

## **Electoral structure review - Glen Eira City Council - Response Submission**

### **Yaron Gottlieb - Elsternwick - 08 August 2023, 10:48 pm**

Glen Eira Council Wards Submission

I am an Orthodox rabbi, businessman, and father. I have worked and lived in the City of Glen Eira for most of my life. Regarding the three proposed maps, the only option that does not separate communities of interest is Model 1. As such, this is the option I believe should be chosen.

Census data regarding the area's residents shows there is a significant Jewish community in the greater Caulfield area. However, this headline number does not take into account a number of significant - and often discrete - subgroup communities in the area.

Importantly, these communities live within defined geographic boundaries that are accommodated by Model 1, but that would be divided if Models 2 or 3 are adopted.

I will first describe the unique nature of the broader Orthodox grouping, and then elaborate upon the three discrete communities of interest.

**The Orthodox Jewish community**

The Orthodox stream of Judaism, and its strict laws of observance, result in communities which live within very tight geographic proximity to their synagogues. They believe that on the Sabbath, and most festivals, it is forbidden to drive cars or bikes. Some of these communities similarly forbid scooters thus making walking the only mode of transport available on Saturday.

Within the broader Orthodox stream exist numerous communities - each with its own synagogue. Because of this, members of these communities usually choose to live within a comfortable walking distance from their specific synagogue. That is, most do not live further than a 15-20 minute walk away. In these instances, a 500-800m radius around a community's synagogue would take in a majority of the members.

This is not like the broader Jewish community's secular organisations which can be accessed by car, resulting in catchments that can be several kilometres in size. Because of the tight geographic location of these communities, their boundaries can be easily contained within a single council ward.

**Communities in question**

The three communities that I have identified are significant within the Melbourne Orthodox world, each with an outsized influence on Orthodox life. They each have overlapping catchments thus making separating them from each other extremely difficult. Even though there may be several synagogues for the various streams of Orthodoxy, these three would be considered the flagship communities for their respective streams.

These groups are:

? Mizrahi - This is a religious-Zionist community. This synagogue is located on Balaclava Rd between Orrong and Kooyong Rd. Their main catchment is bounded by Glen Eira Rd in the south and stretches from over Orrong Rd to Hawthorn Rd. However, because most of this community lives to the west of Kooyong Rd, Model 1 would capture most of this community.

? Adass Yisroel - This is the main ultra-Orthodox community in Melbourne. While its synagogue is in Ripponlea, most of this community lives in Glen Eira. The catchment is in the streets on either side of Glen Eira Rd, between Hotham St and Orrong Rd.

? Yeshiva - This community centre and synagogue is the central hub for the Chabad community. It is located near the corner of Hotham and Balaclava Rd. Its congregants usually live in the area between Hotham and Orrong Rd where it overlaps at its eastern end with the Mizrahi community. To the south, it reaches Glen Eira Rd where it overlaps with the Adass community.

Each of these communities is unique and offers a suite of self contained functions and services, as well as infrastructure.

Each has its own Kosher certification organisations, schools, Beth Midrash (study halls), multiple prayer sessions for each of the 3 daily prayers, youth groups, and other services. Yeshivah and

Adass also have their own men's and women's ritual baths.

While Orthodox Jews from outside these tight-knit communities often use these services, members from within those communities remain within those communities' confines.

This contrasts with other synagogues that may provide prayer services and some classes during the week but lack the scale of infrastructure and services of these three communities.

In summary:

- a) The Orthodox Jewish communities are unique due to their small geographic footprint resulting from religious requirements.
- b) They comprise communities of interest due to their self-contained nature and suite of discrete services and infrastructure that they offer.
- c) These communities of interest are almost completely situated in the boundaries suggested by Model 1.