



PRSAV-T Inc. Policy V-T_02: Victoria's municipal councils

SUMMARY: Victoria's municipal councils should be directly elected by the [single transferable vote](#) (quota-preferential) form of proportional representation. The voting and counting systems should closely resemble the [Hare-Clark system](#) used for Tasmania's municipal elections, but with the transfer values described below.

Council structure: Councils should consist of an odd number of councillors (*to minimize tied votes*). The number of councillors in a municipality should be between five and fifteen.

Multi-councillor electoral districts: All councillors should be elected from one or more multi-councillor electoral districts. Each electoral district should elect an [odd number](#) of councillors (*so a majority of votes elects a majority of councillors*). If wards are used, each ward within a municipality should elect the [same number](#) of councillors, and each councillor should represent the same number of electors within a [range of plus or minus ten per cent](#) (*this ensures that votes have equal value*).

Neutral ballot-paper format: The ballot paper should list candidates' names in a single column. Ballot papers should be printed with candidates' names rotated in different positions within the column, using [Robson Rotation](#) (*so the incidence of all candidates' gaining votes attributable to the position of the candidate's name in the column is equalized*). A ballot paper instruction should tell voters to mark as many preferences as there are vacancies, and encourage them to mark further preferences. A ballot should be formal if it is marked with a unique first preference (*this ensures that voters have the maximum possible flexibility in expressing their preferences*).

Accurate transfer values: Transfer values should be determined using the [Weighted Inclusive Gregory Transfer method](#) presently used for the transfer of surplus votes for Western Australia's Legislative Council; or the [Meek method](#) prescribed in Schedule 1A of New Zealand's *Local Electoral Regulations 2001*.

Filling casual vacancies: The system of filling casual vacancies should correspond with the [countback](#) system prescribed for use in Tasmania's *Local Government Act 1993* (*this ensures that all councillors are always [directly elected](#) by the people, and reflects the preferences of the quota of voters that elected the vacating councillor*).

Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor: Mayors and Deputy Mayors should all be councillors elected by vote of the Council. If that is not to be the provision, they should be directly elected by the voters in separate elections using [Tasmania's provision](#) where the Mayor and Deputy Mayor can only take their position if they have also been elected as a councillor, with the election reverting to election by the Council in the event of a casual vacancy, or where no person elected for one of those offices has also been elected as a councillor.

Voting rights of presiding officers: The Mayor and other presiding officers should have a [deliberative vote only](#), so that motions are only carried by a majority of councillors voting for them. Where the vote is equal, the motion should be lost.

Entrenchment: All of the above principles should be entrenched in Victoria's [Local Government Act](#) to require a referendum, to protect against their opportunistic repeal.