

## **Representation Review - Banyule City Council - Response Submission**

### **Gareth Moorhead - Ivanhoe - 17 Sep 2019**

I write to commend the Preliminary Report of the VEC Representation Review of the Banyule City Council. I strongly support Option A, three councillors in three wards with the ward boundaries as shown in the accompanying map. In the context of the terms of reference of the review this is clearly the best outcome for the people of Banyule:

- it is consistent with the statewide approach;\s\s
- it gives effect to 'one vote one value'; and\s\s
- it ensures communities of interest are fairly represented because the geographical divisions do reflect the striking demographic gradient that runs from Olympic Village to Eaglemont.

In addressing the number of councillors, I note that - excluding the council itself and current councillors who arguably have a material conflict of interest, there was a very strong to increasing the number of councillors.

Considering the arguments presented in the VEC report in support of single member wards, I note that again these reflect in large part the view of the current council which, in my opinion, should be excluded from consideration for the obvious reason of self-interest. The council argues that single member wards make councillors more accountable: this is nonsense. Decisions of council are decisions of council as a whole.

Cr Garotti argues that the current arrangement "fostered strong and supportive relationships between councillors and reduced the risk of competition": this is actually an argument against. Council should not be a self-satisfied club: it should have competition, it should reflect the intrinsic competition within the city for resources.

In regards to local representation, I respectfully submit that the Somalis are wrong. In a proportional system it is much more likely that a representative of that community could themselves be elected to council. This goes to the essential feature of proportional representation: it enables and encourages diversity. Single member wards are a recipe for patronage.

On council wide issues: the argument that the current structure enables both local and city-wide representation is not credibly unique to single-member wards. There is no basis in Banyule for comparison; on the other hand there are numerous examples of highly effective multi-member councils throughout metropolitan Melbourne.

Ultimately this is a question of democracy. If the structure results in the deliberate exclusion of large parts of the population; if it results in few candidates for election and the re-election of the same people time after time, then it is not democratic. Multiple multi-member wards are the only way to achieve this.\s\s