

Local council electoral structure review

Final Report

Stonnington City Council

September 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters for which it held this review and pays respects to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging. The panel acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

Version	Date approved	Approved by
1	6 September 2023	Ms Julie Eisenbise
1	6 September 2023	Mr Tim Presnell
1	8 September 2023	Ms Dana Fleming

Version approval:

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1	26 September 2023	Program Sponsor	Final proofread and confirmed to be sent

Contents

Executive summary	4
Recommendation	4
Summary of approach	5
Developing electoral structure models	5
Preliminary report.....	5
Response submissions	5
Public hearing	5
Background	6
About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews.....	6
The electoral representation advisory panel.....	6
Public engagement	6
Developing recommendations.....	7
About Stonnington City Council	11
Profile	11
Current number of councillors and electoral structure	12
Last electoral structure review.....	12
Preliminary report	14
Response submissions	15
Public hearing	17
Findings and recommendation	19
Number of councillors	19
Electoral structure	19
Ward names	22
The panel’s recommendation	23
References	24
Appendix 1: Map of recommended structure	25
Appendix 2: Public involvement	27
Response submissions	27
Public hearing	28

Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government has reviewed the electoral structure of Stonnington City Council.

The purpose of the review was to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council.

Under Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Stonnington City Council must now have a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

The panel looked at:

- the appropriate number of councillors and wards for the council
- the location of ward boundaries
- appropriate ward names.

This report presents the panel's final advice to the Minister on the recommended new electoral structure of Stonnington City Council to meet the requirements of the Act.

More information about the background to the review is available on [page 6](#).

Recommendation

The electoral representation advisory panel recommends that Stonnington City Council adopt a 9 single-councillor ward structure – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 9 wards in this electoral structure are Como Ward, Greville Ward, Hedgeley Dene Ward, Malvern Valley Ward, Orrong Ward, South Yarra Ward, Toorak Ward, Tooronga Ward, and Wattletree Ward. This advice is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the Terms of Reference of the electoral representation advisory panel and the Act.

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a detailed map of this recommended electoral structure.

Summary of approach

Developing electoral structure models

The panel considered a range of factors when deciding on its final recommendation including:

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time
- public submissions (see below).

More information on the way the panel decided on the models is available on [page 7](#).

Preliminary report

The panel published a preliminary report on Wednesday 19 July 2023 with the following electoral structure models for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2.

The full preliminary report is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Response submissions

The panel received 37 submissions responding to the preliminary report. Of these, 6 submissions included maps.

A full analysis of response submissions received can be found on [page 15](#).

Public hearing

The panel held an online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 10 am on Tuesday 15 August 2023. Five people spoke at the hearing.

Background

About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government formed 2 electoral representation advisory panels to review and provide advice on the electoral structures of 39 local councils, under section 16 of the Act. If the Minister accepts the electoral structure recommended by the panel, any changes will take effect at the October 2024 local council elections.

The Act introduced several changes to local government representation, including the types of electoral structures local councils may have. All metropolitan, interface and regional city councils (including Stonnington City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Stonnington City Council, the electoral representation advisory panel examined:

- the number of councillors and wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the names of each ward.

The Act requires electoral structures to provide fair and equitable representation and facilitate good governance. Each ward must have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor (within +/-10% of the average). While conducting the review, the panel also noted the role of a councillor as specified under section 28 of the Act.

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel that conducted the electoral structure review of Stonnington City Council had 3 members:

- Ms Julie Eisenbise (Chairperson)
- Mr Tim Presnell
- Deputy Electoral Commissioner Ms Dana Fleming.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council. The panel is independent of councils and the Victorian State government.

Under the Act, the VEC is not responsible for reviewing council electoral structures but must provide administrative and technical support to the panel. The Electoral Commissioner (or their delegate) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

On behalf of the panel, the VEC conducted a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Stonnington City Council electoral structure review. This included:

- public notices in state-wide newspapers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases announcing the start of the review with the release of the preliminary report
- information on social media channels
- updated website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - current information on the review process
 - submission guide and fact sheets for each council under review with background information
 - response submissions from the public.

Stonnington City Council was also offered and took up 2 optional promotion methods to promote the reviews:

- targeting social media advertisements at the council area
- notifying voters in the council area subscribed to the VEC's VoterAlert service about the start of the review and release of the preliminary report.

Public consultation

The panel encouraged public input to the review of Stonnington City Council via:

- response submissions to the preliminary report
- an online public hearing for anyone who made a response submission to speak to the panel and expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process and are considered alongside other factors addressed during the review. These are outlined below.

Developing recommendations

The panel's final recommendations comply with the Act and were developed through careful consideration of:

- research and analysis conducted by the VEC support team, including geospatial and demographic data
- rates or patterns of population and voter change over time, and relevant forecasts of growth or decline based on forecast information provided by .id (informed decisions, a company specialising in demographics and forecasting)
- input received during public consultation.

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows local councils to have between 5 and 12 councillors, but neither the Act nor the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 specify how the number of councillors is to be determined. As such, the recommendation put forward by the panel in this report is guided by

the Act's intention for fairness and equity in voter representation and the consequent facilitation of good governance.

In examining the appropriate number of councillors for Stonnington City Council, the panel considered the following criteria:

- the population and number of voters in the council area, compared to other councils with a similar population size and number of voters in the same category (for example, other comparable metropolitan, interface and regional city councils)
- patterns of population change and voter growth or decline in the council area over time
- the current and past numbers of councillors
- the representation needs of communities of interest in the council area
- any matter raised in public submissions not already listed above.

Local councils with a larger number of voters will often have more councillors. Large populations generally have greater diversity, both in the type and number of communities of interest and issues relating to representation. However, the ideal number of councillors can also be influenced by the circumstances of each council, such as the:

- nature and complexity of services the council provides
- geographic size and topography of the area
- forecast population and voter growth or decline
- social diversity.

Deciding the electoral structure

Under the Act, regional city, metropolitan and interface councils must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

When developing single-councillor ward models for Stonnington City Council, the panel considered these criteria:

- whether the structure would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and for how long it would likely comply
- the appropriate number of councillors, as outlined above
- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- the representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of wards
- past elections for the council, including:
 - numbers of candidates nominating
 - incidences of uncontested elections

- rates of informal voting.
- other matters raised in public submissions not already listed above.

Under section 15(2) of the Act, subdivided structures must aim for an approximately equal number of voters per councillor in each ward. This means the number of voters represented by each councillor in a ward should be within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor for all wards.

During this review, the panel aimed to recommend a structure that would comply with section 15(2) at the time of the 2024 local council elections and, if possible, also comply based on voter numbers at the time the review was conducted. The panel used forecasts of population and voter change to assess compliance at the 2024 elections with as much accuracy as possible. In some cases, population change and other factors impacting voter numbers mean it is not possible to create compliant subdivided structures based both on voter numbers that were current at the time of the review and forecast voter numbers. In these instances, the panel prioritised compliance at the 2024 local government elections to ensure each vote will have approximately equal value at the 2024 election.

One of the factors that may impact compliance with section 15(2) is the number of current and forecast voters with ratepayer-based voting entitlements, also known as council-enrolled voters. Voters' rolls include both state-enrolled electors (the majority of the roll) and a smaller number of council-enrolled electors. The Act introduced changes to ratepayer-based entitlement categories, which come into full effect at the 2024 local council elections. The panel took this change to the makeup of voters' rolls, and therefore compliance with section 15(2) of the Act, into consideration during this review.

Deciding on ward names

The panel has taken the following approach to naming wards.

1. Retaining existing ward names if these were still relevant to the area covered by the ward.
2. When a new name was required, the panel based this on features such as:
 - places (registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*) in the ward
 - compass directions
 - native flora or fauna.

Use of Aboriginal language

The panel recognises that there should first be meaningful consultation with local Aboriginal communities and groups before a ward is named using Aboriginal language. Meaningful consultation is a significant process that the panel was not able to undertake within the timeframes of the current review program.

The panel also recognises that many of the place names in current use across Victoria are based on Aboriginal language. As such, the panel has only put forward new ward names using Aboriginal language if:

- it is the name of a place within a ward
- it is currently in common use

and

- the name is registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*.

Unregistered names using Aboriginal language have not been put forward by the panel as new ward names. While the panel supports the adoption of names based on Aboriginal language, this requires appropriate consultation.

Accordingly, for the panel to consider an Aboriginal language ward name that is suggested in a public submission to the review, the name submitted needs to comply with the above guidelines.

About Stonnington City Council

Profile

Stonnington City Council covers an area of 26 km² and is in inner eastern Melbourne, about 5 to 10 km from the city centre. It is bordered by the City of Melbourne in the west, Boroondara and Yarra City councils in the north, Monash City Council in the east, and Glen Eira and Port Phillip City councils in the south. The Traditional Custodians of the Stonnington area are the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples.

Landscape

Stonnington City Council has many distinct and culturally important localities. In the west of the council, South Yarra, Prahran, and Windsor centre broadly around the Chapel Street commercial and cultural precinct, with the former the site of significant high-rise development. The council's centre consists of the affluent suburbs of Armadale, Kooyong, Malvern, and Toorak. Glen Iris and Malvern East make up the eastern part of the council.

The Yarra River and Gardiners Creek form most of the council's northern boundary, with surrounding parklands providing major natural geographic features. Other parks within the council's boundaries include Victoria Gardens, Malvern Public Gardens, Central Park, Hedgeley Dene Gardens, and Princes Gardens.

Stonnington City Council is well serviced by public transport, with connections to the Sandringham, Glen Waverley, Frankston, Cranbourne, and Pakenham railway lines, as well as numerous tram services, which run down most main roads in the council area. The Monash Freeway runs across the council's northern boundary, connecting the eastern suburbs with the Melbourne city centre, and is one of the busiest roads in the state.

Community

At the 2021 census, the council's population was 104,703 (ABS 2022c). In 2016, it was 103,832 and in 2011 it was 93,145 (ABS 2011, 2016). It is projected to undergo a modest increase of 1% per year to reach about 111,110 by 2028. Much of this growth is occurring around the South Yarra area, which has experienced strong high-rise apartment development in the last decade. The median age of residents is 37, the same as for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022b, 2022d).

Of the population, 63.9% were born in Australia, and 73.1% speak only English at home. This is higher than the 59.9% and 61.1% respective rates for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identifying people in Stonnington City Council at the 2021 census was 0.3%, less than half the 0.7% who live in Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

At 15.9%, the largest employment category by economic output is construction. Other major employment sectors include professional, scientific and technical services (14.7%), rental, hiring and real estate services (14.1%), health care and social assistance (9.5%), and retail trade (9.4%) (.id 2023a).

Home ownership, at 52.4%, is lower than the Greater Melbourne rate of 66.8% (owned outright and with a mortgage), while the proportion of households renting is significantly higher (44.9% compared with 30.2%) (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

The weekly median household income is \$2,210, which is over \$300 more than the median for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). Stonnington City Council is one of the most socioeconomically advantaged councils in Victoria, with more than 1 in 3 households classed as high income (.id 2023b). Despite this advantage, small areas of extreme disadvantage exist, particularly around the large public housing complexes found in South Yarra and Prahran.

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Stonnington City Council is currently divided into 3 wards with a total of 9 councillors:

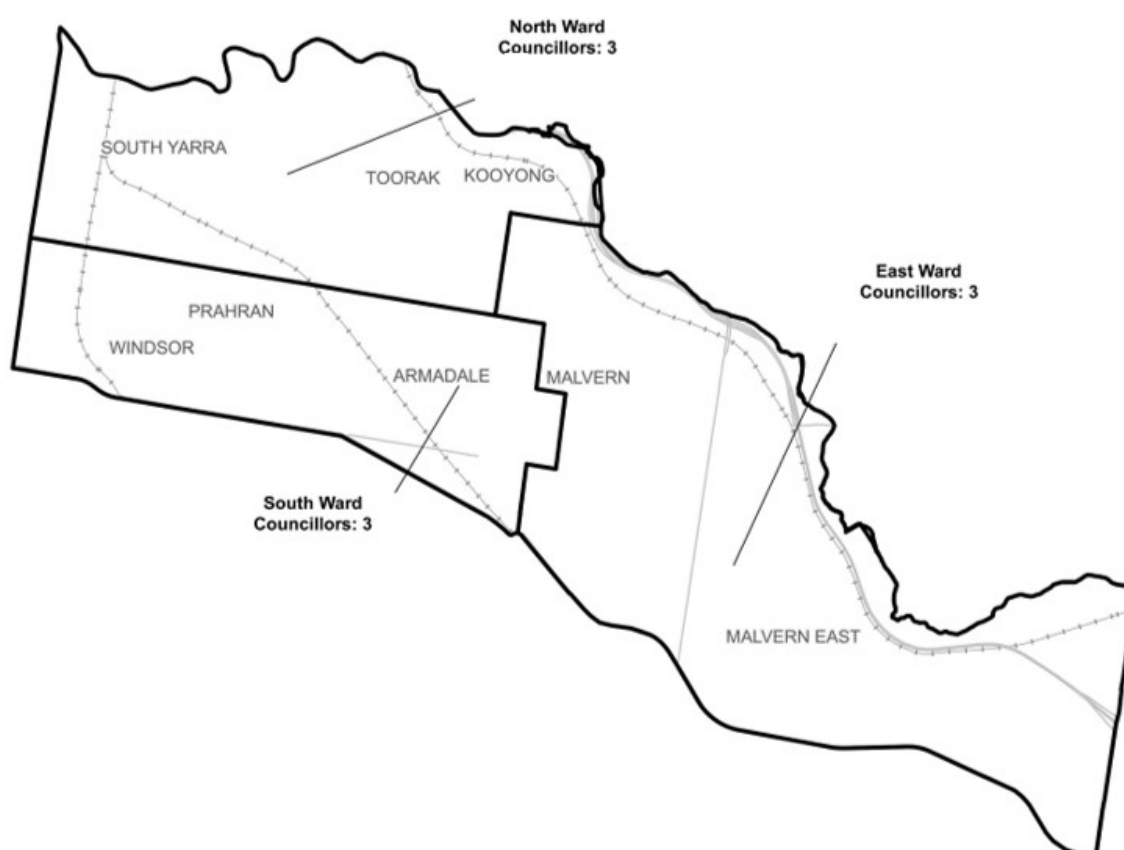


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Stonnington City Council.

There are approximately 86,821 voters in Stonnington City Council, with an approximate ratio of 9,646 voters per councillor.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on Stonnington City Council.

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Stonnington City Council in 2011. This review was carried out under the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*, which was replaced by the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*.

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Stonnington City Council continue to consist of 9 councillors elected from 3 wards (3 wards with 3 councillors in each)

Subdivision review

Since the 2011 representation review, the VEC also conducted a subdivision review of Stonnington City Council in 2020.

Subdivision reviews conducted under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) adjusted the internal ward boundaries of a council but did not change the electoral structure or number of councillors. Subdivision reviews were conducted in situations where the voter-to-councillor ratios in one or more wards of a council were forecast to move outside the legislated +/-10% tolerance before the council's next election and aimed to ensure voter-to-councillor ratios for all wards were within tolerance at the election.

The 2020 review of Stonnington City Council aimed to return the North and East wards to within the permitted +/-10% tolerance before the 2020 local council elections. Visit the Stonnington City Council [profile page](#) on the VEC website to access a copy of the 2020 subdivision review final report.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 19 July 2023. The panel considered research findings and the requirements of the Act when formulating the models presented in the preliminary report.

After careful consideration, the following electoral structure models were put forward for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2.

The full preliminary report is available on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au

Response submissions

The panel received 37 response submissions to the preliminary report from the public by the deadline of 5 pm on Wednesday 9 August 2023. You can find a list of people or organisations who made a response submission in [Appendix 2](#).

The table below provides an overview of preferences in response submissions. You can read an analysis of submissions below this table.

Table 1: Preferences expressed in response submissions			
Model 1 (9 single-councillor wards)	Model 2 (9 single-councillor wards)	Model 3 (9 single-councillor wards)	Other
13	12	4	8

There was varied support for all models put forward, with Models 1 and 2 most favoured in the public feedback. However, more than half of the submissions expressed a preference without making an argument. Six submissions mapped their own electoral structure, while several submitters supported retaining the current electoral structure, which is no longer permitted under the Act. The Victorian Pride Lobby was critical of all models for not factoring in the LGBTIQ+ community. Two submitters addressed matters that are out of scope for this review.

Model 1

A total of 13 submissions supported Model 1. Some supporters believed the model distributed voters fairly and felt its ward boundaries would best represent demographic groups found within the council. Others noted that having the 2 large public housing complexes in Prahran and South Yarra in one ward might lead to better outcomes for these residents with a dedicated councillor to represent their interests.

Arguments against Model 1 included that it:

- used illogical geographical borders
- split suburbs (such as Prahran and Windsor) unacceptably
- meant public housing residents of South Yarra and Prahran would have only one representative
- was less effective at factoring in the council's major commercial strips than Model 2.

Model 2

The 12 supporters of Model 2 argued it was the most logical way to divide the council area, minimised arbitrary splits of suburbs, and captured communities of interest better than any other model. Some submitters believed the model was the most effective at splitting the council area's major commercial strips across wards. A few submissions noted that dividing the large public housing complexes (in Prahran/Windsor and South Yarra) between wards would provide

access to and representation from 2 councillors and could lead to better outcomes for residents. Model 2 was also considered less confusing for voters than the wards proposed in other models, as it most closely resembled the current electoral structure by essentially splitting each of the current wards into 3 single-councillor wards.

Opponents of Model 2 argued it:

- unnecessarily split suburbs across wards
- ignored communities of interest in its proposed wards
- assumed the current electoral structure was optimal for the council, which may not be the case.

Model 3

Model 3 was the least-favoured structure, supported by 4 submitters. Some preferred this model because it adhered most closely to the +/-10% requirement, while others provided no reason for preferring it.

Numerous submissions opposed Model 3, arguing that it:

- split suburbs arbitrarily
- created illogical and unrecognisable boundaries in its proposed wards
- would reduce representation for the communities in wards based around commercial strips.

Other options

Several submitters felt the panel had not adequately considered all possible single-councillor ward structures, with many requesting the panel develop new models for public comment or modelling their own structure. There was one map provided demonstrating an innovative approach to modelling of ward boundaries, however this model would not facilitate good governance. The panel considered all this feedback and, where appropriate, incorporated this into the recommended structure.

Public hearing

The panel held an online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 10 am on 15 August 2023. Five people spoke at the hearing.

You can find a list of people who spoke at the hearing in [Appendix 2](#).

Alex Leung spoke first, arguing that Stonnington City Council should represent ratepayers better, and that the panel should give more consideration to the older ‘heritage overlay’ suburbs such as Toorak. This reasoning led Leung to support Model 1 as the proposed wards more closely aligned with his personal circumstances. When asked about the division of Model 1 overall, Leung stated it worked well and agreed the proposed ward boundaries in the east of the council area best dealt with future growth.

Dr Sean Mulcahy spoke on behalf of the Victorian Pride Lobby and its mapped submission. Mulcahy first detailed the substantial LGBTIQ+ community in the council area, particularly in the west, noting that Windsor, Prahran, and South Yarra have a significantly higher proportion of same-sex couples than average. While Dr Mulcahy felt Model 1 was the best of the models put forward, he argued all proposed models were flawed when considering the lobby’s remit in promoting the interests of LGBTIQ+ people. Dr Mulcahy explained that the lobby wanted to see the suburbs of Windsor, Prahran and South Yarra kept together in wards as much as possible and the ‘horizontal’ rather than ‘vertical’ division of the wards in the west of the council proposed in the mapped submission would provide a better outcome for the LGBTIQ+ community in these areas.

When the panel asked why having 3 or 4 councillors representing the council’s western area in each of the proposed models was inadequate to represent the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community, Dr Mulcahy emphasised that in all the proposed models Windsor and Prahran were split over 2 or 3 wards. By extension it was suggested this would dilute the voice of LGBTIQ+ communities in these areas and might not serve these communities as well as the lobby’s mapped submission.

When asked, Dr Mulcahy answered they had no strong views about the division of areas other than in the west of the council. Dr Mulcahy acknowledged the panel’s various considerations in relation to communities of interest, including public housing residents, but was critical that the LGBTIQ+ community had not been considered in the preliminary report.

Speaking in support of Model 2, current councillor for South Ward Nicki Batagol first outlined the distinct localities, different demographic profiles in the west to east, as well as important commercial precincts in the council area. Building on her written submission, Councillor Batagol suggested Model 2 best represented the 6 core commercial precincts, which she stated were about to undergo a special rate levy and deserved as much councillor representation as possible. The councillor noted Model 3 was her least preferred option and agreed with many of the Victorian Pride Lobby’s arguments.

Asked about the merit in having public housing communities together in the same ward, the councillor noted the complexity of the community sector and that the communities would benefit from 2 councillors instead of one. When queried whether the councillor advocated for Model 2 because it closely aligned with the current structure, councillor Batagol stated this was the case and in her experience the current structure had worked well for the council.

Mitchell Fuller spoke in favour of Model 1, stating that this model best aligned with his lived experience. Fuller noted that Models 2 and 3 grouped localities in the least favourable ways highlighting, for example, how the more 'working class' and renter-occupied areas of Prahran were grouped with the more affluent Toorak area. It was suggested these areas have different demographic profiles and needs in councillor representation, which would not be best served under Models 2 and 3. Fuller also suggested that ward names should be simple and recognisable to make local government as accessible as possible.

Fuller stated that, although he had not read or listened to the Victorian Pride Lobby's submission, he agreed in principle to the idea of splitting wards horizontally in the council's west, as this likely better reflected how communities viewed and used these areas.

Dr Reuben Kirkham spoke last and did not favour any of the models put forward, asserting that they were all flawed in how they calculated the +/-10% requirement. Dr Kirkham suggested that the perceived miscalculation would mean the Forrest Hill precinct, a high-density residential area in South Yarra, would be under-represented in each model put forward and that this amounted to discrimination. In addition, Dr Kirkham advocated for an increase in councillor numbers to 11.

Findings and recommendation

The panel noted that several submitters criticised the review process, including the need to adhere to the legislated equality requirement and the state-wide approach to determining the appropriate number of councillors for a local council.

As outlined in the submission guide for this review, the panel is committed to the principle of 'one vote, one value', which is a requirement for subdivided electoral structures under the Act. This is to ensure that every person's vote counts equally. When undertaking an electoral structure review, the panel must adhere to the Act's legislated equality requirement to seek to ensure the number of voters per councillor in a ward to be within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor in any other ward.

Several submissions called for the panel to make exceptions to the legislated requirement for Stonnington City Council to adopt a single-councillor ward structure. While the panel understands the concerns of these submitters, the panel must comply with legislated requirements.

Number of councillors

After considering the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found 9 councillors to be an appropriate number for Stonnington City Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Stonnington City Council in relation to similar metropolitan councils, including its size and geography, population and the number and distribution of voters across the council area.

Stonnington City Council currently has 86,821 voters represented by 9 councillors and covers an area of 26 km². Other inner-city metropolitan councils with a similar number of voters and social profile usually also have 9 councillors, such as Yarra City Council and Port Phillip City Council. As forecasts indicate only modest population change is expected for the council, and 9 councillors is consistent with other inner-city councils, the panel considered it appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain at 9.

Electoral structure

After considering the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found Model 2 with modifications (the recommended model) to be the single-councillor ward model with the best potential to promote fair and equitable representation for voters in Stonnington City Council and consequently facilitate good governance.

Model 2, with modifications based on public feedback, was recommended for the following reasons:

- The panel noted that the current structure has worked well for the council, and that a key benefit of the recommended model is that it most closely resembles the current structure, which would also likely make it more familiar to voters.

- The panel was also convinced that, compared to other models, this structure would provide better representation to the council's main shopping precincts, which it noted are considered major cultural and community hubs.
- In addition, it was considered that this model would possibly provide greater levels of representation for public housing residents and related interests. Having public housing in Windsor and Prahran located in Greville Ward and the large South Yarra complex contained in South Yarra Ward provides possibly 2 councillors to represent these interests and for residents to connect with.

The panel acknowledged the substantial LGBTIQA+ community found in the council's west and accepted some of the suggestions made by the Victorian Pride Lobby. However, the panel noted the single-councillor ward structure had limited capacity to balance the needs of multiple communities of interest.

The recommended model splits most of the current North Ward into 3 to capture the areas north of Commercial and Malvern roads. The panel modified the model around the South Yarra area to better reflect communities of interest:

- South Yarra and Como wards capture all of South Yarra that is situated within the council. Both these wards provide and share representation for the commercial and cultural precincts around Chapel Street north of Commercial/Malvern Road, while South Yarra Ward provides representation for the large public housing complex on Malvern Road.
- The 2 South Yarra wards differ from Model 2 in the preliminary report by being structured more horizontally rather than vertically. As such, Toorak Road now becomes the north-south boundary between the 2 wards, while more of Toorak's west is included in the revised Toorak Ward. The new eastern boundary between Como and Toorak wards becomes Wallace Avenue and Balmerino Avenue; however, small parts of Toorak east of Williams Road are still included in Como Ward due to the +/-10% requirement. In addition, South Yarra Ward now takes in a small area of Toorak south of the railway line between Williams and Malvern roads, also to adhere to the +/-10% requirement.
- Toorak Ward centres on the suburb of Toorak, while also capturing small parts of Kooyong and Malvern. It is largely focused on the main arterial of Toorak Road and uses the same eastern and southern boundaries as proposed in the preliminary report.

The current South Ward is split into 3 wards, all to the south of Commercial and Malvern roads, and remains unchanged from Model 2 in the preliminary report:

- Greville Ward captures Windsor and about half of Prahran, providing representation for the Chapel Street commercial precinct south of Commercial Road.
- Orrong Ward captures the remainder of Windsor and Prahran and part of Armadale, using the Frankston/Cranbourne/Pakenham railway line and Sutherland Road as an eastern boundary.

- Wattletree Ward captures most of Armadale, half of Malvern and small parts of Glen Iris and Malvern East. It centres on the Wattletree Road, Glenferrie Road, and High Street shopping strips, while using Tooronga Road, Malvern Road, and High Street west of Glenferrie Road as recognisable boundaries.

The eastern part of the council is then made up of 3 wards, essentially splitting the current East Ward into 3, and remains unchanged from Model 2 in the preliminary report:

- Tooronga Ward captures Kooyong, a small part of Glen Iris and about half of Malvern, focusing on Tooronga Road and the Malvern Road retail strip. Kooyong Road and High Street are used as strong, identifiable boundaries.
- Hedgeley Dene Ward takes in about a third of Malvern East, with a small part of Glen Iris and Malvern also captured. It centres on Wattletree Road and Burke Road, while using Waverley Road, Darling Road, High Street and Tooronga Road as major boundaries.
- Malvern Valley Ward takes in the remainder of Malvern East centred on Waverley Road. It also includes the Chadstone shopping precinct.

The panel notes the challenge of creating a single-councillor ward structure for Stonnington City Council that both complies with the legislated +/-10% requirement and captures geographic communities within wards. Due to the uneven distribution of the population across the council area, it is also challenging for any single-councillor ward structure to comply with the +/-10% requirement through to the 2024 local council elections.

While it is difficult to predict the number of candidates likely to stand at future elections, past election results provide some indication. The panel examined past election results for Stonnington City Council including numbers of candidates nominating, incidences of uncontested elections and rates of informal voting, and found there had been relatively strong candidate numbers across all wards. The panel assumes this trend will continue under a structure of 9 single-councillor wards, minimising the risk of uncontested or failed elections.

The panel notes valid arguments both in favour of and against the different single-councillor ward structures examined in this review. However, the panel considers the recommended model to be the single-councillor ward model with the best potential to promote fair and equitable representation for voters in Stonnington City Council and consequently facilitate good governance under the requirements of the Act.

Ward names

The ward names for the panel's recommended electoral structure were based on the following:

- Como Ward: New name based on a park in the ward. This park is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Greville Ward: New name based on a prominent road within the ward. This road is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Hedgeley Dene Ward: New name based on a park found in the ward. This park name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Malvern Valley Ward: New name based on a prominent area in the ward. This name was used as a ward name for a similar ward prior to 2004.
- Orrong Ward: New name based on a prominent road in the ward. This road name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- South Yarra Ward: New name based on a locality in the ward. This locality name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Toorak Ward: New name based on a road and locality in the ward. These road and locality names are registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Tooronga Ward: New name based on a prominent road in the ward. This road is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Wattletree Ward: New name based on a prominent road in the ward. This road is registered in the VICNAMES register.

The panel's recommendation

The electoral representation advisory panel recommends that Stonnington City Council adopt a 9 single-councillor ward structure – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 9 wards in this electoral structure are: Como Ward, Greville Ward, Hedgeley Dene Ward, Malvern Valley Ward, Orrong Ward, South Yarra Ward, Toorak Ward, Tooronga Ward, and Wattletree Ward.

This advice is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the Terms of Reference of the electoral representation advisory panel and the Act. This electoral structure is a modification of Model 2 in the preliminary report.

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a detailed map of this recommended electoral structure.

References

.id (2023a) [City of Stonnington, Industry sector of employment](#), .id website, accessed 3 July 2023.

— (2023b) [City of Stonnington, Seifa by local government area](#), .id website, accessed 3 July 2023.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Stonnington](#), ABS website, accessed 28 June 2023.

— (2022b) [2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Greater Melbourne](#), ABS website, accessed 28 June 2023.

— (2016) [2016 Census All persons QuickStats, Stonnington](#), ABS website, accessed 28 June 2023.

— (2011) [2011 Census All persons QuickStats, Stonnington](#), ABS website, accessed 28 June 2023.

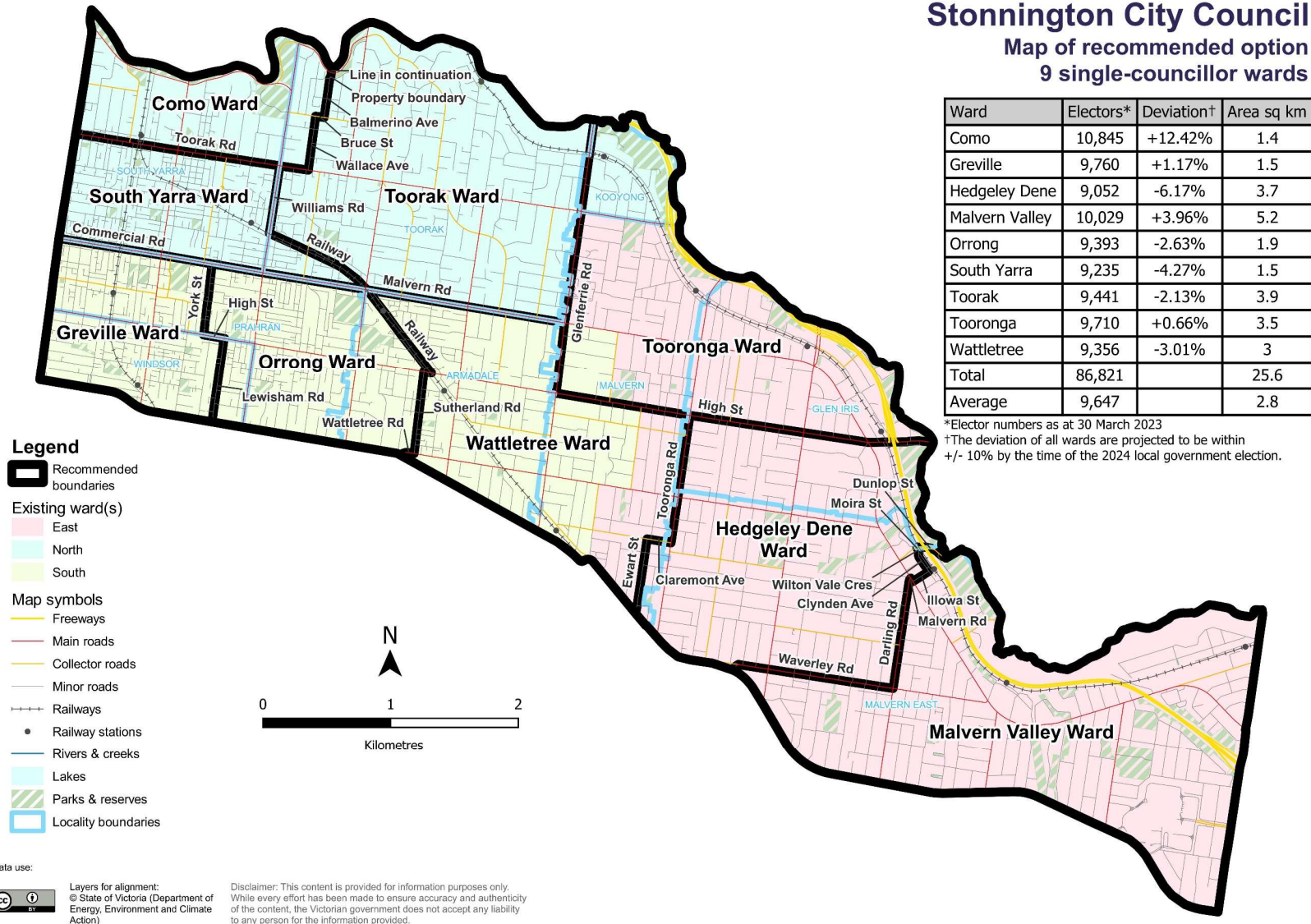
Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic).

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic).

Appendix 1: Map of recommended structure



Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area (square kms)
Como	10,845	+12.42%	1.4
Greville	9,760	+1.17%	1.5
Hedgeley Dene	9,052	-6.17%	3.7
Malvern Valley	10,029	+3.96%	5.2
Orrong	9,393	-2.63%	1.9
South Yarra	9,235	-4.27%	1.5
Toorak	9,441	-2.13%	3.9
Tooronga	9,710	+0.66%	3.5
Wattletree	9,356	-3.01%	3
Total	86,821	-	25.6
Average	9,647	-	2.8

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023

Appendix 2: Public involvement

The panel wishes to thank all submitters to the review and speakers at the public hearing for their participation in the review process.

Response submissions

Response submissions were made by:

Anthony, Damien	Morgan, Polly
Barton, Sarah	Naughton, Ashley
Batagol, Nicki	Nestel, Jeremy
Catherall, Susan	Nottingham, Anitra
Coombe-Tennant, Mark	Page, Christopher
Ermert, Conrad	Ross, Tim
Ermert, Muriel	Russell, Tony
Fuller, Mitchell	Scott, Mike
Hale, Bob	Sekercioglu, Fatma
Hely, Katherine	Seymour, Bruce
Iwanowicz, Chrissie	Stemp, Paul
Jones, Barry	Templeton, Rhiannon
Kirkham, Dr Reuben	Tomkins, Ashleigh
Kudahetti, Pasuni	Victorian Pride Lobby
Kunstler, Steven D	Wang, Alan
Leung, Alex	Whitehorn, Matt
Leventakis, Jim	Wirtz, Helen
Majumdar, Trina	Zou, Yiwei
Martin, Dale	

Public hearing

The following people spoke at the public hearing:

Alex Leung

Mulcahy, Dr Sean (on behalf of Victorian Pride Lobby)

Batagol, Nicki (Councillor, Stonnington City Council)

Fuller, Mitchell

Kirkham, Dr Reuben

Forecast information referred to in the text of this report is based on forecasts prepared by .id – informed decisions id.com.au. .id and its licensors are the sole and exclusive owners of all rights, title and interest subsisting in that part of the report content where .id are identified. Some of .id content is a derivative of ABS Data, which can be accessed from the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics at abs.gov.au, and licensed on terms published on the ABS website.

