

Electoral structure review - Ballarat City Council - Response Submission
Robert Kozlovski - Brown Hill - 18 July 2023, 03:50 pm

Submission to Ballarat Electoral Structure Review 2023

By Robert Kozlovski

Summary

I think Model 1 is the best model in the Preliminary Report for the Ballarat Electoral Structure Review 2023. I think the 9-councillor structure is fine, the ward boundaries are decent, but the ward names could be named better.

Ward Boundaries

The ward boundaries in Model 1 are the most logical out of the three proposed models when it comes to different communities of interest in Ballarat.

Alfredton Ward (Alfredton and Lucas) is perfect. It includes the newer growth areas (Alfredton West and Lucas) in the west of Ballarat. The eastern portion of Alfredton is more established these days (albeit newer than other parts of Ballarat) but it makes logical sense for residents that Alfredton and Lucas are in the same ward. Learmonth St is a good boundary.

Victoria Park Ward (Delacombe and Winter Valley) contains a mix of established (Delacombe) and new developments (Winter Valley) but geographically the boundaries mostly make sense (Ballarat-Carngham Road and Glenelg Hwy).

Yarrowee Ward (Sebastopol and Bonshaw) again contains a mix of established (Sebastopol, lower SES area) and new developments (Bonshaw) but geographically the boundaries again make sense (Glenelg Hwy and Yarrowee Creek).

Buninyong Ward contains the logical boundaries for that area (Yarrowee Creek) and up to north so that the population requirements are reached for that ward.

Wendouree Ward is perfect. It's a lower SES area and the railway line provides the ideal boundary.

Lake Gardens Ward contains most of central Ballarat and the rich Lake Wendouree and Lake Gardens suburbs. These suburbs (including Ballarat Central) form part of the highest SES areas in Ballarat and make a lot of sense being in the same ward.

Burrumbeet Ward is virtually all rural, which is great. The boundaries in Model 1 make the most sense for residents in the rural north of Ballarat (Model 2 and Model 3 boundaries are poor for the rural north because they are mixed with urban areas). "New" Brown Hill (north-east of the highway) is a new growth area and should ideally be in an urban ward. Warrenheip is essentially rural and could make up some of the numbers for Burrumbeet ward should "new" Brown Hill be removed and Warrenheip added.

Black Hill Ward (central areas in particular) are higher SES areas and Doveton St (Midlands Hwy) and the railway line make logical sense as boundaries. The Yarrowee River in Black Hill Ward is a more ideal boundary for the Black Hill and Sovereign Hill wards (if the equal population requirements allowed that boundary to move from the railway line to Yarrowee Creek). Ballarat East and Brown Hill are more similar to Eureka and Ballarat East in Sovereign Hill Ward.

Sovereign Hill Ward is a mix of residents but contains Golden Point, Bakery Hill and Ballarat East (mostly on the eastern side of Ballarat) along with Warrenheip which is a small rural town. That's a mix of high (central) and low SES (Canadian), established areas and newer areas (Canadian). To be fair, it's hard to split the different demographics in that location into different wards.

Model 2 splitting the rural north residents into 3 separate wards and combining them with urban areas makes no sense and is not a good idea.

Model 3 the Tait St boundary between Yarrowee and Winter Valley Wards makes a lot of sense (established area vs new development area) but some of the other boundaries do not make much sense. Black Hill Ward is way too confusing and crosses multiple logical boundaries. Wendouree Ward contains two completely different demographics (Wendouree low SES and Invermay Park high SES). Sovereign Hill Ward is convoluted. Buninyong Ward has a strange peninsula in the north. Model 3 has a lot of issues.

Ward Names

Assuming Model 1 is selected, some of the names should be changed to make more sense. Here are my thoughts on each ward name in Model 1:

Alfredton – keep name – makes sense

Wendouree – keep name – makes sense

Buninyong – keep name – makes sense

Black Hill – keep name – makes sense

Lakes Gardens – a better name would be Central Ward – Lake Gardens the suburb on the western edge of this ward. Ballarat Central is a suburb in this ward. Name this ward Central to keep it simple, most of the population is central, or name it Lake Wendouree at a minimum (that name will give the ward the higher SES vibe that it is)

Victoria Park – a better name would be Delacombe Ward or South-West Ward. It would be nice to call this ward Delacombe Ward (ideal) because people would know the location, although part of the suburb Delacombe falls into the ward below (so that may not be ideal). Victoria Park (the park) is effectively not very close to most residents in this ward, residents south of Ballarat-Carngham Road are geographically very isolated from Victoria Park (Ballarat-Carngham Rd is a major boundary, industry and the old saleyards provide a large physical boundary to Victoria Park for most residents, hence the name would not make a lot of sense to them)

Yarrowee – a better name would be Sebastopol Ward. Sebastopol and Bonshaw are both accessed via the major road in Sebastopol (Midlands Hwy). Makes a lot of sense to call this ward Sebastopol because everyone would know where you're talking about then.

Burrumbeet – a better name would be Rural North Ward. Burrumbeet is a random little town in that ward. To call the whole ward (large area) after that one little town does not make a lot of sense. I think people in the "rural north" would take pride in that name, it is who they are.

Sovereign Hill – a better name would be East Ward. Sovereign Hill is one little isolated place that is not actually that close to most people in that ward. East Ward just makes a lot more sense. Eureka Ward is another option, although that is the state name now, so perhaps not ideal.