functions include:

- conducting parliamentary elections and by-elections;
- conducting local government elections and by-elections (when appointed by councils);
- conducting representation reviews for councils;
- maintaining an accurate and up-to-date register of electors and preparing rolls for elections; and
- contributing to public understanding of elections and electoral matters through information and education programmes.

In performing these functions, the VEC acts as an independent, impartial authority, acting transparently and with integrity.

Greater Shepparton Supplement:
Actual voter numbers as at 23 June 2004



CCD:	Voters:	CCD:	Voters:	CCD:	Voters:
2021414	206	2021605	489	2021710	406
2021501	462	2021606	417	2021711	384
2021502	535	2021607	277	2021712	383
2021503	627	2021608	322	2021801	393
2021504	414	2021609	339	2021802	221
2021505	508	2021610	285	2021803	208
2021506	529	2021701	488	2021804	221
2021507	484	2021702	262	2021805	388
2021508	405	2021703	367	2021806	591
2021509	623	2021704	368	2021807	466
2021510	344	2021705	661	2021808	286
2021601	496	2021706	489	2021809	319
2021602	377	2021707	586	2021810	105
2021603	461	2021708	406	2021811	614
2021604	615	2021709	367	2021812	532

Grand total: 40,176

A map showing the exact boundaries for each Census collector district can be purchased from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – www.abs.gov.au or call 1300 135 070. An electronic version of voter numbers by Census collector district can be downloaded from the VEC's website at www.vec.vic.gov.au

The numbers of voters in each Census collector district within Greater Shepparton are:

CCD:	Voters:	CCD:	Voters:	CCD:	Voters:
2020411	525	2021203	442	2021306	478
2020412	670	2021204	398	2021307	517
2021101	440	2021205	504	2021308	141
2021102	247	2021206	100	2021309	124
2021103	341	2021207	390	2021310	193
2021104	336	2021208	424	2021401	191
2021105	344	2021209	555	2021402	332
2021106	694	2021210	580	2021403	621
2021107	156	2021211	315	2021404	325
2021108	283	2021212	456	2021405	335
2021109	665	2021213	486	2021406	412
2021110	486	2021214	0	2021407	459
2021111	373	2021215	497	2021408	368
2021112	277	2021301	410	2021409	369
2021113	305	2021302	373	2021410	552
2021114	245	2021303	232	2021411	1,373
2021201	539	2021304	205	2021412	211
2021202	461	2021305	187	2021413	508

9.5 List of persons and groups making submissions

Preliminary submissions

Bill Brown
Mijo Darveniza
Edward Davis
Kate Emerson
Alan L. English
Keren Fletcher
Laurie J. Gleeson
Cr John P. C. Gray
Greater Shepparton City Council
Jenny Houlihan
Graeme Jolly
Dr John Lawry
Cr Anne McCamish
Bernard P. Moran
Patricia Moran
The Proportional Representation
Society of Australia (Victoria-
Tasmania Branch)
Peter Quinn
Cr Gurm Sekhon
John A. McG. Stevens
Keppel A. Turnour
Peter L. Twomey
Peter Vibert
Keith R. Ward

Response submissions

Kate Emerson
Alan L. English
Laurie J. Gleeson
Cr John P. C. Gray
Greater Shepparton City Council
Graeme Jolly
Mark Lawlor
Dr John Lawry
Cr Anne McCamish
Bernard P. Moran
Patricia Moran
The Proportional Representation
Society of Australia (Victoria-
Tasmania Branch)
Peter Quinn
Cr Kevin Ryan
John A. McG. Stevens

