

**Electoral structure review - Merri-bek City Council - Response Submission**  
**Kenna Morrison - Brunswick - 08 November 2023, 04:23 pm**

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kenna Morrison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 November 2023 4:23 PM  
**To:** Merri-bek Submissions 2023  
**Subject:** Electoral structure review - Merri-bek City Council - Response Submission  
**Attachments:** WardBoundariesSubmissionKM.pdf

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Good afternoon,  
Attached is my submission to the review of Merri-bek's electoral structure.  
The required contact details are in my signature lines below.  
Regards

Kenna Morrison (she/her)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Brunswick

# **Electoral structure review - Merri-bek City Council - Response Submission**

## **by Kenna Morrison of Brunswick.**

### **1. Single member wards**

While it is not within the scope of this review, please note my belief that multi-member wards would make it more likely that each voter will be able to have a ward councillor for whom they voted on Council whom they are more likely to feel can adequately represent them. While I regard each elected councillor as having an obligation to represent the best interests of all Merri-bek, I believe that many voters will feel less comfortable with their local member in a single member ward system if they did not vote for their elected councillor.

### **2. Number of Councillors**

In light of the population data provided it is reasonable for Merri-bek to have 11 councillors, although I would also be comfortable with 12 councillors in order to provide a more fine grained representation. To my knowledge, there is not strong evidence, that an odd number of councillors necessarily decreases the number of tied votes, as it is very common for one or more councillors to be absent at meetings, or abstain, and I have seen the Mayor exercise her casting vote on numerous occasions.

### **3. Ward names**

While I am comfortable with the principle of using local landmarks and/or Aboriginal names for particular areas I do note that there has been no consultation that I am aware of with local Aboriginal communities. Gary Page makes this point very strongly in his submission. Given this lack of consultation with the local Aboriginal community I strongly believe that at this time it would be best to adopt commonly recognised names such as those used in Model 1. I am also not familiar with the derivation of some of the other proposed names, so likewise feel that further detailed consultation is necessary across the whole before changing the principal of commonly recognised names. Should a strong groundswell of interest in a different naming scheme arise in the community, I believe that a much more detailed consultation process should be adopted, much as was conducted by Council in changing the name from Moreland to Merri-bek, clearly demonstrating it's capacity for such consultation.

### **4. "Brunswick" wards**

As a resident of Brunswick I strongly support the boundaries proposed for the wards labelled as Brunswick East and Brunswick West (in Model 1) that are consistent across all your proposed models. I also support the idea of a North/South division of the central Brunswick with an East/West running boundary along Victoria and Blyth streets as proposed in Models 1 and 2. Having opposite sides of Sydney Road in different wards makes little sense to me as issues of significance to voters are more likely to be shared across the road and are more likely to differ from Northern to Southern ends of Brunswick.

### **5. Other wards**

While I visit areas within Pascoe Vale South and Coburg fairly often I am dramatically more familiar with Brunswick and issues facing residents and businesses here, but don't feel qualified to make any proposals in relation to other wards.

### **6. Conclusion**

In summary, I recommend:

- No change in the number of Councillors.
- A ward naming scheme as used in Model 1 or and adaption of that if other boundaries are adopted.
- Model 1 or Model 2 as a basis for ward boundaries in the Brunswick area.
- I make no recommendation in relation to ward boundaries North of Brunswick.