

**Electoral structure review - Wyndham City Council - Response Submission
Josh Gilligan - Tarneit - 22 November 2023, 10:04 am**

Please refer to the attachment.

Dear Panel,

I lodge the following submission in supporting Model 2. The following reasons set out below explain why I believe Model 1 is not a viable model for proportionate and accountable municipal representation, leaving Model 2 as the best and only viable model.

Model 1 doesn't reflect the reality of representation

As a Wyndham Councillor representing Tarneit, I strongly oppose any model that would move Creekstone, Harlow (not yet commenced) Marigold, Rose Grange, Seasons Park and Verdant Hill estates into Truganina. The proposed Model 1 boundary between Bemim (Truganina) and Wimba (Tarneit) wards will be a nightmare for elected representatives to directly serve the local communities that elect them -- the central premise of single member ward structures.

According to the Local Government Act 2020 (**the Act**), the introduction of single member ward system is *"to enable residents to receive direct representation, and to ensure councillors are more accountable to local communities"*.

Model 1 will mean **six of Tarneit's residential estates** will have less accountability of representation by having a Truganina representative that represents them either wholly or partially as opposed to a single Tarneit councillor directly accountable. The interests of these communities do not mirror the Bemim Ward's interests. They are distinctly different communities that are being inadvertently merged together.

The ERAP must therefore recommend a model that creates the least confusion and not act counter to the single ward member design. Model 1 will undoubtedly create confusion for thousands of Tarneit residents current (and future).

Model 1 has boundary lines along low level roads in the middle of at least three estates in Tarneit and two neighbourhoods in Hoppers Crossing that runs counter to the idea of designing wards that provide direct representation and accountability.

By contrast, Model 2 clearly largely retains the existing ward boundaries and best reflects a model that reduces division of communities compared to Model 1. This view is also supported in the ERAP's Preliminary Report¹.

The primacy given to Williams Landing further supports the contention that Model 1 does not present equitable municipal representation for communities of interest

Model 1 provides Williams Landing with significant and unfair representation. Williams Landing is projected to have a population of a little under 11,000 and yet is being provided with its own ward at the expense of Hoppers Crossing, Truganina and Tarneit communities². This is because the Bemim Ward is extended into Tarneit and Bellbridge is split between Truganina and Hoppers Crossing thereby enabling Williams Landing to be provided with its own exclusive ward representation.

Model 2 retains the likelihood of minimal changes to boundary designs in future years

¹ Page 18, 'Local council electoral structure review – Preliminary report – Wyndham City Council', <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/-/media/072cdb8ff1584e1c95e10102cf36895f.ashx>

² Community Profile, Wyndham City Council, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1fd6bcc071ad437ba821f1b92e5ca592>

The ERAP must give regard to the likelihood of boundary changes being influenced by future population growth. In my opinion, Model 2 does exactly this. The drawing along major roads and creeks, which retains the sensible ward boundaries set more than a decade ago, account for future population growth opportunities.

Whilst I accept that both models will require re-balancing, as identified in the ERAP Preliminary Report, Model 1 is almost certain to require far more significant redistributions that create a greater level of confusion within the municipality.

Model 2 accounts for growth in the boundary areas of the outer corridors of the city through the Brinbeal and Wimba divides as well as Grange, Heathdale and Waterholes along key roads and within the existing ward boundaries of representation.

Proposal to rename 'Wimba and Brinbeal' as Tarneit North and Tarneit West respectively

The proposed names for both wards reflect no relevance to the communities of interest of those divisions. It is notable both wards cover the entire suburb of Tarneit plus Mount Cottrell. In my opinion, there is a greater benefit in classifying the wards to be Tarneit West and Tarneit North.

Tarneit North and Tarneit West are references used to describe the sections of the suburb. Notably, Tarneit is derived from an Aboriginal word and is the recognised suburb name in the City of Wyndham.

The renaming of the wards with the inclusion of a geographical reference (North and West) is more palatable and more likely resonate within the broader community in terms of where the ward is situated and who resides within it.

In the case of 'Wimba', it is worth acknowledging that there are no 'white wallabies' in Tarneit. Equally, 'Brinbeal' refers to 'rainbow'. I do not believe that either of these names reflect or resonate with the people that fall within these ward borders. By comparison, Tarneit is a well known and accepted name with an ability to distinguish between both wards based on geographical reference.

The disconnect of the ward name to the area of the people it represents is worthy of a re-consideration of the panel.

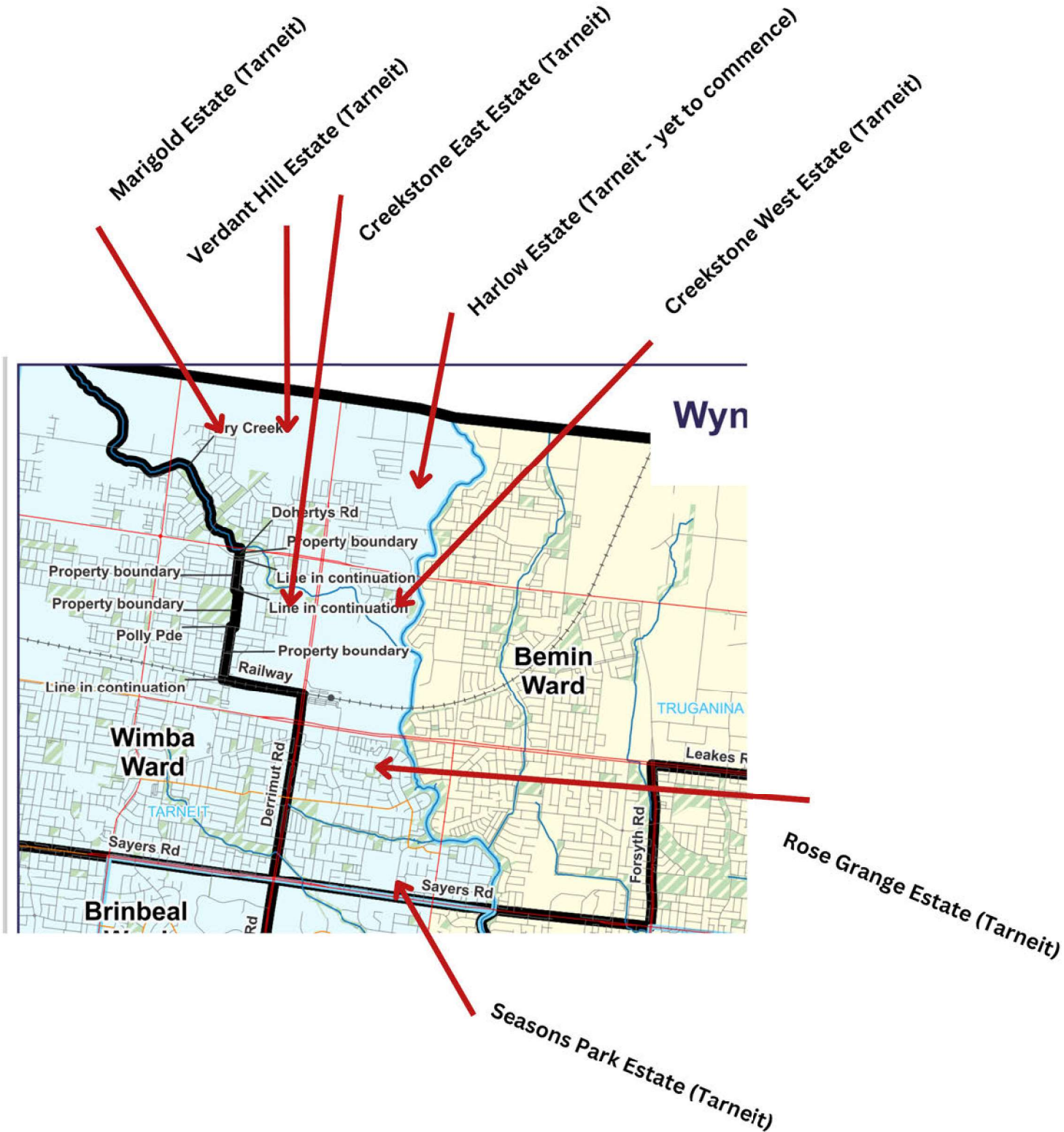
Further, the Precinct Structure Plans that underpin the Victorian Government's planning system setting out development for Tarneit refers to 'Tarneit West' and 'Tarneit North' with respect to areas within the municipal boundaries drawn up in Model 2.

The Victorian Government also refers to Tarneit West and Tarneit North when describing government programs and projects that fit succinctly in the localities of Wimba and Brinbeal.

Examples that reflect the locality of interest include:

- Tarneit West Shopping Centre (located in the centre of Brinbeal);
- FlexiRide Tarneit North (bus service program servicing Tarneit North area)
- Tarneit North Community Precinct Master Plan (major sporting facilities proposed in the proposed 'Wimba' Ward)

I therefore recommend that Wimba be replaced with Tarneit North and Brinbeal be replaced with Tarneit West.



Model 1:
Tarneit estates being pushed into
Truganina's Bemin Ward