



Branch submission to Victorian Electoral Commission

Prepared by:
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Thank you for accepting our submission regarding the shift to adopting a single-councillor ward structure for the City of Wodonga. The Benambra branch believes that expanding representation is a core value of the Labor Party, and that shifting to this model will increase representation for areas beyond the city centre by ensuring that residents of each area will have equal representation on the council, meaning that no matter where you live in the area, you have suitable say in issues that affect our community.

The branch rejects commentary that having council divided into wards will “make council political”. Government on all levels is political, and shifting to change the area that councillors and candidates represent will not increase or decrease this effect, only ensures that each area has local representation. This change will introduce complexity to the operation of local government, but the benefit is fairer representation for those beyond the immediate Wodonga locality. Voters deserve candidates and councillors that are intimately aware of the issues and who share their experience living in their neighbourhood.

The branch submits that proposed model 2 effectively captures the diverse make-up of our rural areas and accommodates better for expected population growth in the Leneva and Baranduda localities. Additionally, model 2 has greater respect for distance between the southern and eastern localities. Model 2 also allows more rural representation in the form of an extra ward councillor, giving non-central areas more weight on the council – this will ensure that these areas are not subject to the will of the simple majority, and play a more active role in the decision making process.

Kind regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mitch Bridges.

Mitch Bridges

Secretary

On behalf of the Benambra Branch of the Victorian Labor Party