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1 Recommendation

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

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

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

2 Background

2.1 Legislative basis

The Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003, which amended the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), was passed by the Parliament in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. In accordance with this new legislation, South Gippsland Shire Council received notice pursuant to s.219C of the Act from the Minister for Local Government that an electoral representation review was to be conducted for South Gippsland Shire. The notice appeared in the Victoria Government Gazette on 13 May 2004.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. On 2 June 2004, South Gippsland Shire Council appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

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

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

2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews

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

Mr Maher commenced his career in local government in 1963. Mr Maher has extensive municipal experience, having been employed by the Melbourne City Council and the former Ringwood and Essendon Councils. He also held the position of Chief Executive at Knox City Council from 1995-2001, and at Croydon City Council from 1986-1994. Mr Maher was also interim Chief Executive of the Monash City Council at the time of municipal restructure. More recently, Mr Maher was appointed by the Minister for Local Government to conduct a Commission of Inquiry into Surf Coast Shire Council which was completed in April 2003.

He now provides consulting services to the public sector.

2.3 Municipality profile

South Gippsland Shire was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of shires of Mirboo and South Gippsland and parts of the shires of Korumburra and Woorayl. Major towns include Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster. Wilsons Promontory National Park is also located within the Shire.

Almost a quarter of people employed in the South Gippsland Shire work in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. Unemployment levels are below those of regional Victoria in general, and there is a slightly higher rate of home ownership. The proportion of the population between 18 and 34 years old is lower than in regional Victoria on average, with larger proportions being found in Melbourne and regional cities.

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

Between 2004 and 2012, South Gippsland Shire is expected to grow by 7.73%. There is expected to be a change in the age structure of the Shire, as in regional Victoria as a whole, with people over 50 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

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

2.4 Current electoral structure

South Gippsland Shire currently has nine councillors, elected from seven single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

3 Electoral representation review process

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

1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality
Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of a representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 Public involvement

4.1 Public information

The VEC informed the community about the electoral representation review through:
advertising in newspapers;
conducting an information session on 27 July 2004, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
distributing a Guide for Submissions;
communicating with the South Gippsland Shire community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
developing an information leaflet and posting it to all voters in South Gippsland Shire;
publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
releasing a Preliminary Report on 31 August 2004 and making the Report available at the Council offices, at the VEC and on the VEC website;
conducting a public hearing in Leongatha on 29 September 2004; and
establishing a help line for responding to community questions.

4.2 Advertising

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

- a public notice which detailed the process of the South Gippsland Shire review and called for public submissions, appeared in the Leongatha Star, the South Gippsland Sentinel Times and the Mirboo North Times on 13 July 2004 and in the Foster Mirror on 14 July 2004;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the South Gippsland Shire review, appeared in the Melbourne Herald Sun on 30 June 2004; and
- a notice of the Preliminary Report appeared in the Leongatha Star, the South Gippsland Sentinel Times and the Foster Mirror on 31 August 2004 and in the Mirboo North Times on 1 September 2004.

See Appendix 9.1.

4.3 Media releases

Media releases designed to supplement the paid advertising were distributed to the Leongatha Star, the South Gippsland Sentinel Times, the Mirboo North Times and the Foster Mirror on 13 July 2004 and on 31 August 2004.

See Appendix 9.2.

4.4 Information leaflet

The VEC posted an information leaflet about the review to all South Gippsland Shire voters from 12 July 2004.

See Appendix 9.3.

4.5 VEC website

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

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

4.7 Guide for Submissions

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

5 Preliminary Report

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

5.1 Preliminary submissions

By the closing time for submissions (9 August 2004 - 5.00 pm), the VEC had received 18 preliminary submissions.

Among the preliminary submissions received by the VEC, the preferred number of councillors for South Gippsland Shire ranged from 5 to 11. The majority of individuals and groups making submissions sought to maintain the number of councillors, suggesting that the current nine councillors works well for the Shire, allows for a reasonable councillor workload and provides acceptable voter representation.

Opinion regarding electoral structure and voting system options varied. The majority of submissions favoured a subdivided structure, with either single or multiple-councillor representation for each ward. Other submissions preferred an unsubdivided municipality and a system of voting which provided for proportional representation.

See Appendix 9.4 for details of those persons and groups making preliminary submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

5.2 VEC research

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

Development projections based on information presented by the Council were also taken into consideration. Extensive field-work was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC. In addition, the VEC explored why South Gippsland Shire’s Commissioners recommended what they did in 1996.
5.3 Recommended options

Having considered the preliminary submissions made by various individuals and organisations and all other relevant factors, the VEC proposed two options for public comment.

The VEC’s preferred option was:

➢ That South Gippsland Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards.

The VEC’s alternative option was:

➢ That South Gippsland Shire consist of nine councillors to be elected from eight wards comprising seven single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

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

6 Response submissions

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

By the close of submissions, 22 September 2004 – 5.00 pm, the VEC had received nine response submissions.

The majority of those submissions favoured the VEC’s preferred option of three three-councillor wards. Those submissions argued that such a structure would encourage a whole-of-shire approach to governance which would benefit voters in South Gippsland Shire. Other submissions preferred the VEC’s alternative option on the basis that smaller wards guarantee local representation which is particularly important to the smaller communities across the Shire.

See Appendix 9.5 for details of those persons and groups making response submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

7 Public hearing

A public hearing was held at the Leongatha Memorial Hall Complex on 29 September 2004 at 6.00 pm. All persons and groups who had made submissions in response to the VEC’s Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions and four people chose to do so. Members of the public were invited to attend and 11 people, including those speaking at the hearing, were present.

8 Findings and recommendations

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

Issues considered by the VEC

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

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

In terms of voter numbers, Victorian municipalities vary from 4,077 to 160,368. The VEC applies the legislative provisions relating to numbers of councillors in a logical way: with those councils that have the largest number of voters having the most councillors, and those councils that have the least number of voters having fewer councillors.

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

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

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

The VEC’s findings

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC made two recommendations for South Gippsland Shire, both of which involved nine councillors. The VEC based these suggestions on: the size of the Shire; the number of voters living within it; the Shire’s projected growth; and the range of industries operating in the region.

Only one of the submissions received by the VEC in response to its Preliminary Report advocated a number of councillors other than nine.

Having considered all suggestions made, and in light of the circumstances in South Gippsland Shire, the VEC confirms that nine is an appropriate number of councillors to represent the voters of the Shire. The VEC is confident that a nine-councillor structure will be appropriate to meet the Shire’s needs over the next eight years.
8.2 Electoral structure

Issues considered by the VEC

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

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

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

Boundaries for wards must:

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

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

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

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

The VEC’s findings

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC put forward two options for South Gippsland Shire. In response to various constituents’ desire for local representation, the VEC offered an eight-ward model as its alternative option and proposed a three-ward structure as its preferred option. Having considered submissions made in response to its Preliminary Report and having heard the persons and groups who elected to speak at the public hearing, the VEC recommends that a three-ward structure be introduced in South Gippsland Shire.

The VEC originally put forward the eight-ward model as its alternative option in recognition of the model’s various drawbacks. The VEC noted in its Preliminary Report that while the eight-ward model satisfied legislative requirements regarding voter numbers, ward boundaries split various communities of interest within the Shire. The VEC also recognised difficulties relating to the Shire’s potential growth. Population data from both the Department of Sustainability and Environment suggests that specific areas within the Shire will experience strong growth during the next 8 years. The VEC was concerned that a structure constituting a majority of
single-councillor wards would be less able to absorb such growth than the multi-councillor ward structure.

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC suggested that the three-ward option would address the difficulties arising under the eight-ward model. Having considered public input following the release of its Preliminary Report, the VEC confirms that its three-ward model, with slightly altered ward boundaries, will facilitate local representation, provide for relatively inclusive ward boundaries and will accommodate future growth in South Gippsland Shire.

During the review process, various constituents in South Gippsland Shire highlighted the desirability of maintaining local representation through the retention of single-councillor wards. They suggested that the Shire’s very different regions require specialised local knowledge in representation. The VEC acknowledges these concerns and suggests that they may be met by the introduction of a system of voting by proportional representation under a multi-councillor ward structure. The basis of proportional representation is that candidates are elected in proportion to their support. Under the proportional representation system any candidate who obtains a ‘quota’, either through first-preference votes or through the flow of preferences, is elected. This means candidates representing large minorities and candidates representing majorities will have a reasonable expectation of being elected. Relatively substantial communities within South Gippsland Shire could secure local representation under this system.

At the public hearing, the VEC heard from the Meeniyan Progress Association which suggested that a small town such as Meeniyan would not secure local representation under a system of voting by proportional representation. The VEC agrees that local representation for such a small community cannot be guaranteed under proportional representation. The VEC notes, however, that such local representation is not guaranteed under the current single-councillor ward structure. Currently, the councillor for Drumdlemara Ward, in which Meeniyan is located, lives just outside Korumburra. By the Association’s own accounts, that representative is representing the people of Meeniyan extremely well. This illustrates that while it may be desirable to have a local representative, such geographic proximity is not critical to securing quality representation.

Large wards under the three-councillor ward model will accommodate broad geographic communities of interest within the Shire. Under the VEC’s recommended model, all coastal regions are grouped together within the Coastal-Promontory Ward. (In response to community suggestions regarding ward names the VEC recommends that its suggested Coastal Ward be renamed Coastal-Promontory Ward, its suggested East Ward be renamed Tarwin Valley Ward and that its suggested West Ward be renamed Strzelecki Ward.)

The VEC is aware that the various coastal areas within the Shire are substantially different; Port Welshpool and Port Franklin, for example, are based around the fishing industry while Venus Bay, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay are small seaside holiday destinations. These areas do, however, share some common interests, many of which can be distinguished from the interests of rural districts. Under the recommended model, those rural districts are divided into the Strzelecki and Tarwin Valley Wards and each ward is based on a major population centre – Strzelecki Ward on Korumburra and Tarwin Valley Ward on Leongatha.
As noted above, the VEC has amended its original configuration in order to balance voter numbers and to reflect better the existing communities of interest within the Shire. At the public hearing, the VEC received various comments about the township of Fish Creek. The observation was made that the proposed boundaries split the community. One group suggested that Fish Creek was more aligned, in terms of communities of interest, with Coastal-Promontory Ward than Strzelecki Ward and so the entire Fish Creek community should be shifted into that Ward. The group conceded, however, that if the Shire’s major growth is expected in the Coastal-Promontory and Strzelecki Wards, moving voters from the Tarwin Valley Ward into the Coastal-Promontory Ward is not a logical course of action. Another speaker suggested that Fish Creek is closely aligned with the Tarwin Valley Ward’s farming environment. The VEC considers that Fish Creek is more closely connected to the farming traditions of the Tarwin Valley Ward than to the coastal themes associated with Coastal-Promontory Ward. The VEC has adjusted ward boundaries to accommodate the whole of Fish Creek within the Tarwin Valley Ward. The VEC notes that this will reduce voter numbers in Strzelecki Ward and so will ease the pressure of future growth in that Ward.

Legislation requires that the number of voters represented by each councillor in a municipality be within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors in that municipality. Under the VEC’s adjusted three-ward model, the deviation from the average in each ward is set close to zero in order to accommodate anticipated growth within the Shire. Consequently, this structure will be able to absorb quite significant growth without requiring boundary review.

The VEC recommends that a three three-councillor ward structure and its associated system of election by proportional representation be introduced in South Gippsland Shire. The VEC is confident that such a structure will provide South Gippsland Shire voters with fair and equitable representation for at least the next eight years.

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

What is the review about?
The aim of the review is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for the voters of South Gippsland Shire. The VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:
- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether the Shire should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and
- if the Shire is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Information about the review is being posted to all South Gippsland Shire voters.

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

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

Key Steps in the Review
Step 1 – Information session, Tuesday, 27 July 2004 - 7.30 pm
- Council Chambers, Council Offices, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha
Step 2 – Preliminary submissions. Deadline: Monday, 9 August 2004 - 5.00 pm
Step 3 – Preliminary Report, released Tuesday, 31 August 2004
Step 4 – Response submissions. Deadline: Wednesday, 22 September 2004 - 5.00 pm
Step 5 – Public hearing, Wednesday, 29 September 2004 - 6.00 pm
- Memorial Hall Complex, Corner McCartin Street and Martin Place, Leongatha
  (People can speak in support of their response submissions.)
Step 6 – Final Report, released Monday, 18 October 2004
  The VEC will lodge a Final Report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government.

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

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

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

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

What are the reviews about?

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

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

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

What will the VEC consider?

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

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

Making a submission

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

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

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

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is conducting an electoral representation review for the South Gippsland Shire Council. The review aims to achieve fair and equitable electoral representation for persons who are entitled to vote at the Council's general election. Having considered a range of information, including information contained in public submissions, the VEC has now released a Preliminary Report including its recommendations.

What are the recommendations in the Report?

South Gippsland Shire currently has nine councillors, elected from seven single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

Preferred option

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

Alternative option

The Report also outlines an alternative option of a Council consisting of nine councillors to be elected from eight wards, comprising seven one-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

The maps on the right show the options.

Where is the Report available?

Copies of the Preliminary Report are available from:
• the South Gippsland Shire Council offices, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha;
• the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au; and
• the VEC on 13 18 32.

Response submissions on the Report

Any person or group may make a response submission to the VEC about its Preliminary Report. A response submission should comment only on the preferred option and/or the alternative option. Submissions can be:
• posted to the VEC at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000;
• emailed to southgippsland.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
• faxed to (03) 9629 9330.

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

Submissions must reach the VEC by Wednesday, 22 September 2004 - 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

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

Public hearing, Wednesday, 29 September 2004 - 6.00 pm

The hearing will be held at:
• Memorial Hall Complex, corner McCartin Street and Michael Place, Leongatha.

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

Final Report, 18 October 2004

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

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

The map below shows the current ward boundaries and voter numbers for South Gippsland Shire.

For further media information:
Alex Kingsmill
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0731
SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION REVIEW: PRELIMINARY REPORT RELEASED

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) today released its Preliminary Report on electoral representation for the South Gippsland Shire Council. The VEC's preferred option is to have nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards. An alternative option is also presented, of nine councillors to be elected from eight wards comprising seven single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

The Report has been released and is available on the VEC's web site at www.vec.vic.gov.au. The Report is also available at the South Gippsland Shire Council offices, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic., 3000.

People have until 5.00 pm, Wednesday, 22 September 2004 to lodge submissions with the VEC regarding its Preliminary Report.

People who wish to speak publicly in support of their submissions will have an opportunity to do so at a public hearing at the Memorial Hall Complex, corner McCartin Street and Michael Place, Leongatha, on Wednesday, 29 September 2004 – 6.00 pm.

The VEC's Final Report and recommendations will be lodged with the Minister on Monday, 18 September 2004.

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

ENDS


9.3 Information leaflet

Current structure of South Gippsland Shire

South Gippsland Shire currently has nine councillors, elected from seven single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. Below is a map showing the Shire boundaries, the current ward boundaries and the estimated number of voters as at 31 May 2004.

How to make a submission

Set the Guide for Submissions by telephoning the VEC on 13 18 32 or by checking our website at www.vec.vic.gov.au. Send your submissions to the VEC in one of the following ways:

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

Electoral Representation Review of the South Gippsland Shire Council

Why is this review being undertaken?

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

What will the review recommend?

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

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

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

What will the VEC consider?

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

Key steps in the review

Step 1

Information Session

Tuesday, 27 July 2004

Council Chambers, Council Offices, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha 7.30 pm

Anyone interested in making a submission should attend.

Step 2

Preliminary Submissions

Deadline: Monday, 9 August 2004 5.00 pm

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

Step 3

Preliminary Report

Tuesday, 31 August 2004

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

Step 4

Response Submissions

Deadline: Wednesday, 22 September 2004 5.00 pm

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

Step 5

Public Hearing

Wednesday, 29 September 2004

Memorial Hall Complex, Cnr McCartin St and Michael Place, Leongatha 6.00 pm

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

Step 6

Final Report

Monday, 18 October 2004

The VEC will lodge a Final Report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government. The Report will be publicly available.
Electoral representation review for the
South Gippsland Shire Council

Guide for Submissions

CHECKLIST:

Before you send in your submission:

❑ Have you included your name, address and telephone contact number?
❑ Do you understand that your submission will be made public (see page 5)?
❑ Have you given reasons for the model(s) you are suggesting?

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

❑ Have you restricted your discussion to the models proposed in the Preliminary Report?
❑ Have you indicated whether or not you would like to speak to the submission at the public
 hearing (see page 5)?

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

The number of councillors (see page 10):

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

The electoral structures (see pages 12-16):

❑ Have you indicated whether you want the municipality to be subdivided or unsubdivided?
❑ Have you explained why your preferred structure would best suit your municipality?

If you think that the municipality should be subdivided into wards (see pages 12-16):

❑ Have you indicated whether you want single-member wards, multi-member wards or a
 combination of both?
❑ Have you suggested ward names and given reasons for those names (see page 17)?
Contents

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Background

What is an electoral representation review?

An electoral representation review examines the electoral structure of a local council. It considers:
- the number of councillors in a municipality;
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided; and
- if it should be subdivided, what the ward boundaries should be.

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

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

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

The Local Government Act specifies that:
- electoral representation reviews must be conducted before every second council election; and
- a council must appoint an Electoral Commission to undertake the review.

On completion of the review, the Electoral Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who then has the power to act on it.

This system of electoral representation reviews came into effect at the end of 2003 as a result of amendments to the Act. The first representation review for each municipality under this system takes place at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government by notice in the Victoria Government Gazette.

On 13 May 2004, the Minister for Local Government gave notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act that an electoral representation review is to be conducted for South Gippsland Shire. The South Gippsland Shire Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the review.

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

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

The electoral structures currently in place in municipalities across Victoria are diverse. This is because the present structures were determined individually for each municipality by the commissioners appointed during the restructures of the 1990s. The commissioners did not have any state-wide reference available to them when considering the appropriate number of councillors or the appropriate electoral structures for their municipalities. As a consequence, there are substantial differences between similar municipalities across Victoria. Subsequent to these reforms, councils have conducted their own electoral reviews.
What is the purpose of a representation review?

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

To achieve this, the VEC has three main duties:

Duty 1: to make sure the number of voters represented by each Councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per Councillor for that municipality.

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

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

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

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

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

What can’t a representation review do?

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

On what does the VEC base its recommendations?

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors. The VEC:

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

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

The review process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 July 2004</td>
<td>The review begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 and 14 July 2004</td>
<td>Notification of the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 27 July 2004</td>
<td>A notice detailing the process for the review and calling for submissions is placed in the Leongatha Star, the South Gippsland Sentinel Times, the Mobbo North Times and in the Foster Mirror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 31 August 2004</td>
<td>Preliminary report released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00 pm, Monday, 9 August 2004</td>
<td>Preliminary submissions are your chance to contribute your views and local knowledge about any issues relevant to the review. See details in the next section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00 pm, Wednesday, 22 September 2004</td>
<td>Preliminary submissions on the Preliminary Report. Any person or group, including the Council, may make a response submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report. This is your chance to present your views and local knowledge about any issues you want to speak in support of their submissions may do so at this public hearing.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Public hearing. People who state in their response submissions to the Preliminary Report that they want to speak in support of their submissions may do so at this public hearing.</td>
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<td>Monday, 18 October 2004</td>
<td>Final Report After considering any written submissions relating to the Preliminary Report, and information provided at the public hearing, the VEC prepares a Final Report making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government. For details of how to get a copy of the Final Report see below.</td>
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Making a submission

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

When can people make submissions?

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

- **Preliminary submissions** should address matters relating to the number of councillors and the electoral structure of the municipality. At this stage, people can suggest any possible models within the constraints as explained in the "Matters to consider" section of this document. The most helpful submissions are generally those which provide clear explanations or evidence for particular viewpoints. Preliminary submissions must be received at the VEC by Monday, 9 August 2004 – 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- **Response submissions** on the Preliminary Report should address matters relating to the models proposed by the VEC in the Preliminary Report. Alternative models will not generally be considered at this stage. Response submissions should indicate whether the person making the submission wishes to speak at a public hearing in support of his or her submission. Response submissions must be received at the VEC by Wednesday, 22 September 2004 – 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

There will be a public hearing for people who want to speak in support of their response submissions on Wednesday, 29 September 2004.

Where should submissions be sent?

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

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

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

Public access to submissions

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

- the VEC office at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne; and

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

Getting copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports

Copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports will be available from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au, by contacting the VEC on 13 18 32, and at the South Gippsland Shire Council offices, 9 Smith Street, Leongatha.

When the Preliminary Report is released, a notice in the Leongatha Star, the South Gippsland Sentinel Times, the Mirboo North Times and in the Foster Mirror will specify how people can make a written submission in response to the Report.


Current structure of South Gippsland Shire

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

South Gippsland Shire was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of shires of Mirboo and South Gippsland and parts of the shires of Korumburra and Wooral. Major towns include Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster. Wilsons Promontory National Park is also located within the Shire.

At the 2001 census, the total population of South Gippsland Shire was divided along the following lines:

- Dumbalk: 0.63%
- Fish Creek: 0.52%
- Foster: 4.02%
- Korumburra: 12.35%
- Leongatha: 17.21%
- Loch: 0.81%
- Meeniyan: 1.58%
- Nyora: 2.19%
- Poowong: 1.24%
- Port Franklin: 0.51%
- Port Welshpool: 0.88%
- South Gippsland: 17.21%
- Toora: 1.99%
- Venus Bay: 1.79%
- Woorayl: 0.52%
- Tarwin Lower: 0.52%
- Wilsons Promontory National Park: 0.52%
- Rural balance: 47.56%

Almost a quarter of people employed in the South Gippsland Shire work in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors. Unemployment levels are below those of regional Victoria in general, and there is a slightly higher rate of home ownership. The proportion of the population between 18 and 34 years old is lower than in regional Victoria on average, with larger proportions being found in Melbourne and regional cities.

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

Between 2004 and 2012, population growth is expected to be relatively large compared to regional municipalities without cities as a whole. There is, however, expected to be a change in the age structure of the Shire, as in regional Victoria as a whole, with people over 50 years of age becoming a substantially higher proportion of the population.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matters to consider when preparing submissions

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

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

How many councillors should there be?

Under the Local Government Act 1989, the number of councillors in every municipality must be between five and twelve (s.5B(1)). The Act does not specify how to decide what is the appropriate number, but the VEC has identified the following matters to consider.

Parliament has provided a range for the number of councillors to allow for municipalities with large numbers of voters and municipalities with smaller numbers. The numbers of voters in each municipality vary across Victoria from 4,077 to 160,368. The VEC applies these provisions of the Act in a logical way, with those municipalities that have the largest numbers of voters having the most councillors, and those municipalities that have the least numbers of voters having fewer councillors.

The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and its voter to councillor ratio (see the end of this document). The table differentiates between rural, regional and metropolitan municipalities. This table is a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors by recognising the different circumstances and needs of these categories of municipalities. This information enables the VEC to compare the municipality being reviewed to other municipalities with similar voter numbers and areas.

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

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a municipality to have more councillors than would otherwise be the case. These might include such issues or circumstances as:

- significant population growth within the municipality;
- an especially mobile or transient population;
- cultural and linguistic diversity within the community;
- a large proportion of older residents who may have special interests and needs;
- a wide geographic distribution of voters within a large municipality; or
- a large number of communities of interest (see below).

The table at the end of this document shows the numbers of councillors and the voter to councillor ratios for the various types of municipalities in Victoria.
Should the municipality be unsubdivided or divided into wards?

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

South Gippsland Shire is currently divided into eight wards, with two councillors representing one ward and one councillor representing each of the remaining seven wards.

The following tables list characteristics that are commonly considered to be associated with the different possible electoral structures and may be of use in deciding which structure most suits your municipality.

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

Unsubdivided municipalities

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

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

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

Options for division into wards

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

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

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

Single-member wards

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

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

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

Eleven of Victoria's municipalities have multi-member wards. A multi-member ward structure results in fewer but larger wards than a single-member ward structure. The possible features of multi-member wards can be portrayed as follows:

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

Combination of single-member and multi-member wards

Eleven of Victoria's municipalities have a mixture of single-member and multi-member wards. The possible features of a combined system can be portrayed as follows:

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

 Voting systems

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

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

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

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

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

- to be elected, a candidate must obtain a “quota”, which is calculated by dividing the total number of votes by one more than the number of vacancies, and then adding one (for example, in an election for 3 vacancies with 800 votes cast, the quota would be 267);
- when a candidate receives more votes than a quota, the surplus votes are distributed to the continuing candidates at a reduced value, calculated by dividing the surplus votes by the total votes for the candidate (for example, if a candidate achieved 300 votes and the quota was 201 votes, the candidate’s surplus would be 99, and ballot papers would be transferred to the remaining candidates at a value of 99 divided by 300);
- when surplus votes have been distributed and there are still vacancies to be filled, preferences are distributed from the lowest-scoring candidates until a candidate has a quota.

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

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

Getting the numbers right

If South Gippsland Shire is to remain divided into wards, the ward boundaries must comply with legal requirements. Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989 requires that:

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

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

Ward boundaries must meet the approximate equality requirement set by the Act. The number of voters represented by each councillor cannot be more than 10% outside the average number for all councillors. Currently in South Gippsland Shire, Grand Ridge Ward and Leongatha Ward are outside the 10% tolerance.

Other considerations

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

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

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance among these criteria.

What should wards be called?

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

- Place names: A number of municipalities name their wards after localities in the wards. This approach is useful where ward boundaries closely align with localities. However, it can lead to people in smaller localities within a ward feeling overlooked, and may cause confusion if the locality that a ward is named after cuts across a ward boundary;
- Compass directions: This is the current approach in, for example, the City of Whittlesea, where the wards are Central, East, East Central, North, North Central, South, South Central, South West and West. It is straightforward. It is of most use where the location of the wards is closely aligned to compass directions;
- Names of historic buildings: This is a way of celebrating the municipality’s heritage;
- Names of natural features: Using the names of natural features such as hills or streams can be a way of identifying wards without the complications of locality names. The features would need to be well known and relevant to the particular wards;
- Names of pioneers and former prominent citizens: This is a way of recognising important former residents. It is most appropriate when the person is closely associated with the area covered by the ward; and
- Aboriginal names: This is a way of recognising the municipality’s Aboriginal heritage. However, the use of Aboriginal names could be seen as being tokenistic if the names are not relevant to areas within the municipality.
Table: Profiles of municipalities
Estimates as at 31 May 2004 (unless otherwise indicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan (including outer metropolitan)</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banyule</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>90,989</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12998</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Casey</td>
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<td>134,072</td>
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<td>12188</td>
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<td>Buxton</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10950</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frankston*</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>90,910</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12998</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glen Eira</td>
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<td>10550</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
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<td>Hobsons Bay*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>504</td>
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<td>Mornington</td>
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<td>86,425</td>
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<td>10804</td>
<td>4 two-member wards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mornington Peninsula</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86,425</td>
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<td>Moreland</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mornington Peninsula</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86,425</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10804</td>
<td>4 two-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mullum</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>44,069</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4854</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Port Philip</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>73,812</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10542</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stonnington*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>78,642</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8733</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whitehorse</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>111,675</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11168</td>
<td>5 two-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whitehorse</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>111,675</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11168</td>
<td>5 two-member wards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>70,225</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10033</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yarra*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60,097</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1 single-member ward &amp; 4 two-member wards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yarra Ranges</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td>105,475</td>
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<td>Single-member wards</td>
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</table>

Average (median) 73 91,112 9 10,880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Cities, Rural Cities and Boroughs</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ararat</td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>9,586</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1356</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>67,490</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7499</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benalla</td>
<td>2,757</td>
<td>11,766</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Bendigo*</td>
<td>2,995</td>
<td>77,291</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11042</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Geelong</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>160,368</td>
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<td>13348</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Shepparton*</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>39,622</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5660</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>4,242</td>
<td>14,520</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>3,419</td>
<td>50,078</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6453</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>22,082</td>
<td>36,082</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queenscliffe</td>
<td>4,407</td>
<td>44,009</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swan Hill</td>
<td>6,110</td>
<td>14,165</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6 single-member wards &amp; 3 two-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wangaratta*</td>
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<td>21,599</td>
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<td>2700</td>
<td>6 single-member wards &amp; 3 two-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warrnambool*</td>
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<td>24,274</td>
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<td>2762</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>23,542</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4706</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average (median) 2,388 23,908 7 3738

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

17
18
### Victorian Electoral Commission

**Regional Shires**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,891</td>
<td>11,850</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,190</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number on roll</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine*</td>
<td>4,832</td>
<td>11,107</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Coast</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>37,199</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,314</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baw Baw</td>
<td>4,032</td>
<td>30,563</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,396</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buloke</td>
<td>8,004</td>
<td>6,734</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>3 three-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaspe</td>
<td>4,519</td>
<td>30,568</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>5 single-member wards &amp; 1 two-member ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardinia</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>37,740</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,391</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Goldfields</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>11,390</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,278</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colac Otway</td>
<td>3,433</td>
<td>20,414</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,916</td>
<td>2 single-member wards, 1 two-member ward, 1 three-member ward</td>
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<td>Corangamite</td>
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<td>1,399</td>
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<td>20,931</td>
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<td>4,624</td>
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<td>Gannawarra</td>
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<td>9,917</td>
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<td>1,417</td>
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<td>2,057</td>
<td>Single-member wards</td>
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<td>Golden Plains</td>
<td>2,704</td>
<td>13,850</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,335</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>889</td>
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<td>Indigo*</td>
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<td>11,325</td>
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<td>Loddon</td>
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<td>1,166</td>
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<td>Macedon Ranges*</td>
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<td>1,843</td>
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<td>Mitchell*</td>
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<td>22,274</td>
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<td>3,186</td>
<td>5 single-member wards &amp; 1 three-member ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Alexander</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>28,666</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>1 three-member ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moyne</td>
<td>5,478</td>
<td>13,909</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,391</td>
<td>5 two-member ridings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Grampians</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>13,909</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>5 two-member ridings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrene</td>
<td>3,891</td>
<td>9,217</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>4 single-member wards &amp; 1 three-member ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Gippsland</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td>28,666</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>1 three-member ward</td>
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<td>7,224</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>Single-member ridings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes

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

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Victorian Electoral Commission
About the VEC

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

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

In performing these functions, the VEC acts as an independent, impartial authority, acting transparently and with integrity.
The numbers of voters in each Census collector district within South Gippsland Shire are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>CCD</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>CCD</th>
<th>Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>Promontory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>Promontory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2200202</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>Drumdlemara</td>
<td>2200053</td>
<td>142</td>
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A map showing the exact boundaries for each Census collector district can be purchased from the Australian Bureau of Statistics - www.abs.gov.au or call 1300 135 070. An electronic version of voter numbers by Census collector district can be downloaded from the VEC's website at www.vec.vic.gov.au
9.5 List of persons and groups making submissions

Preliminary submissions

Cr Heather Bligh
W and M Bray
Cr Diane Casbolt
Frank Considine
Shirley and Brian Dwyer
Cr James T Forbes
Cr Kieran Kennedy
John A McIndoe
Alexander McKinlay
Peter J Norton
CJ Paterson
Jason Pincini
Joe Pinicini
Proportional Representation Society of Australia
Vic Rowlands
South Gippsland Shire Council
Wilma and Ray Walls
Shirley and Peter Westaway

Response submissions

Frank Considine
Anthony van der Craats
E D Hattam
David Lewis
Meeniyan Progress Association
Jason Pincini
Proportional Representation Society of Australia
South Gippsland Shire Council
Peter & Wilma Western