

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Casey City Council

November 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Bunurong 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 panel acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

Report approval

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1	24 October 2023	The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC
1	24 October 2023	Ms Liz Williams PSM
1	25 October 2023	Mr Sven Bluemmel

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Executive summary

An electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government is reviewing the electoral structure of Casey City Council.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council.

Under Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Casey City Council must now have a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

The panel is looking at:

- the appropriate number of councillors and wards for the council
- the location of ward boundaries
- appropriate ward names.

This report outlines the preliminary models the panel is presenting for public consultation, for the proposed new electoral structure of Casey City Council to meet the requirements of the Act.

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

Developing electoral structure models

The panel considered a range of factors when deciding on the models in this report, including:

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time.

More information on the way the panel decided on the models is available on [page 7](#).

Electoral structure models

After considering research and the requirements of the Act, the panel is presenting the following electoral structure models for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 12 councillors – 12 wards with one councillor per ward.

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

Next steps

The panel is now seeking feedback on the preliminary electoral structure models. You can make a response submission to the preliminary models until 5 pm Wednesday 22 November 2023. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online

public hearing on Tuesday 28 November. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 24 January 2024.

More information about the review process is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Background

About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government formed 2 electoral representation advisory panels to review and provide advice on the electoral structures of 39 local councils, under section 16 of the Act. If the Minister accepts the electoral structure recommended by the panel, any changes are expected to take effect at the October 2024 local council elections.

The Act introduced several changes to local government representation, including the types of electoral structures local councils may have. All metropolitan, interface and regional city councils (including Casey City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Casey City Council, the panel is examining:

- the number of councillors and wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the name of each ward.

The Act requires electoral structures to provide fair and equitable representation and facilitate good governance. Each ward must have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor (within +/-10% of the average). While conducting the review, the panel also notes the role of a councillor as specified under section 28 of the Act.

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel conducting the electoral structure review of Casey City Council has 3 members:

- The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC (Chairperson)
- Ms Liz Williams PSM
- Electoral Commissioner Mr Sven Bluemmel.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council. The panel is independent of councils and the VEC.

Under the Act, the VEC is not responsible for reviewing council electoral structures but must provide administrative and technical support to the panel. The Electoral Commissioner (or their nominated representative) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

On behalf of the panel, the VEC conducts a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Casey City Council electoral structure 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.

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

- social media advertisements targeted at the council area
- notifying voters in the council area subscribed to the VEC's VoterAlert service about the start of the review and release of the preliminary report.

Public consultation

The panel now invites input to the electoral structure review of Casey City Council via:

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

Public submissions are an important part of the review process and are considered alongside other factors addressed during the review. These are outlined below.

Developing recommendations

The electoral structure models the panel is presenting in this preliminary report comply with the Act and were developed through careful consideration of:

- research and analysis conducted by the VEC support team, including geospatial 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).

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows local councils to have between 5 and 12 councillors, but neither the Act nor the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 specify how to determine the appropriate number of councillors. Therefore, the models put forward by the panel in this report are guided by the Act's intention for fairness and equity in voter representation.

In examining the appropriate number of councillors for Casey City Council, the panel considered the following criteria:

- the population and number of voters in the council area, compared to other councils with a similar population size and number of voters in the same category (for example, other comparable metropolitan, interface or regional city councils)
- patterns of population change and voter growth or decline in the council area over time
- the current and past numbers of councillors
- the representation needs of the communities of interest in the council area.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

Local councils with a larger number of voters will often have more councillors. Large populations generally have greater diversity, both in the type and number of communities of interest and issues relating to representation. However, the ideal number of councillors can also be influenced by the circumstances of each council, such as the:

- nature and complexity of services the council provides
- geographic size and topography of the area
- forecast population and voter growth or decline
- social diversity.

Deciding the electoral structure

Under the Act, regional city, metropolitan and interface councils must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

When developing single-councillor ward models for Casey City Council, the panel considered these criteria:

- whether the structure would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and for how long it would likely comply
- the appropriate number of councillors, as outlined above
- 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
- past elections for the council, including:
 - numbers of candidates nominating
 - incidences of uncontested elections
 - rates of informal voting.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

Under section 15(2) of the Act, subdivided structures must aim for an approximately equal number of voters per councillor in each ward. 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.

During this review, the panel aims to recommend a structure that will 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 panel 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 create compliant subdivided structures based both on voter numbers that were current at the time of the review and forecast voter numbers. In these instances, the panel prioritises compliance at the 2024 local government elections to ensure each vote will have approximately equal value at the 2024 election.

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. The panel will take these changes to the makeup of voters' rolls, and therefore compliance with section 15(2) of the Act, into consideration during this review.

Deciding on ward names

The panel takes the following approach to naming wards:

1. The panel retains existing ward names if these are still relevant to the area covered by the ward.
2. When a new name is required, the panel bases this on features such as:
 - places (registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*) in the ward
 - compass directions
 - native flora or fauna.

Use of Aboriginal language

The panel recognises that there should be meaningful consultation with local Aboriginal communities and groups before a ward is named using Aboriginal language. Meaningful consultation is a significant process that the panel is not able to undertake within the timeframes of the current review program.

The panel also recognises that many of the place names in current use across Victoria are based on Aboriginal language. As such, the panel may put forward new ward names using Aboriginal language if:

- it is the name of a place within a ward
- it is currently in common use

and

- the name is registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*.

Unregistered names using Aboriginal language have not been put forward by the panel as new ward names. While the panel supports the adoption of names based on Aboriginal language, this requires appropriate consultation.

Accordingly, for the panel to consider an Aboriginal language ward name that is suggested in a public submission to the review, the name submitted needs to comply with the above guidelines.

About Casey City Council

Profile

Casey City Council is located on the south-eastern fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and covers an area of 397 km². With 365,239 people it is Victoria's most populated council (ABS 2022).

Casey City Council is surrounded by Knox City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council in the north, Cardinia Shire in the east, Mornington Peninsula Shire to the south, and Frankston City and Greater Dandenong City councils to the west.

Stretching from the base of the Dandenong Ranges in the north to the Western Port shoreline in the south, the council includes established and rapidly growing suburbs, commercial districts, agricultural land use and green wedge land.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in the Casey City Council area are the Bunurong people.

Landscape

Heavily urbanised in its northern half, and largely rural in the south, the council area sits at the interface of Melbourne's sprawling south-eastern suburbs and its rural outskirts. In the north are the Casey foothills which give way to established suburbs in the north, including Endeavour Hills in the northwest to Harkaway in the northeast. Densely populated suburbs running along the south of the Monash freeway include Eumemmering, Hallam, and Narre Warren to Berwick. Newer housing developments expanding southward and radiating from the Cranbourne centre include Cranbourne East, Cranbourne West, Lyndhurst, Clyde, and Botanic Ridge. In the south are farmlands and areas with green wedge protections and then the Casey Coast and coastal towns such as Pearcedale and Tooradin (DTP 2023; .id 2023).

Notable features of the council include Churchill National Park, Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve, Lysterfield Park, Lysterfield Lake, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Casey Fields, and the Western Port coastline (.id 2023).

The Monash and Princes freeways cut across the northern part of the council. The South Gippsland Highway, running southeast, is a major transport link to Bass Coast. Many other significant roads run through the council and include Hallam and Cranbourne roads which run north-south, and Heatherton and Thompsons roads which run east-west. Metropolitan train services to Pakenham and Cranbourne are also in the council.

Community

Since 2001 the population has more than doubled (ABS 2001, ABS 2022a) and its rapid growth is forecast to continue, to be nearly 450,000 in 2028 and 550,000 people by 2041 (.id 2023).

From 2022 to 2028 the population is forecast to increase at a rate of 2.8% per annum. Most of the future growth will occur in the Clyde area. This growth is following a pattern of expansion which began in the north-west and has followed major transport corridors towards the south as new fields have been opened to development and settled. This has seen the Narre Warren, Berwick, and Cranbourne areas turn into significant population centres (.id 2023).

The proportion of the population identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander is 0.7%, the same as for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

Casey is a comparatively young council area with a median age of 34, compared to 37 for Greater Melbourne. The council area has mainly family households (82% of households compared with 71% for Greater Melbourne). Housing is dominated by separate, mostly large builds with about 50% of houses having 4 or more bedrooms, far greater than the average for Greater Melbourne (33%). In addition, with so much recent development, over 50% of all homeowners have a mortgage, compared to 37% for Greater Melbourne (.id 2023).

The median weekly income for individuals in the council is \$783, less than that for Greater Melbourne (\$841), while for households it is \$1,918, slightly more than \$1,901 for Greater Melbourne (ABS 2022a; 2022b).

Overseas migration has made a large contribution to population growth, with 42% of people born overseas, compared to 36% for Greater Melbourne. Since 2011, the number of people from India and Afghanistan has close to tripled, and people from Sri Lanka doubled (ABS 2022c). Consequently, there are many households (42% of the total) in which a language other than English is spoken, compared to 34% for Greater Melbourne (.id 2023). Other large populations of people with Chinese, Italian, Afghan, and Hazara ancestry are present in the council. At about 4% of the overall population, the council has a comparatively large number of people from Afghanistan, and many of these people have refugee backgrounds and are in the north-west of the council in Doveton and Eumemmerring (.id 2023).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Casey City Council is currently divided into 6 wards with a total of 11 councillors:

- one ward with one councillor (Balla Balla Ward)
- 5 wards with 2 councillors each (Edrington, Four Oaks, Mayfield, River Gum, and Springfield wards).



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

There are approximately 252,670 voters in Casey City Council, with an approximate ratio of 22,970 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The electoral structure of Casey City Council was last reviewed in 2020. However, the electoral structure recommended as part of the review process and published shortly before the introduction of the Local Government Act 2020 did not meet the requirements of the new Act. A

copy of the final report for the 2020 Casey City Council representation review is available at the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au.

Casey City Council was dismissed by an Act of Parliament in February 2020 and consequently no elections were held for the council in October 2020.

Preliminary findings and models

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act and the agreed criteria, the panel found 11 or 12 councillors to be an appropriate number for Casey City Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Casey City Council in relation to similar interface councils, including its population, the number and distribution of voters, and the size and geography of the council.

Similar interface councils to Casey City Council						
Local council	Area (km ²)	Number of voters at 2020 election	Population (2021 Census)	Current total estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor
Casey City Council*	397	n/a	365,239	252,670	11	22,970
Wyndham City Council*	542	154,404	292,011	196,938	11	17,903
Whittlesea City Council*	490	n/a	229,396	170,869	11	15,533
Hume City Council*	503	152,470	243,901	170,268	11	15,478
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council*	727	154,651	168,948	151,741	11	13,794
Melton City Council*	528	104,010	178,960	120,696	9	13,410
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	2,468	117,583	156,068	117,900	9	13,100
Cardinia Shire Council	1,283	78,991	118,194	83,258	9	9,250
Nillumbik Shire Council	432	48,101	62,895	47,845	7	6,835

*These local councils are undergoing an electoral structure review during 2023–24.

Maintaining 11 councillors

Casey City Council currently has 252,670 voters represented by 11 councillors and covers an area of 397 km². As the population grows, the justification to increase the number of councillors to 12 (the maximum permitted) will become stronger. Considering this and population forecasts indicating relatively high rates of population growth to continue, the panel feels it appropriate for the number of councillors to either remain at 11 or increase to 12.

Increasing to 12 councillors

The panel decided to include a model with 12 councillors because such an increase would be justified and appropriate for the council's large and growing population. The panel seeks public feedback on this proposed change to councillor numbers and a model with 12 councillors, which the panel feels might provide more favourable wards and boundaries.

Electoral structure

To identify the most appropriate electoral structure, various factors were considered. This included the requirements of the Act, the communities of interest in Casey City Council, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and which models offered the best potential for fair and equitable representation and consequently facilitate good governance.

In developing the preliminary models presented in this report, the panel considered a range of models. The panel proposes 3 models for the consideration of the Casey City Council community:

- a subdivided electoral structure of 11 single-councillor wards (Model 1)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 11 single-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 (Model 2)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 12 single-councillor wards (Model 3).

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

A single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors (Model 1)

Under this model, Casey City Council would adopt an 11-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Model 1 was based on the use of major roads to provide strong and recognisable boundaries. In particular, major highways separated by noise barriers and with limited crossing points, and other high traffic roads form clear divides between communities either side. The Cranbourne and Pakenham train lines also form clear boundary delineations.

The Monash Freeway is a clear barrier in the north of the council and the suburbs on either side have different social characteristics. However, due to the distribution of electors it cannot be used in its entirety: north of the Monash there are too many voters to make 2 wards and too few for 3 wards. This meant the Monash had to be crossed at some point. Similarly, the South Gippsland Highway has almost 50,000 people south of it, which are too many for 2 wards. Therefore, this major transit route could not be used continuously.

The distinct communities north of the Monash are arranged into 2 wards: Kalora Ward covers the northeast and includes Endeavour Hills and the western half of Narre Warren North; Kurrajong Ward, further to the east, covers the eastern half of Narre Warren North, Harkaway, and parts of Narre Warren and Berwick. In the northeast is where the Monash is crossed, with Grasmere Ward extending across the freeway to cover a large part of Berwick. The panel felt this was an appropriate place to cross the Monash, because the large Berwick suburb itself crosses the Monash and the ward contains the Berwick activity centre, using a section of the Pakenham train line as a solid boundary.

To the south of the Monash and north of the South Gippsland Highway, 3 wards are arranged to capture established suburbs running from the west to the centre of the council area. Waratah Ward covers Doveton, Eumemmering, the majority of Hallam, and part of Narre Warren

including the Fountain Gate Shopping Centre. River Gum Ward captures the area south of Pound Road and east of the highway to include most of Hampton Park, reaching into Cranbourne North as far south as Thompsons Road. It also includes a small section of Lynbrook. Alkira Ward in the centre of the council consists mainly of Narre Warren South.

The large and populous area further south, with Cranbourne at the centre, is covered by 3 wards. From the west and south of the highway Merinda Ward covers some of Lynbrook, Lyndhurst, Cranbourne North, and Cranbourne West. Further south, Cranbourne Gardens Ward contains the Cranbourne activity centre and includes much of the bushland surrounding the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Selandra Ward, taking in Cranbourne East and Clyde North as well as a small section of Cranbourne North, and Clyde rounds out the main areas radiating from the Cranbourne centre.

Further east, Viewgrand Ward covers a large part of Clyde North, where significant growth is expected, and the southern section of Berwick.

In the south, Coastal Ward is largely comprised of land outside the urban growth boundary, but comes up to capture Clyde, deviating around the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens in the west and around the Clyde shopping district in the east. It includes the coastal townships together in the same ward.

A single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors (alternative version) (Model 2)

Under this model, Casey City Council would adopt an 11-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Where possible, Model 2 uses suburb boundaries to delineate wards and attempts to keep communities based around suburb identities together in wards. However, the council has about 30 suburbs and it was not possible to avoid splitting some between wards which covered multiple suburbs. Given the diversity of the suburbs, the model groups suburbs with common interests where possible.

Model 2 has 3 wards that cross the Monash, each with a major road to enable connection between the north and south of the divide. Churchill Ward contains the communities of Doveton and Endeavour Hills, linked by Power Road and bounded in the south by Eumemmering Creek. Maramba Ward follows the Narre Warren locality boundary across the Monash, with links at Belgrave-Hallam Road and Ernst Wanke Road. Grasmere Ward covers a large area, partly wrapping around Maramba Ward and includes most of Narre Warren North, Harkaway, and the north of Berwick.

The model has 6 even sized wards covering the centre of the council area, which roughly follow suburban boundaries. However, some deviations were necessary from these boundaries to balance voter numbers between wards.

The 3 across the top are as follows:

- River Gum Ward covers Hampton Park and Narre Warren South to the south of Ormond Road and a small part of Hallam south of the train line. The ward also has 2 sections of

Lynbrook, one north of the South Gippsland Highway, the other a non-residential area north of Northey Road.

- Berwick Springs Ward consists largely of Narre Warren and Narre Warren South and deviates around suburb boundaries to keep Berwick Springs Wetlands Reserve together as with Sweeney Reserve.
- Grices Ward is mainly comprised of Berwick and crosses to the north of the Princes Freeway, with the Pakenham train line forming the northern boundary. In its south the ward also includes a portion of Clyde North to west of Bonnington Boulevard and north of Honour Avenue.

The 3 sitting below include:

- Quarters Ward which has a rectangular protrusion to the east which follows the suburb boundaries of Cranbourne North to Narre Warren Road. The ward also covers most of Lynbrook, all of Lyndhurst, and the majority of Cranbourne West.
- Springhill Ward takes on an angular appearance due to it following the Cranbourne train line and is composed of Cranbourne north of the train line, the eastern part of Cranbourne North, and the north of Cranbourne East. The ward boundary between the Clyde North and Cranbourne East suburbs also deviates slightly from the suburb boundary, to avoid splitting Selandra Reserve down the middle.
- Clyde North Ward covers nearly all of Clyde North, except in the north-west corner.

Botanic Gardens Ward covers all of Cranbourne South and Botanic Ridge, some southern parts of Cranbourne West, and Cranbourne south of the train line. The ward also includes a small part of Cranbourne East between Berwick-Cranbourne Road and the train line.

South of the Cranbourne centre, Pelican Point Ward covers Devon Meadows, Junction Village and Clyde, and combines urban areas in its north with more sparsely populated areas and farmlands south including coastal suburbs from Pearcedale to Tooradin.

A single-councillor ward structure with 12 councillors (Model 3)

Under this model, Casey City Council would adopt a 12-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Model 3 focuses on roads, similar to Model 1, but having 12 councillors reduces the elector to councillor ratio. Having 12 wards requires more boundaries and, in this case, allowed the use of more recognisable features as boundaries, especially in the central area of the council. It also allowed the use of many existing ward boundaries, again in the centre of the council, where good use is made of suburb boundaries and major roads. Although some wards are uneven in shape, this has balanced voter numbers and helped define clear communities of interest.

The Monash forms a well-defined boundary and is largely used to the same extent in this model as in Model 1. Churchill Ward and Maramba Ward sit to its north, divided by the Belgrave – Hallam Road to Troups Creek and then Ernst Wanke Road, and Narre Warren North is divided

between the 2 wards. Grasmere Ward crosses the Monash in the Berwick area at the same place as Model 1, though not extending as far west as the previous model, going as far south as Chase Boulevard.

To the south of the Monash Freeway, Waratah Ward covers Doveton to Hallam and the north of Hampton Park. River Gum Ward has all of Lynbrook, a large part of Hampton Park, plus a section of Cranbourne North.

To the east most of the current Springfield Ward is organised into 2 wards, divided mainly using Cranbourne Road. Brechin Ward covers the majority of Narre Warren to the south of the Monash, the western portion of Narre Warren South, and reaches into a part of Cranbourne North, to the south of the Cranbourne golf club. Berwick Springs Ward is also a central ward, and Narre Warren – Cranbourne Road forms the west boundary, meaning it encompasses about half of Cranbourne North and approximately half of Narre Warren South. The ward also contains a southwest section of Berwick, south of O’Shea Road and west of Bridgewater Boulevard, Viewgrand Drive and Ackland Court to Grices Road.

Further south, 2 wards are created to cover most of the area in the current Mayfield Ward. One is Quarter Ward which covers Lyndhurst, most of Cranbourne West and a part of Cranbourne to the west of the South Gippsland Highway and south of the train line. The other is Selandra Ward, in the centre of the council and taking in most of Cranbourne, and Cranbourne East to the north of Berwick-Cranbourne Road. A section of Cranbourne North is included in the ward, crossing along the south of the golf course, at this point the ward follows property boundaries, which was necessary to avoid the deviations going outside of the +/-10%. The westerly section of Clyde North, bounded by the Berwick-Cranbourne Road, is also contained within the ward.

Grices Ward in the east covers the majority of Clyde North and shares boundaries with Grasmere, which in places are less clear than those in the other models and could appear arbitrary. However, these have been necessary to maintain wards within the +/-10% deviation requirement. It covers the southern portion of the current Edrington Ward.

A key change that having 12 councillors has allowed is splitting the sparsely populated south along the South Gippsland Highway. Using the suburb boundary in the far south keeps the township of Tooradin together with Clyde in the Tooradin Ward. This ward also crosses into Clyde North to the north of Pattersons Road, splitting Clyde North by Clyde Creek, however this divides established housing from new developments to the east.

To the south of the South Gippsland Highway the Cranbourne Gardens Ward includes the Cranbourne Royal Botanic Gardens, the south coast from Pearcedale to Blind Bight, Cranbourne South and Botanic Ridge, Junction Village, and a part of Cranbourne south of Sladen Street. Also, to maintain balanced ward deviations, the ward boundary passes through a community to the south of Hall Road.

Summary

In summary, introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral structure change for Casey City Council. Achieving models that divide communities into appropriate wards while

also accounting for population growth and ensuring they comply with the +/-10% requirement can be challenging.

Casey City Council is Victoria's most populated council and is forecast to grow by over 10,000 people a year to 2029. It has complex and variable demographics and is changing in many ways which may result in significant work for elected representatives. The panel recognises many of the challenges and acknowledges that model 3, with 12-single councillor wards, has reached the maximum number of councillors permissible under legislation. The panel submits 3 models for public discussion and feedback.

Model 1 is an 11-single councillor ward structure that mainly uses roads for ward boundaries. Some wards have sections of multiple suburbs however the boundaries are generally well recognised and should be understood by voters.

Model 2 is also an 11-single councillor ward structure, but mainly uses suburbs to define ward boundaries. The panel feels this would keep communities of interest together to a degree, but also noted that some strong boundaries, such as the Monash Freeway, are crossed.

Model 3 has 12-single councillor wards and relies mainly on road and rail infrastructure as ward boundaries. The panel noted that there were some arbitrary boundaries but given the challenges of developing models that meet the legislative requirements, they were necessary.

Models for public feedback

The panel considers all models outlined below to be the single-councillor ward electoral structures with the best potential to offer fair and equitable representation for voters in Casey City Council and consequently facilitate good governance. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for detailed maps of these models.

Model 1

Casey City Council has 11 councillors and is divided into 11 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Alkira Ward, Coastal Ward, Cranbourne Gardens Ward, Grasmere Ward, Kalora Ward, Kurrajong Ward, Merinda Ward, River Gum Ward, Selandra Ward, Viewgrand Ward, Waratah Ward.

Model 2

Casey City Council has 11 councillors and is divided into 11 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Berwick Springs Ward, Botanic Gardens Ward, Churchill Ward, Clyde North Ward, Grasmere Ward, Grices Ward, Maramba Ward, Pelican Point Ward, Quarters Ward, River Gum Ward, Springhill Ward.

Model 3

Casey City Council has 12 councillors and is divided into 12 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Berwick Springs Ward, Brechin Ward, Churchill Ward, Cranbourne Gardens Ward, Grasmere Ward, Grices Ward, Maramba Ward, Quarters Ward, River Gum Ward, Selandra Ward, Tooradin Ward, Waratah Ward.

Ward names

The panel has suggested ward names to identify the wards in each model and invites comments from the community on these names as part of submissions responding to the preliminary report. The basis of the ward name recommendations for each model are described below.

Model 1

Alkira Ward is a new ward name and is based on the registered name of a built feature found within the ward.

Coastal Ward is a new ward name and is based on natural features found within the ward.

Cranbourne Gardens Ward, Kalora Ward, Merinda Ward, Viewgrand Ward and Waratah Ward are new ward names and are based on the registered name of parks found within each ward.

Grasmere Ward is a new ward name and is based on the registered name of a waterway found within the ward.

Kurrajong Ward and Selandra Ward are new ward names and are based on the registered name of roads found within each ward.

River Gum Ward is an existing ward name under the current electoral structure.

Model 2

Berwick Springs Ward, Grices Ward and Springhill Ward are new ward names and are based on the registered name of roads found within each ward.

Botanic Gardens Ward and Churchill Ward are new ward names and are based on the registered name of parks found within each ward.

Clyde North Ward is a new name and is based on a locality.

Maramba Ward and Quarters Ward are new ward names and are based on the registered name of a built feature found within each ward.

Pelican Point Ward is a new ward name and is based on the registered name of a natural feature found within the ward.

Grasmere Ward and River Gum Ward, as above.

Model 3

Brechin Ward is a new name and is based on the registered name of a road found within the ward.

Tooradin Ward is a new name and is based on a locality.

Berwick Springs Ward, Churchill Ward, Cranbourne Gardens Ward, Grasmere Ward, Grices Ward, Maramba Ward, Quarters Ward, River Gum Ward, Selandra Ward, and Waratah Ward as above.




The panel will review ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage when forming the final advice to the Minister for Local Government on the electoral structure of the council. Suggested ward names should comply with the panel's approach to naming wards (see [Deciding on ward names](#) and [Use of Aboriginal language](#)). All ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage will be provided to the Minister for consideration at the conclusion of the electoral structure review.

Next steps

Response submissions

Any person or group, including the local council under review, can make a response submission to the electoral representation advisory panel. In your submission you should address the models proposed by the panel in this preliminary report.

You can make a submission:

	<p>Online</p> <p>Visit vec.vic.gov.au to make a submission online.</p> <p>You will need to make an account to use the online Public Submission Tool and can save a draft submission to finish later.</p>
	<p>By email</p> <p>Casey.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au</p>
	<p>By post</p> <p>Electoral Representation Advisory Panel c/o Victorian Electoral Commission Level 11, 530 Collins St Melbourne VIC 3000</p>

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 22 November 2023. If you post your submission, make sure it has enough time to reach the panel before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

For your submission to be considered, you 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 panel will not consider submissions without this information. If you are submitting as a group or organisation, you must include the name of a nominated contact person who is authorised to submit on behalf of your group.

On behalf of the panel, the VEC will handle information provided by submitters in accordance with the privacy policy available at vec.vic.gov.au/privacy

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the electoral structure 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: 2 pm

Date: Tuesday 28 November 2023

The panel 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 asked to 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, which will include at least 2 of the review panel members. 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 review panel will consider all evidence gathered and prepare a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing a recommendation for the number of councillors and the electoral structure for the local council.

The final report is scheduled to be provided to the Minister on Wednesday 24 January 2024. The Minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the electoral structure of Casey City Council following on from 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

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2001) [2001 Census All Persons QuickStats, Casey \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 2 October 2023.

—(2022a) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Casey \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 2 October 2023.

—(2022b) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Greater Melbourne](#), ABS, accessed 2 October 2023.

—(2022c) [2021 Census Community Profiles. Casey \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 2 October 2023.

DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) (2023) [Casey planning scheme](#), DTP, accessed 2 October 2023.

Electoral Act 2002 (Vic)

Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic)

.id (informed decisions) (2023) [City of Casey](#), .id, accessed 2 October 2023.

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

Appendix 1: Model maps

The following maps are included in this report:

Map	Page
Model 1 – a single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.	28
Model 2 – a single-councillor ward structure with 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward (with boundaries different to Model 1).	31
Model 3 – a single-councillor ward structure with 12 councillors – 12 wards with one councillor per ward.	34

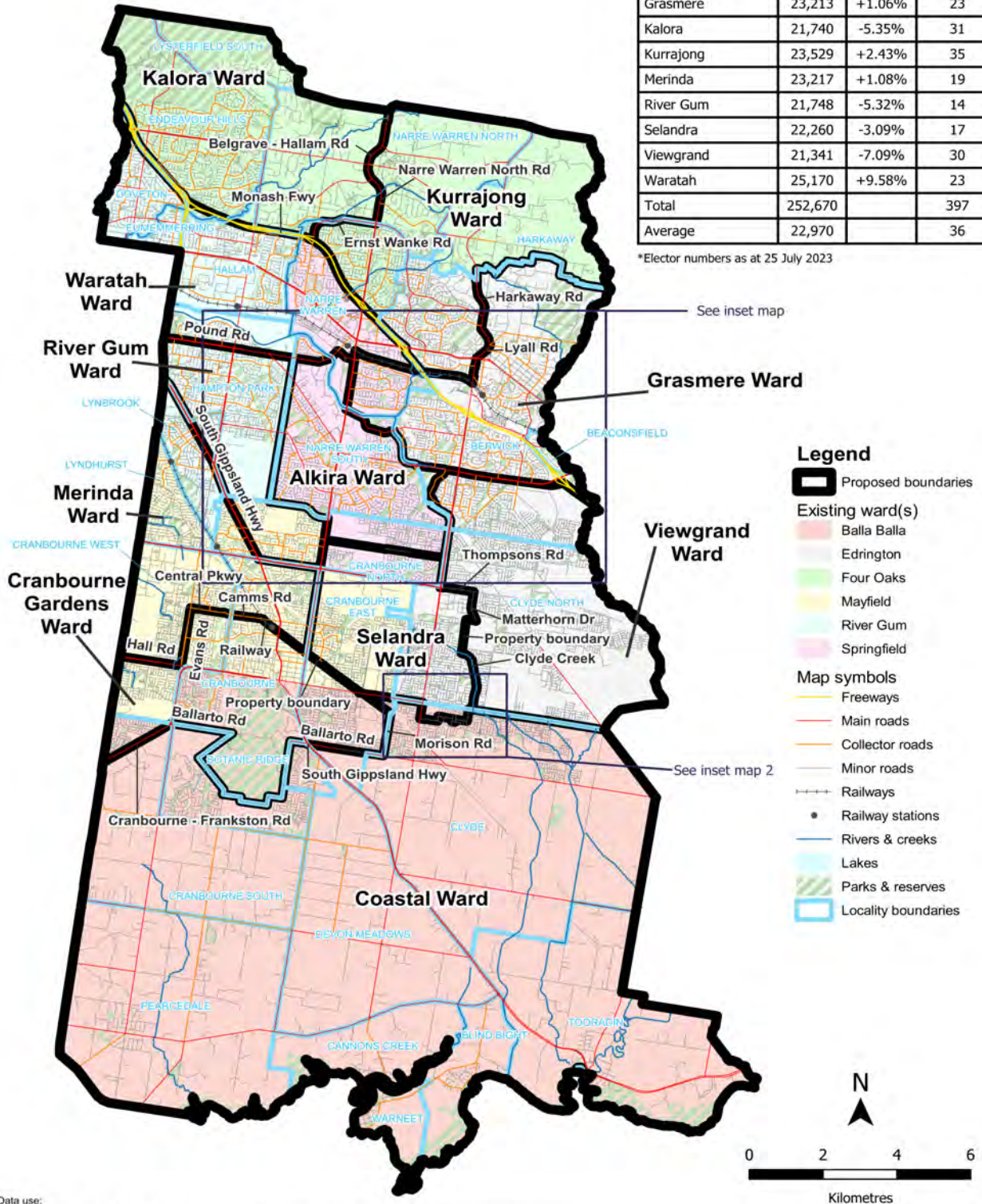
Casey City Council

Model 1

11 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Alkira	23,434	+2.02%	16
Coastal	23,016	+0.2%	165
Cranbourne Gardens	24,002	+4.49%	23
Grasmere	23,213	+1.06%	23
Kalora	21,740	-5.35%	31
Kurrajong	23,529	+2.43%	35
Merinda	23,217	+1.08%	19
River Gum	21,748	-5.32%	14
Selandra	22,260	-3.09%	17
Viewgrand	21,341	-7.09%	30
Waratah	25,170	+9.58%	23
Total	252,670		397
Average	22,970		36

*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023

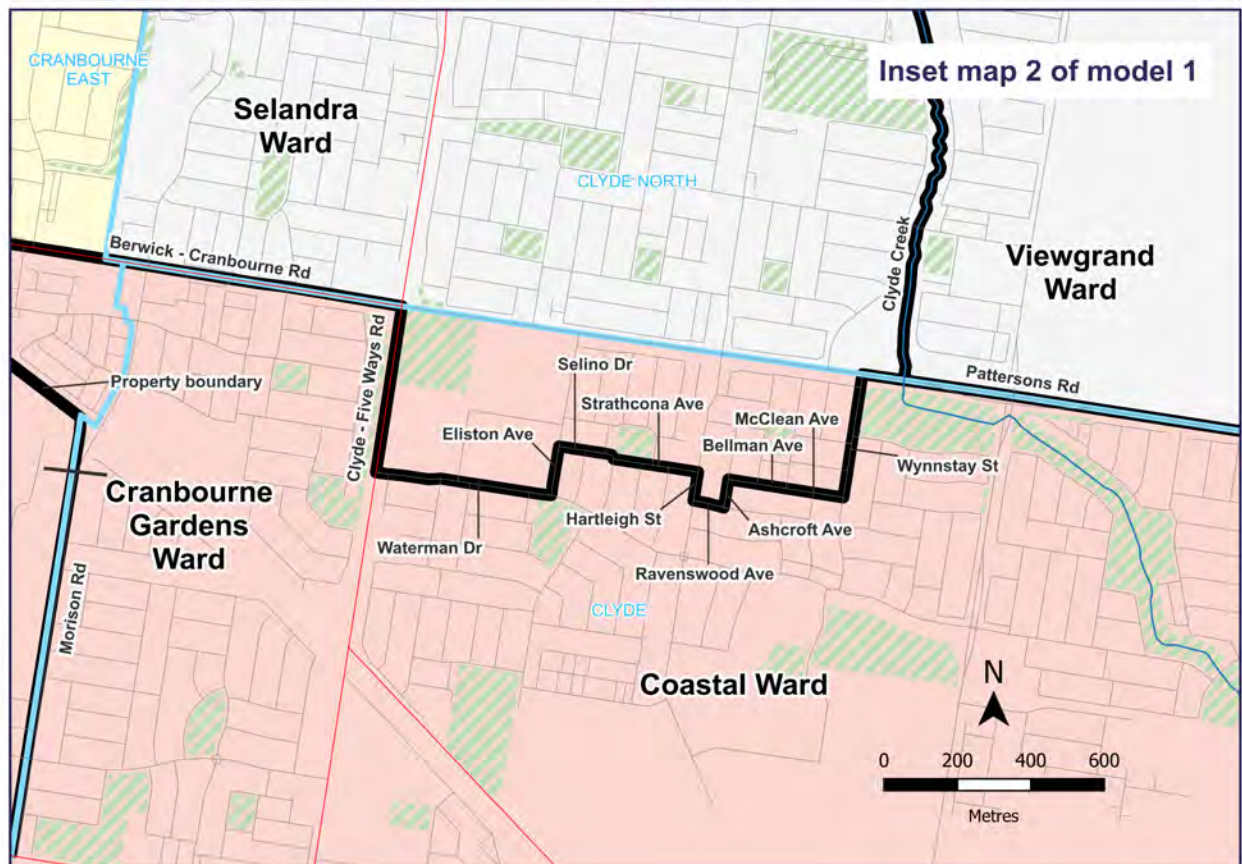
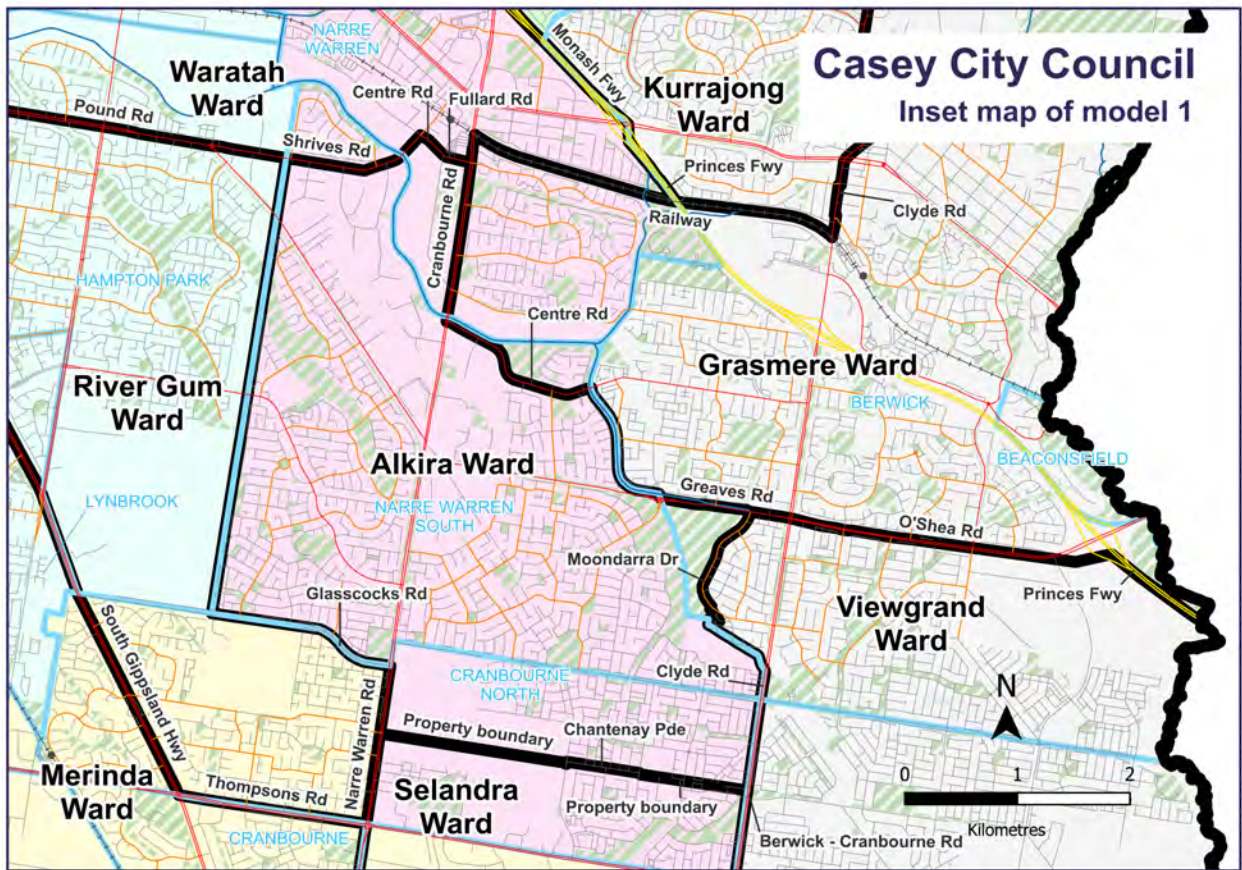


Data use:



Layers for alignment:
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Data for Model 1

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Alkira	23,234	+2.02%	16
Coastal	23,016	+0.2%	165
Cranbourne Gardens	24,002	+4.49%	23
Grasmere	23,213	+1.06%	23
Kalora	21,740	-5.35%	31
Kurrajong	23,529	+2.43%	35
Merinda	23,217	+1.08%	19
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Viewgrand	21,341	-7.09%	30
Waratah	25,170	+9.58%	23
Total	252,670	n/a	397
Average	22,970	n/a	36

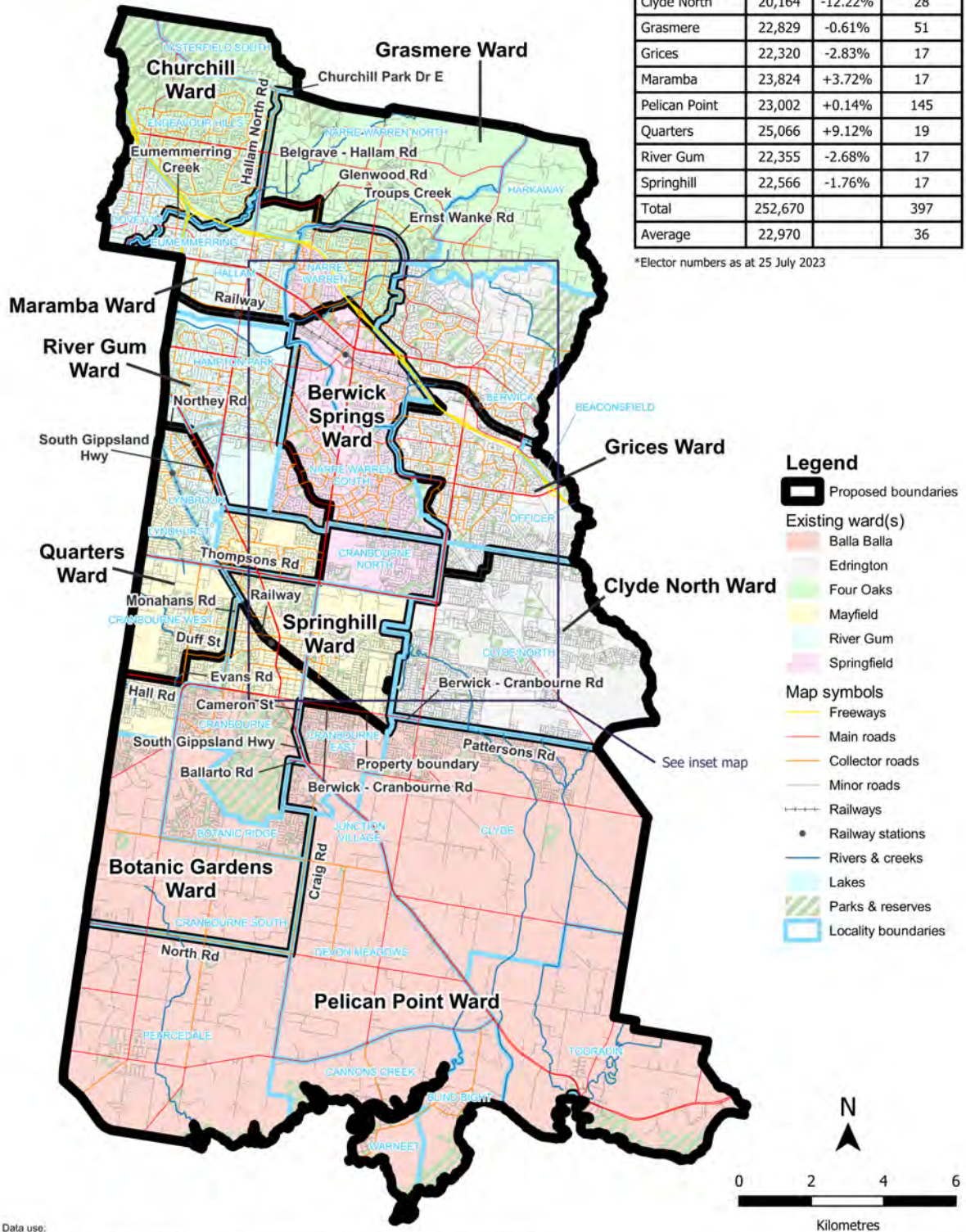
*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023

#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 (e.g. ABS).

Casey City Council Model 2 11 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Berwick Springs	22,632	-1.47%	19
Botanic Gardens	23,234	+1.15%	43
Churchill	24,678	+7.44%	24
Clyde North	20,164	-12.22%	28
Grasmere	22,829	-0.61%	51
Grices	22,320	-2.83%	17
Maramba	23,824	+3.72%	17
Pelican Point	23,002	+0.14%	145
Quarters	25,066	+9.12%	19
River Gum	22,355	-2.68%	17
Springhill	22,566	-1.76%	17
Total	252,670		397
Average	22,970		36

*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023

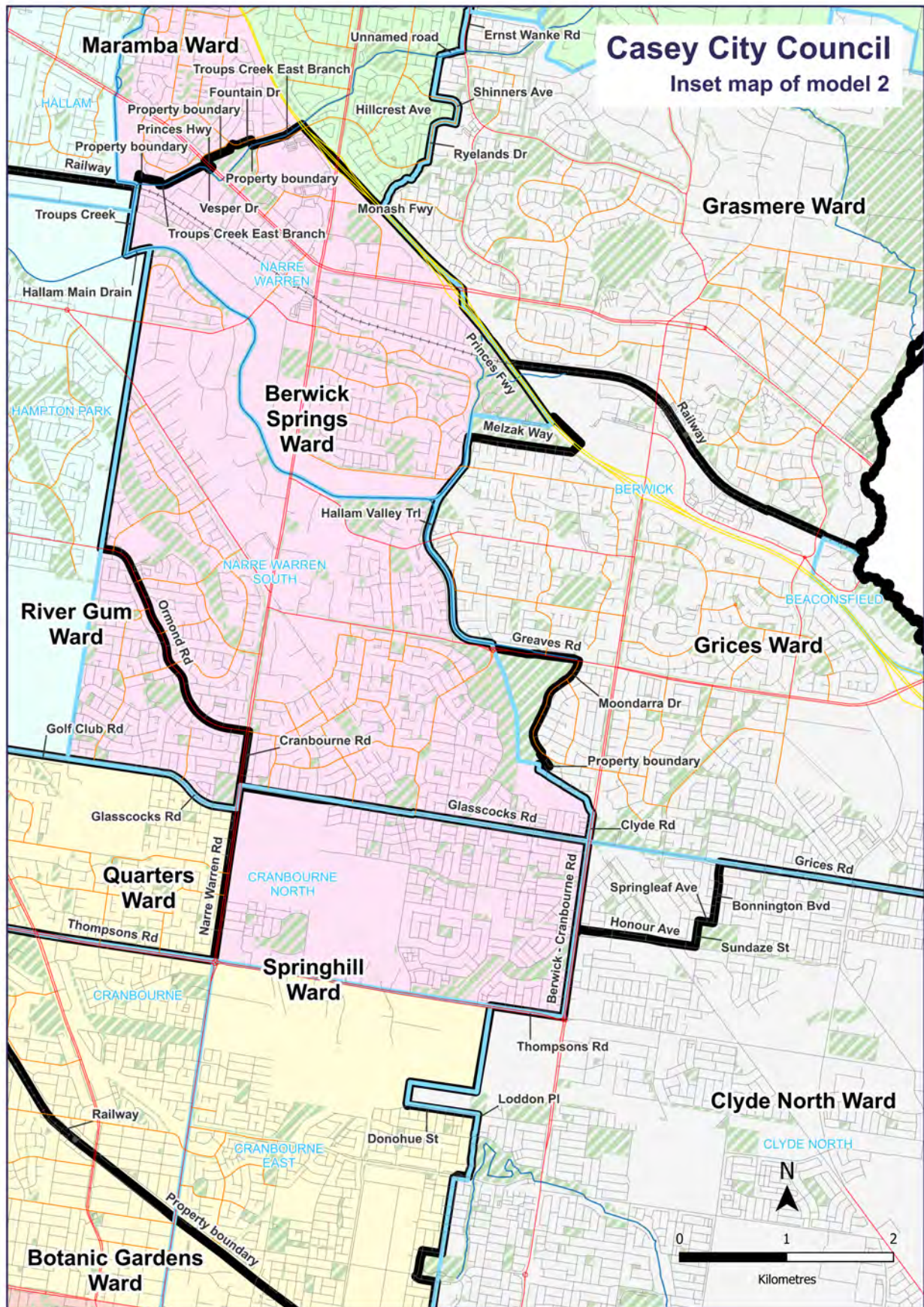


Data use:



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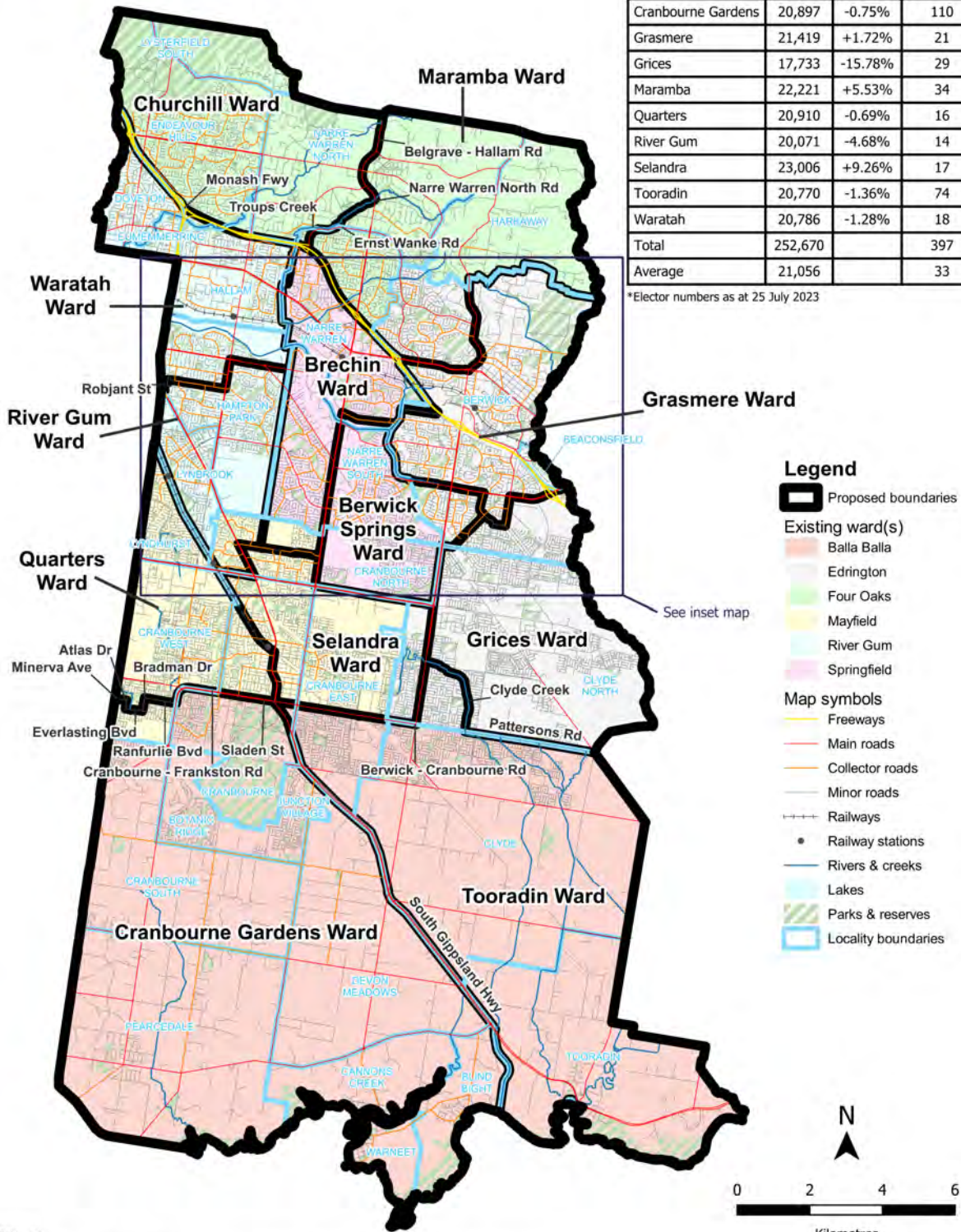
Data for Model 2

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Berwick Springs	22,632	-1.47%	19
Botanic Gardens	23,234	+1.15%	43
Churchill	24,678	+7.44%	24
Clyde North	20,164	-12.22%	28
Grasmere	22,829	-2.83%	51
Grices	22,320	-2.83%	17
Maramba	23,824	+3.72%	17
Pelican Point	23,002	+0.14%	145
Quarters	25,066	+9.12%	17
River Gum	22,355	-2.68%	17
Springhill	22,566	-1.76%	17
Total	252,670	n/a	397
Average	22,970	n/a	36

Casey City Council Model 3 12 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Berwick Springs	20,481	-2.73%	14
Brechin	22,820	+8.38%	17
Churchill	21,556	+2.38%	31
Cranbourne Gardens	20,897	-0.75%	110
Grasmere	21,419	+1.72%	21
Grices	17,733	-15.78%	29
Maramba	22,221	+5.53%	34
Quarters	20,910	-0.69%	16
River Gum	20,071	-4.68%	14
Selandra	23,006	+9.26%	17
Tooradin	20,770	-1.36%	74
Waratah	20,786	-1.28%	18
Total	252,670		397
Average	21,056		33

*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023

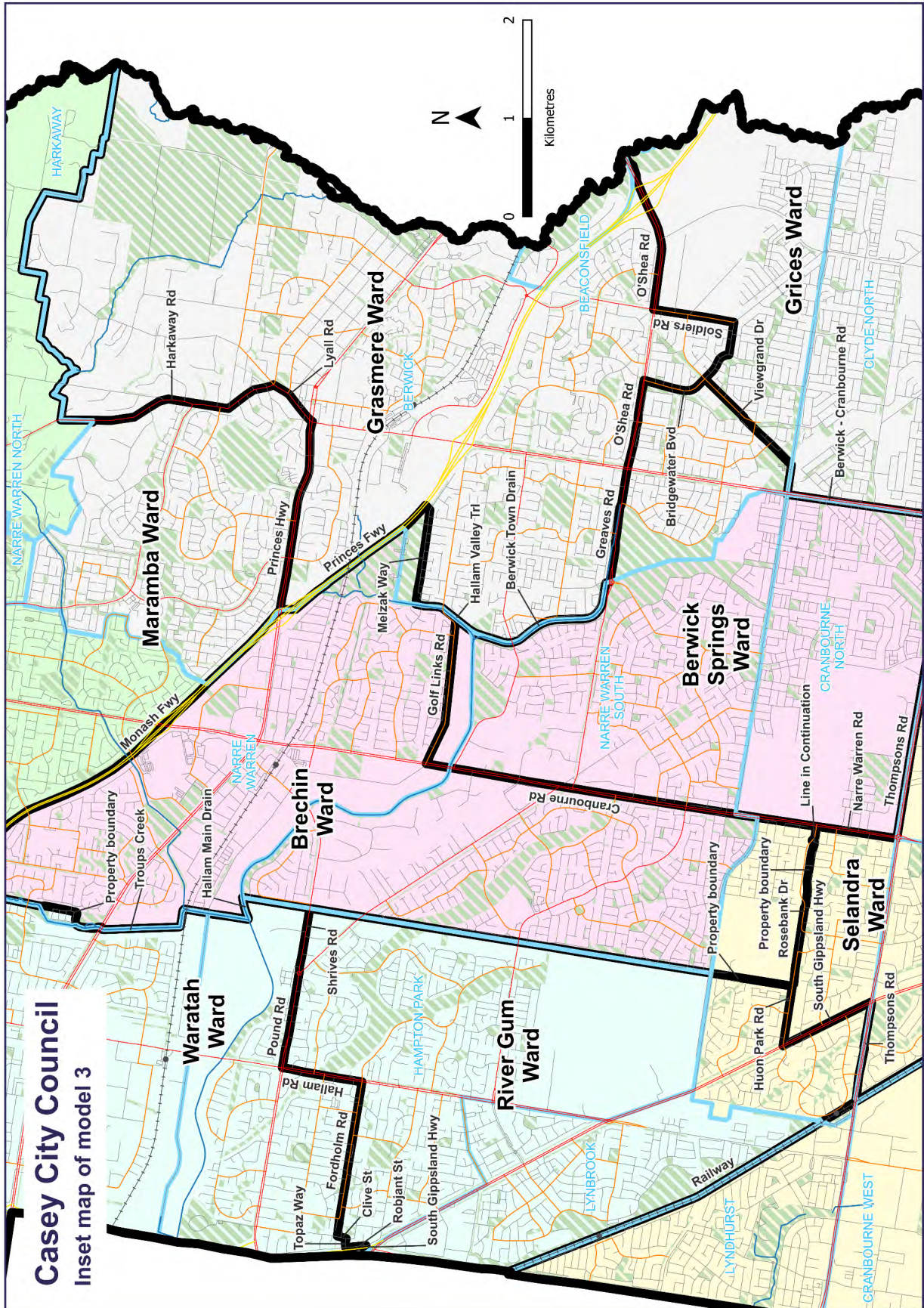


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Data for Model 3

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Berwick Springs	20,481	-2.73%	14
Brechin	22,820	+8.38%	17
Churchill	21,556	+2.38%	31
Cranbourne Gardens	20,897	-0.75%	110
Grasmere	21,419	+1.72%	21
Grices	17,733	-15.78%	29
Maramba	22,221	+5.53%	34
Quarters	20,910	-0.69%	16
River Gum	20,071	-4.68%	14
Selandra	23,006	+9.26%	17
Tooradin	20,770	-1.36%	74
Waratah	20,786	-1.28%	18
Total	252,670	n/a	397
Average	21,056	n/a	33

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