

IVANHOE BRANCH OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY

Submission in response to Local Council Representation Review, Banyule City Council, Preliminary Report, August 2019

Background

The Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party represents 75 members, who together with their families reside wholly within the Banyule City Council. Over many years the Ivanhoe Branch has been an active participant in Local Government activities in Banyule City Council, and before that, the City of Heidelberg. There are several former Local Government Councillors who are members of the Branch, and as well several others who have stood as candidates at local government elections. Many members of the Branch are also active in a range of community groups throughout the Banyule City Council.

The Branch has long supported full representative democracy in local government. The Branch also acknowledges the diversity of the population of the Banyule City Council. At a recent meeting of the Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party a motion was passed that the Branch supported an electoral structure of the City of Banyule such that there would be nine councillors representing three wards with three councillors in each ward as a way to provide a better representation of the diverse nature of the Banyule City Council than the current seven single councillor wards. It should be noted that the meeting was attended by members of the Labor Party from other parts of the Banyule Local Government Area including Watsonia, Bundoora, Rosanna and Macleod.

Submission in Response to Preliminary Report

The Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party supports **Option A: Nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.**

Given the current and foreshadowed population growth in the Banyule Local Government area an increase to nine councillors will bring Banyule Council into the same range of voter-to-councillor ratios as other municipalities leading to fairer and more equitable representation.

The option of nine councillors being elected from three three councillor wards affords voters with a greater choice than with single councillor wards. This is especially valid in the Banyule Local government area with its high degree of diversity.

Of the two options for the 3x3 electoral structure, the Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party strongly supports Option A. The proposed ward boundaries shown in Option B suggest a division along socio-economic lines, with the proposed North West Ward defined by social disadvantage and the South Ward by social privilege. The consequence of this would be division and a possible breakdown of cohesion in future Councils. The Ivanhoe Branch of the Labor Party considers this option to be anathema to fair and equitable governance in Banyule. Option A, on the other hand, with multi-councillor ward, would facilitate a fairer and more representative Council, reflecting the diversity of the Banyule Local Government Area.

The Ivanhoe Branch of the Australian Labor Party commends the Victorian Electoral Commission in offering Option A as its preferred model of electoral structure.