

Electoral Representation Review - Boroondara City Council - Preliminary Submission
Peter Main - Camberwell - 11 March 2019

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [SPAM] Submission for VEC Boroondara representation review
Date: Monday, 11 March 2019 7:53:03 AM

To whom it may concern,

A proportional representation system is the most democratic way to represent our community. I support multi-councillor wards in the City of Boroondara. An even number of councillors means that the council can have tied votes, which are broken by the mayor. This means that the mayor can in effect have two votes on some issues.

Many minority communities of interest are spread throughout the community and not geographically concentrated, so can only be represented in a proportional system. In single-councillor wards, majority groups will often win every ward. A large minority (whether that be ethnicity, age, politics, etc.) will, if its members were to all vote on that basis, gain representation on council in a multi-councillor ward system.

Boroondara councillors are currently all older people, and are all white. In these ways and others, Boroondara Council is vastly unrepresentative of its residents and will remain so for as long as single- councillor wards are used.

In 2015, the ward boundaries in Hawthorn were changed to account for high population growth in Glenferrie Ward. In just four years, Glenferrie Ward has again fallen outside the 10% enrolment requirement, this time along with two other wards. A new set of boundaries are now required, and this will keep happening if single-councillor wards are kept. Multi-councillor wards can accomodate fast-growing and slow-growing areas together, maintaining balance without boundaries frequently needing to be shifted. ore democratic.

Elections for more vacancies attract more candidates, meaning the voter can consider a wider range of viewpoints when deciding who to vote for. Boroondara elections for single-councillor wards usually only attract a few candidates, and in the worst cases just one, leading to no election being held in that ward. This happened in Glenferrie and Maling Wards in 2008, and in Bellevue Ward in 2016.

In multi-councillor wards, proportional representation applies, and candidates are elected in proportion to their support within the electorate. Therefore, unlike the preferential vote counting system where only the candidate with the majority of votes is elected (used in single-councillor wards), other candidates with significant minority support can also be elected.

Existing systems are defended on the basis of how well they are working, but the current system is not providing Boroondara citizens with good democratic outcomes. Councillors are only accountable to their ward, which is a very small section of the entire municipality and there is no competition amongst councillors of the same ward to increase standards of conduct and integrity, as there would be in multi- councillor wards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Main

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Via Boroondara Citizens for Better Democracy, www.boroondarademocracy.com