

**PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA-TASMANIA) INC.**



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Response Submission to Electoral Representation [Review](#), Banyule City Council

This submission is also accessible, **with active hyperlinks**, at [http://www.prsa.org.au/2019\\_response\\_banyule.pdf](http://www.prsa.org.au/2019_response_banyule.pdf)

**SUMMARY:**

Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc. is pleased that the VEC's preferred Option A, and Option B, each recommend the election of Banyule City Council entirely by proportional representation using the single transferable vote (**PR-STV**).

PRSAV-T Inc's [Preliminary Submission](#) recommended replacing the present arrangement for Banyule City Council with three 3-councillor wards, or an undivided council of seven councillors. Proportional representation works best when all wards return the same number of councillors, and when the number of councillors elected from each ward is an odd number. The total number of councillors should also be an odd number.

PRSAV-T Inc. opposes Option C, an arrangement of nine single-councillor wards.

PRSAV-T Inc. strongly opposes any single-councillor wards.

The present arrangement means that in each ward up to just under half of the votes cast can be wasted and not result in the election of a candidate. Just as the single-councillor ward system leads to a large proportion of wasted votes, it also allows for minority groupings to control a council with much less than 50% support. Since 50% of the vote in just 5 of 9 single-councillor wards in Banyule City Council would be all that would be needed to gain control of the Council - and those 5 wards would include 55.6% of the voters - it is possible for a minority with just 25.5% of voters overall to achieve control of the Council. In practice, the support for such a grouping would usually be higher than that but, with single-councillor wards, minorities are regularly gaining control of elected bodies at the expense of majorities. The best way to improve on the present low percentage would be to change to a multi-member ward structure.

That manageability would be greatly improved if Victoria were to follow the lead of the Senate and other Australian jurisdictions that use PR-STV, and its own practice for *below-the-line* voting for its Legislative Council, and provide for at least partial optional preferential marking of preferences, which it can do by regulation alone. A simple change to Regulation 22 of Victoria's Local Government (Elections) Regulations 2016 is all that would be required.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

PRSAV-T Inc's submission makes the following key recommendations for Banyule City Council:

- Elections of its councillors should be by proportional representation using the single transferable vote (**PR-STV**),
- Each ward should elect the same odd number of councillors, and
- There should be no single-councillor wards.

PRSAV-T Inc. looks forward to electoral arrangements in Banyule City that empower voters and leave candidates and voters satisfied that community views are fairly reflected in the representation determined as a result of each poll, with uncontested seats minimized, as is most likely with multi-councillor wards.

Geoffrey Goode,  
Secretary, Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.