Somali Australian Council of Victoria

Date 14/07/2019

Banyule City Council Electoral Representation Review
Submission from the Somali Australian Council of Victoria

The Somali Australian Council of Victoria (SACOV) advocates for the wellbeing of the Somali community in Victoria. We are based in Heidelberg West, which has one of the largest many Somali Australian communities in Victoria. We are committed to building a thriving, achieving and integrated Somali community. We work with government and non-government agencies to provide Somali community members with the information, resources, support they require to fully participate as citizens in Australia.

Banyule City Council is delivering for people from multicultural and disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly local Somalis. A major achievement has been the establishment of the Harmony Centre in the Bell Street Mall, Heidelberg West, which is a vibrant hub that provides a range of valued community services. We are also very pleased with the Banyule jobs and internship program which is providing quality, paid jobs for young people in our community who are struggling to break into the employment market.

SACOV strongly supports the retention of single member Wards in Banyule. We believe that single member wards deliver high quality, accountable and responsive representation to residents in Banyule. SACOV is concerned that if there was a move to multi-member representation the views and aspirations of our community members would be diluted. We are also concerned there could be a breakdown in the high-quality governance and accountability that characterises the Banyule City Council.

SACOV notes there are currently seven single member wards in Banyule. We believe there is merit in expanding the number of wards to nine to provide for a greater opportunity for community representation on the Council.

SACOV can confirm that a member of our Executive would be delighted to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing. Our official contact details are provided in the header above.

Regards,

Jabiri Ali
President
Somali Australian Council of Victoria