

Representation Review - Banyule City Council - Preliminary Submission
Tim Davis - Heidelberg - 14 Jul 2019

Dear VEC

As a long time resident of Banyule (Heidelberg in particular - I have lived in the area for almost 60 years) I am in favour of Banyule increasing the number of councillors to 9. This is in keeping with local population growth in this area compared to the number of representatives for other city councils per population.

I am also in favour of moving to a multi-member ward structure - with 9 councillors it makes sense to have three wards in Banyule with three representatives for each ward. In my view this has advantages over the current system.

Firstly I believe this would be more democratic in that minority groups in each ward would have a chance to have a representative on council. The current system elects a councillor on 50.1% of the votes, potentially leaving 49.9% of the population in the ward not represented. Having three councillors per ward would mean that this minority would also have representation. Surely this is more democratic?

Secondly, we have heard horror stories about people with vested interests, such as property developers, getting onto council to change laws (such as rezoning) to their and their colleagues financial benefit and to the detriment of the local community. If councillors are required to negotiate with other representatives within their ward (that is, the other elected members), there is a built-in check on councillor activities. In my view this provides a mechanism to ensure integrity of our elected representatives.

With regard to ward boundaries, I think it important that each ward have a similar number of people.