

Electoral Representation Review – Boroondara City Council - Response Submission
Ann Wilks – Hawthorn – 8 May 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to comment about the proposal to change the local council system in Boroondara. I am concerned about the attempt to change the present system of one member per ward and accordingly advise my support for Option C, for the reasons outlined below.

Local government means just that: “local” (at least it should). At the time council amalgamations occurred resulting in the city of Boroondara, I was deeply sceptical of the decision to have just single representation in many smaller wards. However, since living with single-representation and having had considerable interaction with my local representatives over successive years (and in the context of having experienced the former multiple representation system) I am a convert to a single councillor representing a single ward. It enables the opportunity to form a connection with and deal directly with one person - a “local” representative who is “close to the action” and knows the (small) area well and can personally relate easily and directly with the issues at hand.

Whether Boroondara has 10 or 11 wards seems to be just a matter of size and numbers - and it would appear that the time has come that increasing population now demands another ward and representative to provide “fairness” to all.

I am deeply opposed to the VEC's preferred option A and also option B, proposing multiple councillors in only a few wards. Over the years (*post* council amalgamations) I have also experienced the modern version of multiple representatives within large wards, in another municipality. So, I base my opinion on not just the former system, but also the current experience. It is of concern that the VEC appears to have a preference towards a few, large, multimember wards for all local government areas and so has apparently disregarded the majority support for the retention of ten single councillor wards in Boroondara, a system that has served it well since inception. Each municipality is individual and the views and interests of residents and councillors must be heard and respected.

Thank you.