



2015-16

**Council
Representation
Reviews**

Final Report

2015 Melton City Council Electoral Representation Review

Wednesday 25 November 2015

This page has been left intentionally blank

Contents

1 Recommendation	4
2 Executive summary	5
3 Background	7
3.1 Legislative basis	7
3.2 The VEC's approach	7
3.3 The VEC's principles	9
3.4 The electoral representation review process	9
4 Melton City Council representation review	11
4.1 Profile of Melton City Council	11
4.2 Current electoral structure	11
4.3 Public information program	12
5 Preliminary report	13
5.1 Preliminary submissions	13
5.2 Preliminary report	14
6 Public response	17
6.1 Response submissions	17
6.2 Public hearing	18
7 Findings and recommendation	20
7.1 The VEC's findings	20
7.2 The VEC's recommendation	21
Appendix 1: Public involvement	22
Appendix 2: Map	23
Appendix 3: Public information program	24

1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recommends Melton City Council consist of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward, one three-councillor ward and one two-councillor ward.

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

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

2 Executive summary

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

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

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

The VEC conducts all reviews on the basis of three main principles:

1. ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality
2. taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors and
3. ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

Current electoral structure

The last electoral representation review for Melton City Council took place in 2008. The review recommended seven councillors be retained and the electoral structure change from seven single-councillor wards to one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards.

Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions opened at the commencement of the current review on Wednesday 5 August 2015. The VEC received four submissions by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 2 September.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 30 September with the following options for consideration:

- Option A (preferred option)
Melton City Council consist of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward, one three-councillor ward and one two-councillor ward.

- Option B (alternative option)

Melton City Council consist of 10 councillors elected from two four-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

Response submissions

The VEC received five submissions responding to the preliminary report by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 28 October.

Public hearing

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 3.30 pm on Wednesday 4 November. Two people spoke at the hearing.

Recommendation

The VEC recommends Melton City Council consist of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward, one three-councillor ward and one two-councillor ward.

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

3 Background

3.1 Legislative basis

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

The Act specifies that the purpose of a representation review is to recommend the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides ‘fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.’¹

The Act requires the VEC to consider:

- the number of councillors in a municipality and
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided.

If a municipality should be subdivided, the VEC must ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.² On this basis, the review must consider the:

- number of wards
- ward boundaries (and ward names)
- number of councillors that should be elected for each ward.

3.2 The VEC’s approach

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows for a municipality to have between five and 12 councillors, but does not specify how to decide the appropriate number.³ In considering the number of councillors for a municipality, the VEC is guided by the Victorian Parliament’s intention for fairness and equity in the local representation of voters under the Act.

The VEC considers that there are three major factors that should be taken into account:

- diversity of the population
- councillors’ workloads and
- profiles of similar municipalities.

¹ Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

² *ibid.*

³ Section 5B(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Generally, those municipalities that have a larger number of voters will have a higher number of councillors. Often large populations are more likely to be diverse, both in the nature and number of their communities of interest and the issues of representation.

However, the VEC considers the particular situation of each municipality in regards to: the nature and complexity of services provided by the Council; geographic size and topography; population growth or decline; and the social diversity of the municipality, including social disadvantage and cultural and age mix.

Deciding the electoral structure

The Act allows for a municipality ward structure to be:

- unsubdivided—with all councillors elected ‘at large’ by all voters or
- subdivided into a number of wards.

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

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

A subdivided municipality must have internal ward boundaries that provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality, and ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor remains within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality.

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

- communities of interest, encompassing people who share a range of common concerns, such as geographic, economic or cultural associations
- the longevity of the structure, with the aim of keeping voter numbers per councillor within the 10 per cent tolerance as long as possible
- geographic factors, such as size and topography
- the number of voters in potential wards, as wards with many voters can have a large number of candidates, which can lead to an increase in the number of informal (invalid) votes and
- clear ward boundaries.

3.3 The VEC's principles

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

- 1. Ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.**

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

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

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

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

Each municipality contains a number of communities of interest. Where practicable, the electoral structure should be designed to ensure they are fairly represented, and that geographic communities of interest are not split by ward boundaries. This allows elected councillors to be more effective representatives of the people and interests in their particular municipality or ward.

3.4 The electoral representation review process

Developing recommendations

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

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review, including Australian Bureau of Statistics and .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd⁴ data; voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll; and other State and local government data sets
- small area forecasts provided by .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and similar reviews for State elections
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government

⁴ .id is a company specialising in population and demographic analysis that builds suburb-level demographic information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

- careful consideration of all input from the public in written and verbal submissions received during the review and
- advice from consultants with extensive experience in local government.

Public involvement

Public input is accepted by the VEC:

- in preliminary submissions at the start of the review
- in response submissions to the preliminary report and
- in a public hearing that provides an opportunity for people who have made a response submission to expand on this submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the process, but are not the only consideration during a review. The VEC ensures its recommendations are in compliance with the Act and are formed through careful consideration of public submissions, independent research, and analysis of all relevant factors, such as the need to give representation to communities of interest.

4 Melton City Council representation review

4.1 Profile of Melton City Council

The City of Melton is approximately 40 kilometres from the centre of Melbourne and covers 528 square kilometres. It is located on the western fringe of Melbourne and adjoins the fast growing municipalities of Brimbank, Hume, Wyndham and Moorabool. The current population of 127,000 is generally dispersed across three areas in the municipality, with the largest population area situated along the eastern boundary of the municipality, including the suburbs of Caroline Springs (which takes in a master-planned residential community), Taylors Hill, Burnside Heights and part of Burnside. This area is generally considered part of the outer urban fringe of Melbourne.

The second largest population area is in the west of the municipality, and includes the suburbs of Melton, Melton West, Melton South, Brookfield and Kurunjang. It is separated from the eastern urban areas by the currently semi-rural areas of Rockbank and Plumpton—which are expected to increase significantly in population over the next decade. In the north are the rural localities of Toolern Vale and the fringe suburb of Diggers Rest.

The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria; the population grew by 4 per cent between 2013 and 2014 (4,860 people). This reflects the overall forecast trend of significant population growth for the municipality, with approximately 254,000 people expected to reside in the City of Melton by 2031, representing a 4.3 per cent average annual growth rate. Demographically, the City of Melton has a younger population compared to the Greater Melbourne average, with those under 18 years of age comprising approximately 30 per cent of the population. The percentage of people aged 50 years or over (21 per cent) is significantly lower than the Greater Melbourne average of 30 per cent.

4.2 Current electoral structure

The last electoral representation review for Melton City Council took place in 2007–08.⁵ Following the review, the VEC recommended that the electoral structure of the municipality change from seven single-councillor wards to seven councillors elected from one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards. The VEC considered seven councillors was appropriate for the municipality, and moving from single-councillor to multi-councillor wards would better represent the three distinct geographic communities of interest in the municipality (the Melton area to the west of the municipality, the urban growth areas on the eastern boundary, and the rural balance).

⁵ The municipality was previously named 'Melton Shire Council'. It was proclaimed 'Melton City Council' by an Order in Council on 6 September 2012.

4.3 Public information program

Public involvement is an important part of the representation review process. The Melton City Council representation review commenced on Wednesday 5 August and the VEC conducted a public information program to inform the community, including:

- public notices of the review and the release of the preliminary report in local and state-wide papers
- media releases announcing the commencement of the review, the release of the preliminary report and the publication of this final report
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- coverage through the municipality's media, e.g. Council website or newsletter
- a helpline and dedicated email address to answer public enquiries
- ongoing information updates and publication of submissions on the VEC website and
- a *Guide for Submissions* to explain the review process and provide background information on the scope of the review.

See Appendix 3 for full details of the public information program.

5 Preliminary report

5.1 Preliminary submissions

The VEC received four preliminary submissions by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 2 September. A discussion of the preliminary report is included below.

Number of councillors

The number of councillors recommended in preliminary submissions varied between seven and 12. Melton City Council was the only submitter to prefer retaining the current seven councillors. The Council's submission argued that seven councillors is sufficient to serve the needs of the current and future population within the municipality, whilst continuing to provide high levels of engagement and representation. The Council also argued that the current structure has provided fair and equitable representation for voters since 2008, with the Council logistically and organisationally structured accordingly. The Council also submitted an alternative nine-councillor model as a second preference.

Olivia Liron recommended increasing councillor numbers, changing from seven to between 10 and 12 councillors. The submission argued that the population of the municipality had significant sociocultural and socioeconomic diversity, as well as a growing number of young families. Olivia Liron further argued that increasing councillor numbers would assist councillors to manage their workloads and further prioritise local issues, which are becoming increasingly important given the rapid growth within the municipality.

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia (PRSA) recommended increasing councillor numbers to nine, as an odd number of councillors facilitated proportional representation.

Electoral structure

Similar to the appropriate number of councillors, the preferred electoral structure differed considerably among submitters. Melton City Council submitted in favour of retaining the current structure with modified ward boundaries, including extending Coburn Ward's boundary north to encompass Toolern Vale, and south to take in Eynesbury and part of Mount Cottrell. The Council also recommended changing the boundary between Watts Ward and Cambridge Ward, dividing the new growth areas of Rockbank and Plumpton between the two wards. Apart from the Council being operationally set up to accommodate the existing electoral structure, the submission also highlighted the desirability of the current number of wards in terms of managing greater tolerances to population change and the success of the model in meeting fair and equitable representation to date.

Bob Nielsen's submission recommended an unsubdivided structure, arguing that this structure would best enable councillors to represent interests of the municipality as a whole, and provide the best results for residents.

The PRSA recommended introducing three three-councillor wards, noting that an unsubdivided model, while providing fair and equitable representation for voters, was likely to produce an unwieldy ballot paper due to a high number of candidates at elections for Melton City Council. The submission noted that the Council's last four general elections produced between 34 and 72 candidates. By introducing three three-councillor wards, the submission argued, proportional representation would still function effectively in the municipality, providing the best opportunity for the widest variety of community opinion to be represented.

Both the PRSA and Olivia Liron recommended introducing an equal number of councillors per ward. However, Olivia Liron also indicated a preference for increasing the number of wards from three, but did not specify how many.

A list of people who made a preliminary submission can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2 Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 30 September. The VEC considered public submissions and research findings when formulating the options presented in the preliminary report. A discussion of the report is included below.

Number of Councillors

The VEC considered either nine or 10 councillors was appropriate for Melton City Council. Retaining seven councillors was deemed unviable as the number of voters per councillor by 2024 would be over 18,000—the highest of any Victorian council. After consulting the banding table of comparable councils, and taking into account current and projected growth up to the next scheduled representation review in 2028, the VEC also considered that increasing the number of councillors to 11 would result in over-representation—with around 7,700 voters per councillor. This is significantly lower than Hume City Council, which has the lowest voter-to-councillor ratio of each of the 11-councillor councils in the metropolitan/rural fringe category. The VEC also considered that Melton City Council does not have the same levels of socioeconomic and sociocultural diversity as Hume and Brimbank City Councils—both comparable, rapidly growing 11-councillor councils.

Electoral structure

The VEC proposed two options for public consideration, one nine-councillor model and one 10-councillor model, both discussed below.

Option A

The VEC's preferred option (Option A) consisted of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward (including all of Melton urban area and surrounds), one three-councillor ward (including most of the suburbs in the east of municipality) and one two-councillor ward (including Diggers Rest and the rural north balance). This model was broadly based on the current electoral structure, although ward boundaries were adjusted to better contain short- and long-term population growth, and importantly meet legislative requirements. The model also utilised the Council's preferred ward boundaries where possible.

The VEC identified a number of major advantages of the model. Firstly, it represented a minimum change option, with ward boundary changes occurring primarily in the yet to be developed rural balance. This model presented no change to voters in the northern urban areas of Melton and in the areas of Taylors Lakes and Hillside in the east. Secondly, based on current projections, the model was expected to remain within the legislative tolerances until 2024. It further retained all of the Melton urban area in one ward with four councillors, and the odd number of councillors reduces the likelihood of tied votes on Council.

A slightly higher workload for councillors in Watts Ward was identified as one limitation of the model, due to the diversity of the areas represented and the larger distances with only two allocated councillors. However, this was deemed unavoidable due to the population distribution in the municipality, with smaller populations contained in the ward.

Option B

The VEC's second option consisted of 10 councillors elected from two four-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. The identified advantages of this model were its structural longevity and increased representation for voters due to lower numbers of voters per councillor (as a result of having an extra councillor). Unlike Option A, the projected deviations for all wards were expected to remain below 5 percent until 2024. However, the potential to increase the chance of tied votes, requiring a casting vote, was seen as a key limitation.

Three three-councillor ward model (not proposed)

The VEC also considered a three three-councillor ward model that would create an equal number of councillors in each ward across the municipality, effectively dispersing the expected population growth across all wards and increasing the long-term likelihood of meeting legislative requirements. However, as Diagram 1 illustrates, the model significantly split the broader Melton area, placing Kuranjang and Melton in a separate ward from Melton West and Melton South. This would split the major community of interest of Melton, which the VEC considered undesirable, especially given the high growth predicted and socioeconomic diversity in households in the area.

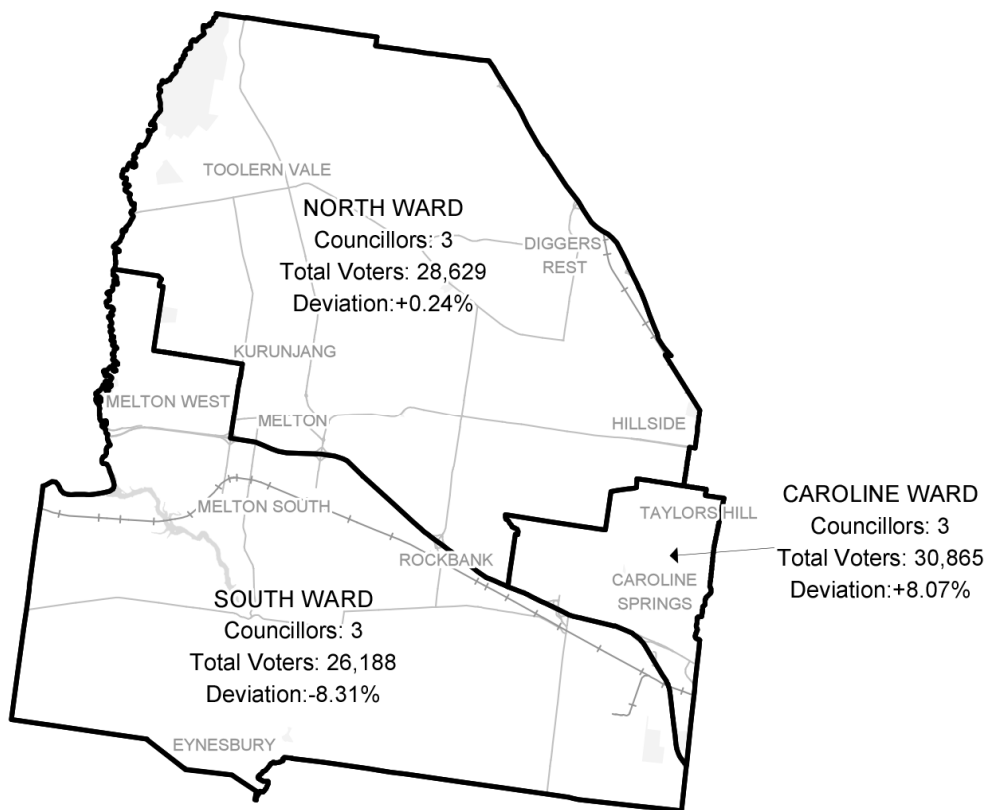


Diagram 1: three three-councillor ward model.

Options

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

- Option A (preferred option)
Melton City Council consist of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward, one three-councillor ward and one two-councillor ward.
- Option B (alternative option)
Melton City Council consist of 10 councillors elected from two four-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

6 Public response

6.1 Response submissions

The VEC accepted submissions responding to the preliminary report from Wednesday 30 September until 5.00 pm on Wednesday 28 October. The VEC received five response submissions, and a list of people who made a response submission can be found in Appendix 1. Table 1 indicates the level of support for each option.

Table 1: Preferences expressed in response submissions

Option A	Option B	Other
3	0	2

Of the five, three preferred Option A. Melton City Council preferred this option on the basis that the model increased to nine councillors rather than 10, reducing the potential situation where the casting vote might need to be exercised. In addition, Option A reflected the nine-councillor model proposed in the Council's preliminary submission. Two other submitters also preferred Option A.

Two submitters were not in favour of either Option A or Option B. Victor Bennett argued that both Option A and Option B did not allow for significant population growth in Melton City. He submitted that 11 councillors was more appropriate. The submission argued for development of an Option C, a model comprising four councillors for both Coburn and Cambridge Wards, and three councillors for Watts Ward.

The PRSA was also not in favour of either of the VEC's proposed electoral structures. The Association argued that, while nine councillors is an appropriate number of councillors for Melton City, a three three-councillor ward model was preferable. Concerns about the implementation of Option A included an absolute majority of voters not necessarily electing an absolute majority of councillors; and the three-councillor ward becoming a kingmaker ward for the Council if a particular group favouring a contentious platform obtained only half the councillors in each of the other two wards. The PRSA considered that Option B was even less desirable than Option A, with the even number of councillors in each ward being vulnerable to stalemates; an absolute majority of voters not necessarily electing an absolute majority of councillors, and the possibility that the casting vote would be required in many subsequent votes on motions before the Council.

6.2 Public hearing

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 3.30 pm on Wednesday 4 November in the Balam Balam Seminar Room, Melton Library & Learning Hub, McKenzie Street, Melton. A list of people who spoke at the hearing can be found in Appendix 1.

Two speakers presented at the public hearing. The first speaker, Victor Bennett, elaborated on a proposed model of 11 councillors, as recommended in his response submission. The panel heard concerns that both Option A and Option B did not provide enough councillors to represent the significant population growth that is predicted for Melton City—something that 11 councillors would better manage. One of the issues raised by the panel in the public hearing was legislative requirements, particularly that Watts Ward currently did not have enough voters for a third councillor. A solution to meet these legislative requirements identified by Victor Bennett was having a councillor elected in Watts Ward who would serve the growth areas as required across the municipality, as a non-attached councillor. While Victor Bennett maintained his lack of support for both Option A and Option B, he did acknowledge that both models represented communities of interest.

The second speaker was Kelvin Tori on behalf of Melton City Council. The panel heard that the Council supported Option A on the basis that it reasonably resembles Council's nine-councillor model, submitted at the preliminary response stage. The panel heard that the proposed boundaries appropriately reflected communities of interest, and the Council was generally supportive of the VEC's proposed ward boundaries. The way Cambridge Ward encompassed the immediate growth areas of Plumpton, as well as Rockbank and Woodley's Estate, was seen as appropriate given these areas are likely to have more in common with Caroline Springs.

When asked by the panel if any of the areas being moved from Cambridge to Coburn Wards would be disproportionately affected under Option A, it was identified that voters of Eynesbury and Exford may see themselves as having more in common with the east of the municipality (as traffic and movement tends to head east). However, the panel heard there were equal connections to other parts of the municipality. For instance, it was noted that Eynesbury is relatively isolated, with some links to Exford and Melton, and is likely to have more in common with areas south of the municipality, especially Werribee, as road infrastructure further develops. Overall, however, this consideration was not a concern for Council, which argued both towns were still appropriately located under Option A.

The VEC panel members also heard that nine councillors was preferred, as the potential for the requirement of a casting vote to break ties under a ten-councillor model was seen as a concern and best avoided.

Option B was less preferred on the basis that the Cambridge Ward was very dispersed under this model, combining a large number of urban and rural areas. It was suggested that the efficacy of this model may be improved at the next review, when the growth areas are more filled out. However, on balance, the Council felt that Option A was more reflective of current communities of interest.

7 Findings and recommendation

7.1 The VEC's findings

Most of the response submissions expressed preference for the VEC's Option A, while Option B was not recommended by any response submitters. Selecting the appropriate number of councillors is a significant component of the Melton City Council representation review—an increase is inevitable due to the current and predicted population growth in the municipality. The VEC's options comprised one nine-councillor model and one 10-councillor model. Overall, the VEC considered that both options would provide fair and equitable representation.

Option A

The VEC considers that Option A has a number of advantages over Option B. For instance, Option A is able to increase the number of councillors (to nine) while broadly retaining current ward boundaries. The current structure broadly captures the three communities of interest across the municipality: the Melton and Caroline Springs urban areas, as well as the green wedge zone in the north of the municipality. Option A provides minimal disruption to voters, with no change to the boundary between Watts and Cambridge Wards in the eastern urban area around Caroline Springs, as well as the urban boundary between Watts and Coburn Ward around the northern edge of Melton. While Option A does split part of Hillside, this is also the case under the current structure, and is unavoidable due to the distribution of population. Based on current projections, legislative requirements voter-to-councillor ratios are expected to remain valid until 2024⁶ under this option.

One of the most significant changes under Option A is the modification of the southern boundary of Coburn Ward, which extends to the southern boundary of the municipality (a recommendation of the Council). The VEC is satisfied, after questioning speakers at the public hearing, that this adjustment will not have a significantly adverse effect on voters who would be transferred to Coburn Ward from Cambridge Ward (notably those in Eynesbury and Exford). Rather, reducing the size of Cambridge Ward at this review is appropriate for providing fair and equitable representation for the predicted population growth in the Ward. Overall, the VEC considers that Option A divides upcoming population growth well among the three wards.

Apart from ward boundaries, retaining an odd number of councillors was preferred by submitters, and the VEC concedes that this will decrease the likelihood of tied votes.

⁶ Please note that Option A sets the numbers of voters represented by each councillor for Watts Ward and Cambridge Ward outside the 10 per cent tolerance allowed under the *Local Government Act 1989*. The Act provides that in determining ward boundaries, the VEC can use projected numbers of voters at the time of review or the projected number of voters at the entitlement date for the next general election. The VEC is confident that by the October 2016 council elections the wards will be well inside the tolerance. The deviations for these two wards have been set to allow for significant amounts of growth expected in the centre of the municipality, as best as possible, until the next scheduled review.

Option B

The VEC's second option in the preliminary report (Option B) increased the number of councillors to 10. This model was considered to have the advantage of decreasing the number of voters per councillor (thereby increasing the representation of voters as growth continues across the municipality), and increasing longevity of structure. While both Option A and Option B are anticipated to meet legislative requirements until 2024, the projected deviations in Option B are expected to remain under 5 percent in all wards until 2024. As with Option A, all of the Melton urban area is included in one ward with four councillors under Option B. However, the southern boundary of Coburn Ward follows the Urban Growth Boundary rather than extending the ward to the south boundary of the municipality—Option B thus retains a large Cambridge Ward. Option B also creates changes in the east of the ward, bringing communities of interest together in different wards (i.e. all of Taylors Hill in Cambridge Ward and Hillside in Watts Ward).

However, the VEC notes that the major limitation of Option B is not ward boundaries, but the number of councillors. Legislation allows the VEC to consider any number of councillors between five and 12, with comparisons among councils a key part of determining an appropriate number. In the case of Melton City Council, either nine or 10 councillors is considered appropriate to manage the expected population growth between now and the next review.

The VEC's preliminary report noted that, while 10 councillors is appropriate based on Melton City Council's voter-to-councillor ratio, an even number of councillors does increase the chance of tied votes, with the use of a casting vote required, putting additional pressure on council decision making. Concern over an even number of councillors was also noted through the response submission process and in presentations at the public hearing, with the Council in particular raising concerns about an even number of councillors.

Summary

In summary, the VEC considers that Option A is preferable for Melton City Council. This structure provides minimal disruption to voters, while also facilitating a needed increase in the number of councillors. Based on current projections, the VEC considers that nine councillors is sufficient for managing projected growth between now and the next scheduled review in 2028.

7.2 The VEC's recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recommends Melton City Council consist of nine councillors elected from one four-councillor ward, one three-councillor ward and one two-councillor ward.

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

Appendix 1: Public involvement

Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions were received from:

Olivia Liron

Melton City Council

Bob Nielsen

Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc

Response submissions

Response submissions were received from:

Terry Atherton

Victor Bennett

Melton City Council

Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc

Garry Thomas

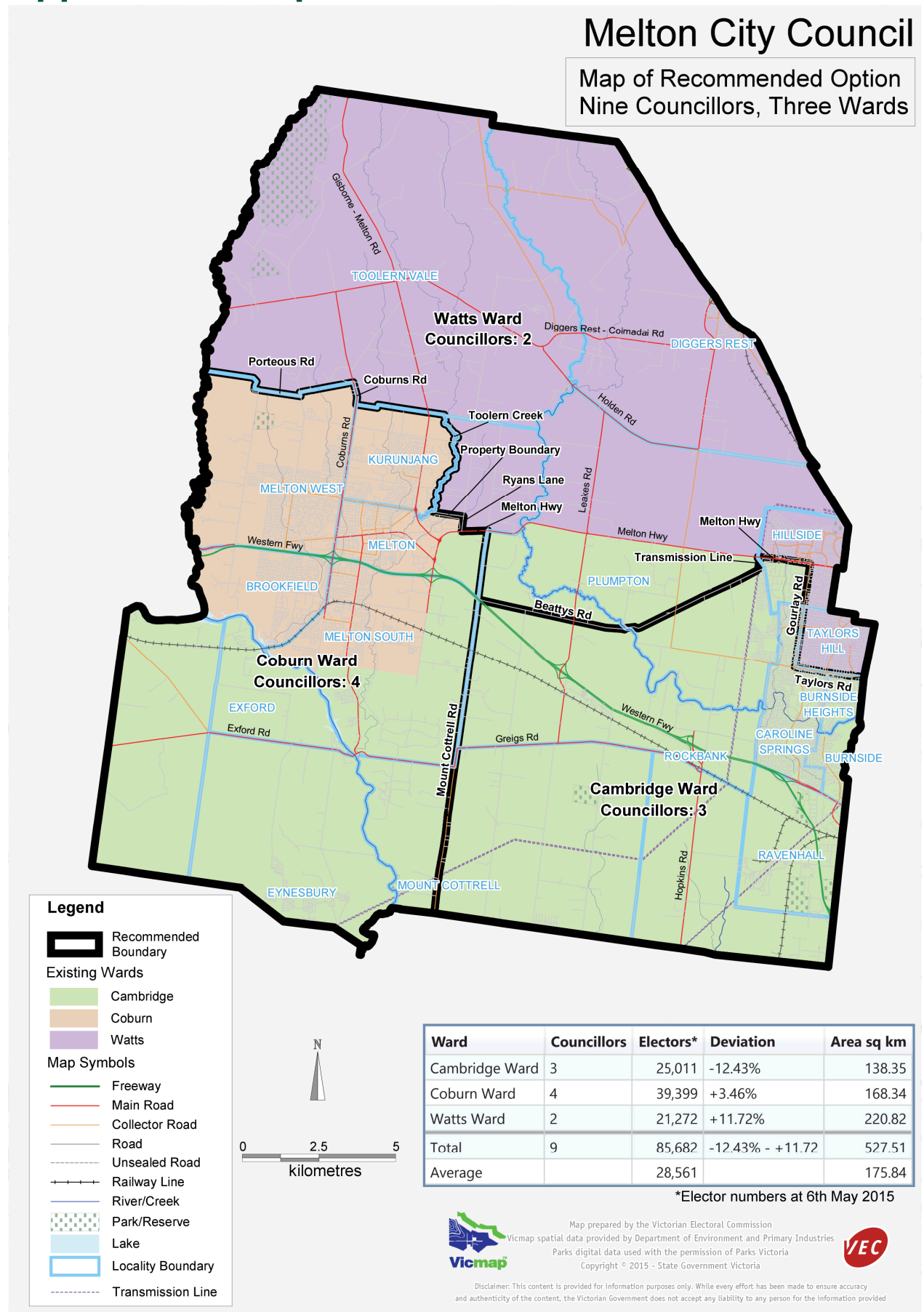
Public hearing

The following individuals spoke at the public hearing:

Victor Bennett

Kelvin Tori (on behalf of Melton City Council)

Appendix 2: Map



Appendix 3: Public information program

Advertising

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

Newspaper	Notice of review	Notice of preliminary report
<i>Herald Sun</i>	Wednesday 15 July	Wednesday 9 September
<i>Melton Leader</i>	Tuesday 4 August	Tuesday 6 October
<i>Melton & Moorabool Star Weekly</i>	Tuesday 4 August	Tuesday 6 October

Media releases

A media release was prepared and distributed to local media at the commencement of the review on Wednesday 5 August. A further release was distributed at the publication of the preliminary report on Wednesday 30 September. A final release was circulated on the publication date of this final report.

Public information sessions

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

- Thursday 13 August in the Balam Balam Seminar Room, Melton Library and Learning Hub, McKenzie Street, Melton
- Thursday 13 August in Meeting Rooms 3 & 4, Caroline Springs Civic Centre Library, 193–201 Caroline Springs Boulevard, Caroline Springs.

Helpline and email address

A telephone helpline and dedicated email address were established to assist members of the public with enquiries about the review process.

VEC website

The VEC website delivered up-to-date information to provide transparency and facilitate public participation during the review process. An online submission tool was made available and all public submissions were posted on the website.

Guide for Submissions

A *Guide for Submissions* was developed and distributed to those interested in making submissions. Copies of the *Guide* were available on the VEC website, in hardcopy on request and also provided to Council.

Council website and newsletter

Information about the review was provided to Council for publication in council media, e.g. website and newsletter.

This page has been left intentionally blank

This page has been left intentionally blank

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

131 832

melton.review@vec.vic.gov.au