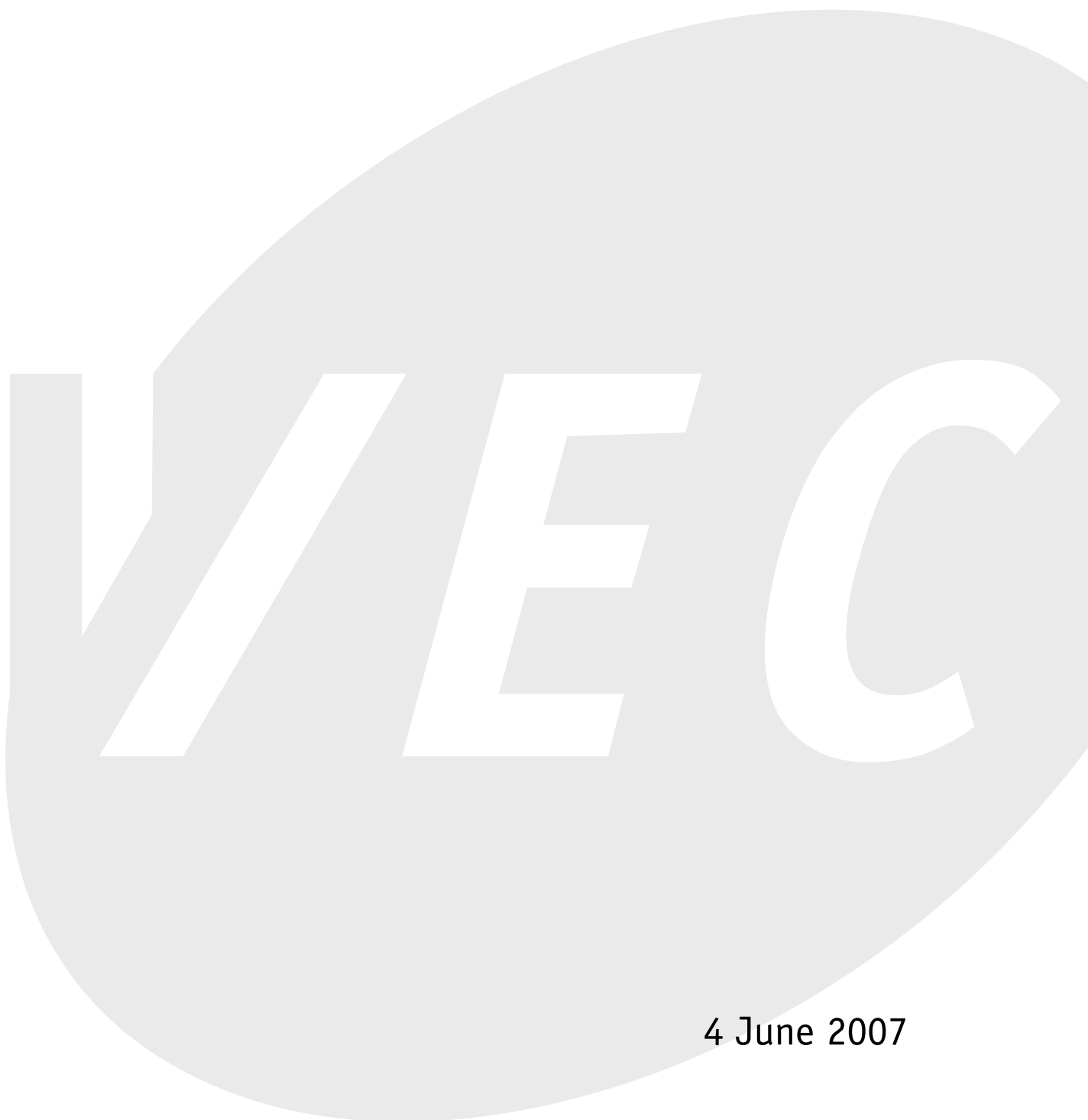


**FINAL REPORT**  
**Electoral Representation Review**  
**for the**  
**Knox City Council**



4 June 2007





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## 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 the City of Knox (s.219D *Local Government Act 1989*).

**The VEC recommends that the Knox City Council consist of nine councillors to be elected from nine wards. This structure is similar to the preliminary alternative option, with some boundary adjustments to accommodate projected voter numbers and communities of interest.**

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, the Knox City 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 the City of Knox. The notice appeared in the *Victoria Government Gazette* on 4 January 2007.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. On 24 January 2007, the Knox City Council advised that it had appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

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

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

### 2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews

The VEC has ten years' experience in working on municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils to prepare options for their consideration. VEC staff have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has used sophisticated mapping software, conducted field research and

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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 former Department of Infrastructure.

### **2.3 Municipality profile**

The City of Knox was proclaimed in 1994, and is located in the outer eastern metropolitan area approximately 25kms from the Melbourne GPO. The City includes the suburbs of Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Boronia, The Basin, Rowville, Wantirna, Wantirna South, Lysterfield, Knoxfield, Scoresby and Bayswater.

Knox is one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria with almost 150,000 residents living in eleven localities. Knox residents are proud of their city's leafy green image, and are protective of the nearby foothills and other places of biological significance. It is a community with residents from 130 different countries who speak 54 languages.

In only thirty years, housing, business and commercial development has sprung up across the once rural landscape of Knox. There is substantial local employment in business, retail and manufacturing. The main industries include chemical product ion and food manufacturing. Modern industrial estates are focussing on future technologies, and thriving, modern shopping and commercial precincts feature in its suburbs. There is interest in the arts, leisure and recreational pursuits.

The Urban Growth Boundary winds through the northeast and southeast corners of the municipality, and population growth is slowing. By 2015 an estimated 26% of the Knox population will be over 65. These changing demographics are impacting on housing development and services. There is a decrease in new housing subdivisions and an increase in multi-unit developments.

(Sources: Department of Sustainability and Environment *Victoria in Future 2004*; Department of Sustainability and Environment *Melbourne in Fact 2001*; Department of Sustainability and Environment *Victoria Population Bulletin 2006*; Department of Sustainability and Environment *Know Your Area*; Knox City Council website)

### **2.4 Current electoral structure**

The City of Knox is a subdivided municipality with nine councillors elected from nine wards.

## **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:

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*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).

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## 4 Public involvement

### 4.1 Public information

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

- advertising in newspapers;
- conducting an information session in Wantirna South on 7 March 2007, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the City of Knox community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- developing a leaflet containing information about the review, which was distributed to households throughout the municipality;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a helpline for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions;
- releasing a Supplement to the Guide for Submissions containing an amended timeline;
- releasing a Preliminary Report on 17 April 2007 and making the Report available at the Knox City Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- publishing all submissions in response to the Preliminary Report on the VEC website; and
- conducting a public hearing in Wantirna South on 17 May 2007.

### 4.2 Advertising

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

- a public notice of the review, detailing the process, appeared in the *Knox Journal* on 20 February 2007, and the *Knox Leader* on 21 February 2007;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the City of Knox review, appeared in the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* on 7 February 2007; and
- a notice that the Preliminary Report had been released appeared in the *Knox Journal* on 17 April 2007, and the *Knox Leader* on 18 April 2007.

See Appendix 9.1.

### 4.3 Media releases

Media releases designed to supplement the paid advertising were distributed to the *Knox Journal* and the *Knox Leader* newspapers. See Appendix 9.2.

### 4.4 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](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)

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#### **4.5 Leaflet**

The VEC developed a leaflet containing information about the review. The leaflet was distributed to households throughout the municipality. See appendix 9.3

#### **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.

#### **4.8 Supplement**

A supplement to the Guide for Submissions was released to provide information on changes in the Knox City Council electoral representation review timeline. See Appendix 9.5

### **5 Preliminary Report**

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

The VEC followed this process during the Knox City Council review. In accordance with s.219F(6) of the Act, the VEC produced a Preliminary Report containing its preferred and alternative options for the City of Knox. In developing these options, the VEC considered preliminary submissions made by various persons and groups, as well as various other relevant factors.

#### **5.1 Preliminary submissions**

The VEC received ten preliminary submissions by the closing time (19 March 2007 – 5.00 pm). One submission was received after the deadline and could not be considered.

Submissions were mixed in their view of the most preferred number of councillors.

##### *Number of councillors*

- eight submissions recommended nine councillors (the current number), one recommended twelve, and one made no recommendation regarding the number of councillors. Two alternative suggestions were for eleven councillors;
- two submissions recommended retaining the current structure (nine councillors elected from nine wards) and expressed satisfaction with the present arrangements;
- five submissions recommended multi member wards;

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- one submission recommended 12 councillors, noting that Knox councillors have a heavy workload, and noting that the number of residents is 32,000 higher than the number of voters; and
  - one submission made no comment as to the number of councillors.

*Electoral structure:*

Submissions were divided in their preferred electoral structure:

Two submissions recommended retaining the current nine single-councillor ward structure, giving the following reasons in support of their recommendation:

- the current structure is effective for the municipality;
- the ward numbers, number of voters per councillor and ward deviations are all within acceptable limits;
- there is low expected population growth and that growth is projected to be evenly spread across the municipality.;
- there is a high councillor workload requiring nine councillors;
- there are cost benefits associated with retaining the current structure, including costs related to the holding of elections;
- the municipality is largely within average socio economic range and demands from the various communities of interest are not complex;
- the current levels of support for the elderly (a large and increasing community of interest) are satisfactory;
- the existing ward divisions are suitable for the municipality and its localities; and
- the current structure resulted from a recent review process that involved extensive community consultation. [The VEC notes that the commissioners' recommendation was made prior to the proportional representation vote counting system being introduced for multi-member wards.]

Two submissions recommended a three three-councillor ward structure as a first option and two submissions recommended a three three-councillor ward structure as an alternative.

One submission recommended a four three-councillor ward structure and one recommended a mixed multi-councillor ward structure.

One submission did not specify a structure except to recommend a subdivided structure with at least one green wedge ward.

Submissions recommending multi-councillor ward structures gave reasons including that they:

- enable a better reflection of voter preferences;
- are more representative of broader range of community views including disadvantaged and community groups; and they
- enable a proportional representation vote counting system.

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### *Ward names*

Four submissions addressed ward names:

- one made suggestions relating to compass or directional names;
- two made no suggestions but supported the use of aboriginal names but only in consultation with the indigenous community; and
- one recommended continuance of names significant to the municipality.

Several submissions suggested likely boundaries and groupings of existing wards or parts of wards into multi-member wards.

Appendix 9.6 contains 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](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au).

## **5.2 VEC research**

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

Development projections based on information presented by the Council were also taken into consideration. Extensive fieldwork was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC. In addition, the VEC examined the considerations of the City's Commissioners when they made their electoral structure recommendations in 1996.

## **5.3 Recommended options**

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

The preferred option was:

- That the City of Knox consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.

The alternative option was:

- That the City of Knox consist of nine councillors elected from nine single councillor wards.

## **6 Response submissions**

In accordance with s.219F(7) of the Act, the VEC invited written submissions in response to the Preliminary Report. The VEC received 22 submissions by the due date.

Five submissions supported the preliminary preferred option of three three-councillor wards.

Reasons provided in support of the preliminary preferred model included:

- the perceived advantages of proportional representation vote counting system;

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- the preferred option captures communities of interest well;
  - a broader representation of the community can be obtained by giving special interest groups the opportunity to be elected;
  - the preferred option gives members of the community choice over which councillor they will approach over a certain issue; and
  - multi-councillor wards enable strongly held views within a community to impact on one third of the councillors rather than one ninth. Therefore, a greater percentage of the council is accountable for decisions impacting directly on a local community.

These submitters expressed a wide variety of reasons for their opposition to the preferred option including general beliefs about the impact of multi-councillor wards as well as those specific to the City of Knox. These included:

- the overall large geographic area of the City of Knox will result in wards that are too large for councillors to service effectively;
- the current structure is less than 10 years old and was determined as a result of community consultation;
- the Lakewood Estate provides a natural constituency for a single councillor ward and to split it between two or more wards makes little sense;
- the number of voters to be serviced by each councillor will be 36000 not 12000;
- multi-councillor wards will lead to an increased workload for councillors and will decrease the time available to the council for developing structural and strategic considerations for long-term policies;
- having experienced both single-councillor and multi-councillor ward structures, the submitter believes that more candidates stand in single councillor wards whereas in multi-councillor wards more candidates are likely to be re-elected unopposed;
- constituents will not know which councillor to contact or how to determine the effectiveness of each councillor in a multi-councillor ward;
- pressure groups or single issue groups may dominate a large ward;
- councillors will be unable to effectively determine what the voters want, resulting in less representation of local groups and voters not being adequately represented;
- concern that all councillors could reside in one pocket of a ward, thus resulting in lack of real representation;
- consensus on ward issues will be required between councillors before such issues are taken to council which will take up more time with meetings;
- change will be disruptive; and
- larger wards will reduce the number of candidates as campaign costs will increase unacceptably in a multi-councillor ward structure;

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Sixteen submissions expressed a preference for a single-councillor ward structure, with twelve supporting the current structure and four expressing support for the alternative option.

The four submissions supporting the alternative option gave reasons including:

- single-councillor wards are more democratic;
- single-councillor ward councillors are more accountable than those from multi-councillor wards
- local representation is enabled by a single ward structure

The twelve submissions that expressed a preference for the current nine single-councillor ward structure gave a variety of reasons in addition to those above including:

- the existing ward boundaries are satisfactory; current ward deviations are within the legislated  $\pm 10\%$  deviation, and are expected to remain within acceptable limits at least until the next review;
- genuine natural local communities are captured by the current structure whereas the preferred option creates large artificial groupings;
- the proposed three three-councillor wards do not enhance or create new communities of interest other than those related to socio-economic divisions;
- effective local representation is provided by the current structure;
- the current structure creates a manageable workload for councillors;
- election costs are affordable for candidates;
- communities in the City of Knox are working together in harmony, rather than competing in blocks;
- the community has confidence in the existing structure and values the intimate knowledge the councillors maintain about their respective local areas;
- Knox is geographically large and is better suited to smaller, more practical sized wards;
- the current structure provides good representation across the city and effective relationships between constituents and councillors are maintained;
- concern that larger wards will reduce the number of candidates because of the increased cost of campaigning;
- single-councillor ward representation enables community groups to work through issues in a controlled, effective and systematic manner;
- problems occurred under the previous multi-councillor structure;
- 'many' members of the Knox Ratepayers Association have experienced both types of structure in Knox City Council and consider the current single-councillor ward structure to be more effective in addressing the various communities of interest;
- a multi-councillor ward structure will mean voters will have to lobby within another level of government;

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- the current structure provides good representation across geographical areas and in the various suburbs;
  - the current structure provides greater encouragement for candidates to nominate;
  - significant minorities are represented and not disadvantaged by the current structure; and
  - the current structure provides an efficient and effective framework for continuing interaction between local council and local residents;

Submitters commented that those submissions supporting the preferred option are from people or groups located outside the municipality.

Some submissions noted that certain boundaries in the alternative option were unsatisfactory because they split communities of interest inappropriately. Comments included:

- the proposed boundaries divide some areas, severing communities of interest. These submissions noted that this is particularly so in the Ferntree Gully foothills, (the proposed Dobson/Chandler ward boundary) also noting that it is recognised by the State Government as a unique area of Knox, and that the community united and lobbied for protection for this area over a 5-year period;
- the 3 wards in the preferred option are very artificial in nature: Bushy Park contains three very different suburbs in history and nature; Lightwood suburbs are all very different communities to each other; and Stamford Rowville (west) is very different to the more easterly areas of Rowville and Lysterfield;
- the areas of Ferntree Gully around Mountain Gate and Kent Park are different in nature and history to the "Rowvilles" and are separated from them by what was termed the "creek with no crossings";
- in the alternative model, Lakewood housing estate community is inappropriately divided between two wards;
- the northern boundary being proposed along Doysal Avenue and Olivebank Road is not a logical boundary; and
- the southern boundary should be considered at either Rathgar or Kelletts Road to increase the voter numbers for Taylor Ward.

A list of those persons and groups who made response submissions is provided in Appendix 9.6. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)

## **7 Public hearing**

A public hearing was held at the Knox City Council Function Rooms, Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, on 17 May 2007 at 6.30pm. All people and groups who had requested to be heard in their submissions in response to the VEC's Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions, and eight people chose to do so.

One person who had chosen to speak did not attend for the hearing. Members of the public were invited to attend, and there was a total audience of 15 people (including

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those making presentations). Speakers raised a number of issues in support of points raised in written submissions.

The Council representative stated that the existing structure is effective and has served the community well. He noted a high rate of participation and candidature, which was indicative of an effective structure. This presenter expressed concern that a change to a multi-councillor ward structure would dilute accountability and reduce the accessibility of councillors to voters.

A matter of concern to that speaker and other speakers was the anticipated increase in campaign costs for candidates due to the larger geographical area, and the increase in the number of voters to be canvassed. It was feared that this would reduce the number of candidates, and that candidates' volunteer supporters would be over-taxed.

The presenter pointed out the Council's view that the wards in the preferred model appeared to place a disproportionate emphasis on socio-economic divisions and he asserted that this would not be advantageous to Council operations.

The presenter for the Knox Ratepayers' Association expressed his organisation's opposition to changes to boundaries and structure, arguing that all wards in the current structure are within the allowable tolerance of  $\pm 10\%$ . He argued that the introduction of a new structure was unnecessary and would be unworkable because of the large geographic size of the municipality.

This speaker asserted that the consequent increases in time and costs to councillors of servicing a much larger ward and for candidates to canvass the larger wards would be detrimental to the municipality.

This presenter also noted that only one of the submissions in favour of the preferred option was from a Knox City Council resident, asserting that this was indicative of a high level of voter satisfaction with the current electoral structure within the municipality.

A few speakers stated that the preferred option would combine communities that have nothing in common, and that different communities exist within Knox City Council and can be differentiated quite clearly. One speaker cited Scoresby, Wantirna and Wantirna South as examples of adjacent communities that are very different and have differing interests and needs from council. The speaker also identified the localities of Bayswater, Ferntree Gully and The Basin as separate communities that have developed independently and very differently. Other speakers identified differences between Ferntree Gully and The Basin relating them to the positioning of the proposed Dobson/Chandler Ward boundary in the alternative option.

One speaker noted that the proposed Stamford Ward in the preferred model included within its boundaries the "creek with no crossings" (the Corhanwarrabul and Monbulk Creeks) indicating that this would mean councillors in the proposed Stamford ward in the preferred option would have much greater distances to travel in order to visit locations within the ward.

The speaker noted that the western boundary of the proposed Scott Ward in the alternative model inappropriately divided the Lakewood housing estate and suggested that a better boundary would be Scoresby Road or the rear of the properties along Bunnett Road.

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Another speaker argued that some submissions in favour of the preferred option were from people who were not residents of the municipality and demonstrated a lack of local knowledge of the area.

This speaker reiterated the statements in her submission relating to an increase to eleven councillors and her view that the large population of the City of Knox and the increase in workloads for councillors related to legislative requirements and administrative work warranted an increase in councillor numbers.

This speaker then indicated her support for the current structure, noting that the communities of interest have developed within the City of Knox over decades. She outlined her concerns that the interests of these separate communities would not be served by the preferred option, as it does not capture the communities of interest well.

One speaker noted the changing demographics of the municipality and stated that communities are currently encouraged to be involved in council decisions. He expressed the views that the City of Knox is unique and that Knox City Council worked very effectively. He expressed his concern that larger wards would lead to a decrease in councillor accountability and argued that smaller wards resulted in increased representation.

This speaker argued that a referendum style vote should be required to effect a change in council structure. [The VEC notes that discussion on the legislation guiding the electoral representation review process is beyond the scope of this review.]

Several speakers presented the view that the proposed boundary between Dobson and Chandler Wards in the alternative option splits Ferntree Gully inappropriately, and that this boundary should be moved north. These speakers noted the individual character of the Ferntree Gully foothills area and asserted that the significance of the area militates against both splitting it as in the alternative option, and combining it with The Basin, Boronia and Bayswater as in the preferred option. Two speakers specifically asserted that there was very little connection between Ferntree Gully and The Basin.

Another speaker conceded that the Dobson Ward could be extended to Boronia Road but noted that the character of the localities changed around this area.

A significant number of speakers asserted that the voter number projections put forward by the VEC were inaccurate, especially in the short term, and that they did not reflect the municipality's low expected population growth.

The presenter representing the Knox Greens supported the preferred option noting that it would give special interest groups the opportunity for better representation. This presenter also asserted that it would provide voters with a choice of representatives to approach over issues, and that councillors would be more informed about specific issues. This presenter stated that his organisation supported an odd number of councillors and that nine councillors would be cost-effective for the municipality.

In relation to assertions by other speakers that the preferred model would increase costs to an unacceptable level, this speaker responded that candidates who had the strength of support required to be elected should be able to generate sufficient support to mount an election campaign.

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## 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 approximately 4,000 to over 164,000. The VEC applies the legislative provisions relating to numbers of councillors in a logical way, with those councils that have the largest number of voters having the most councillors, and those councils that have the least number of voters having the fewest councillors.

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

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

#### The VEC's findings

##### The VEC's preliminary options

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC found nine to be the most appropriate number of councillors for the Knox City Council.

As noted in the Preliminary Report, Knox City Council has voter numbers around 109,000 and a large population, though the expected growth rate for the next eight years is low (2.19%). In addition, Knox City covers a large area, so the VEC believed it was reasonable to consider a councillor number between nine and eleven.

Some preliminary submissions recommended nine councillors, arguing that

- the number of voters per councillor would be within an acceptable range when compared to other municipalities;
- councillor workload is expected to remain stable;
- an increase in numbers would be accompanied by a cost increase with no additional community benefit;

One submission noted that the councillor workload is onerous, whilst another noted that whilst councillor workload is high, an increase in councillor numbers would increase costs and would not necessarily reduce the workloads of individual councillors.

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The VEC has recommended eleven councillors for municipalities of a similar size or population to the City of Knox. The VEC considers, however, that these municipalities can be distinguished from the City of Knox because they generally have more diverse or distinct communities of interest and projected increases in population growth. Consequently these municipalities have higher levels of disadvantage and/or more complex needs than those in the City of Knox, thereby placing a greater workload on councillors.

#### The options are tested

There were no significant objections put forward in response submissions or by presenters at the public hearing to the recommendation of nine councillors as the appropriate number of councillors for Knox City Council.

One submission in response to the Preliminary Report stated support for an increase to eleven councillors. This submitter stated at the public hearing that some good reasons existed for an increase in councillor numbers as noted above. Since an eleven-councillor option had not been put forward in the Preliminary Report, the speaker then indicated support for the retention of the current structure.

As noted in its Preliminary Report, at the preliminary stage of the review the VEC did consider the option of increasing the number of councillors. The VEC believes that the special circumstances required to support a recommendation for eleven councillors are not apparent within the City of Knox.

Consequently, the VEC sees no reason to change its original finding. The VEC confirms its view that nine is the number of councillors most likely to provide the opportunity for fair and equitable representation to the voters of Knox City.

## **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.

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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**

#### Should the municipality be unsubdivided?

The VEC's process of determining an appropriate electoral structure for the Knox City Council began with an assessment of the City and of the existing structure of nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.

The VEC recognises that there are distinct communities of interest within the municipality. The City of Knox covers established residential areas, newer residential areas and green wedge areas. Whilst it has been identified as a reasonably homogeneous community, there are differences in the demographic profile across the municipality, as well as notable geographic differences.

Population growth in the City of Knox is expected to occur evenly across the municipality in the years to 2016 at a comparatively low rate of 2.19%, although there is some conjecture relating to anticipated pockets of development in the existing Scott and Dinsdale Wards.

In preparing its summary for the Preliminary Report, the VEC noted that the trends in the north and north-east of the municipality do not in general extend to The Basin.

Variations in population density are evident across the municipality and significantly higher numbers of families with children under 15 are evident in Lysterfield and Rowville. Slightly higher numbers of people aged over 65 years live in the north of the municipality, with the highest percentages occurring in Upper Ferntree Gully.

The number of people born overseas is higher in Wantirna, Wantirna South, Rowville, and Bayswater. A wide variety of countries of origin is evident in these areas, and there are smaller groups of people born in the United Kingdom who have settled in The Basin, Upper Ferntree Gully, Boronia, Ferntree Gully and Bayswater.

Households with incomes in the lowest quartile are more common in the north-east areas of Bayswater, Boronia, Upper Ferntree Gully and Ferntree Gully. Single parent families are found in higher proportions in Boronia, Bayswater, Scoresby and Ferntree Gully along with a higher proportion of government housing. Unemployment is higher in the north-east but these figures are lower than the Melbourne metropolitan average.

The differences between geographic areas and between groups within the municipality mean that there are a number of communities within the municipality that have varying interests and differing needs from the Council. The VEC therefore

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considers that the opportunity for fair and equitable representation is more likely to be achieved by dividing the municipality into wards.

The VEC also noted that the City contains nearly 109,000 voters. An unsubdivided municipality would be a very large electorate for candidates to canvass, and could result in an impractically large number of candidates listed on ballot papers. At the 2005 election there was a total of 44 candidates across all wards. If all of those candidates were to stand for election in an unsubdivided municipality, all 44 would appear on the one ballot paper and voters would have to number each box with a preference from 1 to 44 (unlike voting for the Senate, voters cannot have the option of voting above the line in local government elections).

Given these considerations, the VEC believes that it is most appropriate to divide the City of Knox into wards.

#### The VEC's preliminary options

Preliminary submissions received by the VEC indicated that the existing nine single-councillor ward structure enjoys support from the community, though a number of submissions supported the introduction of multi-councillor wards to help ensure that minority groups and non-geographic communities of interest were afforded the opportunity for fair and equitable representation.

Census data suggested that there are broader communities of interest than were captured by the single-councillor wards in the existing structure. In the VEC's view, whilst the existing electoral structure reflected localities reasonably well, the nine smaller wards did not necessarily reflect non-geographic communities of interest or encourage broader representation for voters.

The VEC was concerned that unlike larger wards, which are able to gather together broad groupings of people linked by features such as ethnicity or language, small wards with limited geographic reach are less likely to incorporate enough members of any single minority group to make representation feasible.

As was argued in submissions supporting multi-ward structures, the VEC considered that representation of non-geographic communities of interest, including cultural, familial and socio-economic communities, would be assisted by the introduction of a system of voting by proportional representation.

As a result of its research, and the arguments and evidence presented in preliminary submissions, the VEC developed its preferred option, consisting of a three three-councillor ward electoral structure.

However, the VEC did identify some problems when dividing the municipality into three larger wards due to the distribution of the population, geographic features and the size and shape of the various localities within the City of Knox.

It was not possible to simply merge the existing wards into groups of three, as was suggested in preliminary submissions, as this resulted in awkwardly shaped wards with unclear boundaries and unacceptable deviations in average voter numbers.

The VEC endeavours to create boundaries so that the number of voters per ward will remain within the legislated tolerance for as long as possible and, as part of the review, considers the likelihood of changes within the various localities.

Significant factors including area and physical terrain; means of travel; traffic arteries and community connections; expected population growth; changes in voter numbers;

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and communities and diversities of interest assist in forming decisions relating to the electoral structure and the creation of ward boundaries.

The VEC develops projections by combining data obtained from a variety of sources. One of the reasons supporting the VEC's recommendation of a three three-councillor ward structure with the specific boundaries indicated in the preliminary preferred option was that it considered this structure would better contain some uneven growth expected in pockets within the municipality. Wards would therefore be more likely to remain within the legislated tolerance for the period between reviews.

In developing the preliminary options, the VEC also considered arguments in support of retaining the current single-councillor ward structure.

There was some evidence identified in research, from data and in preliminary submissions that there were a number of compact, geographic communities of interest in the municipality.

Substantial differences between The Basin and the Boronia and Bayswater areas, and between Ferntree Gully and the Rowville and Lysterfield areas were noted. The Basin and the Ferntree Gully/Dandenong foothills were considered to indicate locality-based communities of interest that could perhaps be more effectively represented in a single-councillor ward structure than in a multi-councillor ward structure.

The Knox City Council submission argued that the current structure best represents the communities of interest across the municipality. The Council stated that low growth is expected, and the existing boundaries have remained within the legislated  $\pm 10\%$  tolerance for six years. The Council stated that it does not expect current wards to move outside that tolerance within the next eight years.

In response to the VEC's concerns relating to the voter numbers in individual wards in the single-councillor ward structure, several speakers commented that the projections used by the VEC did not correspond with those put forward by the Knox City Council. This issue was significant because if wards are outside the legislated tolerance before the next election a further review may be required.

The Council stated that to its knowledge there are no significant issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity in the municipality.

The Council also stated that the aged population is well supported by retirement villages and existing services, unemployment in the municipality is low and individual incomes are largely within the average for metropolitan Melbourne.

In making its assessment for the purposes of its Preliminary Report, the VEC considered whether the current structure adequately captured the various communities of interests.

The VEC considered locality-based communities such as The Basin and Ferntree Gully, discussed above, were clearly identified as geographically determined. Large parts of the municipality, though, appeared to be more suited to a multi-councillor ward structure. On balance, the VEC believed the locality-based communities of interest, which had been identified at that stage, could be well represented in either a single-councillor ward structure or a multi-councillor ward structure.

After considering the arguments and conducting research, the VEC included a nine single-councillor ward structure as an option in the Preliminary Report. The existing, similar single-councillor ward structure enjoys support from the community and the

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VEC considered it was appropriate to present such a structure for consideration by the community.

The VEC did so notwithstanding some concern that planned development in the municipality could put pressure on the balance of voter numbers between wards.

The wards under the VEC's preliminary alternative option were drawn so that the existing ward boundaries could be retained as far as was possible, though a number of adjustments had to be made to allow for expected population growth based on available data at the time of modelling.

When comparing the two options, the VEC decided to recommend the three three-councillor ward structure as its preliminary preferred option. The VEC considered that the non-geographic communities of interest identified within the municipality were captured more effectively by the preferred option than was achieved by the preliminary alternative option of nine single councillor wards, and that the three three-councillor ward structure would better contain the pockets of anticipated growth within the legislated tolerance.

#### The options are tested

Legislation provides that, in conducting an electoral representation review, the VEC must put forward its initial preferred option and any alternative options in a Preliminary Report. The VEC must also invite written submissions on the Report and it must hear verbal presentations if any person making a submission so requests. In effect, the Preliminary Report provides the VEC with an opportunity to test its preliminary options before formulating a final recommendation for the Minister to consider. Similarly, written and verbal responses to the Report operate either to affirm or deny the appropriateness of the electoral models suggested by the VEC.

One of the VEC's primary considerations when conducting electoral representation reviews is to recommend a structure that enables voters to elect a council that will represent their views, interests and needs.

A number of issues were raised by a number of submitters concerning both the preliminary preferred and the preliminary alternative options.

At the public hearing, speakers provided argument relating to the different characteristics of communities in adjacent localities such as Boronia and The Basin, which the VEC had identified previously and are discussed above.

The Councillor for Scott Ward also noted differences between the communities of Wantirna and Wantirna South, and between Bayswater and Boronia. Speakers argued that the VEC's preferred option inappropriately combined communities of interest and localities. Speakers also identified boundaries in the preferred option that inappropriately split some communities.

In its research the VEC had identified The Basin as an area of significant difference to adjacent areas both demographically and geographically. In the VEC's preferred option The Basin was grouped with adjacent areas in a three-councillor ward structure. The VEC considered that grouping the communities in this way would have provided sufficient opportunity for representation for communities of interest within the proposed Lightwood Ward. This was particularly so given the shared green wedge interest that extended into the Ferntree Gully area that was also contained within the proposed Lightwood Ward.

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The VEC considered that the proposed Bushy Park and Stamford Wards in its preliminary preferred option grouped non-geographic communities of interest more effectively than shown in the single councillor wards in the alternative option, particularly across the south and central west of the municipality.

However, response submissions and speakers at the public hearing identified a number of communities of interest across the municipality that were distinct from each other geographically and in character, lifestyle and land use. A number of proposed boundaries that split existing communities were also identified in each option.

The creeks that wind through the proposed Stamford Ward in the preferred option were identified as problematic due to the lack of creek crossings. The VEC notes that the creeks run through three of the existing wards and that for the most part, the available crossings are located in the more densely populated parts in the east of the municipality.

Concerns relating to the preferred option indicated a combination of perceived problems about multi-councillor wards in general and, more specifically, about the unsuitability of a multi-councillor ward structure for Knox City Council.

There were some concerns that a multi-councillor ward structure with larger wards and high number of voters per councillor would cause campaign costs to become prohibitive for candidates. The VEC does not consider that the risk of an increase in campaign costs is a principal reason to recommend single-councillor wards.

Submissions and presentations at the public hearing contained general arguments in support of single-councillor ward structures. Argument focusing on the perceived benefits of single-councillor wards included increased councillor accountability, and the effectiveness of relationships between voters and councillors as was experienced in the current structure.

Notwithstanding the recommendation contained in this report, the VEC notes that multi-councillor wards can and do function successfully without many of these perceived concerns eventuating, and that a single-councillor ward structure may not necessarily resolve the doubts expressed about multi-councillor wards structures. Issues such as councillors avoiding responsibility and the involvement of parties and tickets may occur under any electoral structure.

A single-councillor ward structure may be considered the most suitable for a particular municipality due to a range of circumstances and for a variety of reasons. The representation of communities of interest that are predominantly geographic and can be well captured in a single-councillor structure must be balanced with the need for representation for non-geographic diversities and communities of interest.

It was argued in submissions and at the public hearing that the City of Knox community is relatively homogeneous, and that their differences and the requirements they have of the Council are related to their geographic community rather than their ethnicity, socio-economic status or diversity of lifestyle and interests.

It was also pointed out that the Council has a capacity building and place management approach that is based around the various villages and commercial hubs in the localities throughout the municipality, and that this approach is supported by the single-councillor ward structure and has not been divisive for residents.

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Submitters pointed out that what is important in the City of Knox is to have wards that reflect existing geographic communities of interest in preference to a structure that reflects non-geographic community groups.

It was argued that the homogeneousness of the community as a whole meant that geographic communities of interest had more varying needs and interests than the non-geographic communities that had been otherwise identified in research and in submissions.

The special significance of the Ferntree Gully area was noted. The extent of this community of interest was outlined and it was pointed out by several speakers that the proposed boundary between Chandler and Dobson Wards in the VEC's alternative option (Olivebank Road and Doysal Avenue) would detrimentally split this long established community of interest.

### Summary

The City of Knox contains a relatively large area when compared to other metropolitan municipalities. With around 109,000 voters, the current nine-councillor structure results in an average of around 12,000 voters per councillor, which is high when compared to other municipalities with a similar number of voters.

The nature of the community is such that whilst broad demographic groupings can be observed, at this stage they do not place overwhelming or complex demands on council resources.

The VEC expects that the low expected population growth may result in other fast growing municipalities equalling or even overtaking Knox City Council in terms of the average number of voters per councillor in the future. Therefore, the VEC considers that nine is an appropriate number of councillors for the provision of fair and equitable representation for the voters of the City of Knox.

Information in submissions, and at the public hearing, identified the nature of the City of Knox as being comprised of distinct communities that have developed independently and at different periods. It was noted that these communities have well established and clearly differentiated identities. This characteristic differentiates it from some other metropolitan municipalities that have only three or four major suburban centres, or with communities that developed quite quickly and/or during the same period.

In response to arguments put forward in response submissions and at the public hearing, the VEC conducted extensive modelling using all available data. The VEC calculated projections for the City of Knox using a number of variables relating to anticipated housing development and population projections for localities within the City of Knox, including updated data provided by the Council.

The modelling under these projections indicated that there remained a likelihood that some wards in the current structure may be outside the allowable tolerance of  $\pm 10\%$  within the next eight years.

The VEC amended boundaries in both the preliminary preferred and the preliminary alternative option in an endeavour to develop a model that effectively captured communities of interest as identified in response submissions and at the public hearing.

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Noting the concerns relating to the separation of communities and the inconvenience to councillors caused by the creeks in the southern part of the municipality, the VEC modelled several combinations of nine-councillor, multi-councillor ward options including one with a two-councillor ward in the south of the municipality.

The boundaries in the preliminary preferred option are considered to be the most appropriate to be used if considering a three three-councillor ward structure. The VEC acknowledges that due to the constraints associated with creating logical and clear boundaries in combination with voter distribution, geographical barriers and the characteristics of the communities of interest, some communities are necessarily split in this option, whilst others are combined.

The updated projections indicated that it is more likely than not that the adjusted wards in the preliminary alternative option will comply with legislative requirements for the number of voters in each ward, after allowing for eight years of potential growth in the municipality.

Additionally, as noted above, the VEC believes that a structure consisting of nine single-councillor wards could address the special requirements associated with those voters who reside in the unique sections of the municipality in The Basin, the Dandenong foothills and the Ferntree Gully areas.

The other localities within the municipality, whilst sharing some non-geographic communities of interest as identified in research, also appear to have strong individual identities. The geography and size of the municipality also causes a certain level of isolation or separation between localities. Differences in lifestyle and land use are also apparent and influence the nature of the communities of interest. This view was supported by argument in submissions and at the public hearing.

In other municipalities the VEC has heard convincing argument based around the concept that there is a pressing need for increased diversity on council. This important consideration for voters was not identified, during this review process, as an overriding cause for concern in the City of Knox.

After considering all arguments and evidence in support of, and against both preliminary options, the VEC decided that on balance a nine single-councillor ward structure remains the best-suited option for the City of Knox.

The VEC is satisfied that the non-geographic communities of interest could be well served under a nine single-councillor ward structure based on the existing structure.

Suggested amendments to the single councillor ward boundaries have been accommodated where practicable, although it was not possible to retain the existing ward boundaries. However, to a large extent the current ward structure with appropriate modifications, can be successfully continued.

The Dobson Ward boundary has been redrawn to include much of the remainder of Ferntree Gully. The Taylor Ward boundary has been amended to include the south-west section of the municipality incorporating that part of Lysterfield that relates geographically to Rowville.

The Tirhatuan Ward encompasses the area known as the Austral Bricks Site. The boundary between Dinsdale and Baird Wards has been amended to continue north up Scoresby Road rather than proceeding east at Power Road.

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With respect to ward names, the VEC considered comments made in submissions suggesting directional or compass names, historic, Indigenous or locally significant names or existing ward names. The Knox City Council supported the use of existing ward names, reasoning that this decision would be less confusing to voters. The VEC received strong support for the retention of the existing ward names and only qualified support for those ward names in the preferred option.

The VEC agrees that using existing ward names coupled with the continuation of the current electoral structure will be less confusing for voters. The VEC considers the existing ward names to be significant, linked appropriately to the respective ward area and providing continuity of history within the municipality.

The VEC considers that the existing ward names as put forward in the alternative option should be used:

- Collier
- Dinsdale
- Baird
- Chandler
- Scott
- Friberg
- Dobson
- Tirhatuan
- Taylor

In conclusion, the VEC considers that an electoral structure with nine single-councillor wards will provide the best balance between the various criteria it considers for the electoral representation review.

The VEC is satisfied that this structure will best provide fair and equitable electoral representation to the voters of Knox City Council.

### **8.3 Recommendation**

Having taken into account all relevant factors, including the submissions and presentations at the public hearing, the VEC recommends that the City of Knox consist of nine councillors to be elected from nine single-councillor wards.

This structure is similar to the preliminary alternative option, with some boundary adjustments to accommodate projected voter numbers and communities of interest.

Steve Tully

Electoral Commissioner

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## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review

#### Electoral Representation Review Knox City 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 Knox City Council. The Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the independent review.

##### What is the review about?

The aim of the review is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for voters in the City of Knox. The VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

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

##### What will the VEC consider?

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

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

##### Key Steps in the Review

###### Step 1 – Information session, Wednesday, 7 March – 7.30 pm

- Function Rooms, Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South

###### Step 2 – Preliminary submissions. Deadline: Monday, 19 March 2007 - 5.00 pm

###### Step 3 – Preliminary Report, released Tuesday, 10 April 2007

###### Step 4 – Response submissions. Deadline: Wednesday, 2 May 2007 - 5.00 pm

###### Step 5 – Public hearing, Thursday, 10 May 2007 - 6.30 pm

- Function Rooms, Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South
- People may speak in support of their response submissions if they have requested to do so in those submissions.

###### Step 6 – Final Report, released Monday, 28 May 2007

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

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit [www.vec.vic.gov](http://www.vec.vic.gov).

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:

- Manningham City Council
- Whitehorse City Council
- Darebin City Council
- Banyule City Council
- Kingston City Council
- Knox City Council
- Bayside 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 information in public submissions will assist the review.

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


### Making a submission

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

- |                           |               |                         |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| • Manningham City Council | 5 March 2007  | • Kingston City Council | 19 March 2007 |
| • Whitehorse City Council | 6 March 2007  | • Knox City Council     | 19 March 2007 |
| • Darebin City Council    | 13 March 2007 | • Bayside City Council  | 19 March 2007 |
| • Banyule City Council    | 13 March 2007 |                         |               |

**For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)**

# Media Release

Victorian Electoral Commission 

For release from 20 February 2007

## REPRESENTATION REVIEW GETS UNDERWAY

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

"Anyone interested in the review should attend the public information session on Wednesday, 7 March," said the Victorian Electoral Commissioner, Mr Steve Tully.

The details for the information session are:

- Wednesday, 7 March 2007, 7:30 pm
- Function Rooms, Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South

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

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

Key dates for the City of Knox representation review are:

Monday, 19 March 2007 - 5.00 pm –Deadline for preliminary submissions. Submissions can be mailed, faxed or emailed to the VEC.

Tuesday, 10 April 2007– The VEC's Preliminary Report will be released containing its preferred options.

Wednesday, 2 May 2007 - 5.00 pm – Deadline for response submissions about the Preliminary Report.

Thursday, 10 May 2007 - 6.30 pm – Public hearing. People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions if they have requested to do so in those submissions.

Monday, 28 May 2007– The VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

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

For more information, telephone the VEC on 13 18 32 or visit the VEC website [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)

– ENDS –

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

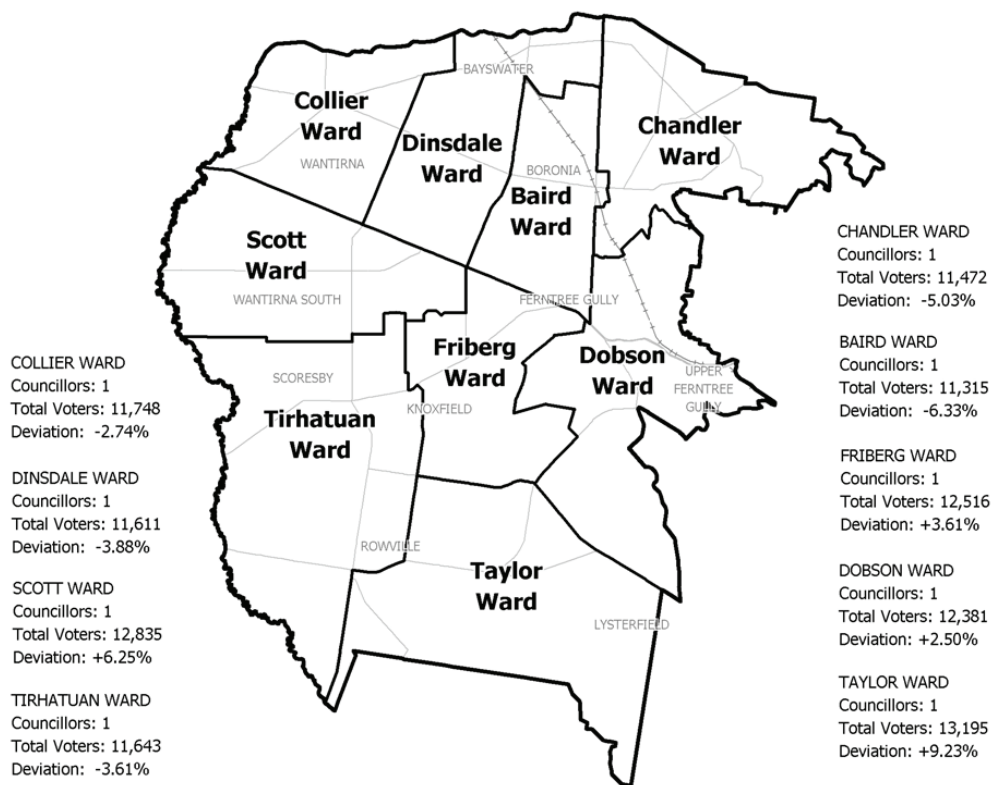
For further media information:

Aileen Duke  
Victorian Electoral Commission  
Tel: 9299 0796

# Media Fact Sheet

## City of Knox

The map below shows the current ward boundaries and the voter numbers and deviations from the average number of voters per councillor as at 8 January 2007.



For release from Tuesday, 10 April 2007

## **KNOX CITY COUNCIL ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW: PRELIMINARY REPORT DELAY**

The Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) Preliminary Report on the electoral representation for the Knox City Council has been delayed by one week. It was previously advertised as being released on 10 April 2007. As a result of the delay, all subsequent dates in the electoral representation review process have also been moved by one week.

The new timelines for the review are:

17 April 2007 – The VEC's Preliminary Report will be released containing its preferred options.

9 May 2007 – 5.00 pm – Deadline for response submissions about the Preliminary Report.

17 May 2007 – Public hearing. People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions if they have requested to do so in those submissions.

4 June 2007 – The VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

Any person who requires additional information can visit [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://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 –**

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

**For further media information:**

Aileen Duke  
Victorian Electoral Commission  
Tel: 9299 0796

For release from Tuesday, 17 April 2007

## **KNOX CITY COUNCIL ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW: PRELIMINARY REPORT RELEASED**

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) today released its Preliminary Report on electoral representation for the Knox City Council. The VEC's preliminary preferred option is for the City of Knox to consist of nine councillors, elected from three three-councillor wards. A preliminary alternative option is also included in the Preliminary Report.

The Report has been released and is available on the VEC's web site at [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au). The Report is also available at the Knox City Council offices, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

People have until 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 9 May 2007 to lodge submissions with the VEC regarding its Preliminary Report.

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

Knox City Council Function Rooms, Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South on Thursday, 17 May 2007 at 6.30 pm.

The VEC's Final Report and recommendations will be lodged with the Minister for Local Government on Monday, 4 June 2007.

Please note that these dates are different to those published previously.

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

**– ENDS –**

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

**For further media information:**

Aileen Duke  
Victorian Electoral Commission  
Tel: 9299 0796

































# Knox City Council

## Map of Recommended Option Nine Councillors, Nine Wards



Ward	Councillors	Voters	Deviation	Area (sq km)
Baird	1	11,738	-2.83%	9.152
Chandler	1	11,471	-5.04%	12.474
Collier	1	11,748	-2.75%	9.258
Dinsdale	1	11,189	-7.38%	8.388
Dobson	1	12,381	+2.49%	14.882
Friberg	1	12,516	+3.61%	9.131
Scott	1	12,835	+6.25%	12.344
Taylor	1	13,195	+9.23%	18.306
Tirhatuan	1	11,643	-3.62%	19.899
<b>Totals for all Electorates</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>108,716</b>	<b>-7.38% to +9.23%</b>	<b>113.83</b>
<b>Average per Councillor</b>		<b>12,080</b>		<b>12.65</b>

