

Electoral structure review - Moonee Valley City Council - Response Submission Katrina Hodgson - Moonee Ponds - 08 November 2023, 03:58 pm

I make the following independent submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel with regard to the Moonee Valley Electoral Structure Review. All views expressed are my own, and not necessarily those of the Moonee Valley City Council.

1. This submission is in support of Model 2 as presented by the ERAP Preliminary Report (the Report), with some modifications to suggest the use of main roads, railways and natural features as boundaries, and to propose adjustments to population deviations to provide longer term stability for the ward structure, including the use of some Model 1 boundaries as suitable.
2. Moonee Valley is a rich and diverse municipality. As one of the metropolitan councils it has projected population growth, including particularly in areas of anticipated high density growth including the Keilor Road Precinct in Niddrie/Essendon North, and the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre (particularly the Moonee Valley Racecourse redevelopment). For these reasons I support the appropriateness of Moonee Valley retaining representation of nine councillors.
3. While Model 1 proposes a division of ward boundaries that provides some consistency and familiarity with our existing multi-member ward structure, I consider that the current Moonee Valley ward boundaries are a relatively recent construction (2008), and they do not have any permanency in the way communities and neighbourhoods identify. For this reason I do not believe that the current ward structure needs to be a strong consideration for this review. More relevant factors are keeping together suburbs and/or Moonee Valley 2040 Neighbourhoods (as defined in the Moonee Valley 2040 Strategy, 2018) wherever possible.
4. Further, Model 2 provides an opportunity to align ward boundaries along main roads and features which create barriers of movement, such as the freeway, railway line and Steele Creek. In my view this is a more practical way to construct the ward boundaries, as these barriers of movement direct residents towards communities of interest through the way they access goods and services.
5. The ward boundaries I have suggested in my submission largely follow the Model 2 boundaries, with the exception that in the south west, population deviations I believe favoured the Model 1 boundaries. With projected population stabilisation in the Avondale Heights area of Moonee Valley, the Canning ward and Rosehill ward structure is, I believe, more suitable for long term ward structure stability.
6. In proposing this model, I have also taken into account the activity centres in Moonee Valley and made variations to Model 2 to group areas with the shopping precincts and service hubs that I believe make sense, considering patterns of resident movement. For example, in the proposed Aberfeldie ward, I suggest extending to Mt Alexander Road to include the Essendon North Village. And in the proposed Riverside ward, the suggested boundary also extends north to Athol Street to take in the length of Union Road and those streets south of Athol Street that likely travel to the Union Road shops. Model 2 already accounts for the Essendon residents east of the railway line who might use the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre as their main shopping precinct in the Moonee ward (referred to as Queens Lake ward in the Report), and contains the full length of Napier Street in the proposed Woodlands ward (referred to as Napier ward in the Report). There may be other variations that would also achieve this outcome.
7. The proposed boundaries in my submission also differ from Model 2 to account for the requirement to have deviations below 10%, and in particular to reduce/maintain the deviations in the proposed Moonee, Woodlands and Aberfeldie wards which have

anticipated growth in the intensification of housing proposed in the recent Victorian Housing Statement.

8. Finally, I have suggested minor adjustments to correct some small anomalies for example the inclusion of Maribyrnong Park and streets west of Argyle Street in the proposed Aberfeldie ward (an adjustment from the Model 2 boundary), and the inclusion of Clydebank Road and Smiley Crescent in the proposed Buckley ward (an adjustment from the Model 1 boundary with Canning ward).
9. The suggested names are taken from key defining parks, suburb names, street names or features within the wards.