

**Representation Review - Banyule City Council - Response Submission
Watsonia Traders Association - Watsonia - 17 Sep 2019**

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 17 September 2019 10:20 PM
To: Banyule City Council
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Banyule Council VEC Review

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi there

My name is Jeremy Richards. I am writing as President of the Watsonia Traders Association, which is the representative group of 75+ businesses in the Watsonia Shopping Centre. I previously submitted feedback for Stage 1 of the Banyule review but last minute technological shenanigans saw my submission not able to be accepted.

The Watsonia Traders Association is in favour of Single Councillor Wards. As such we are strongly in favour of option C – 9 single-Councillor wards.

Local Government is the State Government's link with Local Communities. All communities are unique. Having to compete with other Shopping Centres and communities for our Councillors' attention would be detrimental to the way our Councillor can currently communicate with us, and vice versa. Our other method of communicating with Government is through our State Parliament Member. However this is more challenging as he has much more on his plate than just our local concerns. Our Local Councillor fills this role perfectly, and we strongly believe it is in our best interest for this situation to continue.

Our Traders are very busy just running their businesses. We have long enjoyed a great positive relationship with our representative Councillor. It is very convenient to only have to speak to one Councillor for Council-related issues. Having three Councillors representing our area would increase the time we need to spend on building and maintaining relationships with our Councillors. If an important enough issue were needed to be discussed with Council, and it WILL with the potential 7+ year development of North East Link Project almost upon us, we would need to speak to all three to ensure proper representation of our needs/liberties. Whereas at present we only need to speak to one.

Merging Wards would partly take away the Localness of the elected representation of Local Government, and what makes it work so well for us at present.

We request that Option C (9 single Councillor Wards) is the best option for us out of the three options presented at this stage of the Banyule Council review.

Thanks for the opportunity of presenting this view for consideration.

Jeremy Richards
President
Watsonia Traders Association
[REDACTED]

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