



Final Report

2015 Boroondara City Council Subdivision Review

Wednesday 28 October 2015

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1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recommends adjustments to the boundaries of the following wards within Boroondara City Council:

- Gardiner Ward
- Glenferrie Ward

This recommendation is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Recommended ward boundaries are illustrated in the map in Appendix 2.

2 Review background

2.1 Legislative basis

The *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct a subdivision review to ensure the equitable representation of all voters in a municipality.

A subdivision review considers adjustments to ward boundaries so that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10 per cent of the average number of voters per councillor for the whole municipality. This is known as the 'equality requirement'.

As population changes affect voter numbers and distribution in subdivided municipalities, one or more wards may be unlikely to meet this requirement at the next general election. A subdivision review considers adjustments to existing ward boundaries so the voter-to-councillor ratio in all wards meets the equality requirement.

Subdivision reviews only apply to subdivided councils:

- that are not scheduled for an electoral representation review before the next general election and
- where, two years before the council is to hold a general election, the VEC considers one or more wards are unlikely to meet the equality requirement at the time of the next general election.

The VEC notified the Minister for Local Government that the Glenferrie Ward was unlikely to meet the equality requirement at the 2016 general election. The Minister then advised the VEC that a subdivision review of Boroondara City Council was required before the general election.

2.2 Scope

A subdivision review only considers the location of ward boundaries. A subdivision review cannot consider changes to the number of councillors or wards.

These changes are considered in a council's periodic electoral representation review. The next scheduled representation review for Boroondara City Council will be held before the 2020 general election.

A subdivision review also cannot:

- change the external boundaries of the municipality
- divide municipalities or
- amalgamate municipalities.

These changes can only be made by an Order in Council.

2.3 The VEC's approach

Developing recommended changes

Recommended changes to ward boundaries are modelled using both population growth data provided by .id (Informed Decisions) Pty Ltd¹, and voter statistics prepared by the VEC.

Where possible, models are developed using a 'minimal change' approach, so recommended changes affect as few voters as possible.

The VEC also considers the following factors in developing its recommendation:

- relevant issues identified in the council's last representation review
- communities of interest
- geographic features
- means of transport and traffic routes and
- the likelihood of population changes before the next election.

Public involvement

Public input is accepted by the VEC via:

- written submissions to the subdivision review preliminary report and
- a public hearing for people to speak about their submission.

Submissions are an important part of the process, but are not the only consideration during a review. The VEC ensures its recommendations are in compliance with the Act and are formed through careful consideration of public input, independent research, and analysis of all relevant factors.

¹ .id is a company specialising in population and demographic analysis that builds suburb-level demographic information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

3 Current review

3.1 Council background

Council profile

The City of Boroondara is located five kilometres east of Melbourne's central business district, and is bounded by the Yarra River to the north and west. The municipality covers an area of 60 square kilometres, encompassing the suburbs of Ashburton, Balwyn, Balwyn North, Camberwell, Canterbury, Deepdene, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East, Kew, Kew East and parts of Glen Iris, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert. The municipality is home to many educational institutions, including Swinburne University of Technology.

The City of Boroondara has a high level of education and occupational status compared with Victoria as a whole.² Compared to Greater Melbourne, the municipality has a higher proportion of people employed in professional and technical services and a slightly lower unemployment rate.³

The predicted average annual population growth rate for Boroondara between 2011 and 2016 is 1.3 per cent, and the average annual growth rate is expected to be 0.8 per cent through to 2031.⁴ The municipality is largely residential in character, and has a higher concentration of medium and high-density dwellings to the west, in the suburbs of Kew, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East and parts of Camberwell and Balwyn. The rate of approvals for dwellings other than houses has been increasing steadily since 2010, rising from around 400 approvals in 2004–05 to over 1,200 in 2013–14.⁵

Electoral structure

Boroondara City Council currently consists of 10 councillors elected from single-councillor wards.

Diagram 1 details this structure and voter statistics by ward.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Index of Education and Occupation*, 2011.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census data*, 2011.

⁴ Victorian Government, *Victoria in Future 2015: Population and household projections to 2051*.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Building approval trends*, available at boroondara.vic.gov.au/our-city/all-about-boroondara-social-statistics/housing#BPDs.

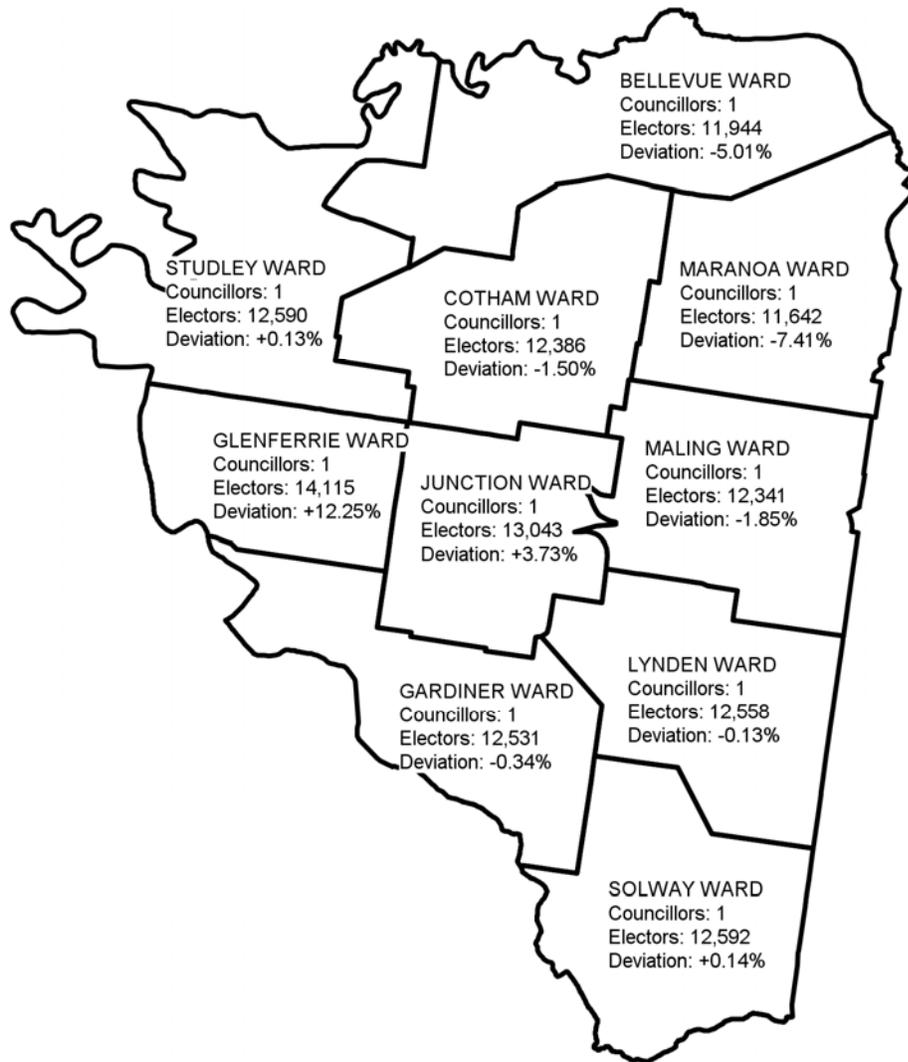


Diagram 1: Boroondara City Council electoral structure and voter statistics as at 3 July 2015.

Voter numbers

Table 1 shows the number of voters in each ward as at 3 July 2015, ranked by the percentage this deviates from the average number of voters per councillor for the whole municipality.

Table 1: Voter numbers per ward

Ward	Councillors	Voters	Deviation (%)
Glenferrie	1	14,115	+12.25
Maranoa	1	11,642	-7.41
Bellevue	1	11,944	-5.01
Junction	1	13,043	+3.73
Maling	1	12,341	-1.85
Cotham	1	12,386	-1.5
Gardiner	1	12,531	-0.34
Solway	1	12,592	+0.14
Studley	1	12,590	+0.13
Lynden	1	12,558	-0.13
Total for municipality	10	125,742	

The table shows that Glenferrie Ward is recording a deviation beyond the 10 per cent tolerance allowed by legislation. The VEC's projected enrolment data shows that this deviation will continue to increase in the lead-up to the Council's next general election in October 2016. Glenferrie Ward's boundaries need to be adjusted to fulfil the equality requirement.

3.2 Subdivision review preliminary report

The VEC's subdivision review of Boroondara City Council commenced with the release of a preliminary report on Tuesday 1 September. The report contained proposed ward boundary changes based on analysis of enrolment information.

Advertisements were placed in the following newspapers notifying the public of the proposed changes:

- *Progress Leader*, Tuesday 1 September
- *The Age*, Tuesday 1 September
- *The Weekly Review - Stonnington & Boroondara*, Wednesday 2 September

3.3 Public response

Public submissions

The VEC accepted submissions responding to the preliminary report from Tuesday 1 September until Wednesday 30 September. The VEC received one public submission. The submission is discussed in Section 4.1.

The submitter's details can be found in Appendix 1.

Public hearing

The VEC scheduled a public hearing for those wishing to speak about their submission at 7.00 pm on Thursday 8 October in the The Zelman Room, Hawthorn Arts Centre, 360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn. There were no requests to speak so the hearing was not held.

4 Recommendation

4.1 The VEC's findings

In its preliminary report, the VEC put forward an option to address the imbalance in the voter-to-councillor ratio in Glenferrie Ward leading up to the October 2016 election. Based on analysis of demographic trend data, public submissions, and a minimal change approach, the VEC continues to support the option put forward in its preliminary report. The VEC's reasons for adopting its final recommendation are outlined below.

Demographic trend data

The City of Boroondara is one of several urban municipalities of Victoria experiencing growth. The rate of population growth in Boroondara is expected to be 0.8 per cent per year.⁶ There is also evidence of growth in the numbers of dwellings and new developments at the western end of the municipality, particularly in the suburbs of Hawthorn and Hawthorn East.⁷ With its single-councillor ward structure of 10 wards, this concentrated population growth is putting particular pressure on Glenferrie Ward, contributing to the higher number of voters per councillor in that ward than is permitted by legislation. By contrast, enrolment statistics for Gardiner Ward show that it is easily able to accommodate a small increase in its number of voters under the proposed boundary adjustment (916, or 0.72 per cent of total voters) and remain comfortably within the voter-to-councillor average.

Submissions

The VEC received one submission, from Boroondara City Council, in response to the preliminary report for the Boroondara City Council subdivision review. As outlined in its submission, the Council considered the proposed adjustments to the Glenferrie and Gardiner Ward boundaries at its meeting on 28 September 2015. The Council resolved to support the proposed adjustments on the basis that they are clear and have low impact, as the affected area does not contain significant commercial districts, schools or other social infrastructure.

Minimal change

The VEC explored a number of possible models for reducing voter numbers in Glenferrie Ward, all of which alter multiple sections of the ward's boundaries and therefore impact other wards. The VEC's recommended boundary adjustment involves the least change to existing wards in the municipality of any of the models that were considered. The proposed boundary runs north-

⁶ Victorian Government, *Victoria in Future 2015: Population and household projections to 2051*, Boroondara Profile, 2015.

⁷ profile.id, City of Boroondara, Dwellings and development map, forecast.id.com.au/boroondara/dwellings-development-map, 2015.

south at the intersection of Glenferrie Road and Riversdale Road, and east-west along Urquhart Street to the intersection of Auburn Road. The proposed boundary is clear and easy to identify, running along Glenferrie Road and Urquhart Street, with little or no impact on local commercial districts, schools and other social infrastructure in Glenferrie and Gardiner Wards. Nor does the recommendation alter the suburban character of the re-shaped wards, as it does not add or remove parts of other suburbs. The proposed changes simply transfer a small part of the suburb of Hawthorn from Glenferrie Ward to Gardiner Ward, which is already split between the two wards.

4.2 The VEC's recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recommends adjustments to the boundaries of the following wards within Boroondara City Council:

- Gardiner Ward
- Glenferrie Ward

Recommended ward boundaries are illustrated in the map in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Public involvement

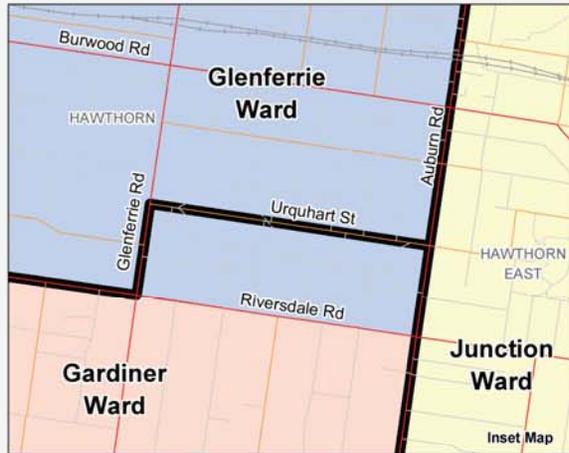
Public submissions

Public submissions were received from:

Boroondara City Council

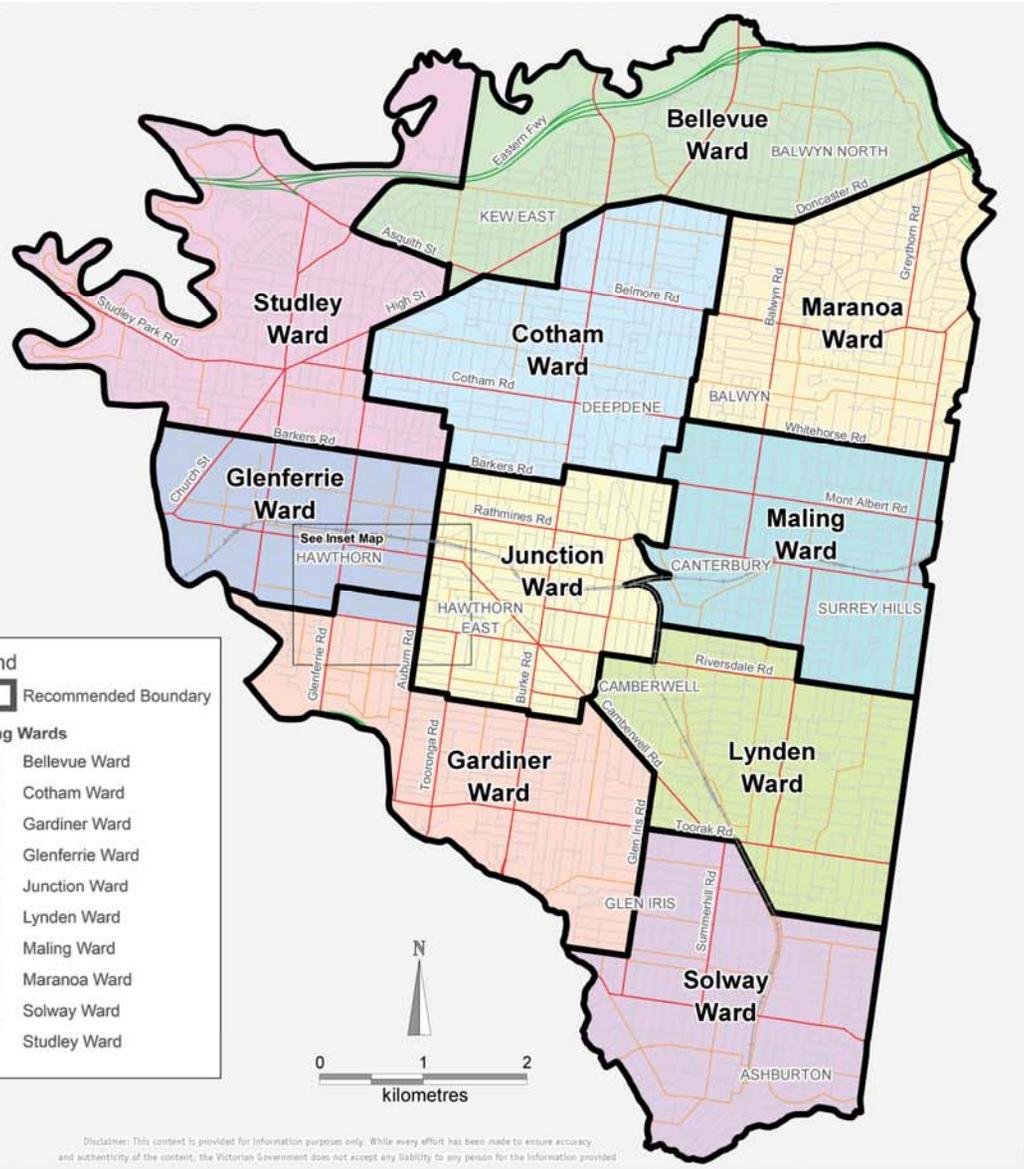
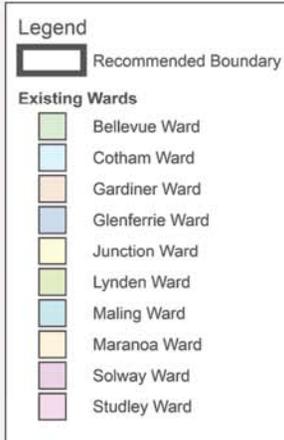
Appendix 2: Recommended ward boundaries map

Boroondara City Council
Map of Recommended Option



Ward Statistics

Ward	Councillors	Electors	Deviation	Area (sq km)
Bellevue	1	11,944	-5.01%	7.79
Cotham	1	12,386	-1.50%	6.20
Gardiner	1	13,447	+6.94%	5.96
Glenferrie	1	13,199	+4.97%	3.83
Junction	1	13,043	+3.73%	4.77
Lynden	1	12,558	-0.13%	5.70
Maling	1	12,341	-1.85%	5.64
Maranoa	1	11,642	-7.41%	5.98
Solway	1	12,592	+0.14%	6.03
Studley	1	12,590	+0.13%	8.26
Total	10	125,742	-7.41% - +6.94	60.16
Average		12,574		6.02



Map prepared by the Victorian Electoral Commission
Vicmap spatial data provided by Department of Environment and Primary Industries
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