

**Electoral structure review - Monash City Council - Response Submission**  
**Maria Palatsides - Hughesdale - 09 August 2023, 03:12 pm**

Firstly I would like to thank the VEC for the text message notifying us of this suggested transition and the ability to provide feedback.

I think it would be wise for Monash City Council to also adopt a similar process when seeking feedback on projects that affect residents rather than relying on people to go to their website or shape Monash. Great initiative shown here by the VEC.

I seek some clarification that is not contained in any of the supporting documentation for the proposed changes.

1. Is it possible for residents in the suggested zones to have a say on the zone names? ie. Put a few names forward for each zone and request the residents vote or ask residents to participate in the naming of the zones and provide their own suggestions. This would ensure a less top-down feeling and a more consultative process for residents and ratepayers.

2. Was there any public consultation by the Vic Govt or councils prior to the Local Govt Act 2020 provision being created for this model? It would be helpful for all residents to understand the reasoning and pro's and con's in transitioning toward this model. ie. Is it geared to provide a better easier transitioning to the Vic Govt's 20 Min neighbourhood plan as outlined in The Plan to 2050 (as outlined on their website).

3. Can an explanation and cost forecast or scoped anticipated budget be provided as to the cost of delivering any of these changed models.

- Council election costs in going from the current structure to a greater number of wards; More printing etc.
- Costs for councillors to have business cards, advertising materials etc reprinted due to the necessity to rebrand;
- Will there be an increase in workload for councillor support staff seeing that the council resources are already stretched and over the last forecasted budget;
- Has consideration been given to the cost and timing of this implementation with the already growing and unbearable cost of living and energy crisis residents and rate payers are facing;
- Is this the most beneficial use of tax and ratepayer dollars right now? -- - What will be the direct tangible benefits for resident and rate/ taxpayers and what will be the cost of this to residents and rate / taxpayers?
- Cost to update the council websites and all affiliated electronic sites and printing material.

4. We currently have three councillors in each ward which provides choice for residents who may feel comfortable to approach one of the current councillors in their ward to have topical discussions.

How will the removal of options improve the approachability of councillors to engage with ratepayers when some ratepayers may be polarised by their new representative being that they are usually affiliated with a political party. Were constituents consulted by the Vic Govt before introducing this into the LGA 2020?

This change will actually remove the options to rate payers who may for racial and ethnic reasons feel more comfortable with having options. Has it been considered that this could discourage public interaction with council and actually detriment the democratic process?

5. Can the wards stay unchanged and instead the number of councillors be reduced? Why is this not an option presented? The option would also ensure council will meet the requirements of the LGA 2020 and the cost of those salaries could be put back into the community in the form of reduced rates and more staff on the actual ground to ensure community enquiries are met in a faster turnaround than the current service levels standard set by council of 10 working days. The funds could be used to expedite efficiencies.

6. Collaboration – Having one councillor per ward does not encourage discussion and collaboration. The varying and latitudinal view of the public are not democratically represented in one representative per ward. This is undemocratic. You will actually be facilitating a disservice to the constituents of Monash by going to a one ward councillor.

7. I have searched for the following and have been unable to find the relevant documents so I would seek that the following must be provided by law to all living people residents, rate/tax payers as a part of the consent process needed under the constitution / law when any change is made that will affect living people's lives. Please provide a copy of the following documents:

- o Copy of the Local Government Act 2020 that has the Governor's / Crown's ascent on the front (validating the LGA 2020) there is no copy on the Victorian Government website;
- o Copy of the results of the 1988 referendum results showing and verifying the passing of the LGA (Local Government) decision.

In closing it is very difficult to agree to these changes when there are many questions unanswered and the public has not really been adequately consulted or informed. These major changes require consent from the public not implied consent.

I look forward to your response and proof as requested.

Kind regards