

Electoral Representation Review – Boroondara City Council - Response Submission
Julia Thornton – Surrey Hills – 8 May 2019

I have lived in Surrey Hills all my life. The house I live in was bought by my grandparents in 1920. My great grandmother moved in to it late in her life, and my children also have lived here, my daughter being born in the same room as my mother. Thus it has housed five generations of us. I am therefore a long standing resident, and you would think, likely to be quite conservative about change.

However I am writing to support Option One as presented in the AEC preliminary report. I was initially moved by wanting greater diversity in representation on Council, especially given what I perceive as a much changed spectrum of communities of interest in the municipality. This is especially obvious in the influx of more young people into small units in the area and the growth of the Chinese community. But I was also further persuaded by the argument made in the report, of the structural import of keeping ward boundary changes to a minimum at a time of uneven population growth .

I am generally in favour of voting arrangements that result in elected officials being required to bargain to a decision, somewhat in the Scandinavian fashion. Politics is far too aggressively competitive and "winner takes all" at the moment. Democratic options that allow people to necessarily at least pay attention to other points of view, even if not fully incorporating them, are to be commended. However good governance also demands circuit breakers, so 11 councillors makes sense.

I commend you on a very well thought through and argued first report. Perhaps next time an incorporation of some of the philosophy and mechanisms of representative and informed deliberative democracy could be included for incorporation into local government voting and decision-making systems.