

Electoral structure review - Port Phillip City Council - Response Submission
Michael Sabada - South Melbourne - 09 August 2023, 01:31 pm

I would like to thank the Victorian Electoral Commission for its work on the Port Phillip City Council Electoral Structure Review and make a submission on its recommendations.

Of the three proposed models, Model 2 would be my preference.

My reasons for supporting Model 2 include:

1. it is the model which minimises large deviations in number of electors which cannot be addressed by population growth. In models 1 and 3 "Lakeside" or "Gateway East" "Ward deviation in number of electors by >+15%, which I cannot see as justifiable, as anything over 10% is excessive, and population growth (which in Port Phillip is not evenly distributed) will only make the deviation worse, unlike wards which deviate below the average. If this is to compensate for ward being predominantly landlords rather than residents, this should be explicit in the rationale. The additional apartments being built now in the proposed Model 2 Kirrip Park Ward, once completed will address the -16.50% deviation as there are more than 1,000 dwelling units under construction, and this will bring the number electors to less than -10% deviation.
2. of the three models it is best grouping of communities of interest (though still flawed) It is inevitable that Port Melbourne and St Kilda be divided in part to ensure the equitable number of electors between wards.
3. a minor point, the ward names, are more appropriate than the other two models. Though I suggest Kirrip Park is too obscure for Port Phillip residents to recognise as a location, and North Ward or Montague Ward would be more suitable, and Catani would best be named Albert Park. The VEC could save time and effort, in ward names by using numbers if it is not going to use a suburb or recognisable direction or central feature of the ward. Numbers rather than names is common practice in many countries for electorates.

Model 2, however, could still be improved with respect to the numbers of per ward.

Previous ward boundaries which started with large deviations from the average did not through the course of one or two elections return to near average in all wards.

Population growth will address Kirrip Park issues, but Elwood, Lakeside and South Melbourne - could be improved and made closer to the average number of electors per ward. Lakeside and South Melbourne have in excess of 12 000 electors whilst Elwood and Kirrip Park have fewer than 10 000 electors. Lakeside's boundary with St Kilda East Ward should shift west to Brighton Road. The South Melbourne Ward boundary with Lakeside Ward should be moved north from Torak Road to Albert Road. For Elwood Ward moving the eastern boundary at Southey St to Tennyson St would better balance elector numbers.

The other two models are too flawed address issues of representation or elector number with a simple boundary change.