



CITY OF VINCENT

DISCUSSION PAPER

REVIEW OF CITY'S WARDS AND REPRESENTATION

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1. Summary of statutory requirements and review process

A local government's ward and representation requirements are set out in the *Local Government Act 1995 (Act)*. The key requirements are:

- a council must comprise of no fewer than six and no more than 15 elected members including a Mayor elected at large (section 2.17); and
- a district (local government area) can be divided into wards (section 2.2).

Clause 6 of Schedule 2.2 to the Act provides that a local government that has a ward system is required to carry out reviews of:

- (a) its ward boundaries; and
- (b) the number of offices of council members for each ward,

from time to time so that not more than eight years elapse between successive reviews.

The last review of the City of Vincent's wards and representation was conducted in 2010. Therefore the City is required to conduct a review of its wards and representation this year.

It is necessary for Council to initiate the review process and for the City to provide at least six weeks local public notice that a review will be carried out. The purpose of the local public notice is to inform the community of the proposed review and invite comments and submissions which will inform the review process. The public is also encouraged to provide options for ward and representation change, and the local government can facilitate this by providing some options as suggestions. Options could include:

- Creating new wards in a district already divided into wards;
- Changing the boundaries of a ward;
- Abolishing any or all of the wards into which a district is divided;
- Changing the name of a district or a ward;
- Changing the number of offices of council member on a council; and
- Specifying or changing the number of offices of council members for a ward.

The local government cannot constrain the public to certain options, and must consider all options put forward by the public. Upon receiving the public comments, the City will conduct a review, taking into account the public comments and with regard to the factors set out below:

- Community Interest*
- Sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities
 - 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
 - Neighborhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging

- Physical and topographical 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

- Demographic trends*
 - 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
- Economic factors*
 - Any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area
 - This includes 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
- Ratio of council members to electors*
 - The ratio of council members to electors is particularly significant - it is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to council members across its wards
 - The Local Government Advisory Board (**LGAB**) will not support deviations of more than plus or minus 10% of the average ratio of council members to electors between wards

After completing the review, the local government must make a recommendation to the LGAB. The LGAB's role is to determine if the local government properly considered all relevant factors, and make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts (**Minister**) to this effect. If the LGAB believes that the local government has not completed a proper review it will advise the Minister of this. The Minister may accept or reject the LGAB's recommendation. If the local government has requested changes to its ward and representation and the Minister approves the request, these changes will come into effect at the next council elections. The next council elections are scheduled for October 2019.

2. Analysis of current wards & representation

The City has two wards, North and South. Each ward is represented by 4 council members who serve a four year term each. The City is also represented by a Mayor who is elected by the electors (at large). Two council members are elected for each ward at each local government election, with elections occurring every second year. The City currently has 23,650 electors (WA Electoral Commission September 2018 data), with an average ratio of 2,956 electors per council member.

The City's current wards and representation model has been analysed in reference to the five factors discussed above.

Community of interest

As the City is only 11.3 square kilometres in size, there are few (if any) ways in which the criteria to delineate boundaries based on communities of interest could be applied.

The localities of Leederville and North Perth are split between the North and South wards at present. Suburb boundaries do not generally follow any particular pattern and tend to simply be a reflection of the pace of development at the time of their creation.

Physical and topographic features

Other than transport thoroughfares such as Charles St, Vincent St, the Perth-Midland rail line, and Fitzgerald St, the Town has few physical or topographic features that could realistically be used to determine where ward boundaries could be.

Demographic trends

Population growth is forecast in localities in both of the current wards of the City. The City's population (which tends to also drive changes in elector numbers) to the year 2036 (see <https://forecast.id.com.au/vincent/population-summary>) is forecast to be 51,726 broken down as follows:

Population summary							
City of Vincent	Forecast year					Change between 2016 and 2036	
Area	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Total change	Avg. annual % change
City of Vincent	35,592	40,487	44,443	48,244	51,726	+16,134	+1.89
East Perth - Claisebrook	1,225	1,649	2,366	3,031	3,441	+2,216	+5.30
Highgate	2,543	2,665	2,801	2,926	3,033	+490	+0.88
Leederville	3,281	3,812	4,434	4,968	5,539	+2,258	+2.65
Mount Hawthorn	7,876	8,203	8,545	8,910	9,322	+1,446	+0.85
Mount Lawley	3,343	3,681	3,872	4,048	4,238	+895	+1.19
North Perth	9,187	10,459	11,202	11,968	12,709	+3,522	+1.64
Perth	5,764	6,858	7,588	8,283	8,951	+3,187	+2.22
West Perth	2,373	3,160	3,635	4,111	4,493	+2,120	+3.24

Growth in the City is expected in a number of areas, but higher rates forecast for localities in the present South ward for the period to 2026 (the period by when the City will need to undertake another review). If this occurs, the present South ward may be under represented and the present North ward over represented. The reliability of the forecasts can be considered closer to the next ward boundary review.

Economic factors

The current ward boundaries do not reflect economic activities. Aligning ward boundaries and representation with economic activities is not considered relevant to the City due to the homogenous nature of economic activities across wards.

Ratio of council members to electors

As at September 2018 the ratio of electors per council member are:

Ward	Electors	Council members	Ratio	Percentage deviation from average
North	11,143	4	2,786	-5.77%
South	12,507	4	3,127	5.76%
Totals or average	23,650	8	2,956	

This indicates that the North ward is slightly over represented, although both ward ratios are within the upper and lower limits considered appropriate by the LGAB.

3. Options for change to wards and representation

Based on the analysis conducted above, the options for change as set out below are recommended as possibilities and proposed to be presented to the public as suggestions for change to provoke discussion and encourage submissions and comments. Please note that

these options are for discussion purposes only and are not intended to be all encompassing. The public will be encouraged to provide alternative options and all options will be considered.

Option 1 – no change

Ward boundaries remain as they are. Ratios of electors to council members currently comply with the requirements of the Act, and therefore it is not necessary for any changes to the wards or representation.

Option 2 – move the part of Leederville presently in the South ward to the North ward

As noted above, although within allowable tolerances, the current ratio of council members to electors shows a slight over representation of the North ward and slight under representation of the South ward.

This could be improved by moving the part of Leederville presently in the South ward to the North ward. This would result in the following ratios of council members to electors:

Ward	Electors	Council members	Ratio	% deviation from average
North	12,004	4	3,001	1.51%
South	11,646	4	2,912	-1.52%
Totals	23,650	8	2,956	

None of the other criteria under the Act is considered relevant to this option. Furthermore the present ward boundaries are substantially preserved.

Option 3 – increase the number of South ward council members to five

Under this option current ward boundaries are maintained. The slight under representation of the South ward could be improved by adding a council member, which results in the following ratios of council members to electors:

Ward	Electors	Council members	Ratio	% deviation from average
North	11,143	4	2,786	6.01%
South	12,507	5	2,501	-4.81%
Totals	23,650	9	2,628	

This option has the further advantage of potentially dealing with the forecast growth in the City. Using the forecast increases in population by Forecast i.d from above, and applying the current City wide percentage of locality populations who are also electors of 66%, if there is no change in the number of council members there may be an imbalance between the North and South wards by 2026, as shown in the table below:

Ward	Electors	Council members	Ratio	% deviation from average
North	13,035	4	3,259	-10.16%
South	15,984	4	3,996	10.16%
Totals	29,018	8	3,627	

If a council member is added to the South ward the ratios fall within allowable tolerances:

Ward	Electors	Council members	Ratio	% deviation from average
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North	13,035	4	3,259	1.07%
South	15,984	5	3,197	-0.85%
Totals	29,018	9	3,224	

Please note that the population and elector projection to 2026 is a forecast only, and the data is based on suburbs, which do not always align with district and ward boundaries.

Option 4 – no wards

Under this option, wards are dispensed with altogether. As council members do not vote along ward lines this option may have minimal impact. The only variable would be the number of council members, which can range from six to 14.

Based on the current elector number, the possible number of electors per council member is set out below:

No. council members	Electors per council member
6	3,942
7	3,379
8	2,956
9	2,628
10	2,365
11	2,150
12	1,971
13	1,819
14	1,689

If implemented, there is no requirement for future ward boundary reviews.

There are 85 local governments in WA that have no wards. Using WAEC figures as at 2 July 2018, a number that may be comparable to the City are:

Local Government	Number of electors	No of council members	Electors per council member	Comments
City of Gosnells	70,368	11	6,397	Plus Mayor elected at large
City of Busselton	26,817	9	2,980	
City of Kwinana	23,627	9	2,625	Plus Mayor elected at large
City of Bunbury	22,562	11	2,051	Plus Mayor elected at large
Shire of Harvey	18,269	13	1,405	
City of Kalgoorlie Boulder	16,634	7	2,376	Plus Mayor elected at large
Shire of Murray	12,172	9	1,352	
City of Perth	11,560	9	1,284	Under commissioners at present
Shire of Capel	11,227	9	1,247	
Town of Bassendean	10,582	7	1,512	

The table below summarises the advantages and disadvantages of this option:

Advantages of 'no wards'	Disadvantages of 'no wards'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected members are elected by the whole community not just a section of it. • Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs would result broadening the views beyond the immediate concerns of those in a ward. • The smaller town sites and rural areas have the whole Council working for them. • Members of the community who want to approach an elected member can speak to any elected member. • Social networks and communities of interest are often spread across a local government and elected members can have an overview of these. • 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 administer. • Promotes the concept of a whole-of-City focus, with Council members being elected by and concerned for the local government as a whole, rather than parochial interests. • Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of Council members to approach with their concerns. • Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the council election. • Council members can use their speciality skills and knowledge for the benefit of the whole community. • Removes the need to (re)define internal ward boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they don't 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 the 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 whole local government area. • May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented or for others to dominate. • May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of Council members. • Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters. • May lead to Council members being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the local government area. • May be difficult for voters to assess the performance of individual Council members. • In some LGs it may be appropriate to have wards, for example where you might have 2 or more "large" population centres (eg the Shire of Coolgardie has Coolgardie and Kambalda which are roughly equal in size).