

Local Council Representation Reviews

Summary for Councils

The *Local Government Act 1989* (LG Act) requires the VEC to conduct an electoral representation review of each local council in Victoria before every third general election of that council (or approximately every 12 years). Earlier reviews may be requested by the Minister for Local Government.

The review ensures fair and equitable representation for all voters and considers:

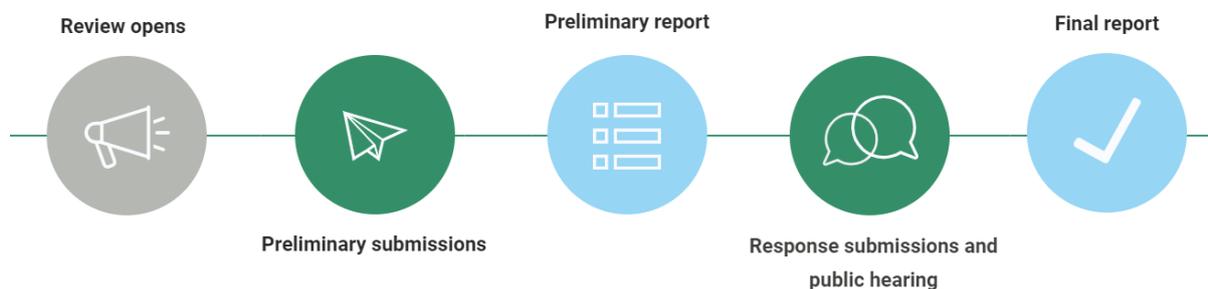
- whether the local council has the appropriate number of councillors
- whether the local council should be subdivided into wards or be unsubdivided and
- if subdivided, the number of wards, ward boundaries and the number of councillors per ward.

Public input is a vital part of the review process. There are three main opportunities for involvement:

1. a preliminary submission
2. a response submission to the preliminary report, and
3. speaking at a public hearing to be held in the local area (only available to those people who make a request to speak in their response submission)

Anyone can make a submission to the review, including council, individual councillors and community members.

The Representation Review Process



1. Review opens

The VEC advertises the commencement of the review. This includes placing advertisements in the *Herald Sun* and local newspapers and publishing information on the VEC website.

The VEC presents at one or more information sessions in the local council area.

Information sessions provide an opportunity for community members to find out more about the review and the review process. Councillors and council officers are welcome to attend

2. Preliminary submissions

The VEC makes the online submission tool, including Boundary Builder, available on the VEC website and accepts submissions from the public for a period of 28 days.

The VEC carefully considers all preliminary submissions received by the close of submissions before preparing the preliminary report.

All preliminary submissions are published on the VEC website. Any personal information such as signatures, contact telephone numbers or addresses are removed. Names and localities remain.

3. Preliminary report

The VEC presents at least one option for the local council's electoral structure in a preliminary report.

The VEC publishes the preliminary report on the VEC website, provides a link to it via email and posts hard copies to council.

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The VEC advertises its release to the media and public including placing advertisements in the *Herald Sun* and local newspapers. This may be the day of the release or in the week following depending on the publication date of individual newspapers.

4. Response submissions and public hearing

Following the release of the preliminary report, the VEC again makes the online submission tool available on the VEC website (this time without Boundary Builder) and accepts submissions from the public that respond to the recommendations contained in the report for a period of 28 days.

The VEC carefully considers all response submissions received by the close of submissions.

All response submissions will appear on the VEC website. Any personal information such as signatures, contact telephone numbers or addresses will be removed. Names and localities will remain.

The VEC schedules a public hearing in the local council area to give people or organisations who have provided a response submission the opportunity to expand on their views.

Only people who have requested to speak as part of their response submission may speak at the public hearing. All members of the public may attend; this includes councillors and council staff. It is important to note that a public hearing will not be held if no requests are made to speak.

The VEC contacts the council following the close of response submissions to advise if the public hearing will go ahead.

5. Final report

The Electoral Commissioner will provide a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government on the appropriate electoral structure for the council in a final report.

The VEC publishes the final report on the VEC website, provides a link to it via email and posts hard copies to council. The VEC will also advertise its release to the media and public.

Any changes resulting from the final report will apply at the October 2020 general election.