

Submission to VEC Electoral Review of Boroondara City Council

To the VEC,

I make this submission regarding the VEC Electoral Review of Boroondara City Council representation. As resident of Ashburton within the Solway Ward, I support change to multi-Councillor wards and in particular option A proposed by the VEC.

I support the multi-Councillor per ward structure in option A for the following reasons:

- **Multi-councillor wards would reflect community interests by capturing the commercial hubs and activity centres together with the areas they service.** Multi-councillor wards cover a larger area, promoting a broader and more community based (rather than ward-based) approach to provision of social, cultural, community and sports facilities. The proposed boundaries capture the communities of interest within Boroondara. Residents are familiar with their suburbs, major shopping centres and landmarks and the main roads which act as dividers.
- **Multi-councillor wards promote diversity** and the representation of a variety of views within the community. This is an important advantage over the single-Councillor ward in which the largest single group is likely to dominate. Even if such a group makes up a minority of the residents (e.g three interest groups that make up 35, 30 and 25 percent of the community respectively) it is possible for the largest group to dominate and influence councillors in single-Councillor wards and prevent other views from been considered.
- **Multi-councillor wards would facilitate the representation of features that impact on larger areas than are covered by single-councillor wards** (such as the Yarra River, Gardiners Creek and Camberwell Junction). Larger multi-councillor wards are more effective at supporting council to develop plans that have impact across the entire council whether these relate to environment, sports facilities, transport, planning, heritage, social and cultural etc. They would also provide economies of scale that can assist with administrative and other functions.
- **Multi-councillor wards ensure that a particular ward is not left without representation** in circumstances where a councillor has a conflict of interest (or does not attend a meeting) – as occurred recently with the Dorothy Laver Reserve issue.

I note that I was very concerned about the publicity campaign undertaken by the City of Boroondara in relation to the electoral review process. The Council used taxpayer money to promote the current system – this was a blatant conflict of interest on behalf of existing councillors and was entirely improper.

Regards,

Gemma-Jane Cooper

