

**Brimbank City Council  
Subdivision Review**

**Subdivision Review Report**

A large, light gray watermark of the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) logo is centered on the page. The logo consists of the letters 'VEC' in a bold, sans-serif font, with the 'V' and 'E' slanted to the right. The letters are white and set against a light gray oval background that is partially obscured by the text above and below.

**VEC**

21 April 2008



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## 1 Summary of recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is required under legislation for the electoral subdivision review to make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to the location of the ward boundaries for the City of Brimbank (s.219L *Local Government Act 1989*). The VEC recommends that the boundaries of the following wards be changed:

- Harvester; and
- Grasslands

The recommended location of the new ward boundaries can be seen in the map at the back of this Report. The black boundary lines represent the recommended ward boundaries.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Legislative basis

Subdivision reviews are allowed for by the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act). Their purpose is to consider the location of a municipality's ward boundaries to ensure the number of electors represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of electors represented by all councillors (compliance may be determined by reference to the number of electors at the time of the review or the projected number electors as at the entitlement date for the next general election).

Subdivision review provisions only apply to councils:

- that are not scheduled to conduct an electoral representation review before the next general election; and
- where, two years before the council is to hold a general election, the VEC considers that the boundaries for the wards of the Council are unlikely to meet the equality requirements of the legislation as at the time of their next general election.

(Based on projected enrolment estimates as at 31 October 2006, the VEC considered that City of Brimbank would have one ward (Harvester) that was unlikely to conform with the equality requirements of the legislation.)

A subdivision review is only required where the Minister for Local Government directs a Council to which the subdivision provisions apply to appoint an electoral commission to conduct a review.

The Brimbank City Council received notice in January 2007 pursuant to section 219K of the Act from the Minister for Local Government that the Council must appoint an electoral commission to conduct an independent subdivision review. The Brimbank City Council appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

### 2.2 Scope of the review

Subdivision reviews can **only** look at the location of ward boundaries. They **cannot** look at the total number of councillors, the number of councillors in a ward, ward names, the external boundaries of a municipality, whether a municipality should be divided into two municipalities or amalgamated or any other such matters.

Electoral representation reviews (as opposed to subdivision reviews) consider a broader range of topics, including the number of councillors, whether or not there should be wards, how many councillors there should be in a ward and how many wards there should be (if any). The Brimbank City Council will undergo an electoral representation review considering these matters in 2011 or 2012.

### 2.3 The VEC's experience

The VEC has over ten years' experience in developing municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils to prepare options for their consideration and conducting independent electoral representation reviews of most of Victoria's municipalities. VEC staff have also worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission during State redivisions. The VEC uses sophisticated mapping software, and has developed expertise in preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with legislative equality requirements and respect communities of interest.

### 2.4 Electoral structure

The Brimbank City Council currently has eleven councillors elected from four wards (three wards with three councillors each and one ward with two councillors). The table below shows the number of current and projected electors in the existing wards as at 18 January 2008.

| Ward                              | Councillors | Current Electors | Current Deviation | Projected Electors | Projected Deviation | Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Grasslands                        | 3           | 34,329           | +3.05%            | 36,495             | +6.65%              | 35.704                  |
| Harvester                         | 3           | 29,819           | -10.48%           | 30,359             | -11.28%             | 30.034                  |
| Horseshoe Bend                    | 2           | 22,998           | +3.56%            | 23,072             | +1.13%              | 25.094                  |
| Taylors Ward                      | 3           | 35,001           | +5.07%            | 35,554             | +3.89%              | 32.521                  |
| <b>Totals for all Electorates</b> | <b>11</b>   | <b>122,147</b>   |                   | <b>125,480</b>     |                     | <b>123.353</b>          |
| Average per Councillor            |             | 11,104           |                   | 11,407             |                     | 11.21                   |

Current Electors is derived from the number of legislative assembly electors enrolled on the State roll for the City of Brimbank and the number of electors from council records that have a council entitlement to be enrolled.

Projected Electors is based on the number of current electors plus the estimated increase or decrease in the number of electors in each ward up to 3 October 2008 (entitlement date for the 2008 Brimbank City Council elections). The VEC uses information from Department of Planning and Community Development and Council regarding housing developments, recent trends in enrolment, and population estimates from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to determine its projected estimates (refer Section 6.1 for more information on elector projections).

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### 3 Subdivision review process

- 3.1 An up-to-date voters roll is prepared to determine the number of electors currently enrolled as at the time of the review and the projected number of electors likely to be enrolled at the time of the next general election.
- 3.2 Changes are modelled to the location of ward boundaries to achieve the equality requirements referred to in Section 2.1 using the number of electors projected to be electors on the entitlement date for the next general.
- 3.3 Where possible, a “minimal change” approach is used when moving the location of ward boundaries to ensure that changes affect as few electors as possible. (It should be noted that changes to the boundaries of wards that do not conform to the equal enrolment principles generally have a flow-on effect and changes may need to be made to the boundaries of other wards, even though they may currently conform to the equal enrolment principles.)
- 3.4 When modelling changes to ward boundaries, due consideration is given to the following factors:
  - relevant issues that were considered as part of the preceding representation review;
  - area and physical features of terrain;
  - means of travel, traffic arteries, and communications and any special difficulties in connection therewith;
  - clear boundary delineators;
  - community or diversity of interests; and
  - the likelihood of changes in the number of electors in the various localities before the next general election.
- 3.5 A map of the proposed boundaries is published in the newspapers used by Council circulating within the municipality informing the community of the changes and inviting written suggestions or objections about the proposed changes.
- 3.6 A report containing a detailed map of the proposed boundaries together with the rationale for the boundary changes and information about the process is made available for inspection at the offices of the VEC and Council. Alternatively, the report can be downloaded from the VEC's website or hard copies can be requested by contacting the VEC.
- 3.7 Written suggestions and objections are considered and if necessary, a public hearing is held where submitters who request to make an oral submission in support of their written submission can be heard.
- 3.8 The VEC will prepare a Report containing its final recommendation, which will be lodged with the Minister for Local Government not later than six months before the general election in respect of which the subdivision review is to be implemented. Copies of the Subdivision Review Report will be sent to Council and made available on the VEC website.

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## **4 Public Involvement**

### **4.1 Public Information**

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

- advertising in local newspapers;
- communicating with the City of Brimbank community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- establishing a helpline for responding to questions from the community;
- releasing a Proposed Ward Boundaries Report on 3 March 2008 and making the report available at the Brimbank City Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- providing opportunity for people to make written submissions in response to the proposed boundaries; and
- providing the opportunity for people to speak in support of their submission at a public hearing.

### **4.2 Advertising**

The VEC published a public notice of the review, detailing the process, advising that the Proposed Ward Boundaries Report had been released and indicating the proposed new ward boundaries. The notice appeared in the *Brimbank Leader*, the *Sunshine Advocate* and the *Keilor/Sunshine/St Albans Star* on 4 March 2008. See Appendix 7.1

### **4.3 Media Releases**

A media release designed to supplement the paid advertising was distributed to the *Brimbank Leader*, the *Sunshine Advocate* and the *Keilor/Sunshine/St Albans Star*. See Appendix 7.2

### **4.4 VEC website**

The VEC used its website to deliver information and to provide transparency in the review process. The VEC's website can be viewed at [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au).

### **4.5 Helpline**

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

## **5 Proposed Ward Boundaries Report**

The VEC's Proposed Ward Boundaries Report provided details of the VEC's proposed new boundaries and invited public comment on them. In developing the proposed boundary model, the VEC aimed to achieve the best possible balance between the criteria outlined under 3.2 to 3.4 above. Above all, it is essential that the number of electors represented by each councillor is within 10% (plus or minus) of the average number of electors represented by all councillors at the time of the next election.

### **5.1 Submissions**

The VEC did not receive any submissions by the closing time (Tuesday 25 March 2008 – 5:00 pm)

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## **5.2 Public hearing**

As there were no submissions, there were no requests to be heard in person, so the planned public hearing was not held.

## **6 Findings and recommendation**

### **6.1 The VEC's proposed ward boundaries**

In the Proposed Ward Boundaries Report the VEC noted that for the wards to conform to the equality requirements of the legislation at the next election it was necessary to alter the boundaries so there were more electors in the Harvester Ward.

The table of elector statistics under Section 2.4 shows that Harvester Ward is currently outside the 10% deviation allowed by legislation. It is expected that the deviation for this ward will further decline as development occurs in other parts of the municipality in the period leading up to the elections in November of this year.

The VEC is using the number of electors projected to be electors as at the time of the next general election as compliance to the equality provisions of the legislation referred to in Section 2.1. The projected elector estimates are subject to variation as they are dependant upon many factors, some of which may or may not occur. The projected elector estimates are at the high end of the projection scale and the VEC is confident that the number of electors in each of the proposed wards at the time of the next election will be no more than that projected.

To achieve the increase in the number of electors in the Harvester Ward, the VEC suggested that the most preferable change was to move the boundary between Harvester and Grasslands wards to include the locality of Derrimut in Harvester Ward.

The VEC recognises that from a community of interest perspective this is not ideal, but as noted in the Proposed Ward Boundaries Report, there were no ideal areas from a community of interest perspective to include in the Harvester Ward from either Grasslands Ward and Horseshoe Bend Ward (the two wards that adjoin Harvester Ward). Moving electors from the Grasslands Ward avoided any flow-on effect to other wards and minimised the number of electors affected by this review.

### **6.2 The proposed boundaries are tested**

By releasing proposed boundaries the Brimbank City Council community had the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes before the VEC makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government.

As there were no submissions in response to the proposed boundaries, the VEC sees no reason to change its initial proposal.

### **6.3 Recommendation**

Having taken into account all relevant factors, the VEC recommends that the ward boundaries as proposed in the Proposed Ward Boundaries Report and detailed in the map at the end of this Report be adopted for the City of Brimbank.

Steve Tully  
Electoral Commissioner





## 7.2 Media release

# Media Release

For release from Monday, 3 March 2008

## **PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT ON NEW WARD BOUNDARIES FOR THE CITY OF BRIMBANK**

In preparation for the November 2008 local council elections, the ward boundaries in the City of Brimbank need to be altered so that each person's vote has the same value. The Victorian Electoral Commission has been appointed by the Brimbank City Council to conduct an electoral subdivision review to recommend new ward boundaries.

The VEC proposes to alter the boundary between Grassland Ward and Harvester Ward. The VEC is now seeking feedback on the proposed new ward boundary.

Submissions must be received at the VEC by 5.00 pm on 25 March 2008. A public hearing for people to speak in support of their submissions, if they have requested to do so, will take place at the Council Chambers, Municipal Offices, Alexandra Ave, Sunshine on 31 March 2008 at 6.30 pm.

The Preliminary Ward Boundaries Report, which contains details of the recommendation and information on how to make a submission, is available from the VEC or can be downloaded from [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au) Copies are also available for viewing at the Municipal Offices, Alexandra Ave, Sunshine.

"During a subdivision review, ward boundaries are re-drawn so that the 'one vote, one value' principle can apply at the next election," said Mr Steve Tully, Victorian Electoral Commissioner.

On 21 April 2008, the VEC will make a final recommendation which will be sent to the Minister for Local Government and made available to the public. If accepted, the new ward boundaries will come into effect for the local council elections in November 2008.

A subdivision review can only make recommendations to change ward boundaries. The number of councillors in the municipality, number of councillors in each ward, voting method and ward names cannot be altered.

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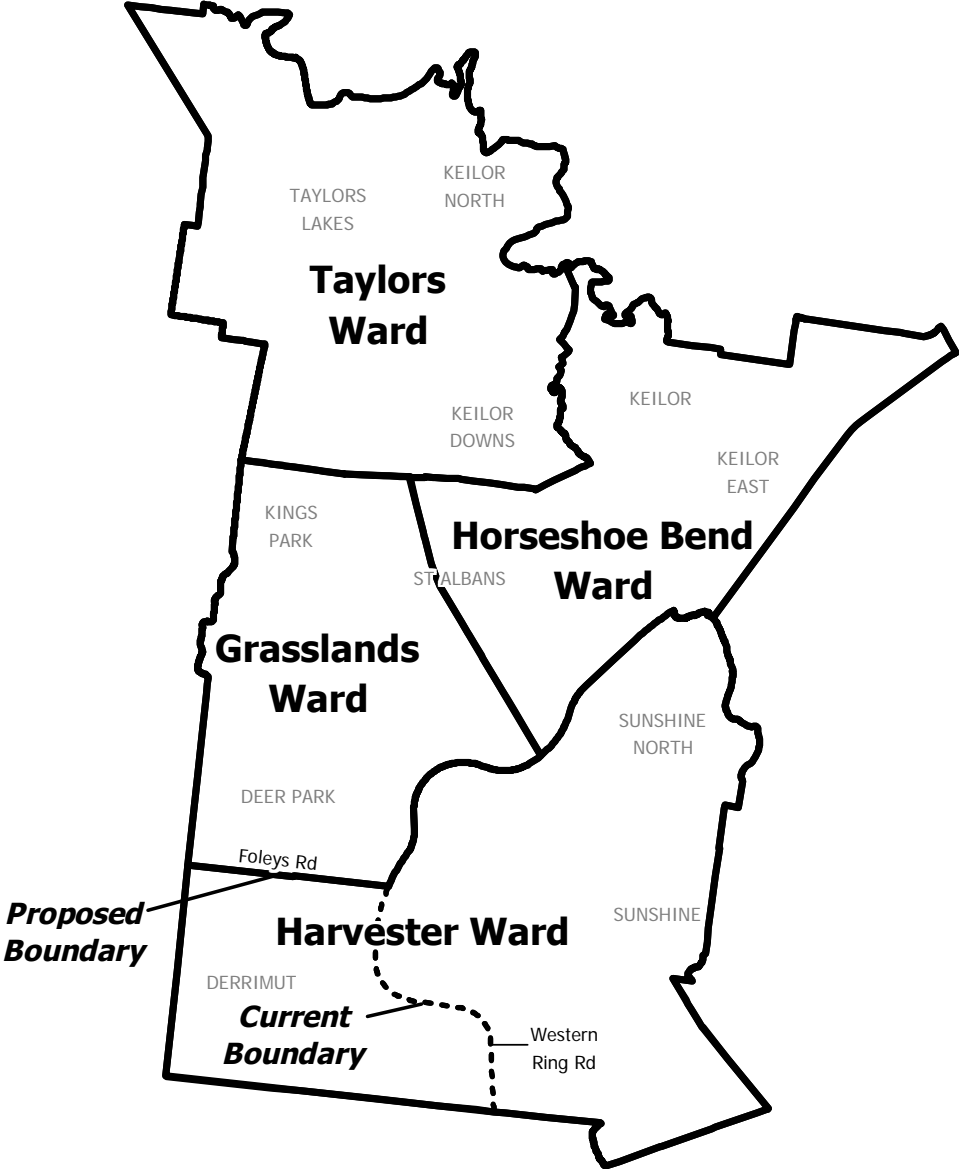
Media releases are available from the VEC website <http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/rrreleases.html>

**For further media information:**

Chris Gribbin  
Victorian Electoral Commission  
Tel: 9299 0737

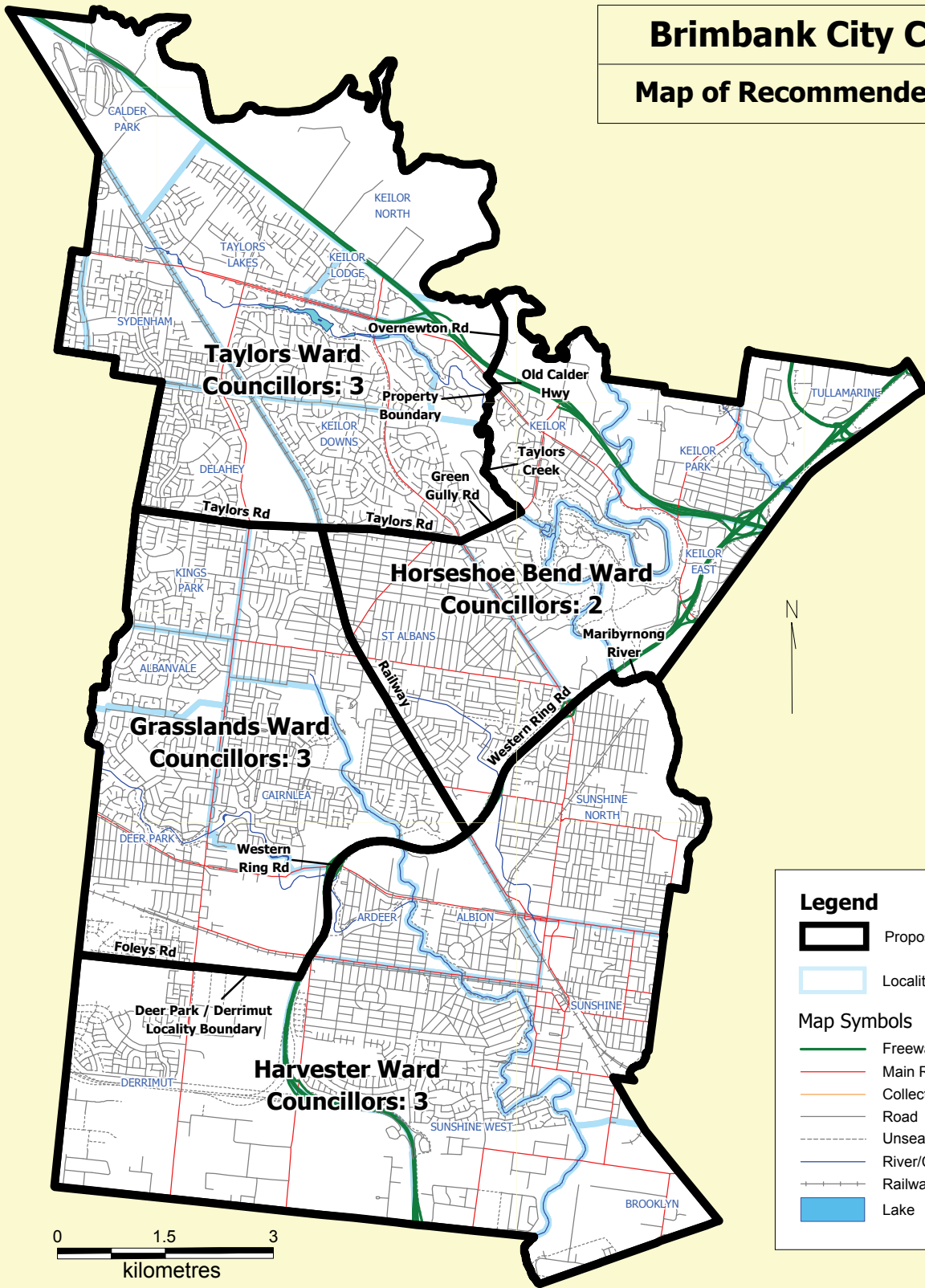
# Media Fact Sheet

## MAP OF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION FOR BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL



# Brimbank City Council

## Map of Recommended Option



### Ward Statistics

| Ward                              | Councillors | Voters at 18 Jan 08 | Deviation               | Est. Voters at 3 Oct 08 | Deviation               | Area (sq km)  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Grasslands                        | 3           | 32,678              | -1.90%                  | 34,096                  | -0.37%                  | 22.945        |
| Harvester                         | 3           | 31,470              | -5.53%                  | 32,758                  | -4.28%                  | 42.775        |
| Horseshoe Bend                    | 2           | 22,998              | +3.56%                  | 23,072                  | +1.13%                  | 25.09         |
| Taylors                           | 3           | 35,001              | +5.07%                  | 35,554                  | +3.89%                  | 32.529        |
| <b>Totals for all Electorates</b> | <b>11</b>   | <b>122,147</b>      | <b>-5.53% to +5.07%</b> | <b>125,480</b>          | <b>-4.28% to +3.89%</b> | <b>123.34</b> |
| <b>Average per Councillor</b>     |             | <b>11,104</b>       |                         | <b>11,407</b>           |                         | <b>11.21</b>  |