

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in response to the Preliminary Report on the structure of the Boroondara Council. As I indicated in my earlier response (to the initial consultation), I strongly support the concept of multi-member wards as I think this approach enables the diversity of community views and needs to be appropriately represented. Consequently, in response to your preliminary report, my view is that Option A will provide the best representation for Boroondara, although Option B would also do well.

Furthermore, as a Boroondara resident, I am deeply concerned at the intervention by Boroondara Council described in the VEC's preliminary report. Of course, individual councilors, as all others living in Boroondara, have the right to have their opinions heard in representation reviews. However, their approach in devoting resources to mobilising residents to make submissions that benefit the existing councillors thereby maximising their own chances of getting re-elected has disturbing implications for democracy. From past experience this approach to exercising their muscle and claiming to speak on behalf of all residents when there is no consensus (and we have not been consulted by them in the process of them doing this!), exemplifies everything that is wrong with the current Council structure of single member wards and its implementation in representing residents.

I urge the VEC to take this abuse of process into consideration when reaching its final decision, and to support either Option A or B, either of which would be likely to check such behaviour in future.

Helen Borland

