

T3081 – Banyule Electoral Structure Submission

Transition 3081 (T3081) was established in 2011, with the vision of encouraging and inspiring residents living in the postcode of 3081 (Bellfield, Heidelberg Heights, and Heidelberg West) to live sustainably, in our efforts to tackle climate change. We are one of the seven Transition Towns movements within Banyule. In the past few years, we have worked closely with our local councillor and other councillors on various community building initiatives. We have been awarded Banyule Environmental Grants to run sustainability workshops, as well as received the Banyule Volunteer Award (Community Group category) in 2016.

Our 3081 population is growing rapidly, principally due to extensive medium and high-density housing being built in recent years. This area is also gentrifying and attracting home buyers due to proximity to the city and surrounding infrastructure. However, this area has a higher than average number of lower socio-economic residents compared to the rest of Banyule, with many in social housing and suffering from mental health issues, addictions and generational poverty. Heidelberg West is also home to Victoria's largest Somalian community. However, we also have innovative examples of community such as the Murundaka co-housing community in Heidelberg Heights, the Hibi Urban Farm in Heidelberg West, and the Exodus community.

Our Olympia ward currently is already on a deviation of +9.74%, and due to the area's diverse issues our councillor carries a heavy load for a part-time position. With the population growing rapidly in this area, we would like to propose a change to the **3 wards with 3 councillors** in each ward structure. We believe this will encourage more diverse viewpoints and allow for constructive debate within the council. We hope that this will better represent the local environmental movement that we have within Banyule, and various other communities of interests within the area.

We are aware of the State Government's proposal to abolish multi-councillor wards which make this recommendation unsustainable in the long term. If this eventuates, we would like to see Banyule's wards boundaries to be redrawn to 9 wards, so that we have **9 councillors in total**. Our considered view is that at the very least, an increase in the number of wards and councillors would be best for Banyule's ever-increasing population and issues. Within Olympia ward, our recommendation is to retain Heidelberg Heights and Heidelberg West, but redraw the boundary so that Bellfield and Ivanhoe can be joined. The logical geographical boundary would be Bell Street. Bellfield has a small number of voters (1457), compared to Heidelberg West (4268) and Heidelberg Heights (5304). We believe a dedicated councillor would have more time to focus on addressing challenges unique to these two suburbs.

We also hope that a larger number of councillors can encourage more diversity in gender and cultural background. Our council has been traditionally very male-dominated and may not best represent the different communities of interests. We also hope that there will be more energy, vision, and debate around important issues within our council, such as the complex challenge of tackling climate change.

Finally, we strongly recommend that the ward names be changed to aboriginal names, with consultation to the local Aboriginal elders. The current ward names do not carry much visibility to many of our current residents and miss the opportunity to be respectful to the traditional landowners.

Thank you for taking time to read our group submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Yennie Starkey, on behalf of T3081

21 July 2019

List of T3081 Resourcing Group Members:

1. Michael and Yennie Starkey (3 children), Heidelberg Heights
2. Christine and Jake Clancy (2 children), Heidelberg West
3. Anthony and Avril Lunken, Heidelberg West
4. Neil and Maude Erenstrom (2 children), Heidelberg Heights
5. Eva Parton and Eric Ong (2 children), Heidelberg Heights
6. Yuki and John Cameron (2 children), Heidelberg West
7. Maria Nechwatal, Heidelberg West
8. Anne Connell, Bellfield
9. Joanne Begovic (2 children), Heidelberg Heights
10. Jo Massey, Heidelberg Heights
11. Mikoto Araki (1 child), Heidelberg Heights
12. Sharon Wright, Heidelberg West
13. Kaz Phillips, Heidelberg Heights
14. Mary and Robert Stringer, Heidelberg
15. Belinda Nechwatal, Ivanhoe

Note: T3081 sends a monthly newsletter and has a database of over 300 local subscribers.