

Preliminary Submission: Stonnington CC Electoral Representation Review 2011

I thank you for the opportunity to submit my views to the 2011 review of Stonnington City Council electoral structure. My comments regarding each issue for the Stonnington City Council are listed below.

Number of Councillors

The actual number of councillors required to run the Council effectively really depends on the degree of cooperation and acceptance of democratic principles. How issues are resolved determine the workload of councillors in actual practice. Based on pre-2004 Stonnington electoral structure, 9 councillors appear to be adequate. Current electoral structure has resulted in an apparent uneven sharing of responsibilities among councillors based on my perception of the difficulties in accessing councillors. If the current multi-councillor ward is to continue, then an additional ward may be a good way of distributing workload more evenly. This could result in having 11 or 12 councillors.

Communities of Interest

There are too many ways of defining a community of interest. The practical way is to determine the various groups that want to influence what resources that the Council can allocate and what regulations that the Council can enforce. A broad example is residential and business communities. Residential communities could be classified according to the housing type, eg low density, medium density and high density. The other overlay on this is based on types of services, entertainment and recreation required (and this should automatically take into account of cultural differences.) The best way to identify the various communities of interest is to do a sociological study of the Council on a regular basis (in conjunction with ABS.)

Division into Wards

The structure without wards or with large wards is prone to the danger of being manipulated by groups with access to large funding or access to a huge campaign organisation. This can be minimised by having as many wards as possible so that candidates with limited funding can participate in the elections. Hence my preference is for a single-councillor wards for Stonnington Council.

Ward Boundaries

Ward boundaries should encompass a significant community of interest like a business area and not based on some nice geometrical shape on the map. High density areas should have more voters per ward than low density areas.

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