Local Council Electoral Structure Review: Moorabool Shire Council

Dear Electoral Representation Advisory Panel,

The **Ballaarat and District Branch of the Victorian Greens ("Ballaarat and District Greens")** writes to make a submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel, addressing the models proposed by the Panel in its preliminary report.

We **strongly support Model 1**, an unsubdivided electoral structure with 9 councillors.

As the Panel notes, the Moorabool Shire Council population is forecast to grow rapidly, and an unsubdivided structure is the best mechanism for accommodating changes in its population. As other submissions have noted, this is also likely to foster a shire-wide focus amongst councillors elected from across the entire council rather than a sectional ward-based focus that tilts towards the urban and most populated areas. It would ensure that councillors work for the whole shire, not just their own ward.

With 9 councillors, it is likely that there will be councillors elected from the rural and regional areas of the shire. Furthermore, it is likely that the proportional voting system will enable minority groups an opportunity to get representation, in turn increasing the diversity of councillors, including councillors from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.

Public submissions are also largely in support of an unsubdivided structure. We believe this is the most fair, equitable and democratic model.

We **do not support Model 2**, a subdivided electoral structure.

As the Panel notes, a ward-based structure would likely need to undergo frequent ward boundary reviews in response to rapid population growth.

The structure would also decrease the diversity of councillors and lead to sectional ward-based focus that tilts towards the east of the shire to the disadvantage of rural communities in the west.

Public submissions are also largely opposed to a subdivided structure.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and would welcome the opportunity to speak at the public hearing.