

From: Vita Mezzatesta [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 November 2023 11:14 AM
To: Merri-bek Submissions 2023
Subject: Merri-bek Council Ward Boundaries

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Electoral Representation Panel

We are writing to make a submission to Round 3 Review of the electoral Structure for Merri-bek Council. We have lived in what is now Merri-bek for our entire lives. George grew up in Brunswick, and I in Pascoe Vale, and we have lived together in Pascoe Vale for 25 years. George was the founder and President of the East Coburg Cricket Club for 39 years, which was founded in the streets of Connelly St, Brunswick, with club rooms at Brearley Reserve, Pascoe Vale. We have both been hardworking and active volunteers of the club until recently. George and I have many relatives and friends who live throughout Merri-bek and seen many changes over the years. We are very familiar with the interests of the community throughout Merri-bek.

We do not oppose the Panel's recommendation for 11 Wards and therefore 11 councilors, to maintain the current number of councilors. We hope the change to single-member wards will make council more responsive and connected to its voters.

Community of interest is determined by things such as postcode, geographical obstacles, the distribution of local newspapers, as well as previous council and electoral boundaries. Although the influence of local newspapers and the old council boundaries is diminishing with time, it still exists. On the basis, Moreland Road is a strong boundary and it makes sense for the Panel to use it, which it has done with all 3 Models. Within the Brunswick area, south of Moreland Road, we think the strongest dividing line is Sydney Road, and that the communities of interest of Brunswick East and Brunswick West are stronger than those of Brunswick North and Brunswick South. On that basis Model 3 looks to be the better model.

We also think Model 3 is the better model when it comes to dividing the wards in the centre of the city, and those in the north of the City. Both it and Model 2 do a better job of putting all the Coburg Residents together, because they use Gordon St as the Boundary, rather than the weak boundaries of Linsey Street, Liverpool St and Hawthorn St, used in Model 1. Those streets are well into Coburg, and would put a lot of residents of Coburg into the Pascoe Vale south Ward. Model 3 does a better job than Model 2 of dividing up Glenroy and Oak Park. It uses the Craigieburn Railway Line, which is a much stronger geographical obstacle, and therefore boundary, than the New Road, Victoria St etc boundaries used by Model 2.

For the above reasons, we prefer Model 3. Although we are a bit puzzled with some of the boundaries chosen East to West of the municipality. As stated previously, both my husband and I have grown up and lived in the area. We went to local schools, high schools and familiar with most parks, facilities, businesses and have seen many changes over the years, including the demographic. In the 80s with trendy Carlton, anything south of Brunswick Road was looked down on. Years later Brunswick became a sought-after area and anything south of Moreland Road was looked down on. Now it's anything south of Bell Street, which is slowly changing. Next it will Boundary Rd, which also becomes Pascoe St and then Rhodes Pde. Lastly,

there is Box-Forest Rd, which becomes Hilton St. So, it is Brunswick Rd, Moreland Rd, Bell Street, Boundary Rd (Pascoe St & Rhodes Pde) and Box-Forest Rd (becoming Hilton St) that cut straight across Merri-bek East to West from Sydney Rd to the Craigeburn Railway line.

The name of the ward we would be living is Westbreen Ward, and we support that name. We also support the other names being proposed for the Wards set out in Model 3:- Moonee Ponds Creek Ward, Box Forest Ward, Bababi Djinanang Ward, Thomson Ward, Harmony Park Ward, Merri Creek Ward, Dunstan Ward, Bulleke-bek Ward, Randazzo Ward and Warrk-Warrk Ward.

Yours sincerely,

Vita Mezzatesta and George Georgiou

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Vita Mezzatesta and George Georgiou.