

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Electoral Commission's Review of Local Council Electoral Representation for Boroondara.

I am writing to support the implementation of multi members wards and proportional representation as a means to elect councillors in the City of Boroondara.

I believe that multi member wards will contribute to a more democratic council by enabling the representation of a wider range of views and allow a more meaningful debate in council deliberations.

It will also meet the urgent need to attract a more diverse range of councillors with a wider range of skills and expertise.

The current level of discussion and debate at Council meetings appears to be orchestrated to an outcome and questions from the public are seemingly discouraged from making meaningful contribution to the debate and consideration of a wider range of views.

Decisions made by Council heavily favour business and property interests with less consideration of groups within the community and their needs and representations. For example Council could play a significant role in the climate change and environmental area by being proactive in its own emissions reductions efforts and by encouraging residents and businesses with the decisions it considers and the programs it delivers. Local transport is another area where a more favourable emissions performance could be facilitated by Council but where interest in this area does not get heard.

A net effect of the narrow interests that are currently pursued is the distortion seen by the demolition and re-development of the Kew Recreation Centre. An already adequate and well featured facility is being replaced at major cost whereas in less affluent sections of the Municipality there is a relatively sub-par approach to facility development.

As I understand it the last VEC Review for this issue in Boroondara initially found there was a case for changing to multi members wards but was perhaps heavily influenced by Councillor submissions that could be seen as protecting their views and interests.

A change to multi members wards would enable a more democratic representation of the community interests and a potential for more diverse discussion topics to be aired properly and debated fully.

Robert Brown

