

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Ballarat City Council

June 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples 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.

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Submission approved by	Brief description
1	23 May 2023	Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner	Final version for publication

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Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government is reviewing the electoral structure of Ballarat 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), Ballarat 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 Ballarat 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 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2.

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 19 July. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public

hearing on Tuesday 25 July. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 23 August 2023.

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 will 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 Ballarat City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Ballarat City Council, the electoral representation advisory 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 Ballarat City Council has 3 members:

Panel 1

- The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC (Chairperson)
- Ms Liz Williams PSM
- Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner Ms Máiréad Doyle.

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 Victorian State government.

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 delegate) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

On behalf of the panel, the VEC has conducted a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Ballarat City Council electoral structure review. This has included:

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

The VEC will continue to promote the review on behalf of the panel during the response submission stage via media releases, the VEC’s social media channels and the VEC website.

Public consultation

The panel now invites input to the electoral structure review of Ballarat 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 the number of councillors is to be determined. 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 Ballarat 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 Ballarat 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, which come into full effect at the 2024 local council elections. The panel 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.

Deciding on ward names

The panel has taken the following approach to naming wards.

1. Retaining 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 first 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 Ballarat City Council

Profile

Ballarat City Council is in the Central Highlands region of Victoria, about 110 km west of Melbourne. It shares its borders with Hepburn Shire in the north, Moorabool Shire in the east, Golden Plains Shire in the south, and Pyrenees Shire in the west.

The Traditional Custodians of the lands in Ballarat City Council are the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples.

Landscape

The city covers an area of 739 km², comprised of commercial and residential areas predominantly in the south, with rural and farming land in the north. It contains a number of lakes, reserves and parks, with major industrial areas located mainly in Alfredton, Delacombe, Mitchell Park and Wendouree. Tourism is an important industry with over 2.3 million visitors recorded each year (City of Ballarat 2023b).

The city's current population is 113,763 (ABS 2022a), with most residing in the large and expanding urban areas of Ballarat. It has a diverse housing market, reflecting the long history of residential development and changing patterns of land use.

The land area dedicated to agriculture is about 412 km² and accounts for approximately 56% of the council area. Agricultural activities include broad acre sheep and beef grazing supporting the wool, meat and dairy industries, poultry and piggeries, and cropping for potatoes and cereal (DAFF 2023).

The city is served by 4 major road networks (the Western Freeway, and Midland, Sunraysia and Glenelg Highways), which connect the regional hub of Ballarat to Melbourne and Adelaide, and also to Geelong, Portland, Bendigo and Mildura.

Community

Like other regional centres, the city's population over the past decade has increased at a much greater rate than regional Victoria overall. From 2011 to 2021, the population grew by over 18,000 people (95,185 to 113,763) at an average annual growth rate of 1.9%. This growth rate is projected to continue, with the population expected to reach just over 122,000 by 2026. Much of this growth will be in the "Ballarat West growth zone", comprising of Alfredton, Bonshaw-Smythes Creek, Cardigan, Lucas, Bunker Hill and Delacombe (.id 2022a, 2022b).

The unemployment rate across the city sits at 4.7%, higher than the regional Victoria average of 4.1%. The city's main industries include health care and social assistance, education and training, and retail. These sectors collectively employ 40% of residents, with professionals representing 21.8%. Several large businesses are based in Ballarat, including McCain Foods, Mars Confectionary, Alstom and Haymes Paints.

The 2021 Census showed the median age of the population was 39 years, marginally higher than the 2016 Census which was 38 years (ABS 2022a, ABS 2016). However, the age profile

varies across the city, with the median age significantly lower in Cardigan Village (32 years) and in Alfredton (35 years), while higher in Wendouree (42 years) and Learmonth (45 years) (ABS 2022a).

People born in Australia make up 83.7% of the population, and 88.1% speak only English at home, both at rates above the regional Victoria averages (ABS 2022a, 2022b). People of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage make up 1.8% of the city's population, slightly below the regional Victoria average of 2.0% (ABS 2022a, 2022b).

Across the city the median weekly household income is \$1,429, higher than the regional Victoria average. Home ownership is widespread, with 65.6% of homes owned outright or owned with a mortgage, while a larger than average number of people rent (31.6%) than in regional Victoria overall (23.6%) (ABS 2022a, 2022b).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Ballarat City Council is currently divided into 3 wards with a total of 9 councillors:

- 3 wards with 3 councillors in each ward (Central, North and South).

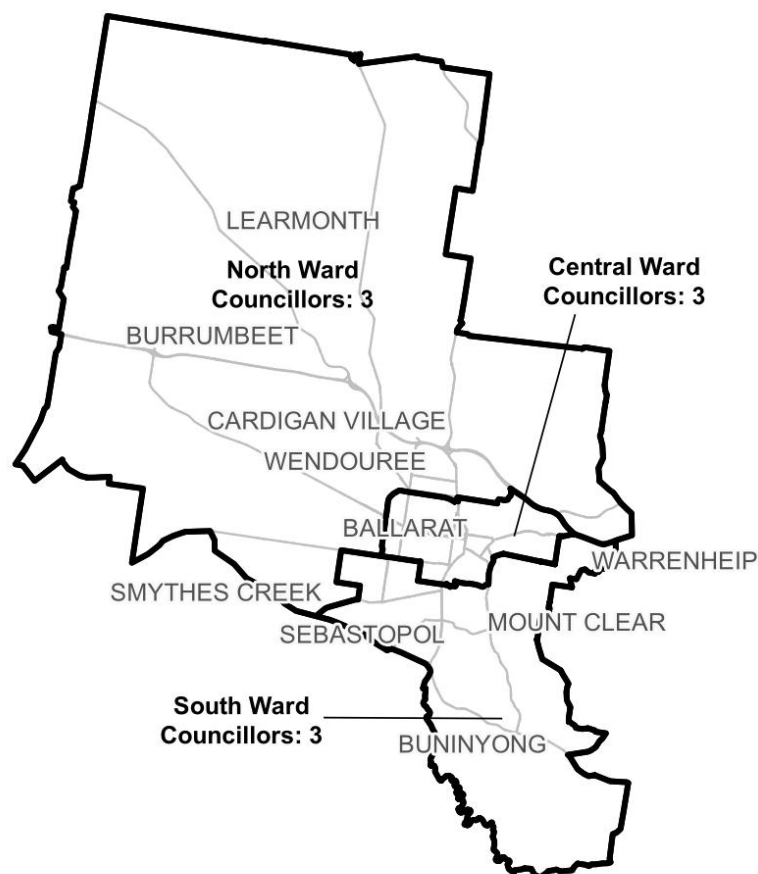


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Ballarat City Council.

There are approximately 87,340 voters in Ballarat City Council, with an approximate ratio of 9,704 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Ballarat City Council in 2015. This 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 Ballarat City Council continue to consist of 9 councillors elected from 3 wards (3 wards with 3 councillors in each ward).

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2015 representation review final report.

Preliminary findings and models

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act and the agreed criteria, the panel found 9 councillors to be an appropriate number for Ballarat City Council.

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

Similar regional city councils to Ballarat 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
Greater Geelong City*	1,248	204,092	271,057	212,369	11	19,306
Greater Bendigo City*	3,000	91,892	121,470	93,852	9	10,428
Ballarat City	739	84,694	113,763	87,340	9	9,704
Latrobe City*	1,426	58,170	77,318	59,099	9	6,566
Greater Shepparton City*	2,422	46,242	68,409	46,959	9	5,217
Mildura Rural City*	22,082	40,720	56,972	42,932	9	4,770
Wodonga City*	433	32,430	43,253	33,461	7	4,780
Warrnambool City*	121	27,279	35,406	27,731	7	3,961

*This local council is undergoing an electoral structure review during 2023–24.

Maintaining 9 councillors

Ballarat City Council currently has 87,340 voters represented by 9 councillors and covers an area of 739 km², consistent with other regional city councils with a similar number of voters. While forecasts indicate strong rates of population growth, such growth will likely occur in (or be confined to) a small number of localities close to the centre of Ballarat itself. As no special circumstances could be identified and councillor's current workloads were not considered to be impacted by the proposed models, the panel considers it appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain unchanged.

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 Ballarat City Council, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and which models best offered 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 strongest 3 models have been put forward for further public comment.

The panel proposes 3 models for the consideration of the Ballarat City Council community:

- a subdivided electoral structure of 9 single-councillor wards (Model 1)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 9 single-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 (Model 2)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 9 single-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2 (Model 3).

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

A single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors (Model 1)

Under this model, Ballarat City Council would adopt a 9-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

The approach in developing Model 1 was to utilise strong and clear physical boundaries – major roads, railway line and distinctive geographic features. The proposed western boundary of Buninyong Ward is primarily the Yarrowee River, while Elsworth Street makes up the ward's northern boundary. The current council boundaries are maintained in the east and south. Closer into the centre of Ballarat, the proposed Lake Gardens Ward (which encompasses Lake Wendouree Reserve) is bounded by the main roads of Ring Road, Sturt, Russell and Sebastopol Streets, the Yarrowee River, Grenville Street and the main east-west rail line.

Much of the projected population growth is contained in the south-western wards of Alfredton, Victoria Park and Yarrowee wards, where new housing development is already underway. This model effectively accommodates current and projected growth.

In supporting Model 1 for further consideration, the panel made comment that several of the proposed single councillor wards fell wholly within some of the existing wards, with other proposed wards traversing the existing boundaries. For instance, the Alfredton, Burrumbeet and Wendouree wards sit wholly inside the current 3-councillor North Ward, and 100% of the Buninyong and Yarrowee wards are included in the current South Ward.

The main downsides to Model 1 are:

- The Burrumbeet Ward covers an area of approximately 550 km², over 70% of the council area, making this a relatively large area for one councillor to represent when compared with other wards.

- Some ward boundaries do not follow the clear physical features for the full length of the boundary.
- To create balanced ward numbers (voters per councillor), some minor roads were utilised as boundaries.

A single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors (alternative version) (Model 2)

Under this model, Ballarat City Council would adopt a 9-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Viewed as a robust model by the panel, this model was developed by integrating several of the growth urban localities of the city with the western and northern rural areas. This is evident in the proposed Coghills Creek, Burrumbeet and Nerrina wards:

1. *Coghills Creek Ward*: Encompasses much of the large residential suburb of Wendouree, continuing across the Western Highway into the new residential development north of Ballarat Town Common and in Miners Rest, then through the rural towns of Learmonth, Coghills Creek and Glendaruel to the council's northern boundary.
2. *Burrumbeet Ward*: Captures the new residential housing developments in Lucas and Cardigan to form part of a large western ward that also includes the towns of Burrembeet and Windemere, and the popular recreation area of Lake Burrumbeet.
3. *Nerrina Ward*: Includes the more densely populated suburbs of Ballarat North and Invermay Park combined with the rural areas of Invermay, Glen Park and Chapel Flat by crossing the Western Freeway, the White Swan Reservoir and Glen Park State Forest towards council's north-eastern boundary.

The panel viewed the creation of these three urban/rural wards in Model 2 as an effective way to balance councillor workloads, which together closely resemble the current 3-councillor North Ward.

It was noted that in creating wards that remain within the permitted +/-10% tolerance through to 2024 local council elections, some drawbacks could be identified such as wards with unusual shapes (for example the proposed Black Hill and Wendouree wards, where Lake Wendouree influences the ward boundaries), and that it was not structurally possible to have all 9 wards with a mixture of urban and rural localities.

A single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors (alternative version) (Model 3)

Under this model, Ballarat City Council would adopt a 9-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

The approach in building Model 3 was to use locality boundaries to capture suburban communities, with the view that most residents would be familiar with the suburb in which they live. The locality boundaries were considered clear and would allow for communities of interest, in the most part, to be grouped together.

Much of the population growth in the council is contained within the proposed Winter Valley Ward, which includes the developing towns of Bonshaw, Delacombe, Winter Valley and the southern part of Lucas.

The northern part of Lucas, the residential development in Cardigan and the residential enclave adjacent to Ballarat Town Common are included in the proposed Burrumbeet Ward. This ward stretches from the south-western council boundary (near Bunker Hill), across to the western council boundary, up to the northern boundary and over to the eastern council boundary just above Gong Gong. The area covered by this ward is 535 km² and while it captures communities of interest reasonably well, it could potentially provide a heavy workload for one councillor.

The proposed wards of Alfredton, Wendouree, Central, Black Hill and Yarrowee are residential, follow clearly defined ward boundaries, and are structured to best represent their communities of interest. The proposed Buninyong Ward is also a mix of urban and rural, encompassing the more urban suburbs of Mount Pleasant and Mount Clear, down through the rural towns of Mount Helen, Black Lead and Buninyong to the council's southern boundary.

Along with creating a large northern ward, an additional downside of Model 3 is that, with a large part of the growth tied to specific localities, there is a need to split Lucas along what might be considered an arbitrary boundary, placing about half of a residential estate in the proposed Winter Valley Ward and the other half in the proposed Burrumbeet Ward.

Models considered but not put forward

A single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors

The panel considered a fourth 9-ward structure, with the basis for this model being to split each of the current 3 wards by 3. Whilst this model could be viewed as minimal change from the current electoral structure, to deliver wards that remained within the permitted +/-10% tolerance at the 2024 local council elections, there was a need to create ward boundaries along numerous minor features, as well as dividing communities either side of major highways.

While, as in Model 2, this model included 3 wards with an urban/rural population mix, the panel did not put this model forward for further consultation, as Model 2 was considered to better represent the communities of interest across all the proposed council wards.

See [Appendix 2](#) for a diagram of this model.

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 Ballarat City Council and consequently facilitate good governance. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for detailed maps of these models.

Model 1

Ballarat City Council has 9 councillors and is divided into 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Alfredton Ward, Black Hill Ward, Buninyong Ward, Burrumbeet Ward, Lake Gardens Ward, Sovereign Hill Ward, Victoria Park Ward, Wendouree Ward, and Yarrowee Ward.

Model 2

Ballarat City Council has 9 councillors and is divided into 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Alfredton Ward, Black Hill Ward, Buninyong Ward, Burrumbeet Ward, Coghills Creek Ward, Nerrina Ward, Sovereign Hill Ward, Wendouree Ward, and Yarrowee Ward.

Model 3

Ballarat City Council has 9 councillors and is divided into 9 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Alfredton Ward, Black Hill Ward, Buninyong Ward, Burrumbeet Ward, Central Ward, Sovereign Hill Ward, Wendouree Ward, Winter Valley Ward, and Yarrowee 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

Alfredton, Black Hill, Buninyong, Burrumbeet, Lake Gardens, Sovereign Hill, Victoria Park, Wendouree and Yarrowee ward names are new and are based on registered natural features or localities found within each ward.

Model 2

Alfredton, Black Hill, Buninyong, Burrumbeet, Coghills Creek, Nerrina, Sovereign Hill, Wendouree and Yarrowee ward names are new and are based on registered natural features or localities found within each ward.

Model 3

Alfredton, Black Hill, Buninyong, Burrumbeet, Central, Sovereign Hill, Wendouree, Winter Valley and Yarrowee ward names are new and are based on directional names, registered natural features or localities found within each ward.


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>Ballarat.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 19 July 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: 10 am

Date: Tuesday 25 July 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 23 August 2023. The Minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the electoral structure of Ballarat 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

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.id (informed decisions) (2022a) [Welcome to the City of Ballarat Community Profile](#), .id website, accessed 21 March 2023.

— (2022b) [Welcome to the City of Ballarat Population Forecasts](#), .id website, accessed 21 March 2023.

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

Appendix 1: Model maps

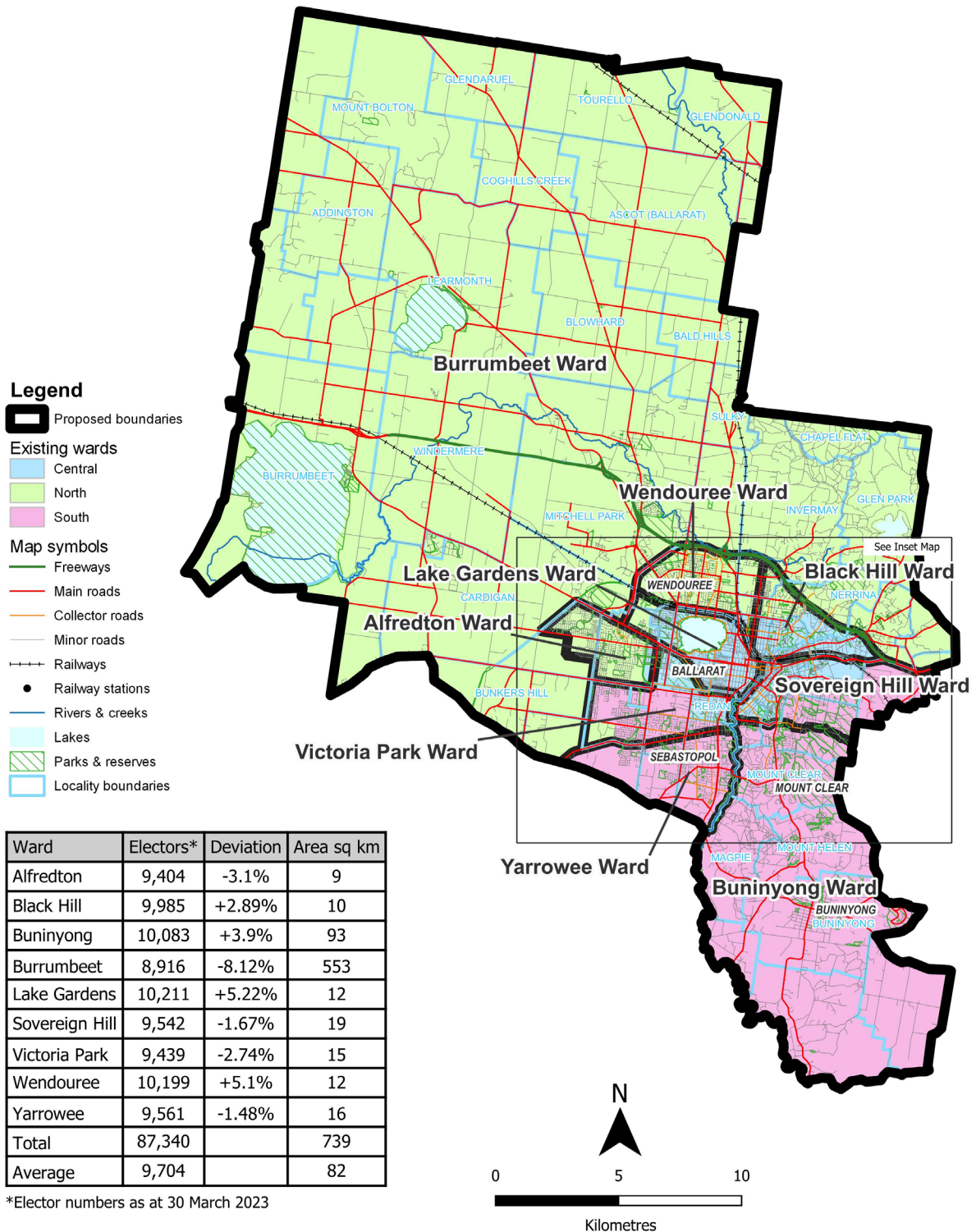
The following maps are included in this report:

Map	Page
Model 1 – a single-councillor ward structure with 9 councillors – 9 wards with one councillor per ward.	24
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Ballarat City Council

Model 1

9 single-councillor wards

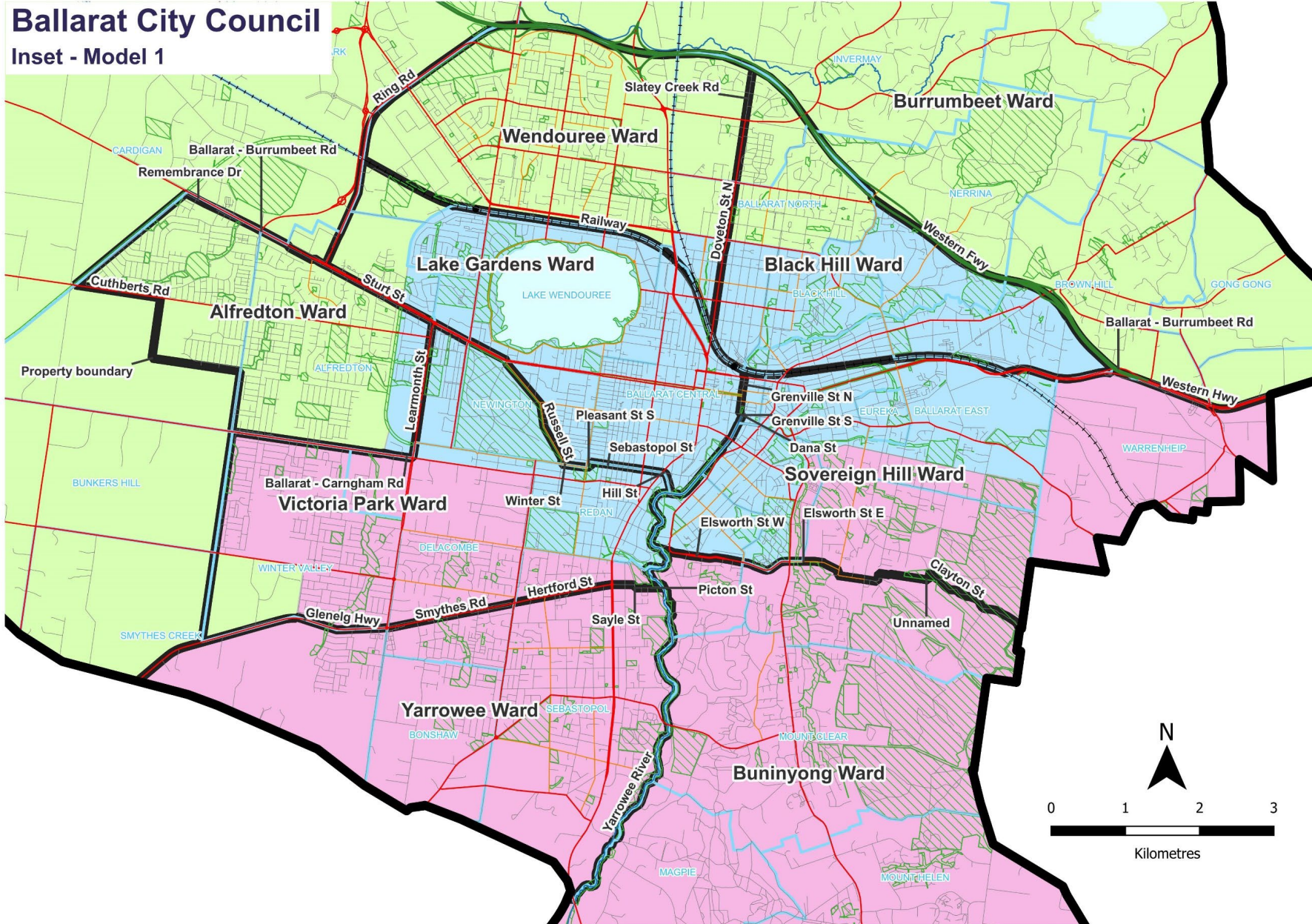


Map prepared by:
 Victorian Electoral Commission

Data use:

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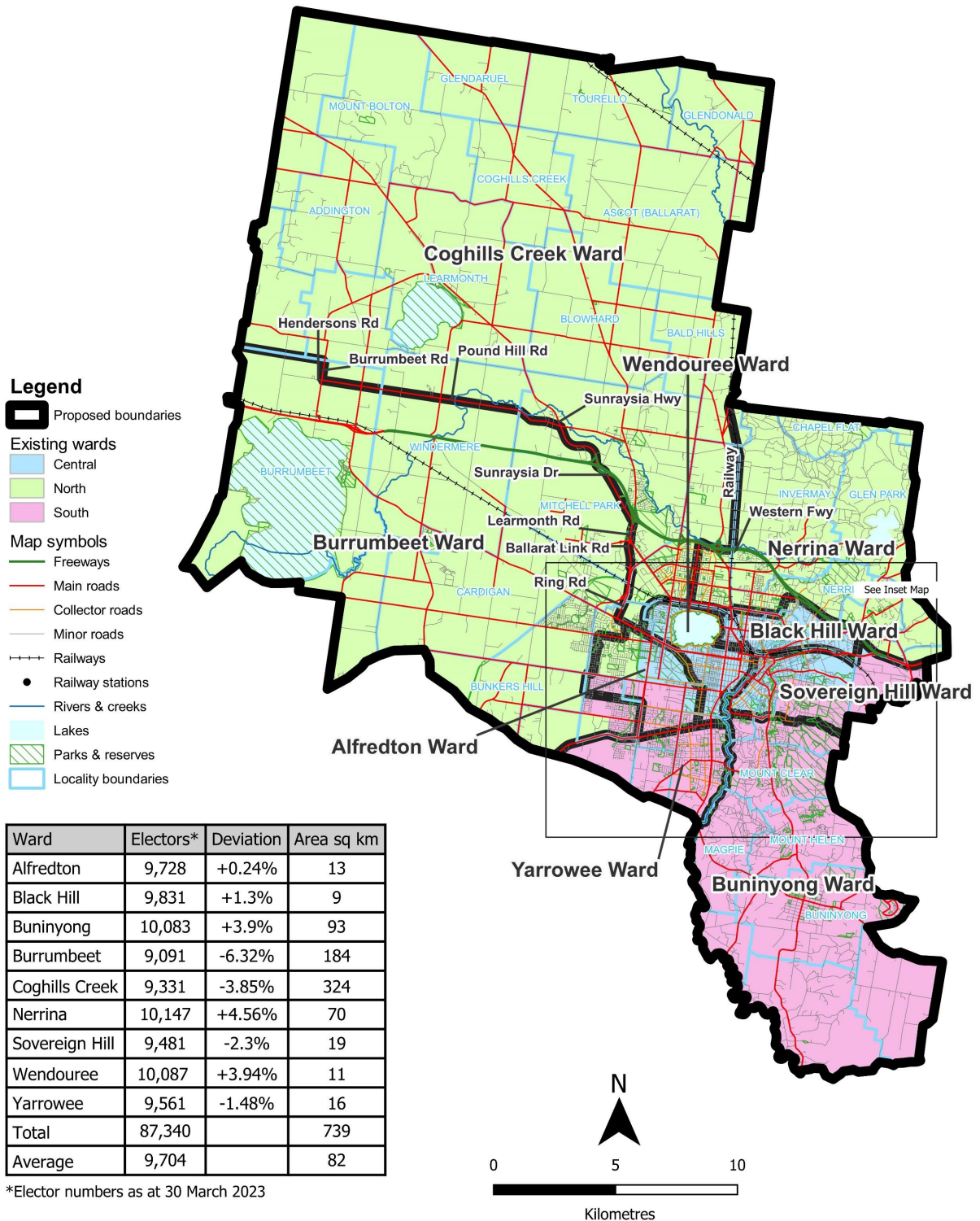
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Ballarat City Council

Model 2

9 single-councillor wards



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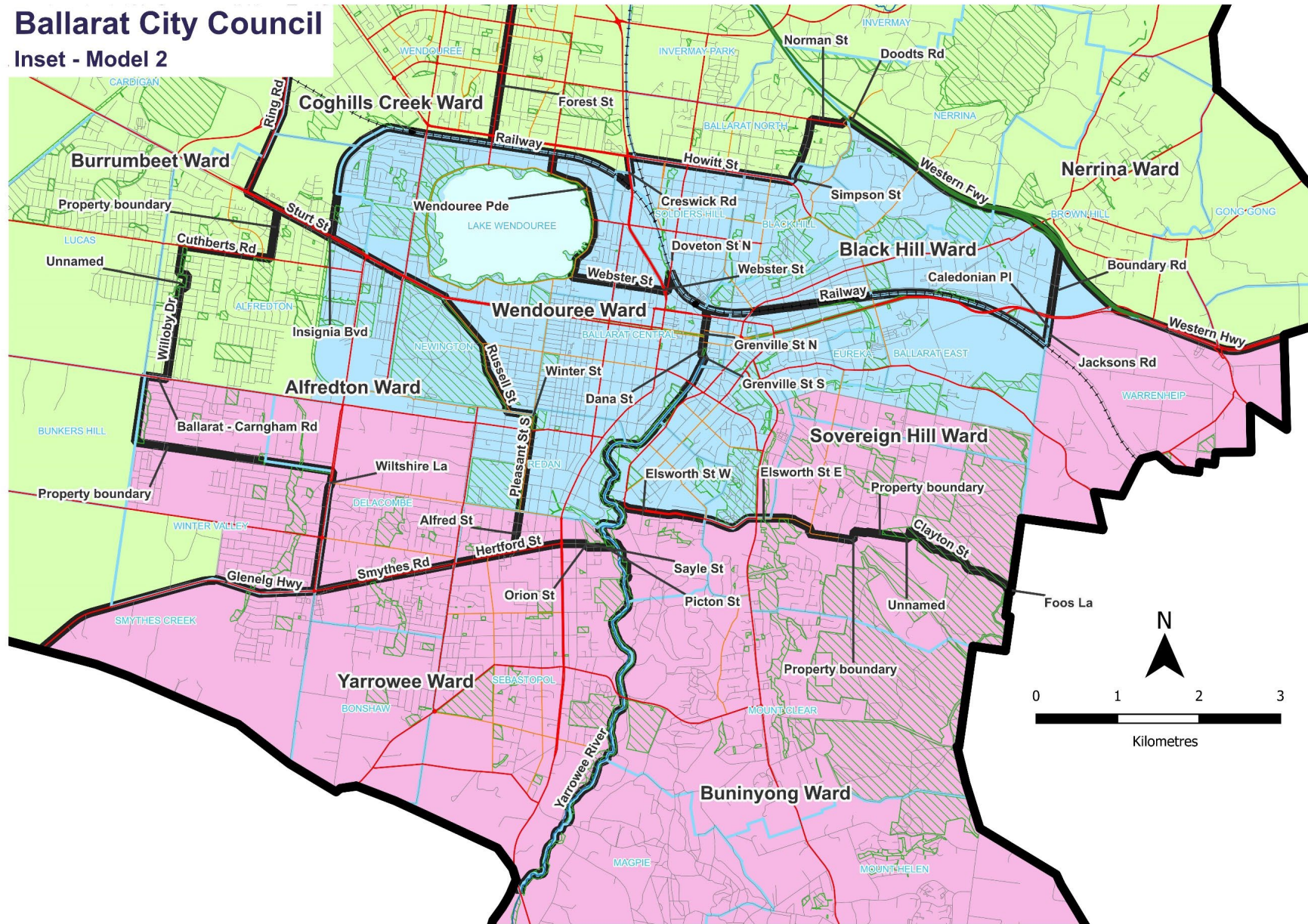


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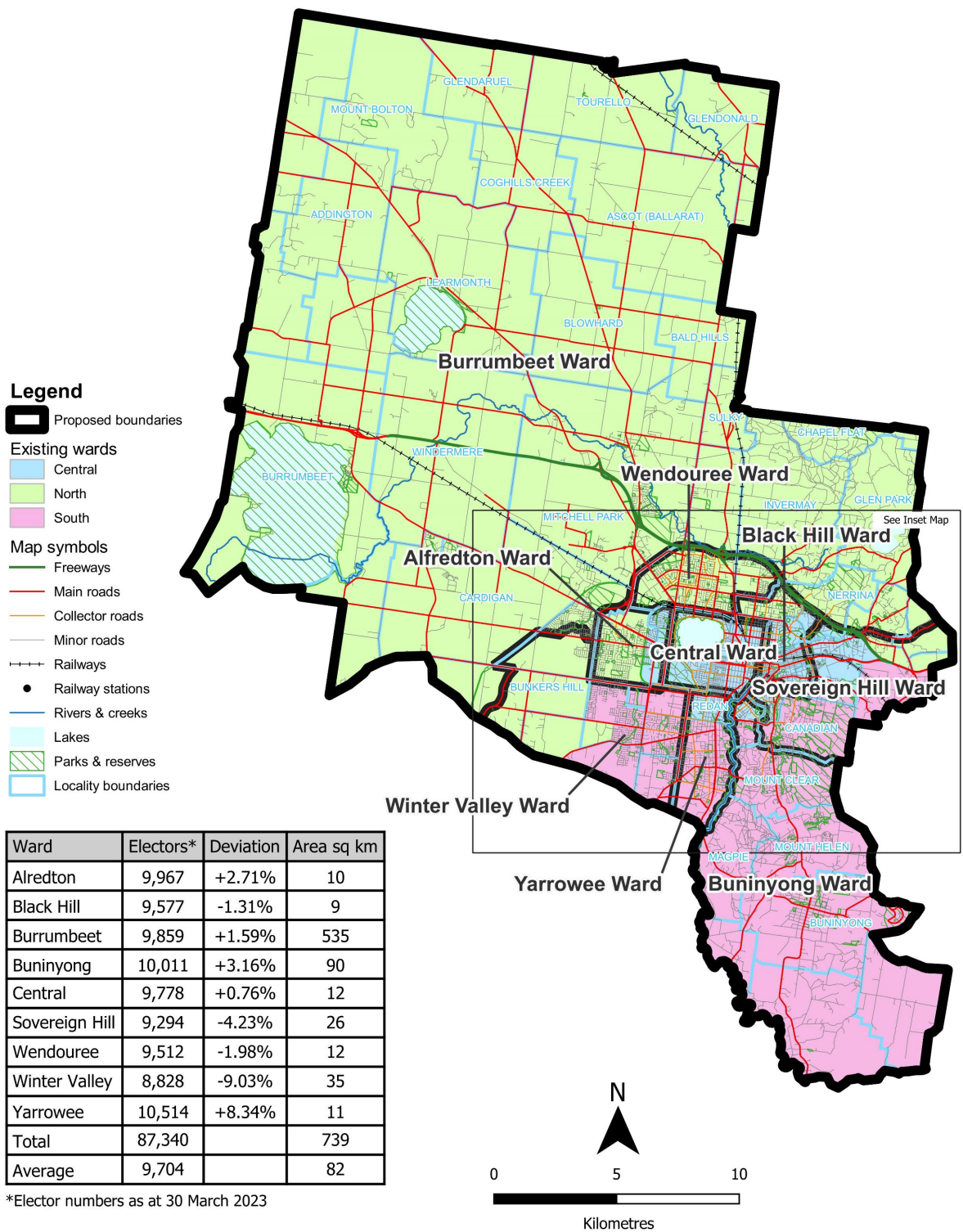
Inset - Model 2



Ballarat City Council

Model 3

9 single-councillor wards



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Data use:

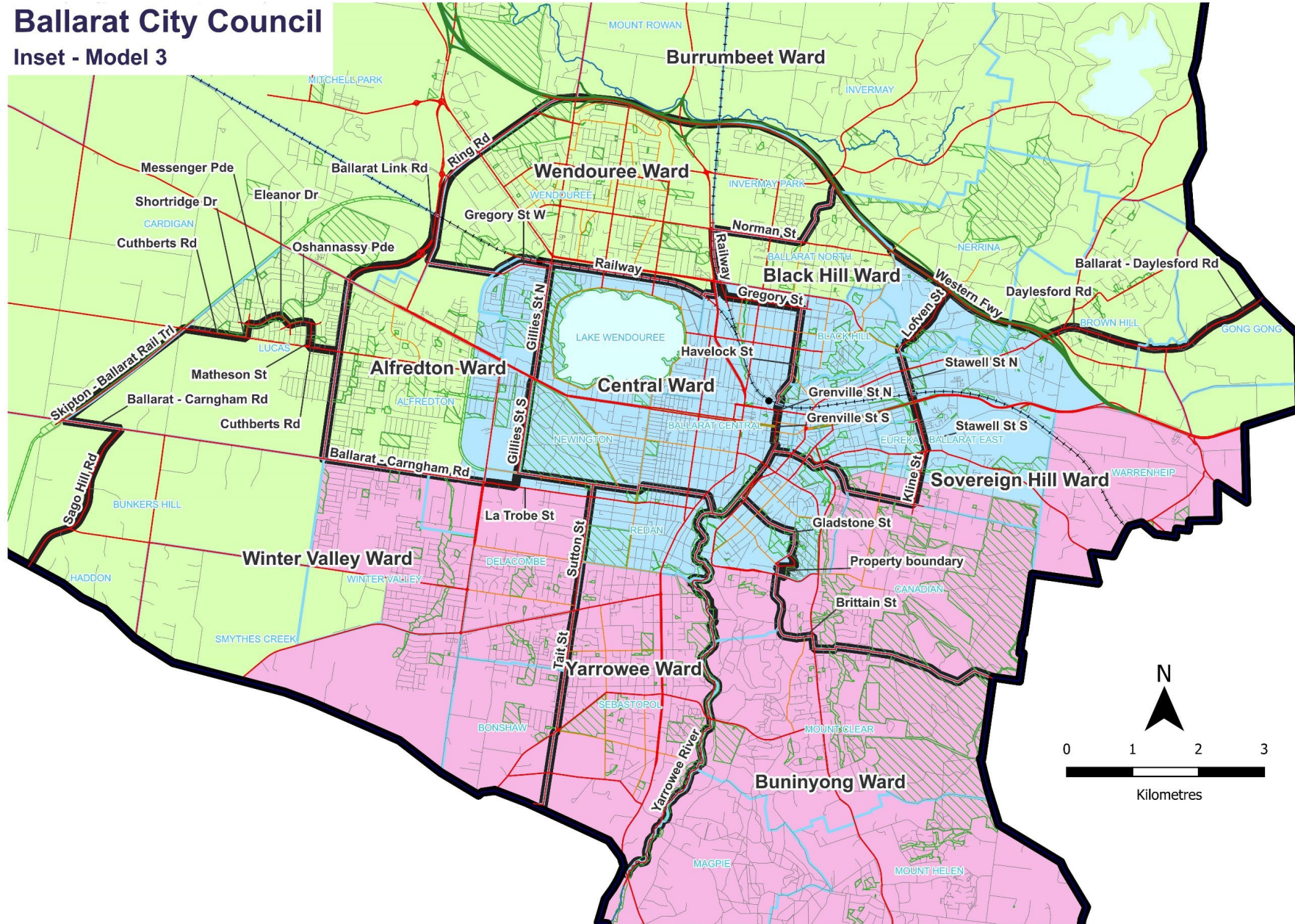


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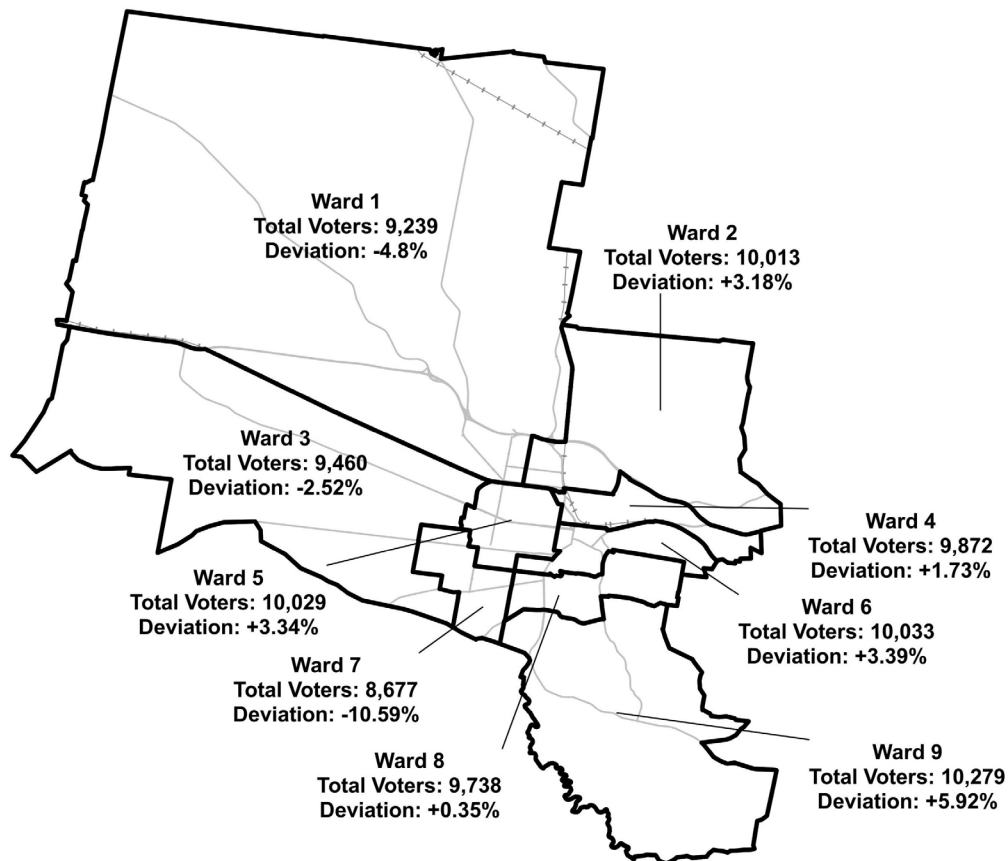
Inset - Model 3



Appendix 2: Additional models considered

The following model was closely considered by the panel but is not being put forward for public consultation. See [Models considered but not put forward](#) for further information.

A single-councillor ward model with 9 councillors



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