

Local Council Representation Review

Final Report



NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL

June 2019

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Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Nillumbik Shire Council continue to consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards with modifications to the current ward boundaries.

This recommendation is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

Executive summary

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third council general election.

The purpose of an electoral representation review is to recommend an electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for people who are entitled to vote at a general election of the council. The matters considered by a review are:

- the number of councillors
- the electoral structure of the council (whether the council should be unsubdivided or divided into wards and, if subdivided, the details of the ward boundaries and the number of councillors per ward).

The VEC conducts all reviews based on three main principles:

1. taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors
2. if subdivided, ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council
3. ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

Current electoral structure

Nillumbik Shire Council currently comprises seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. Prior to the last representation review in 2008, Nillumbik Shire Council was composed of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2008 review final report.

Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions opened at the commencement of the current review on Wednesday 13 February 2019. The VEC received 76 submissions for the representation review of Nillumbik Shire Council by the deadline at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 13 March 2019.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 10 April 2019 with the following options for consideration:

- Option A (preferred option) **Nillumbik Shire Council consist of seven councillors elected from one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards.**
- Option B (alternative option) **Nillumbik Shire Council consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards.**

Response submissions

The VEC received 81 submissions responding to the preliminary report by the deadline at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 8 May 2019.

Public hearings

The VEC conducted two public hearings for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 7.30 pm on Monday 13 May 2019 and at 7.30 pm on Thursday 16 May 2019. In total, 14 people spoke at the public hearings.

Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Nillumbik Shire Council continue to consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards, with modifications to the current ward boundaries.

This electoral structure was designated as Option B in the preliminary report. Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

Background

Legislative basis

The Act requires the VEC to conduct a representation review of each local council in Victoria before every third general council election, or earlier if gazetted by the Minister for Local Government.

The Act states that the purpose of a representation review is to recommend the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides 'fair and equitable representation for people who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.'¹

The Act requires the VEC to consider:

- the number of councillors in a local council
- whether a local council should be unsubdivided or subdivided.

If a local council is subdivided, the VEC must ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council.² On this basis, the review must consider the:

- number of wards
- ward boundaries
- number of councillors that should be elected for each ward.

Public engagement

Public information program

The VEC conducted a public information program to inform the community of the representation review, including:

- public notices printed in local and state-wide papers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases announcing the commencement of the review and the release of the preliminary report
- a submission guide to explain the review process and provide background information on the scope of the review

¹ Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

² *ibid.*

- an information email campaign targeted at known community groups and communities of interest in the local council area
- sponsored social media advertising geo-targeted to users within the local council area
- ongoing information updates and publication of submissions on the VEC website.

More information on the VEC's public information program for the representation review of Nillumbik Shire Council can be found at Appendix 3.

Public consultation

Public input was accepted by the VEC via:

- preliminary submissions at the start of the review
- response submissions to the preliminary report
- public hearings that provided an opportunity for people who had made a response submission to expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process but are not the only consideration. The VEC ensures its recommendations comply with the Act and are formed through careful consideration of public submissions, independent research, and analysis of all relevant factors.

The VEC's principles

Three main principles underlie all the VEC's work on representation reviews:

1. Taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors.

The VEC is guided by its comparisons of local councils of a similar size and category to the council under review. The VEC also considers any special circumstances that may warrant the local council having more or fewer councillors than similar local councils.

2. If subdivided, ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council.

This is the principle of 'one vote, one value', which is enshrined in the Act. This means that every person's vote counts equally.

3. Ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

Each local council contains a number of communities of interest. Where practicable, the electoral structure should be designed to ensure they are fairly represented, and that geographic communities of interest are not split by ward boundaries. This allows elected

councillors to be more effective representatives of the people and interests in their particular local council or ward.

Developing recommendations

The VEC bases its recommendations for particular electoral structures on the following information:

- internal research specifically relating to the local council under review, including data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and .id³; voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll; and other State and local government data sets
- small area forecasts provided by .id
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and similar reviews for State elections
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government
- careful consideration of all input from the public in written submissions received during the review and via oral submissions at the public hearing
- advice from consultants with extensive experience in local government.

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows for a local council to have between five and 12 councillors but does not specify how to decide the appropriate number.⁴ In considering the number of councillors for a local council, the VEC is guided by the Victorian Parliament's intention for fairness and equity in the local representation of voters under the Act.

The starting point in deciding the appropriate number of councillors for a local council is comparing the local council under review to other local councils of a similar size and type (Principle 1). Generally, local councils that have a larger number of voters will have a higher number of councillors. Often large populations are more likely to be diverse, both in the nature and number of their communities of interest and the issues of representation.

However, the VEC also considers the particular circumstances of each local council which could justify fewer or more councillors, such as:

- the nature and complexity of services provided by the Council
- geographic size and topography
- population growth or decline

³ .id is a consulting company specialising in population and demographic analysis and prediction information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

⁴ Section 5B(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

- the social diversity of the local council.

Deciding the electoral structure

The Act allows for a local council ward structure to be unsubdivided—with all councillors elected ‘at-large’ by all voters—or subdivided into a number of wards.

If the local council is to be subdivided into wards, there are three options available:

1. single-councillor wards
2. multi-councillor wards
3. a combination of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards.

A subdivided electoral structure must have internal ward boundaries that provide for a fair and equitable division of the local council.

The Act allows for wards with different numbers of councillors, as long as the number of voters represented by each councillor is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that local council (Principle 2). For example, a local council may have one three-councillor ward with 15,000 voters and two single-councillor wards each with 5,000 voters. In this case, the average number of voters per councillor would be 5,000.

Over time, population changes can lead to some wards in subdivided local councils having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of the review, the VEC corrects any imbalances and considers likely population changes to ensure ward boundaries provide equitable representation for as long as possible.

In considering which electoral structure is most appropriate, the VEC considers the following matters:

- the VEC’s recommendation at the previous representation review and the reasons for that recommendation
- the longevity of the structure, with the aim of keeping voter numbers per councillor within the 10% tolerance for as long as possible (Principle 2)
- communities of interest, consisting of people who share a range of common concerns, such as geographic, economic or cultural associations (Principle 3)
- the number of candidates in previous elections, as large numbers of candidates can lead to an increase in the number of informal (invalid) votes
- geographic factors, such as size and topography
- clear ward boundaries.

Nillumbik Shire Council representation review

Profile of Nillumbik Shire Council

Nillumbik Shire Council is located on Melbourne's urban-rural fringe, approximately 25 kilometres north-east of the Melbourne CBD. The Shire extends into Kinglake National Park in the north and Christmas Hills in the east. The Yarra River forms the Shire's southern boundary, and much of the western boundary follows the Plenty River and Yan Yean Road.

Nillumbik Shire contains many nature and recreation reserves, as well as residential bushland properties that form a 'Green Wedge' in the Shire. The south of the Shire is predominantly urban.

The traditional custodians of the area include the Wurundjeri people.

At the 2016 Census, Nillumbik Shire had an estimated population of 61,273 people, largely concentrated in the south-western corner of the Shire around Eltham (with an estimated population of 18,314), Eltham North (6,805) and Diamond Creek (11,733).⁵ The remaining population is dispersed through smaller townships and properties across the Shire.

Major industries in the Shire include the health care and social assistance industry (employing 12.8% of the population), the construction industry (12.3%) and education and training (11.4%).

Nillumbik Shire's population has a higher median household weekly income (\$2,098) than the Victorian median household weekly income (\$1,419). Its unemployment rate is lower than the average for Greater Melbourne. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage in areas across Australia and it is based on a range of Census characteristics. According to the SEIFA, Nillumbik Shire is one of the least socially and economically disadvantaged areas in Greater Melbourne and in Victoria.⁶

The median age in the Shire is 40 years, which is slightly older than the average age in Greater Melbourne of 36 years. A large proportion of households in the Shire are made up of couples with children, more than for Greater Melbourne. Most people in Nillumbik Shire were born in Australia and speak only English at home. The proportion of the Shire's population identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (0.4%) is small and close to the average for Greater Melbourne (0.5%).

The Shire has a history of interest in the arts and natural environment. Montsalvat artist colony is in Nillumbik Shire, as well as conservation reserves for the threatened Eltham Copper Butterfly.

⁵ Demographic data compiled from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Quickstats 2016' and 2016 Census.

⁶ .id., 'Nillumbik Shire: SEIFA by local government area', .id., <https://profile.id.com.au/nillumbik/seifa-disadvantage>, accessed 11 April 2018. See also, ABS, 'New data from the 2011 Census reveals Victoria's most advantaged and disadvantaged areas', Media Release, ABS, 28 March 2013, [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2011~Media%20Release~2011%20Census%20\(SEIFA\)%20for%20Victoria%20\(Media%20Release\)-3](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2011~Media%20Release~2011%20Census%20(SEIFA)%20for%20Victoria%20(Media%20Release)-3), accessed 11 April 2019.

Parts of Nillumbik Shire were also significantly impacted by the February 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Current electoral structure

Nillumbik Shire Council currently comprises seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards. Prior to the last representation review in 2008, Nillumbik Shire Council was composed of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2008 review final report.

Preliminary submissions

At the close of submissions on Wednesday 13 March 2019, the VEC had received 76 submissions for the representation review of Nillumbik Shire Council. A list of people who made a preliminary submission can be found in Appendix 1.

Number of councillors

Twenty-seven preliminary submissions commented on the number of councillors and most of these submissions (20) identified seven as the appropriate number of councillors for Nillumbik Shire Council. Overall, a large number of submissions (49) did not state a preference for the number of councillors. This number included 14 individual submissions and 35 form-letter submissions.

Seven submitters proposed a different number of councillors. One submitter supported seven councillors but suggested the number could be six. The remaining six submitters wanted to change the number of councillors, and suggested increasing to eight, nine or 11, mainly to fit with their proposed electoral structures. One of these submitters suggested that more councillors may provide more representation for the rural communities living in Nillumbik Shire's Green Wedge.⁷

Electoral structure

Most submissions (63) expressed a desire to change to an unsubdivided electoral structure or multi-councillor wards so that the proportional representation system is used during council elections. These preliminary submissions frequently stated that the management of the Green Wedge is a key issue for voters and that there has been a longstanding debate about how to balance conservation needs with development priorities in the Green Wedge. The preliminary submissions commonly stated that 'swinging' election results in Nillumbik Shire had led to one group or another (described as 'pro-conservation' or 'pro-development') dominating the Council. Most submitters wanted more balance on the Council. Focusing on the merits of the proportional

⁷ Green Wedge refers to a significant area set aside by the State Government of Victoria to conserve rural activities, natural features and resources, from the growing urban areas of Metropolitan Melbourne. See, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Victoria), 'Green Wedges', <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/green-wedges>, accessed 27 March 2019.

representation system, these submitters argued that changing to an unsubdivided electoral structure or multi-councillor wards could lead to more diverse views being represented and balance among councillors and in terms of council decision-making and planning.

Of the 63 submissions that supported changing the electoral structure, submitters preferred either an unsubdivided electoral structure or multi-councillor wards, with a small number of submitters preferring only an unsubdivided structure or only multi-councillor wards. Several proposals for multi-councillor wards were put forward by submitters. The most common model consisted of three wards that included one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards.

In contrast, a smaller number of submissions (10) wanted to retain the current single-councillor ward structure. Nillumbik Shire Council's submission favoured retaining the status quo of seven councillors elected from single-councillor wards, arguing that the current model is an accurate reflection of the grouping of townships in the Shire into distinct communities of interest.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 10 April 2019. The VEC considered public submissions and research findings when formulating the options presented in the preliminary report.

Number of councillors

When considering the appropriate number of councillors for a local council area, the VEC assesses population data and other factors which may warrant an increase or decrease in the number of councillors, such as projected population growth or special circumstances relating to distinct communities of interest.

The VEC considered seven to be the most appropriate number of councillors for Nillumbik Shire Council. Nillumbik Shire is a slow-growing local council area compared to other local councils at the urban-rural interface. At present, Nillumbik Shire continues to be one of the least socially and economically disadvantaged local council areas in Victoria.

While the VEC found no special circumstances to increase the number of councillors, it also did not consider it appropriate to reduce the number of councillors. Nillumbik Shire Council is responsible for managing a Green Wedge for its community and for Victoria, which includes managing the threat of bush fires that have impacted significantly on communities in the Shire. Nillumbik Shire's many active interest groups were also considered a reason not to reduce the number of councillors.

Electoral structure

In its preliminary report, the VEC considered the issues raised in the preliminary submissions. It was able to consider the election results from the past three general elections, which indicated

that there had been substantial change in the composition of Nillumbik Shire Council from one election to the next. The VEC considered that it is not unexpected for new councils to pursue different objectives than their predecessors after an election, especially when there are several new councillors. Nonetheless, the VEC appreciated submitters' views that an unsubdivided electoral structure or multi-councillor wards would give voters greater choice at election time and may bring broader perspectives to council decision-making and greater stability of council.

The VEC also recognised that there are some advantages to an unsubdivided electoral structure for Nillumbik Shire. An unsubdivided electoral structure would provide voters with the widest possible choice of candidates at elections, enable both geographic and non-geographic communities of interest to elect a representative, and encourage councillors to take a whole-of-shire approach to local representation. However, the VEC ultimately determined that an unsubdivided electoral structure was not viable as an option based on the large numbers of candidates during Nillumbik Shire Council elections. With consistently large numbers of candidates, an unsubdivided electoral structure for Nillumbik Shire Council would result in a very lengthy ballot paper. In the VEC's experience, longer ballot papers can be confusing for voters and more difficult to fill out correctly, leading to higher levels of informal voting through voter error, thereby effectively disenfranchising these voters.

Based on these considerations, the VEC considered multi-councillor ward structures and modelled possible options based on received preliminary submissions as well as from the 2008 representation review. Out of the models proposed in the submissions, a three-ward option consisting of one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards was considered the most favourable. This model grouped the key urban centres into wards, thus ensuring that the towns within the Green Wedge would be encompassed by a single ward, without splitting any geographic communities of interest. The model was also considered favourable as it would provide proportional representation across the three wards and it would guarantee two councillors to represent the voters in the Green Wedge. A general positive feature of multi-councillor wards is that they also facilitate the representation of non-geographic communities, so council is more likely to reflect the diversity in the population and voters are offered a choice of councillors to approach for local issues. This model was presented as Option A in the preliminary report.

While recognising that most submissions preferred changing the electoral structure, the VEC noted that there were also strong arguments in favour of retaining the current single-councillor ward electoral structure. The single-councillor ward electoral structure reflects the very local nature of Nillumbik Shire's communities of interest which, as found in the previous representation review, appear to be very 'place-based'. The structure would also guarantee a distribution of local councillors across the Shire. The VEC further noted that one of the strengths of single-

councillor wards is that councillors in this structure are more likely to be accessible to their constituents and to be both knowledgeable and aware of local issues. The current structure was presented as Option B in the preliminary report, with a modification to ensure that Swipers Gully Ward would remain within the legislated ratio of voters-to-councillors in the present and up to the next scheduled representation review.

To reflect the call for the proportional representation system to be used at elections, the VEC put forward a multi-councillor ward structure as Option A and an updated single-councillor ward structure as Option B for further consultation. Both models were considered to achieve good representation for the communities of interest in the Shire and to meet the legislated requirement of voters-to-councillors in the present and up to the 2028 local government elections.

Options

After careful consideration, the VEC put forward the following options:

- Option A (preferred option)
Nillumbik Shire Council consist of seven councillors elected from one three-councillor ward and two two-councillor wards.
- Option B (alternative option)
Nillumbik Shire Council consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards.

Public response

Response submissions

The VEC accepted submissions responding to the preliminary report from Wednesday 10 April 2019 until 5.00 pm on Wednesday 8 May 2019. The VEC received a total of 81 response submissions. Submissions were mainly from individual residents and ratepayers within the Shire. Several organisations and groups also submitted: Friends of Nillumbik, Green Wedge Protection Group, Nillumbik Pro Active Land Owners (PALS), Nillumbik Rate Payers Association, Warrandyte Community Association, and there were seven pro forma submissions submitted under 'Nillumbik Residents for Representation'. The VEC received a submission from Nillumbik Shire Council, and two councillors (Councillor Jane Ashton and Councillor Grant Brooker) made separate response submissions in this final stage of the review.

The VEC also received a submission from the Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc. (PRSA). The PRSA submitted in favour of an unsubdivided electoral structure but indicated that it would also support the VEC's Option A as this option would provide proportional representation using the single transferable vote. However, the PRSA noted that Option A included 'the serious disadvantage of a lack of parity between the wards and the quotas', and it was not as favourable as an unsubdivided electoral structure. The PRSA was particularly opposed to Option B, stating that single-councillor wards lead to a large proportion of wasted votes and allow for minority groups to control a council with much less than 50% of voters' support.

A list of people who made a response submission can be found in Appendix 1. Table 1 indicates the level of support for each option.

Table 1: Preferences expressed in response submissions

Option A	Option B	Other	Out of scope
29*	37	16†	3

*This included one submitter who proposed modifications to Option A that were unclear.

†This number included eight submitters who supported an unsubdivided electoral structure.

Number of councillors

One submitter who supported Option A proposed eight councillors. The submitter provided no details in his submission for preferring eight over seven councillors. Most other response submissions supported retaining seven councillors with a small number of submitters providing reasons why they thought the present number of councillors was justified. Cr Ashton commented that the current number of councillors would continue to be appropriate given the size of

Nillumbik Shire and there being no significant population growth predicted for the next eight years.

Electoral structure

While most preliminary submitters had supported a change to multi-councillor wards or an unsubdivided electoral structure, the response submissions were more divided, with 38 submitters supporting the present single-councillor ward electoral structure (as in Option B) and 30 submitters advocating for a change to multi-councillor wards (as in Option A). A number of supporters of Option A also indicated a preference for an unsubdivided electoral structure, which the VEC had not presented as an option for reasons discussed in the preliminary report. These submitters felt that Option A was 'on the way' to an unsubdivided electoral structure, which they ultimately preferred.

There were also 15 submitters who could not be categorised as supporters of either Option A or Option B. Of these submitters, eight expressed strong support for an unsubdivided electoral structure. Of the 15 submitters, two submitters did not support either of the VEC's options and one submitter who supported multi-councillor wards did not explicitly state support for the VEC's Option A.

Support for Option A

Supporters of Option A frequently stated that communities of interest in Nillumbik Shire are 'geographically large and comingled'. In its submission, the Warrandyte Community Association commented that 'rather than trying to cut Nillumbik up into geographic communities of interest', Option A would instead divide the Shire into 'geographically similar wards', indicating that they considered Option A to be a good balance between representing non-geographic and geographic communities of interest in the Shire.

Supporters of Option A advocated for multi-councillor wards primarily because it would ensure the use of the proportional representation system at elections. Option A supporters stated that there are marginal wards in Nillumbik Shire Council elections, which can leave up to 50% of voters in these wards unrepresented. They explained that community views are often divided in Nillumbik and argued that the current single-councillor ward structure can lead to situations where up to half of the residents in a ward feel they cannot approach their ward councillor as this councillor does not share their views. Supporters of Option A therefore advocated for proportional representation as it is more likely to deliver a council which represents the diversity in Nillumbik Shire. They also argued that proportional representation would reduce the likelihood of 'swinging councils' in which one group dominated council and was overturned by the opposing group at the next election.

Supporters of Option A as well as several submitters who strongly favoured an unsubdivided electoral structure suggested modifying the VEC's Option A by merging the proposed Plenty Valley and Artisan Hills wards. They argued that a two-ward electoral structure presented advantages over and above Option A by providing a structure where candidates need to reach almost equal quotas for election. They also reasoned that it would provide a greater choice of candidates to voters, a more even distribution of voters to councillors, and it would ensure that the small Green Wedge areas in Plenty and Yarrambat were not separated from the main part of the Green Wedge.

Support for Option B

Supporters of Option B argued that the current single-councillor ward electoral structure continued to be the most relevant electoral structure. They commented that the current electoral structure reflects the distinct town-based geographic communities of interest in Nillumbik Shire, and that this characterisation remains an accurate reflection of community of interest in the Shire.

Option B supporters rejected several arguments made by Option A supporters. They were critical of the characterisation of the Shire's main communities of interest as either 'pro-environment' or 'pro-development'. They emphasised that the current Council has not been 'pro-development' as it has not lobbied the State Government for changes to the Urban Growth Boundary or proposed subdivisions that would indicate as such. Some Option B supporters also argued that changing councillors at each election is not a sign of problems in the Shire but of democracy in action. In terms of marginal wards, Cr Ashton pointed out that five out of seven wards at the recent election were won by candidates who polled over 16% of first preference votes, with most polling at least 25% of first preference votes in their wards.

Comparing Option B to Option A, supporters of Option B also reasoned that the present electoral structure reduces the number of candidates for voters and enables voters to get to know their candidates better. Councillors are also more likely to be more involved, knowledgeable and accountable to local residents. In terms of councillor workloads, Option B supporters argued that the current electoral structure has advantages over multi-councillor wards as it is more likely to ensure that there is 'no confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors'. Option B supporters, such as Cr Ashton, stated that in this structure, it 'makes it absolutely clear' to voters who your councillor is and that it does not prevent residents from approaching other councillors with regard to shire-wide concerns.

Option B supporters raised concerns about the representation of rural landowners in the Green Wedge in Option A. They argued that the current single-councillor wards provided better representation for rural voters by ensuring that the workload of both the Bunjil and Sugarloaf ward councillors were reasonable. They also argued that the current electoral structure provides

wards which encompass both rural and suburban areas, which has meant more and better representation of rural voters in the Shire.

Out of scope submissions

There were several response submitters that raised concerns, which were outside the scope of this representation review. These included several submissions requesting assurances regarding specific properties in the Shire and their inclusion within the Urban Growth Boundary and within certain wards. There were also submissions that drew attention to issues to do with animal management and the management of the Green Wedge. These are policy and operational matters of the State Government (in respect to the Urban Growth Boundary) and Nillumbik Shire Council (in respect to the other matters) and cannot be considered through this review.

Similarly, there were submitters arguing that rural residents are at a distinct disadvantage in a shire which has a majority urban population and a large rural area. They reasoned that there are smaller numbers of rural residents in the Shire and most voters as well as councillors are from the suburban areas. These submitters were aggrieved that suburban voters and councillors do not experience the same issues that affect rural residents but have the majority of votes and responsibility of making decisions that affect rural residents. One of these submitters called for a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government that a review of Victorian council areas, such as Nillumbik Shire, be conducted so that urban and rural residents are 'equally and appropriately represented by their (different) local council'. These concerns cannot be addressed by the VEC.

Public hearings

The VEC conducted two public hearings for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 7.30 pm on Monday 13 May 2019 and 7.30 pm on Thursday 16 May 2019. Both public hearings were held in the Nillumbik Shire Council Chamber, 14-34 Civic Drive, Greensborough. A total of 14 speakers presented to the panel over the two public hearings.

At the first hearing there were five speakers. This included one supporter of Option B, one supporter of Option A and three speakers who expressed strong support for an unsubdivided electoral structure and some support for Option A.

At the second public hearing there were nine speakers. This included six supporters of Option B and three supporters of Option A.

At both public hearings, speakers generally reiterated the main themes from their response submissions and were provided with an opportunity to expand on key arguments.

A list of people who spoke at the public hearings can be found in Appendix 1.

Communities of interest

At the public hearings, the VEC heard two distinct views on communities of interest in Nillumbik Shire. Supporters of Option A stated that there are widespread communities of interest that are not defined by the current ward boundaries but are based on shared values on issues such as the protection of the environment and the Green Wedge, planning and development, and the selling of assets in the community. Those who supported an unsubdivided electoral structure (an option that was not put up by the VEC) stated that Nillumbik Shire has both geographic and non-geographic communities of interest. Supporters of an unsubdivided electoral structure reiterated that in a subdivided electoral structure, voters are 'forced to vote' for candidates representing a geographic community of interest (their ward) but in an unsubdivided electoral structure, voters can choose to vote for any candidate. Supporters of Option B presented an opposing view, stating that communities of interest in the Shire are being represented in the current single-councillor wards, which reflect the distinct 'place-based' communities in the Shire. The VEC commonly heard that the Green Wedge is significant, and that most of the Shire's population has an interest in caring for the Green Wedge whether as residents or visitors.

Party-backed candidates in single-councillor versus multi-councillor wards

Supporters of Option B often commented that single-councillor wards present several advantages over multi-councillor wards in relation to candidates. Option B supporters told the VEC that candidates have less area to cover in single-member wards and they are more likely to be able to finance their own campaigns, without looking to political parties for support. There is therefore less likelihood of influence from partisan politics in a single-councillor ward structure at council elections. On the other hand, supporters of Option A stated that there is no more or less potential for party-backed candidates to stand in an electoral structure consisting of multi-councillor wards.

Representation of rural residents in the Green Wedge

The VEC heard from mostly rural residents during the second public hearing. Most of these speakers supported the current single-councillor structure (Option B) stating that it has provided two rural councillors from the Green Wedge. Option B supporters commonly argued that the current electoral structure is better than Option A as the two rural Green Wedge councillors have clearly defined and manageable workloads. They argued that a single ward covering the entire Green Wedge would be a challenge for the two Green Wedge councillors who would have larger distances to cover if Option A was recommended. On the other hand, Option A supporters argued that the proposed electoral structure in their preferred option included two councillors for the Green Wedge and ensured that the Wedge is not split by a ward boundary. These submitters stated that there was no less representation for rural residents in Option A compared to Option B.

Option B supporters were often critical of the VEC's reliance on the Urban Growth Boundary in informing the ward boundaries presented in Option A. They argued that Option A did more to cut rural areas out of urban wards, which was a drawback for rural representation and the urban-rural balance in the Shire. They commented that most of the current single-councillor wards have small areas of rural land and therefore councillors who are knowledgeable on both urban and rural issues. Option A supporters, on the other hand, were positive about the clearer division stating that the boundaries in Option A can ensure that rural votes are not being 'cut into' by urban populations, and ensuring rural interests are maintained. They also argued that the rural areas in the current wards represented such small numbers of voters that they were unlikely to be a key consideration for councillors in the predominantly suburban wards.

Representation and division of councillors' work

Option A supporters pointed out that councillors have been able to share their work and ensure that their workloads are manageable in other council areas with multi-councillor wards. Option B supporters, in contrast, told the VEC that multi-councillor wards could lead to councillors 'passing the buck' and leaving others to do the work. Nillumbik Ratepayers Association reiterated such concerns, stating that multi-councillor ward electoral structures allow for 'lazy councillors' and could promote a 'dominant councillor'. The Association similarly argued that single-councillor wards encourage all councillors to be proactive. Councillor Karen Egan (Mayor of Nillumbik Shire Council) and Cr Ashton, who respectively represent the Bunjil and Sugarloaf wards in the Green Wedge, stated that the current single-councillor wards provided the best arrangement in terms of dividing up their workload and ensuring that they can also contribute effectively to shire-wide issues. Cr Egan told the VEC that a 'portfolio system' operating currently in the Council ensured that councillors could contribute to specific shire-wide issues in addition to their ward-based duties.

Management of the Green Wedge and swinging councils

At the public hearing, the Mayor, Cr Egan spoke about the division between 'pro-environment' and 'pro-development' groups. She rejected comments that council had 'swung' towards pro-development views, stating that the current council was 'in the middle of the spectrum' with 'two blues, two reds and three basically in the middle'.

The Mayor also rejected the statement that Nillumbik Shire was divided in the same way as the advocates of Option A have described. She told the VEC that there are no pro-development groups, 'they are just not extreme environmentalists' and said that these descriptions are not supported by the wider community. The Mayor commented that everyone values the Green Wedge and the amenity it provided, and stated, 'we're all green in Nillumbik, what is contentious is the shade of the green'. The Mayor further noted that during the 2016 general election, there were two councillors that had stepped down, which reduced the extent to which the composition

of the Council had changed from the 2012 to 2016 elections and cast some doubt on Option A supporters' comments that there have been wholesale swings from one election to another.

At the same time, Option A supporters and supporters of an unsubdivided electoral structure generally spoke on the basis that this division existed. Several submitters said that they would find it difficult to approach their ward councillor who has opposing views. Chris Curtis of Hurstbridge responded to the VEC's questions about the division between pro-environment and pro-development groups. He commented that the Shire has a history of 'big swings from one side to the other, exacerbated by that single councillor ward structure'. He told the VEC that the Council should be representing both sides of any debate as well as the nuanced views in between, which was one of the reasons why he supported an unsubdivided electoral structure.

Other Option B supporters including the Nillumbik Pro Active Land Owners (PALS) spoke about the importance of representing rural landowners in the Shire. In terms of stability of the Council, Nillumbik PALS argued that there should be no change to the electoral structure as the Shire was in a period of 'reestablishment of trust' with its constituents due to recent issues with council administration and the Green Wedge planning scheme amendments.

An unsubdivided electoral structure

The VEC heard strong support from several speakers for an unsubdivided electoral structure at the first public hearing. Mr Curtis told the VEC that an unsubdivided structure was the most appropriate electoral structure for Nillumbik Shire. He told the VEC it would deliver proportional representation in the fairest and most effective manner for Nillumbik Shire Council voters. Voters would have the greatest choice of candidates that represent geographic or non-geographic communities of interest. Mr Curtis stated that in an unsubdivided electoral structure it is unlikely that any single group would be elected with a majority of positions on council. In addition, according to his assessment of the VEC's options, in Option B up to 50% of votes are 'wasted' as they are not counted in support of a winning candidate, while the VEC's Option A was better as it resulted in less 'wasted votes' and it delivered proportional representation – although not to the full extent that an unsubdivided structure could provide.

Mr Curtis acknowledged, however, that the ballot paper in an unsubdivided structure would pose a problem for the voters of Nillumbik Shire Council, which has tended to have large numbers of candidates at local council elections. Other submitters who expressed strong support for an unsubdivided electoral structure requested the VEC advocate to change the requirement that all boxes need to be filled out on local government election ballot papers, which is another matter that is outside the scope of these reviews.

Findings and recommendation

The VEC's findings

The VEC considered the key themes expressed in the submissions as well as internal research and analysis to develop its final recommendation. Its recommendation complies with the legislative equality requirement and acknowledges communities of interest. The VEC recommends that Nillumbik Shire Council remain with seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards, with modifications to the current ward boundaries to accommodate forecasted population growth in the Swipers Gully Ward. This was presented as Option B in the VEC's preliminary report.

Numbers of councillors

Determining the number of councillors for Nillumbik Shire Council was not a substantially disputed element of this review. The VEC recommends retaining the existing number of seven councillors for Nillumbik Shire based on the size of the Shire, the average number of voters per councillor and the slower population growth for the Shire. In some cases, special circumstances may exist in a local council area that support a recommendation for more or fewer councillors. While Nillumbik Shire Council has its own characteristics and challenges, which includes managing a Green Wedge for its community and for Victoria, the VEC's analysis and information provided in the submissions did not identify any special circumstances that would justify changing the number of councillors.

Electoral structure

The VEC received strong arguments from those who supported Option A and those who supported Option B in Nillumbik Shire Council. Having considered the arguments, the VEC recommends retaining the existing electoral structure.

Option A: multi-councillor wards

While the VEC's preferred option at the preliminary stage was Option A, on balance, the VEC found that the current electoral structure (Option B) is delivering fair and equitable representation for voters in Nillumbik Shire Council. The current electoral structure represents local geographic communities of interest in the Shire, which do not seem to have changed significantly since the last review. Councillors have also been representing the entire shire through a portfolio system.

Option A was however a valid option. It complied with the VEC's key principles including the legislated ratio of voters-to-councillors, which must be within the plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of votes per councillor across the local council, in each of its wards. It also followed the Shire's broad geographic divisions in its grouping of urban and rural areas, with

suburbs such as Eltham, Greensborough, Plenty and Diamond Creek grouped into two distinct wards and the Green Wedge included almost entirely in its own ward.

In the response submissions, supporters of Option B criticised Option A for following the Urban Growth Boundary and argued that it created a rigid divide between urban and rural areas.⁸ Supporters of Option B also argued that the current single-councillor structure provided better representation for rural residents than Option A, as it ensured six out of seven wards contained some rural land (with two wards representing the Green Wedge). They argued that it gave most councillors and residents some ownership of rural issues and meant most councillors would be conversant with issues to do with rural areas. The VEC considers that the difference in the representation for rural voters is minimal between the two options as Option A would also include some rural areas in its proposed Plenty Valley and Montsalvat Wards. The VEC also considers that having rural areas in all wards does not necessarily improve representation for rural voters as they are split across ward boundaries.

The VEC's Option A, did however, include more of the populated areas of Eltham and Research in the proposed Montsalvat Ward than in the existing electoral structure, where parts of Research are in the Sugarloaf Ward. The VEC considered it an advantage to ensure that urban populations are represented without cutting into the votes of rural residents. Another advantage of Option A is that it included more of the rural areas of Yarrambat into its predominantly rural Artisan Hills Ward. As supporters of Option A have argued, this option avoids splitting geographic communities of interest and ensures that suburban populations in the Plenty Valley and Montsalvat Wards are represented without 'cutting into the votes of rural areas', as the Warrandyte Community Association described in its response submission.

Throughout this review, supporters of Option A have stated that the Shire is divided along 'pro-environment' and 'pro-development' lines. Supporters of Option B, on the other hand, opposed this description, arguing that it is 'too simplistic' and is a way of describing the community which is not supported by most of the Shire. The VEC notes, however, the division of opinion in Nillumbik Shire. This was evident in the submissions and at the public hearings where supporters of Option A and B appeared to naturally separate. While Option A was a valid option, the VEC found, through submitters, that a change to Option A could potentially result in a polarised council where one councillor from either side on any key divisive issue is elected in each multi-councillor ward. The VEC notes that voters will assess candidates and vote based on the key issues facing the council. The VEC considers that no electoral structure will solve a polarisation of opinion in Nillumbik Shire.

⁸ The VEC notes that the Urban Growth Boundary was only applied to a part of the boundary around Diamond Creek in the proposed Plenty Valley Ward. It was not applied across all relevant boundaries between the proposed Plenty Valley and Montsalvat wards, and the Artisan Hills Ward.

Although it is not a key issue, the VEC notes some submitters were also concerned about the different quotas for election in the two two-councillor wards compared to the three-councillor ward. Different quotas are often perceived as inequitable. The VEC acknowledges that equal sized wards are ideal but often the number of councillors and the communities of interest preclude this from happening and in practice, they make little difference to equality in representation. With seven councillors the logical split was two two-councillor wards and one three councillor ward.

Unsubdivided electoral structure and two-ward model

The VEC considered an unsubdivided electoral structure at the preliminary stage of the review. As discussed in its preliminary report, an unsubdivided electoral structure, while presenting several advantages, would not be viable given the large number of candidates in Nillumbik Shire Council's elections. As several submitters have also noted, a legislative change in the electoral system to allow for optional preferential voting would be required for an unsubdivided electoral structure to be viable for Nillumbik Shire Council.⁹

In addition, as heard through some of the response submissions received, Option A would not fully meet the desired benefits of proportional representation in the community. Following the response submissions, the VEC also considered the suggestion of a two-ward electoral structure based on alterations to Option A but found that there were significant drawbacks to this proposal. The proposal would produce a large ward that includes the entire Green Wedge and the urban populations in the south-west of the Shire, with the remaining ward encompassing Eltham. This could create or reinforce any perceived divide in the community between Eltham and the rest of the Shire. Furthermore, in this electoral structure, candidates nominating from the higher density areas may find campaigning easier, as they have access to a significant proportion of the voting population, which could lead to a situation where there is reduced representation from the smaller rural communities. There would also likely be a large ballot paper in the ward with four councillors.

Option B: single-councillor wards

On balance, the VEC found that Option B and the current electoral structure best provided fair and equitable representation. A key principle of the VEC's representation reviews is to consider the representation of communities of interest in a local council area. The VEC received submissions from residents who argued that the most salient communities of interest are non-geographic. On the other hand, it also received submissions stating that the current single-

⁹ Under the full preferential voting system, voters place a 1 in the box against their preferred candidate on the ballot paper. Voters then number all remaining boxes in order of their preference. Optional preferential voting is similar, except that voters do not need to number every box. Optional preferential voting would be likely to reduce the number of informal votes in local council elections where there are a large number of candidates. On the preferential voting system see, Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), 'Preferential Voting', accessed 24 May 2019, <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/Voting/PreferentialVoting.html>

councillor electoral structure reflected the very local 'place-based' communities of interest in the Shire. The VEC recognises that there are non-geographic communities of interest based on a strong sense of shared values in Nillumbik Shire. It also recognises that there is substantial community interest in how the Green Wedge is to be managed and conserved, which was apparent in the submissions and at the public hearing.

However, the VEC considered that the most prominent feature of Nillumbik Shire – its distinct towns and place-based communities of interest – have not markedly changed since the last representation review. It did not receive evidence that this characteristic has altered substantially over the years. Population growth in Nillumbik Shire has been modest for comparable local council areas at the urban-rural interface. The Shire comprises over 20 towns and suburbs and has a largely culturally and linguistically homogenous population that generally experiences less social and economic disadvantage compared to many other local council areas in Victoria. This also does not seem to have changed. At the last review, the VEC noted that the many townships in the Shire appeared to be quite independent, with their own sporting clubs, Landcare associations, community groups and Country Fire Authority brigades, as well as unique identities and heritage. It considered that these strong local communities may have a better opportunity for fair and equitable representation using a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

In terms of the issues raised by supporters of Option A including their concerns about 'council swings', the VEC acknowledges the substantial changes in the composition of council that have occurred in Nillumbik Shire. At the public hearing however, the Mayor stated that the current councillors include 'two blues, two reds and three basically in the middle', indicating the current council may represent diverse views.

The VEC has commonly noted that in single-councillor wards, there is the risk of councillors developing parochial attitudes to representing the local council area. The VEC heard that this is not the case in Nillumbik Shire. At the public hearing, the Mayor stated that the Council governs through a portfolio system in which councillors are allocated responsibility to manage issues and to represent residents on matters that are relevant across the Shire. She told the VEC that although councillors have been elected in wards, the Council ensures that every councillor has a responsibility to lead one of seven different areas that are relevant across the Shire. According to Nillumbik Shire Council's website, councillors sit on a special committee established under Section 86 of the *Local Government Act 1989* – the Future Nillumbik Committee. The committee agenda is structured on the portfolios assigned to individual councillors.¹⁰ The Mayor noted that

¹⁰ In addition to Ordinary and Special meetings, Nillumbik Shire councillors sit on a special committee. The Committee agenda is structured on the portfolios assigned to individual councillors. There are seven portfolios that include Community Services, Economic Development and Marketing, Environment and Sustainability, Finance and Governance, Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure, and Planning. See: Nillumbik Shire Council, 'Committees', accessed 24 May 2019, <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Committees>.

councillors can be allocated a relevant subject area depending on their skills, and that the system promotes ward-based councillors to be connected to the whole of the shire. The VEC considers that the Council's allocation of portfolios allows for both shire-wide representation and representation of ward-based issues.

The VEC also heard that voters generally have high expectations regarding their local councillors. While Option A supporters argued that the marginal wards at the Shire's elections can leave up to 50% of voters unable to approach their ward councillor, which the VEC recognises could be the case, there were indications at the public hearing that this has not prevented residents from approaching councillors outside of their ward.

The VEC considers that there can be distinct advantages with the single-councillor electoral structure for the representation of very local communities of interest. Candidates are more likely to be known to voters. Councillors deal with a wide range of issues and queries from residents and the single-councillor ward structure makes it clear to residents who their local representative is, and who they can contact in the first instance regarding local issues. The single-councillor electoral structure is also more likely to promote councillor accountability to their constituents and voters are more likely to be able to clearly assess their local councillor's performance. The VEC also recognises that smaller sized wards can assist councillors to manage their large workloads and it can support candidates by reducing the area they need to campaign within, especially in the large rural area of the Shire.

Single-councillor ward structures can be problematic in some local council areas due to the legislative necessity for voter numbers in all wards to be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters to councillors in each ward across the council area. However, unlike some other local council areas on the urban-rural fringe, ward boundaries in Nillumbik Shire are not highly susceptible to change due to the modest rate of population growth. The VEC notes that this makes single-councillor wards more appropriate for Nillumbik Shire than for some other local council areas, which have particularly high or uneven population growth rates.

The VEC recognises that there are clearly issues such as balancing the management and conservation priorities for the Green Wedge that are important to many shire residents. There have been, however, no significant demographic changes in the distribution of the population in the Shire or its social, cultural and economic composition that would suggest change to the very local nature of the communities of interest in the Shire. In addition, the VEC heard that councillors are required to represent their ward constituents and to consider issues relevant across the Shire. Voters have also been able to contact councillors outside of their ward for representation on issues that are broader than the very local issues within their ward. On balance, the VEC considers that the current electoral structure is providing fair and equitable representation for voters in Nillumbik Shire Council.

Modification to Swipers Gully and Sugarloaf wards

Small area population forecasts were used by the VEC in this review of Nillumbik Shire Council. These small area forecasts provide greater accuracy in terms of the location of population growth.

In retaining the existing electoral structure, it was necessary to revisit current boundaries because the VEC found that one ward (Swipers Gully Ward) required an adjustment to its boundaries to accommodate forecast growth until the next scheduled representation review and ensure it remains within the legislated requirement. The boundary change took a small number of voters (776 voters) from the existing Sugarloaf Ward into Swipers Gully Ward to ensure that Swipers Gully Ward would remain within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor across the local council. This was a minor adjustment affecting approximately 1.6% of the voting population in the Shire. The boundary change has also meant that voters in the suburb of Research, who had been in Sugarloaf Ward, have been moved into Swipers Gully Ward, which includes a substantial population of Eltham voters.

The boundary change is visible in the updated model of the current structure (see Appendix 2). Overall, the VEC received no substantial opposition to this proposed modification in the response submissions and at the public hearings.

Ward names

Although ward names are not the VEC's major focus for representation reviews, they are important to be able to clearly identify wards and to provide local meaning and relevance for constituents. In considering the ward names for the current electoral structure, the VEC did not vary the names of the wards as it did not receive community opposition to the existing ward names.

If the Nillumbik Shire community is minded to prefer alternative ward names, the Act provides for ward names to be altered by an Order in Council.

The VEC's recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends that Nillumbik Shire Council continue to consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards, with modifications to the current ward boundaries.

This recommendation is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the *Local Government Act 1989*. The model was designated as Option B in the VEC's preliminary report for this review.

Please see Appendix 2 for a detailed map of this recommended structure.

Appendix 1: Public involvement

Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions were received from:

Bagusauskas, Vince	McDonald, Mark
Bailey, Greg	Meade, Janet
Campbell, Narelle	Moore, Ian
Collum, Alexander	Moore, Marilyn
Cope, Kim	Nicholls, David
Crichton, Ingrid	Nillumbik Pro Active Land Owners
Curtis, Chris	Nillumbik Ratepayers Association
Davies, Janice	*35 submissions under the group 'Nillumbik Residents for Representation'
Davies, Richard	Nillumbik Shire Council
Elderfield, Barry	Niven, Rex
Elderfield, Lorraine	Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
Ellis, Mel	Ramcharan, Ben
Fitzpatrick, Anne	Russell, Betty
Fox, Megan	Shnookal, Liezl
Gillson, Peter	Simeoni, Luke
Green Wedge Protection Group Inc.	Sleigh, Neville
Hackett, Colleen	Taylor, Frank
Holmes, Janet	Van Hulsen, Anika
Honey, Juliet	Walters, Brian
Johnson, Greg	Warrandyte Community Association
Laos, Linda	
Macrae, Don	

Response submissions

Response submissions were received from:

Adjungbilly Pty Ltd	Harrison, Steve
Allen, Cindy	Holmes, Janet
Ashton, Cr Jane	Jenkinson, Steve
Bagusauskas, Vince	Johnson, Greg
Bailey, Greg	Kean, Peter
Bauer, Fred and Jan	Lynch, Leonie
Brooker, Cr Grant	Macrae, Don
Campbell, Narelle	Mannerheim, Phillip
Caspi, Esther	McAlpin, Warren
Cope, Kim	McDonald, Mark
Curtis, Chris (Nillumbik)	McDonald, Mary
Davies, Janice	Moore, Ian
Davies, Richard	Moore, Marilyn
De Beurs, Marteen	Mosley, Geoff
Ellis, Mel	Murray, Brian
Enderfield, Barry	Nillumbik Pro Active Land Owners (PALS)
English, June	Nillumbik Ratepayers Association Inc
Franke, Kahn and Julie	Nillumbik residents for representation on behalf of Nillumbik residents
Friends of Nillumbik	
Gardner, Heather and Rossley Paul	Nillumbik Shire Council
Giles, Cathy	Niven, Rex
Grant, Peter	Parsons, Elizabeth
Green Wedge Protection Group	Parsons, Kane
Grimes, Alex	Parsons, Max
Hackett, Colleen	Paull, Greg
Harrison, Michelle	Penrose, Bill

Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria -Tasmania)	Stoneman, Anne
Ramcharan, Ben	Stoneman, Ron
Renouf, Len	Stoneman, Wendy
Russell, Betty	Stuart, Pam
Schnapp, Dale	Stubley, Carole and Brian
Schnapp, Gila	Stuwe, Gerhard
Sells, Mark	Turner, Sharon
Sharpe, Colin	Van Eeden, Joanne
Shnookal, Liezl	Van Eeden, John
Solty, Martin	Van Hulsen, Anika
Steve, Belinda	Walters, Bryan
Stoneman, Anne and Kevin	Warrandyte Community Association

Public hearing

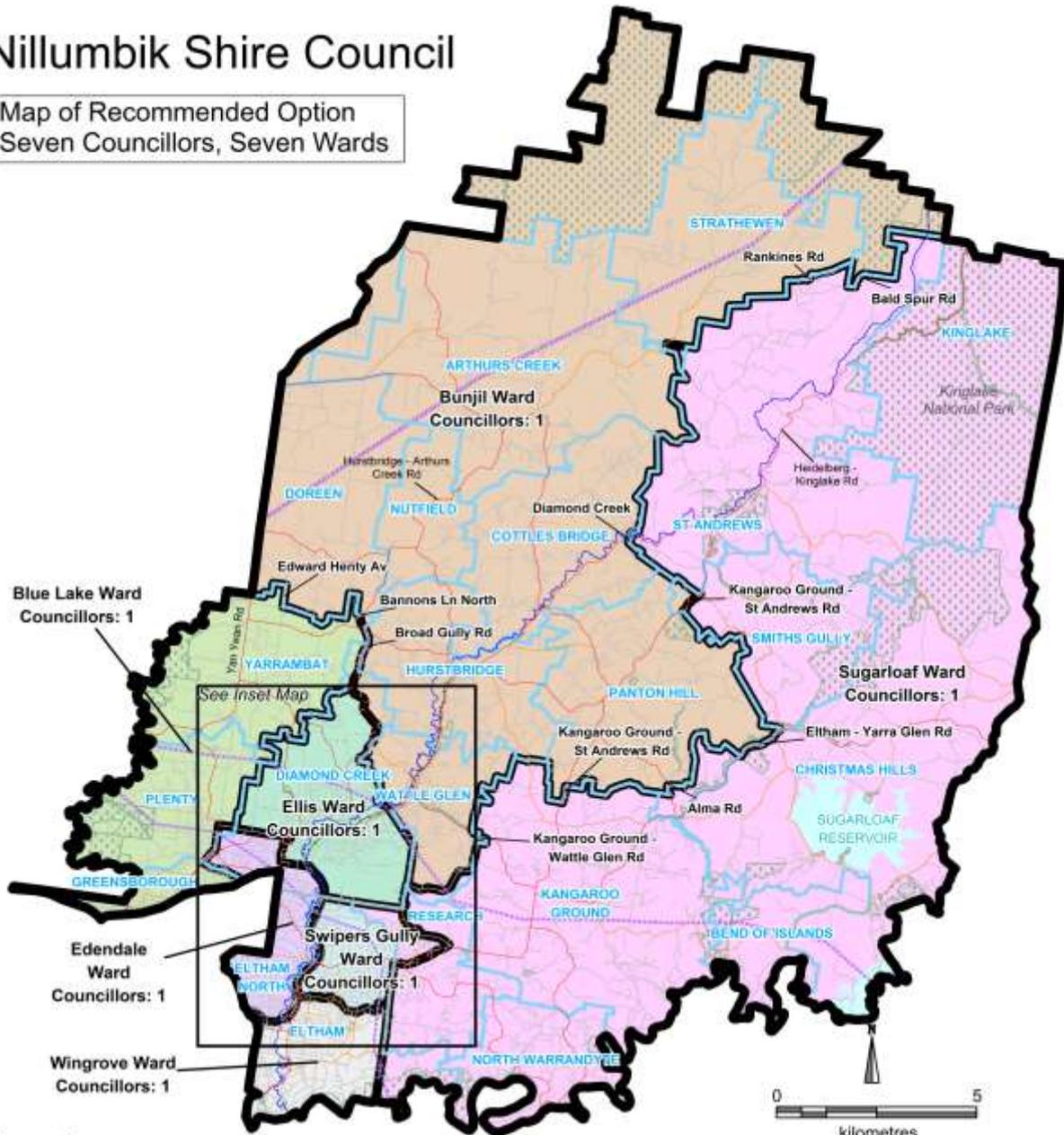
The following individuals spoke at the public hearings

Ashton, Jane (Cr)	Moore, Ian
Bauer, Fred	Murray, Brian for Nillumbik Rate Payers Association
Campbell, Narelle	Ramcharan, Ben
Caspi, Esther	Tozer, Lynlee for Green Wedge Protection Group
Crock, Damian for Nillumbik Pro Active Land Owners (PALS)	Van Hulsen, Anika
Egan, Karen (Cr) for Nillumbik Shire Council	Curtis, Chris
McDonald, Mary	Penrose, Bill

Appendix 2: Map

Nillumbik Shire Council

Map of Recommended Option
 Seven Councillors, Seven Wards



Legend

- Recommended Boundary
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeway
 - Main Road
 - Collector Road
 - Road
 - Unsealed Road
 - Railway Line
 - River/Creek
 - Park/Reserve
 - Lake
 - Locality Boundary
 - Transmission Line
- Existing Wards**
 - Swipers Gully
 - Blue Lake
 - Edendale
 - Ellis
 - Wingrove
 - Bunjil
 - Sugarloaf

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Blue Lake Ward	1	7,409	+5.91%	29.36
Bunjil Ward	1	6,658	-4.83%	176.51
Edendale Ward	1	7,331	+4.79%	6.96
Ellis Ward	1	6,927	-0.98%	13.88
Sugarloaf Ward	1	6,541	-6.50%	190.71
Swipers Gully Ward	1	7,487	+7.02%	6.23
Wingrove Ward	1	6,616	-5.43%	8.32
Total	7	48,969	-6.50% - +7.02	431.97
Average		6,996		61.71

*Elector numbers at 22nd Nov 2018

Map prepared by:

Victorian Electoral Commission **VEC**

Data user:



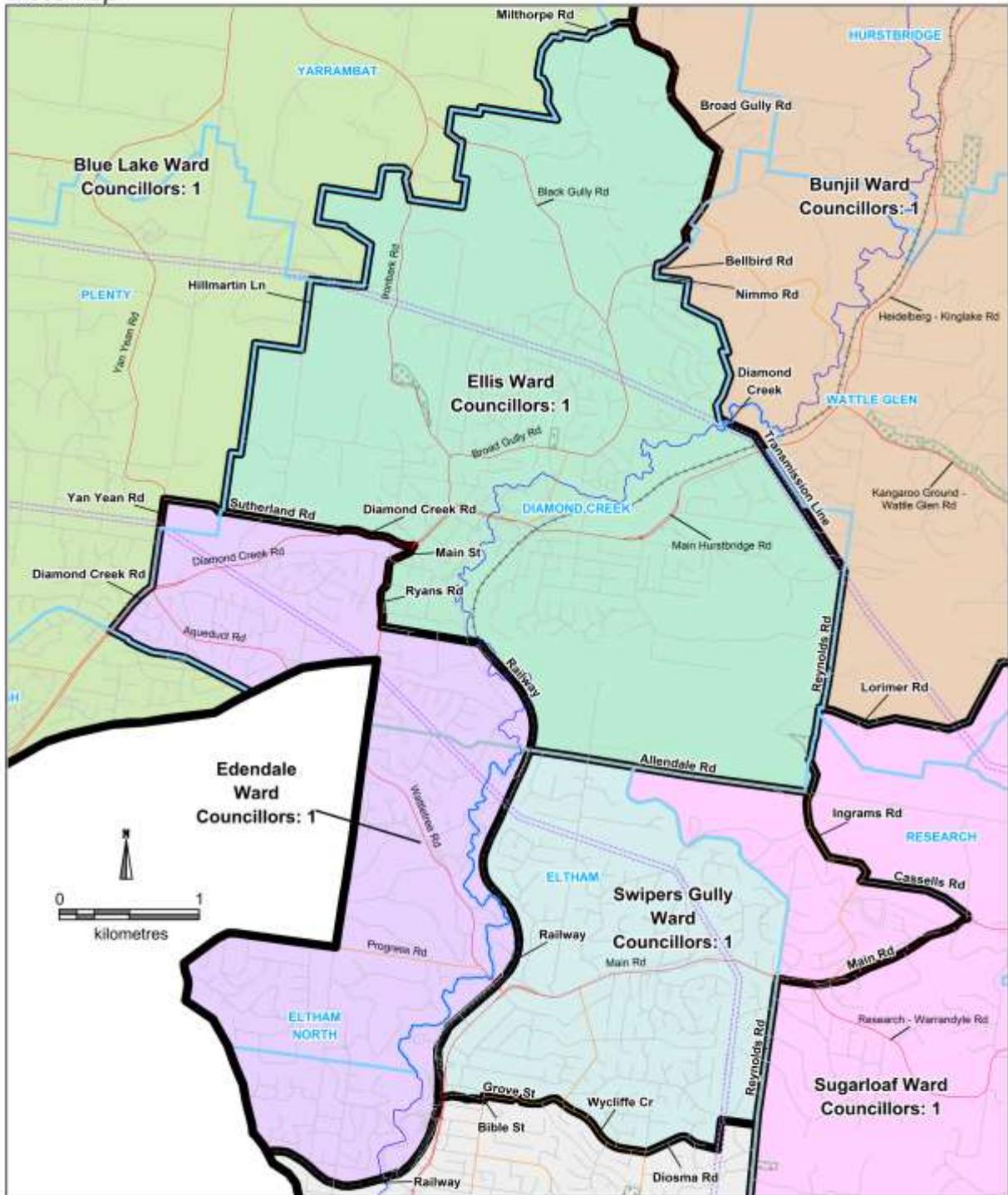
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 Planning

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Nillumbik Shire Council

Map of Recommended Option
 Seven Councillors, Seven Wards

Inset Map



Map prepared



Data used:



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Appendix 3: Public information program

Advertising

In accordance with the Act, public notices of the review and the release of the preliminary report were placed in the following newspapers:

Newspaper	Notice of review	Notice of preliminary report
<i>Herald Sun</i>	Thursday 17 January 2019	Wednesday 20 March 2019
<i>Diamond Valley Leader</i>	Wednesday 6 February 2019	Wednesday 3 April 2019 Wednesday 10 April 2019

Media releases

A media release was prepared and distributed to local media to promote the commencement of the review on Wednesday 13 February 2019. A further release was distributed with the publication of the preliminary report on Wednesday 10 April 2019. A final media advisory was circulated on the publication date of this final report.

Public information sessions

Public information sessions for people interested in the review process were held on:

- Monday 11 February 2019 in the Nillumbik Council Chamber, 14-34 Civic Drive, Greensborough
- Monday 18 February at the St Andrews Community Centre Wadambuk, 35 Caledonia Street, St Andrews.

Submission guide

A submission guide was developed and made available on the VEC website, or in hardcopy on request, throughout the review timeline. The submission guide provided information about the review, the review timeline and how to make submissions to the review.

Online submission tool

An online submission tool was developed and made available during the submission periods of the review. The tool allowed people to make a submission from the VEC website. During the preliminary submission stage, users also had the opportunity to map out their preferred subdivisions through the online submission tool using Boundary Builder. Boundary Builder included real elector numbers so that users could see if their preferred structures and numbers of councillors met the plus-or-minus 10% rule.

VEC website

The VEC website delivered up-to-date information to provide transparency and facilitate public participation during the review process. All public submissions were published on the website.

Email and social media engagement

The VEC delivered an information email campaign targeted at known community groups and communities of interest in the local council area. This included a reminder email at each milestone of the representation review process.

The VEC also published sponsored social media advertising that was geo-targeted to users within the local council area. This included advertising at both the preliminary submission and response submission stages. The total reach of these posts was 9,788 during the preliminary submission stage and 7,426 during the response submission stage.

Council communication resources

The VEC provided the Council with a communication pack that included information on the review in various formats. While the council is encouraged to distribute this information and raise awareness about the review, the VEC is an independent reviewer and all communications resources include reference and links to the VEC website and core materials.

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Victorian Electoral Commission

Level 11, 530 Collins Street Melbourne Victoria 3000

Ph: 03 8620 1100 | Fax: 03 9629 8632

vec.vic.gov.au

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