

I have studied the preliminary report, and considered the arguments for and against options A, B and C.

I note that all three options result in an increase in councillors from 7 to 9. This certainly is appropriate, given that Banyule currently has the highest voter to councillor ratio of any metropolitan council.

Firstly, **I am strongly opposed to option B**, as I feel that it divides Banyule into three very unequal wards from a socio-economic perspective.

The cited advantages of large, 3 councillor wards include greater likelihood of elections, greater opportunity for new and female councillors, and better representation for minority groups. These are all valid points.

Nevertheless, on balance **I am in favour of option C** over option A. I have lived and voted in the cities of Heidelberg and then Banyule for 44 years. In that time, one of the great strengths of our council has been long-serving ward councillors who are very aware of the local issues in their wards, and well-known, approachable identities in the community. I believe this aspect would be lost with only 3 wards, which would be a great pity.

I support the proposed 9 wards, in particular Hawdon and the new Sherbourne ward. I live in Viewbank, in Hawdon ward. It is difficult for one councillor to truly represent such a large and diverse ward. Often, the issues affecting Viewbank-Banyule-Rosanna and Lower Plenty-Montmorency are quite different. The Plenty River forms a natural and appropriate boundary between the wards.

Jim Cramb