



2015-16

**Council  
Representation  
Reviews**

# **Preliminary Report**

## **2015 Port Phillip City Council Electoral Representation Review**

*Wednesday 8 April 2015*

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# 1 Executive summary

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third council general election.

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

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

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

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

## 1.1 2015 electoral representation review

The current electoral representation review for Port Phillip City Council commenced on Wednesday 11 February 2015.

### Current electoral structure

The last electoral representation review for Port Phillip City Council took place in 2007. The review recommended that Port Phillip City Council continued to consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards, though with changes to some ward boundaries and names from the previous electoral structure.

### Preliminary submissions

The VEC received a total of nine preliminary submissions: one from the Council, three from organisations and five from private citizens.

### VEC options

The following options are being considered by the VEC:

- Option A (preferred option)  
**Port Phillip City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.**
- Option B (alternative option)  
**Port Phillip City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, with different boundaries from those in Option A.**
- Option C (alternative option)  
**Port Phillip City Council consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards.**

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Legislative basis

The Act requires the VEC to conduct an electoral representation review of each municipality in Victoria before every third general council election, or earlier if gazetted by the Minister for Local Government.

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

The Act requires the VEC to consider:

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

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

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

### 2.2 The VEC's approach

#### Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows for a municipality to have between 5 and 12 councillors, but does not specify how to decide the appropriate number.<sup>3</sup> In considering the number of councillors for a municipality, the VEC is guided by the Victorian Parliament's intention for fairness and equity in the local representation of voters under the Act.

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

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Section 5B(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

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

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

### **Deciding the electoral structure**

The Act allows for a municipality ward structure to be:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.3 The VEC's principles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.4 The electoral representation review process

### Developing recommendations

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

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review, including Australian Bureau of Statistics and .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd data<sup>4</sup>; voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll; and other State and local government data sets
- small area forecasts provided by .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd
- the VEC's experience conducting previous electoral representation reviews of local councils and similar reviews for State elections
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government

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<sup>4</sup> .id is a company specialising in population and demographic analysis that builds suburb-level demographic information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

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

### **Public involvement**

Public input is accepted by the VEC:

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

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

## 3 Port Phillip City Council representation review

### 3.1 Background

#### Profile of Port Phillip City Council

The City of Port Phillip was established in 1994 with the amalgamation of the former Cities of St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.

The City of Port Phillip is located between two and eight kilometres south-east of Melbourne's CBD and covers an area of 21 square kilometres, of which approximately 80 per cent is built-up area (mainly residential and commercial) and 10 per cent parks and open space, including Albert Park Lake and golf course. The City is bounded by approximately 11 kilometres of foreshore to the south-west, by the City of Melbourne to the north, by the Cities of Stonnington and Glen Eira to the east and the City of Bayside to the south-east.

As at 2013, the City of Port Phillip had a population of 102,501, with a population density of 4,881 people per square kilometre.<sup>5</sup> The City contains several major urban communities and suburbs with the following population breakdown:

**Table 1: Current population distribution in major suburbs**

St Kilda	19.4%	Albert Park	6.8%
Elwood	16.3%	Balaclava	5.6%
Port Melbourne/Garden City	15.9%	Middle Park	4.3%
South Melbourne	10.1%	St Kilda West	3.1%
St Kilda East	9.5%	Ripponlea	1.6%
St Kilda Road	7.4%		

The City of Port Phillip's population increased by 25 per cent between 2001 and 2014 and is projected to increase at an annual rate of 1.7 per cent over the period 2011-2031, to reach 135,137 by 2031.<sup>6</sup> The City has 85,439 voters, with 12,206 voters per councillor, which is greater than the average of 11,020 voters per councillor across Greater Melbourne as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Most wards currently fall within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor, except for Junction Ward, which has a deviation of 11.11 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimated Resident Population, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (2014) *Victoria in Future 2014: Population and Household Projections to 2051*.

<sup>7</sup> 'Greater Melbourne' is an ABS statistical geographic area including 31 metropolitan and metropolitan fringe local government areas.

<sup>8</sup> Data derived by Victorian Electoral Commission from State and Council voter rolls (as at January 2015).

The City has a relatively young population, with a median age of 35, lower than the Victorian median of 37. The population is relatively mobile, with 50 per cent having changed address between 2006 and 2011, compared with 39 per cent for Greater Melbourne on average. It is a culturally diverse municipality, with 31 per cent of inhabitants born overseas. The St Kilda Road corridor and the suburbs of Balaclava, Ripponlea, South Melbourne, St Kilda East and St Kilda have higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average. In the past decade, the City has experienced an overall decrease in the amount of cultural diversity as the municipality gentrifies. Around 20 per cent of the population speak a language other than English at home, lower than the Greater Melbourne average of 29 per cent.

The original inhabitants of the area are the Boon Wurrung people and there is a small population (0.3 per cent) of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander from various backgrounds living in the City.<sup>9</sup>

Professional, scientific and technical services constitute 17 per cent of the workforce. Other significant industries of employment in this economically diverse municipality include education and training, health care and social services, construction and manufacturing, financial services and retail, accommodation and food services.<sup>10</sup> Compared to Greater Melbourne generally, the City of Port Phillip, as a whole, is relatively wealthy, with a significantly higher proportion of high income earners and a lower proportion of low income earners.<sup>11</sup>

The City of Port Phillip holds several large events throughout the year, including the Pride March, St Kilda Festival, the St Kilda Film Festival and the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. The City's beaches (particularly in St Kilda), parks and sporting facilities (especially in Albert Park) and shopping, food and entertainment precincts attract a large number of domestic and international visitors, particularly in the warmer months.<sup>12</sup>

### **Current electoral structure**

The last electoral representation review of the Port Phillip City Council took place in 2007. Following the review, the VEC recommended that the electoral structure remain the same, with seven councillors to be elected from seven single-councillor wards.

Minor adjustments to ward boundaries were recommended to incorporate parts of Albert Park into each of the adjoining wards, in order to accommodate growth in voter numbers. The following ward names were adopted (including three new names): Sandridge, Emerald Hill, Albert Park, Junction, Catani, Carlisle and Point Ormond.

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<sup>9</sup> Port Phillip City Council, *Annual Report 2013/2014*.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) *Regional Profile: City of Port Phillip*.

<sup>11</sup> .id (informed decisions) Pty Ltd (2014).

<sup>12</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Tourism Strategy Plan: 2007-2010*.

The structure was adopted because it was considered to:

- reflect and represent diverse communities of interest and local neighbourhoods and
- accommodate population growth areas to ensure the voter-to-councillor ratio remains fair and equitable across the municipality.

### **3.2 Public information program**

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

- public notices printed in local and state-wide papers
- a public information session to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- a media release announcing the commencement of the review
- coverage through the municipality's media, e.g. Council website or newsletter
- a helpline and dedicated email address to answer public enquiries
- ongoing information updates and publication of submissions on the VEC website and
- a *Guide for Submissions* to explain the review process and provide background information on the scope of the review.

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

### **3.3 Public submissions (preliminary)**

The VEC received nine preliminary submissions by the deadline for submissions at 5.00 pm on Wednesday 11 March 2015. The submissions are publicly available on the VEC website.

Table 2 provides an overview of preferences in the preliminary submissions. Detailed analysis of the submissions follows.

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

	Submitter wanted fewer wards	Submitter wanted ward number to remain unchanged	Submitter wanted more wards	Submitter did not comment on number of wards
Submitter wanted fewer councillors				
Submitter wanted councillor number to remain unchanged	1	2		
Submitter wanted more councillors	5		2	
Submitter did not comment on number of councillors				1

Note: two submitters (the Community Alliance of Port Phillip and the Proportional Representation Society of Australia) put forward two different models.

Submissions proposed a wide variety of models, ranging from seven to twelve councillors and from single-councillor wards to an unsubdivided structure. There was some appetite for change, but also a defence of the status quo.

The Council and unChain Inc. supported the current structure, on the grounds that the single-councillor wards represented the distinct communities of interest in Port Phillip and that the compact size of the municipality meant that seven councillors were enough to ensure adequate representation. Most submissions, though, wanted an increase in the number of councillors, arguing that, in a context of rapid growth and complex issues, this would ease councillors' workloads and improve citizens' access to councillors. Five submissions advocated a change to multi-councillor wards, contending that proportional representation would promote diversity of representation. The Community Alliance of Port Phillip proposed two different models for varying reasons: one of nine single-councillor wards because the Alliance believed this structure would minimise disruption to existing identities of interest and provide strong transparency, accountability and a connecting framework between electors and elected members; and a second model of four three-councillor wards that, in the Alliance's view, would represent strong communities of interest and provide for a diversity of viewpoints from the same ward.

Two submissions included maps of proposed ward boundaries. The Council submission detailed limited changes that would bring wards back to equality now and into the future. The Community Alliance of Port Phillip put forward two proposed models, with a map of each model. A common theme in submissions was that the current long, thin Junction Ward resembled a salamander, did not fit communities of interest and should be changed.

The Community Alliance of Port Phillip and unChain Inc. discussed the 2014 reports of the Local Government Electoral Review and their possible impacts on this representation review. The review, while an important contribution to the discussion on local government representation and its associated electoral processes, has not been adopted by the State Government or translated into legislation. The VEC is obliged to conduct this program of electoral representation reviews consistent with current legislation.

Several submissions discussed the method of voting at council elections, but this issue is a matter for the Council and is outside the scope of electoral representation reviews.

## 4 The VEC's findings and options

### 4.1 Preliminary report findings

#### Number of councillors

The VEC considers that similar types of municipality of a similar size should have the same number of councillors, unless special circumstances justify a variation. The following table shows where the City of Port Phillip fits among the medium and smaller metropolitan municipalities. The municipalities are ranked by number of voters.

**Table 3: Selected metropolitan municipalities**

Municipality	Estimated voters <sup>#</sup>	Number of councillors	Voters per councillor	Area (sq km)
Kingston	114,844	9	12,760	91
Melbourne	114,656	9	12,740	37
Whitehorse	113,729	10	11,373	64
Darebin	105,532	9	11,726	54
Frankston	101,894	9	11,322	130
Glen Eira	100,887	9	11,210	39
Greater Dandenong	98,219	11	8,929	130
Banyule	94,043	7	13,435	63
Moonee Valley*	87,392	9	9,710	43
Manningham	87,039	9	9,671	113
<b>Port Phillip*</b>	<b>85,439</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12,206</b>	<b>21</b>
Stonnington	84,207	9	9,356	26
Maroondah	82,917	9	9,213	61
Bayside	73,333	7	10,476	37
Yarra	71,291	9	7,921	19
Hobsons Bay	65,547	7	9,364	64
Maribyrnong	57,610	7	8,230	31

\* The municipality is currently undergoing an electoral representation review by the VEC during 2015-16.

# Voter estimate calculated after the January 2015 merge of the State electoral roll and Council-only electors as at the 2012 council elections.

The City of Port Phillip is the second largest of the seven-councillor municipalities. Only the City of Banyule is larger than Port Phillip; at the last representation review, the VEC recommended seven councillors rather than nine for Banyule City Council, mainly because the boundaries under a seven-ward configuration best fitted the geographic communities of interest. Three nine-councillor municipalities are smaller than Port Phillip. Port Phillip's voter-to-councillor ratio is considerably higher than the Greater Melbourne average of 11,020. An increase to nine councillors would reduce Port Phillip's voter-to-councillor ratio to 9,493, which would be comparable to other nine-councillor municipalities. On the basis of numbers of voters alone, the VEC considers that there is a case for increasing the number of councillors to nine.

Moreover, the population is growing quite rapidly, at virtually the same rate as the Greater Melbourne area as a whole. This growth imposes development pressures on the Council. Major developments such as the St Kilda Triangle and Fishermans Bend occupy the Council's attention. There is a strong argument that the increased workloads for councillors as a result of the complex issues of development, plus the desirability of maintaining councillor access to a growing number of constituents, justify an increased number of councillors.

On the other hand, the Council submission did not mention undue workloads for councillors. The Council and unChain Inc. pointed to the small geographic size of the municipality, which meant the councillors were well able to represent their compact wards. Another argument against an increase is that gentrification has reduced the social diversity of the municipality and thus the demands on councillors. At the 2011 census, Port Phillip scored 1,065.2 on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index of disadvantage, making it the eighth least disadvantaged municipality in Victoria.<sup>13</sup> All the suburbs within Port Phillip have high scores. At 20 per cent, the proportion of residents who speak a language other than English at home is well below the Greater Melbourne figure of 29 per cent.

Nevertheless, although the City of Port Phillip is generally an affluent municipality, there are pockets of disadvantage that require the Council's attention. As well, some suburbs such as St Kilda East and Balaclava are ethnically diverse, with substantial Russian-speaking and Hasidic Jewish populations. Finally, Port Phillip has a tradition of an active and engaged citizenry that compels attention from its representatives.

Taking all the above factors into account, the VEC considers that it would be preferable to increase the number of councillors and is putting forward two options for nine councillors. The

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<sup>13</sup> The SEIFA index of disadvantage measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of census characteristics, such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. A lower score on the index means a higher level of disadvantage.

current number of seven councillors appears to be working and so the VEC is also offering this option.

The VEC is proposing an increase to nine councillors rather than eight partly because nine councillors fits the proposed electoral structure and partly in agreement with the Council, which stated that 'Port Phillip Council supports having an odd number of councillors, to reduce the chance of split decisions occurring at council meetings.' The VEC rejects the Community Alliance of Port Phillip's alternative proposal of twelve councillors because this number of councillors is disproportionate to the size of the municipality.

## **Electoral structure**

### ***Communities of interest***

One of the main principles underlying the VEC's work on representation reviews is to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible. While the concept of 'communities of interest' is a relatively complex idea, it has been argued that there are two dimensions:<sup>14</sup>

1. Subjective dimension: A community of interest can be said to exist 'where people feel an affinity or compatibility with the area and the people who live there. They see each other as having like interests and value systems.'
2. Objective dimension: A community of interest can be said to exist where there are 'functional relationships between people living in the same area,' which can be measured by looking at 'local activity patterns (for example, where people go to shop, bank, school, church, play sport and socialise).' From this perspective, 'the measure of a strong community of interest is that of the vast majority of people going towards a common centre for services and having common membership of sports clubs, parishes and other community organisations.'

Communities of interest can be geographic, or there can be non-geographic communities of groups across a city or a State. Geographic communities of interest vary in range from a large region to a single street. For a representation review of a metropolitan municipality, the most relevant geographic communities of interest are suburbs or groups of suburbs.

In the City of Port Phillip, the individual suburbs have a strong sense of identity and vary markedly in demographic and other characteristics. Diagram 1 shows these suburbs, which are described in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>14</sup> Fucher, Helen (1989) *The Concept of Community of Interest: a discussion paper which explores the concept of Community of Interest as it applies to Local Government boundaries*, Discussion Paper 2, South Australian Department of Local Government.

While there are eleven suburbs in the City of Port Phillip, the Council distinguishes seven district neighbourhoods, grouping together some suburbs, such as Albert Park and Middle Park.<sup>15</sup>



**Diagram 1: Port Phillip City Council suburbs**

### **St Kilda**

St Kilda is the largest suburb in the City, with a population of 17,795 at the 2011 census. It is a densely populated residential area and tourist and entertainment precinct centred on St Kilda Beach and the shopping and restaurant strips of Acland and Fitzroy Streets. St Kilda has a distinct character—with many live music venues, bars and restaurants—and receives the most visitors of any locality in the City of Port Phillip, particularly in the warmer months. While St Kilda is gentrifying, there are a number of lower income residents and groups with particular needs. St Kilda is less wealthy than the City of Port Phillip on average and has higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average.

### **Port Melbourne**

Port Melbourne had a population of 14,508 as at 2011. Port Melbourne also includes the localities of Garden City and Beacon Cove. Historically, Port Melbourne was an industrial area but has been subject to intensive urban renewal and residential development over the past 15 years. Bay Street is the main street in Port Melbourne. Port Melbourne is wealthier than the City

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<sup>15</sup> See City of Port Phillip website, [portphillip.vic.gov.au/community\\_profiles.htm](http://portphillip.vic.gov.au/community_profiles.htm)

of Port Phillip on average. The impact of the proposed Fisherman's Bend development is a subject of concern amongst many residents. The Council has approved a planning application for Ingles Street, which will contain 258 three-storey townhouses.

### **Elwood**

At the 2011 Census, Elwood had a population of 14,638. Attractions include Elwood Beach and many large period houses from the 1920s and 1930s. Elwood is experiencing ongoing gentrification and has a quiet, exclusive residential character. Elwood Village on Ormond Road is the main shopping and entertainment strip.

### **South Melbourne**

South Melbourne had a population of 9,317 in 2011. It is one of the oldest suburbs in Melbourne. Clarendon Street and the surrounding area—including the popular South Melbourne Market—is the main commercial and entertainment precinct and attracts visitors from outside the municipality. South Melbourne is wealthier than the City of Port Phillip on average. However, there are pockets of intensive social housing, which house lower-income residents.

### **St Kilda East**

St Kilda East had a population of 8,655 within the City of Port Phillip in 2011. St Kilda East is one of the more diverse and densely populated suburbs of Melbourne, although it generally has a quiet residential character, which distinguishes it from the lively neighbouring suburb of St Kilda. The exception to this is Carlisle Street, which has a strong arts and 'alternative' community. St Kilda East shares a prominent Hasidic Jewish community with the neighbouring suburb of Balaclava. St Kilda East is less wealthy than the City of Port Phillip on average and has higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average.

### **Balaclava**

Balaclava had a population of 5,383 at the 2011 census. Much of Melbourne's Orthodox Jewish community resides in Balaclava and the area has a quiet residential character. However, Balaclava also shares the busy and vibrant Carlisle Street with St Kilda East. Balaclava is less wealthy than the City of Port Phillip on average and has higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average.

### **Melbourne (St Kilda Road)**

Part of the suburb of Melbourne, with a population of 6,792 at the 2011 census, is in the City of Port Phillip. The area mainly comprises high-rise residential and commercial developments along the St Kilda Road corridor. This section of the municipality is often considered to share more of a community of interest with the rest of the suburb of Melbourne, rather than being identified with

the City of Port Phillip. The St Kilda Road area has higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average.

### **Albert Park**

At the 2011 census, Albert Park had a population of 5,955. It is characterised by wide streets, heritage buildings, terraced houses, open air cafes and parks and generally has an exclusive, quiet residential character. Commercial centres include Bridport Street, with its cafes and shops and Victoria Avenue, known for its cafes, delicatessens and boutiques. Albert Park is wealthier than the City of Port Phillip on average. Since 1996, Albert Park has been home to the Australian Grand Prix.

### **Middle Park**

Middle Park had a population of 4,058 in 2011. Located between Port Phillip Bay and Albert Park Lake, Middle Park shares a number of characteristics with Albert Park, including terrace houses and a wealthy population. The main shopping street is Armstrong Street.

### **St Kilda West**

At the 2011 Census, St Kilda West had a population of 2,845. It is a primarily residential area characterised by a mix of medium density terrace housing and flats dating from the turn of the century to modern high-rise apartments along the foreshore and closer to Albert Park. The suburb's community and commercial facilities (including schools and shops) are located in nearby suburbs.

### **Ripponlea**

Ripponlea had a population of 1,478 in 2011. The suburb is named after Rippon Lea Estate, a privately owned area which was acquired by the Victorian State Government and subdivided. Ripponlea is less wealthy than the City of Port Phillip on average and has higher proportions of people born in countries where English is not the first language compared with the municipality average.

### ***Seven single-councillor wards***

The current electoral structure of seven single-councillor wards has existed since the first elections for Port Phillip City Council in 1996. The VEC's electoral representation review in 2007 recommended this structure as the one best able to ensure fair and equitable representation for the voters. One of the endemic flaws of single-councillor wards can be a lack of choice for voters, but Port Phillip City Council elections since 2004 have been strongly contested, with an average of more than three candidates per ward and very few uncontested wards. The wards broadly coincide with the seven neighbourhoods identified by the Council and so can be said to fit geographic communities of interest. For these reasons, the VEC has included a structure of seven single-councillor wards as one of the options in this report.

With enrolment for Junction Ward 11.11 per cent above the average across the municipality, ward boundaries have to be adjusted to ensure that all wards meet the legislated requirement of no greater than a 10 per cent variation. The Council's submission proposed a number of amendments to the current boundaries and the VEC has adapted these to take account of projected population shifts. The boundary changes under this option are:

- Transfer the part of Elwood west of Barkly Street and north of the Elwood Canal from Catani Ward to Point Ormond Ward. This change unites all of Elwood in Point Ormond Ward and allows for that ward's relative population decline.
- Transfer the part of St Kilda west of St Kilda Road and south of Fitzroy Street from Junction Ward to Catani Ward. This change creates a clearer boundary, places the bulk of St Kilda in Catani Ward, returns enrolment for Junction Ward to within the 10 per cent tolerance and compensates Catani Ward for the loss of voters to Point Ormond Ward.
- Transfer the parkland north-west of Albert Park Lake from Emerald Hill Ward to Albert Park Ward. This change unites the parkland west of the lake in one ward and creates a clearer boundary along Albert Road.
- Transfer the parts of Port Melbourne and South Melbourne bounded by Ingles, Pickles and Boundary Streets, the Port Melbourne light rail line and the West Gate Freeway from Emerald Hill Ward to Sandridge Ward. This change unites nearly all of Port Melbourne in Sandridge Ward and splits the Montague development between two wards to reduce its impact on voter numbers.

This option has three main defects. First, the City of Port Phillip is not only growing rapidly, but also unequally with concentrated growth in the north and a relative decrease in the south. Single-councillor wards are always vulnerable to population shifts. Under these boundaries, Catani Ward is projected to decline below the 10 per cent threshold by 2024, while Emerald Hill and Sandridge Wards are projected to grow above the 10 per cent threshold. Although the Act provides a mechanism for deviations to be corrected through electoral subdivision reviews, these reviews are a cost to the Council and cause uncertainty and disruption when boundary changes are required. If this model were to be implemented, an electoral subdivision review would likely be required before the next scheduled electoral representation review.

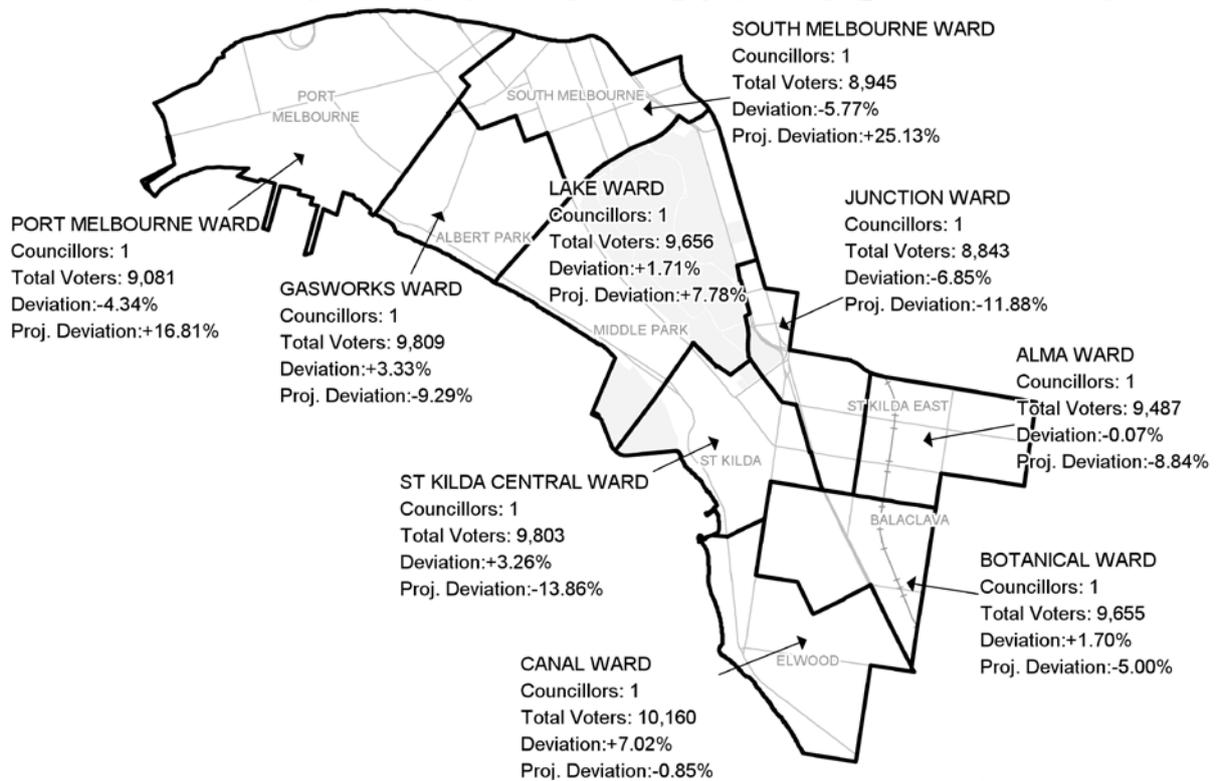
Second, the ward boundaries unavoidably cut across suburb boundaries and so do not coincide with communities of interest. The most egregious example is Junction Ward, which is even worse under these boundaries than under the current boundaries. There is no real community of interest holding this ward together: the St Kilda Road corridor looks to Melbourne CBD and South Melbourne for its services while residents of the southern section go to St Kilda, Prahran

or Windsor. The proposed boundary change nearly cuts the ward in two at St Kilda Junction, making it two disconnected halves.

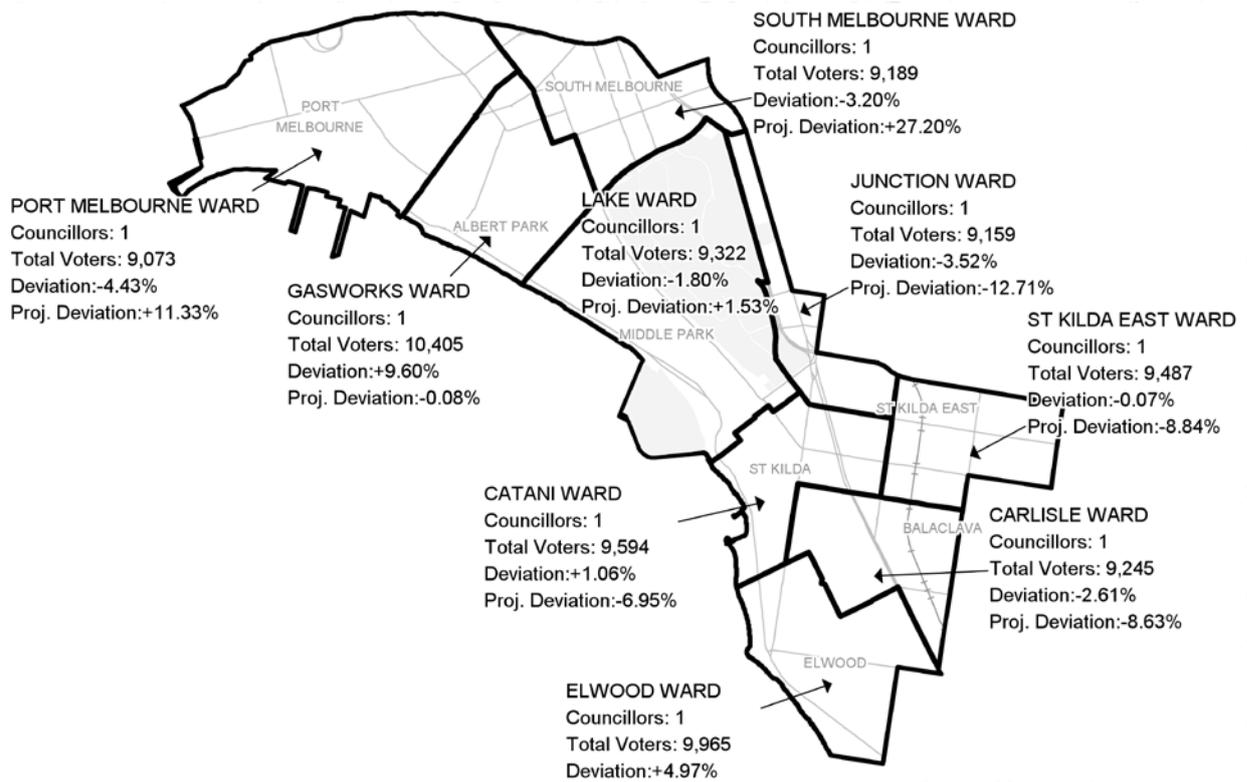
Third, as discussed above, nine is a more appropriate number of councillors for Port Phillip. This report will now discuss some nine-councillor options.

**Nine single-councillor wards**

The Community Alliance of Port Phillip proposed nine single-councillor wards and included a map showing suggested boundaries. The VEC modelled two possible approaches to nine single-councillor wards, one centred on St Kilda and the other on Port Melbourne, as shown below.



**Diagram 2: St Kilda-centric nine single-councillor wards model**



**Diagram 3: Port Melbourne-centric nine single-councillor wards model**

Both models are inferior to the seven single-councillor ward option. They do not comply with communities of interest as well as the seven-councillor option and in both models enrolments for three wards are likely to deviate well outside the 10 per cent tolerance. The VEC does not consider that these models would provide fair and equitable representation and so is not putting forward nine single-councillor wards as an option.

### Three three-councillor wards

Multi-councillor wards are less vulnerable than single-councillor wards to population shifts that require boundary changes because growth areas and other areas can be combined in the same ward. They can be particularly suitable for municipalities whose population is growing rapidly and unevenly.

More important reasons for multi-councillor wards relate to the nature of representation. From media reports, it appears that elections for Port Phillip City Council tend to be passionately fought. Under a single-councillor ward structure, there is a possibility of one group of candidates being elected to represent a majority of wards. Under the proportional representation system that applies in multi-councillor wards, election results are much more in proportion to support. Proportional representation allows more scope for the representation of diversity of opinion.

The main argument for the current structure is that it reflects communities of interest. Yet communities of interests can be non-geographic. For instance, private tenants would have

concerns in common and are spread across the municipality. Port Phillip's LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex) community is very important to the City but is not geographically based. Various demographic characteristics are stronger in some parts of the City than others, but the areas of concentration do not neatly match suburban or neighbourhood boundaries.<sup>16</sup> Non-geographic communities can be more readily represented under proportional representation.

Multi-councillor wards can capture broad geographic communities of interest, combining the advantages of local representation and of proportional representation. The VEC is putting forward two options of three three-councillor wards. One advantage of this structure is that, because all the wards would elect the same number of councillors, there can be no perception of inequality of representation. Under both options, suburbs have been grouped as follows:

- The 'Gateway Ward' includes South Melbourne and Port Melbourne—the area adjacent to the CBD, characterised by rapid growth and high-rise development
- the 'Lake Ward' is based on St Kilda and includes the suburbs to its north and north-west and
- the 'Canal Ward' combines the suburbs east and south-east of St Kilda, distinguished by their residential nature and high degree of ethnic diversity.

The ward boundaries are readily identifiable and enrolments are projected to remain within the 10 per cent tolerance until the next scheduled representation review.

The difference between the two options is the boundary between the proposed Gateway and Lake Wards. Under Option A, the boundary is Albert Road and Kerferd Road—a very clear dividing line. Under Option B, the boundary generally follows suburban boundaries, including all of Albert Park in Lake Ward and nearly all of St Kilda Road in Gateway Ward. The St Kilda Road corridor, composed almost entirely of high-rise apartments with direct access to the CBD, could be said to have more in common with Gateway Ward than with Lake Ward. As well, it might be desirable to keep the suburb of Albert Park united. The VEC considers that either option—one emphasising clarity of boundaries and the other complying more with suburban boundaries—would provide fair and equitable representation to the voters of the City of Port Phillip.

Whilst the VEC has included ward names in all maps, these are illustrative only. Feedback on ward names is welcome.

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<sup>16</sup> See the Profile.id atlas on the City of Port Phillip website—for example, population density: [atlas.id.com.au/port-phillip/](https://atlas.id.com.au/port-phillip/)

## 4.2 Options

The VEC is required by the Act to include a preferred option and may include one or more alternative options for the electoral structure in the preliminary report. The VEC considers that all the options outlined below offer fair and equitable representation for voters in the municipality. Please see Appendix 2 for detailed maps of these options.

### Option A (preferred option)

**Port Phillip City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards.**

### Option B (alternative option)

**Port Phillip City Council consist of nine councillors elected from three three-councillor wards, with different boundaries from those in Option A.**

### Option C (alternative option)

**Port Phillip City Council consist of seven councillors elected from seven single-councillor wards.**

## 5 Next steps

### 5.1 Response submissions

Any person or group, including the Council, can make a submission to the VEC in response to the options contained in this report. Response submissions to the preliminary report should address the models proposed by the VEC within this report. Response submissions must be received by the VEC by 5.00 pm on Wednesday 6 May 2015. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions must include the full name, address and contact telephone number of the submitter. Submissions without this information cannot be accepted.

#### Submission methods

Submissions can be made via:

- the online submission form at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)
- email at [portphillip.review@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:portphillip.review@vec.vic.gov.au)
- post to:  
Victorian Electoral Commission  
Level 11, 530 Collins Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000
- fax to (03) 9629 8632

#### Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the electoral representation review process, all submissions will be available for public inspection at:

- the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) and
- the VEC office at Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The VEC will remove personal information such as address, phone number, and signature, if applicable, from all public copies. However, the full name and locality of submitters will be displayed.

### 5.2 Public hearing

There is an opportunity for people or organisations who have made a response submission to speak about their submission at the public hearing. The public hearing is schedule to be held at 7.00 pm on Monday 11 May in the Council Chamber, St Kilda Town Hall, 99a Carlisle Street, St

Kilda. If you wish to speak at the public hearing, you **must** indicate this on your response submission.

### **5.3 Final report**

Following the public hearing, the VEC considers all the evidence it has gathered and publishes a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing a recommended electoral structure. The report is scheduled to be published on Wednesday 3 June 2015. Any changes resulting from the final report will apply at the October 2016 general election.

The final report will be available from the VEC by visiting [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) or calling 131 832 and also for inspection at the offices of Port Phillip City Council.

## **Appendix 1: List of preliminary submissions**

Preliminary submissions were received from:

Community Alliance of Port Phillip

John Millard

John Mills

Stephen Morey

Port Phillip City Council

Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc.

Ainsley Symons

unChain Inc.

Lorna Wyatt

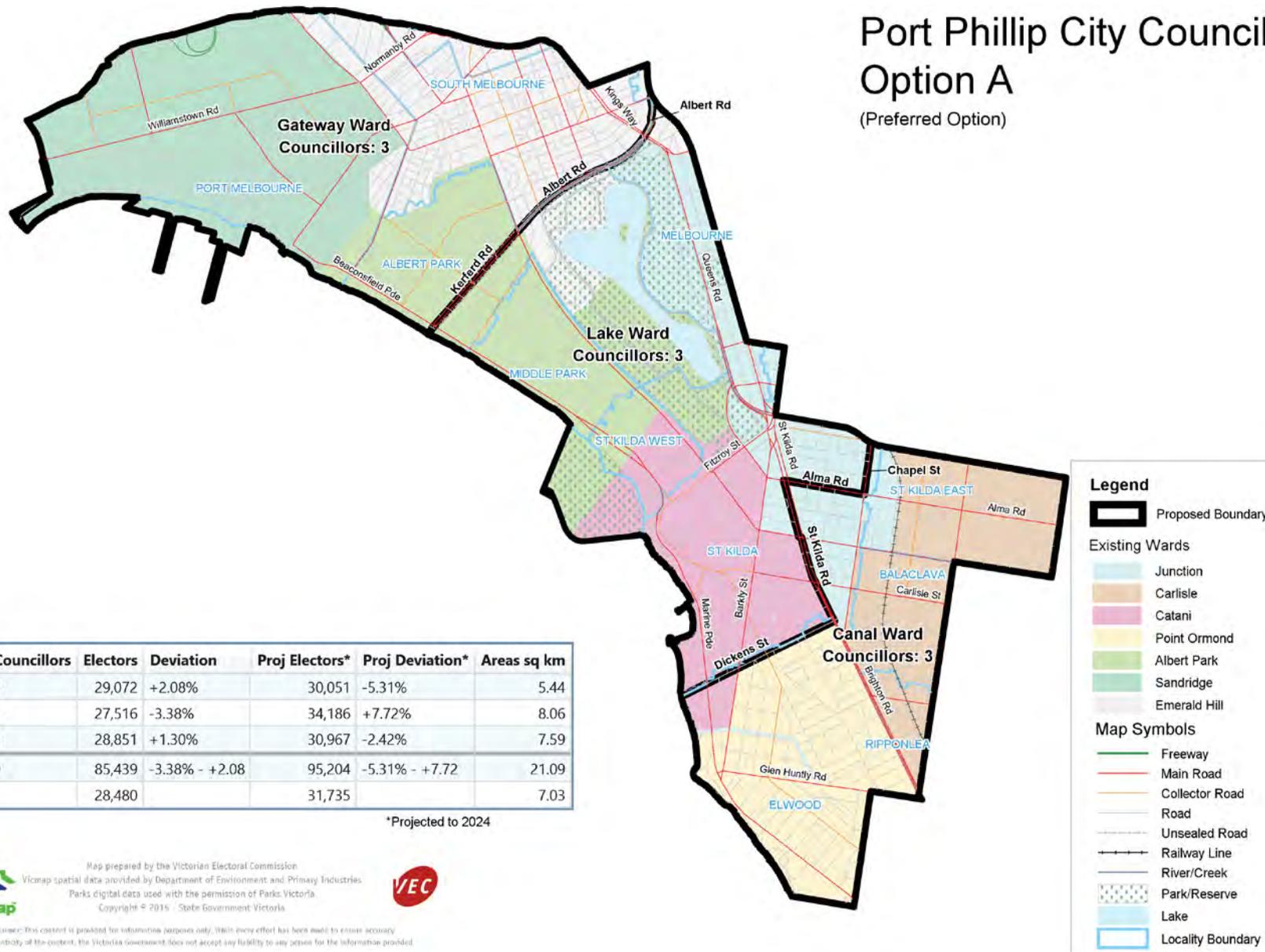
## Appendix 2: Option maps

The following maps are included in this report:

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<b>Map</b>	<b>Page</b>
Option A (preferred option)	30
Option B (alternative option)	31
Option C (alternative option)	32

# Port Phillip City Council Option A (Preferred Option)



Ward	Councillors	Electors	Deviation	Proj Electors*	Proj Deviation*	Areas sq km
Canal	3	29,072	+2.08%	30,051	-5.31%	5.44
Gateway	3	27,516	-3.38%	34,186	+7.72%	8.06
Lake	3	28,851	+1.30%	30,967	-2.42%	7.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>85,439</b>	<b>-3.38% - +2.08</b>	<b>95,204</b>	<b>-5.31% - +7.72</b>	<b>21.09</b>
Average		28,480		31,735		7.03

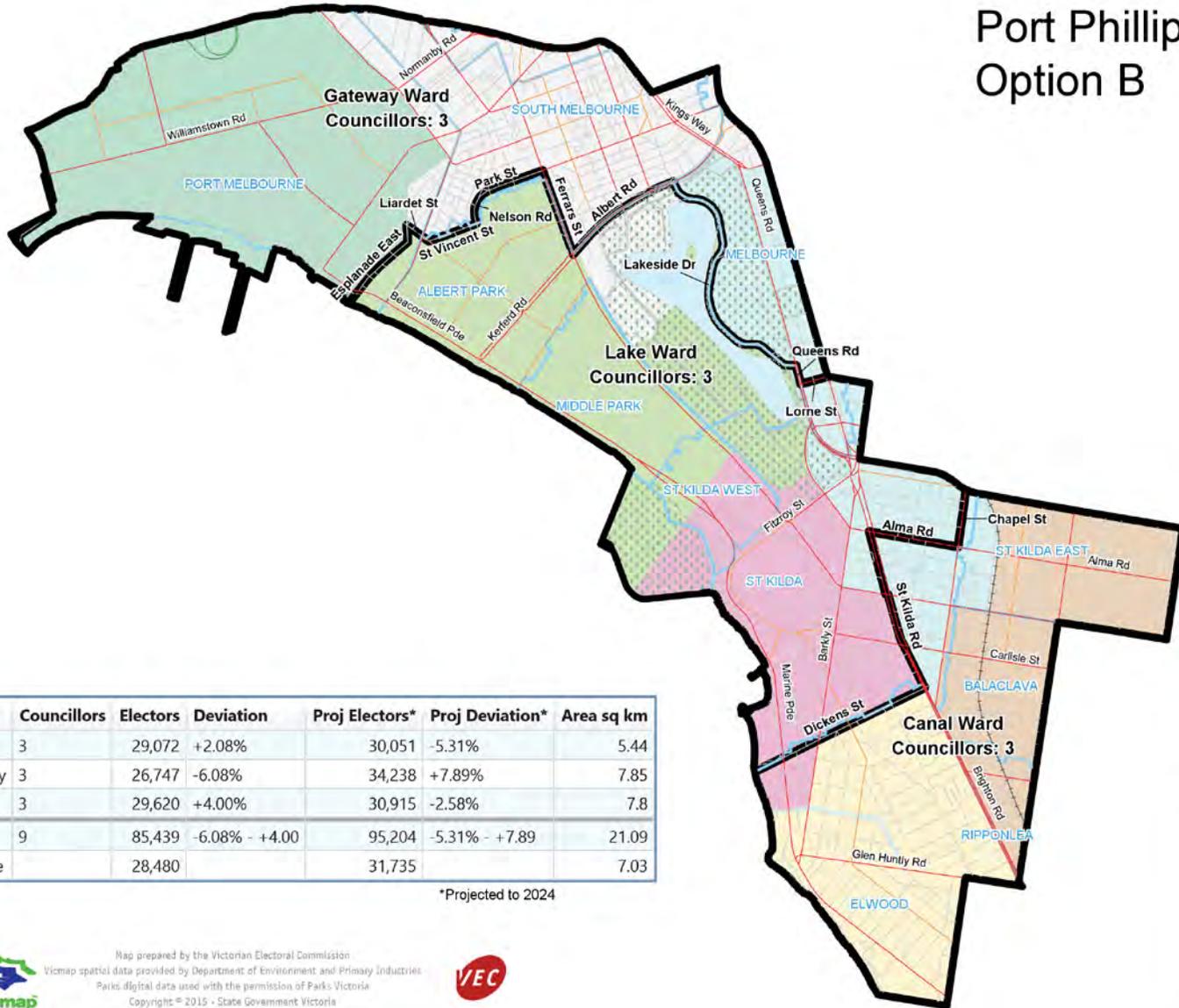
\*Projected to 2024

Map prepared by the Victorian Electoral Commission  
Vicmap spatial data provided by Department of Environment and Primary Industries  
Parks digital data used with the permission of Parks Victoria  
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# Port Phillip City Council Option B



Ward	Councillors	Electors	Deviation	Proj Electors*	Proj Deviation*	Area sq km
Canal	3	29,072	+2.08%	30,051	-5.31%	5.44
Gateway	3	26,747	-6.08%	34,238	+7.89%	7.85
Lake	3	29,620	+4.00%	30,915	-2.58%	7.8
Total	9	85,439	-6.08% - +4.00	95,204	-5.31% - +7.89	21.09
Average		28,480		31,735		7.03

\*Projected to 2024

**Legend**

- Proposed Boundary

**Existing Wards**

- Junction
- Carlisle
- Catani
- Point Ormond
- Albert Park
- Sandridge
- Emerald Hill

**Map Symbols**

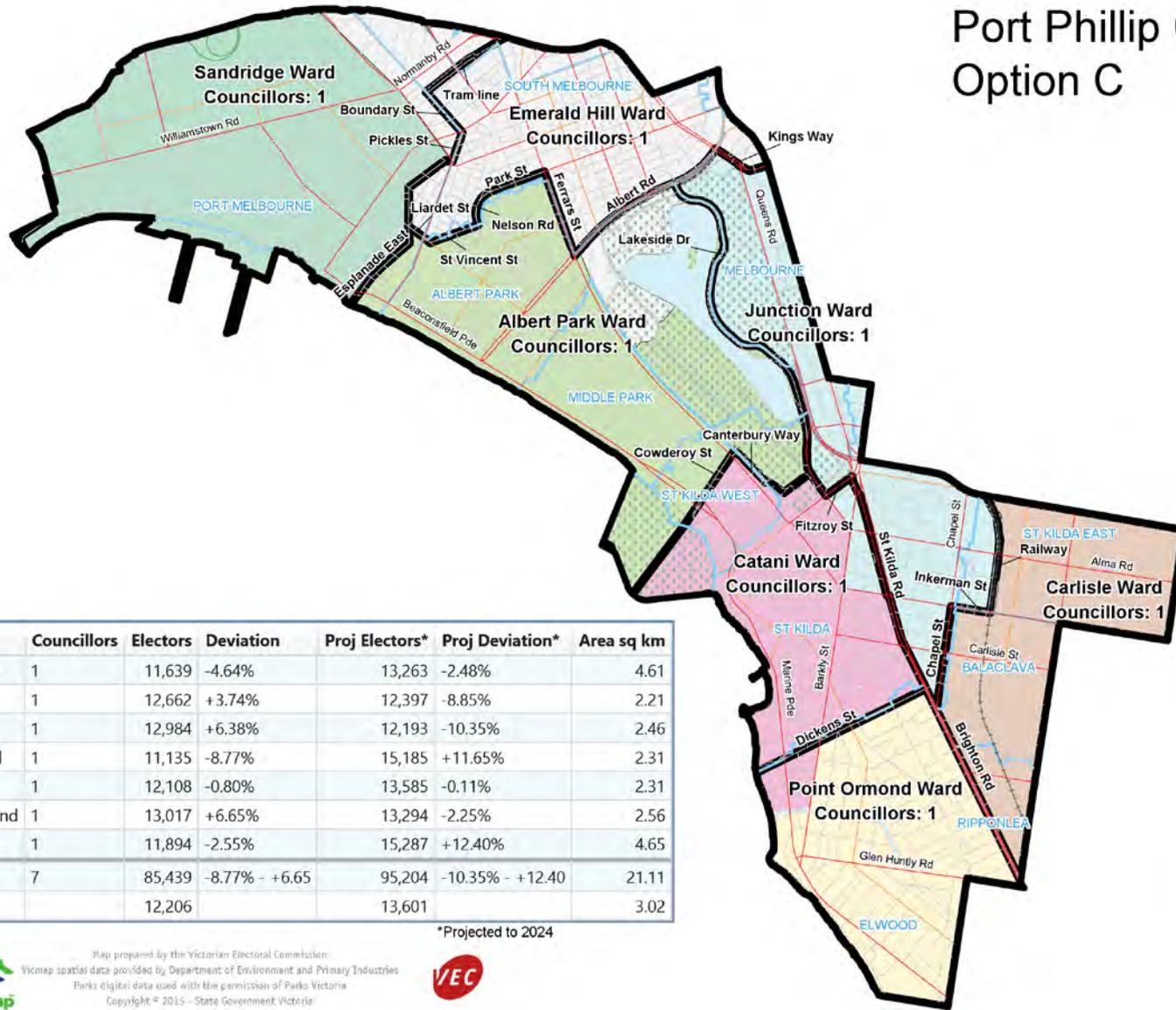
- Freeway
- Main Road
- Collector Road
- Road
- Unsealed Road
- Railway Line
- River/Creek
- Park/Reserve
- Lake
- Locality Boundary

Map prepared by the Victorian Electoral Commission  
 Vicmap spatial data provided by Department of Environment and Primary Industries  
 Parks digital data used with the permission of Parks Victoria  
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# Port Phillip City Council Option C



Ward	Councillors	Electors	Deviation	Proj Electors*	Proj Deviation*	Area sq km
Albert Park	1	11,639	-4.64%	13,263	-2.48%	4.61
Carlisle	1	12,662	+3.74%	12,397	-8.85%	2.21
Catani	1	12,984	+6.38%	12,193	-10.35%	2.46
Emerald Hill	1	11,135	-8.77%	15,185	+11.65%	2.31
Junction	1	12,108	-0.80%	13,585	-0.11%	2.31
Point Ormond	1	13,017	+6.65%	13,294	-2.25%	2.56
Sandridge	1	11,894	-2.55%	15,287	+12.40%	4.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>85,439</b>	<b>-8.77% - +6.65%</b>	<b>95,204</b>	<b>-10.35% - +12.40%</b>	<b>21.11</b>
Average		12,206		13,601		3.02

\*Projected to 2024



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**Legend**

- Proposed Boundary

**Existing Wards**

- Junction
- Carlisle
- Catani
- Point Ormond
- Albert Park
- Sandridge
- Emerald Hill

**Map Symbols**

- Freeway
- Main Road
- Collector Road
- Road
- Unsealed Road
- Railway Line
- River/Creek
- Park/Reserve
- Lake
- Locality Boundary

## Appendix 3: Public information program

### Advertising

In accordance with the Act,<sup>17</sup> a public notice of review was placed in the following newspapers:

- *Herald Sun*, Wednesday 4 February
- *Caulfield Glen Eira / Port Phillip Leader*, Tuesday 10 February
- *Weekly Review Bayside and Port Phillip*, Wednesday 11 February

### Media release

A media release was prepared and distributed to local media at the commencement of the review on Wednesday 11 February 2015.

### Public information sessions

Public information sessions for people interested in the review process were held on:

- Monday 16 February in the Council Chamber, St Kilda Town Hall, 99a Carlisle Street, St Kilda and
- Wednesday 18 February 2015 in the Auditorium, Port Melbourne Town Hall, 333 Bay Street, Port Melbourne.

### Helpline and email address

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

### VEC website

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

### Guide for Submissions

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

### Council website and newsletter

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

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

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Victorian Electoral Commission  
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Melbourne VIC 300

131 832

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