

Local council ward boundary review

Preliminary Report

Boroondara City Council

February 2024



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February 2024

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1	26 February 2024	Program sponsor	Final proofread and confirmed for publication

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters for which it is holding this review and pays respects to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging. The VEC acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

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Executive summary

Under section 17 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (the Act), the Minister for Local Government has asked the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct ward boundary reviews for 10 local council areas prior to the next general local council elections in October 2024.

For these 10 councils, the number of voters per councillor is forecast to be out of balance by October 2024, with the number of voters per councillor in one or more wards forecast to vary from the average number of voters per councillor for all of the wards by more than 10 per cent.

Boroondara City Council is one of the 10 local council areas under review. The purpose of this review is to correct this forecast imbalance for the October 2024 local council election.

In its review, the VEC is looking at:

- the number of currently enrolled voters in each ward
- the forecast number of enrolled voters at the next election
- adjustments to the locations of existing ward boundaries.

At the end of the review, the VEC will recommend ward boundary changes to the minister, with the aim of all wards in Boroondara City Council being within the legislated +/-10% tolerance at the time of the 2024 local council election.

This preliminary report presents proposed ward boundary adjustments for Boroondara City Council.

More information about the background to the review is available on [page 6](#).

Ward boundary models

After considering research and the requirements of the Act, the VEC is presenting 2 models for public consultation. These models propose different options for ward boundary changes to Boroondara City Council.

Details on these models, including maps are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Next steps

The VEC is now seeking feedback on its preliminary ward boundary models. You can make a response submission to the preliminary models until 5 pm on Wednesday 20 March 2024. If any submitters ask to speak at a public hearing, the VEC will hold this online on Tuesday 26 March 2024. Following the hearing, the VEC will present its final recommendation to the minister on Wednesday 24 April 2024.

More information about the review process is available on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au

Background

About the 2024 ward boundary reviews

Under section 15(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic), for a council that is divided into wards:

- a) each ward should have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor; and
- b) the number of voters per councillor in a ward should not vary from the average number of voters per councillor for all of the wards by more than 10 per cent.

On 22 February 2023, the VEC provided advice to the Minister for Local Government on councils that were projected to have at least one ward with the number of voters per councillor outside this +/-10% range at the time of the October 2024 local council elections.

This advice was based on:

- current enrolment and enrolment trends
- future population projections
- legislated changes to council entitlements for council-enrolled voters.

On 20 April 2023, in response to this advice and under section 17 of the Act, the minister asked the VEC to conduct ward boundary reviews for 10 local council areas before the October 2024 local council elections. These reviews aim to balance the number of voters per councillor for the wards of these 10 councils in time for the 2024 elections.

Boroondara City Council is one of the 10 local council areas under review.

In its review, the VEC is looking at:

- the number of currently enrolled voters in each ward
- the forecast number of enrolled voters at the next election
- adjustments to the locations of existing ward boundaries.

A ward boundary review does not change a council's electoral structure, number of councillors, or ward names. A ward boundary review also cannot change the external boundaries of a local council, divide local councils, or amalgamate local councils.

At the end of the review, the VEC will recommend ward boundary adjustments to the minister, with the aim of all wards in Boroondara City Council being within the legislated +/-10% tolerance at the time of the 2024 local council election.

The ward boundary review panel

Leading the VEC's review is a ward boundary review panel, which has 2 VEC members including the program sponsor.

Administrative and technical support for the panel is provided by the VEC's team of electoral structure and boundary review experts as well as specialists from across the VEC.

Public engagement

Public information program

The VEC is conducting a public information and awareness program about the Boroondara City Council ward boundary review. This includes:

- printed public notices in state-wide newspapers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- a media release to announce the start of the review
- information on social media channels
- website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - current information on the review process
 - fact sheets for each council under review and a submission guide.

Boroondara City Council was also offered but did not take up 2 optional methods to promote the reviews:

- printed public notices in local newspapers
- targeted social media advertisements for the council area.

Public consultation

The VEC now invites input to the ward boundary review of Boroondara City Council via:

- response submissions to this preliminary report
- an online public hearing for anyone who makes a response submission and wishes to speak to the ward boundary review panel and expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process and the VEC will consider them alongside other factors during the review. These factors are outlined below.

Considerations in developing models

The models in this preliminary report comply with the Act and were developed through careful consideration of:

- research and analysis conducted by the VEC, including geospatial, electoral and demographic data
- rates or patterns of population and voter change over time, and relevant forecasts of growth or decline based on forecast information provided by .id (informed decisions, a company specialising in demographics and forecasting).

When developing the preliminary models for Boroondara City Council, the VEC considered:

- whether the adjusted wards would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and how long they are likely to comply

- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- the representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of wards
- the scale of ward boundary changes, aiming for minimal change (where possible).

In addition to the above, the VEC's final recommendation will also consider matters raised in public response submissions.

Under section 15(2) of the Act, subdivided structures must aim for an approximately equal number of voters per councillor across all wards. This means the number of voters represented by each councillor in a ward should be within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor for all wards of that council.

During this review, the VEC aims to recommend ward boundary adjustments that help ensure a council's wards comply with section 15(2) at the time of the 2024 local council elections and, if possible, also comply based on voter numbers at the time the review is conducted. The VEC uses forecasts of population and voter change to assess compliance at the 2024 elections with as much accuracy as possible.

In some cases, population change and other factors impacting voter numbers mean it is not possible to adjust the ward boundaries of a council so that both 'current' (at the time of the review) and 'forecast' (at October 2024) voter numbers are within the legislated +/-10% tolerance. Where this happens, the VEC prioritises compliance at the October 2024 elections to ensure each vote will have approximately equal value at the 2024 elections. In some cases, the VEC's recommended model may set the current ward deviations outside the +/-10% tolerance. This is because the ward deviations are forecast to change over a short period of time and move within the +/-10% tolerance by the time of the 2024 local council elections.

One of the factors that may impact compliance with section 15(2) is the number of current and forecast voters with ratepayer-based voting entitlements, also known as council-enrolled electors. Voters' rolls include both state-enrolled electors (the majority of the roll) and a smaller number of council-enrolled electors. The Act introduced changes to ratepayer-based entitlement categories, which come into full effect at the 2024 local council elections. The VEC will take this change to the makeup of voters' rolls, and therefore compliance with section 15(2) of the Act, into consideration during this review.

About Boroondara City Council

Profile

Boroondara City Council is located about 5 km to the east of the Melbourne CBD. Covering an area of 60 km², it has a total population of 167,900 people (ABS 2022b). The council is surrounded by Manningham and Banyule city councils to the north, Yarra City Council to the west, Stonnington City Council to the south, and Monash and Whitehorse city councils to the east. The council was formed in 1994 by the amalgamation of the cities of Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in Boroondara City Council are the Wurundjeri people (ACHRIS 2024).

Landscape

A predominantly residential council, it contains the suburbs of Ashburton, Balwyn, Camberwell, Canterbury, Deepdene, Hawthorn, Hawthorn East, Kew, Kew East, and part of Balwyn North, Glen Iris, Mont Albert and Surrey Hills. In addition to residential land use there are 3 major commercial centres at Camberwell, Hawthorn and Kew (.id 2024).

Major roads servicing the council area include the Eastern Freeway and the Monash Freeway. The Alamein, Belgrave and Lilydale railway lines also service the area, as do several tramlines.

A section of the Yarra River forms a large part of the council's northern border. The river environment contains most of the council's open space and is its most significant landscape feature (DPT 2024). Smaller, local parklands are located throughout the council area.

Community

The City of Boroondara's name comes from the Woi wurrung language, which means 'where the ground is thickly shaded' and prior to colonisation was a hunting ground for local Wurundjeri people (Boroondara City Council 2024; Blainey 1964). Following colonisation, its proximity to a rapidly expanding Melbourne and highly valued land resulted in the area becoming sought after and known as 'a gentleman's retreat' (Blainey 1964).

Over time, the desirability of the area remained, and the council is now one of Melbourne's more affluent, with its historic mansions and gardens an indication of such prosperity (Peel *et al.* 1993). The ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (SEIFA Index) shows many of the council suburbs rank as some of the most advantaged in Victoria (ABS 2023).

As one of metropolitan Melbourne's more populous councils, the council grew from 148,532 people in 2001 to 167,900 in 2021 (ABS 2001, ABS 2022b). By 2028 the population is forecast to grow to almost 189,000 people, and between 2024 and 2041 to increase by 14% to about 205,000 (.id 2024).

The median age of residents is 40, older than the median of 37 for Greater Melbourne. In general, residents are well educated, with over 52% attaining a bachelor's degree or higher level of education, compared to 32.8% for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c).

The main country of birth is Australia at about 65% of the population, compared to 60% for Greater Melbourne. Residents born in China account for 8% of the population, which is high compared to the equivalent of 3.4% for Greater Melbourne overall (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c). At 17.2%, Balwyn has a particularly large number of Chinese-born residents (ABS 2022a).

A non-English language is spoken in nearly a third (32.6%) of households, though not as high as the Greater Melbourne average (37.7%). At 10.4% (4.3% for Greater Melbourne) Mandarin is the most common language after English (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c).

At 4.3%, unemployment is low, compared to 5.3% for Greater Melbourne. Professionals and managers are the most common professions, accounting for a combined 60% of employment, compared to 40.6% for Greater Melbourne. The median weekly income for individuals in the council is \$1,071, more than the \$841 for Greater Melbourne, while for households it is \$2,376, well above the Greater Melbourne average of \$1,901 (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c).

Dwellings are most commonly separate houses at 55.4% of the total housing stock, but this proportion is lower than the average rate across Greater Melbourne (67.8%). Semi-detached dwellings account for about 20%, and flats and apartments for 24.2%, both at rates above those for Greater Melbourne (16.2% and 15.6% respectively) (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c).

Of the occupied private dwellings, just below 39% are owned outright, far higher than nearly 30% for Greater Melbourne. Conversely, about 30% are owned with a mortgage, compared to 37% for Greater Melbourne. Rented homes account for just under 29%, which is lower than for Greater Melbourne at 30.2% (ABS 2022b, ABS 2022c).

Current electoral structure

Boroondara City Council has a total of 11 councillors and is divided into 11 single-councillor wards (Bellevue, Cotham, Gardiner, Glenferrie, Junction, Lynden, Maling, Maranoa, Riversdale, Solway, and Studley wards).



Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Boroondara City Council.

There are an estimated 130,537 voters in Boroondara City Council, with an estimated ratio of 11,867 voters per councillor.

By October 2024, the voter-to-councillor ratio of Bellevue Ward is forecast to be outside of +10%, and the voter-to-councillor ratio of Riversdale Ward is forecast to be outside of -10%.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on Boroondara City Council.

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Boroondara City Council in 2019. That review was carried out under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic), which was replaced by the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Boroondara City Council adopt a structure of 11 councillors elected from 4 wards (3 wards with 3 councillors and one ward with 2 councillors).

Please note, the current structure differs from the one recommended in the 2019 final report.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2019 representation review final report.

Preliminary findings and models

Ward boundary models for public feedback

The VEC considered a range of ward boundary adjustments for Boroondara City Council and chose the strongest 2 models for public consultation.

The following 2 models are presented for community consideration:

- Model 1, which proposes changes to the boundaries of Bellevue, Cotham, Glenferrie, Junction, Riversdale, and Studley wards.
- Model 2, which proposes changes to the boundaries of Bellevue, Cotham, Glenferrie, Junction, Maling, Riversdale, and Studley wards.

Maps of the preliminary models are included in [Appendix 1](#).

Model 1

Bellevue Ward is due to be above +10% by the 2024 local council elections and needs to reduce voter numbers, while Riversdale Ward is forecast to be below -10% and needs to gain voters. Model 1 aims to achieve a balance between making minimal adjustments to ward boundaries while ensuring the council electoral structure will be compliant with the +/-10% requirement at the 2024 local council elections.

In this model, no adjustments are made to the eastern wards, namely Maranoa, Maling, Lynden, and Solway wards, or to Gardiner Ward in the south. Where boundary changes are necessary, the proposed changes aim to use sensible boundaries with as little disruption to communities as possible. Overall, Model 1 would impact 3,842 (or 2.8%) of voters within the council area, based on current enrolments.

To reduce the number of voters in Bellevue Ward and bring the forecast deviation within +10% for the 2024 elections, the existing boundary along Harp Road and Violet Grove is moved north to follow High Street, and the current boundary along Maud Street is moved north to Doncaster Road. This results in an expansion of Cotham Ward into these areas and creates a continuous and more easily identifiable southern boundary along High Street and Doncaster Road. In addition, the south-west Bellevue Ward boundary moves north from Childers and High streets to Asquith and Valerie streets, with this area being transferred to Studley Ward.

The southern boundary of Studley Ward is also proposed to shift north from Wellington Street to follow Cotham Road and a small section of High Street, with that area becoming part of Glenferrie Ward. The current southern boundary of Glenferrie Ward is moved north to Burwood Road, with Riversdale Ward expanding to take voters from this area. The expansion of Riversdale Ward into this area of high population density will increase the number of voters in the ward and bring it comfortably within +/-10% deviation at the 2024 local council election.

In the south-west of Cotham Ward, the Malin Street boundary shifts east to follow Wrixon Street and part of Davis Street, moving this western portion of Cotham Ward into Glenferrie Ward. In

addition, the southern Cotham Ward boundary between Auburn Road and Burke Road shifts north from Rathmines Road to Harcourt Street, transferring this area to Junction Ward.

In summary, the proposed changes in Model 1 would result in the contraction of Bellevue Ward, the slight expansion of Riversdale and Junction wards, and Cotham Ward expanding to the north and slightly contracting in its southwest. These changes would result in Glenferrie and Studley wards having stronger boundaries.

The proposed changes under Model 1 would result in some commercial centres being divided between 2 wards. For instance, the use of Burwood Road to divide Riversdale and Glenferrie wards. The panel would be interested to hear community views on this boundary change.

Model 2

Model 2 makes the same boundary adjustments to Bellevue, Cotham, Glenferrie, Junction, Riversdale, and Studley wards as per Model 1, but includes 3 additional changes in order to better group some neighbourhoods into wards and improve ward boundaries. This model will impact 5,859 voters or 4.49% of total voters in the council area, based on current enrolments.

In developing this model the Boroondara City Council [Neighbourhood character study](#) was referenced to identify and group areas likely to have similar characteristics.

As such, Model 2 proposes expanding Bellevue Ward slightly westward into the current Studley Ward, with the current boundary along Earl Street extending west to Princess Street. This proposed change better aligns neighbourhood precincts and also gives the western part of Bellevue Ward a clearer boundary.

In Maling Ward, the western boundary is adjusted at 2 points. The current boundary with Cotham Ward is shifted from Oakdale Avenue westward to follow the eastern boundary of Camberwell Grammar School, resulting in Belmont Park and properties along Highton Grove being transferred to Maling Ward.

The second change to Maling Ward shifts the boundary with Junction Ward further to the west. The proposed boundary would follow the trainline north from Prospect Hill Road and continue along the west side of Boroondara Park to Canterbury Road. In addition to grouping neighbourhoods that were more alike, the panel considered this boundary to be stronger and more easily recognised.


The panel understands that the neighbourhood character study was developed according to factors such as architecture and heritage, which may reflect communities of interest. Moreover, it was felt that such factors may indicate sufficient similarities in housing to include particular areas within the one ward, as for example, people with a similar socio-economic status may likely cluster in these neighbourhoods. The panel would be interested in hearing local perspectives of the proposed changes.

Next steps

Response submissions

Any person or group, including the local council under review, can make a response submission to the VEC. Your submission should address the model or models proposed in this preliminary report.

You can make a submission:

	<p>Online</p> <p>Visit vec.vic.gov.au and make an account to use the online Public Submission Tool. You may save a draft submission to finish later.</p>
	<p>By email</p> <p>Boroondara.WardReview@vec.vic.gov.au</p>
	<p>By post</p> <p>Ward boundary review panel Victorian Electoral Commission Level 11, 530 Collins St Melbourne VIC 3000</p>

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 20 March 2024. If you post your submission, it must reach the VEC before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

To be considered, your submission must include your:

- full name
- contact phone number or email address
- postal or residential address.

To protect the integrity and transparency of the review process, the VEC will not consider submissions without this information. If you are submitting as a group or organisation, you must include a nominated contact person authorised to submit on behalf of your group.

The VEC will handle information provided by submitters in accordance with its privacy policy at vec.vic.gov.au/privacy

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the ward boundary review process, your submission will be published on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au. The VEC will remove your signature and

contact details, including residential and postal addresses, from all public copies but must publish your full name (or group name) and locality (suburb or town).

Please note that any submission content that is potentially defamatory, offensive, obscene or that includes the personal information of people or organisations who are not a party to the submission may also be redacted before publication.

Public hearing

If you make a response submission, you can also ask to speak at an online public hearing to support your submission and expand on your views.

The online public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 10 am

Date: Tuesday 26 March 2024

The VEC encourages participation in the public hearing. If you wish to speak at the public hearing, you **must** indicate this in your response submission. The public hearing will not be held if there are no requests to speak.

Anyone can attend a public hearing, but you will only be able to speak if you expressly asked to speak in your response submission. If you ask to speak, the VEC will contact you to arrange a time for you to speak at the hearing. You will have 10 minutes to address the public hearing panel. The members of the public hearing panel may ask you questions.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on public hearings.

Final report

Following the public hearing, the VEC will consider all evidence and prepare a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing recommended ward boundary adjustments for the local council.

The final report is scheduled to be provided to the minister on Wednesday 24 April 2024. The minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the ward boundaries of Boroondara City Council following this review is expected to apply at the October 2024 local council elections. Under the Act, the final council electoral structure will be set by an Order in Council published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

References

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—(2022b) [2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Boroondara \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 5 January 2024.

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Appendix 1: Model maps

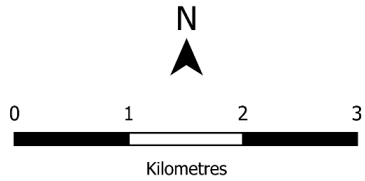
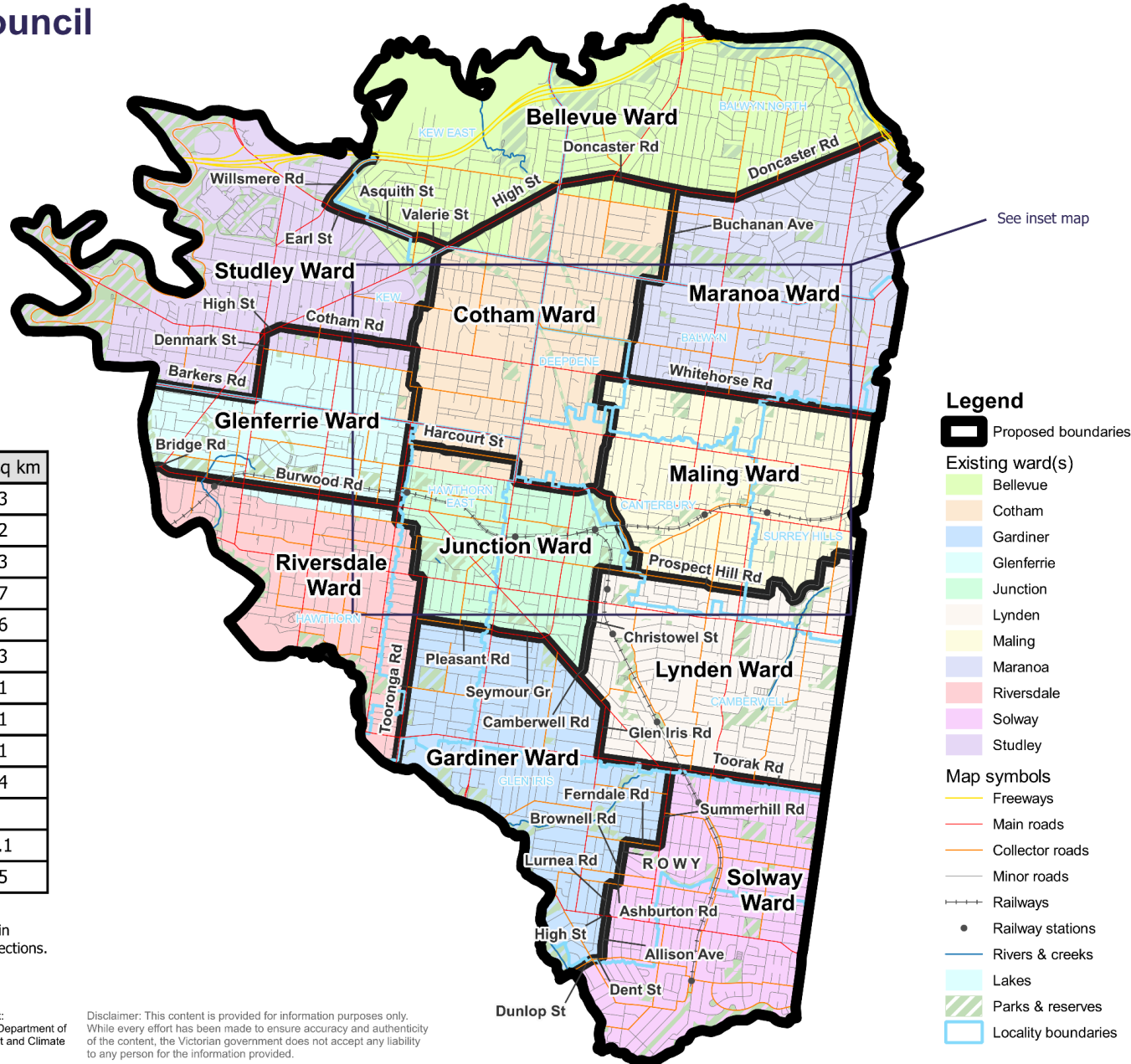
The following maps are included in this report:

Map	Page
Model 1 – with proposed changes to the boundaries of Bellevue, Cotham, Glenferrie, Junction, Riversdale, and Studley wards.	19
Model 2 – with proposed changes to the boundaries of Bellevue, Cotham, Glenferrie, Junction, Maling, Riversdale, and Studley wards.	22

Boroondara City Council

Preliminary model 1

11 single-councillor wards



Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area sq km
Bellevue	11,534	-2.81%	8.3
Cotham	11,887	+0.17%	6.2
Gardiner	12,408	+4.56%	5.3
Glenferrie	12,020	+1.29%	3.7
Junction	11,976	+0.92%	3.6
Lynden	11,884	+0.14%	5.3
Maling	11,426	-3.72%	5.1
Maranoa	11,492	-3.16%	6.1
Riversdale	12,145	+2.34%	4.1
Solway	11,797	-0.59%	5.4
Studley	11,968	+0.85%	7
Total	130,537		60.1
Average	11,867		5.5

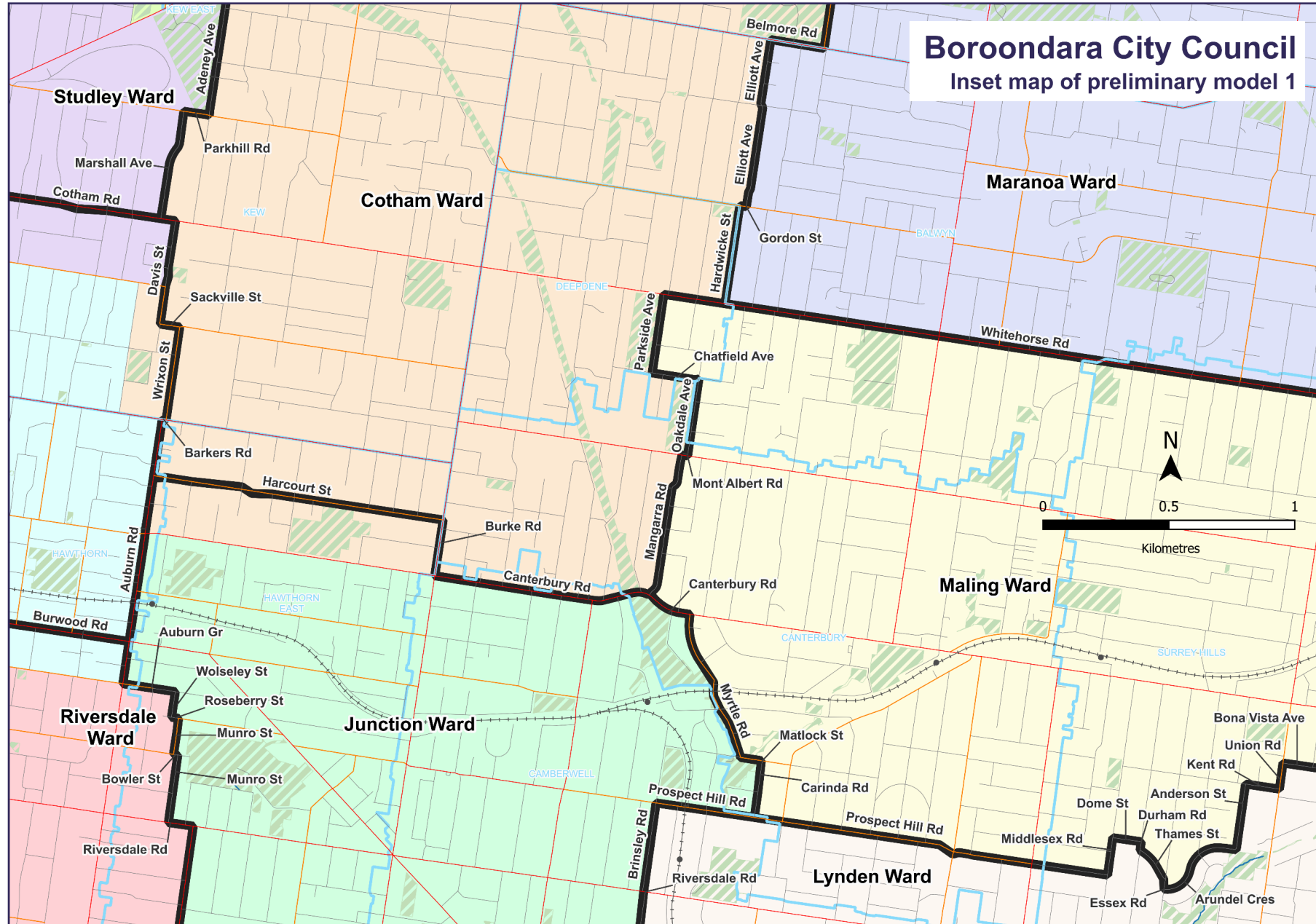
*Elector numbers as at 3 November 2023

†The deviations of all wards are projected to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local government elections.



Data use:
Layers for alignment:
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Data for Model 1

Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area# (square km)
Bellevue	11,534	-2.81%	8.3
Cotham	11,887	+0.17%	6.2
Gardiner	12,408	+4.56%	5.3
Glenferrie	12,020	+1.29%	3.7
Junction	11,976	+0.92%	3.6
Lynden	11,884	+0.14%	5.3
Maling	11,426	-3.72%	5.1
Maranoa	11,492	-3.16%	6.1
Riversdale	12,145	+2.34%	4.1
Solway	11,797	-0.59%	5.4
Studley	11,968	+0.85%	7.0
Total	130,537	n/a	60.1
Average	11,867	n/a	5.5

* Elector numbers at 3 November 2023.

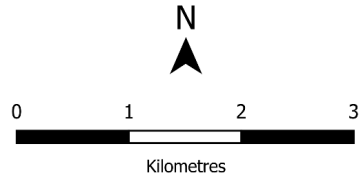
† The deviations of all wards are forecast to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local council elections. The current deviation of some wards may be set outside +/-10% at the time of the review to offset forecast change between the review and the 2024 election.

Ward area (square km) and total council area is measured at level of accuracy required for electoral boundaries. This may vary slightly from other data sources (for example, the ABS).

Boroondara City Council

Preliminary model 2

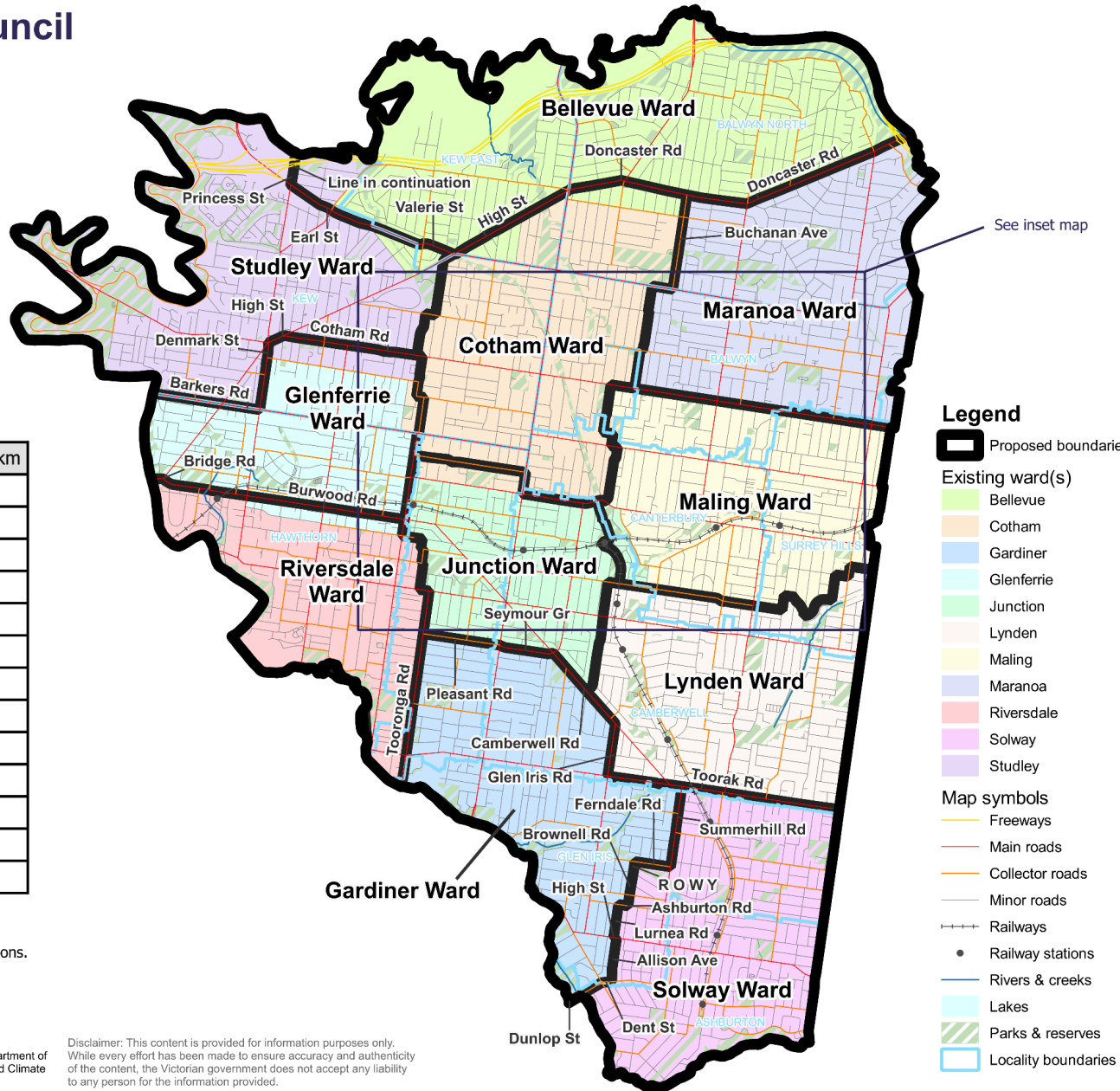
11 single-councillor wards



Ward	Elector*s*	Deviation†	Area sq km
Bellevue	12,008	+1.19%	8.6
Cotham	11,846	-0.18%	6.2
Gardiner	12,408	+4.56%	5.3
Glenferrie	12,020	+1.29%	3.7
Junction	11,670	-1.66%	3.4
Lynden	11,884	+0.14%	5.3
Maling	11,773	-0.79%	5.3
Maranoa	11,492	-3.16%	6.1
Riversdale	12,145	+2.34%	4.1
Solway	11,797	-0.59%	5.4
Studley	11,494	-3.14%	6.7
Total	130,537		60.1
Average	11,867		5.5

*Elector numbers as at 3 November 2023

†The deviations of all wards are projected to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local government elections.

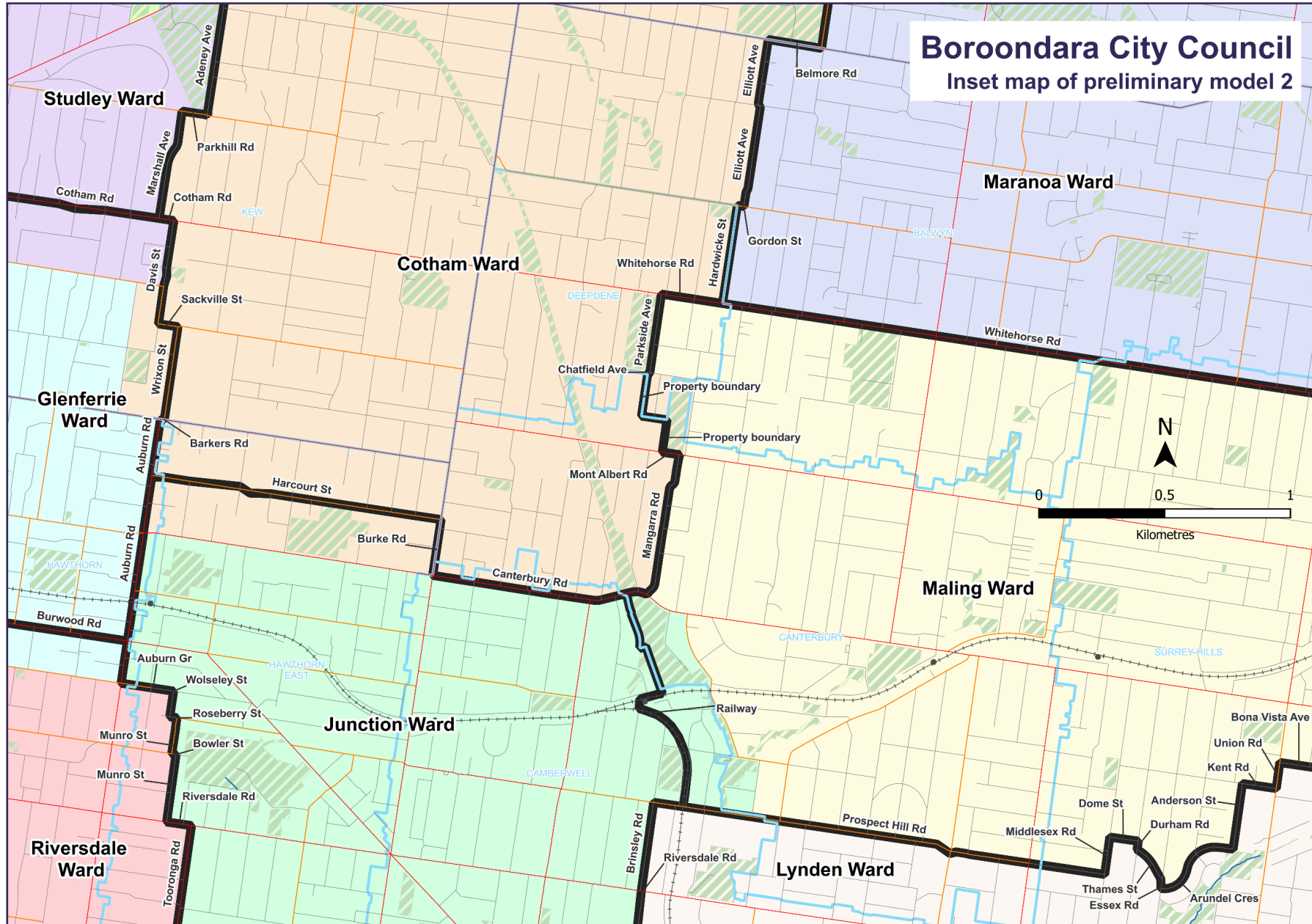


Map prepared by: Victorian Electoral Commission

Data use:

Layers for alignment: © State of Victoria (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)

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Data for Model 2

Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area# (square km)
Bellevue	12,008	+1.19%	8.6
Cotham	11,846	-0.18%	6.2
Gardiner	12,408	+4.56%	5.3
Glenferrie	12,020	+1.29%	3.7
Junction	11,670	-1.66%	3.4
Lynden	11,884	+0.14%	5.3
Maling	11,773	-0.79%	5.3
Maranoa	11,492	-3.16%	6.1
Riversdale	12,145	+2.34%	4.1
Solway	11,797	-0.59%	5.4
Studley	11,494	-3.14%	6.7
Total	130,537	n/a	60.1
Average	11,867	n/a	5.5

* Elector numbers at 3 November 2023.

† The deviations of all wards are forecast to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local council elections. The current deviation of some wards may be set outside +/-10% at the time of the review to offset forecast change between the review and the 2024 election.

Ward area (square km) and total council area is measured at level of accuracy required for electoral boundaries. This may vary slightly from other data sources (for example, the ABS).

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