

FINAL REPORT
Electoral Representation Review
for the
Mitchell Shire Council



11 October 2004

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 | 4 |
| 3 | Electoral representation review process | 4 |
| 4 | Public involvement | 5 |
| 4.1 | Public information..... | 5 |
| 4.2 | Advertising..... | 5 |
| 4.3 | Media releases | 6 |
| 4.4 | Information leaflet..... | 6 |
| 4.5 | VEC website..... | 6 |
| 4.6 | Helpline..... | 6 |
| 4.7 | Guide for Submissions | 6 |
| 5 | Preliminary Report | 6 |
| 5.1 | Preliminary submissions | 6 |
| 5.2 | VEC research | 7 |
| 5.3 | Recommended options | 7 |
| 6 | Response submissions | 7 |
| 7 | Public hearing | 10 |
| 8 | Findings and recommendation | 10 |
| 8.1 | Number of councillors | 11 |
| 8.2 | Electoral structure | 12 |
| 8.3 | Recommendation..... | 18 |
| 9 | Appendices | 19 |
| 9.1 | Public notices of the electoral representation review | 19 |
| 9.2 | Media releases | 22 |
| 9.3 | Information leaflet..... | 25 |
| 9.4 | Guide for Submissions | 26 |
| 9.5 | List of persons and groups making submissions..... | 39 |

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 Mitchell Shire (s.219D *Local Government Act 1989*).

The VEC recommends that Mitchell Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards.

This recommended structure is indicated in the map on the back page of this Report.

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, Mitchell 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 Mitchell Shire. The notice appeared in the *Victoria Government Gazette* on 13 May 2004.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. On 9 June 2004, Mitchell Shire Council informed the VEC that the Council had appointed it 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 Vern Robson to provide expertise in the field of local government. Mr Robson has worked in local government since 1955, and has been the Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer of the City of Warrnambool, the Chief Commissioner of the City of Ballarat, the Administrator of the Mansfield Shire Council and the Director of the Local Government Branch of the Department of Infrastructure.

2.3 Municipality profile

Mitchell Shire was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of parts of the Rural City of Seymour, the Shires of Kilmore and Pyalong and parts of the Shires of Broadford and McIvor. Major towns within the Shire include Seymour, Wallan, Kilmore, Broadford and Wandong-Heathcote Junction. Mitchell Shire is close to Melbourne, and is consequently more densely populated than most of regional Victoria. In some respects, the population profile resembles the profile of Melbourne more than regional Victoria as a whole. In other respects, Mitchell Shire faces issues which are typical of regional Victoria.

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

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Seymour | 23.4% | Tallarook | 1.1% |
| Wallan | 14.4% | Pyalong | 0.9% |
| Kilmore | 13.2% | Waterford Park | 0.8% |
| Broadford | 9.6% | Rural balance | 31.8% |
| Wandong- Heathcote Junction | 5.0% | | |

Mitchell Shire contains some workers in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, but far fewer than in regional Victoria generally. Manufacturing and retail are the largest industries, and a large proportion of the population works in the government administration and defence sector, largely due to the presence of the Puckapunyal Military Base. Some residents commute to Melbourne to work.

Unemployment levels are below those of Melbourne and regional Victoria as a whole. There is a higher proportion of people and households on higher incomes than in regional Victoria generally, though below the proportions in Melbourne. Similarly, there are higher proportions of professionals and people working in the advanced clerical and services sector than in regional Victoria generally.

As in most of regional Victoria, the vast majority of residents come from an English-speaking background, with relatively small numbers of people from other backgrounds (mostly European).

Between 2004 and 2012, the population growth is expected to be substantially higher than the levels of regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne as a whole. There is also expected to be a change in the age structure of the Shire, as in regional Victoria as a whole, with people over 50 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

(Sources: Department of Infrastructure: *Victoria in Future*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Regional Victoria in Fact 2001*; Department of

Sustainability and Environment: *Towns in Time*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Know Your Area*).

2.4 Current electoral structure

Mitchell Shire is currently represented by seven councillors, elected from five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

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 at Broadford on 20 July 2004, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the Mitchell Shire community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- developing and issuing an information leaflet for voters living outside Mitchell Shire;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a help line for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions;
- releasing a Preliminary Report on 24 August 2004 and making the Report available at the 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 at Broadford on 21 September 2004.

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 *North Central Review* on 6 July 2004 and in the *Kilmore Free Press*, the *Seymour Telegraph*, the *Seymour-Nagambie Advertiser* and *The Heathcote-McIvor Times* on 7 July 2004;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the Mitchell Shire review, appeared in the *Melbourne Herald Sun* on 30 June 2004; and
- a notice of the Preliminary Report appeared in the *North Central Review* on 24 August 2004 and in the *Kilmore Free Press*, the *Seymour Telegraph*, the

Seymour-Nagambie Advertiser and *The Heathcote-McIvor Times* on 25 August 2004.

See Appendix 9.1.

4.3 Media releases

A media release designed to supplement the paid advertising was distributed to the *North Central Review*, the *Kilmore Free Press*, the *Seymour Telegraph*, the *Seymour-Nagambie Advertiser* and *The Heathcote-McIvor Times* on 2 July 2004. A second media release was sent to WIN TV, Seymour FM, One FM and the Goulburn and Border Broadcasters on 22 July 2004. A media release with details of the Preliminary Report was distributed to the *North Central Review*, the *Kilmore Free Press*, the *Seymour Telegraph*, the *Seymour-Nagambie Advertiser*, *The Heathcote-McIvor Times*, Seymour FM, One FM and the Goulburn and Border Broadcasters on 24 August 2004. See Appendix 9.2.

4.4 Information leaflet

The VEC distributed an information leaflet to voters living outside the municipality from 5 July 2004. 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 to 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

The VEC developed and distributed its Guide for Submissions to help those persons interested in making submissions. A copy of the Guide is attached. See Appendix 9.4.

5 Preliminary Report

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

5.1 Preliminary submissions

By the closing time for submissions (2 August 2004 - 5.00 pm), the VEC had received 32 preliminary submissions. A proportion of these submissions were form letters.

Among the submissions, opinion regarding the number of councillors varied. Support ranged from a total of 5 to 9 councillors (the Act states that a council must consist of between 5 and 12 councillors), with nine as the most favoured number. Opinion regarding the electoral structure and voting system options also varied. Some submissions supported the existing structure. Most submissions favoured three three-councillor wards. Other submissions preferred an unsubdivided structure. One

submission suggested single-councillor wards, some suggested multi-councillor wards and some suggested a mixture of these two options.

See Appendix 9.5 for details of those persons 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 field work was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC.

5.3 Recommended options

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

The VEC's preferred option was:

- **That Mitchell Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards.**

The VEC's alternative option was:

- **That Mitchell Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards, with ward boundaries differing from those in the preferred option.**

Detailed maps of these two options, showing recommended ward boundaries, were included in the Preliminary Report.

The VEC's recommendation in this Report is the alternative option that was presented in the Preliminary Report.

6 Response submissions

In accordance with s.219F(7) of the Act, the VEC invited written submissions in response to the Preliminary Report.

By the close of submissions, 15 September 2004 – 5.00 pm, the VEC had received 301 response submissions. Of these, 260 were form letters and an additional 7 submissions were the form letter with extra text added.

The preferences expressed in the submissions are summarised in the following table:

| Option | Number of submissions supporting this option |
|---|---|
| VEC's preferred option | 1 |
| VEC's preferred option with minor changes | 1 |
| VEC's alternative option | 17 |
| either of the VEC's options | 4 |
| neither of the VEC's options | 278* |

* includes form letters

Table 1: Summary of the preferences outlined in the response submissions

The VEC reiterates that options are not recommended based on how many submissions support them, but rather are based on the arguments presented in support of them (see Section 3).

In support of the VEC's options in general, it was argued that:

- better electoral representation for voters would be provided overall due to the increased councillor numbers;
- three councillors in each ward would provide better representation, easier access to councillors and a better choice of councillors;
- three councillors in three wards could share their workloads better than councillors in single-councillor wards;
- a fairer distribution of representation across the municipality would be achieved;
- Wallan and Hidden Valley would be included in the same ward; and
- smaller towns would be better served than at present, because councillors would be elected representing smaller numbers of voters.

In favour of the preferred option, it was argued that it would be possible for councillors to service all parts of their wards, regardless of where they live.

The following arguments were made in support of the alternative option:

- more growth would be allowed for than in the preferred option, so the proposed ward boundaries would last longer; and
- the suggested wards more accurately capture communities of interest.

The following reasons were given for not recommending the preferred option:

- Kilmore would be split from Kilmore East; and
- Pyalong and Tooborac would be split.

A number of submissions also suggested that the alternative option should be adjusted so that Sunday Creek Dam is included in the Central Ward. They argued that the dam will soon only service the Central Ward, and, because of its great importance to Central Ward

residents, the councillors who represent these residents should see their roles as including supervision of the dam.

Those submissions preferring neither option expressed the view that:

- the municipality has six distinct communities of interest, rather than three;
- local knowledge would no longer be present on council without a larger number of wards;
- the current structure works well as it is;
- these options would introduce an “us versus them” mentality;
- Wandong-Heathcote Junction and other areas in Glenburnie Ward do not share a community of interest with Wallan;
- fast-growing areas should be spread amongst different wards, but the VEC’s proposals put most of the fast-growing areas together in the South Ward;
- smaller towns would be dominated by Wallan in the proposed South Ward options;
- Broadford would be dominated by Kilmore in the Central Ward options;
- the proposed North Ward options would not accommodate the needs of the rural areas of Panyule or the special needs of the Puckapunyal Military Area;
- councillor workloads would increase because councillors would have to cover larger ward areas;
- there may be confusion about councillors’ responsibilities and about whom residents should approach in multi-councillor wards; and
- multi-councillor wards may lead to voting tickets.

Overall, there was a great concern that, in the proposed wards, the municipality’s four largest towns would dominate the smaller communities. It was thought to be necessary to retain the present Glenburnie and Panyule wards to ensure that these small town and rural areas could achieve representation.

Against the increase in the number of councillors, some submissions argued that:

- the number of voters per councillor in Mitchell Shire is only slightly higher than in comparable municipalities;
- the current growth rate may not continue;
- current councillor workloads are not excessive;
- the extra cost for two additional councillors is undesirable; and
- there is no demand from voters for more councillors.

Some submissions suggested that the existing electoral system be retained, but with minor boundary variations. A number of submissions suggested that the present system be retained with a second councillor added to the Pretty Sally Ward.

See Appendix 9.5 for details of those persons and groups making response submissions. 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 Shire Hall, Broadford, on 21 September 2004 at 6.30 pm. All persons and groups who had made submissions in response to the VEC's Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions, and fourteen chose to do so. Members of the public were invited to attend, and there was a total audience of 52 people (including presenters).

In addition to points raised in response submissions, a number of further issues were presented at the hearing.

The following arguments were presented in favour of the VEC's options:

- smaller communities will not be disenfranchised, because they will be able to approach one, two or three councillors to discuss issues, rather than only one councillor as at present;
- the current electoral system has encouraged parochialism;
- larger wards should reduce parochialism and should encourage councillors to represent the whole municipality primarily, and their wards secondarily;
- Wandong-Heathcote Junction, Wallan and Beveridge do have similar interests – they use common facilities and are all commuter towns; and
- Puckapunyal should be in the same ward as Seymour, because Seymour provides many of its needs.

The following argument was presented in favour of the alternative option rather than the preferred option:

- Pyalong and Tooborac have more of a community of interest with other areas of the North Ward than with the Central Ward.

The following arguments were presented against both of the VEC's options:

- the Puckapunyal Military Area has special needs from the Council and that the responsibility for it should be handled by one councillor, as at present, rather than by three councillors; and
- three wards provides the possibility that two wards could collude against the third.

The VEC notes, however, that a number of people who supported the current electoral structure also agreed that it would be inappropriate to split Wallan.

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.

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 4,077 to 160,368. 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 councillor to voter ratio. 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 (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

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC found nine to be the appropriate number of councillors for Mitchell Shire. The VEC noted that the Shire has a slightly higher number of voters per councillor at present compared to other similar-sized municipalities, and that the population is expected to grow rapidly before the next scheduled review (2012). In addition to resulting in more voters to represent, the rapid growth may bring about other council-related issues, leading to a higher workload for councillors in Mitchell Shire than in other similar-sized municipalities, in the near future, if not already.

The VEC also found that nine councillors enabled a fairer and more equitable electoral structure to be developed that did not split geographic communities of interest to the extent that structures with fewer councillors did. For these reasons, the VEC put forward two options with nine councillors in its Preliminary Report.

In the response submissions and at the public hearing, some people emphasised that the number of voters per councillor is not especially high at present, and that the population growth rate may not continue. The VEC believes that growth will continue in Mitchell Shire based on information from the Department of Sustainability and Environment and from Mitchell Shire Council. Whilst the VEC acknowledges that the number of voters per councillor is at the lower end of the scale for nine councillors at present, the high expected growth rate means that this number will continue to grow. The VEC believes that greater representation than is provided at present will be required before the next review is due in 2012.

Although there were some submissions claiming that there was no demand from the people of Mitchell Shire for more councillors, there were also a number of submissions supporting the increase.

Having considered all arguments presented, the VEC confirms its original rationale for suggesting that nine councillors will best provide fair and equitable representation for Mitchell Shire.

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

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC put forward a preferred option for Mitchell Shire of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards. The VEC also presented an alternative option of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards with ward boundaries differing from those in the preferred option. Whilst a number of submissions expressed preferences for either the preferred or alternative options, the majority of submissions expressed a preference for the existing structure or for the existing structure with some modifications. The VEC emphasises that the existing structure is not suitable for recommendation, and cannot be made suitable (having regard to geographic communities of interest and to the legislative requirements relating to voter numbers) by the modifications suggested in some submissions or in some presentations at the hearing (see below). The VEC confirms its reasoning for an electoral structure with three three-councillor wards and considers the option offered as the alternative in the Preliminary Report to be best able to provide fair and equitable representation for Mitchell Shire voters.

VEC options

The VEC proposed two options of three three-councillor wards because it believed that this electoral structure provided the best solution to the specific electoral representation requirements of Mitchell Shire.

In particular, the VEC noted in the Preliminary Report that the options with three three-councillor wards would:

- avoid splitting communities of interest as much as possible;
- reflect the differences between the northern, central and southern parts of the Shire; and
- better provide for growth and change than a structure with single-councillor wards.

In addition, the VEC's options would reunite Wallan, Wallan East and Hidden Valley. They would also provide a spread of representation more in keeping with the current and expected population distribution. Three-councillor wards with proportional representation would provide the opportunity for greater diversity to be represented on council, as it would allow non-geographic communities of interest within wards to be represented if voters wish it. This may become increasingly important as Mitchell Shire grows.

A number of submissions supported the VEC's options for these and other reasons, as set out in Sections 6 and 7.

There were also a number of arguments presented against any division of the Shire into three three-councillor wards. A major concern was that all of the councillors may be elected from the four major towns (Seymour, Broadford, Kilmore and Wallan) and that the rural areas and small towns may be unable to gain representation on the Council. It was also suggested that three-councillor wards with proportional representation could lead to tickets dominating the municipal elections.

The VEC believes that neither of these possibilities is likely to occur under proportional representation. Proportional representation will apply from the next

election in multi-councillor wards, and has some important differences to the exhaustive preferential system, which operated in multi-councillor wards in previous council elections. Some of the key differences between proportional representation and the exhaustive preferential system are summarised in the following table:

| Exhaustive Preferential | Proportional Representation: |
|---|--|
| Candidates with 49% of the primary vote (or less) may end up not being elected if preferences do not flow their way. | Any candidate receiving more than 25*% of the primary vote will automatically be elected. |
| Second and subsequent preferences are passed on to other candidates at full value, even if a voter's first preference candidate is elected. | Second and subsequent preferences are passed on to other candidates at a reduced value if a voter's first preference candidate is elected. |

* in wards with three councillors

Table 2: Key differences between the exhaustive preferential system and proportional representation

The VEC is of the understanding that proportional representation is likely to return candidates that are more representative of voters' choices and should make it more difficult for candidates to be elected as part of a ticket. In addition, proportional representation should make it unlikely that the three proposed wards would be completely dominated by voters from the major towns in Mitchell Shire.

Some submissions suggested that all South Ward councillors might come from Wallan, that Kilmore would dominate Broadford and that Seymour would dominate the rest of North Ward. However, the VEC believes that none of these outcomes is likely. In order to be elected in a three-councillor ward, each candidate needs to receive over 25% of the vote, based on primary votes and preferences. Once a candidate receives the required quota, the preferences of the people who voted for that candidate are passed on to other candidates at a reduced value. Therefore, for a town to elect two councillors without assistance from the rest of the ward, it would need to contain over 50% of the voters. For a town to elect all three councillors in a ward without help, over 75% of the voters would have to live or own property in that town and support all three candidates. In Mitchell Shire with the VEC's recommended option, Wallan, Kilmore and Seymour constitute the following proportions of their wards:

| Town | Ward | Percentage of voters in that ward |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| Wallan | South | 46% |
| Kilmore | Central | 34% |
| Seymour | North | 57% |

Table 3: Percentages of voters in Wallan, Kilmore and Seymour
(based on voter numbers as at 23 June 2004)

As Table 3 shows, Wallan and Kilmore do not currently have the requisite numbers to elect two councillors (let alone three) without considerable assistance from voters in other parts of their wards. Even with substantial growth, Wallan would not be able to

elect all three councillors by itself. Seymour has the potential to elect two councillors, but the remaining 43% of voters in that ward have the opportunity to elect representation in accordance with their wishes as well. Similarly, the voters in South Ward who are not living in Wallan have the opportunity to elect at least one councillor to represent their interests if they so desire. This situation will remain for some time, even with substantial growth in Wallan. The VEC therefore believes that the six geographic communities of interest identified in the submissions will all have the opportunity to be represented on the Council if voters wish to support locally-based candidates.

Another concern expressed in submissions and at the public hearing was that the wards may lead to an “us versus them” mentality or that two wards may collude against the third. The VEC points out that, with proportional representation, there is little reason to expect that the elected councillors within wards would vote as a block.

The VEC also emphasises that a number of concerns that were expressed about the VEC’s options (such as ensuring that particular areas with special needs have a dedicated councillor) can be solved by the way council organises itself and do not necessarily require the electoral structure to solve them.

The VEC has carefully considered the objections put forward to the three three-councillor ward options. As outlined above, the VEC considers many of the concerns to be insubstantial. In addition, the VEC considers that there are serious problems with the existing electoral structure (see below). On balance, therefore, the VEC believes that three three-councillor wards will best suit the particular needs of Mitchell Shire at present and in the near future.

The preferred and alternative options

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC noted that there were different advantages to the preferred and alternative options. The preferred option:

- places Pyalong and Tooborac in the same ward as Kilmore.

Whereas the alternative option:

- includes Kilmore and Kilmore East in the same ward; and
- allows for more growth than the preferred option.

Some submissions in response to the Preliminary Report suggested that it was far more important to keep Kilmore together with Kilmore East than to include Pyalong and Tooborac with Kilmore. The need to allow for growth was also emphasised by many submissions. The VEC accepts these arguments, and notes that splitting Kilmore and Kilmore East would conflict with the VEC’s principle of not splitting communities of interest. The VEC is also of the view that there is a community of interest between the residents on the west side of the Northern Highway and those on the east, which would be split in the VEC’s preferred option. As a result of these considerations, the VEC recommends to the Minister the three ward structure shown as its alternative option in the Preliminary Report.

It was suggested in one submission that the preferred option would better allow councillors to travel to all parts of their ward, no matter where they lived. The VEC accepts this argument, but, in the light of response submissions, considers it more important to include both Kilmore and Kilmore East in the same ward. The VEC also

notes that Tooborac is the same distance away from Kilmore as from Seymour by road.

A number of submissions suggested that the Central Ward be redesigned to include the Sunday Creek Dam. The submissions argued that the dam was of great importance to Central Ward residents, and therefore the councillors who represent these residents should consider supervision of the dam as part of their roles. This, it was suggested, would be helped by including the dam in the Central Ward. However, the area that would have to be added to the Central Ward is substantial. The VEC does not believe that it would be appropriate to consider such a change at this stage of the process, when the public would have no opportunity to provide feedback. Moreover, the VEC notes that how the Council distributes its responsibilities is a matter that the Council can determine for itself, and need not be restricted by ward boundaries.

As a result of the above considerations, the VEC believes nine councillors from three three-councillor wards, with ward boundaries as shown in the alternative option of the Preliminary Report, will best provide fair and equitable representation for Mitchell Shire at this point in time.

The existing structure

A number of submissions advocated retaining the existing ward structure, or retaining it with various modifications. The VEC considered these options at the preliminary stage of the review, but found them to be unacceptable for the following reasons.

As explained above, legislation states that no councillor may represent more than $\pm 10\%$ of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality under review. Under the present electoral structure, the variations of voter numbers from the averages for each ward are as follows:

| Ward | Number of voters* | Number of councillors | Variation from average number of voters per councillor |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| New Crossing Place | 5,942 | 2 | -7.47% |
| Panyule | 2,945 | 1 | -8.28% |
| Piper | 3,084 | 1 | -3.96% |
| Willowmavin | 3,502 | 1 | +9.06% |
| Glenburnie | 3,518 | 1 | +9.56% |
| Pretty Sally | 3,485 | 1 | +8.53% |

* as at 23 June 2004

Table 4: Numbers of voters per councillor under the current ward structure

It was argued in response submissions that none of the current wards exceeds the 10% limit and that therefore the existing structure should be left in place. As explained in Section 3, however, the VEC endeavours to establish ward structures that take account of likely future changes. That helps to create as much continuity as possible and increases the length of time between reviews.

Given the expected growth rate for Mitchell Shire, the present structure will fail to meet legislative requirements in the very near future. Under the present structure, four of the six wards exceed the average by more than 8%. The likelihood of these wards quickly exceeding the 10% limit is especially clear when one considers that most of the growth is expected to occur in the South, and that these wards are already close to the +10% limit. Consequently, if as few as 100 voters moved into Wallan, Pretty Sally Ward would exceed the average by 11.16%. Similar results would occur if 100 voters moved to Glenburnie Ward or to Willowmavin Ward or if 100 voters left Panyule Ward.

One suggested solution that was proposed in a number of response submissions was to simply add an extra councillor to the Pretty Sally Ward. This way, it was felt, the existing structure could be retained, and the population growth accounted for. As the following table shows, however, this proposal creates other electoral difficulties:

| Ward | Number of voters* | Number of councillors | Variation from average number of voters per councillor |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| New Crossing Place | 5,942 | 2 | +5.75% |
| Panyule | 2,945 | 1 | +4.82% |
| Piper | 3,084 | 1 | +9.77% |
| Willowmavin | 3,502 | 1 | +24.65% |
| Glenburnie | 3,518 | 1 | +25.22% |
| Pretty Sally | 3,485 | 2 | -37.98% |

* as at 23 June 2004

Table 5: Numbers of voters per councillor under the current ward structure with an extra councillor added to Pretty Sally Ward

Not only does Pretty Sally Ward have an insufficient number of voters at present, but adding an extra councillor to the Shire changes the average number of voters per councillor. As a result, Willowmavin and Glenburnie Wards exceed the allowed number of voters by very large amounts, and Piper Ward has an undesirably high variation.

To resolve these issues, every single ward would have to be substantially redrawn. A number of submissions, especially the preliminary submission from the Council, emphasised that the current wards reflect geographic communities of interest well. These communities of interest would necessarily be split in any attempt to make the numbers work for an eight councillor, six-ward option. In contrast, the VEC's recommended option generally keeps together the areas covered by the existing wards, with the exception of Panyule Ward. Therefore, the VEC considers that the three three-councillor ward structure better captures the communities of interest in Mitchell Shire.

8.3 Recommendation

Having considered the submissions and all other relevant factors, the VEC recommends that Mitchell Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards.

Doug Beecroft

Acting Electoral Commissioner

9 Appendices

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review

Electoral Representation Review Mitchell 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 Mitchell 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 the voters of Mitchell 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 Mitchell Shire. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions first.

Key Steps in the Review

Step 1 – Information session, 7.30 pm, Tuesday, 20 July 2004

Shire Hall, Murchison St, Broadford

Step 2 – Preliminary submissions. Deadline: 5.00 pm, Monday, 2 August 2004

Step 3 – Preliminary Report, released Tuesday, 24 August 2004

Step 4 – Response submissions. Deadline: 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 15 September 2004

Step 5 – Public hearing, 6.30 pm, Tuesday, 21 September 2004

Shire Hall, Murchison St, Broadford

Step 6 – Final Report, released Monday, 11 October 2004

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

Victorian Electoral Commission 

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:

- Indigo Shire Council
- Towong Shire Council
- City of Wodonga Council
- Alpine Shire Council
- Greater Shepparton City Council
- Rural City of Wangaratta Council
- Strathbogie Shire Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council
- Frankston City 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 evidence 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:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| • Indigo Shire: | 19 July 2004 | • Strathbogie Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • Towong Shire: | 19 July 2004 | • Mitchell Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • City of Wodonga: | 19 July 2004 | • Macedon Ranges Shire: | 2 August 2004 |
| • Alpine Shire: | 26 July 2004 | • South Gippsland Shire: | 9 August 2004 |
| • Greater Shepparton City: | 26 July 2004 | • Wellington Shire: | 9 August 2004 |
| • Rural City of Wangaratta: | 26 July 2004 | • Frankston City: | 9 August 2004 |

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

Electoral Representation Review Mitchell Shire Council

Preliminary Report

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is conducting an electoral representation review for the Mitchell 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 information contained in public submissions, the VEC has now released a Preliminary Report including its recommendations.

What are the recommendations in the Report?

Mitchell Shire currently has seven councillors, elected from five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

Preferred option

The Report recommends that the Mitchell Shire Council consist of nine councillors, to be elected from three three-councillor wards.

Alternative option

The Report also outlines an alternative option of a Council consisting of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards, with ward boundaries differing from those in the preferred option.

The maps on the right show the options.

Where is the Report available?

Copies of the Preliminary Report are available from:

- the Mitchell Shire Council offices, 113 High Street, Broadford;
- 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. A response submission should comment only on the preferred option and/or the alternative option. Submissions can be:

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

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 **Wednesday, 15 September 2004 - 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, Tuesday, 21 September 2004 - 6.30 pm

The hearing will be held at:

- the Shire Hall, Murchison Street, Broadford.

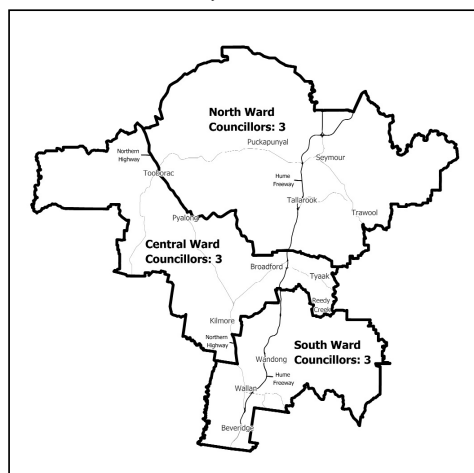
The hearing is open to the public, but only those people who have indicated in their submission that they would like to speak in support of their submission will be heard at the hearing.

Final Report, Monday, 11 October 2004

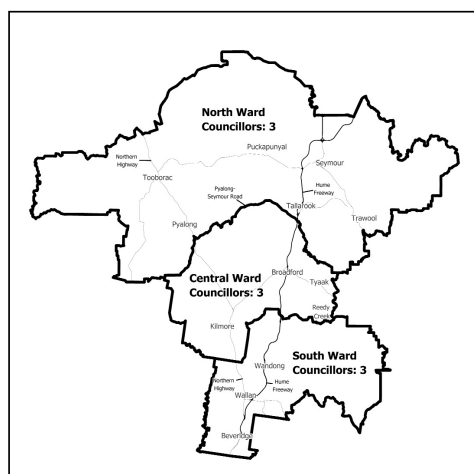
After considering a variety of sources of information including information contained in submissions and provided at the public hearing, the VEC will prepare its Final Report making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government.

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

Mitchell Shire Preferred Option



Mitchell Shire Alternative Option



Media Fact Sheet Victorian Electoral Commission

For release Tuesday, 6 July 2004

REPRESENTATION REVIEW GETS UNDERWAY

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

"Anyone interested in the review should attend the public information session on 20 July," said the Acting Victorian Electoral Commissioner, Mr Doug Beecroft.

The details for the information session are:
 Tuesday, 20 July 2004 - 7.30 pm
 Shire Hall, Murchison St, Broadford

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

Key dates for the Mitchell Shire representation review are:

Monday, 2 August 2004 - 5.00 pm - Deadline for preliminary submissions. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or emailed to the VEC.

Tuesday, 24 August 2004 - The VEC's Preliminary Report will be released containing its preferred options.

Wednesday, 15 September 2004 - 5.00 pm - Deadline for response submissions about the Preliminary Report.

Tuesday, 21 September 2004 - Public hearing. People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

Monday, 11 October 2004 - The VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

Any new electoral arrangements, if approved by the Minister for Local Government, would apply at the next Shire Council elections.

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

- ENDS -

For further media information:

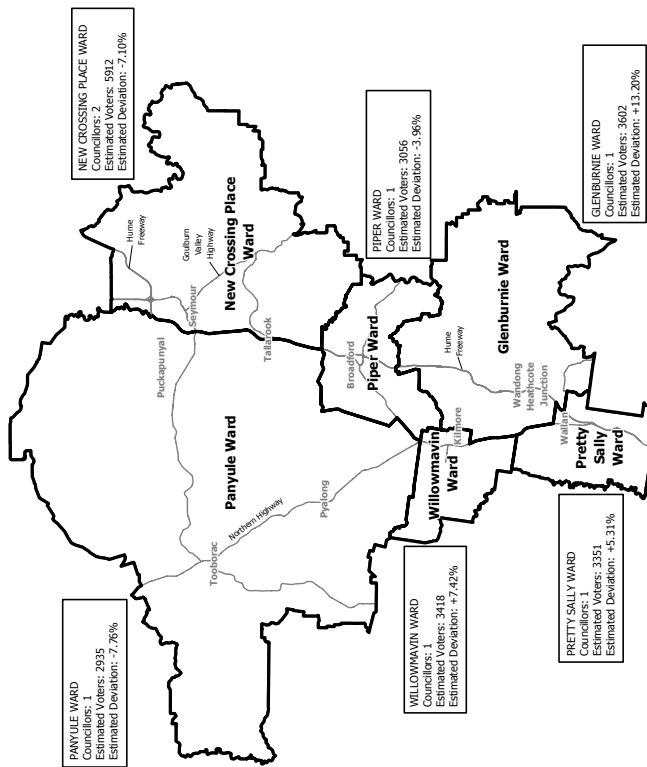
Chris Gribbin
 Victorian Electoral Commission
 Tel: 9299 0737

9.2 Media releases

Media Fact Sheet

Mitchell Shire

The map below shows the current ward boundaries and estimated voter numbers as at 31 May 2004.



Media Fact Sheet



Victorian Electoral Commission

For release Thursday, 22 July 2004

REPRESENTATION REVIEW – submission closing date is fast approaching

The closing date for preliminary submissions is nearly here!

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recently began an electoral representation review for Mitchell Shire. The review will consider the number of councillors for the Shire and the Shire's electoral structure.

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

"Submissions are the community's chance to pass their local knowledge on to the VEC," said the Acting Victorian Electoral Commissioner, Mr Doug Beecroft. "To be considered, submissions must be received at the VEC by 5.00 pm, Monday, 2 August 2004."

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.

Key dates for the Mitchell Shire representation review are:

Monday, 2 August 2004 – 5.00 pm – Deadline for preliminary submissions. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or emailed to the VEC.

Tuesday, 24 August 2004 – The VEC's Preliminary Report will be released containing its preferred options.

Wednesday, 15 September 2004 – 5.00 pm – Deadline for response submissions about the Preliminary Report.

Tuesday, 21 September 2004 – Public hearing. People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

Monday, 11 October 2004 – The VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

Any new electoral arrangements, if approved by the Minister for Local Government, would apply at the next Shire Council elections.

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

– ENDS –

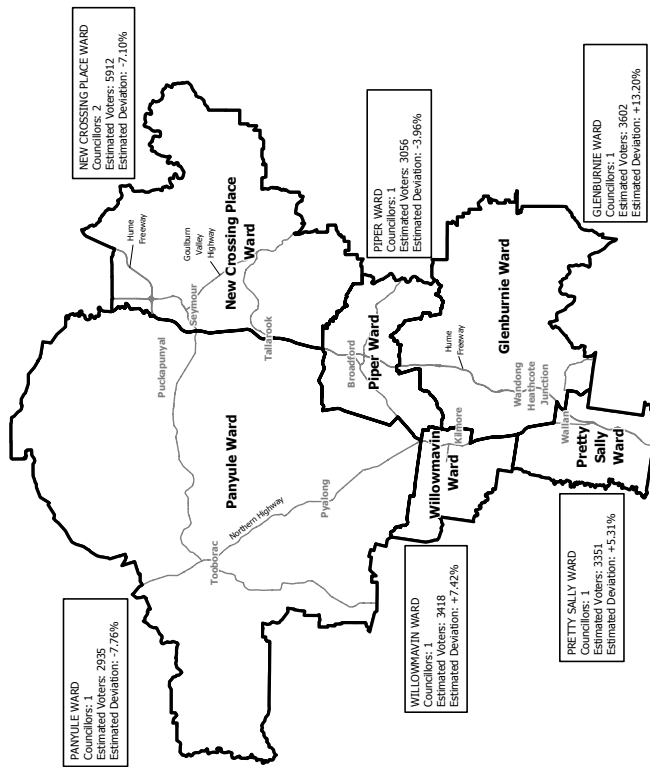
For further media information:

Chris Gribbin
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0737

Mitchell Shire

Media Fact Sheet

The map below shows the current ward boundaries and estimated voter numbers as at 31 May 2004.



For release from Tuesday, 24 August 2004

MITCHELL SHIRE ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW: PRELIMINARY REPORT RELEASED

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) today released its Preliminary Report on electoral representation for Mitchell Shire. The VEC's preferred option is to have nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards. An alternative option of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, with ward boundaries differing from those in the preferred option, is also presented for public comment.

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 Mitchell Shire Council offices, 113 High Street, Broadford, and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic., 3000.

People have until 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 15 September 2004 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:

- the Shire Hall, Murchison Street, Broadford on Tuesday, 21 September 2004 at 6.30 pm.

The VEC's Final Report and recommendations will be lodged with the Minister on Monday, 11 October 2004.

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, Vic., 3000.

– ENDS –

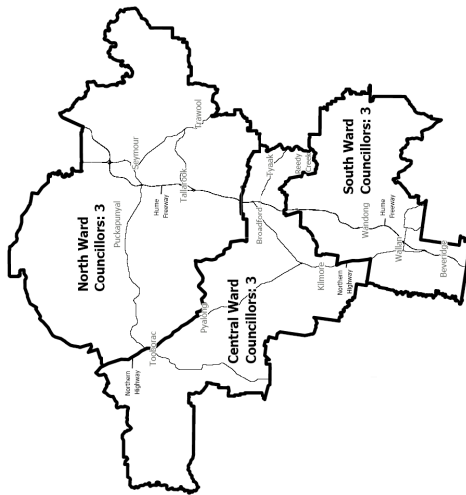
For further media information:

Chris Gribbin
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0737

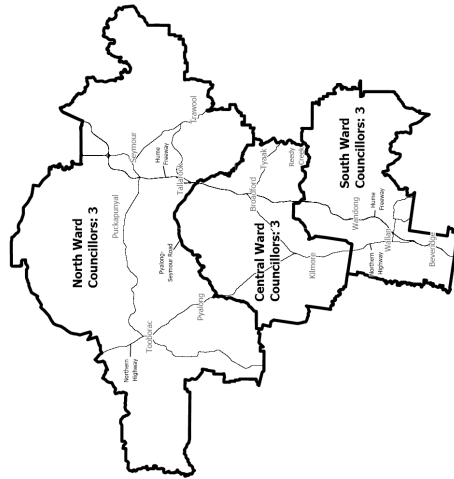
Media Fact Sheet

MAPS OF RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR MITCHELL SHIRE

PREFERRED OPTION: THREE THREE-COUNCILLOR WARDS



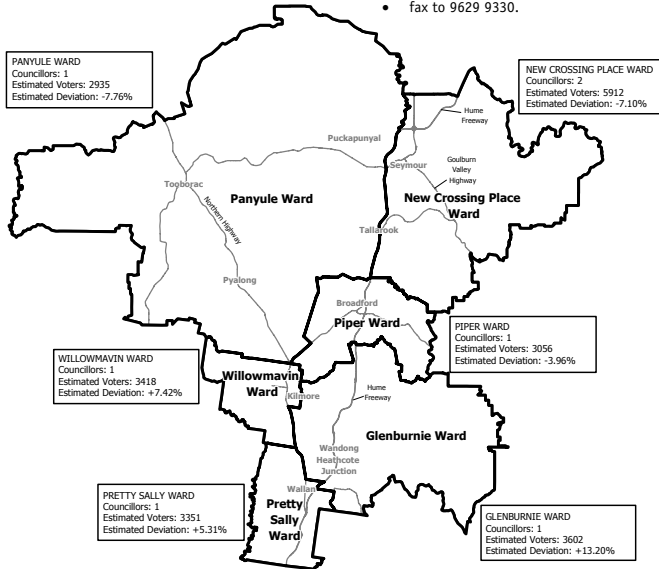
ALTERNATIVE OPTION: THREE THREE-COUNCILLOR WARDS WITH DIFFERING WARD BOUNDARIES



9.3 Information leaflet

Current structure of Mitchell Shire

Mitchell Shire currently has seven councillors, elected from five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. Below is a map showing the current ward boundaries, the estimated number of voters for each ward and the voter deviation from the average as at 31 May 2004.



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; or
- email to mitchell.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- fax to 9629 9330.

Electoral Representation Review of the Mitchell Shire Council



Conducted by the
Victorian Electoral Commission **VEC**

Why is this review being undertaken?

The Minister for Local Government has given notice that there is to be an electoral representation review of Mitchell 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 Mitchell 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 a single-councillor ward structure, 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.

What will the VEC consider?

In conducting its review, the VEC will consider such factors as the numbers of councillors and the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. The VEC will consider a range of information including arguments and information in public submissions.

Key steps in the review

Step 1 Information Session

Tuesday, 20 July 2004
Shire Hall, Murchison St,
Broadford – 7.30 pm

Anyone interested in making a submission should attend.

Step 4 Response Submissions

Deadline:
5.00 pm, Wednesday,
15 September 2004

Any person or group may make a submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report.

Step 2 Preliminary Submissions

Deadline:
5.00 pm, Monday, 2 August 2004

Any person or organisation may make a submission to the VEC. The VEC recommends consulting its Guide for Submissions.

Step 5 Public Hearing

Tuesday, 21 September 2004
Shire Hall, Murchison St,
Broadford – 6.30 pm

People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

Step 3 Preliminary Report

Tuesday, 24 August 2004

The VEC will release a Preliminary Report containing its preferred option(s).

Step 6 Final Report

Monday, 11 October 2004

The VEC will lodge a Final Report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government. The Report will be publicly available.

9.4 Guide for Submissions

Electoral representation review for Mitchell Shire

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 (see page 5)?
- Have you given reasons for the model(s) you are suggesting?

If you are making a **response submission** to the Preliminary Report:

- Have you restricted your discussion to 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 (see page 5)?

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 (see page 9):

- Have you suggested a number between 5 and 12 (as required by legislation)?
- If the voter to councillor ratio you have suggested varies substantially from the State-wide average for that type of municipality, have you explained why?

The electoral structures (see pages 11-15):

- 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** (see pages 12-15):

- Have you indicated whether you want single-member wards, multi-member wards or a combination of both?
- Have you suggested ward names and given reasons for those names (see page 16)?

Conducted by the

Victorian Electoral Commission

Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000

Telephone: 13 18 32

Fax: 9629 9330

Email: mitchell.review@vec.vic.gov.au

Website: www.vec.vic.gov.au

Victorian Electoral Commission 

Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| Background | 2 |
| The review process | 4 |
| Making a submission | 5 |
| Getting copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports | 6 |
| Current structure of Mitchell Shire | 6 |
| Mitchell at a glance | 7 |
| Matters to consider when preparing submissions | 9 |
| How many councillors should there be? | 9 |
| Communities of interest | 10 |
| Should the municipality be unsubdivided or divided into wards? | 11 |
| Voting systems | 14 |
| How should ward boundaries be drawn? | 15 |
| What should wards be called? | 16 |
| Table: Profiles of municipalities | 17 |
| About the VEC | back cover |

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; 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*.

On 13 May 2004, 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 Mitchell Shire. The Mitchell Shire Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the review.

The VEC is an independent statutory authority and, in accordance with the Act, conducts reviews independently of both councils and the State government.

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. This is because the present structures were determined individually for each municipality 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 or the appropriate electoral structures for their municipalities. As a consequence, there are substantial differences between similar municipalities across Victoria. Subsequent to these reforms, councils have conducted their own 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 has three main duties:

Duty 1: to make sure 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, that can lead to some wards having larger or smaller populations. 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 in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

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

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC tries to bring the ratio of voters to councillors to comparable levels as for other similar municipalities across Victoria. At the same time, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant increasing or reducing the number of councillors from what would otherwise be the case.

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

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest (see page 10). The electoral structure should be designed to take account of the main communities of interest. This is important for assisting councils to be effective representatives of the people in their municipalities.

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. The VEC:

- conducts its own research;
- draws on its experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- draws on its expertise at mapping, demography and local government; and
- carefully considers all input from the public.

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).

The review process

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Monday, 21 June 2004 | the review begins | The VEC begins conducting research and preparing material for the public. |
| 6 & 7 July 2004 | notification of the public | A notice detailing the process for the review and calling for submissions is placed in the <i>Kilmore Free Press</i> , <i>The Heathcote Advertiser</i> , <i>the North Central Review</i> , <i>the Seymour-Magamba Advertiser</i> and the <i>Seymour Telegraph</i> . A leaflet outlining the purpose and process of the review is posted to electors who live outside Mitchell Shire. |
| 7.30 pm, Tuesday, 20 July 2004 | information session | An information session on the review process is held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire Hall, Murchison Street, Broadford. Anyone interested in making a submission is advised to attend. |
| 5.00 pm, Monday, 2 August 2004 | 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. |
| Tuesday, 24 August 2004 | Preliminary Report released | 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 Mitchell Shire could be arranged. The models which 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. |
| 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 15 September 2004 | 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 people of Mitchell Shire. |
| 6.30 pm, Tuesday, 21 September 2004 | public hearing | A public hearing is held at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shire Hall, Murchison Street, Broadford. 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. |
| Monday, 11 October 2004 | Final Report | 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. |
| | | 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. |

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 which provide clear explanations or evidence for particular viewpoints. Preliminary submissions must be received at the VEC by **5.00 pm, Monday, 2 August 2004**. **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Response submissions on the Preliminary Report should address matters relating to the models proposed by the VEC in the Preliminary Report. Alternative models will not generally be considered at this stage. 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 **5.00 pm, Wednesday, 15 September 2004**. **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 **Tuesday, 21 September 2004**.

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 mitchell.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to 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.

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 Mitchell Shire Council offices, 113 High Street, Broadford.

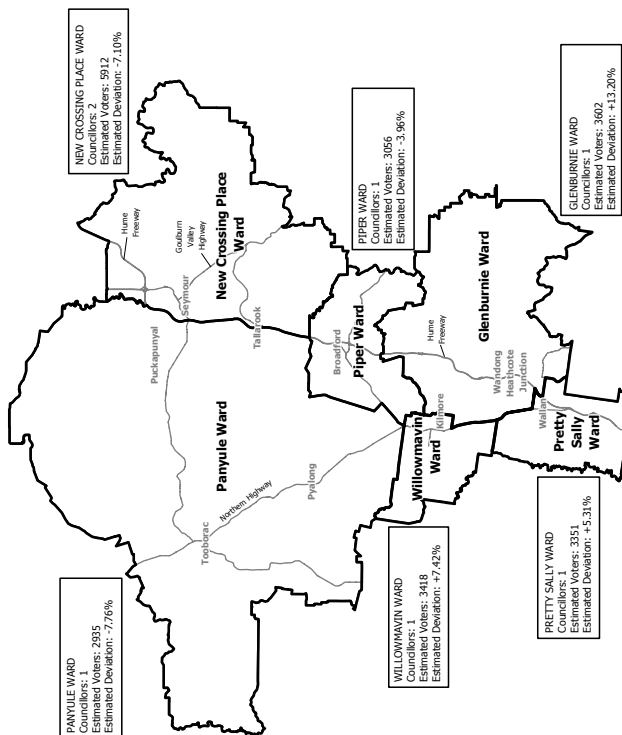
When the Preliminary Report is released, a notice in the *Kilmore Free Press*, *The Heathcote Mirror Times*, the *North Central Review*, the *Seymour-Magabie Advertiser* and the *Seymour Telegraph* will specify how people can make a written submission in response to the Report.

The Preliminary Report will be available from Tuesday, 24 August 2004.

The Final Report will be released on Monday, 11 October 2004.

Current structure of Mitchell Shire

Mitchell Shire currently has seven councillors, elected from five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. The map shows the current ward boundaries, the estimated number of voters for each ward as at 31 May 2004 and the voter deviation from the average. Updated voter numbers will be available shortly from the VEC's website, by telephoning the VEC or at the Information Session.



Mitchell at a glance

Mitchell Shire was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of parts of the Rural City of Seymour, the shires of Kilmore and Pyalong and parts of the shires of Broadford and McTvor. Major towns within the Shire include Seymour, Wallan, Kilmore and Broadford. Mitchell Shire is close to Melbourne, and is consequently more densely populated than most of regional Victoria. In some respects, the population resembles that of Melbourne more than that of regional Victoria, although in other respects Mitchell faces issues typical of regional Victoria.

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

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Seymour | 23.4% | Tallaroak | 1.1% |
| Wallan | 14.4% | Pyalong | 0.9% |
| Kilmore | 13.2% | Waterford Park | 0.8% |
| Broadford | 9.6% | Rural balance | 31.8% |
| Wandong- Heathcote Junction | 5.0% | | |

Mitchell Shire contains some workers in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, but far fewer than in regional Victoria generally. Manufacturing and retail are the largest industries, and a large proportion of the population works in the government administration and defence sector, largely due to the presence of Puckapunyal Military Base. Some residents commute to Melbourne to work.

Unemployment levels are below those of Melbourne and regional Victoria as a whole. There is a higher proportion of people and households on higher incomes than in regional Victoria generally, though below the proportions in Melbourne. Similarly, there are higher proportions of professionals and people working in the advanced clerical and services sector than in regional Victoria generally.

As in most of regional Victoria, the vast majority of residents come from an English-speaking background, with relatively small numbers of people from other backgrounds (mostly European).

Between 2004 and 2012, the population growth is expected to be substantially higher than the levels of regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne as a whole. There is also expected to be a change in the age structure of the Shire, as in regional Victoria as a whole, with people over 50 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

(Sources: Department of Infrastructure: *Victoria in Future*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Regional Victoria in Fact 2001*; Department of Sustainability and Environment: *Towns in Time*).

Size¹:

| | Mitchell: | Regional shires without cities (medians): | Regional cities (medians): | Cities in Metro. Melbourne (medians): |
|--|-----------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Area (Square kilometres): | 2,862 | 3,891 | 2,388 | 73 |
| Population ² : | 30,540 | 15,805 | 32,077 | 120,460 |
| Population density (people/square km): | 10.67 | 3.75 | 27.82 | 1,553.22 |
| Voters: | 22,274 | 13,850 | 23,908 | 91,112 |
| Average voters per councillor: | 3,182 | 2,190 | 3,738 | 10,880 |

Economic profile³:

| | Mitchell: | Regional Victoria: | Metropolitan Melbourne: |
|--|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Major industries (percentages of workforce): | | | |
| <i>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</i> | 4.7 | 11.2 | 0.8 |
| <i>Manufacturing</i> | 15.5 | 13.4 | 16.0 |
| <i>Retail trade</i> | 14.0 | 15.3 | 14.6 |
| <i>Accommodation, cafés, restaurants, cultural and recreation services</i> | 6.6 | 6.9 | 6.9 |
| <i>Property and business services</i> | 6.8 | 6.6 | 13.1 |
| <i>Government administration and defence</i> | 9.9 | 3.3 | 2.9 |
| <i>Health and community services</i> | 8.0 | 10.8 | 9.3 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Unemployment rate: | 6.0% | 7.4% | 6.6% |
| Households earning under \$500/week: | 26.4% | 34.6% | 24.5% |

Population profile⁴:

| | Mitchell: | Regional shires without cities: | Regional cities: | Metropolitan Melbourne: |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Age groups (percentages of the population): | | | | |
| <i>0-17 years old</i> | 30.9 | 27.27 | 26.64 | 23.68 |
| <i>18-34 years old</i> | 21.8 | 17.76 | 22.24 | 26.22 |
| <i>35-49 years old</i> | 23.6 | 22.53 | 21.74 | 22.52 |
| <i>50+ years old</i> | 23.7 | 32.44 | 29.37 | 27.57 |
| Expected population growth (2004-2012) ⁵ : | 17.67% | 4.79% | 6.95% | 9.03% |

1 – Statistics from 2001 Census

2 – based on ABS estimates as at June 2003

3 – based on 2003 interim projections from the Department of Sustainability and Environment

4 – excluding Gardinia

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 4,077 to 160,368. 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 voter to councillor ratio (see the end of this document). The table differentiates between rural, regional and metropolitan municipalities. This table is a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors by recognising the different circumstances and needs of these categories of municipalities. 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 decline 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 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).

The table at the end of this document shows the numbers of councillors and the voter to councillor ratios for the various types of municipalities in Victoria.

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. tourism) or where people work in mutually-dependant 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. For example:

| If: | then fair representation may best be achieved by: |
|--|---|
| a community of interest is compact geographically, | creating a ward with boundaries reflecting that community of interest. |
| a community of interest is a widespread minority, | creating multi-member wards with proportional representation. |
| there are numerous minority communities of interest within a municipality, | combining the communities of interest, so that any elected councillor would be responsible to <i>all</i> of these groups. |

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

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.

Mitchell Shire currently has seven councillors, elected from five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

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.

The table at the end of this document lists all of Victoria’s municipalities and their electoral structures.

Unsubdivided municipalities

Of Victoria’s 79 municipalities, 14 are unsubdivided. Unsubdivided municipalities must elect their councillors by proportional representation (see more on this point below).

The possible features of an unsubdivided municipality can be portrayed as follows:

| Positive Features | Less Positive Features |
|--|--|
| 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. | May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented. May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the municipality. |
| Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns. | May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors. May be difficult for voters to assess the performances of individual councillors. |
| Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election. | Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters. |
| Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries. | |
| Results in a simple, less expensive voters’ roll for elections as compared with separate voters’ rolls for individual wards. | |

Options for division into wards

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

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

The Local Government Act specifies that wards with only one representative must elect that representative via preferential voting, whereas multi-member 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-member wards

More than half (43) of Victoria’s municipalities are made up entirely of single-member wards.

The possible features of single-member wards can be portrayed as follows:

| Positive Features | Less Positive Features |
|--|---|
| Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives, easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues. | Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a perspective of what policies benefit the municipality as a whole. Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest, and may be difficult to define. |
| Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented. | |
| It is less likely that one particular point of view or sectional interest will dominate the Council. | |
| | Voters may have a restricted choice of candidates in elections for individual wards. Small populations in each ward may make ward boundaries more susceptible to change caused by demographic shifts. |

Multi-member wards

Eleven of Victoria’s municipalities have multi-member wards. A multi-member ward structure results in fewer but larger wards than a single-member ward structure.

The possible features of multi-member wards can be portrayed as follows:

| Positive Features | Less Positive Features |
|--|---|
| This structure supports the accommodation of a whole community of interest (such as a sizeable town or group of suburbs) within a ward. | |
| Focus on issues may be broader than for single-member wards (though councillors may be more locally focussed than in an unsubdivided municipality). | Very local issues may be overridden. Groups may form within the council based on multi-member wards, leading to possible division between councillors. |
| Councillors may be more accessible than in an unsubdivided municipality. Electors have a choice of councillor to approach. Councillors may share workloads more effectively. | In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward. Duplication or gaps may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively. |
| 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-member wards. | |
| | It is easier for candidates to be elected as part of a voting ticket than as individuals. |

Combination of single-member and multi-member wards

Eleven of Victoria’s municipalities have a mixture of single-member and multi-member wards.

The possible features of a combined system can be portrayed as follows:

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

Voting systems

The voting system is another important factor to take into account when considering whether to have single-member wards, multi-member wards or unsubdivided municipalities. In single-member wards, councillors must be elected by preferential voting. In unsubdivided municipalities and multi-member wards, councillors must be elected by proportional representation. Under either system, people still vote in the same way. The only differences are the way that the votes are counted.

When there are single-member wards, the **preferential system** applies. Under the preferential system:

- a candidate must achieve an absolute majority (50% plus one) of the formal votes to be elected;
- if a candidate obtains an absolute majority of the first-preference votes, then that candidate is elected;
- if no candidate obtains an absolute majority of first-preference votes, preferences have to be distributed:
 - the candidate with the lowest number of first-preference votes is declared to be a defeated candidate, and that candidate’s votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the second preferences on the ballot papers;
 - the process of excluding the lowest candidate and distributing that candidate’s preferences to the remaining candidates continues until one candidate has an absolute majority of votes, and is declared elected.

Under this system, the way in which voters allocate their preferences can be just as important as where they place their first-preference votes. Candidates advise voters (through how-to-vote cards and candidate statements) about how to order their preferences, and may negotiate with other candidates about the order of preferences. In some cases, candidates have informal “running mates” to help with the flow of preferences to them.

When there are multi-member wards or unsubdivided municipalities, **proportional representation** applies. The basis of proportional representation is that candidates are elected in proportion to their support. Under the proportional representation system:

- to be elected, a candidate must obtain a “quota”, which is calculated by dividing the total number of votes by one more than the number of vacancies, and then adding one (for example, in an election for 3 vacancies with 800 votes cast, the quota would be 201);
- when a candidate receives more votes than a quota, the surplus votes are distributed to the continuing candidates at a reduced value, calculated by dividing the surplus votes by the total votes for the candidate (for example, if a candidate achieved 300 votes and the quota was 201 votes, the candidate’s surplus would be 99, and ballot papers would be transferred to the remaining candidates at a value of 99 divided by 300);
- when all surplus votes have been distributed and there are still vacancies to be filled, preferences are distributed from the lowest-scoring candidates until a candidate has a quota.

This system means that any candidate who obtains a quota, either through first-preference votes or through the flow of preferences, is elected. In effect, candidates representing large minorities are likely to be represented as well as candidates representing majorities.

Under this system, candidates may group together and advise their supporters to follow a ticket in their preferences. However, such a group is unlikely to win all the vacancies in a ward or unsubdivided municipality unless it has overwhelming support.

How should ward boundaries be drawn?

Getting the numbers right

If Mitchell Shire is to remain divided into wards, the ward boundaries must comply with legal requirements. Section 219D 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 voters per Councillor for that municipality; and
- the ward boundaries must provide a fair and equitable division of the municipal district.

Where there are multi-member 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. In Mitchell Shire at present, Glenburnie Ward is outside the 10% tolerance.

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 Central, East, East Central, North, North Central, South, South Central, South West 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
- **Aboriginal names:** This is a way of recognising the municipality's Aboriginal heritage. However, the use of Aboriginal names could be seen as being tokenistic if the names are not relevant to areas within the municipality.

Table: Profiles of municipalities
Estimates as at 31 May 2004 (unless otherwise indicated)

| Metropolitan (including outer metropolitan) | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Municipality | Area (km ²) | Number on roll | Number of councillors | Number of voters per councillor | Electoral structure |
| Banyule | 62 | 90,989 | 7 | 12998 | Single-member wards |
| Bayside | 37 | 67,025 | 9 | 7447 | Single-member wards |
| Boroondara | 60 | 122,181 | 10 | 12218 | Single-member wards |
| Brimbank | 123 | 119,910 | 9 | 13323 | Single-member wards |
| Casey | 410 | 134,072 | 11 | 12188 | Single-member wards |
| Darebin | 53 | 98,551 | 9 | 10950 | Single-member wards |
| Frankston* | 130 | 90,910 | 7 | 12987 | Single-member wards |
| Glen Eira | 129 | 94,387 | 11 | 8581 | Single-member wards |
| Greater Dandenong | 129 | 94,387 | 11 | 8581 | Single-member wards |
| Hobsons Bay* | 64 | 63,197 | 8 | 7900 | 4 two-member wards |
| Hume | 504 | 98,763 | 9 | 10974 | Single-member wards |
| Kingston | 91 | 107,800 | 7 | 15400 | Single-member wards |
| Knox | 114 | 110,342 | 9 | 12260 | Single-member wards |
| Manningham | 113 | 86,429 | 8 | 10804 | 4 two-member wards |
| Maribyrnong | 31 | 48,346 | 7 | 6907 | Single-member wards |
| Maroondah | 61 | 77,306 | 7 | 11044 | Single-member wards |
| Melbourne | 36 | 64,000 [†] | 9 | 7111 | Unsubdivided |
| Melton | 527 | 45,855 | 7 | 6551 | Single-member wards |
| Monash | 81 | 121,239 | 8 | 15155 | Single-member wards |
| Moonee Valley | 44 | 91,235 | 7 | 13034 | Single-member wards |
| Moreland* | 51 | 108,092 | 10 | 10809 | Single-member wards |
| Mornington Peninsula | 723 | 136,448 | 9 | 15161 | Single-member wards |
| Millumbik | 433 | 44,009 | 9 | 4890 | Single-member wards |
| Port Phillip | 21 | 73,812 [†] | 7 | 10545 | Single-member wards |
| Stonnington* | 26 | 78,642 | 9 | 8738 | Single-member wards |
| Whitehorse | 64 | 111,679 | 10 | 11168 | 5 two-member wards |
| Whittlesea | 490 | 85,755 | 9 | 9528 | Single-member wards |
| Wyndham | 542 | 70,220 | 7 | 10031 | Single-member wards |
| Yarra* | 20 | 60,097 [†] | 9 | 6677 | 1 single-member ward & 4 two-member wards |
| Yarra Ranges | 2,470 | 105,475 | 9 | 11719 | Single-member wards |
| Average (median) | 73 | 91,112 | 9 | 10,880 | |

* under review
† as at 2004 representation review
‡ as at previous election

| Regional Cities, Rural Cities and Boroughs | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Municipality | Area (km ²) | Number on roll | Number of councillors | Number of voters per councillor | Electoral structure |
| Ararat | 4,210 | 9,586 [†] | 7 | 1369 | Unsubdivided |
| Ballarat | 740 | 67,490 | 9 | 7499 | Single-member wards |
| Benalla | 2,354 | 11,768 | 7 | 1681 | Single-member wards |
| Greater Bendigo* | 2,999 | 77,291 [†] | 7 | 11042 | Single-member wards |
| Greater Geelong | 1,247 | 160,368 | 12 | 13364 | Single-member wards |
| Greater Shepparton* | 2,422 | 39,622 | 7 | 5660 | Unsubdivided |
| Horsham | 4,249 | 14,520 | 7 | 2074 | Unsubdivided |
| Latrobe | 1,426 | 58,078 | 9 | 6453 | Single-member wards |
| Mildura | 22,082 | 36,082 | 9 | 4009 | Unsubdivided |
| Queenscliffe | 9 | 4,077 | 7 | 582 | Unsubdivided |
| Swan Hill | 6,116 | 14,365 | 7 | 2052 | 1 single-member ward & 3 two-member wards |
| Wangaratta* | 3,639 | 21,599 | 8 | 2700 | 6 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward |
| Warrnambool* | 121 | 24,274 [†] | 7 | 3468 | Single-member wards |
| Wodonga* | 433 | 23,542 | 5 | 4708 | Unsubdivided |
| Average (median) | 2,388 | 23,908 | 7 | 3738 | |

* under review
† as at 2004 representation review
‡ as at previous election

| Municipality | Area (km ²) | Number on roll | Number of councillors | Number of voters per councillor | Electoral structure |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Surf Coast ³ | 1,553 | 25,457 | 9 | 2829 | Unsubdivided |
| Towong* | 6,673 | 5,218 | 5 | 1044 | Unsubdivided |
| Wellington* | 10,989 | 37,666 | 9 | 4185 | Unsubdivided |
| West Wimmera | 9,107 | 4,256 | 5 | 851 | Unsubdivided |
| Yarriambiack | 7,310 | 7,222 | 9 | 802 | 3 single-member wards & 2 three-member wards |
| Average (median) | 3,891 | 13,850 | 7 | 2190 | |

* under review
 † as at 2004 representation review
 ‡ reviewed 2003 – structure to come into effect at next election

| Municipality | Area (km ²) | Number on roll | Number of councillors | Number of voters per councillor | Electoral structure |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Alpine* | 4,832 | 11,107 | 5 | 2221 | Unsubdivided |
| Bass Coast | 864 | 37,199 | 7 | 5314 | Single-member wards |
| Baw Baw | 4,032 | 30,563 | 9 | 3396 | Single-member wards |
| Buloke | 8,004 | 6,734 | 9 | 748 | 3 three-member wards |
| Campaspe | 4,519 | 30,568 | 7 | 4367 | 5 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward |
| Cardinia | 1,280 | 37,740 | 7 | 5391 | Single-member wards |
| Central Goldfields | 1,534 | 11,390 | 5 | 2278 | Single-member wards |
| Colac Otway | 3,433 | 20,414 | 7 | 2916 | 2 single-member wards, 1 two-member ward & 1 three-member ward |
| Corangamite* | 4,404 | 13,985 | 10 | 1399 | 5 two-member wards |
| East Gippsland | 20,931 | 36,993 | 8 | 4624 | 2 four-member wards |
| Gannawarra | 3,732 | 9,917 | 7 | 1417 | 3 single-member wards & 2 two-member wards |
| Glennelg | 6,210 | 18,515 | 9 | 2057 | Single-member wards |
| Golden Plains | 2,704 | 13,850 | 9 | 1539 | Single-member ridings |
| Hepburn | 1,470 | 13,733 | 5 | 2747 | Single-member wards |
| Hindmarsh | 7,550 | 5,335 | 6 | 889 | 3 two-member wards |
| Indigo* | 2,044 | 11,325 | 7 | 1618 | Unsubdivided |
| Loddon | 6,694 | 8,406 | 6 | 1401 | Single-member ridings |
| Macedon Ranges* | 1,747 | 30,386 | 9 | 3376 | Single-member wards |
| Mansfield | 3,891 | 9,217 | 5 | 1843 | 3 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward |
| Mitchell* | 2,862 | 22,274 | 7 | 3182 | 5 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward |
| Moira | 4,045 | 20,686 | 9 | 2298 | 3 three-member wards |
| Moorabool* | 2,110 | 20,391 | 7 | 2913 | 4 single-member ridings & 1 three-member riding |
| Mount Alexander | 1,529 | 15,332 | 7 | 2190 | Single-member wards |
| Moyne | 5,478 | 13,909 | 10 | 1391 | 5 two-member ridings |
| Murrindindi | 3,877 | 13,714 | 6 | 2286 | Single-member ridings |
| Northern Grampians | 5,728 | 10,931 | 9 | 1215 | 1 three-member ward & 1 six-member ward |
| Pyrenees* | 3,433 | 7,224 | 7 | 1032 | Single-member ridings |
| South Gippsland* | 3,295 | 28,669 | 9 | 3185 | 7 single-member wards & 1 two-member ward |
| Southern Grampians | 6,652 | 13,186 | 7 | 1884 | Unsubdivided |
| Strathbogie* | 3,302 | 9,065 | 7 | 1295 | Single-member wards |

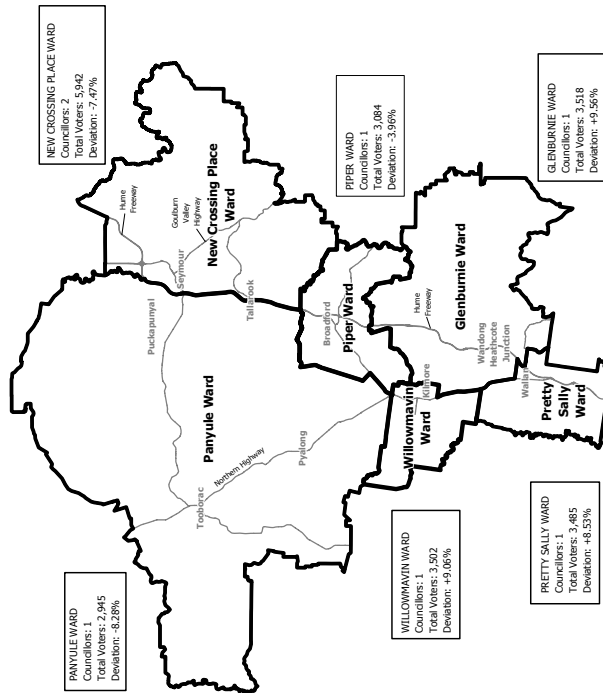
About the VEC

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, acting transparently and with integrity.

Mitchell Supplement:
Actual voter numbers as at 23 June 2004



| Panyule Ward | | Piper Ward | | Pretty Sally Ward | |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| CCD: | Voters: | CCD: | Voters: | CCD: | Voters: |
| 2050601 | 216 | 2051207 | 0 | 2051502 | 176 |
| 2050602 | 6 | 2051401 | 454 | 2051503 | 1,003 |
| 2050604 | 405 | 2051403 | 442 | 2051505 | 32 |
| 2050606 | 375 | 2051404 | 321 | 2051506 | 373 |
| 2050607 | 488 | 2051405 | 604 | 2051507 | 1,047 |
| 2050611 | 182 | 2051406 | 367 | 2051508 | 570 |
| 2051201 | 357 | 2051407 | 625 | 2051510 | 284 |
| 2051205 | 652 | 2051408 | 106 | | |
| 2051207 | 258 | 2051504 | 165 | | |
| 2051208 | 6 | | | | |
| total: | 2,945 | total: | 3,084 | total: | 3,485 |

| Willowmavin Ward | |
|------------------|--------------|
| CCD: | Voters: |
| 2050601 | 302 |
| 2050603 | 797 |
| 2050605 | 211 |
| 2050608 | 223 |
| 2050609 | 551 |
| 2050610 | 722 |
| 2051502 | 332 |
| 2051504 | 364 |
| total: | 3,502 |

Grand total for Mitchell Shire: 22,476

A map showing the exact boundaries for each Census collector district can be purchased from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – www.abs.gov.au or call 1300 135 070. An electronic version of voter numbers by Census collector district can be downloaded from the VEC's website at www.vec.vic.gov.au

The numbers of voters in each Census collector district within Mitchell Shire are:

| Glenburnie Ward | | New Crossing Place Ward | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| CCD: | Voters: | CCD: | Voters: |
| 2051402 | 2 | 2051201 | 29 |
| 2051406 | 360 | 2051202 | 383 |
| 2051409 | 165 | 2051203 | 595 |
| 2051501 | 428 | 2051204 | 483 |
| 2051504 | 593 | 2051206 | 352 |
| 2051505 | 1,154 | 2051207 | 288 |
| 2051509 | 624 | 2051208 | 201 |
| 2051510 | 192 | 2051301 | 488 |
| | | 2051302 | 688 |
| total: | 3,518 | total: | 5,942 |

9.5 List of persons and groups making submissions

Preliminary submissions

Kevin Abbot
Brian J. Ashford
M. Ashford
Bernadette Bell
Anthony and Pamela Bramley
Philip Clancy
Fiona Cottier
J. Davie
Democracy in Mitchell Public Forum
Marie Dooley
Dot Evans
E. J. Evans
Robert Gordon
Michael Hammond
Geoff Hewitt and Liz Kilpatrick
Beth and Barry Hill
David Hill
Keith Howell
Saowanee Howell
Claudia James
Kilmore Integrity Kept
Cr Ross Lee
Cr Sue Marstaeller JP
David McCullough
Mitchell Shire Council
The Proportional Representation
Society of Australia (Victoria-
Tasmania Branch)
Catherine Russell
Roger L. Sanders
Ruth Shinn
Elizabeth Slattery
Wandong-Heathcote Junction
Community Group
Yvonne Whittaker

Response submissions

B. J. & M. C. Ashford
Susan Atkinson
Matthew Awad
Patricia Awad
Jan Baley
Carmel Barrot
Guy Batey
E. Beale
K. Beayni
William Best
Pauline Bittles
Simon Bonwick
Susan Bott
Wayne Bott
Margaret Brinsden
Paul Brinsden
C. R. Brown
Kathryn Brown
R. J. Brown
Steven R. Brown
Eileen Bugêja
Maureen Buggy
Philip Buggy
Bob Butterworth
Pauline Candy
Ray Candy
Deborah Capuano
John Capuano
Teresa M. Carlin
Vincent T. Carlin
Murray Carter
Sonia Chalmers
Luke Chmielewski
Rhonda Chmielewski
Philip Clancy
Kylie Coad
James & Doreen Coall

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Janet Cockerill | Michelle Gibbs |
| Rhonda Cole | Judith Gibson |
| Suzanne & Allan Cole | Philip Gibson |
| Wes Cole | Andrew Gillett |
| Heidi Coombs | Jodie Gobbett |
| Linda Cornish | Peter Gough |
| Robert & Pauline Cornish | Rochelle Gough |
| Royce Cornwell | Allen Hall |
| Goran & Amanda Coter | Kerrie Hall |
| Glenda Curr | Norina Hall |
| Joy Dalben | Robert C. Hall |
| Laurie Dam | Sandy Hall |
| Mark Darbyshire | Shelley Hall |
| Valinda Davern | Michael Hammond |
| Alan Davey | Wilma Hammond |
| Catherine Day | Ian Hanna |
| John Day | Joan Hanna |
| Democracy in Mitchell Public Forum | Deborah & Dale Hanson |
| Bryan Dennis | Tracy & Wes Hardiman |
| Margaret Dickinson | Leslie Harrison |
| Neale Dickinson | Ray & Margaret Hayes |
| Troy Dickson | John Hennessy |
| Gayle Dodds | Geoff Hewitt |
| Marie Dooley | Trevor Hibbert |
| Brian J. Dove | Beth and Barry Hill |
| Rosaleen Dove | Beck Hinton |
| J. K. Eades | C. Hoey |
| Dave & Iona Edwards | Maria Hooper |
| Dot Evans | Martin Hooper |
| Neil Evans | H. Hulett |
| Caroline Farrugia | Norman Hulett (twice) |
| Bill Forbes | Roslyn Hulett |
| M. Forbes | Bob Humm |
| Norman & Rosemary Ford | Olga Jensen |
| Trevor Forge | Robert Jensen |
| Kate Galeer | Anne Jillett |
| Sander van der Geer | Edna Johnson |
| Gaye Georgelin | Adrian Jones |
| Shane Geogrelin | Amanda Jones |
| J. Gibbon | Sharyn Keily |
| Melinda Gibbons | Jessica Kendrick |

Liz Kilpatrick
Adrian King
Denise King
Derryn King
Marie King
Mervyn J. King
Rose King
Janne Kneebone
Jay Kneebone
Rodney Kneebone
Taryn Kneebone
Alan Knight
Diane Lanphier
John Lanphier
Allan Laurens
Peter Leahy
Theresa Leahy
Cr Ross Lee
Sue Lees
Elisa Lehmann-Kay
Narelle Liepa
David Limbrick
Denise Limbrick
Robyn Livesay
Steven Livesay
Ian Luhrs
Janet Luhrs
Karen MacDonald
Gail Anne Mains
Ray Malone
Doris Manton
Kevin Manton
Ben Marshall
Nicole Marshall
Ian Marstaeller
Cr Sue Marstaeller JP
K. Matters
John McCarthy
Phyllis McCarthy
S. K. McCarthy
Dawn McCormack

David McCullough
Hugh McGowan
Gwen McIntosh
Bruce McLean
Gabrielle McLean
Jodie McLennan
Benjamin McMahon
Geoffrey McMahon
Helen McMahon
David Meek
Ian Miller
Lee Miller
Natalie Miller
Rita Miller
Mitchell Shire Council
David Moran
Sandra Moran
Alistair Morris
Carolyn Morris
Cassandra Morris
D. Mugavin
Neil Mugavin
Ross Mugavin
H. Muller
David Murray
Marita Murray
Dylan Naylor
Betty O'Brien
Herbert O'Brien
Sandra O'Connor
Patrick O'Kane
Mervyne J. Ord
Michael O'Toole
Rae O'Toole
David & Julie Palmer
K. Patow
Laurence Patton
Margaret Patton
Mavis Patton
Michelle Patton
Sheena Patton

Stephen Patton
George Paul
Francis Payne
John Perrett
Sandra Perrett
Loraine Petravicius
Alicia Poperechny
Len Poperechny
The Proportional Representation
Society of Australia (Victoria-
Tasmania Branch)
Jessi-Juanita Providence
Elva Rainey
Noel Rainey
Trudy Rainey
Reginald A. Raynor JP
Kenneth Reaburn
Margaret Reaburn
Maree Rebl
Theodore Rebl
Gwynneth Reddish
Erika Reiter
W. Reiter
Elizabeth Riley
P. Roads
Cindy Robson
George W. Rochfort
Marcia E. Rochfort
Norman Rose
Brian Russell
Catherine Russell
A. F. Ryan
Andrew Ryan
Brendan Ryan
Charmaine Ryan
Christopher Ryan
John Ryan
Leone Ryan
Lyndall Ryan
Marie Therese Ryan
Mary Ryan

Michael Ryan
P. E. Ryan
Patrick Ryan
Penny Ryan
Tracey Ryan
Valerie Ryan
Alex Samoilenko
John Sanders
Wanda Sanderson
Bette Sartore
Frank Sartore
Maurice A. Scanlon
Tony Scicluna
Dawn Scott
Norman Scott
Bradley Shield
Debbie Shield
Ruth Shinn
John Simpson
Robert Simpson
Alma E. Smith
Kellie Sones
B. Stewart
Craig Stewart
Helen Stewart
Howard Stokes
Wendy Stokes
Barbara Sutton
Elizabeth Symons
G. Symons
Travis Symons
Carmen Taffe
Charlene Taylor
Mark Taylor
Avril Thomas
Brad Thomas
Lee Thomas
Carlo Tomolillo
Luisa Tomolillo
Cr Faye Ure
Christopher Waldie

Heather Waldie
Shane Waldie
Ben Walker
Don Watson
Glenda Watson
Maxine Watson
David Waye
Moirra Waye
Shirley Weber
Peter Weihart
Kaye Weller
James Whalan
Jean Whalan
Patricia Whalan
Kath Willcockson
Robert Williams
Geogrina Wright
Colleen Zoch
Geoffrey Zoch

