



2015-16

Council  
Representation  
Reviews

# Final Report

## 2015-16 Greater Geelong City Council Electoral Representation Review

*Wednesday 16 March 2016*

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# 1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward, in addition to the Mayor.

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

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

## 2 Executive summary

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Local Government Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third council general election, although unscheduled reviews can take place when required.

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. The matters considered by a review are:

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

The VEC conducts all reviews on the basis of three main principles:

1. ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality
2. taking a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors and
3. ensuring communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible.

### Current electoral structure

The last representation review for Greater Geelong City Council was conducted in 2008.

Following the review, the VEC determined that 12 single-councillor wards, with modified ward boundaries to meet the necessary voter-to-councillor ratio, would provide the best opportunity for fair and equitable representation for voters of the City of Greater Geelong.

### 2015 electoral representation review

The current electoral representation review for Greater Geelong City Council commenced on Wednesday 11 November 2015. The unscheduled review was required by section 16 of the *City of Greater Geelong Act 1993* (the COGG Act).

### Scope of the Greater Geelong City Council representation review

The COGG Act was amended in 2012 to provide Greater Geelong City Council with a directly elected Mayor, elected by all voters in the municipality.

To facilitate this transition, the COGG Act allowed for the election of 12 councillors, in addition to the Mayor, only for the 2012 general election. From the 2016 general election, the COGG Act requires the Council to consist of no more than 11 councillors, in addition to the Mayor.

For this review, the VEC could only consider electoral structures with between four and 11 councillors. The directly elected Mayor could not be considered by the review.

### **Preliminary submissions**

A total of 31 preliminary submissions were made to the review by the deadline at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 9 December.

### **Preliminary report**

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 20 January 2016 with the following options for consideration:

- Option A (preferred option)  
**Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.**
- Option B (alternative option)  
**Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward.**
- Option C (alternative option)  
**Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from two four-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward.**
- Option D (alternative option)  
**Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from single-councillor wards.**

### **Response submissions**

The VEC received 57 submissions responding to the preliminary report by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 17 February.

### **Public hearing**

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those willing to speak about their response submission at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 24 February in the Council Chamber of the City Hall in Geelong. Fourteen people spoke at the hearing.

## **Recommendation**

**The VEC recommends Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward, in addition to the Mayor.**

This electoral structure was designated as Option A in the preliminary report.

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

## 3 Background

### 3.1 Legislative basis

The Local Government Act requires the VEC to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third general council election, although unscheduled reviews can take place when required.

The Local Government Act specifies that the purpose of a representation review is to recommend the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides ‘fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.’<sup>1</sup>

The Local Government Act requires the VEC to consider:

- the number of councillors in a municipality and
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided.

If a municipality should be subdivided, the VEC must ensure that the number of voters represented by each ward councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.<sup>2</sup> On this basis, the review must consider the:

- number of wards
- ward boundaries (and ward names) and
- the number of councillors that should be elected for each ward.

### 3.2 The VEC’s approach

#### Deciding on the number of councillors

From the 2016 general election, the Greater Geelong City Council must consist of no more than 11 councillors, in addition to the Mayor. In considering the number of non-Mayoral councillors for a municipality, the VEC is guided by the Victorian Parliament’s intention for fairness and equity in the local representation of voters under the Local Government Act.

The VEC considers that there are three major factors that should be taken into account:

- diversity of the population
- councillors’ workloads and
- the situation in similar municipalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 219D of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*



Generally, those municipalities that have a larger number of voters will have a higher number of councillors. Often large populations are more likely to be diverse, both in the nature and number of their communities of interest and the issues of representation.

However, the VEC considers the particular situation of each municipality in regards to: the nature and complexity of services provided by the Council; geographic size and topography; population growth or decline; and the social diversity of the municipality, including social disadvantage and cultural and age mix.

### **Deciding the electoral structure**

The Local Government Act allows for a municipality ward structure to be:

- unsubdivided—with all councillors elected ‘at large’ by all voters or
- subdivided into a number of wards.

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

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

A subdivided municipality must have internal ward boundaries that provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality, and ensure that the number of voters represented by each ward councillor remains within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality.

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

- communities of interest, consisting of people who share a range of common concerns, such as geographic, economic or cultural associations
- the longevity of the structure, with the aim of keeping voter numbers per councillor within the 10 per cent tolerance as long as possible
- geographic factors, such as size and topography
- the number of voters in potential wards, as wards with many voters often have a large number of candidates, which can lead to an increase in the number of informal (invalid) votes and
- clear ward boundaries.

### 3.3 The VEC's principles

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

- 1. Ensuring the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality.**

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

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

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

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

Each municipality contains a number of communities of interest. Where practicable, the electoral structure should be designed to ensure they are fairly represented, and that geographic communities of interest are not split by ward boundaries. This allows elected councillors to be more effective representatives of the people and interests in their particular municipality or ward.

### 3.4 The electoral representation review process

#### Developing recommendations

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

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review, including Australian Bureau of Statistics and .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd data<sup>3</sup>; voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll; and other State and local government data sets
- small area forecasts provided by .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and similar reviews for State elections
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government

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<sup>3</sup> .id is a company specialising in population and demographic analysis that builds suburb-level demographic information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

- careful consideration of all input from the public in written and verbal submissions received during the review and
- advice from consultants with extensive experience in local government.

### **Public involvement**

Public input is accepted by the VEC:

- in preliminary submissions at the start of the review
- in response submissions to the preliminary report and
- in a public hearing that provides an opportunity for people who have made a response submission to expand on this submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the process, but are not the only consideration during a review. The VEC ensures its recommendations are compliant with the Local Government Act and COGG Act, and are formed through careful consideration of public submissions, independent research, and analysis of all relevant factors, such as the need to give representation to communities of interest.

## 4 Greater Geelong City Council representation review

### 4.1 Profile of Greater Geelong City Council

Greater Geelong City Council is situated 75 kilometres to the south-west of the Melbourne CBD and covers 1,248 square kilometres. The municipality borders Moorabool Shire in the north; the City of Wyndham in the north-east; the Borough of Queenscliffe in the east; Surf Coast Shire and Golden Plains Shire in the west; and Bass Strait to the south. It is the largest regional city in Victoria, with a population of approximately 230,000 people.

The City of Greater Geelong is a geographically diverse municipality which includes suburban, agricultural and coastal areas. The majority of the population resides in Geelong city and surrounding suburbs, which broadly cover the centre of the municipality. A large rural balance (including the towns of Lara and Leopold) can be found in the north and south of the municipality, with a number of coastal towns on the Bellarine Peninsula (such as Ocean Grove and Portarlington). Table 1 provides current population estimates of major towns and suburbs.

**Table 1: Population estimates in major towns and suburbs (2016)<sup>4</sup>**

Highton – Wandana Heights – Ceres	22,949
Corio	15,500
Grovedale	14,800
Ocean Grove	14,071
Leopold	12,646
Geelong West – Manifold Heights	9,900
Norlane – North Shore	9,000
St Albans Park	5,092
East Geelong	4,000

Overall, the estimated resident population in 2016 is expected to be 235,000 people, increasing to approximately 278,000 people by 2026.<sup>5</sup> This represents an average annual population growth of 1.6 per cent—slightly higher than the rural/regional Victorian average of 1.3 per cent.

Significant ‘greenfield’ developments are planned for the municipality, most notably around Armstrong Creek, as well as other suburban expansions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> profile.id, *Forecast population, households and dwellings*.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Enterprise Geelong, [economicprofile.com.au/geelong/](http://economicprofile.com.au/geelong/)

Demographically, Greater Geelong is generally comparable to the broader rural/regional Victorian average, apart from cultural diversity. Greater Geelong has a significantly higher percentage of the population who were born overseas (16.7 per cent), and almost double the percentage of people who speak a language other than English at home. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing in the area is also slightly higher than the rural/regional Victorian average.

Traditionally known for its manufacturing base, the City of Greater Geelong's main employing industries have diversified significantly, with health care services and retail now comprising around 40 per cent of total employment. This is followed by education and training (13.3 per cent), accommodation and food service (9 per cent), and public administration and safety (6.4 per cent). Manufacturing currently employs around 5 per cent of the workforce. Workforce participation in Greater Geelong is the same as the Greater Melbourne average, as is the unemployment rate, which was approximately 5.6 per cent at the 2011 census.

## **4.2 Current electoral structure**

The last representation review for Greater Geelong City Council was conducted in 2008.

Following the review, the VEC determined that 12 single-councillor wards, with modified ward boundaries to meet the necessary voter-to-councillor ratio, would provide the best opportunity for fair and equitable representation for voters of the City of Greater Geelong at the time.

Twelve councillors were considered an appropriate number for what was then the largest municipality in Victoria.

At the time of the 2008 review, the VEC put forward three possible electoral structures in its preliminary report: a preferred option of six two-councillor wards; an alternative option of 12 single-councillor wards with modified ward boundaries; and a second alternative of 12 councillors elected from four three-councillor wards.

The VEC considered that while a multi-councillor ward structure could increase diversity on the Council, better represent communities of interest and manage growth, the wards would be large, creating the risk of an unwieldy ballot paper and a high informal vote. There was strong public support for retaining the single-councillor structure. The VEC concluded that, on balance at that time, the single-councillor ward structure, with adjusted ward boundaries, was the most appropriate.

The 2008 representation review final report can be found on the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Geelongrr.html](http://vec.vic.gov.au/reviews/Geelongrr.html).

### **4.3 Scope of the 2015-2016 Greater Geelong City Council representation review**

The COGG Act was amended in 2012 to provide Greater Geelong City Council with a directly elected Mayor, elected by all voters in the municipality.

To facilitate this transition, the COGG Act allowed for the election of 12 councillors, in addition to the Mayor, only for the 2012 general election. From the 2016 general election, the council must consist of no more than 12 councillors as a whole, including the Mayor. This brings the total number of councillors within the maximum allowed by legislation for any Victorian council.

The amendment to the COGG Act required an electoral representation review before the 2016 election in order to recommend the most appropriate electoral structure given this change.

In order to comply with the Local Government Act, the VEC can only recommend an electoral structure with between four and 11 councillors other than the Mayor, meaning that the number of non-Mayoral councillors for Greater Geelong City Council must be reduced by at least one and an appropriate electoral structure developed accordingly.

Given these requirements, this review could not consider:

- the position and method of election of the directly elected Mayor
- the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor
- proposals to maintain the current number of 12 non-Mayoral councillors
- the conduct or operations of Council.

References to 'councillor' in this report refer to non-Mayoral elected members of Greater Geelong City Council, except where otherwise stated.

On 1 December 2015, the Victorian Government announced a Commission of Inquiry into the City of Greater Geelong. The matters considered by the Commission of Inquiry are outside the scope of this representation review.

### **4.4 Public information program**

The Greater Geelong City Council representation review commenced on Wednesday 11 November 2015. The VEC conducted a public information program to inform the community, including:

- public notices printed in local and state-wide papers
- a public information session to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community

- a media release announcing the commencement of the review
- coverage through the municipality's media, e.g. Council website or newsletter
- a helpline and dedicated email address to answer public enquiries
- ongoing information updates and publication of submissions on the VEC website and
- a *Guide for Submissions* to explain the review process and provide background information on the scope of the review.

See Appendix 3 for full details of the public information program.

### **BoundaryMaker Web: interactive software pilot**

In addition to the standard public information program for the City of Greater Geelong, the VEC piloted new interactive software designed to assist submitters to the review to create a digital version of their preferred electoral structures.

The submission tool, BoundaryMaker Web (BMWeb), brought together components of publicly available geographic information system (GIS) software Google Earth and VEC data, including current voter numbers, and specially-designed features to enable submitters to design proposed wards with 'building blocks' of voters. The BMWeb software pilot was supported by a comprehensive user guide, which provided detailed instructions on how to use each component of the software, including placement of voter 'building blocks', criteria for effective boundaries and reference to further data sources such as projected population growth.

A total of seven submitters (representing approximately 23 per cent of the total number of submissions) used the tool for the representation review.

## 5 Preliminary report

### 5.1 Preliminary submissions

The VEC received 31 preliminary submissions by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

#### Number of councillors

Over half of the preliminary submissions to the review (19 of 31) favoured 11 councillors, which is the maximum number of councillors allowed by the COGG Act. The next most common preference among submitters was for eight councillors, while smaller numbers of submissions favoured nine or 10 councillors.

The submissions supporting 11 councillors often stated that the high population of the City of Greater Geelong warranted the maximum number of councillors to allow for adequate representation of voters in the municipality. Many submitters stated that the relatively large geographic size of the municipality, with its diverse communities of interest and varied land use—including higher-density suburban areas, the CBD, agricultural land and the coastal tourist towns of the Bellarine Peninsula—also justified the highest number of councillors possible. The projected rapid growth in some areas of the municipality and the workload for councillors were additional reasons for favouring 11 councillors.

Seven submissions stated a preference for eight councillors. These submissions mostly supported division of the municipality into four wards with two councillors per ward, making eight councillors in total. A number of the submissions in favour of eight councillors suggested that reducing the number of councillors could result in cost savings for the municipality.

One submission suggested that a corporate board style of governance could be achieved with fewer councillors.

Two submissions, one from an individual submitter and another from the SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre in Clifton Springs, stated a preference for nine councillors, with the individual submitter noting that nine was an appropriate number with reference to the other councils in the 'regional urban' category.

#### Electoral structure

A broad range of options for the electoral structure of Greater Geelong City Council was put forward by submitters, with a mix of multi- and single-councillor models and some support for an unsubdivided structure. Just over 10 per cent of submissions did not comment on either councillor numbers or electoral structure.



Of those submissions preferring multi-councillor electoral structures, nine submissions (approximately one quarter) preferred multi-councillor wards with 11 councillors, in either three- or four-ward configurations. An equal number of submissions stated their preference for 11 single-councillor wards. Four submissions supported a four-ward model with two councillors per ward; while three submissions favoured a model of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards. Three submissions supported an unsubdivided electoral structure for the municipality. Three submissions did not state a preference for a specific electoral structure, putting forward general comments about the municipality and constraints of the current structure.

The analysis below summarises the key themes of the submissions received, grouping them into the most commonly preferred models.

A single-councillor structure with 11 councillors represents the closest model to the status quo, taking into account the necessary reduction of the number of councillors to meet legislative requirements. Submitters in support of this model described several distinct communities of interest based on a common population demographic (such as age or growth area) or geographic area (such as semi-rural townships, northern suburbs of Corio, Norlane and Lara, or coastal towns of the Bellarine Peninsula). One of the most common reasons these submitters supported a single-councillor model of 11 councillors was that, in their view, it would prevent the formation of a 'CBD-centric' council by ensuring dedicated representation with directly accountable ward councillors spread throughout the municipality.

Twenty submissions favoured a change to multi-councillor wards, in varying configurations. A common theme in these submissions was that the current structure was unsustainable in light of the population growth expected in Armstrong Creek and other parts of the municipality. Artificial division of communities (such as Clifton Springs) was another perceived defect of single-councillor wards. Advantages of a multi-councillor model were that councillors could share ward duties (thus allowing residents seamless access to a councillor), that councillors working together in each ward would improve social and infrastructure planning, funding and implementation, and that the proportional representation system used in elections for multi-councillor wards would minimise wasted votes.

The particular configuration of wards favoured in submissions resulted partly from submitters' views of the main geographic communities of interest within the municipality. Four submissions proposed a four-ward structure, comprising three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. These submitters suggested that the municipality divides naturally into four distinct areas: north, central, east and south. These submissions described the northern area as encompassing the town of Lara and suburbs north of Church Street; the central area as including the CBD, Belmont and eastern and western suburbs; the east as the Bellarine Peninsula (including

Barwon Heads); and the south incorporating the suburbs south of the Barwon River, excluding Belmont.

Submitters supporting a three-ward model identified natural division of the municipality into three areas. These submitters proposed a model with one larger ward of five councillors and two smaller wards of three councillors per ward. The submissions identified a northern area comprising Lara, Avalon Airport and the suburbs in the current wards of Windermere and Cowie, which would have three councillors; a large central ward, which would have five councillors, proportionate to the higher voter population of the bayside commercial district and high-density residential suburbs of central Geelong; and an eastern ward encapsulating the Bellarine Peninsula.

Five submissions supported a model of eight councillors elected from four two-councillor wards.<sup>7</sup> These submissions suggested that the municipality divided naturally into four areas, logically creating a north, central and south ward and a ward encompassing the Bellarine Peninsula.

Two submitters identified a preference for a subdivided model of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards. One of these submissions stated that this model is appropriate for Greater Geelong City Council based on comparisons to other municipalities in the regional urban category.

Four submissions identified a preference for an unsubdivided model. The submissions preferring an unsubdivided model generally did not exclusively prefer it, with one (the submission of the current Mayor, Councillor Darryn Lyons) preferring either an unsubdivided model of eight councillors or a multi-councillor model of eight councillors elected from four two-councillor wards. Another submission in favour of an unsubdivided structure also nominated either an unsubdivided structure or a subdivided structure with 11 councillors. Supporters of an unsubdivided structure suggested that it may improve councillors' responsibility to their colleagues on Council and focus efforts on the strategic interests of the whole municipality.

### **Submissions outside the scope of the review**

While submissions demonstrated a clear understanding of the scope of the review, many submissions provided commentary or suggestions on matters which could not be considered by the VEC, including:

- the position of the directly-elected mayor
- conduct of current councillors including resolution of voting deadlocks

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<sup>7</sup> One of these submissions identified a preference for either four wards of two councillors per ward or an unsubdivided model of eight councillors.

- performance of the Council, governance arrangements and service delivery
- external boundaries of the City of Greater Geelong and neighbouring municipalities
- whether the municipality should be divided into separate, smaller councils or amalgamated with other municipalities
- the vote counting system used in local council elections.

## 5.2 Preliminary report findings

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 20 January 2016. The VEC considered public submissions, research finding and the particular characteristics of the City of Greater Geelong when formulating the options presented in the preliminary report.

### Number of councillors

The preferences for councillor numbers put forward by submitters to the review ranged from eight to 11. Unlike most other councils in Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong has additional governing legislation that influences councillor numbers. In accordance with the COGG Act, the council must consist of no more than 12 councillors as a whole, including the Mayor, from the 2016 general election. Projected population growth is a significant consideration in the municipality, and there are also specific geographic and demographic communities of interest which, in the VEC's view, warrant specific council representation. Further analysis of these factors is outlined below.

The VEC takes a State-wide approach to the number of councillors, under which similar types of municipality of a similar size should have the same number of councillors, unless special circumstances justify a variation. The City of Greater Geelong is by far the largest regional urban municipality in Victoria, with 177,363 voters in all and 14,780 voters per ward councillor, compared to Greater Bendigo City Council's nine councillors and 9,293 voters per councillor. Across the State, Greater Geelong is second only to the City of Casey, which has 183,392 voters and 16,672 voters per councillor. On voter numbers alone, the VEC considered that Greater Geelong City Council should have the maximum possible number of councillors.<sup>8</sup>

The City of Greater Geelong is predicted to experience high rates of growth between now and its next scheduled representation review ahead of the 2028 council elections.<sup>9</sup> With a growth rate of 1.6 per cent per year, the municipality is projected to outstrip the growth rate of Victoria as a

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<sup>8</sup> Voter estimate calculated after the January 2015 merge of the State electoral roll and Council-only electors as at the 2012 council elections.

<sup>9</sup> Profile.id, *City of Greater Geelong: Population and household forecasts 2011-2036*, May 2015.

whole during the period from 2016–31.<sup>10</sup> According to Council data, the City of Greater Geelong has experienced not only population growth but economic expansion evidenced by dwelling approvals, increasing commuter numbers and growth in local employment in the fields of health care, manufacturing and retail trade.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the overall population increases and evidence of economic development in the municipality as a whole, the specific areas of Armstrong Creek, Mount Duneed and Curlewis are expected to experience very high levels of growth from 2015–36. Several localities in the north of the municipality are also expected to grow in population, although not at the same rate as the southern central suburban and semi-rural areas named above. The areas of Lovely Banks, Batesford, Moorabool, Fyansford and Lara will see some expansion, while the rural Bellarine Peninsula and the St Leonards locality at the eastern end of the municipality will also experience moderate population rises. The City's rapid and uneven growth increases demands on the Council, constituting an additional reason for a large number of councillors.

Greater Geelong is also distinguished by social and geographic diversity, with a large urban core ranging from affluent to struggling suburbs, coastal communities on the Bellarine Peninsula, and rural areas in the north. This diversity, noted in submissions, increased the tasks of representation and so justified a large number of councillors.

The combination of high voter numbers, population growth and the diversity of communities of interest described by submitters demonstrated that the City of Greater Geelong should be represented by 11 councillors, the maximum number of councillors permitted.

### **Electoral structure**

A broad range of models was put forward by submitters and these were taken into account when looking at possible electoral structures. Preliminary submissions were detailed and thorough, providing highly valuable local insights, demonstrating clear awareness of the legislative arrangements and sensitivity to the requirements and scope of the review. Several submitters also made use of the VEC's pilot software, BMWeb, to identify ward boundaries discussed in their submissions and provide the VEC with illustrated modelling of their proposed electoral structure.

Having determined that the number of councillors for the municipality should be 11, the review then had to consider whether the municipality should be subdivided or unsubdivided, and if subdivided, what would form the best ward boundaries and the number of councillors per ward.

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, *Victoria in Future 2015: Geelong SA4*.

<sup>11</sup> City of Greater Geelong, *Geelong Fast Facts*, November 2015, [enterprisegeelong.com.au](http://enterprisegeelong.com.au)

An unsubdivided structure can bring the benefits of proportional representation, provide voters with a greater choice of candidates and facilitate a whole-of-municipality strategic focus. An unsubdivided structure was preferred by some submitters but did not have significant support in submissions overall. In Greater Geelong City Council elections, the number of candidates is likely to be very high, given it is the second largest municipality in Victoria in terms of voter numbers (there were almost 60 candidates at the 2012 election). The VEC has observed that a high number of candidates can create an unwieldy ballot paper for voters, resulting in a higher informal voting rate.<sup>12</sup> A high informal vote diminishes the representativeness of elections.

Due to these limitations and the low level of support in public submissions for an unsubdivided structure, the VEC focussed on subdivided models. As noted by the VEC in its 2008 representation review of Greater Geelong City Council, multi-councillor wards have the potential to increase diversity on council, represent communities of interest, and importantly for this review, accommodate projected growth. The VEC determined viable structures for 11 councillors could be put forward with three, four or five multi-councillor wards. A single-councillor ward model was also developed. Of these, the four-ward model was the VEC's preferred option.

***Option A: Four-ward model (preferred option)—three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward***

The VEC's preferred option responded to submissions that described the municipality as naturally falling into four distinct areas: the northern suburbs; the suburban centre including the CBD; southern residential and semi-rural areas; and the Bellarine Peninsula, grouping Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove together.

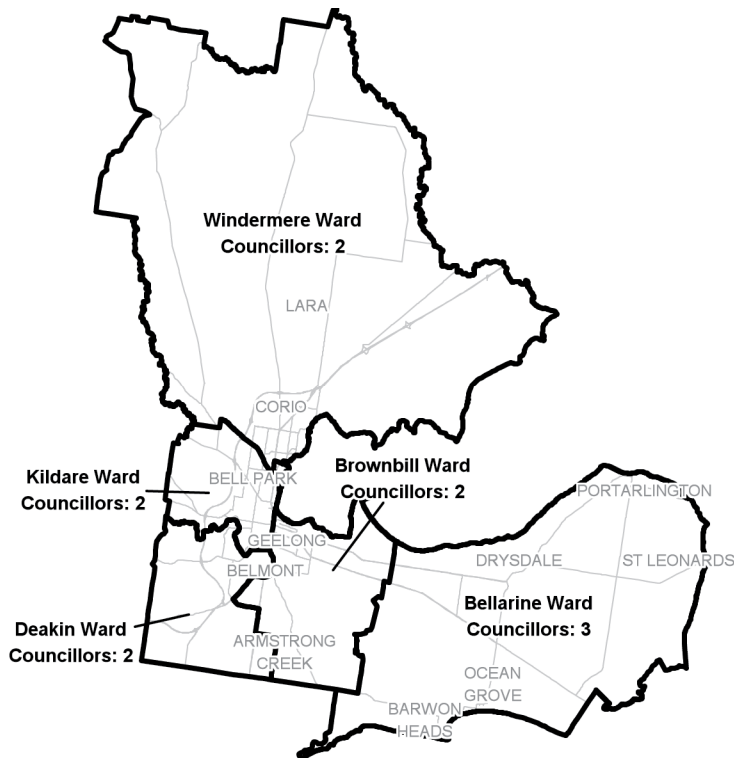
Because it has larger wards than the current structure, Option A accommodated the uneven growth expected in specific parts of the municipality. The model kept suburbs and townships intact, and used strong and clearly identifiable boundaries such as the Geelong Ring Road, separating the northern suburbs around Corio from the suburban centre and the CBD. The Barwon River separated the Windermere, Kardinia and Brownbill Wards.

Under this model, the proposed northern Windermere Ward had two councillors while the more densely populated and growing wards to the south, centre and east of the municipality were served by three councillors each.

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<sup>12</sup> Victorian Electoral Commission, *Report on conduct of 2012 Local Government Elections*, 2013.

**Option B: Five-ward model (alternative option)—four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward**



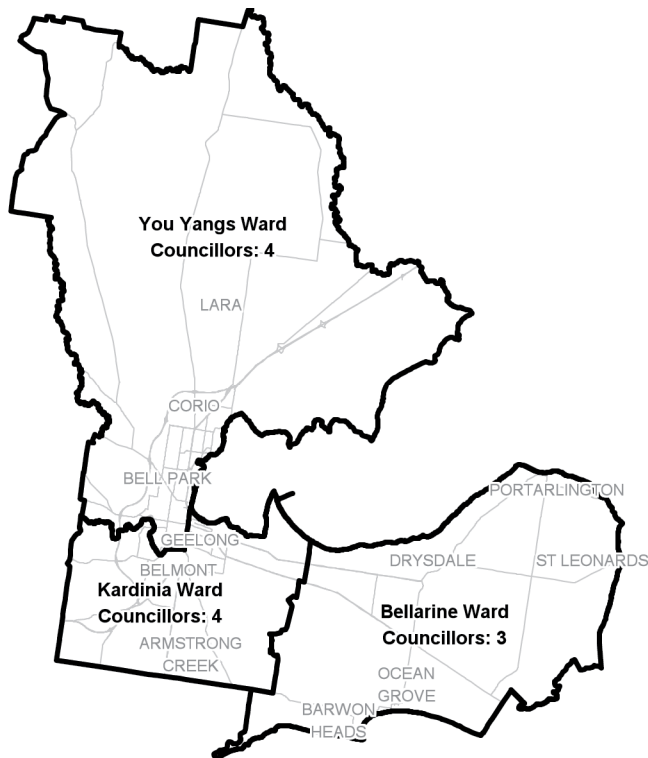
As with the four-ward model, a five-ward model for the City of Greater Geelong encapsulated the geographic and socio-economic communities of the municipality. As with Option A, this model had larger wards than the municipality's current structure, providing capacity to absorb population growth and limiting the artificial division of communities between wards.

This model was distinct from Option A in that the wards were slightly smaller. The wards also generally had fewer councillors, with two councillors per ward for the northern, central and southern wards, and three councillors for the larger Bellarine Ward. The smaller number of councillors made this model closer to the current single-councillor model, allowing for direct, local representation where councillors are more easily able to get to know local issues. Localities were preserved where possible, such as the concentrated residential and commercial areas of Geelong, Geelong West, East Geelong and South Geelong, which were grouped in the proposed Brownbill Ward.

While there were clear advantages to the larger wards and comparatively smaller number of councillors per ward, there were some limitations arising from the ward boundaries proposed under this model. While the boundaries were clear and used natural divisions to some extent, the boundary of the Barwon River was not used to the same extent as it could be in Option A. The growth area of Armstrong Creek was spread over two wards, and the suburbs of Belmont

and Grovedale were also divided, although the main shopping district of Belmont was preserved intact within Deakin Ward.

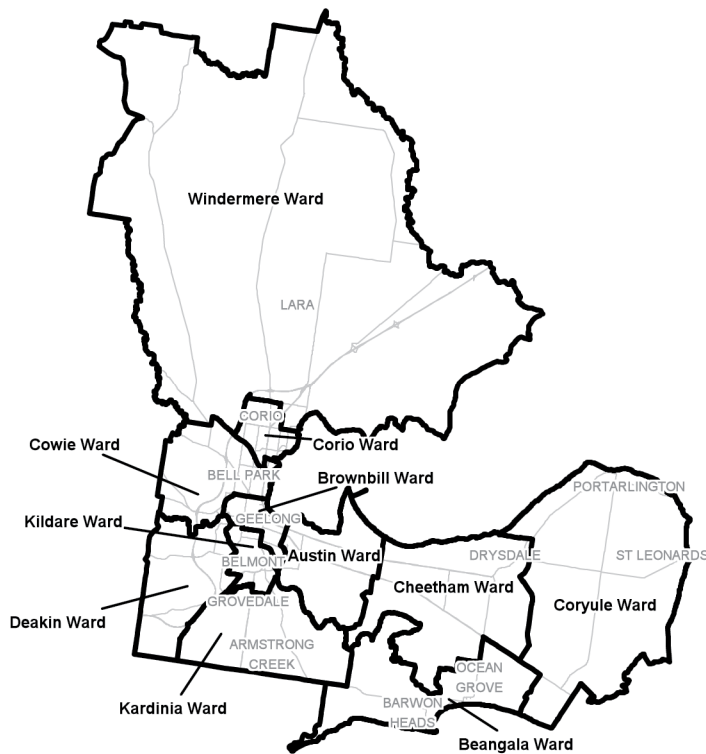
***Option C: Three-ward model (alternative option)—two four-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward***



The three-ward model proposed by the VEC in Option C shared the advantages of the larger ward models of Options A and B, in that it provided a sustainable model for the municipality into the future, accommodating expected population growth in specific areas within the north, south and north-eastern areas. Option C allowed for comfortable voter-to-councillor ratios, albeit with a higher number of voters per ward compared to Options A and B. As there were fewer wards in this option, the boundaries were able to preserve localities to a greater extent than the other options, following the Barwon River and Princes Highway between the proposed You Yangs and Kardinia Wards, and using the Barwon River, locality boundaries and Barwon Heads Road to separate the central Kardinia Ward and the Bellarine Peninsula.

This model was less preferred due to the larger number of councillors per ward in two of the wards, and the larger size of the wards compared to those of Options A and B. While the model had the advantages of a multi-councillor structure including proportional representation and opportunities for councillors to share workloads, the VEC was concerned that the capacity for more direct and localised representation might be diluted in the very large four-councillor wards. There was also potential for a high number of candidates in larger multi-councillor wards, which can lead to unwieldy ballot papers and an increased rate of informal votes.

**Option D: Single-councillor model (alternative option)—eleven councillors elected from single-councillor wards**



To reflect the strong support shown in submissions and the VEC’s recommendation that a single-ward structure be adopted following the previous review, the VEC put forward a single-councillor model for further consultation. While the voter-to-councillor ratio would comply with the legislative requirement for the 2016 general election, the model was vulnerable to significant projected population growth.

A single-councillor structure with 11 councillors is the closest to the current structure of 12 councillors elected from single-councillor wards, recognising that there must be a reduction of at least one councillor from the 2016 general election.

Many submitters to the review supported a single-councillor structure on the grounds that it could best represent communities of interest. One of the advantages of the proposed single-councillor structure with 11 wards is that it can achieve representation of communities with councillors directly accountable to voters in their ward. Supporters of single-councillor wards also submitted that councillors can get to know local issues more effectively than in larger wards with multiple councillors, and the smaller ward size allows councillors to be more accessible to constituents. A single-councillor structure can also minimise the perception of urban dominance in large municipalities where there is a larger urban centre and smaller, outlying towns and coastal communities, as exists in the City of Greater Geelong.



Option D modified the current ward boundaries to accommodate the reduction of one councillor (and one ward), and, to the extent possible, the locations of expected population growth. Reducing the number of councillors, as required by legislation, relieved some of the pressure of population growth, as the wards were slightly larger. The localities of Geelong, East Geelong and Geelong West in the urban centre were preserved intact, and Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove on the southern coast were also grouped into one ward as suggested by submitters. By contrast, some localities were not neatly captured under the structure; for example the Kildare Ward incorporated residential communities on both sides of the Barwon River, rather than using the river as a natural boundary. Similarly, the localities of Clifton Springs, Newtown and Grovedale were divided between wards.

While there are advantages in single-councillor structures, particularly in municipalities of significant geographic size such as Greater Geelong, there are also major constraints when the municipality is experiencing high rates of population growth. These limitations become even more pronounced when the population growth is as uneven as it is in the City of Greater Geelong. Under these circumstances, ward boundaries of single-councillor wards cannot accommodate growth and continue to meet the legislative requirement for voter numbers to remain within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor across the municipality. This important requirement ensures fair and equitable representation for all voters. Currently, enrolments for four wards of the 12 wards are outside the 10 per cent tolerance allowed by the Local Government Act. The reduction of a councillor and altering ward boundaries to better allow for the growth areas in Option D had limited effect on providing a sustainable single-ward electoral structure that would last beyond the 2016 general election. The structure was likely to require further reviews to correct ward imbalances prior to the next review, scheduled to occur before the 2028 general election.

## 6 Public response

### 6.1 Response submissions

The VEC accepted submissions responding to the preliminary report from Wednesday 20 January to 5.00 pm on Wednesday 17 February. A total of 57 submissions were received. Table 2 indicates the level of support for each of the VEC’s options.

**Table 2: Preferences expressed in response submissions**

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Other
28*	3	4 <sup>#</sup>	18	4

\* Three of the submitters put forward modified versions of Option A.

# One of the submitters put forward a modified version of Option C.

Greater Geelong City Council and four individual councillors lodged submissions.

Eight submissions were from organisations – local community groups such as the Barwon Heads Association, business and development organisations (Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Committee for Geelong) and public interest groups (Women in Local Democracy, Proportional Representation Society of Australia). The remaining 44 submissions were from private citizens.

Seven submissions originated from outside the City of Greater Geelong. The remaining 50 submissions were spread widely across the City. The Bellarine Peninsula was the source of 21 submissions, and there were 16 submissions from the inner urban area (Geelong, Geelong West, Newtown, Drumcondra and Rippleside). In contrast, there were comparatively few submissions from the north of the municipality (four from Lara and one each from Corio and Bell Park), and none from the northern rural area. There was little indication of areas tending to favour a particular option.

Option A was most popular, supported by just under half of the submissions. A number of submissions used very similar arguments and language. Submissions stated that the boundaries under option A fitted communities of interest better than the single-councillor wards of Option D, that proportional representation would produce greater diversity among the councillors, that constituents would be able to get councillor assistance even if one councillor was unavailable, and that the structure would put an end to expensive by-elections and greatly reduce the likelihood of early reviews of ward boundaries. The Proportional Representation Society and Lyle Allan argued that Option A was the best of the three providing for multi-councillor wards, because most of the wards under Option A had an odd number of councillors, enabling a majority of votes to win a majority of seats. Several submissions from the Bellarine Peninsula

supported Option A because it would end the divide between Drysdale and Clifton Springs, and unite the coastal communities of the Peninsula, which had similar needs and concerns.

Cr Jan Farrell and the Ocean Grove Community Association proposed a modified version of Option A, under which the northern Windermere Ward would incorporate more of the northern suburbs of Geelong and increase to three councillors, and the central Brownbill Ward would be reduced to two councillors. The Chamber of Commerce considered Option A the best available, but thought that the number of councillors should be reduced to eight because this would be the optimum number for decision making. The Chamber argued that the councillors' role was to provide effective governance and oversight of the Council, which would be best achieved through a smaller, more effective decision-making body. The Chamber rejected the notion that the number of councillors should be based on a comparison with the number of councillors per population in other municipalities, but should be determined on a qualitative basis that had the best chance of delivering good governance.

Eighteen submissions supported Option D, which is the closest to the status quo. For Peter Loney, the underlying principle of local government is that it is representative of and responsible to local communities. Mr Loney believed that unsubdivided councils and councils with wards that are too large undermine this principle. In a municipality as large and diverse as Greater Geelong, he argued, the only acceptable model was single-councillor wards. Submitters from Ocean Grove, Indented Head and Lara supported single-councillor wards because they provided local representation, which they argued would be jeopardised under multi-councillor wards. Three councillors supported single-councillor wards because it was easier for voters to know their representative, who would be well informed about local issues. They were concerned that multi-councillor wards would open the way to political party involvement, and would effectively exclude candidates with fewer resources.

Four submissions favoured Option C. The most substantial submission was from Women in Local Democracy (WILD), whose view was that this option offered the best possibility of achieving an open and democratic system of local governance. WILD believed that the size of the wards would encourage participatory structures, strengthening the whole democratic process. WILD objected to Option A because it created a CBD ward, risking division between the CBD and Greater Geelong. Of the other submissions, the SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre adhered to its previous model of three three-councillor wards, criticised Options A, B and C as giving the Bellarine Peninsula less proportional representation than almost every other ward, but believed that Option C would be fairer if the boundary between Bellarine and Kardinia Wards was moved to the west, with Bellarine Ward having four councillors and Kardinia Ward having three.

Three submissions supported Option B. The only submitter to give reasons for this preference, Elizabeth Turner, saw the advantage of this option was that it retained specific representation for the rural areas, which had particular needs different from those of the urban areas.

Four submissions did not favour any of the VEC's options. These tended to put forward proposals that were outside the scope of the representation review, such as suggesting wholesale changes to external council boundaries, or an entirely new council structure.

Few submissions discussed ward names. In relation to Option D, the Greater Geelong City Council resolved that Kardinia Ward should be renamed Buckley Ward, and Kildare Ward be renamed Kardinia Ward. WILD believed that the VEC should seek appropriate new ward names from the Indigenous community of Greater Geelong, the Wathaurong. Cr Farrell thought that Bellarine was a suitable name, but that the other wards under Option A should have new names. Cr Farrell suggested the ward names 'could be as simple as North, South and Central or refer to a natural structure, local flora and/or fauna or an appropriate historical and/or Aboriginal name'.

## **6.2 Public hearing**

The VEC conducted a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 24 February 2016 in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 57 Little Malop Street, Geelong. There were a total of 14 speakers (presenting 12 submissions), comprising three councillors, six representatives of organisations, and five private citizens. Greater Geelong City Council had requested to speak to its submission, but did not attend. A list of people who spoke at the hearing can be found in Appendix 1.

Speakers at the hearing supported the full range of the VEC's options, with a few speakers putting forward variations. The hearing was an opportunity for speakers to expand on their written submissions and for the VEC to ask questions to learn about their views on alternative models.

## 7 Findings and recommendation

### 7.1 The VEC's findings

Having received and considered public feedback, the VEC is now in a position to recommend an electoral structure for the City of Greater Geelong. The VEC has assessed the four options presented in the preliminary report, as well as several proposed variations to those options.

#### Number of councillors

All of the VEC's options were based on 11 councillors. A clear majority of submissions accepted this number. Several submissions and speakers at the public hearing pointed to the discrepancy in the number of voters per councillor between Greater Geelong and other councils, which was considered to be unjust to Greater Geelong voters. The only way to reduce this discrepancy would be to increase the allowable number of councillors. A couple of submissions wanted to maintain 12 councillors, which is impossible under the current legislation.

The Chamber of Commerce's position favouring a reduction in the number of councillors is based on the corporate model of representation, under which the role of the representative body is to make decisions for the organisation as a whole. The councillors, who supported 11 councillors, tend to follow the interest model of representation, under which councillors are seen as representatives of their constituents, and their task is to pursue the interests of their area. Both models are valid, and councillors have to fulfil both roles. For the VEC, the key purpose of the review is to ensure fair and equitable representation of the voters. The need for representation is the reason why the VEC has adopted a State-wide approach to the number of councillors, with larger municipalities having more councillors because the tasks of representation tend to be greater. Considering Greater Geelong's size, growth and diversity, the VEC reaffirms that it should have the maximum allowable number of councillors.

#### Electoral structure

##### *Single-councillor wards (Option D)*

Greater Geelong has had single-councillor wards ever since its first election in 1995.<sup>13</sup> The current structure is supported both by councillors and by private citizens. For them, the essence of local government is local representation, under which councillors act as local champions, well known to their constituents and acting on local issues. At the public hearing, Jan Laidlaw cited the assistance of her councillor in getting maintenance for the plane trees in her street. Cr Tony Ansett argued that his ward (Windermere Ward) needed local representation, and that the local

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<sup>13</sup> From 1998 to 2001 Greater Geelong had a hybrid system, with four large single-councillor wards and five city-wide councillors.

situation is the big picture for a lot of people. Cr Kylie Fisher (Corio Ward) pointed to her own experience as a candidate of limited means, who was elected through campaigning locally and doorknocking. Proponents of the current structure expressed concern that this local element would be lost with a transition to multi-councillor wards – that the greater costs of campaigning would preclude the election of anyone who lacked substantial financial and organisational backing, that outsiders with little knowledge of the area would be elected, that councillors would be less accountable and that smaller communities would be overlooked.

Although localised advocacy is an important feature of local government, the VEC must also consider representation more broadly. Advocacy on local issues can be just as effective and appreciated by voters in multi-councillor ward structures as under single-councillor wards. Experience from other municipalities indicates that councillors tend to be elected from across the ward. Councillors for a ward can work together, complementing each other's skills and knowledge, and filling in for each other if a councillor is unavailable for any reason. At the public hearing, Cr Ansett pointed to the size and diversity of the current Windermere Ward, which is larger in area than the rest of the municipality combined. Under Option A, Windermere Ward would be only slightly larger geographically (with the addition of Corio, Batesford and Fyansford), but would have two councillors instead of one, improving the representation of the area.

One of the strengths of single-councillor wards is representation of local communities, but Option D is not satisfactory in this regard. Jan Laidlaw supported Option D, but noted that a ward boundary under this option arbitrarily divided her own suburb of Newtown. The proposed Kildare Ward in Option D comprises Belmont and part of Newtown, which are separated by the Barwon River. On the Bellarine Peninsula, the combined communities of Clifton Springs and Drysdale are divided by a ward boundary. Such splitting of communities is an inescapable part of ward boundaries under single-councillor wards, dictated by the constraints of voter numbers. In contrast, the larger scale of multi-councillor wards means that fewer communities are split.

The explosive growth of Armstrong Creek and some other areas mean that ward enrolments would inevitably fall outside the 10 per cent tolerance in the medium term. This would require an early review of ward boundaries, which would be expensive and would probably lead to further splitting of communities, followed in all likelihood by an early representation review.

Multi-councillor wards are able to cope better with population shifts, by combining growth areas and stable areas.

The VEC considers that multi-councillor wards offer a better prospect of achieving fair and equitable representation, and are less susceptible to rapid and uneven population growth than a single-councillor ward structure.

### ***Multi-councillor wards (Options A, B and C)***

The task now is to determine which of the multi-councillor ward options best fits Greater Geelong.

All of the options provide for a three-councillor Bellarine Ward (including Barwon Heads).

Submissions argued that the whole Bellarine Peninsula forms a single community, with its coastal towns and rural areas sharing needs, concerns and outlooks distinct from those of urban Geelong. The Council recognised the distinct identity and commonality of the Peninsula in the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan.<sup>14</sup>

Option B (four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward) was the least popular of the VEC's options. Elizabeth Turner submitted that this option retained specific representation for rural areas, which had their own particular needs, for roads, footpaths and attention to tourism. At the public hearing, John Turner (speaking on behalf of Monica Hayes) saw Option B as good for the Bellarine Peninsula. These advantages, however, are not exclusive to Option B, as both Options A and C also provide for a Bellarine Ward, and both options include two wards with substantial rural components.

The ward boundaries in Option B do not fit geographic communities of interest as well as in the other two options. The boundary between the proposed Deakin and Brownbill Wards splits Belmont, Grovedale and Armstrong Creek. The proposed Brownbill Ward comprises two disconnected parts north and south of the Barwon River.

In addition, four of the wards under Option B have two councillors each, and it could be argued that the proportional representation counting method is less effective in representing the diversity of these wards than would be achieved by wards with more councillors.

In the light of these considerations, the VEC now believes the two strongest options are A and C. Both options provide for large multi-councillor wards with clear boundaries that fit geographic communities of interest. The advantages of the proportional representation method of counting apply to both options. The differences between the options are limited.

For Women In Local Democracy (WILD), the size of the wards in Option C was a positive, because it would encourage 'the formation of community participatory structures for internal policy thinking and accountability and also for city-wide democratic participation and co-operation'. Each ward would incorporate a variety of communities of interest. The option would be a complete break from the past, sending a message to the people of Greater Geelong that local government could change, inspiring greater enthusiasm and hope for the future.

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<sup>14</sup> See the Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan 2006-2016, downloaded 2 March 2016, <http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/residents/suburbs/article/item/8cc1176c379a4fc.aspx>

WILD wrote that Option A in some ways satisfied the group's democratic standards, but objected to that option's division of the central part of Geelong along lines reflecting pre-amalgamation structures by using the shared resource of the Barwon River as a boundary instead of a unifier. Worse, in WILD's view, Option A's creation of a ward incorporating the CBD and most of Greater Geelong's shared cultural and historic resources meant a danger of a divisive city-centric versus Greater Geelong perspective and an unwillingness to share custodianship of resources.

Two speakers at the public hearing supported the central ward in Option A. Sandra Gatehouse of the Barwon Heads Association stated that the City needed a central ward, and that Option A was balanced. Bernadette Uzelac of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce replied to questioning that the CBD needed particular attention as the heart of the City, as the location of government instrumentalities, commercial business interests, developing residential precincts and a unique economic driver.

It should be noted that Geelong's CBD is quite small in area. Under Option C, the CBD, with all its cultural, economic and government resources, is entirely located in the proposed Kardinia Ward, with the boundary of the ward (Latrobe Terrace) coinciding with the western edge of the CBD. Thus Option C does not eliminate the risk of a CDB versus Greater Geelong division.

The VEC considers that the ward boundaries in Option A fit Greater Geelong's broad communities of interest slightly better than those in Option C. The proposed Brownbill Ward comprises the CBD and the established inner suburbs around it. The proposed Windermere Ward covers the outer north, which has a strong longstanding identity; Kardinia Ward includes the south side; and Bellarine Ward incorporates the Peninsula. In contrast, in Option C there is a rather coarse twofold division of Greater Geelong (putting Bellarine aside), with each ward including a huge range of areas.

Under Option C, the two four-councillor wards each have some 65,000 voters, making them about 1.5 times the size of a State electoral district. These wards may be so large as to weaken the local element of representation. They may also attract so many candidates that there would be unwieldy ballot papers, potentially increasing the number of informal votes. Under Option A, the three-councillor wards have an average of some 50,000 voters – little larger than a State electoral district.

The Proportional Representation Society of Australia (PRSA) supported Option A because it considered that proportional representation would work best under this option. Three of the four wards under Option A would have an odd number of councillors, which would mean that a majority of votes in those wards would elect a majority of councillors. The PRSA rejected Options B and C because most of the wards under those options had an even number of councillors and risked being stalemate wards, with two sides tied in each ward even if the number of votes for



those sides differed. The PRSA's argument was supported by the Committee for Geelong, the Barwon Heads Association at the public hearing, and Lyle Allan. The PRSA's view presupposes two organised groups or parties contesting elections, whereas under the Local Government Act, council elections are contested by individual candidates and organised political campaigns are not recognised. Nevertheless, other things being equal, the VEC would tend to prefer wards with an odd number of candidates.

On balance, the VEC regards Option A as better than Option C.

Two submissions proposed a modified version of Option A, under which the northern Windermere Ward would be enlarged to capture more of the northern suburbs of Geelong and increase to three councillors, and the central Brownbill Ward would be reduced to two councillors. The Ocean Grove Community Association pointed out that Lara and the area west of the Geelong Ring Road (in Windermere Ward) were designated growth zones, while central Geelong (in the Brownbill Ward) had a stable population with minimal growth, and was concerned that population changes would force an early change to ward boundaries. Cr Jan Farrell argued that it was inequitable for the physically largest ward to have only two councillors. More importantly, she believed that the three wards outside the CBD should all have equal representation of three councillors per ward. Cr Farrell believed that a two-councillor central ward would still be well represented, as all councillors and the Mayor would take a keen interest in the welfare of the CBD.

On the matter of voter numbers in the wards, the boundaries under Option A allow for likely population shifts, and the VEC is confident that enrolments will stay within the 10 per cent tolerance. With 11 councillors, it is inevitable that one ward will have fewer councillors than the others. However, the number of voters per councillor is practically the same across the municipality regardless of the number of councillors in each ward, so in that sense, all voters are equally represented. If Windermere Ward was increased to three councillors and Brownbill Ward was reduced to two, the northern ward would need to include suburbs such as Manifold Heights and Herne Hill to make up the numbers. These suburbs would appear to have more in common with inner Geelong than with the north. In the 2013 redivision of State electoral boundaries, the Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC) proposed to move the boundary of Lara district south to Church Street. The EBC received many objections to the proposed boundary, objectors contending that residents of the suburbs north of Church Street (North Geelong, Hamlyn Heights and Bell Park) looked to Geelong West and the city centre for all their services, and had no links to the north. The EBC conceded the validity of many of these community of interest arguments,

but was bound by the numbers.<sup>15</sup> In the current review, the VEC considers that the boundaries required under Cr Farrell's proposal would divide the inner suburban area of Geelong, and greatly change the character of the northern ward. Consequently, the VEC considers it must reject this proposed modification of Option A on community of interest grounds.

Cr Farrell also proposed that Moolap be transferred from Bellarine Ward to the Central Ward, observing that Moolap is not part of the Bellarine Peninsula strategic plan. Moolap is a residential, industrial and semi-rural locality on the eastern fringe of Geelong, abutting the western edge of the Bellarine township of Leopold. Moolap arguably has more in common with Geelong than with the Bellarine Peninsula. However, transfer of the locality's 1,069 voters to Brownbill Ward would push that ward's deviation from 7.55 per cent above the average to +9.7 per cent. This is unacceptably close to the 10 per cent tolerance, which would be breached with only a small influx of voters to the ward, and could only be resolved by splitting the Moolap locality across two wards.

In summary, the VEC considers Option A from the preliminary report is the electoral structure that is most likely to provide fair and equitable representation for the voters of the City of Greater Geelong.

It should be noted that enrolment for Option A's Kardinia Ward is currently 10.6 per cent below the average. The Local Government Act provides that compliance with the equality requirements of the Act may be determined by the number of voters at the time of the review or by reference to the projected number of voters on the entitlement date for the next general election.<sup>16</sup> The VEC is confident that voter numbers for Kardinia Ward will be within tolerance by the time of the 2016 council election, as a result of the rapid development of Armstrong Creek.

### **Ward names**

There was some attention to ward names at the public hearing. Sandra Gatehouse for the Barwon Heads Association said that Brownbill was a good name on historic grounds. Fanny Brownbill, member for Geelong district from 1938 to 1948, was the first woman Labor MP in Victoria. Ms Gatehouse cautioned that adopting Indigenous names for wards is a complex issue, and should be done in consultation. Dr Rosemary Kiss for WILD reaffirmed that there should be consultation with the Wathaurong on appropriate Indigenous names.

The VEC believes that the ward names in Option A are readily identifiable. If the Greater Geelong community is minded to prefer alternative ward names, the Local Government Act provides for ward names to be altered by an Order in Council.

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<sup>15</sup> Electoral Boundaries Commission: *Report on the 2012-2013 redivision of electoral boundaries*, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> *Local Government Act 1989*, s. 219D(2).

## **7.2 The VEC's recommendation**

**The Victorian Electoral Commission recommends Greater Geelong City Council consist of 11 councillors elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward, in addition to the Mayor.**

This electoral structure was designated as Option A in the preliminary report.

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

## Appendix 1: Public involvement

### Preliminary submissions

Preliminary submissions were received from:

Cr Anthony Ansett	Neil McGuinness
Barwon Heads Association	Barry Millman
Michael Beckham	Justin Mills
Sarah Carroll	Ian Moore
Doug Carson	Susan Norris
Gail Cook	Terry O'Brien
Annalisa Cranby	Ocean Grove Community Association
Drysdale & Clifton Springs Community Association	Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
Daniel Gerrard	Gladys Seaton
Ray and Lee Gladwell (joint submission)	SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre
David Hall	Dorothy Tresize
Cr Michelle Heagney	Colin Wallace
Patrick Hughes	Stephen Williams
Jeannette Johanson	Women in Local Democracy
Greg Lacey	
Jan Laidlaw	
Cr Darryn Lyons (Mayor)	

## Response submissions

Response submissions were received from:

Lyle Allan	Peter Loney
Cr Tony Ansett	Janet Massey
Barwon Heads Association	Heather and Les McCann
Mark Bennett	Kathryn McCauley
Judy Cameron	Michael McCauley
Gregor Cattanach	Cr Rod McDonald
Terry Cleland	Paul McFarlane
Committee for Geelong	Gordon Nash
Lynne Clarke	Susan Norris
Sarah Dekiere	Ingrid Novosel
Cr Jan Farrell	Ocean Grove Community Association
Graham Fisher	Tom O'Connor
Cr Kylie Fisher	Vicki Perrett
Chad Foulkes	David Phillips
Geelong Chamber of Commerce	Portarlington Community Association
Greater Geelong City Council	Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.
Richard Hastings	Stephen Rafferty
Monica Hayes	Janine Roberts
Frauke Hoffmann	Lisa Robinson
Matt Hrkac	Paul Rogers
Ross Hunter	Gladys Seaton
Jeannette Johanson	Adam Southon
Julie Johnson	SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre
Greg Lacey	Ainsley Symons
Jan Laidlaw	
Corey Lockwood	

Dorothy Tresize

Donna Williams

Elizabeth Turner

Stephen Williams

Colin Wallace

Women in Local Democracy

Greg Wandel

### **Public hearing**

The following individuals spoke at the public hearing:

Cr Tony Ansett

Anne Brackley speaking on behalf of SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre

Cr Jan Farrell

Cr Kylie Fisher

Sandra Gatehouse and Judith Brooks speaking on behalf of Barwon Heads Association

Dr Rosemary Kiss speaking on behalf of Women in Local Democracy

Jan Laidlaw

Tom O'Connor

Gladys Seaton

John Turner speaking on behalf of Monica Hayes

Bernadette Uzelac and Mark Edmonds speaking on behalf of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce

Colin Wallace

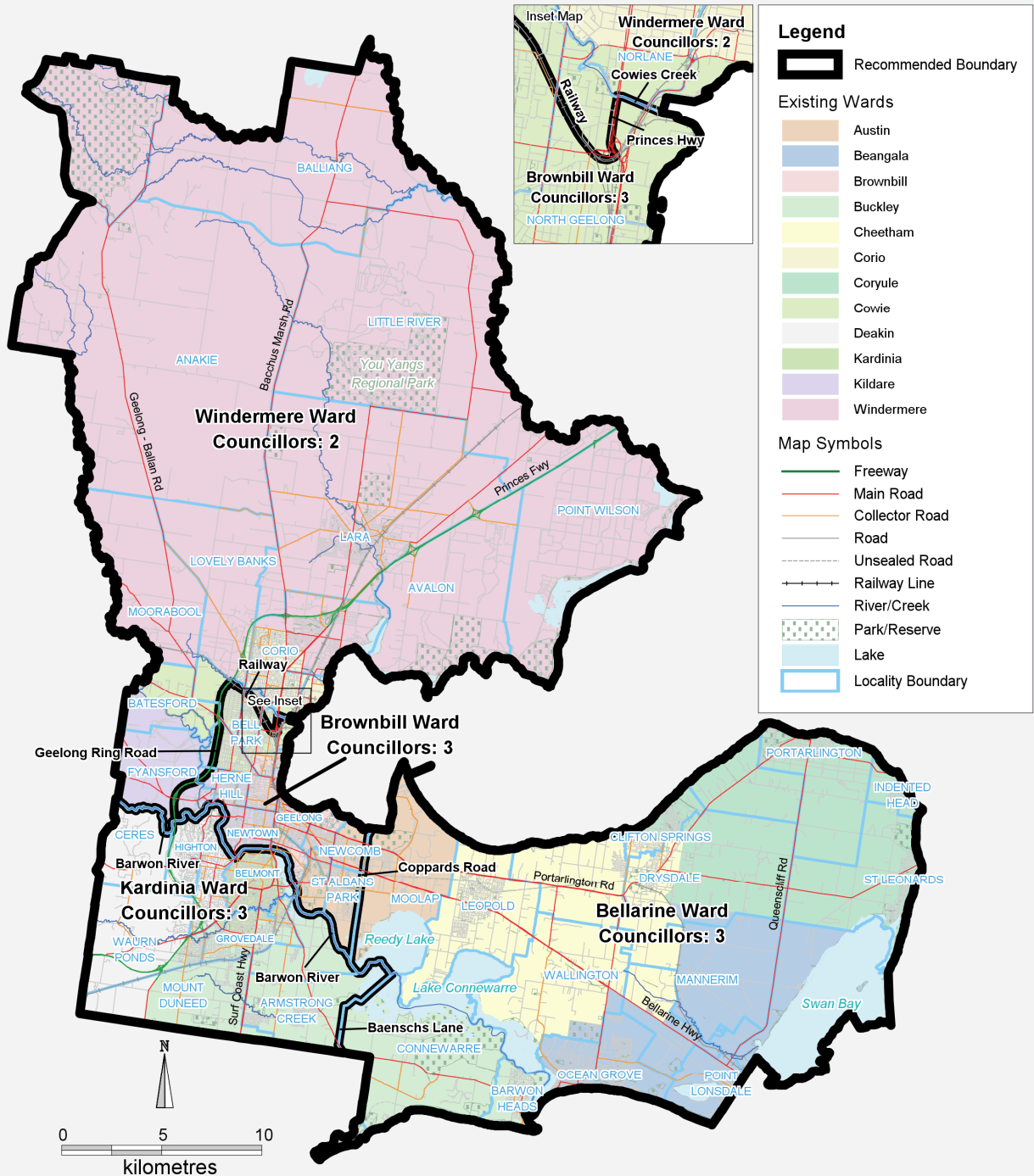
## Appendix 2: Map

# Greater Geelong City Council

Map of Recommended Option  
Eleven Councillors, Four Wards

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area (sq km)
Bellarine	3	52,399	+5.64%	402.55
Brownbill	3	53,345	+7.55%	48.75
Kardinia	3	44,343	-10.60%	119.76
Windermere	2	31,782	-3.89%	708.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>181,869</b>	<b>-10.60% - +7.55</b>	<b>1,279.90</b>
Average		45,467		319.98

\* Electors as at 14 August 2015



Map prepared by the Victorian Electoral Commission Vicmap spatial data provided by Department of Environment and Primary Industries  
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## Appendix 3: Public information program

### Advertising

In accordance with the Local Government Act,<sup>17</sup> public notices of the review and the release of the preliminary report were placed in the following newspapers:

Newspaper	Notice of review	Notice of preliminary report
<i>Geelong Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 11 November 2015	Wednesday 20 January 2016
<i>Geelong News</i>	Wednesday 11 November 2015	Wednesday 20 January 2016
<i>Bellarine Times</i>	Thursday 12 November 2015	Thursday 21 January 2016
<i>Geelong Independent</i>	Friday 13 November 2015	Friday 22 January 2016

### Media releases

A media release was prepared and distributed to local media prior to the commencement of the review on Wednesday 4 November 2015. A further release was distributed at the publication of the preliminary report on Wednesday 20 January 2016. A final release was circulated on the publication date of this final report.

### Public information session

A public information session for people interested in the review process was held on Wednesday 18 November in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 57 Little Malop Street, Geelong.

### Helpline and email address

A telephone helpline and dedicated email address were established to assist members of the public with enquiries about the review process.

### VEC website

The VEC website delivered up-to-date information to provide transparency and facilitate public participation during the first stages of the review process. An online submission tool was made available and all public submissions were posted on the website.

### Guide for Submissions

A *Guide for Submissions* was developed and distributed to those interested in making submissions. Copies of the *Guide* were available on the VEC website, in hardcopy on request and provided to Council.

### Council website and newsletter

Information about the review was provided to Council for publication in council media, e.g. website and newsletter.

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<sup>17</sup> Section 219F(4) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.



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