

## VEC WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW: CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

### Background and context

Port Melbourne has adapted, absorbed and become stronger through successive waves of urban change. The Bank Houses of Garden City (1928 to 1948), the Housing Commission Fishermans Bend estate (1938 to c1945) and Beacon Cove in the early 2000s have all been added to Port Melbourne. And yet Port Melbourne has retained an identity. That identity has been shaped by its relationship to Port Phillip Bay, the Port of Melbourne boundary and the Westgate Freeway.

When the former councils of St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne were amalgamated in 1994, the newly created City of Port Phillip developed an approach to its municipal administration which respected the neighbourhoods and communities of the former cities. There was no attempt to homogenise the city. Instead the identity of the former cities became the way in which services were delivered. Port Melbourne's identity was supported and strengthened.

Significant change is anticipated in Fishermans Bend as outlined in the Fishermans Bend Framework (2018). Fishermans Bend's identity is yet to emerge and will be shaped by future residents. However, there is no sense that the names of the Port Melbourne precincts of Fishermans Bend: Montague, Wirraway and Sandridge have much traction or meaning to new residents. Real estate advertising and development promotion relies on 'Port Melbourne', or 'South Melbourne'.

An important role for contemporary local governments is place making with the intention of creating place attachment and social connection. A sense of a shared history, even if only superficially understood, contributes to the sense of identity.

There is widespread concern about the erosion of democracy and low levels of engagement in elections. It is often said that local government is the level of government closest to the people. That is why local government ward boundaries should relate closely to the communities that local government serves.

When the ward boundaries relate to the places people connect with, they will make more sense.

**I support Model 3** for the following reasons:

- It broadly coincides with Port Melbourne as most people understand it
- It allows for significant population growth in Fishermans Bend on the northern side of Williamstown Rd
- It avoids awkward arbitrary pockets

**I do not support Models 1 and 2**

#### Model 1

- Arbitrarily divides Port Melbourne at Graham St. This defies the way people connect with place through childcare, schools, and sporting clubs.
- The northern parts of the proposed Gateway Central Ward is orientated towards the City rather than the Bay. People living in Port Melbourne relate strongly to Port Phillip Bay and the boundary imposed by the Westgate Freeway.

- The pockets created in Gateway Central Ward (Farrars x Albert x Clarendon St) do not capture any sense of neighbourhood coherence.

## Model 2

- Combines the emerging precincts of Wirraway and Sandridge in Fishermans Bend with some of the most established areas of South Melbourne with which they have absolutely no connection either in the past or present.
- Separates emerging Fishermans Bend from Port Melbourne. Students from Port Melbourne attend Port Melbourne Secondary College, play sport at Murphy's Reserve in Model 3. Communities drive Council investment in sporting facilities, and it makes no sense for them to be separated in this way.

## Ward names

I prefer either Sandridge or Port Melbourne for Model 3. However, I note that Sandridge is also the name of a precinct of Fishermans Bend. Notwithstanding that the name is not widely used, it has the potential to cause confusion.

I would like to retain some reference to 'Port' in any name chosen since it is both part of our history and our future.

Gateway is a generic name with no local, or fond, associations.

## Basis for making submission

I have lived in Port Melbourne since 1987. Since then I have been actively involved in the Port Melbourne community. I represented Sandridge (Port Melbourne) on the Port Phillip Council from 2004 to 2012, and was Mayor in 2006 and 2007. I continue to be involved with the *Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society* and *Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery and Landcare*. I am not just looking to the past, but actively involved in planning for the future of Fishermans Bend\*.

Relevant to this submission is **Port Places**, my decade long project documenting and observing changing Port Melbourne and Fishermans Bend.

\*Janet Bolitho is a member of the Fishermans Bend Development Board.

Janet Bolitho

[REDACTED]  
Port Melbourne

Vic 3207

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]