

Electoral structure review - Monash City Council - Response Submission

Brandon Maki - Notting Hill - 20 July 2023, 03:33 pm

Looking at the boundaries I believe that Model 3 most cleanly represents the different demographics of Monash. I think that it especially more accurately reflects the demographic groups in University Ward and Banksia Ward.

I would also like to give feedback on the names:

While the Council has indicated they don't have time to consult with Traditional Owners, I don't think that some of the current names should be used instead. Several of them are named after figures from the violent colonial period which are not worth the continued celebration of. For reference, from 1835 to the early 1860s the number of Eastern Kulin people (Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung) was reduced to twenty-eight individuals.

Council suggested names overview:

- Gardiners Creek ward- John Gardiner was a wealthy landowner and banker who held hundreds of acres of land during the Black War period in Tasmania. Gardiner was running cattle over thousands of acres as soon as Melbourne was founded. As such, his contribution to the displacement of Aboriginal people and the destruction of their natural food resources (by running thousands of cattle) in early Melbourne history cannot be overstated.
- Huntingdale ward – Huntingdale ward doesn't include the suburb of Huntingdale, which is super confusing. Supposedly named for an early Hunting Club in the area, this ward could be named to commemorate someone instead.
- Scotchmans Creek ward – The reference to Scottish pastoralists like John McMillan has a similar but less clear issue as Gardiners Creek.
- Warrigal ward – While Warrigal refers to Warrigal Road its also a word derived from Aboriginal languages and so does not meet the councils criteria due to lack of consultation.
- Bogong ward – Same as above.
- Gallagher ward – The namesake of Gallaghers Road is unclear and should be researched before continued use of their name.
- Jells ward – Joseph Jell is another early stockman, with similar issues to Gardiner but at a smaller scale.

Further comments on names:

I believe the wards should be named after a diverse group of influential people from the Monash area, from current times through its history. We should be celebrating our more recent heroes not just historic colonists. If the council does not have time for this right now, I recommend naming the wards with benign names before a renaming process is begun with Aboriginal and the wider community consultation. For example, naming all wards after plants would suffice as has been done with the Banksia ward. The decision by the council to forego Aboriginal consultation because of lack of time isn't really good enough, and they should take the opportunity to rename these wards as soon as possible after the restructuring.

Additionally, some names such as Brentwood Ward (derived from Brentwood Drive) and Wellington Ward (Wellington Road), Waverley Park Ward, Holmesglen Ward, continue a tradition of naming Australian places after random places in Britain. We have an opportunity to develop our own local community and national character that is distinct from lazily reusing British town names, and I think we should do so. Given Monash' diverse population and the diverse character of early Melbourne (including many demographic groups such as Greek and Chinese settlers) names from a diverse background should be looked into.