

From: Hamish Jones [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 7 November 2023 9:01 PM
To: Moonee Valley Submissions 2023
Subject: Moonee Valley City Council Electoral Structure Review Submission

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Strathmore, VIC, 3041
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7/11/23

Subject: Public Submission in Support of Ward Structure Model 1

Dear Members of the Review Panel,

I am writing as a resident of Moonee Valley, with a vested interest in the growth, development, and governance of our community. I wish to submit my feedback in favour of adopting Model 1 in the restructuring of Moonee Valley City Council's ward system, as required with the Local Government Act 2020 - and mandated because of a requirement that Moonee Valley move to a single member ward structure..

Introduction

I am a lifelong resident in Moonee Valley. I grew up in Ascot Vale. I was schooled first in Flemington, then in East Keilor. I have lived in Strathmore since 2006 and spent my entire working life in Moonee Valley also (first in East Keilor, then Essendon and now Niddrie.)

My life is centred on Moonee Valley - giving me an intense passion for our community but also a strong understanding of various parts of the municipality and their individual needs.

It is for this reason that I am writing this proposal and with this proposal I am broadly supportive of Model 1 as I feel this best reflects our community.

Number of Councillors and Wards

Personally, I have always found the idea of multi-member wards problematic as this could lead to some Councillors doing more work than others - it's easier to hide if there are other Councillors that pick up the slack. Single member wards do not afford this luxury to a Councillor elected.

Having said that, it must be recognised that Councils are political institutions. It becomes possible with single member wards, if factions are formed, that some areas may miss out on their fair share of investment if Councillors get excluded from the decision making process. I know that this is not a decision for the Review and that the panel must act under the guidelines given.

With the requirement for single member wards, the discussion must then turn to the number of Councillors/Wards. Given that there is little projected growth over current years, and given no "special

needs” within our municipality it’s my belief that the current number of Councillors (9) remains the ideal number of Councillors.

Further, the current boundaries lead to a projected number of voters well within the margins set within the Act.

Ward Boundaries

The Ward Boundaries in Model 1 best represent how Moonee Valley residents interact with their community. Boundaries in model 1 reflect communities of interest and, for the most part, keep suburbs together. This is especially evident when comparing “Strathmore” in Model’s 1 and 2. Model 1 keeps Strathmore and Strathmore Heights together - reinforcing that Strathmore (north of the Freeway) and Strathmore Heights have more to do with “old” Strathmore than they do with Airport West. Model 1 keeps the Niddrie community together and also Airport West and East Keilor.

Whilst Model 2 uses “major” thoroughfares to split Ward boundaries, their boundaries make no sense when you think about how residents in those areas interact with their community.

Ward Names

I have no emotional attachment to the Ward names mentioned. They are “fine” but if they were changed in the final structure I would not be particularly disappointed.

Community Engagement and Representation

As mentioned previously, it is my belief that Model 1 best reflects communities of interest going forward and, for this reason, Model 1 is the model that should be implemented.

If implemented, economic centres and sporting ovals will be within Wards where they are most likely to be used, so Councillors will have responsibilities for advocacy that best reflect the Community that will elect them.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering my submission. I believe that the adoption of Model 1 is in the best interest of Moonee Valley’s residents, ensuring fair and effective representation while respecting the rich diversity and unique character of our community. I look forward to discussing this further at Public Hearings when they are convened.

Sincerely,

Hamish Jones