

**VICTORIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION
LOCAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATION REVIEW**

BOROONDARA CITY COUNCIL

RESPONSE SUBMISSION – April 2019

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is to be congratulated on the thorough, comprehensive and professional Representation Review, as set out in its Preliminary Report. The findings are supported by hard data and established facts, presented in a clear fashion. One important feature of the Preliminary Report is that it identified overt and covert submissions from a small minority which pressed for the maintenance of the present structure of a single councillor representing each of the ten wards.

I strongly support Option A, the VEC's Preferred Option, for eleven councillors elected from four wards. Option A is based on the strongest of democratic principles, supported by facts and data, and is well argued. The VEC has established a very compelling case for change. The present structure has been in place since 1995, and has outlived its usefulness because it flouts many of the principles of a democracy. In order to capture the support of the largest and broadest representation of electors, almost all the Melbourne metropolitan councils together with the Victorian Legislative Council, have abandoned the single-councillor type of electoral structure. The VEC has also presented a number of other additional strong reasons for adopting its Option A.

The VEC must not be distracted from implementing their Preferred Option A, as was the case in the previous Review in 2008. The introduction multiple councillor wards represents an opportunity for local government in Boroondara to change from a system based on an outdated 17th Century feudal model, to one representing a contemporary form of local governance. The change will result in moving from a system where the residents and ratepayers are told what to do and believe, to a democracy where the council and staff are representatives which are responsible to the residents and ratepayers.

I strongly support the naming of a ward after George Swinburne (1861–1928). He was a visionary and a philanthropist who made an enormous contribution to the State of Victoria and to the local area. He was the Mayor of Hawthorn and the local representative in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. In 1907 he held discussions with the Mayors of Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell which led to the establishment of a technical college based in the local community. I appreciate that there may be some resistance to the use of the name Swinburne for a Ward. This resistance is based on inconvenience caused to some local residents over issues related to the present Swinburne University of Technology, such as parking. However, I would ask those who may feel aggrieved to look back over the past 115 years and to recognise George Swinburne for his very substantial and generous contributions to what is now Boroondara.

John McLean AO



1 May 2019