Representation Review - Banyule City Council - Preliminary Submission
Robert Carter - Heidelberg - 23 Jul 2019

Electoral Representation Review
Banyule City Council
Banyule City Council is currently represented by 7 councillors in seven single member wards.
At the time of its last review in 2007 the number of voters in Banyule was 90,000 or 12,800 per councillor. Since then it is estimated (ABS figures) that the population of the City has increased by 10% or more, meaning a significant increase in voters per councillor. With the amount of development occurring, and in prospect, especially in the southern areas of the City, it would be reasonably expected that the population would increase at a faster rate over the next decade or so.

How does the current situation serve the community and how can it be improved?
The City of Banyule is one of the more diverse local government areas in metropolitan Melbourne. It is diverse ethnically, economically and environmentally. The more southern suburbs are becoming increasingly urbanised whilst the northern and eastern suburbs retain their semi-rural nature. To the west are some areas of public housing, with a high level of recent migrant population and some areas of depressed socio-economic levels. To the east lie some of the more wealthy areas of Melbourne.
This diversity means that Council must be able to respond differently to the needs of all geographic areas of the municipality through its representation. Any representative structure must align the electoral representation to the needs and aspirations of the community. Any electoral divisions within the City should recognise and capture communities of interest. In Banyule there are considerable demographic differences between areas, with some of these areas being large and others quite small. Whilst attempts have been made to draw ward boundaries to reflect communities of interest, the current boundaries, in many areas, cut through communities of interest, and combine other areas of very different and in some ways conflicting needs.(for example Olympia Ward).
It is extremely unlikely that the municipality can be subdivided into wards that include communities of interest and are not unduly diverse. It could however be argued that diversity should be encourage to avoid the establishment of ghetto like areas within the municipality.
With the increasing population and the changing demographic and diversity of population density of Banyule there is a need to re-draw the ward boundaries. It is also desirable to consider the number of residents served by each councillor, with an increase in the number of councillors being required to ease the burden on the representatives.
Increasing the number of councillors would also facilitate a better alignment of communities of interest.
The aims of any subdivision of the municipality should be, as far as is possible to:

- Keep communities of interest together
- Ensure the majority of residents feel that their needs and aspirations are served by their representatives
- Foster a diversity of representation, with hopefully a better gender ration than at present
- Not overly burden councillors with excessive residents to represent
- Not to lead to a feeling of disenfranchisement in communities who may be in a minority.
  Recommendations
  That Banyule City Council be subdivided into 9 wards with a single councillor representing each ward. On figures available from the Banyule City Council Website this would mean that each of the 9 councillors represented approximately 14,000 residents based on 2019 population estimates.
  Whilst no attempt will be made to draw up a map of the municipality, it is suggested that

the wards be based on the following groupings of suburbs, or parts thereof:

1. Ivanhoe
2. Heidelberg West, Bellfield, Heidelberg Heights
3. Ivanhoe East, Eaglemont, Parts of Heidelberg
4. Rosanna Parts of Heidelberg
5. Viewbank Yallambie, Lower Plenty
6. Montmorency Briar Hill, St. Helena-Eltham North
7. Greensborough
8. Macleod,Watsonia
9. Watsonia North, Bundoora

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