

Victorian Electoral Commission,
Level 11, 530 Collins Street,
Melbourne. 3000



RE: BANYULE Local Council Representation Review.

Reading the VEC Preliminary Report only reinforces my opinion for the adoption of Option C. (9 single ward councillors).

I made representations 12 years ago and have been closely following both the City of Heidelberg and now Banyule councillors for approx. 4 decades.

I have seen how multi-wards operate and the added work for residents in having (as in option A or B) to contact 3 councillors to tell the same story as opposed to (option C) being 1 point of contact. Residents will benefit with their individual councillor concentrating on a smaller area.

Of the local councils that have made the headlines (for all the wrong reasons); they have been multi-ward with some having uneven councillors in each multi-ward as well as being political party aligned. Some Councils are referred to as a particular party Council. Banyule is fortunate to have avoided these labels.

The problem I see with Option A is that conflict will occur if one multi-ward councillor votes differently to the other 2 councillors in the same multi-ward. Council will become fractured if 1 councillor is pro-development and the others respect conservation and environment from the same multi-ward.

Banyule may as well have only 3 councillors – one for each ward if Option A or B is approved. It also means that Banyule will require any 2 multi-wards voting together to pass a motion.

As Option “A” South Ward provides the most rate income and could successfully operate as a Council in its own right; this means that the 2 northern wards are then able to act as a voting block to siphon this wealth to the detriment of the southern suburbs. This is less likely with Option “C”.

I strongly request the VEC to not “*reinvent the wheel*” by returning to a multi-ward system. It has been tried before in our council area and that is why it was changed to 1 single ward councillor with very satisfactory results. Arguments put forward about non contested elections do not wash. It only means

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that the incumbent councillor has been doing an acceptable job it was not worth the effort of standing as an opponent.

The other point about multi-ward councillors that has not appeared in the preliminary report is that of the 3 councillors, some may have full time 'day' jobs while another one could be seen as a "full time" councillor. This means the work load for a multi-ward will be carried by the "full time" councillor as residents will soon realise which councillor they can best contact to resolve an issue.

Thank you once again for allowing participation in our Local Government review process.

Yours faithfully,



Rowan Harrison

