

Electoral Representation Review - Boroondara City Council - Preliminary Submission
Matthew Whitehorn - Hawthorn East - 09 March 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to make a submission to this review in favour of introducing multi-member wards to the Boroondara council, along with an increase to 11 councillors. This would bring Boroondara council in line with the majority of councils in the Melbourne region, as well as allow more distinct voices to be represented in the council.

Under a single-winner election, someone whom the majority of a ward voted against can become their sole voice on council for four years. By having multi-member wards, it is more likely that one of the councillors that is elected to represent a ward is more receptive to their viewpoint and concerns, and that the interests of minority communities are better protected.

It is often argued that having a single member allows a clear direct point of contact and to understand local issues better, however if your only local councillor is opposed to the cause you are contacting them for, or is on the opposite side of a particular issue - then you are effectively not represented on council at all, with no alternative voice available to you.

An increase to 11 councillors is suggested as a means of reducing deadlocked votes that give too much power to a single councillor, as the mayor's tie-break vote effectively gives them two votes. I have included a map of an indicative division of the council into 3 wards, as I believe this provides the best balance between representing minority views and providing manageable ward sizes to address concerns regarding a local voice. This is I believe preferable to an at-large election, where it would be difficult for voters to make informed decisions on a large number of candidates; or to smaller 2 member wards, where you would not see the diversity of represented views.

Thank you for your consideration.