



ELECTOR REPRESENTATION REVIEW

REPRESENTATION REVIEW REPORT

(SECTION 12(8a) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999)

CITY OF



MITCHAM

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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 12(4) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) requires each Council to undertake a review of all aspects of its composition and the division (or potential division) of the council area into wards, with the view to determining whether the local community would benefit from an alteration to the current composition and/or structure of Council.

The Minister for Local Government has specified that Council is required to undertake and complete a review during the period June 2020 – October 2021.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 12(8a) of the Act. It:

- provides information on the initial public consultation undertaken by Council;
- sets out the proposal that Council believes should be carried into effect; and
- presents an analysis of how Council's proposal relates to the relevant provisions and principles of the Act.

The key issues that need to be addressed during the review include:

- the principal member of Council, more specifically whether it should be a Mayor elected by the community or a Chairperson chosen by (and from amongst) the elected members;
- the need for area councillors in addition to ward councillors (if a ward structure is to be retained);
- the division of the Council area into wards, or alternatively the abolition of wards;
- the number of elected members required to provide fair and adequate representation to the community; and
- if applicable, the level of ward representation and the name of any proposed future wards.

It should also be noted that *Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020* (the Bill) was passed in State Parliament on Thursday 10th June 2021. This Bill contains provisions which cap the number of members of a council; abolish the option of a Chairperson; and introduce an abridged review process. At the time of preparing this report the Bill had not been formally proclaimed.

It is understood that the provisions of the Bill which specifically relate to elector representation reviews will likely not come into effect until after the next Local Government election in November 2022. Council's current review proposal, as articulated in this report, meets both the current legislative requirements and the new provisions included in the Bill. Should Council change its current review proposal resulting in a proposal which is at odds with the new legislative provisions, the transitional regulations will require Council to conduct and complete another elector representation review in 2024/2025.

2. BACKGROUND

The City of Mitcham covers approximately 75.55 km²; and had an estimated resident population of 67,907 as at the 30th June 2020. In March 2021 there were 48,841 eligible electors within the Council area, this equating to an elector ratio (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor) of 1:3,757

The Council area is currently divided into six (6) wards (refer Map 1), with the Craighburn Ward being represented by three (3) councillors and all of the remaining wards each being represented by two (2) councillors (i.e. a total of thirteen (13) ward councillors). The principal and fourteenth member of Council is a Mayor who is elected by the community.

The current structure, which was adopted by Council at the previous elector representation review in 2012/2013, came into effect at the periodic Local Government elections in November 2014.

Table 1 provides data pertaining to the number of electors within each of the current wards and demonstrates the variance between the ward elector ratios and the quota (elector ratio) for the whole of the council area.

Table 1: Current ward structure - Elector numbers and elector ratios

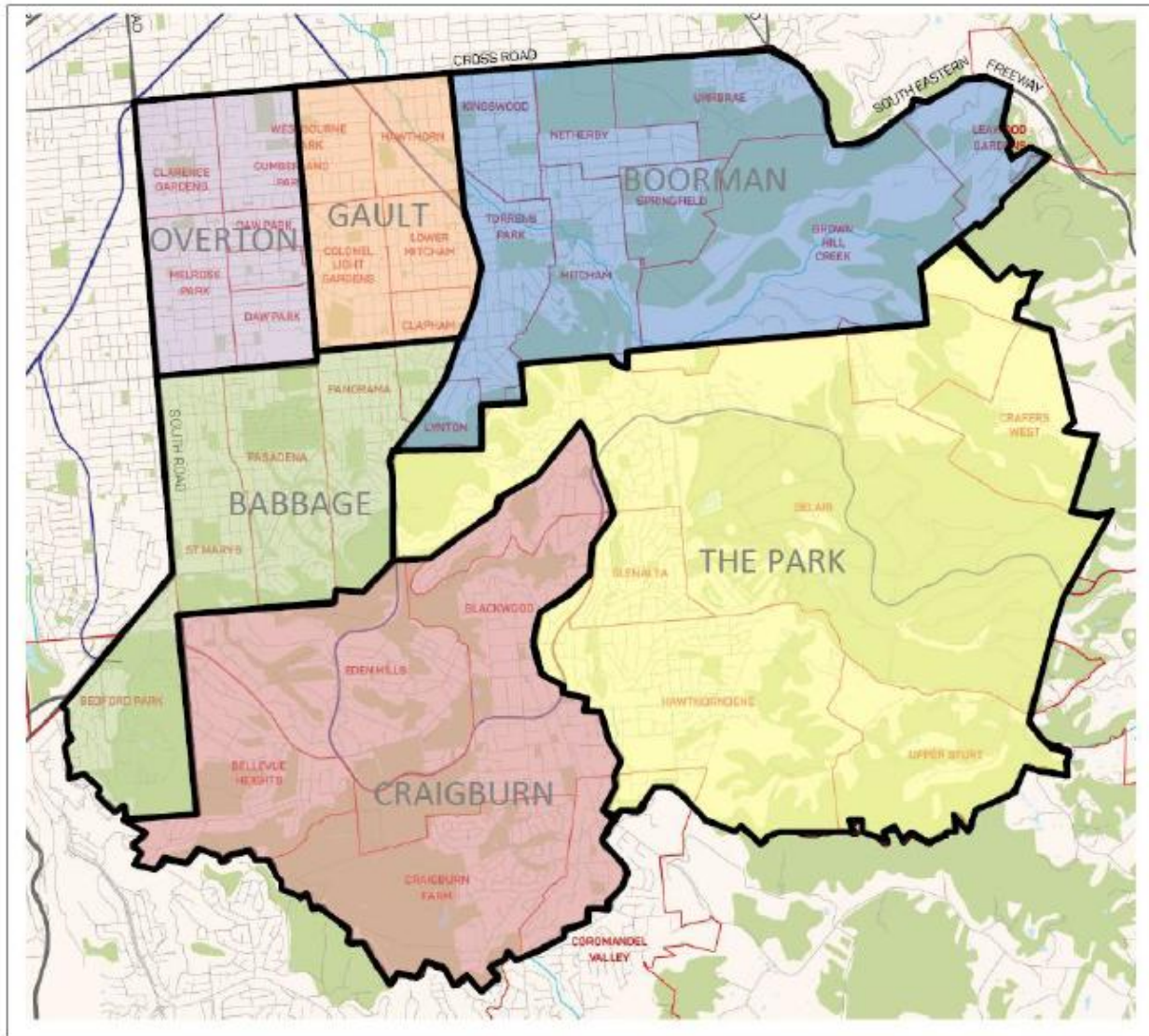
Ward	Crs	H of A Roll	Council Roll	Electors	Ratio	% Variance
Babbage	2	7,275	8	7,283	1:3,642	- 3.07
Boorman Ward	2	7,741	19	7,760	1:3,880	+3.27
Craighburn	3	11,230	8	11,238	1:3,746	- 0.29
Gault	2	7,713	8	7,721	1:3,861	+2.75
Overton	2	7,561	12	7,573	1:3,787	+0.79
The Park	2	7,261	5	7,266	1:3,633	- 3.30
Total	13	48,781	60	48,841		
Average					1:3,757	

Source: Electoral Commission SA (March 2021)

Council commenced its current elector representation review in June 2020 and completed the prescribed initial six (6) week public consultation stage of the review process on Friday 7th May 2021.

At its meeting on the 8th June 2021, Council considered all matters relevant to the review; and made "in principle" agreements regarding its preferred future composition and structure.

Map 1: Current ward structure



3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The initial public consultation relating to the elector representation review was undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Sections 12(7) and 12(8) of the Act.

Public consultation commenced on Tuesday 16th March 2021 with the publishing of a public notice in "The Advertiser" newspaper; and this was followed by the publishing of a notice in the Government Gazette on Thursday 18th March 2021.

The Council "Have Your Say" engagement platform was activated on the 17th March 2021. This portal provided a copy of the Representation Options Paper; a copy of the survey; information pertaining to the review and the review process; and key dates for the review process.

Use of social media included posts on Facebook on the 17th and 24th March 2021; the 3rd, 22nd and 27th April 2021; and the 1st and 4th May 2021. In addition, posts were made on Twitter on the 24th March 2021; the 22nd April 2021; and the 1st and 4th May 2021.

Hard copies of the Representation Options Paper and the survey were also made available at the Civic Centre throughout the period of consultation.

At the expiration of the public consultation period (i.e. close of business on Friday 7th May 2021) Council had received sixty-two (62) submissions via the electronic survey. The "Have Your Say" website page recorded 520 visits and 190 downloads during the public consultation period.

The receipt of sixty-two (62) submissions was considered to be a reasonable response, given that at the same stage of the previous elector representation review (December 2012) Council received only five (5) submissions. Whilst the submissions received represented only a very small sample (i.e. 0.13%) of the 48,841 eligible electors within the City of Mitcham (as at March 2021), they did provide some insight regarding several issues which are being addressed during the representation review.

The following tables provide details of the support demonstrated by the community for the various composition and ward structure options.

Table 2: Preferred principal member.

Principal member	Respondents	%
Mayor elected by the community	44	70.97
Chairperson selected by Council	18	29.03
Total	62	

Table 3: Retain or abolish wards.

Wards/No wards	Respondents	%
Wards	48	77.42
No wards	14	22.58
Total	62	

Table 4: Preferred number of councillors.

Councillors	Respondents	%
Thirteen (13)	16	26.23
Nine (9)	14	22.95
Ten (10)	13	21.31
Eleven (11)	10	16.39
Twelve (12)	8	13.12
Total	61	

Note: One submission provided no preference.

Table 5: Preferred ward structure.

Preferred ward structure	Respondents	%
Option 1 (Current ward structure)	22	41.51
Option 4 (Five wards, ten councillors)	12	22.64
Option 5 (Four wards, nine councillors)	11	20.75
Option 2 (Five wards, eleven councillors)	4	7.55
Option 3 (Five wards, eleven councillors)	4	7.55
Total	53	

Note: Excludes the nine (9) submissions which favoured "no wards".

Whilst a clear majority of the submissions received favoured the retention of an elected Mayor (approximately 71%) and the retention of wards (approximately 77%), the responses in regard to the issues of the preferred number of councillors and the preferred ward structure option were somewhat ambiguous.

There was no clearly favoured option in regard to the issue of the preferred number of councillors, however forty-five (45) or approximately 74% of the respondents collectively favoured less councillors than the current level of representation. In addition, whilst the existing ward structure presented as Option 1 (i.e. six wards, thirteen councillors) was the most supported of the ward structure options, overall 58.49% of the respondents favoured ward structure options based on nine (9) to eleven (11) councillors.

It should be noted that the provisions of Section 12 of the Act do not require Council to provide respondents with the opportunity to address the elected members at this stage of the review process.



4. PROPOSAL

Having duly considered all relevant provisions of the Act; the information and alternatives contained within the Representation Options Paper; the submissions received from the community; and the ramifications of the Bill, Council proposes the following in respect to its future composition and structure.

- The principal member of Council continue to be a Mayor elected by the community.
- The Council area be divided into six (6) wards (refer Map 2).
- Each of the proposed wards be represented by two (2) ward councillors.
- The future elected body of Council comprise the Mayor and twelve (12) ward councillors.

The proposed wards are described as follows.

Proposed Ward 1 incorporates the suburbs of Clarence Gardens, Colonel Light Gardens (west of Goodwood Road), Cumberland Park, Daw Park, Melrose Park and St Marys (north of Southern Avenue and west of Cashel Street).

Proposed Ward 2 incorporates the suburbs of Colonel Light Gardens (east of Goodwood Road), Clapham (north of Springbank Road), Hawthorn, Kingswood (north of Tutt Avenue), Lower Mitcham and Westbourne Park.

Proposed Ward 3 incorporates the suburbs of Belair (north of the area bounded by the railway line, Main Road, Gloucester Road and Kalyra Road), Brown Hill Creek, Crafers West, Kingswood (south of Tutt Avenue), Leawood Gardens, Mitcham, Netherby, Springfield, Torrens Park and Urrbrae.

Proposed Ward 4 incorporates the suburbs of Bedford Park, Clapham (south of Springbank Road), Eden Hills (west of the railway line), Lynton, Panorama, Pasadena and St Marys (south of Southern Avenue and east of Cashel Street).

Proposed Ward 5 incorporates the suburbs of Blackwood (north of Shepherds Hill Road), Belair (south of the area bounded by the railway line, Main Road, Gloucester Road and Kalyra Road), Glenalta, Hawthorndene and Upper Sturt.

Proposed Ward 6 incorporates the suburbs Bellevue Heights, Blackwood (south of Shepherds Hill Road), Coromandel Valley, Craighburn Farm and Eden Hills (east of the railway line).

Table 6 provides data pertaining to the number of electors within each of the proposed wards; and demonstrates the variance between the elector ratios within the proposed wards and the current elector ratio (quota) for the whole of the Council area.

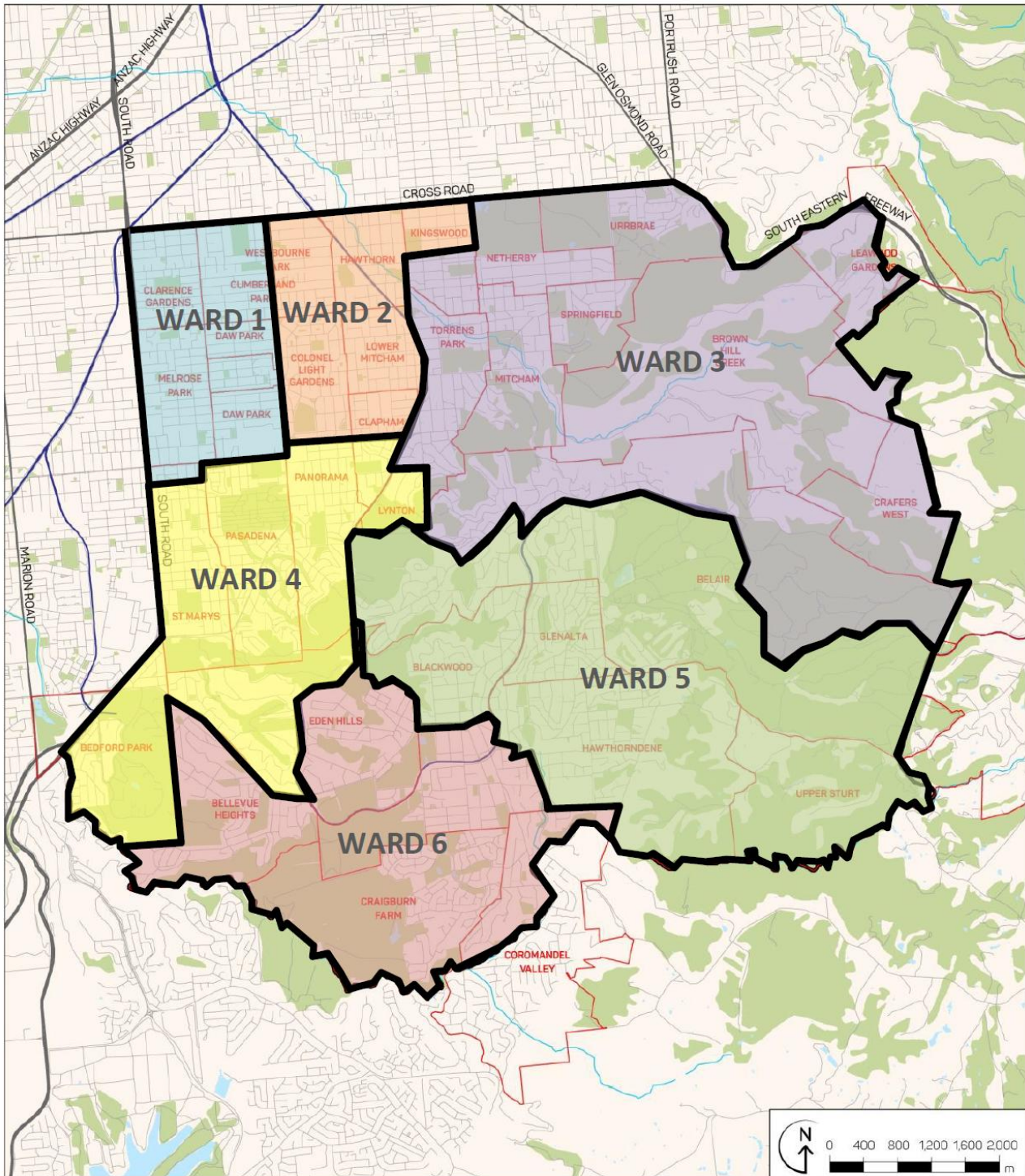
Table 6: Elector representation and distribution - proposed ward structure

WARD	COUNCILLORS	ELECTORS	RATIO	% VARIANCE
Ward 1	2	7,629	3,815	- 3.94
Ward 2	2	8,044	4,022	+ 1.29
Ward 3	2	8,160	4,080	+ 2.75
Ward 4	2	7,831	3,916	- 1.39
Ward 5	2	8,135	4,068	+ 2.44
Ward 6	2	7,850	3,925	- 1.15

Source: Electoral Commission SA (September 2020)



Map 2: Proposed ward structure



5. PROPOSAL RATIONALE

5.1 Principal Member

The principal member of Council has always been a Mayor who is elected by the community.

Council believes that:

- a Mayor elected by the community is in accord with a fundamental principle of democracy – choice;
- the election of a Mayor affords all eligible members of the community the opportunity to express faith in a candidate, should they choose to do so, and provides Council with an identifiable principal member who is directly accountable to the community;
- the office of Mayor has served the City of Mitcham well for over seventy (70) years;
- the retention of an elected Mayor brings stability and continuity to the Council, given the four year term of office;
- little practical benefit will likely be achieved by changing to a Chairperson at this time;
- the retention of an elected Mayor as the principal member is consistent with the structure of the majority of councils within the state; and
- the retention of an elected Mayor is consistent with forty-four (44) or approximately 71% of the public submissions which addressed the issue of the principal member.

Whilst there were eighteen (18) submissions that favoured a change to a Chairperson, it is considered that, on balance, a change to a Chairperson would provide only a few benefits, including a likely reduction in the number of elected members (with associated cost savings); flexibility in the tenure of the principal member; the opportunity for a number of elected members to gain experience as the principal member during the four year term of the Council (and to bring their particular skill set and opinions to the position); and avoidance of the potential loss of high calibre candidates through the mayoral election process. On the downside, a Chairperson is chosen by the elected members, thereby depriving all of the electors the opportunity to vote for the principal member of Council.

Further, and most importantly, Council is aware that the Bill, which was only passed in State Parliament on Thursday 10th June 2021, includes a provision which abolishes the office of Chairperson. Whilst the implementation of this provision may take some time, essentially Council now has no option but to retain an elected Mayor.

Having duly considered all relevant matters, Council believes that the principal member should continue to be a Mayor elected by the community at this time.

5.2 Wards/No Wards

The City of Mitcham has always been divided into wards.

Council believes that wards provide for direct representation of all areas and communities within the council area; ensure local interests and/or issues are not overlooked in favour of the bigger "council-wide" picture; and provide recognizable lines of communication with Council through the ward councillors. It is also considered that ward councillors should have some empathy for, and an affiliation with, all of the communities within their ward; and that ward councillors deliberate and make decisions on the basis of achieving the best outcome for the whole of the Council area.

Further, the community knows and accepts the division of the Council area into wards and the structure of representation that it provides. As such, the retention of a ward structure may be perceived as an indication of stability within Local Government.

Council is also mindful of the fact that forty-eight (48) or 77.42% of the submissions received during the initial consultation stage of the review process supported the division of the Council area into wards.

Council acknowledges that the "no wards" alternative affords electors the opportunity to vote for all of the vacant positions on Council; allows for the most supported candidates from across the Council area to be elected; and enables the elected members to be free of parochial ward attitudes. Notwithstanding this, Council is concerned that the "no wards" alternative:

- does not guarantee direct representation of all communities across the Council area;
- may make it easier for single interest candidates and/or groups to gain support (than does the existing ward based system);
- could discourage potential candidates from contesting elections because of the perception that the task and expense of contesting council-wide elections is difficult and excessive; and
- has the potential to increase the cost of conducting elections and supplementary elections, given that all contested elections must be conducted on a council-wide basis.

Council is of the opinion that the aforementioned present sound reasons for supporting the retention of a ward structure.

5.3 Proposed Ward Structure

The current ward structure can be retained because the elector ratio in all of the existing wards lay within the 10% quota tolerance limit specified under Section 32.2 of the Act (refer Table 1, page 2). However, the Bill specifies that Councils must not be comprised of more than thirteen (13) elected members (unless granted an "exemption certificate").

Whilst the legislative amendments have not yet come into effect, Council has chosen to reduce the number of elected members at this time (in accordance with the intent of the Bill), which requires the development/introduction of a new ward structure (a proposed). Alternatively, Council could have opted to maintain the status quo in regard to its composition and structure (subject to certification by Electoral Commission SA), knowing that the transitional provisions of the Bill will likely require the conduct of another elector representation review in 2024/2025.

In reaching its decision to pursue the introduction of a new ward structure, Council also took into account the following.

- The variation in the level of representation between the existing wards could be perceived as an unacceptable imbalance which provides the existing Craighburn Ward with greater say on Council (even though the elector ratios within the proposed wards are relatively similar).
- The proposed ward structure has the same level of representation in each of the proposed wards (i.e. two ward councillors) and exhibits a relatively equitable distribution of electors between the wards.
- In general the proposed ward boundaries align with long existing suburb boundaries, thereby ensuring that most of the perceived existing "communities of interest" are maintained in their entirety in a proposed ward. In addition, the proposed ward structure takes into account and seeks to preserve (as much as possible) the character and communities of the eastern "hills" areas.
- The proposed wards exhibit elector ratios which lay well within the specified quota tolerance limits and, as such, allow for anticipated population growth and resultant future fluctuations in elector numbers.
- Of the public submissions received, twenty-two (22) or 41.51% favoured the retention of the existing ward structure, whereas a total of thirty-one (31) or 58.49% of the submissions collectively supported new ward structures comprising four (4) or five (5) wards. Further, whilst the proposed ward structure has not previously been presented for consideration by the community, Council opted for this structure as it believed that it represents a sound alternative, given the requirements of the Bill and the fact that it maintains a six (6) ward structure, as has been the case within the Council area for many years.

Council believes the introduction of the proposed six-ward structure, which will afford the same level of representation within the proposed wards and an equitable distribution of electors between the proposed wards, should provide fair and adequate representation of the local community.

5.4 Area Councillors (in addition to ward councillors)

Council is aware that area councillors (in addition to ward councillors) are unique to the City of Adelaide and considers that this form of elected member/representation affords few advantages.

Under a ward structure area councillors hold no greater status than a ward councillor; have no greater responsibilities than a ward councillor; nor need comply with any extraordinary or additional eligibility requirements. Furthermore, ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only the ward in which they were elected, but the council area as a whole.

The introduction of area councillors (in addition to ward councillors) may also be a difficult proposition to support, given that the existing and proposed amended provisions of the Act which speak against over-representation and seek to cap the number of elected members in a council.

For the reasons espoused herein Council considers that the introduction of area councillors (in addition to ward councillors) is unwarranted, unnecessary and could potentially be a costly additional tier of elector representation.

5.5 Ward Names

The existing ward names relate to persons of local heritage significance (i.e. prominent early residents, elected members of the initial District Council of Mitcham or a long-serving District/Town Clerk) and a well-known natural feature (i.e. Belair National Park, the first proclaimed national park in South Australia). These ward names are of particular relevance to the Council area and have been utilized for many years. As such, the existing ward names are likely known to, and accepted by, the local community.

It is considered that the existing ward names can be utilized in respect to the proposed ward structure, as they are generally relevant to the whole of the Council area, rather than an individual location or suburb.

Council is aware of the alternative means of ward identification, such as the allocation of letters, numbers and/or compass points (i.e. north, south and west) but feels that these options generally fail to reflect the character and/or heritage of the Council area.

Council believes that the identification/allocation of appropriate ward names which have relevance and meaning to the local community is an important element of the review. Accordingly, **Council proposes to retain the long existing ward names but also welcomes suggestions from the community in respect to this matter.**

5.6 Number of Councillors

Council has comprised thirteen (13) councillors for many years but now believes that a more efficient and effective elected body should enable fewer elected members to adapt to, and meet the demands and needs of, the local community. Further, Council has strived for a balance between the provision of fair and adequate representation of the community and the on-going demands of fiscal management and constraint. Accordingly, Council proposes to reduce the number of elected members (councillors) to twelve (12).

In reaching this "in principle" decision, Council was mindful of the following.

- The provisions of Sections 26 and 33 of the Local Government Act stipulate the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).
- The Bill seeks to cap the number of elected members in a Council at thirteen (13), including the principal member.
- Of the submissions received which indicated at preferred number of elected members, a total of forty-five (45) or 73.77% favoured a reduction in the number of councillors (nine (9) to twelve (12) members), whilst sixteen (16) or 26.23% supported the retention of thirteen (13) councillors.
- Sufficient elected members must be available to manage the affairs of Council.
- The elected member's workloads should not become excessive.
- There needs to be an appropriate and adequate level of elector representation afforded the community.
- Diversity in member's skill sets, experience, expertise, opinions and backgrounds needs to be maintained, where possible, in order to ensure robust discussion amongst the elected members.
- Adequate lines of communication must exist between Council and the growing local community.
- The proposed reduction in the number of elected members could save Council and the community a minimum of \$82,520 in elected member allowances alone over a four year term of Council (given the current elected member base allowance of \$20,630/pa), with the resulting savings being available for redirection to community projects and/or programs.
- The proposed reduction in the number of elected members may serve to expedite the discussion in the Council chamber, given the potential for fewer participants. However, Council does not believe that a reduction in the number of elected members will detrimentally impact the decision making processes and/or the expression of opinions within the chamber, but rather may serve to reduce the incidence of similar opinions being expressed during debate.

- The proposed reduction in the number of elected members will serve to increase the elector ratio across the Council area from the current 1:3,757 to approximately 1:4,070. The elector ratio under the proposed structure will still only be "mid-range" when compared to the elector ratios exhibited by the other councils of a similar size and type (refer Table 7).

Table 7: Elector data and representation
Proposed structure compared to regional councils of a similar size (elector numbers)

Council	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio
Walkerville (1.34 km ²)	8	5,763	1:720
Gawler (41.10km ²)	10	18,521	1:1,852
Prospect (7.81 km ²)	8	14,990	1:1,874
Norwood Payneham & St Peters (15.1 km ²)	13	25,790	1:1,984
Unley (14.29 km ²)	12	27,505	1:2,293
Holdfast Bay (13.72 km ²)	12	28,433	1:2,369
Adelaide Hills (795.1 km ²)	12	29,468	1:2,456
Burnside (27.53 km ²)	12	32,019	1:2,668
West Torrens (37.07 km ²)	14	42,182	1:3,013
Campbelltown (24.35 km ²)	10	36,176	1:3,618
Mitcham (75.55 km ²)	13	48,841	1:3,757
Adelaide* (15.57 km ²)	7	28,279	1:4,040
Playford (344.9 km ²)	15	64,448	1:4,297
Port Adelaide/Enfield (97.0 km ²)	17	86,605	1:5,094
Charles Sturt (52.14 km ²)	16	87,838	1:5,490
Marion (55.5km ²)	12	66,559	1:5,547
Tea Tree Gully (95.2 km ²)	12	73,685	1:6,140
Salisbury (158.1 km ²)	14	96,326	1:6,880
Onkaparinga (518.4 km ²)	12	127,988	1:10,666

Source: Electoral Commission SA (March 2021)

* City of Adelaide also comprises four (4) "area councillors".

Council believes that the proposed reduction in the number of elected members is the right and responsible course of action at this time. Twelve (12) councillors should be sufficient to provide adequate and fair representation to the community, and to perform the roles and responsibilities of Council. Whilst the task of a councillor may become a little more demanding than previously experienced, the role of an elected member has changed over the years to a decision and policy maker, and a communication conduit between Council and the community. This being the case, it is envisaged that the demands to be placed upon the future elected members should be manageable and may, in part, be mitigated by ever improving telecommunications and information technology.

Council is confident that twelve (12) councillors should be able to represent and serve the community of the City of Mitcham adequately over the coming years.

6. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The provisions of Sections 26(1)(c) and 33(1) of the Act require Council take into account, as far as practicable, the following when developing a proposal that relates to its composition and structure.

6.1 Quota

Section 33(2) of the Act indicates that a proposal which relates to the formation or alteration of wards of a council must also observe the principle that the number of electors represented by a councillor must not, as at the relevant date (assuming that the proposal were in operation), vary from the ward quota by more than 10%.

According to Section 33(2a)(b) of the Act, ward quota is determined to be: *“the number of electors for the area (as at the relevant date) divided by the number of councillors for the area who represent wards (assuming that the proposal were in operation and ignoring any fractions resulting from the division).”*

The breakdown of elector data provided in Table 6 (page 8) indicates that the elector ratios in all of the proposed wards lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits. As such, it is expected that all of the proposed wards will be capable of sustaining reasonable future fluctuations in elector numbers.

6.2 Communities of Interest and Population

The Act speaks of the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind.

“Communities of interest” have previously been defined “as aspects of the physical, economic and social systems which are central to the interactions of communities in their living environment”, and are generally identified by considering factors relevant thereto, including neighbourhood communities; history and heritage communities; sporting facilities; community support services; recreation and leisure communities; retail and shopping centres; work communities; industrial and economic development clusters; and environmental and geographic interests.

Council believes that there are numerous communities of interest within the Council area, including but not limited to the thirty-two long-established suburbs of Bedford Park (part), Belair (part), Bellevue Heights, Blackwood, Brown Hill Creek, Clapham, Clarence Gardens, Colonel Light Gardens, Coromandel Valley (part), Crafers West (part), Craigburn Farm, Cumberland Park, Daw Park, Eden Hills, Glenalta, Hawthorn, Hawthorndene, Kingswood, Leawood Gardens (part), Lower Mitcham, Lynton, Melrose Park, Mitcham, Netherby, Panorama, Pasadena, Springfield, St Marys, Torrens Park, Upper Sturt (part), Urrbrae and Westbourne Park.

When developing the proposed ward structure, care was taken to ensure that, where possible, identified "communities of interest" were maintained in their entirety within the bounds of a ward, taking into account the features of the landscape; the location of, and connection between, the various communities; and the distribution of the electors.

6.3 Topography

The City of Mitcham is 75.55km² in area; comprises urban and rural environments incorporating long established residential and "hills" suburbs; has significant industrial development to the west and two primary commercial precincts (Blackwood and Mitcham); and exhibits an extensive road network, a railway line which winds through the Council area and a system of watercourses (including Brown Hill, Minno and Wattiparringga Creeks).

Despite the above, it is considered that the topography of the Council area will have little or no impact upon Council's proposal, given that the proposed ward structure has been developed with the view to maintaining, where possible, entire "communities of interest" (suburbs) within the bounds of the proposed wards, taking into account the existing topographical features.

Further, whilst the potential effects of the topography will remain, it is considered that the impacts thereof will be reduced through the united approach and efforts of the elected members.

6.4 Feasibility of Communication

Council believes that the proposed level of representation (i.e. the Mayor and twelve (12) ward councillors) will still provide adequate lines of communication between Council and the community, taking into account the concentration of the electors within the small council area; and the ever improving communication and information technology.

6.5 Demographic Trends

During the review process (and associated deliberations), Council has taken into account the following information.

- According to Electoral Commission SA, the number of eligible electors within the City of Mitcham increased by 2,485 (5.36%) since the last elector representation review was undertaken in 2012/2013. This growth primarily occurred in the Craighburn and Babbage wards.
- Population projections prepared by PlanSA (the then Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure) in 2020 indicates that the population of the City of Mitcham is anticipated to increase by 4,832 (7.3%) during the period 2016 – 2036.

- Considerable future residential growth opportunities exists throughout the Council area which could impact on the future population/elector numbers. These include, but are not limited to:
 - on-going development of land in Craighburn;
 - residential infill around railway stations and bus GO zones throughout the Council area, and adjacent community hubs in Mitcham and Blackwood;
 - potential urban renewal opportunity in St Marys (west of Centennial Park);
 - higher density residential in-fill around existing activity centres at Cumberland Park, Mitcham and Blackwood, as well as along the Goodwood Road and Belair Road corridors and in the area south of Daws Road;
 - medium to high density residential development in the " Bedford Triangle";
 - medium to high-density housing around the Flinders University/Hospital/Medical Centre precinct; and
 - potential for significant change and growth in and about Goodwood and Daws Roads, the Blackwood centre, the Belair Road centre, and Goodwood and Cross Roads.
- Data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (refer 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia) indicates that the estimated population of the City of Mitcham increased every year during the period 2005 – 2019 (i.e. from 63,265 to 67,494), which equates to a total increase of 4,229 or 6.68%.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics "Quick Stats" indicate that the estimated population of the Council area increased by 5,039 or 8.43% during the period 2001 - 2016 (i.e. 59,766 to 64,805).
- Council's "Community Profile" data indicates that, based on the 2016 census data, the Council area had:
 - a slightly higher proportion of residents less than 19 years of age and 55 years and over, when compared to the averages for the Greater Adelaide area;
 - an estimated 12,267 residents (18.9% of the local population) in the age bracket 5 – 19 years; and
 - 20,737 local residents (or 32.0 % of the local population) were aged 50 years and older.

6.6 Adequate and Fair Representation

For the reasons espoused earlier, Council is confident that its proposed future composition will provide sufficient elected members to manage the affairs of Council; provide an appropriate level of elector representation; maintain an appropriate diversity in the skill set, experience and expertise amongst the elected members; and present adequate lines of communication between the community and Council.

In addition, Council believes that the equitable distribution of electors between the six proposed wards, and the consistent level of representation within the proposed wards, will likely be considered to be fair and reasonable by the community.

6.7 Section 26, Local Government Act 1999

Section 26(1) of the Act requires that a number of broader Principles also be taken into account during the review process. These are similar in nature to those presented under Section 33 of the Act and include:

- the desirability of avoiding significant divisions within the community;
- proposed changes should, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers;
- a Council having a sufficient resource base to fulfil its functions fairly, effectively and efficiently;
- a Council should reflect communities of interest of an economic, recreational, social, regional or other kind, and be consistent with community structures, values, expectations and aspirations; and
- residents should receive adequate and fair representation within the local government system, while over-representation in comparison with Councils of a similar size and type should be avoided (at least in the longer term).

The composition and structure being proposed by Council is considered to comply with the cited legislative provisions, in that it will:

- incorporate sufficient elected members to undertake the various roles and responsibilities of Council;
- have little if any detrimental impact upon the ratepayers and/or existing communities of interest;
- provide adequate and fair representation to all electors; and
- compare favourably with the composition and elector ratios of other regional councils that are of a similar size (in terms of elector numbers) and type.

7. CURRENT PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with Section 12(9) of the Act, interested persons are invited to make a written submission to Council in respect to this report, and more specifically the composition and structure that Council proposes to retain at (and beyond) the date of the next Local Government elections in November 2022. Any person who makes a written submission at this time will be afforded the opportunity to address Council, in support of their submission, on Tuesday 27th July 2021.

Interested members of the community are invited to make a submission expressing their views on the future composition and structure of Council. Submissions can be made as follows, and will be accepted until 5.00pm on Friday 23rd July 2021.

- In writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, PO Box 21, Mitcham Shopping Centre, Torrens Park 5062.
- Emailed to mitcham@mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au
- Via the Council website (www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au)

Further information regarding the elector representation review can be obtained on Council's website or by contacting Deborah Horton, Team Leader Governance, on telephone 8372 8888 or email dhorton@mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au.

