



Tim Smith MP

Member for Kew

Shadow Minister for Planning & Heritage
Shadow Minister for Local Government
Shadow Minister for Housing
Shadow Minister for Population



13th March 2019

Victorian Electoral Commission



Dear Victorian Electoral Commissioner

Re: Boroondara Electoral Representation Review - Preliminary Submission

I am emailing in support of single-councillor wards for Boroondara City Council.

The last electoral representation reviews for Boroondara took place in 2008 and 2015. Following the 2008 and 2015 reviews, the VEC's final recommendation was for Boroondara to remain with ten single-councillor wards with a minor change to ward boundaries.

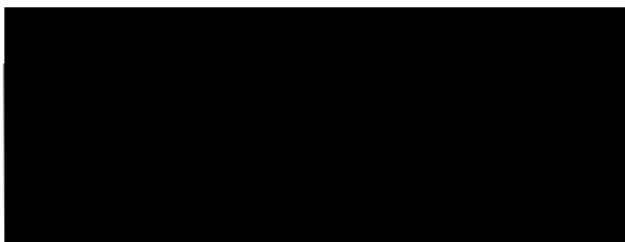
As Shadow Minister for Local Government and Member for Kew, I oppose multi-councillor wards for the following reasons:

- (1) The current number of councillors for Boroondara is appropriate and is sufficient to provide fair and equitable representation for locals. However, I do believe that having an odd number of councillors particularly for electing a Mayor might be an issue the VEC may wish to consider in this review process.
- (2) Our representatives should have a close connection to their community. In single member wards our elected local representatives:
 - a. are easier to access
 - b. have a greater understanding of the local area and issues
 - c. reflect the individual diverse elements and voices in our communities
 - d. are more accountable to the local community
 - e. provide one primary point of contact ensuring a consistent approach; and
 - f. different neighbourhoods have distinctive needs. Local representation ensures these differences are recognised and supported.
- (3) Multi-councillor wards are inappropriate for Boroondara because:
 - a. residents may need to contact multiple councillors to raise awareness of an issue or galvanise support for local project

- b. there is potential for a duplication of work if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively
 - c. all of the Councillors may reside in the same part of the ward leaving the remaining parts without local representation and therefore councillors may be less accessible for residents in some parts of the ward
 - d. can encourage party political affiliations
 - e. councillors may be overworked due to increased workload
 - f. councillors may have competing views about how their ward should be run, which may cause friction and be confusing for residents and businesses.
- (4) Geographically and demographically, Boroondara is a very diverse community. The suburbs in my electorate of Kew alone are distinctively different from each other. Kew and Kew East are different from Deepdene, Canterbury, Balwyn and Balwyn North. And the Kew electorate is only a third of the Boroondara municipality.
- (5) I am a former Mayor and Councillor of Stonnington Council, which has a proportional representation voting and multi-councillor wards. Councillors were not as accountable to the community as is the case with single-councillor wards. Further still, elections were clouded with dummy candidates and political activists who didn't understand the community's needs and who don't have their best interests at heart. It is much easier for activists and minor political parties to run 'dummy' candidates and undermine the democratic process in multi-councillor ward elections with proportional representation.

I support retaining single-councillor wards elected by the preferential system of voting.

Yours sincerely



TIM SMITH MP