

Ward boundary review - Greater Dandenong City Council - Response Submission
Matthew Kirwan - Noble Park - 18 March 2024, 11:45 am

From: Matthew Kirwan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 18 March 2024 11:45 AM
To: Submissions - Greater Dandenong City ward boundary review 2024
Subject: (With Contact Details) Submission - Matthew Kirwan - Ward boundary review - Greater Dandenong City Council -

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To whom it may concern,

I write in strong support of Model 2, a model that is similar to the current ward structure and best keeps communities of interest together. The foundation of effective representation of residents and ratepayers is the principle of reflecting communities of interest.

Model 1 on the other hand has some changes that range from not being in line with that principle to breaching it altogether.

Firstly in Springvale South. Model 1 proposes adding the south-west part of Springvale South bordering Dingley to Springvale Central Ward. With my experience as a former Greater Dandenong Councillor (2012-2020), I don't understand the logic of that. Springvale South is a largely suburban area that is more similar to the lifestyle of low density Keysborough than the hustle and bustle and increasing density of central Springvale. If you live in Springvale South near Heatherton Rd, the Springvale Activity Centre is important to you but if you live in the south and you don't shop at the Springvale Shopping Centre in MacKay St you are just as likely to go to Parkmore Shopping Centre in Keysborough than central Springvale. So if you need to split up Springvale South electorally breaking it up north-south makes more sense than east-west. This is why how Model 2 splits up Springvale South makes much more sense than how it is done in Model 1.

However the biggest issue with Model 1 is the proposed revised Dandenong Ward. Firstly its size - it stretches from bordering Doveton in the City of Casey at one end to bordering the suburb of Waterways in the City of Kingston at the other. 57% of the land area of Greater Dandenong, spanning parts of Dandenong, Dandenong South, Bangholme and Keysborough would be represented by 1 Councillor.

In the current electoral structure, Dandenong Ward makes sense. It contains the Dandenong South Industrial Area, the Dandenong Commercial Activity Centre including its residential periphery that is increasing in density to provide an semi-urban rather than suburban life experience for those that live there.

Whereas the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge, a very different land use, is in Keysborough South Ward. There are two types of residents in the Greater Dandenong Green Wedge. They either live in hobby/small farms in Bangholme or Keysborough or live in the Willow Lodge Village in Bangholme East. From my experience as a Councillor, neither see their interests as having anything in common with the industrial sector. In fact they are passionately supportive of the current Urban Growth Boundary being maintained protecting their land from being zoned industrial!

The proposed new Dandenong Ward would be a representational nightmare for a single Councillor, trying to represent competing interests and very complex issues over a vast area. Conversely for residents and business owners it would be a poor experience with the one Councillor alone dealing with the complex and unique issues of the Green Wedge, the Dandenong South Industrial Area and the Dandenong Activity Centre at the same time. One Councillor alone dealing with issues being experienced by business owners in Progress St, Dandenong South on the border of Doveton in the City of Casey as well as issues experienced by semi-rural land holders in Pillars Rd, Bangholme near the Chelsea Heights Hotel on the other side of the municipality,

Model 2 avoids these issues. This is not to say Model 2 could not be improved. Where Model 2 could be best modified is in the Dandenong West area. By Dandenong West I mean the part of Dandenong bordered by Princes Highway, Robinson St, Railway Parade and the Yarraman Creek. Model 2 proposes using a non-significant street - Birdwood Avenue as a boundary between Yarraman Ward and Dandenong Ward. The Model 1 boundary between Yarraman Ward and Dandenong Ward makes more sense - capturing those streets closest to the Dandenong Railway Station where apartments and dense townhouses are increasingly being built and residents are choosing to live near the Dandenong Activity Centre versus the more low to medium density of the rest of Dandenong West.

What is consistent with all of the comments in this submission throughout is the principle of reflecting communities of interest in a representational structure. In particular, that communities of interest are consistent with questions of land use. Establishing and maintaining ward boundaries based on keeping together commercial/industrial, urban/semi-urban, suburban and semi-rural areas together leads to the best representational outcomes. Some different land uses work well together - like semi-urban and commercial in the residential periphery of central Dandenong. Some very much don't - like industrial and semi-rural.,

Thanks for the opportunity of making a submission and I would like to be invited to the hearing to speak to it.

Kind Regards,

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