



Review of Ward Boundaries and Elected Member Representation

Community Discussion Paper

July 2014

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City of Mandurah Review of Wards and Representation: Discussion Paper

Background

At its June 2014 Council Meeting, the City of Mandurah resolved to undertake a review of its ward system to comply with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act).

Schedule 2.2 of the Act requires local governments with wards to carry out reviews of their ward boundaries and the number of councillors for each ward from time to time, so that no more than eight years elapse between successive reviews.

The last review of wards in the City of Mandurah was undertaken in 2006, and it is now appropriate to carry out another review, prior to the 2015 Local Government Elections.

Current Situation

Currently the City of Mandurah has twelve (12) councillors elected from four (4) wards as follows:

Current Structure: 4 Wards, 12 Councillors plus Mayor, April 2014				
Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/ Elector Ratio	Percentage Ratio Deviation
North	13,022	3	1:4341	-4.9%
East	11,843	3	1:3948	4.8%
Town	11,741	3	1:3914	5.7%
Coastal	13,043	3	1:4348	-5.1%
Total	49,649	12	1:4138 (Average)	

Source: Western Australian Electoral Commission; *Local Government Statistics as at 1/04/2014*;
www.elections.wa.gov.au

The percentage ratio deviation gives a clear indication of the percentage difference between the average councillor/elector ratio for the whole local government and the councillor/elector ratio for each ward. A balanced representation is reflected in the percentage ratio deviation being within plus or minus 10%.

Currently, all four of Mandurah Wards are well within the 10% ratio deviation, and are expected to remain within the deviation at the time of the October 2015 Local Government Election. A map showing current ward boundaries is attached (Option 1).

Review Process

The review process involves a number of steps:

- The Council resolves to undertake the review;
- Public submission period opens;
- Information provided to the community for discussion;
- Public submission period closes;
- The Council considers all submissions and relevant factors and makes a decision;
- The Council submits a report to the Local Government Advisory Board for its consideration; and
- If a change is proposed, the Board submits a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government.

Any changes approved by the Minister where possible will be in place for the next local government election where possible. The next local government election is scheduled for October 2015.

The minimum period for accepting public submissions is to be six weeks. **Public submissions will close at 5pm on Friday 5 September 2014.** Notice of the review process is being advertised in the local media, and on the City's website at www.mandurah.wa.gov.au.

Factors for Consideration

When considering changes to wards and representation, Schedule 2.2 of the Local Government Act specifies factors that must be taken into account by a local government as part of the review process:

1. Community of interest;
2. Physical and topographic features;
3. Demographic trends;
4. Economic factors; and
5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards.

1. Community of interest

The term 'community of interest' has a number of elements. These include a sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community, and similarities in the economic activities. It can also include dependence on the shared facilities in an area as reflected in catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure, and often generate a feeling of community and belonging.

2. Physical and topographic features

These may be natural or man-made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations. Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be relevant, as may other man-made features such as railway lines and freeways.

3. Demographic trends

Several measurements of the characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information. Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

4. Economic factors

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area. This may include the industries that occur in a local government area (or the release of land for these), and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks.

5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards

It is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to councillors across the wards of its district.

Several additional factors need to be considered when reviewing Councillor representation across wards and the district as a whole. These include:

- The advantages and disadvantages of reducing the number of Councillors;
- The advantages and disadvantages of introducing a 'no-ward' structure;
- The implications of any change to the Councillor/elector ratio.

The Local Government Advisory Board outlines the following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages of a reduction in the number of Elected Members:

- The decision-making process may be more effective and efficient if the number of Elected Members is reduced. It is more timely to ascertain the views of a fewer number of people, and decision making may be easier. There is also more scope for team spirit and cooperation amongst a smaller number of people;

- The cost of maintaining Elected Members is likely to be reduced;
- A reduction in the number of Elected Members may result in an increased commitment from those elected, reflected in greater interest and participation in Council's affairs;
- Fewer Elected Members are more readily identifiable to the community;
- Fewer positions on Council may lead to greater interest in elections, with contested elections and those elected obtaining a greater level of support from the community;
- There is currently a State-wide trend for reductions in the number of Elected Members, and many local governments have found that a Council with fewer Elected Members works well.

Disadvantages of a reduction in the number of Elected Members:

- A smaller number of Elected Members may result in an increased workload and may lessen effectiveness. A demanding role may discourage others from nominating for Council;
- There is the potential for dominance of Council by a particular interest group;
- A reduction in the number of Elected Members may limit the diversity of interests around the Council table;
- Opportunities for community participation in Council's affairs may be reduced if there are fewer Elected Members for the community to contact;
- An increase in the ratio of Councillors to electors may place too many demands on Elected Members.

Advantages of retaining a ward system:

- Different sectors of the community can be represented, ensuring a good spread of representation and interests amongst Elected Members;
- There is more opportunity for Elected Members to have a greater knowledge and interest in the issues of their local ward;
- It may be easier for a candidate to be elected if they only need to canvass one ward;
- Councillors may be more easily accessible to the electors of the ward they represent.

Disadvantages of a ward system:

- Elected Members can become too focussed on their own wards, and less focussed on the affairs of other wards and the whole local government;
- An unhealthy competition for resources can develop where electors in each ward come to expect the services and facilities provided in other wards, whether they are appropriate or not;
- The community and Elected Members can tend to regard the local government in terms of wards rather than as a whole community;
- Ward boundaries may appear to be placed arbitrarily, and may not reflect the social interaction and communities of interest of the community;
- Balanced representation across the local government may be difficult to achieve, particularly if a local government has highly populated urban areas and sparsely populated rural areas.

Advantages of a 'no ward' system:

- Elected Members are elected by the whole community, not just a section of it. Elected Members under the Act are required to represent the views of all electors of the Council, and make decisions in the best interest of the district as a whole. Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs would result, broadening the views beyond the immediate concerns of those within a ward;
- Members of the community who want to approach an Elected Member can speak to any Elected Member, rather than only an Elected Member who lives locally;
- Elected Members can use their specialty skills and knowledge for the benefit of the whole local government;
- There is balanced representation, with each Elected Member representing the whole community;
- The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and for the Council to administer.

Disadvantages of a 'no ward' system:

- Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they do not have an affinity with any of the Elected Members. Elected Members living in a certain area may have a greater affinity and understanding of the issues specific to that area;
- There is potential for an interest group to dominate Council;

- Elected Members may feel overwhelmed by having to represent all electors, and may not have the time or opportunity to understand and represent all the issues;
- It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they need to canvass the entire local government area.

Review Options

Council will consider the following five review options:

Option 1 - Maintain the current 4-ward, 13 Elected Member system

Option 2 - Retain existing 4-Ward system, and reduce number of Elected Members to 9;

Option 3 - Introduce 2-Ward system, and reduce number of Elected Members to 11;

Option 4 - Introduce No-Ward system, and retain 13 Elected Members;

Option 5 - Introduce No-Ward system, and reduce number of Elected Members to 10.

The attached maps indicate the five proposed options.

Also under consideration will be the number of councillors for each ward and the district. For example, it may be that fewer councillors will provide good representation and may result in financial savings and more effective and efficient decision making.

Although Council has put forward five options as part of the review, alternative proposals from the community are also encouraged. A submission paper is provided below.

Option 1

The City of Mandurah is currently represented by 13 Elected Members, including the Mayor. Each Ward is represented by three Councillors, and the Mayor represents the City as a whole.

4 Wards, 12 Councillors plus Mayor				
Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/ Elector Ratio	Percentage Ratio Deviation
North	13,022	3	1:4341	-4.9%
East	11,843	3	1:3948	4.8%
Town	11,741	3	1:3914	5.7%
Coastal	13,043	3	1:4348	-5.1%
Total	49,649	12	1:4138 (Average)	

Source: Western Australian Electoral Commission; *Local Government Statistics as at 1/04/2014;*

The Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC) maintains quarterly records of electoral enrolment in each local government area. The most recent (April 2014) statistics indicate that all four wards are currently well within the 10% ratio deviation, and will remain within the deviation at the time of the 2015 local government election.

As indicated on Map 1, current ward boundaries for the most part do not align with physical and topographical features, such as the Peel Inlet and Dawesville Channel, Old Coast Road/Mandurah Road, and Pinjarra Road. Further, current Ward boundaries divide a number of localities. Greenfields is represented by both North and East Wards, Dudley Park is represented by both East and Town Wards, and Mandurah is represented by North, East and Town Wards.

Option 2

Option 2 involves retaining the existing four-ward structure, and reducing the number of Elected Members from 13 to nine (9).

4 Wards, 8 Councillors plus Mayor				
Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/ Elector Ratio	Percentage Ratio Deviation
North	13,022	2	1:6511	-4.9%
East	11,843	2	1:5922	4.8%
Town	11,741	2	1:5871	5.7%
Coastal	13,043	2	1:6522	-5.1%
Total	49,649	8	1:6207 (Average)	

Option 2 would fit within the 10% ratio deviation, as per Option 1. Option 2 would result in the loss of four Councillors (one per ward), which would increase the average number of electors per Councillor from 4138 to 6207. Communities of interest and physical and topographical features would be the same as for Option 1.

Option 3

Option 3 involves reducing the number of wards from four to two, and the number of Elected Members from 13 to 11. North Ward would encompass all localities north of the Peel Inlet, whilst South Ward would encompass all localities south of the Peel Inlet.

2 Wards, 10 Councillors plus Mayor				
Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/Elector Ratio	Percentage Ratio Deviation
North	28,291	6	1:4715	6.7%
South	21,392	4	1:5348	-6.3%
Total	49,683	10	1:5032 (Average)	

Option 3 would fit within the 10% ratio deviation. Option 3 would result in the loss of two Councillors, increasing the average number of electors per Councillor from 4138 to 5032.

Communities of interest and physical and topographical features would more closely align under Option 3, with all localities south of the Peel Inlet contained in the South Ward, and all localities to the north contained in the North Ward.

Option 4

Option 4 involves the removal of wards and replacement with a no-ward system, and retaining 13 Elected Members. Under this system, all Councillors would represent the entire Mandurah district, rather than a single ward.

No Wards, 9 Councillors plus Mayor		
Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/Elector Ratio
49,649	12	4138

Option 4 would eliminate the need for a 10% ratio deviation. Option 4 would retain 12 Councillors, with an average number of electors per Councillor of 4138.

Communities of interest and physical and topographical features would no longer be relevant, as each Elected Member would represent the entire Mandurah district, rather than only one Ward.

Option 5

Option 5 involves the removal of wards and replacement with a no-ward system, and a reduction in the number of Elected Members from 13 to 10. Under this system, all Councillors would represent the entire Mandurah district, rather than a single ward.

No Wards, 9 Councillors plus Mayor		
Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor/Elector Ratio
49,649	9	5517

Option 5 would eliminate the need for a 10% ratio deviation. Option 5 would result in the loss of three Councillors, increasing the average number of electors per Councillor from 4138 to 5517.

Communities of interest and physical and topographical features would no longer be relevant, as each Elected Member would represent the entire Mandurah district, rather than only one Ward.

Public Submissions

Members of the community are invited to make a written submission about any aspect of ward boundaries and representation, and address it to:

The Chief Executive Officer
City of Mandurah
PO Box 210
MANDURAH WA 6210

Faxed to (08) 9550 3888, emailed to council@mandurah.wa.gov.au , or hand delivered at the City's administration building at 3 Peel Street Mandurah.

For any enquiries regarding the review of Wards and Elected Member representation, please contact the City's Strategic Policy and Research Officer, Tim Bateman, on (08) 9550 3728.

Written submissions should be lodged at the City of Mandurah by 5.00 pm on **Friday 5 September 2014**.

Thank you for your interest in the City of Mandurah's 2014 review of ward boundaries and Elected Member representation. The City of Mandurah welcomes your submission.

Review of Current Ward Boundaries and Elected Member Representation: Submission Form

Note: This form is provided for your convenience. Written public submissions do not have to be made on this form.

To: Chief Executive Officer
City of Mandurah
PO Box 210
3 Peel Street
MANDURAH WA 6210

Email: council@mandurah.wa.gov.au
Fax: (08) 9550 3888

Dear Sir

I support the following ward boundary/Elected Member option:
(please circle, underline or highlight)

- **Option 1:** Retain existing 4-ward system – 12 Councillors plus Mayor (13 Elected Members)

Yes No

Or

- **Option 2:** Retain existing 4-ward system – 8 Councillors plus Mayor (9 Elected Members)

Yes No

Or

- **Option 3:** Introduce 2-ward system – 10 Councillors plus Mayor (11 Elected Members)

Yes No

Or

- **Option 4:** Introduce no-ward system – 12 Councillors plus Mayor (13 Elected Members)

Yes No

Or

- **Option 5:** Introduce no-ward system – 9 Councillors plus Mayor (10 Elected Members)

Yes No

Or

Continued on next page.....

I propose the following Ward boundary/Councillor structure:

The City of Mandurah should haveWards and Councillors
(minimum of 5 Councillors and maximum of 14).

The City's Wards should have the following names and number of Councillors:

Name	No. of Councillors
Ward 1.....
Ward 2.....
Ward 3.....
Ward 4.....
Ward 5.....
Ward 6.....
Ward 7.....
Ward 8.....

The City's Wards should contain the following suburbs/localities and/or physical/topographic features:

Ward 1.....
Ward 2.....
Ward 3.....
Ward 4.....
Ward 5.....
Ward 6.....
Ward 7.....
Ward 8.....

Comments in support of my preferred option:

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Submitted by:

Name:
Address:
Contact details: