

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF WARD BOUNDARIES 2023
FROM: Director Customer and Corporate Strategy
EDMS #: 23/386398

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is for Council to endorse the recommended proposal for amending the ward boundaries to comply with the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and place the recommended proposal on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, allowing up to 42 days after the date on which public exhibition commences for submissions to be made to Council.

BACKGROUND

Under section 211 of the Act, Council is required to keep its ward boundaries under review and ensure that, prior to an election, the number of electors (being persons entitled to vote for Councillors in the Camden Local Government Area (LGA)) does not differ by more than 10% between wards. The alteration of boundaries is managed by the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC).

Council last adopted revised ward boundaries on 26 November 2019 for the 2021 election. The adopted revised ward boundaries ensured that the variance of electors between wards was 8.6%, thereby meeting the requirement to establish a maximum variance of no more than 10%.

The NSWEC has set a general deadline of 5 October 2023 for councils to submit ward boundary change proposals. However, to enable the final boundary change proposal to be considered for adoption by Council at its meeting scheduled for 10 October 2023, Council has been granted an extension by the NSWEC until 19 October 2023. All consultation and public exhibition must be completed and the final proposal adopted by Council by that date.

If approved by the NSWEC, the new ward boundaries will take effect from the local government election for Council in 2024 and apply to the following term of Council from 2024-2028.

Councillor briefings were held on 27 June 2023 and 11 July 2023 to discuss this matter.

MAIN REPORT

Current ward variance

Council's current ward boundary map is provided as **Attachment 1** to this report.

As of 26 April 2023, the NSWEC issued enrolment data sourced from the Australian Electoral Commission which is included in the Statistical Area Level 1 Boundaries (SA1) mapping data developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This data demonstrates that as at that date Camden's enrolment figures are as detailed below, which shows that there is a current variance of electors between the highest and lowest ward of 38.6%

Ward	Enrolment Figures	Highest and Lowest	% Variation (highest to Lowest)
North	32,229	Highest	
Central	27,174		
South	23,247	Lowest	
TOTAL	82,650		38.6%

Proposed ward boundary adjustment

In order to reduce the current 38.6% variance to no more than 10%, the following ward boundary amendment is proposed:

Move Spring Farm from the South Ward to the Central Ward, Gledswood Hills from the Central Ward to the North Ward, Harrington Park from the North Ward to the South Ward, Smeaton Grange from the Central Ward to the South Ward and two small parts of Gregory Hills from the Central Ward to the North Ward and South Ward respectively.

A map illustrating the recommended ward boundary adjustment is provided as **Attachment 2** to this report.

Under the proposal, there will be a maximum variance of 9.7% between wards.

A table showing the number of electors that results from the recommended boundary amendment proposal and the resultant percentage ward variation is as follows:

Ward	Enrolment Figures	Highest and Lowest	% Variation (highest to Lowest)
North	27,291		
Central	28,958	Highest	
South	26,401	Lowest	
TOTAL	82,650		9.7%

Due to the rapid population growth the Camden LGA is experiencing, Council will need to revisit these figures again prior to the 2028 election.

Consultation with the NSWEC

Section 210A of the Act requires consultation with the NSWEC to ensure that, as far as practicable, ward boundaries correspond to the boundaries of appropriate districts and census districts, and to ensure that there is a variation of no more than 10% between the number of electors in each ward. Consultation with the NSWEC on the recommended ward boundary adjustment proposal has occurred and feedback was received. The NSWEC has confirmed that Council's recommended proposal is satisfactory as the variance remains under 10% and the boundaries largely correspond with the boundaries of appropriate districts and census districts.

Public exhibition

Section 210A of the Act also requires public notice of not less than 28 days of any proposal to review ward boundaries and allows persons to make submissions to a council for a period of not less than 42 days after the date on which the proposal is placed on public exhibition.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

The above recommended ward boundary amendment proposal has been prepared for Council's consideration and determination. The proposal achieves the requirements of the Act. Following the public exhibition period, a report will be brought back to Council on any submissions received and for final adoption.

RECOMMENDED

That Council:

- i. place the recommended ward boundary amendment proposal, as outlined in this report, on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, allowing up to 42 days after the date on which public exhibition commences for submissions to be made to Council; and
- ii. following the public exhibition period, receive a report on any submissions received and for final adoption.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Current Ward Map
2. Proposed Ward Map