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Subject:

Response submission for VEC Council Review - Banyule Council

My preference is for Option A: Banyule City Council to consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.

The reasons for this preference are:

1. The currently proposed Option A ward boundaries are reasonable.
2. Under this proposed model a constituent(s) can still approach an individual councillor but realistically there must be agreement with 2/3 councillors for the issue to probably proceed. This can serve as initial 'checks and balances' and may decrease the backlog of constituent issues.
3. Being able to count on the support of at least 2/3 councillors in a ward, provides better opportunities for success in bringing up an issue to Council than 1/7 or 1/9.
3. At present Councillors do make a huge commitment to their wards in time and energy, for small recompense. This model may help share the load. Particularly as at Council they are often arguing from a single base, for support from 4/7 Councillors. With Option A there is an opportunity to share the research and preparation for the presentation of issues.
4. Option A provides more opportunity for Banyule residents to work together on issues and projects; working on what unites them as a ward.
5. Proportional representation is a better voting method than first-past-the-post. It will lead to more cultural, ethnic and gender diversity and more opportunities for people to stand for Council.

Suzanne Lees

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