FINAL REPORT
Electoral Representation Review
for the
Southern Grampians Shire Council

27 August 2007
Table of Contents

1 Recommendation .......................................................... 2

2 Background .................................................................... 2

2.1 Legislative basis .................................................................... 2

2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews ......................... 2

2.3 Municipality profile ............................................................ 3

2.4 Current electoral structure ................................................... 3

3 Electoral representation review process .............................. 3

4 Public involvement .......................................................... 5

4.1 Public information ................................................................ 5

4.2 Advertising ......................................................................... 5

4.3 Media releases ..................................................................... 5

4.4 Information leaflet ............................................................... 5

4.5 VEC website ......................................................................... 5

4.6 Helpline .............................................................................. 6

4.7 Guide for Submissions ........................................................ 6

5 Preliminary Report ........................................................... 6

5.1 Preliminary submissions ...................................................... 6

5.2 VEC research ...................................................................... 8

5.3 Recommended options ...................................................... 8

6 Response submissions ..................................................... 8

7 Public hearing ...................................................................... 9

8 Findings and recommendation ........................................... 9

8.1 Number of councillors ....................................................... 10

8.2 Electoral structure ............................................................. 11

8.3 Recommendation .............................................................. 13

9 Appendices ......................................................................... 14

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review ................ 14

9.2 Media releases ................................................................... 17

9.3 Information leaflet ............................................................. 21

9.4 Guide for Submissions ......................................................... 22

9.5 List of people and groups making submissions ....................... 35
1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is required under the legislation for the electoral representation review to make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the voters of Southern Grampians Shire (s.219D Local Government Act 1989).

The VEC recommends that the Southern Grampians Shire Council consist of seven councillors to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

This recommended structure is indicated in the map at the back of this Report. This structure is the same as the VEC’s preliminary preferred option.

2 Background

2.1 Legislative basis

The Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003, which amended the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), was passed by the Parliament in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. In accordance with this new legislation, the Southern Grampians Shire Council received notice pursuant to s.219C of the Act from the Minister for Local Government that an electoral representation review was to be conducted for Southern Grampians Shire. The notice appeared in the Victoria Government Gazette on 19 March 2007.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. The Southern Grampians Shire Council appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

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

a) the number of councillors;
b) the electoral structure of the municipality (whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and, if the municipality is to be subdivided, the number of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward); and
c) if the recommendation is for the municipality to be divided into wards, boundaries for the wards that will:
i. provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
ii. ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors.

2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews

The VEC has ten years’ experience in working on municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils to prepare options for their consideration. VEC staff have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has used sophisticated mapping software, conducted field research and
has developed expertise in preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with legislative approximate equality requirements and respect communities of interest.

The VEC has engaged Mr Terry Maher to provide expertise in the field of local government. Mr Maher commenced his career in local government in 1963. Mr Maher has extensive municipal experience, having been employed by the Melbourne City Council and the former Ringwood and Essendon Councils. He also held the position of Chief Executive at Knox City Council from 1995-2001, and at Croydon City Council from 1986-1994. Mr Maher was also interim Chief Executive of the Monash City Council at the time of municipal restructure. In 2002, Mr Maher was appointed by the Minister for Local Government to conduct a Commission of Inquiry into Surf Coast Shire Council which was completed in April 2003. He now provides consulting services to the public sector, and more specifically Local Government.

2.3 Municipality profile

Southern Grampians Shire was formed in September 1994 with the amalgamation of the former Shires of Dundas, Mt Rouse and Wannon and the City of Hamilton. The Shire covers an area of 6,653 square kilometres and is located in the centre of Victoria’s Western District, 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south-east of Adelaide.

More than half the population of the Shire live in Hamilton, the main retail and service centre. Other smaller towns include Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Penshurst and Tarrington.

Agriculture, manufacturing, retail, education, health and tourism are the Shire’s predominant industries. Because of the development of the mineral sands industry, strong growth in house and land value is expected to continue. Council has recently engaged VicUrban to develop a new 300 lot residential estate bordering Lake Hamilton.

Natural attractions include the Grampians National Park, Rocklands Reservoir, the Wannon and Glenelg Rivers, Lake Linlithgow and Mount Napier. There are a large number of sporting facilities including a large aquatic and leisure centre, five golf clubs and a harness racing track. Southern Grampians Shire is also home to a large secondary and tertiary school system and multi-campus hospital.

The Shire’s population of almost 17,000 is expected to decline over the next decade as a proportion of the 18–34 year group is expected to move to larger cities for education and employment.

(Sources: Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria in Future 2004; Department of Sustainability and Environment Regional Victoria in Fact 2001; Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria Population Bulletin 2006; Department of Sustainability and Environment Know Your Area; Department of Sustainability and Environment Towns in Time; Southern Grampians Shire Council web site)

2.4 Current electoral structure

Southern Grampians Shire is an unsubdivided municipality represented by seven councillors.

3 Electoral representation review process

Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989 specifies that the purpose of an electoral representation review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons
who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.” To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality

Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of an electoral representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC has adopted as a guide the numbers of councillors in similar-sized municipalities of similar categories within Victoria. In addition, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant the municipality having more or fewer councillors than similar municipalities.

3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest. The electoral structure should be designed to take these into account where practicable. This is important for assisting the elected councillors to be effective representatives of the people in their particular municipality.

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- the VEC’s experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- the VEC’s expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, and also considering other factors, such as the best possible representation for the various communities of interest in the municipality under review.

In considering public submissions, the VEC values the local knowledge and local perspectives that are presented. The VEC believes it important to consider the issues and information presented in submissions, as well as the arguments for particular structural models. In reaching its recommendations, the VEC seeks to combine the information gathered through public submissions with its own research in order to achieve what it considers to be a fair and equitable result until the next review period. The VEC does not make its recommendations based on a “straw poll” of the number of submissions supporting a particular option.

Further details about issues considered by the VEC can be found in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of this Report and in the Guide for Submissions (Appendix 9.4).
4 Public involvement

4.1 Public information

The VEC informed the community about the electoral representation review through:

- advertising in newspapers;
- conducting an information session in Hamilton on 31 May 2007, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the Southern Grampians Shire community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- developing and issuing an information leaflet for residents of Southern Grampians Shire;
- providing an article for inclusion in the July Council newsletter;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a helpline for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions;
- releasing a Preliminary Report on 9 July 2007 and making the Report available at the Southern Grampians Shire Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- publishing all submissions in response to the Preliminary Report on the VEC website; and
- conducting a public hearing in Hamilton on 9 August 2007.

4.2 Advertising

In accordance with s.219F(4) of the Act, the VEC published the following advertisements for the electoral representation review:

- a public notice of the review, detailing the process, appeared in the *Hamilton Spectator* on 12 May 2007;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the Southern Grampians Shire Council review, appeared in the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* on 9 May 2007; and
- a notice that the Preliminary Report had been released appeared in the *Hamilton Spectator* on 7 July 2007.

See Appendix 9.1.

4.3 Media releases

Media releases designed to supplement the paid advertising were distributed to the *Hamilton Spectator*. See Appendix 9.2.

4.4 Information leaflet

An information leaflet about the review was distributed to households within the City. See Appendix 9.3.

4.5 VEC website

The VEC used its website to deliver information and to provide transparency in the review process. All preliminary submissions and submissions in response to the
Preliminary Report were posted on the website to facilitate public access to this information. The VEC website can be viewed at www.vec.vic.gov.au

4.6 Helpline

The VEC established a helpline to assist with public enquiries concerning the electoral representation review process.

4.7 Guide for Submissions


5 Preliminary Report

In accordance with s.219F(6) of the Act, the VEC produced a Preliminary Report containing its preferred and alternative options for Southern Grampians Shire. In developing these options, the VEC considered preliminary submissions made by various people and groups, as well as various other relevant factors.

5.1 Preliminary submissions

The VEC received 33 preliminary submissions by the closing time (12 June 2007 – 5.00 pm). Of those submissions:

- 18 supported retaining seven councillors from an unsubdivided municipality;
- 1 supported either seven or nine councillors from an unsubdivided municipality;
- 3 supported an unsubdivided structure without specifying a preferred number of councillors;
- 9 supported one three-councillor urban ward and three single-councillor rural wards;
- 1 supported a four-councillor urban ward and three single-councillor rural wards; and
- 1 supported nine councillors, without specifying an electoral structure.

Submissions supporting seven councillors argued that it was appropriate given the number of voters, and cited the fact that similar-sized municipalities such as Alpine Shire, Ararat Rural City, Horsham City and Indigo Shire have seven councillors. The geographic size of the Shire was also cited as making seven councillors an appropriate number. It was suggested that seven has worked well for the Shire in providing representation, accessibility and efficient decision-making. It was argued that the population number is relatively static, indicating no need to change. One submission suggested that growth due to mineral sand mining and the timber industry would be likely to counter population loss due to other factors.

The submissions indicating that nine councillors might be more appropriate cited the geographic spread of the municipality, extra workload from the larger proportion of older residents, an increasing business sector due to sand mining operations and diversity of issues, including the reinstatement of remote roads and assets such as the Hamilton Art Gallery.

The submissions supporting six councillors preferred this number because they believed it would enable a structure in which both urban and rural voters were represented by the same number of councillors.
Several submissions were concerned that an even number of councillors would result in tied votes on the Council. One submission was also concerned that a reduction in the number of councillors would distort representation for Hamilton.

Submissions supporting an unsubdivided structure argued that there is a high degree of inter-dependence between the rural area and Hamilton. Hamilton is the primary service centre for most residents of the municipality for retail, business, education, sport, recreation, cultural activities, government and medical services. Many people from the rural area travel to Hamilton for employment, education, recreation and entertainment.

These submitters believed that those factors made it particularly appropriate for all voters to have a say on all candidates, for councillors be accountable to all communities at election time and for councillors to have a municipality-wide focus. A number of submissions expressed a view that the structure is currently working well and cited the community satisfaction survey. Several submissions considered an unsubdivided structure important to ensure a range of choices for voters at election time to select the best candidates. There were only fourteen candidates in total at each of the last two elections for Southern Grampians Shire.

A number of the submissions provided various arguments in support of proportional representation and multi-councillor elections in general, such as that they provide the best opportunity for non-geographic communities of interest to be represented.

The submissions supporting a division of the Shire into wards wanted to ensure that both Hamilton and the rural areas were represented on the Council. It was argued that only local residents can meet locals’ needs. Those advocating six councillors considered it important that both urban and rural interests were represented equally on the Council. A number of submissions pointed out that, at the last election, only one of the seven councillors elected was a Hamilton resident. Other submissions explained that candidates from Hamilton had stood at the last election, but that voters (including many of those from Hamilton) had preferred the other candidates. It was also explained that, at previous elections, a larger proportion of candidates from Hamilton had been elected.

The submission advocating one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards considered it important to ensure that Hamilton has a majority of councillors on the Council as it has the majority of the voters. This submitter suggested wards be based around Coleraine in the west and around Dunkeld, Penshurst and Glenthompson in the east.

Some submissions expressed concern that subdividing the municipality would lead to parochialism and a “them and us” mentality between rural and urban areas. They were also concerned that it could lead to a disparity in councillors’ workloads, with rural councillors having to cover much larger areas than urban councillors. Some submitters feared that single-councillor wards would be more likely to lead to groups winning all positions or minority groups having control of the Council.

Several submissions suggested using ward names from before the amalgamation, the names of previous residents or the names of previous mayors as ward names.

Some submissions raised issues beyond the scope of this review, such as councillors’ remuneration.
Appendix 9.5 contains details of those people and groups making preliminary submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

5.2 VEC research

In addition to information provided in submissions, the VEC conducted its own research. This included research into the demographics of the municipality, using a number of data sources including the 2001 Census. The VEC also took into account changes predicted by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Infrastructure. Summaries of some of this research were published in the Guide for Submissions, the Preliminary Report and in Section 2.3 of this Report.

Development projections based on information presented by the Council were also taken into consideration. Extensive fieldwork was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC. In addition, the VEC examined the considerations of the City’s Commissioners when they made their electoral structure recommendations in 1995.

5.3 Recommended options

Having considered the issues outlined in the preliminary submissions and all other relevant factors, the VEC proposed two preliminary options for public comment.

The preferred option was:

➢ That the Southern Grampians Shire Council consist of seven councillors, to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

The alternative option was:

➢ That the Southern Grampians Shire Council consist of seven councillors, to be elected from one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards.

6 Response submissions

In accordance with s.219F(7) of the Act, the VEC invited written submissions in response to the Preliminary Report. The VEC received fourteen response submissions by the closing time (30 July 2007 – 5.00 pm). One person submitted two submissions. Of the thirteen submitters:

➢ 10 supported the preliminary preferred option of seven councillors from an unsubdivided municipality; and

➢ 3 supported the preliminary alternative option of one urban ward and three rural wards.

The supporters of the unsubdivided structure argued that it has worked well, encouraging a “whole of Shire” approach in both councillors and voters. They also suggested that this structure has encouraged voters to elect candidates on merit rather than where they come from. It was suggested that this was particularly relevant to Southern Grampians, as there is a high degree of inter-dependence between the urban and rural areas of the municipality, with decisions about rural areas affecting voters of the urban area and vice versa. Education, employment, industry and cultural connections were cited. Other features of unsubdivided structures in general were also discussed.

The submitters favouring the alternative option believed that the current structure favours candidates from the rural area because rural voters only vote for rural candidates.
The differential rating system was raised to suggest that the urban and rural voters had different interests. It was suggested that the creation of a Hamilton Ward would increase the number of candidates from the urban area and lead to more diversity on the Council. One submitter also suggested that it was hard for voters to know candidates from across the whole municipality, and that wards would make knowing the candidates easier.

Other submitters suggested that the alternative option might lead to a “them and us” attitude between the rural and urban areas, could restrict the number of candidates at election time and could encourage a narrow view of councillors’ responsibilities. Submitters also expressed concern that a subdivided structure would make it easier for an organised group to dominate the Council.

A list of those people and groups who made response submissions is provided in Appendix 9.5. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

7 Public hearing

A public hearing was held at the Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton, on 9 August 2007 at 6.30 pm. All people and groups who had made submissions in response to the VEC's Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions, and five chose to do so. Members of the public were invited to attend, and there was a total audience of nine people (including those making presentations).

Speakers emphasised the similarity of communities across the municipality and suggested that communities of interest are wider than just local geographic areas. The inter-dependence between Hamilton and rural areas was also emphasised. One speaker considered that the preliminary alternative option split a community of interest by placing Cavendish and Coleraine in different wards. Another speaker considered that single-councillor wards would assist councillors to understand and therefore more effectively represent local issues, but one speaker believed that the rural wards proposed in the preliminary alternative option would be too large to enable particularly local issues to be represented. One speaker explained that, although the current councillors are predominantly from the rural area, this has not always been the case in previous elections.

8 Findings and recommendation

The Act states that the purpose of the electoral representation review is to consider two matters. The first matter is the number of councillors for the municipality and the second matter is the electoral structure of the municipality.

In conducting electoral representation reviews, the VEC follows an extensive process of consideration as required by legislation. At the preliminary stage, the VEC considers preliminary submissions along with a wide variety of other information in order to develop a preferred and (in most circumstances) one or more alternative electoral structure options for the municipality in question. The VEC then makes the options available in its Preliminary Report, to be assessed by the public in response submissions and at the public hearing. Having considered the feedback, the VEC then makes a recommendation.
8.1 Number of councillors

Issues considered by the VEC

The legislation provides that a council must consist of between 5 and 12 councillors (s.5B(1)). It does not, however, prescribe the matters to be considered by the reviewer in recommending the number of councillors for a municipality.

The VEC has therefore been required to identify the appropriate matters to take into account when considering the number of councillors.

In terms of voter numbers, Victorian municipalities vary from approximately 4,000 to over 167,000. The VEC applies the legislative provisions relating to numbers of councillors in a logical way, with those councils that have the largest number of voters having the most councillors, and those councils that have the least number of voters having the fewest councillors.

In most cases, the electoral structure and the number of councillors were established by the Commissioners when local government was restructured between 1993 and 1995. Commissioners did not have the benefit of a State-wide reference when considering the appropriate number of councillors for their respective municipalities. The result was a degree of disparity in councillor numbers for similar types of municipalities. The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and the number of councillors. The table differentiates between rural, regional and metropolitan councils in recognition of the different circumstances and needs between these categories of councils. The table has been a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors and was made available to the public in the Guide for Submissions. The information has enabled the VEC to compare a council being reviewed to councils with similar voter numbers and areas.

The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is anticipated to increase or decline in the period between reviews (approximately eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment have been used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a council to have more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case. Public submissions provide valuable information regarding any such issues or circumstances.

The VEC’s findings

The VEC’s preliminary options

Both of the VEC’s preliminary options were for seven councillors. The VEC noted that a number of municipalities of a similar type with a similar number of voters all have seven councillors. The VEC noted the substantial geographic area of the municipality and a steady predicted population decline, but considered that seven councillors would be appropriate to deal with those issues.

Several preliminary submissions advocated six councillors because it would enable a structure that provides equal representation to both the urban and rural areas. The VEC, however, has strong concerns about recommending an even number of councillors. An even number of councillors can lead to tied votes on important policy issues, possibly requiring the mayor to use a casting vote. The VEC considers that the ability for one councillor to cast two votes does not provide fair or equitable
representation. This situation may be further exacerbated if the Council’s efforts to elect a mayor result in a tied vote. In such circumstances, the mayor may be selected by lot, rather than from having the majority support of all councillors. The VEC has previously indicated that it will only consider an even number of councillors if special circumstances exist. It did not consider that to be the case in Southern Grampians Shire.

The VEC also noted that 56% of voters were registered in Hamilton and 44% in the rural areas, and did not consider a structure with three urban councillors and three rural councillors to be fair and equitable.

**The options are tested**

All of the response submissions supported the VEC’s options with seven councillors. None raised any issues to suggest that more or fewer councillors are necessary. Consequently, the VEC confirms its view that seven councillors are most likely to provide fair and equitable representation for the voters of Southern Grampians Shire for the next eight years.

### 8.2 Electoral structure

#### Issues considered by the VEC

Provisions within the Act allow for a municipality to be unsubdivided, with all councillors elected “at large” by all voters, or for a municipality to be subdivided into a number of wards. If wards have only one councillor, councillors are elected using preferential voting. Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers the same way.

If the municipality is subdivided into wards, there are three options available:

- single-councillor wards;
- multi-councillor wards; and
- a combination of both single-councillor and multi-councillor wards.

Boundaries for wards must:

- provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
- ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality.

In addition to the legislative requirements, a number of other factors were considered when evaluating subdivided structures. These factors included:

- communities of interest (Communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns. They may occur where people are linked with each other geographically, economically or through having particular needs.);
- spreading developing areas over a number of wards;
- using logical boundaries such as main roads, physical features and existing boundaries for easy identification of wards; and
- taking account of likely population changes.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance between these criteria.
The VEC’s findings

The initial stages of consideration resulted in a preferred and an alternative electoral structure, which were put to the public in the VEC’s Preliminary Report.

Communities of interest

The majority of the voters (56%) are registered in Hamilton. It is the only large town in the municipality, and the major service centre for most residents. Coleraine, Penshurst and Dunkeld are also sizable towns that form focal points for their surrounding communities. There are a number of differences in the demographics between residents of Hamilton and those in the rural area. Areas in the north of the municipality are roughly equidistant from both Hamilton and Horsham.

Preliminary preferred option: an unsubdivided municipality

The VEC’s preliminary preferred option was for an unsubdivided municipality based primarily on two factors. Firstly, there is a high degree of inter-dependence between the urban and rural areas on a range of issues (such as employment, industry, recreation and education). Hamilton is the only major town in the municipality and is the major service centre for most residents of the municipality. Given this situation, decisions about the urban area affect rural voters and vice versa – so the VEC considers it appropriate for all voters in the municipality to be able to express preferences for all candidates.

Secondly, there were only fourteen candidates at each of the last two elections for the Shire. The continuation of this trend in a structure with wards may result in limited choices for voters and a high chance of some uncontested ward elections.

Preliminary alternative option: one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards

The VEC’s primary concerns in creating the alternative option were to differentiate Hamilton from the rural areas, and to group the smaller towns with the communities that associate with them. The VEC considered that three single-councillor wards would be the most appropriate structure for the rural area, in recognition of the fact that the rural area at one end of the municipality may have limited interaction with the rural area at the other end. In the case of Hamilton, however, the VEC did not see merit in dividing the area into single-councillor wards as it considers the town to be relatively homogeneous.

The options are tested

Support was expressed for both preliminary options in response submissions and at the public hearing. As detailed in Sections 6 and 7 above, most submitters supported the preferred option, primarily because they considered a “whole of Shire” approach to be appropriate given the inter-dependence between Hamilton and the rural areas and given the similar needs of many of the different rural communities.

Other submitters expressed concern about this structure favouring rural candidates. However, the VEC considers that, with 56% of the voters registered in Hamilton and 44% in the remainder of the Shire, both urban and rural voters have the opportunity to elect representatives in accordance with their wishes. If candidates from Hamilton stand, then voters can elect them if they choose to do so. An unsubdivided structure also provides voters with the opportunity to elect candidates based on factors other
than where they come from, but does not restrict their ability to vote on a geographic basis if they prefer.

The VEC remains of the view that an unsubdivided structure is most appropriate given the Shire’s inter-connectedness and the small number of candidates standing at previous elections. The VEC considers that the option to elect candidates representing non-geographically specific communities of interest or geographic communities of interest, according to voters’ wishes, is important in this case and that it is appropriate for all voters to express a preference for all candidates. The VEC also believes that single-councillor wards may provide little or no choice of candidates at election time, which is not in accordance with providing the fairest representation for voters.

On balance, the VEC considers that an unsubdivided municipality is most likely to provide fair and equitable representation for the voters of Southern Grampians Shire.

8.3 Recommendation

Having taken into account all relevant factors, including the submissions and presentations at the public hearing, the VEC recommends that Southern Grampians Shire continue to consist of seven councillors to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

Steve Tully
Electoral Commissioner
9 Appendices

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review

Electoral Representation Review
Southern Grampians Shire Council

The Minister for Local Government has given notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act 1989 that there is to be an electoral representation review of the Southern Grampians Shire Council. The Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the independent review.

What is the review about?
The aim of the review is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for voters in Southern Grampians Shire. The VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

• the appropriate number of councillors;
• whether the Shire should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and
• if the Shire is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

What will the VEC consider?
The VEC will consider the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and information in public submissions will assist the review.

Any person or group may make a written submission to the VEC regarding electoral representation for the Southern Grampians Shire Council. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions first.

Key steps in the review

Step 1 Information session, Thursday, 31 May 2007 - 7.00 pm
  • Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton

Step 2 Preliminary submissions. Deadline: Tuesday, 12 June 2007 - 5.00 pm

Step 3 Preliminary Report, released: Monday, 9 July 2007

Step 4 Response submissions. Deadline: Monday, 30 July 2007 - 5.00 pm

Step 5 Public hearing, Thursday, 9 August 2007 - 6.30 pm
  • Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton
  • People may speak in support of their response submissions if they have requested to do so in those submissions.

Step 6 Final Report, released: Monday, 27 August 2007
  • The VEC will lodge a Final Report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government.

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

Electoral representation review publications are available in large print on request.
## Electoral Representation Reviews

The Minister for Local Government has given notice under section 219C of the *Local Government Act 1989* that there are to be electoral representation reviews of the following councils:

- Ballarat City Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Colac Otway Shire Council
- Ararat Rural City Council
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Moine Shire Council
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Glenelg Shire Council
- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Buloke Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council

The councils have appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the reviews.

### What are the reviews about?

The aim of the reviews is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for the voters of these municipalities. For each municipality, the VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and
- if the municipality is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. Under a single-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected using preferential voting. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers in the same way.

### What will the VEC consider?

The VEC will consider the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and information in public submissions will assist the review.

Any person or group may make a written submission to the VEC regarding electoral representation for these municipalities. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions first.

### Making a submission

Further information about making a submission can be found in the Guide for Submissions. Submissions can be made by mail, fax or email. Submissions must reach the VEC by 5.00 pm on the following dates:

- Ballarat City Council: 28 May 2007
- Hepburn Shire Council: 30 May 2007
- Colac Otway Shire Council: 5 June 2007
- Ararat Rural City Council: 5 June 2007
- Golden Plains Shire Council: 6 June 2007
- Moine Shire Council: 12 June 2007
- Southern Grampians Shire Council: 12 June 2007
- Glenelg Shire Council: 13 June 2007
- Swan Hill Rural City Council: 18 June 2007
- Buloke Shire Council: 19 June 2007
- Northern Grampians Shire Council: 20 June 2007

*For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au*

Electoral representation review publications are available in large print on request.
Electoral Representation Review
Southern Grampians Shire Council

Preliminary Report
The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is conducting an electoral representation review for the Southern Grampians Shire Council. The review aims to achieve fair and equitable electoral representation for persons who are entitled to vote at the Council’s general election. Having considered a range of information, including ideas contained in public submissions, the VEC will release a Preliminary Report including its recommendations on Monday 9 July, 2007.

What are the recommendations in the Report?
Southern Grampians Shire is currently an unsubdivided municipality represented by seven councillors.

Preferred option
The Report recommends that the Southern Grampians Shire Council continue to consist of seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided municipality.

Alternative option
The Report also outlines an alternative option of a Council consisting of seven councillors, to be elected from one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards.

The maps on the right show the preliminary options.

Where is the Report available?
Copies of the Preliminary Report will be available from:
- the Southern Grampians Shire Council offices, 111 Brown Street, Hamilton;
- the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au; and
- the VEC on 13 18 32.

Response submissions on the Report
Any person or group may make a response submission to the VEC about its Preliminary Report. Submissions can be:
- posted to the VEC at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000;
- emailed to southern.grampians.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to (03) 9629 9330.

The VEC recommends obtaining a copy of the Report and consulting its Guide for Submissions first. These documents can be obtained free of charge from the VEC.

Submissions must include the following information about the person or group making the submission:
- name;
- address;
- telephone contact number; and
- whether the person or group making the submission wishes to speak at a public hearing in support of their submission.

Submissions must reach the VEC by Monday, 30 July 2007 – 5.00 pm.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions will be available to the public at the VEC office and on the VEC website.

Public hearing, Thursday, 9 August 2007 - 6.30 pm
The hearing will be held at:
- Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton.

The hearing is open to the public, but only those people who have indicated in their submission that they would like to speak in support of their submission will be heard at the hearing.

Final Report, Monday, 27 August 2007
After considering a variety of sources of information, including arguments and evidence contained in submissions and provided at the public hearing, the VEC will prepare its Final Report making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

Electoral representation review publications are available in large print on request.

Further information 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission
For immediate release.

REPRESENTATION REVIEW GETS UNDERWAY

The electoral representation review for Southern Grampians Shire has begun. The review, conducted by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), will consider the number of councillors for the municipality and the municipality’s electoral structure.

“Anyone interested in the review should attend the public information session on 31 May,” said the Victorian Electoral Commissioner, Mr Steve Tully.

The details for the information session are:
- Thursday, 31 May 2007, 7.00 pm
- Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton

In conducting its review, the VEC will consider a range of information including arguments and evidence in public submissions.

Any person or group may make a written submission to the VEC about the review. Submissions do not have to be elaborate documents. A letter is perfectly acceptable, as long as it deals with the matters covered by the review. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions, which outlines the issues involved.

A leaflet with information about the review is being delivered to key locations in the municipality.

Key dates for the Southern Grampians Shire representation review are:
- Tuesday, 12 June 2007 – 5.00 pm – Deadline for preliminary submissions. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or emailed to the VEC.
- Monday, 9 July 2007 – The VEC’s Preliminary Report will be released containing its preferred options.
- Thursday, 9 August 2007 (6.30 pm, Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton) – Public hearing. People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions if they have requested to do so in those submissions.
- Monday, 27 August 2007 – The VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

Any new electoral arrangements resulting from the review process would apply at the next Council election.

For more information, telephone the VEC on 13 18 32 or visit the VEC website www.vec.vic.gov.au

ENDS

Media releases are available from the VEC website http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/rrreleases.html

For further media information:
Chris Gribbin
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0737
Media Fact Sheet
Map of Southern Grampians Shire

The map below shows the municipality boundaries and the voter numbers as at 7 December 2006.
The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) today released its Preliminary Report on electoral representation for the Southern Grampians Shire Council. The VEC’s preliminary preferred option is for the Southern Grampians Shire Council to continue to consist of seven councillors, to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality. An alternative option of seven councillors from four wards is also included in the Preliminary Report.

The Report has been released and is available on the VEC’s web site at www.vec.vic.gov.au. The Report is also available at the Southern Grampians Shire Council offices, 111 Brown Street, Hamilton, and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

People have until 5.00 pm, Monday, 30 July 2007 to lodge submissions with the VEC regarding its Preliminary Report.

People who wish to speak publicly in support of their submissions will have an opportunity to do so at a public hearing at:

   Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton
   on Thursday, 9 August 2007 at 6.30 pm.

The VEC’s Final Report and recommendations will be lodged with the Minister for Local Government on Monday, 27 August 2007.

Any person who requires additional information can visit www.vec.vic.gov.au, contact the VEC on 13 18 32, or write to the VEC at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

– ENDS –

Media releases are available from the VEC website http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/rrreleases.html

For further media information:
Chris Gribbin
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0737
Media Fact Sheet

MAPS OF PRELIMINARY OPTIONS FOR THE SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

PRELIMINARY PREFERRED OPTION:
seven councillors, to be elected from an unsubdivided municipality

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE OPTION:
seven councillors, to be elected from one four-councillor ward and three single-councillor wards
9.3 Information leaflet

Current structure of the Southern Grampians Shire Council

The Southern Grampians Shire is currently unsubdivided with seven councillors. Below is a map showing the Shire boundaries and the estimated number of voters as at 7 December 2006.

How to make a submission

Get the Guide for Submissions by telephoning the VEC on 13 18 32 or by checking our website at www.vec.vic.gov.au

Send your submissions to the VEC in one of the following ways:

- post to Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000
- email to southerngrampians.review@vec.vic.gov.au or
- fax to (03) 9629 9330

Key steps in the review

**Step 1** Information Session
Thursday, 31 May 2007
Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton
7.00 pm

**Step 2** Preliminary Submissions
Deadline: 5.00 pm, Tuesday, 12 June 2007
Any person or organisation may make a submission to the VEC. The VEC recommends consulting the Guide for Submissions.

**Step 3** Preliminary Report
Monday, 9 July 2007
The VEC will release a Preliminary Report containing its preferred option(s).

**Step 4** Response Submissions
Deadline: 5.00 pm, Monday, 30 July 2007
Any person or group may make a submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report.

**Step 5** Public Hearing
Thursday, 9 August 2007
Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton
6.30 pm
People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

**Step 6** Final Report
Monday, 27 August 2007
The VEC will lodge a final report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government. The Report will be publicly available.

Electoral Representation Review of the Southern Grampians Shire

Conducted by the Victorian Electoral Commission

Why is this review being undertaken?

The Minister for Local Government has given notice that there is to be an electoral representation review of the Southern Grampians Shire. The Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the independent review. The VEC aims to ensure fair and equitable representation for Southern Grampians Shire voters.

What will the review recommend?

The VEC will make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- the electoral structure of the Shire (whether it should be unsubdivided or divided into wards, how many wards there should be, and the number of councillors per ward); and
- the boundaries of the wards (if the Shire is to be divided into wards).

Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. Under a single-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected using preferential voting. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers the same way.

What will the VEC consider?

In conducting its review, the VEC will consider such factors as the number of councillors and the electoral structure of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. The VEC will consider a range of information including arguments and evidence in public submissions.
9.4 Guide for Submissions

Electoral Representation Review
for the Southern Grampians Shire Council

Guide for Submissions

CHECKLIST:

Before you send in your submission:
- Have you included your name, address and telephone contact number?
- Do you understand that your submission will be made public?
- Have you given reasons for the model(s) you are suggesting?

If you are making a response submission to the Preliminary Report:
- Have you focused your discussion on the models proposed in the Preliminary Report?
- Have you indicated whether or not you would like to speak to the submission at the public hearing?

In writing your submission, you might like to consider the following questions (you do not need to answer every question in order to make a useful submission):

The number of councillors:
- Have you suggested a number between 5 and 12 (as required by legislation)?
- If the number of councillors you have suggested varies substantially from the numbers in similar-sized municipalities of a similar type, have you explained why?

The electoral structures:
- Have you indicated whether you want the municipality to be subdivided or unsubdivided?
- Have you explained why your preferred structure would best suit your municipality?

If you think that the municipality should be subdivided into wards:
- Have you indicated whether you want single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards or a combination of both?
- Have you suggested ward names and given reasons for those names?
Background

What is an electoral representation review?

An electoral representation review examines the electoral structure of a local council. It considers:

- the number of councillors in a municipality;
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided into wards; and
- if it should be subdivided, what the ward boundaries should be.

In addition, the review must make sure that, within each municipality, the number of voters represented by each councillor in each ward is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor. That way, each person’s vote has the same value.

Another important element to these considerations is that, according to the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), wards with only one councillor must elect that councillor using preferential voting, and wards with two or more councillors must elect them via proportional representation. If a municipality is unsubdivided, then all of its councillors must be elected using proportional representation.

When do representation reviews take place, and who conducts them?

The Local Government Act specifies that:

- electoral representation reviews must be conducted before every second council election; and
- a council must appoint an Electoral Commission to undertake the review.

On completion of the review, the Electoral Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who then has the power to act on it. This system of electoral representation reviews came into effect at the end of 2003 as a result of amendments to the Act. The first representation review for each municipality under this system takes place at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government by a notice in the Victoria Government Gazette. The first representation reviews to be carried out under the amended Act took place in 2004.

On 19 March 2007 the Minister for Local Government gave notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act that an electoral representation review is to be conducted for the Southern Grampians Shire Council. The Southern Grampians Shire Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the review.

How did the current electoral structures come about, and on what were they based?

The electoral structures currently in place in municipalities across Victoria are diverse. Whilst over half of the metropolitan and regional councils have undergone reviews, most of the remaining municipalities still operate under structures established by the commissioners appointed during the restructures of the 1990s. The commissioners did not have any State-wide reference available to them when considering the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structures for their municipalities. As a consequence, there remain substantial differences between similar municipalities across Victoria. Subsequent to these reforms, individual councils conducted electoral reviews.
What is the purpose of a representation review?

Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989 specifies that the purpose of a representation review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.”

To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.

Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of a representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors.

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC has adopted as a guide the numbers of councillors in similar-sized municipalities of similar categories within Victoria. In addition, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant the municipality having more or fewer councillors than similar municipalities.

3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest (see page 8). The electoral structure should be designed to take these into account where practicable. This is important for assisting the elected councillors to be effective representatives of the people in their particular municipality.

What can’t a representation review do?

The review cannot deal with the external boundaries of the municipality, or such matters as whether the municipality should be divided into two separate municipalities or amalgamated with another municipality.

On what does the VEC base its recommendations?

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- the VEC’s experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- the VEC’s expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC’s recommendations are not made by a “straw poll” of the number of submissions supporting particular models. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, but also considering other factors, such as giving representation to communities of interest (including those communities of interest which may not be particularly vocal).

About the VEC

The Victorian Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established under Victoria’s Electoral Act 2002. The VEC is not subject to ministerial direction or control in the performance of its responsibilities. The VEC’s main functions include:

- conducting parliamentary elections and by-elections;
- conducting local government elections and by-elections (when appointed by councils);
- conducting representation reviews for councils;
- maintaining an accurate and up-to-date register of electors and preparing rolls for elections; and
- contributing to public understanding of elections and electoral matters through information and education programmes.

In performing these functions, the VEC acts as an independent, impartial authority, achieving transparency and integrity.

About the Panel

The VEC’s recommendations are ultimately made by the Electoral Commissioner, Steve Tully. In reaching a decision, he is aided by the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, the manager of the Electoral Enrolment Branch (who is the manager responsible for the review process), and a number of VEC staff. These include teams with expertise in mapping and boundary modelling, and in policy and public consultation. He also receives advice from a consultant with expertise in local government – Mr Terry Maher.

The public hearing following the Preliminary Report will be attended by at least two representatives from the VEC and Mr Maher.
The review process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 1 May 2007</td>
<td>The review begins. The VEC begins conducting research and preparing material for the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 9 May 2007</td>
<td>Notification of the public hearing. A notice detailing the process for the review and calling for submissions is placed in the Herald Sun, The Age and the Hamilton Spectator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 31 May 2007 7.00 pm</td>
<td>Information session held. An information session on the review process is held at: • Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton. Anyone interested in making a submission is advised to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 12 June 2007 5.00 pm</td>
<td>Closing date for preliminary submissions. Preliminary submissions are your chance to contribute your views and local knowledge about any issues relevant to the review. See details in the next section. Late submissions will not be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 9 July 2007 Preliminary Report released</td>
<td>Based on the VEC's research, including information presented by the public, the VEC formulates a series of different models for how the electoral structure of Southern Grampians Shire could be arranged. The models that best fit the VEC's aim of fairness and equity of representation are presented and explained in the Preliminary Report. For details of how to get a copy of the Report, see below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 30 July 2007 5.00 pm</td>
<td>Closing date for response submissions on the Preliminary Report. Any person or group, including the Council, may make a response submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report. This is your chance to present any additional arguments regarding which of the VEC's models you believe best represents the voters of Southern Grampians Shire. Late submissions will not be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 9 August 2007 6.30 pm</td>
<td>Public hearing held at: • Martin J Hynes Auditorium, 5 Market Place, Hamilton. People who state in their response submissions to the Preliminary Report that they want to speak in support of their submissions may do so at this public hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 27 August 2007 Final Report</td>
<td>After considering any written submissions relating to the Preliminary Report, and information provided at the public hearing, the VEC prepares a Final Report, making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government. For details of how to get a copy of the Final Report, see below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Minister for Local Government considers the VEC's recommendations and may make a determination. Any determination will take effect at the next Council election.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making a submission

Any person or group, including the Council, may make a submission to the VEC. Submissions do not have to be elaborate documents; a short letter is perfectly acceptable, as long as it addresses matters within the scope of the review (see the checklist inside the front cover of this document).

When can people make submissions?

The VEC accepts submissions at two stages of the review process:

- **Preliminary submissions** should address matters relating to the number of councillors and the electoral structure of the municipality. At this stage, people can suggest any possible models within the constraints as explained in the "Matters to consider" section of this document. The most helpful submissions are generally those that provide clear explanations or evidence for particular viewpoints. Preliminary submissions must be received at the VEC by Tuesday, 12 June 2007– 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- **Response submissions** on the Preliminary Report can comment on any issues relating to the review, but are more helpful if they comment on the preferred option and/or the alternative option(s). Alternative models will not generally be considered at this stage, as there is no further opportunity to put these models to the public for comment. Response submissions should indicate whether the person making the submission wishes to speak at a public hearing in support of his or her submission. Response submissions must be received at the VEC by Monday, 30 July 2007– 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

There will be a public hearing for people who want to speak in support of their response submissions on Thursday, 9 August 2007 – 6.30 pm. People wishing to speak must request to do so in their response submissions.

Where should submissions be sent?

Submissions can be sent to the VEC in the following ways:

- posted to Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000;
- emailed to southerngrampians.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to (03) 9629 9330.

Submissions must include the name, address and telephone contact number of the person making the submission. Without this information, the submission will not be accepted.

Public access to submissions

Once lodged, submissions will be available to the public at:

- the VEC office at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne; and
- the VEC website www.vec.vic.gov.au

The VEC will publish all submissions received by the due date on its website. The name and locality of the person making the submission will also be published. The person's telephone number, street address and signature will not be published. The reason for making submissions available to the public is to ensure transparency in the electoral representation review process.
Matters to consider when preparing submissions

There are many matters to be considered when determining the electoral structure of a municipality. In your submission, you might try to take all of the issues into account, or you might just concentrate on one issue that you wish to bring to the VEC’s attention. The VEC’s job is to look at all of the relevant matters and to reach the best overall solution, based both on its own research and submissions received from the public.

Below are some of the main matters you might like to consider.

How many councillors should there be?

Under the Local Government Act 1989, the number of councillors in every municipality must be between five and twelve inclusive (s.58(1)). The Act does not specify how to decide what is the appropriate number, but the VEC has identified the following matters to consider:

- Parliament has provided a range for the number of councillors to allow for municipalities with large numbers of voters and municipalities with smaller numbers. The numbers of voters in each municipality vary across Victoria from approximately 4,000 to over 167,000. The VEC applies these provisions of the Act in a logical way, with those municipalities that have the largest numbers of voters having the most councillors, and those municipalities that have the least numbers of voters having fewer councillors.
- The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and its area, number of voters and number of councillors (see the end of this document). The table differentiates between metropolitan municipalities, metropolitan/rural fringe municipalities, regional municipalities with urban areas and rural municipalities in recognition of the different circumstances and needs of these categories of municipalities. This table is a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors. This information enables the VEC to compare the municipality being reviewed to other municipalities with similar voter numbers and areas.
- The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is expected to increase or decrease in the period between reviews (eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment are used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.
- In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a municipality to have more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case. These might include such issues or circumstances as:
  - significant population growth within the municipality;
  - an especially mobile or transient population;
  - cultural and linguistic diversity within the community;
  - a large proportion of older residents who may have special interests and needs;
  - a wide geographic distribution of voters within a large municipality; or
  - a large number of communities of interest (see below).
- Although the legislation allows for any number of councillors between five and twelve, the VEC generally prefers to recommend an uneven number. With an even number of councillors, tied votes are generally more common. Often tied votes are resolved by a mayoral casting vote, which effectively gives one councillor two votes and the right to make determinations on evenly divided issues. The VEC does not consider that this provides fair and equitable representation. This situation may be further exacerbated if a council’s efforts to elect a mayor result in a tied vote. In such circumstances, the mayor may be selected by lot rather than through the support of a majority of the councillors.

The VEC has, however, recommended an even number of councillors in some reviews, where it believes that the possible ward boundaries with an even number of councillors better take account of communities of interest or other factors than the possible ward boundaries with an uneven number.

Should the municipality be unsubdivided or divided into wards?

A municipality can either be unsubdivided, with all councillors elected “at large” by all of the voters, or it can be subdivided into a number of wards. Both electoral structures have advantages and disadvantages, and which structure is best for any individual municipality will depend on the municipality’s particular circumstances.

Southern Grampians Shire is currently an unsubdivided municipality represented by seven councillors. The tables at the end of this document list all of Victoria’s municipalities and their electoral structures.

Many factors must be taken into account in determining the most appropriate electoral structure for a municipality.

Communities of interest

An important part of achieving “fair and equitable representation” is making sure that communities of interest are appropriately represented. Communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns or aspirations. They are different from “interest groups” or “pressure groups” which may only have one issue in common (or a very limited number of issues). The communities of interest to which people belong are often also an important part of their self-identity.

Communities of interest may occur where people are linked with each other geographically (e.g. a town or valley) or economically, such as where people work in similar industries (e.g. fruit growers, transporters and canners). Communities of interest may also appear where people share a number of special needs because of similar circumstances (such as new immigrants, who may have little English, require assistance with housing and need help finding employment). Communities of interest may also include ethnic groups, retired people, the unemployed or many other groupings of people.

Communities of interest are important in electoral representation reviews when they have similar needs from their local government. In such cases, it is important to endeavour to ensure that communities of interest have the opportunity to be fairly represented on councils. There are a number of ways to take account of communities of interest, depending on how they are distributed geographically.
If: then fair representation may best be achieved by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a community of interest is compact geographically,</td>
<td>creating a ward with boundaries reflecting that community of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a community of interest is a widespread minority,</td>
<td>creating multi-councillor wards with proportional representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there are numerous minority communities of interest within a municipality,</td>
<td>combining the communities of interest, so that any elected councillors would be responsible to all of these groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also many other ways to take communities of interest into account.

**Other factors considered**

In developing options, communities of interest are not the only basis for determining boundaries. A range of other factors must also be taken into consideration. Often these factors are competing and the VEC must find an option that provides the best balance of all matters to be considered. These factors include:

- ensuring that the number of voters represented by each councillor meet the legislative 10% variation requirement;
- creating wards with manageable areas and taking account of geographic features, such as terrain and rivers;
- considering travel routes, modes of transport available and communication networks;
- anticipating likely changes to voter numbers in various locations over time; and
- governance related issues.

The following tables list characteristics that are commonly considered to be associated with the different possible electoral structures and may be of use in deciding which structure most suits your municipality. These opinions have come from a wide range of sources, including Local Government Victoria and submissions to previous reviews.

**Unsubdivided municipalities**

Unsubdivided municipalities must elect their councillors by proportional representation (see more on this point below).

Some commonly expressed views about unsubdivided structures are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotes the concept of a municipality-wide focus, with councillors being elected by and concerned for the municipality as a whole, rather than parochial interests.</td>
<td>May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns.</td>
<td>May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election.</td>
<td>Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries.</td>
<td>May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results in a simple, less expensive voter roll for elections as compared with separate voter rolls for individual wards.</td>
<td>May be difficult for voters to assess the performances of individual councillors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Options for division into wards**

If the municipality is to be divided into wards, there are three options:

- single-councillor wards;
- multi-councillor wards; and
- combinations of single and multi-councillor wards.

The Local Government Act specifies that wards with only one representative must elect that representative via preferential voting, whereas multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided municipalities must elect their representatives via proportional representation. As far as voters are concerned on the day, it makes no difference. In practice, ballot papers look the same and are filled out in the same way, regardless of whether the candidates are being elected by proportional representation or by preferential voting. Whether a ward elects councillors via proportional representation or preferential voting can sometimes make a difference as to whether or not communities of interest are fairly represented.
Single-councillor wards

Some commonly expressed views about single-councillor wards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives, easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues.</td>
<td>Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a perspective of what policies benefit the municipality as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented.</td>
<td>Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest, and may be difficult to define.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voters may have a restricted choice of candidates in elections for individual wards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small populations in each ward may make ward boundaries more susceptible to change caused by demographic shifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where major groups support candidates in multiple wards, it is possible that one group can dominate the council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multi-councillor wards

A multi-councillor ward structure results in fewer but larger wards than a single-councillor ward structure.

Some commonly expressed views about multi-councillor wards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This structure supports the accommodation of a whole community of interest (such as a sizeable town or group of suburbs) within a ward.</td>
<td>Groups may form within the council based on multi-councillor wards, leading to possible division between councillors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on issues may be broader than for single-councillor wards (though councillors may be more locally focused than in an unsubdivided municipality).</td>
<td>Very local issues may be overridden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided municipality. Electors have a choice of councillor to approach.</td>
<td>In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors may share workloads more effectively.</td>
<td>Duplication or gaps may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward boundaries are likely to be easy to identify and less susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline than for single-councillor wards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combination of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards

Some commonly expressed views about combined systems are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A large community of interest can be included within a multi-councillor ward, and a smaller community of interest can be included within a single-councillor ward. This structure accommodates differences in population across a municipality, and allows small communities to be separately represented.</td>
<td>Electors in single-councillor wards may expect that their councillors will be more influential than their numbers suggest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear ward boundaries are more likely.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governance related issues

A number of governance related issues are also considered. The VEC notes, though, that there are advantages and disadvantages to all types of structure with respect to governance. The following table shows some of the directly conflicting points of view that have been expressed about governance related issues in single-councillor wards as opposed to multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single-councillor wards</th>
<th>Multi-councillor wards / Unsubdivided municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more accessible to residents.</td>
<td>Voters have a choice of which councillor to approach – they may choose one more akin to their interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more aware of very local issues.</td>
<td>Councillors are more likely to have a broader focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workloads for councillors are more manageable.</td>
<td>Councillors may share workloads more effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more accountable.</td>
<td>Uncontested elections are less likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more likely to reach consensus on issues.</td>
<td>There is a greater opportunity for diversity of groups to be represented and different views on council can be beneficial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conducting the reviews, the VEC's goal is to provide fair and equitable representation for the voters. The VEC considers that the primary consideration in this is to provide structures that help people to elect a council that represents their views, interests and needs. Factors relating to governance issues, particularly those which apply after the election, are often given less weighting in the VEC's considerations than factors leading to an appropriate spread of representation in the first instance (such as capturing diversity and communities of interest).
Proportional representation has a number of key differences to the exhaustive preferential system, which applied in unsubdivided municipalities and multi-councillor wards at elections prior to 2004. Proportional representation may return quite different results to the old system. Proportional representation should return candidates that are more representative of voters’ choices and makes it more difficult for candidates to be elected as part of a ticket.

How should ward boundaries be drawn?

Getting the numbers right

If the Southern Grampians Shire Council were to be divided into wards, the ward boundaries must comply with legal requirements. Section 2190 of the Local Government Act [1989 requires that:

- the number of voters represented by each councillor must be within 10% of the average number of votes per councillor for that municipality; and
- the ward boundaries must provide a fair and equitable division of the municipal district.

Where there are multi-councillor wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor for such wards is taken to be the total number of voters for the ward divided by the number of councillors for the ward. For instance, if there are 3 councillors and 12,000 voters for a ward, the number of voters represented by each councillor will be 4,000, that is 12,000 divided by 3.

Ward boundaries must meet the approximate equality requirement set by the Act. The number of voters represented by each councillor cannot be more than 10% outside the average number for all councillors.

Other considerations

The Act does not prescribe any more details to define what constitutes a fair and equitable division of the municipality. However, the following criteria are useful in considering and (where possible) deciding on proposed ward boundaries:

- the boundaries should take account of communities of interest;
- the boundaries should follow clear lines, such as major roads, rivers and other natural features;
- growing areas should not be concentrated into one ward, but should be spread over several wards; and
- the boundaries should take account of likely population changes, by setting the number of voters in wards with high growth potential somewhat below the average, and the number of voters in wards with little growth potential somewhat above the average. This approach will help ensure that the boundaries stay within the 10% tolerance for a longer period, avoiding the need for frequent redrawing of boundaries.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance among these criteria.
What should wards be called?

There is a variety of possible approaches to the naming of wards, including:

- **Place names:** A number of municipalities name their wards after localities in the wards. This approach is useful where ward boundaries closely align with localities. However, it can lead to people in smaller localities within a ward feeling overlooked, and may cause confusion if the locality that a ward is named after cuts across a ward boundary;

- **Compass directions:** This is the current approach in, for example, the City of Whittlesea, where the wards are East, North and West. It is straightforward. It is of most use where the location of the wards is closely aligned to compass directions;

- **Names of historic buildings:** This is a way of celebrating the municipality’s heritage;

- **Names of natural features:** Using the names of natural features such as hills or streams can be a way of identifying wards without the complications of locality names. The features would need to be well known and relevant to the particular wards;

- **Names of pioneers and former prominent citizens:** This is a way of recognising important former residents. It is most appropriate when the person is closely associated with the area covered by the ward; and

- **Indigenous names:** This is a way of recognising the municipality’s Indigenous heritage. However, the use of Indigenous names could be seen as being tokenistic if the names are not relevant to areas within the municipality.

The VEC encourages people to suggest ward names in their submissions.

Getting copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports

Copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports will be available from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au, by contacting the VEC on 13 18 32, and at the Southern Grampians Shire Council offices.

When the Preliminary Report is released, a notice in the Hamilton Spectator will specify how people can make a written submission in response to the Report.

The Preliminary Report will be available from Monday, 9 July 2007.

The Final Report will be released on Monday, 27 August 2007.

The Current Structure

Southern Grampians Shire is an unsubdivided municipality represented by seven councillors. Councillors are elected by proportional representation.

The map below shows the current municipality boundaries and the voter numbers as at 7 December 2006.

![Map of Southern Grampians Shire](image)

A break-down of voter numbers by locality will be available from the VEC website – www.vec.vic.gov.au – or by calling the VEC on 13 18 32. This can be used to see more precisely where votes are located within the municipality. A break-down of voter numbers by Census Collector District is available on request by calling 13 18 32.

Southern Grampians Shire at a glance

Southern Grampians Shire was formed in September 1994 with the amalgamation of the former Shires of Dundas, Mt Rouse and Wannon and the City of Hamilton. The Shire covers an area of 6,652 square kilometres and is located in the centre of Victoria’s Western District, 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south-east of Adelaide.

More than half the population of the Shire live in Hamilton, the main retail and service centre. Other smaller towns include Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Penshurst and Tarrington.

Agriculture, manufacturing, retail, education, health and tourism are the Shire’s predominant industries. Because of the development of the mineral sands industry, strong growth in house and land value is expected to continue. Council has recently engaged VicUrban to develop a new 300 lot residential estate bordering Lake Hamilton.

Natural attractions include the Grampians National Park, Rocklands Reservoir, the Wannon and Glenelg Rivers, Lake Linlithgow and Mount Napier. There are a large number of sporting facilities including a large aquatic and leisure centre, five golf clubs and a harness racing
track. Southern Grampians Shire is also home to a large secondary and tertiary school system and multi-campus hospital.

At the 2001 Census, the population of the Shire was distributed in the following way:

- Hamilton: 55.3%
- Coleraine: 6.1%
- Penshurst: 2.9%
- Dunkeld: 2.4%
- Balmoral: 1.2%
- Glenthompson: 0.9%
- Branxholme: 0.7%
- Cavendish: 0.7%
- Rural Balance: 29.7%

The Shire’s population of almost 17,000 is expected to decline over the next decade as a proportion of the 18–34 year group is expected to move to larger cities for education and employment.

Statistical data

Trends in statistical data can assist with identifying and mapping communities of interest, which may be localised in a particular area or across larger parts of the municipality. The VEC’s preliminary research indicates there are observable differences across Southern Grampians Shire that may indicate communities of interest.

The unemployment rate in Hamilton at the time of the 2001 census was around 6% with Penshurst recording over 11% unemployment.

The people of Hamilton are employed in larger proportions in the retail (9%) and health and community services industries (6.4%), whereas over 25% of those living in the rural areas are employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.

Over 30% of the populations of both Coleraine and Penshurst are aged over 60. In contrast, nearly 47% of the population of Dunkeld is in the 35–49 year old age group. It should be noted that these are small towns in comparison to Hamilton where over 55% of the Shire’s population resides, and the rural area, which is home to nearly 30% of the Shire’s population.

Just over half the population of Hamilton was living at the same address five years prior to the 2001 census whereas over 60% of those living in the rural areas of the Shire were at the same address.

The Shire’s involvement in the drought infrastructure project for the south-west (announced April 2007) is expected to provide employment, and may also present planning, environmental, development and other issues for the Shire’s residents and business owners.

The VEC invites submitters to comment on these findings, and to identify communities of interest perceived within the municipality. Local knowledge and perspectives will be valuable in the development of recommendations for the VEC’s Preliminary Report. Submissions may also include comments about whether or not these communities are well-represented under the current structure, and suggestions about whether and how the municipality could be structured so that they may be represented more effectively.

(Sources: Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria in Future 2004; Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria Population Bulletin 2006; Department of Sustainability and Environment Know Your Areas; Department of Sustainability and Environment Towns in Time; Southern Grampians Shire Council web site)

---

**Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Southern Grampians Shire</th>
<th>Regional Municipalities with urban areas (medians)</th>
<th>Regional municipalities without urban areas (medians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area (square kilometres)</td>
<td>6,653</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>3,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population1</td>
<td>18,895</td>
<td>34,941</td>
<td>35,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (people/square km)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters1</td>
<td>12,260</td>
<td>24,721</td>
<td>13,706</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic profile1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic profile1</th>
<th>Southern Grampians Shire</th>
<th>Regional Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major industries (Percentage of workforce)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation, cafés, restaurants, cultural and recreation services</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and business services</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and community services</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Unemployment rate | 5.1 | 7.4 |

| Households earning under $500/week | 36.8% | 34.6% |

**Population profile1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population profile1</th>
<th>Southern Grampians Shire</th>
<th>Regional Municipalities with urban areas (medians)</th>
<th>Regional municipalities without urban areas (medians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age groups (Percentage of the population)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-17 years old</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34 years old</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49 years old</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ years old</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Expected population growth (2006-2016) | -6.6% | 8.68% | 5.87% |

1 - statistics from 2001 Census
2 - Department of Sustainability and Environment revised estimates 2005 Population Bulletin 2006
3 - based on 2004-interim projections from the Department of Sustainability and Environment
4 - estimates as at 30 April 2007
Past reviews of similar municipalities

Southern Grampians Shire may be compared and contrasted with Horsham Rural City and Central Goldfields Shire, where the VEC conducted reviews in 2004-2005. When the VEC conducted those reviews, it made the following recommendations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Before review</th>
<th>Final recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horsham Rural City Council</td>
<td>seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided municipality</td>
<td>seven councillors elected from an unsubdivided municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Goldfields Shire</td>
<td>five councillors elected from five single-councillor wards</td>
<td>seven councillors elected from three single-councillor wards and one four-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Horsham Rural City there is a high degree of inter-dependence between the major regional city and other parts of the municipality – that is, decisions affecting one area of the municipality also impact on other areas, and communities of interest extend throughout the municipality.

There is a close connection between urban and rural areas of the municipality through family, business, sporting and recreation activities, and Horsham is the primary service centre for most residents of the municipality – this means that many rural residents must regularly travel to Horsham and use its facilities. The rural residents therefore have a clear personal stake in what happens in Horsham. In addition, over 74% of the municipality’s residents live in the urban area of Horsham.

As a consequence, the VEC recommended an unsubdivided structure for the Horsham Rural City Council.

In contrast, in Central Goldfields Shire there is less inter-dependence between Maryborough (with 61% of the population) and the rural areas and small towns. Some areas have their own distinct communities of interest. In these circumstances, the VEC considered it most appropriate to combine Maryborough into one multi-councillor ward (recognising that there are few differences between different parts of the urban area) and to divide the rural area into single-councillor wards, in recognition of the different communities of interest there.

The reports from these and other reviews can be accessed at the VEC website – www.vec.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 18 32.

In conducting the Southern Grampians Shire Council review, considerations such as these and the structures of similar municipalities such as these will be the starting point. Through its own research and the submission process, the VEC will look carefully for factors specific to the municipality that make its situation similar to or different from those and other municipalities.
### Metropolitan/Rural Fringe Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll¹</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Population¹</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardinia†</td>
<td>1,282</td>
<td>41,929</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,990</td>
<td>57,115</td>
<td>2 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilumbik</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>45,836</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,093</td>
<td>61,048</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>58,959</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8,423</td>
<td>76,131</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>80,552</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,950</td>
<td>115,352</td>
<td>3 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>91,542</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17,171</td>
<td>127,915</td>
<td>3 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume‡</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>102,704</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11,412</td>
<td>152,018</td>
<td>1 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Ranges</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>103,634</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11,515</td>
<td>143,398</td>
<td>2 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>145,545</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13,214</td>
<td>217,349</td>
<td>1 single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Under review

### Regional Municipalities with Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll¹</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Population¹</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ararat*</td>
<td>4,208</td>
<td>9,243</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>11,444</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benalla</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>10,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,571</td>
<td>14,108</td>
<td>1 single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill</td>
<td>6,114</td>
<td>14,377</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,054</td>
<td>21,509</td>
<td>1 single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>4,264</td>
<td>14,750</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,107</td>
<td>19,177</td>
<td>3 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangaratta</td>
<td>3,646</td>
<td>20,826</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>28,766</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>23,509</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3,358</td>
<td>31,083</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wodonga</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>24,721</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3,532</td>
<td>34,941</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midura</td>
<td>22,084</td>
<td>35,950</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,994</td>
<td>51,754</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shepparton</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>40,409</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,773</td>
<td>60,525</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>52,138</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,793</td>
<td>70,543</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat*</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>66,080</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,342</td>
<td>88,777</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Bendigo†</td>
<td>2,999</td>
<td>80,962</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,996</td>
<td>95,968</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Geelong</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>167,928</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13,994</td>
<td>204,891</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Under review

### Regional Municipalities without Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll¹</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Population¹</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queenscliffe</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,059</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>3,191</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wimmera</td>
<td>9,108</td>
<td>4,060</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>4,710</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindmarsh</td>
<td>7,521</td>
<td>5,116</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>6,392</td>
<td>3 two-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toowong</td>
<td>6,661</td>
<td>3,933</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,079</td>
<td>8,380</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buloke*</td>
<td>7,998</td>
<td>6,125</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>7,015</td>
<td>3 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanakie</td>
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<td>1,276</td>
<td>9,662</td>
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<td>1,572</td>
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<td>1,571</td>
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<td>Warrnambool</td>
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<td>5,793</td>
<td>70,543</td>
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<td>Ballarat*</td>
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<td>66,080</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,342</td>
<td>88,777</td>
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<td>Greater Bendigo†</td>
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<td>8,996</td>
<td>95,968</td>
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<td>13,994</td>
<td>204,891</td>
<td>Single-councillor ward</td>
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1. Under review

2. Estimates as of 30 April 2007


4. Estimates as at 30 April 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Change in population 2001-2006</th>
<th>Change in resident population 2006-2007</th>
<th>Change in council population 2006-2007</th>
<th>Estimated resident population 2008-2009</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baw Baw</td>
<td>4,026</td>
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<td>3,305</td>
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<td>Macedon Ranges†</td>
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<td>Wellington†</td>
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<td>4,635</td>
<td>41,722</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* under review
† revised 2003/2005
1 Department of Sustainability and Environment revised estimates 2005: Population Bulletin 2005
2 Estimates as at 30 April 2007
9.5 List of people and groups making submissions

**Preliminary submissions**

- Lyle Allan
- Geoff Barker
- Helen R. Brian
- Des Brown
- Richard Brown
- Cavendish Townscape Association Inc.
- J. Fraser
- Andrew J. Gunter
- Keith Haines
- Hamilton Ratepayers Association
- Judith Kenny
- Norman Kenny
- N. H. Kruger
- Pam Leeming
- Vera Lynch
- Deghia Makris
- Lachlan McDonald
- Daniel McOwan
- Olive McVicker
- Rex Mitchell
- E. Dawn Murray
- R. L. Murray
- Ron Ottrey
- Ruth and Eric Pihl
- The Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
- Beatrice Rayson
- Chris Sharples
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- J. T. Stone
- Cr Howard M. Templeton
- Margaret Waddington
- H. M. Wettenhall
- Leighton Wraith

**Response submissions**

- Cavendish Townscape Association Inc.
- Cr Coralie Coulson
- Andrew J. Gunter
- Daniel McOwan
- Rex Mitchell
- Cr Charles Newbould (twice)
- Ron Ottrey
- The Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- J. T. Stone
- Cr Howard M. Templeton
- Margaret Waddington
- Leighton Wraith
Southern Grampians Shire Council

Map of Recommended Option
Seven Councillors, Unsubdivided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Area (sq km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Grampians Shire</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13,151</td>
<td>6,652.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for all Electorates</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13,151</td>
<td>6,652.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average per Councillor</td>
<td>1,879</td>
<td>950.38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Map prepared by the Victorian Electoral Commission
Vicmap spatial data provided by Department of Sustainability and Environment
Parks digital data used with the permission of Parks Victoria
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