

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Greater Geelong City Council

July 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Wadawurrung 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.

Document history and version control

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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 Greater Geelong 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), Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong 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 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 26 July. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public

hearing on Tuesday 1 August. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 30 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 Greater Geelong City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong City Council has 3 members:

- Ms Julie Eisenbise (Chairperson)
- Mr Tim Presnell
- Acting Electoral Commissioner Ms Dana Fleming.

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 Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong City Council

Profile

Greater Geelong City Council is located about 70 km southwest of central Melbourne and covers an area of 1,248 km². It has a population of 271,057, making it the most populated of Victoria's regional cities and the third most populated local government area in Victoria after Casey and Wyndham cities (ABS 2021).

Greater Geelong City is surrounded by Surf Coast Shire to the south, Golden Plains and Moorabool shires to the west and north, and Wyndham City to the north. Queenscliffe Borough is adjacent to Greater Geelong City on the Bellarine Peninsula. The city includes significant coastal areas, extending south from Breamlea to include the Bellarine Peninsula (except for the small part occupied by Queenscliffe Borough) and a large section of the Port Phillip Bay coast up to Little River.

The Traditional Custodians of Greater Geelong City Council are the Wadawurrung people.

Landscape

The council includes the large urban area and city of Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula, which includes significant residential development and large rural areas, particularly in the north. Well recognised natural features include the You Yangs, the Barwon and Moorabool rivers, and Lake Connewarre, plus extensive coastal environments and wetlands.

Approximately 70% of land is used for primary production, mainly grazing.

The urban centre and surrounding suburbs of Geelong is home to about 180,000 residents. A significant population is located on the Bellarine Peninsula in Ocean Grove – Barwon Heads (approximately 22,000) and Drysdale – Clifton Springs (16,200). Lara to the north and Leopold to the east are other large urban areas with populations of about 15,700 and 12,300 respectively. The population living in the rural areas of the Greater Geelong City Council is about 9,000, or 3.3% of the total population of the city (ABS 2021b).

The council area includes a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including rare and unique species and ecological communities, major waterways, large coastal areas and complex freshwater and marine wetlands (DTP 2023). Agricultural land use is mainly sheep and beef grazing. There are small areas of cropping in the north, and horticultural businesses in the south, particularly on the Bellarine Peninsula (Agriculture Victoria 2023).

Historically, the council area has been a centre for industrial manufacturing, with an automotive industry, agricultural inputs sector, and a fuel refinery having interests in the area. It has Victoria's second largest seaport and airport, and has had major investments in its road and rail infrastructure. It is located on the state and interstate road and rail network, providing direct links to South Australia, south-western Victoria and Melbourne (DTP 2023). The Geelong Ring Road extends the length of the Geelong urban centre and forms a boundary between development on either side.

Community

The council area has a fast-growing population increasing from 183,530 in 2001 (ABS 2001) to over 270,000 people currently. It is forecast to grow to nearly 400,000 people by 2041 at a rate of about 6,000 people or 2% per year and the population will increase by about 25,000 between council elections (.id 2023).

The greatest rates of growth between 2023 and 2041 as forecast will occur in the following small areas:

- Lovely Banks – Batesford – Moorabool (470% from about 3,000 to nearly 17,000 people)
- Bell-Post Hill (140% from about 5,000 to just over 12,300)
- Marshall – Charlemont (200% from about 5,800 to over 17,800)
- Armstrong Creek (100% from about 13,600 to over 27,000)
- Mount Duneed (112% from 7,770 to about 16,500)
- Curlewis, Geelong – South Geelong – Drumcondra, and Herne Hill are forecast to increase between 45-100% by 2041 (.id 2023).

The median age of residents of the council area is 39 years, and its age profile is similar to Victoria overall. However, there are fewer people as a proportion of the overall population aged 30-45 years and more people as a proportion of the population aged 60 years and above when compared to Victoria overall (ABS 2021a).

Most residents identify as having English or Australian ancestry (38.4% and 35.7% respectively, about 10% above the State average), followed by Irish, Scottish, and Italian. At 77.6%, a greater proportion of the population were born in Australia than for Victoria overall (65%) and metropolitan Melbourne (59.9%). There were 3,562 people (1.3%) who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the 2021 Census, which as a proportion of the overall population, is slightly higher than 1.0% for Victoria overall. About 83% of the population speak only English at home (compared to 67.2% for Victoria overall) (ABS 2021a).

Of those people in the labour force (60.7%), 53.1% worked full-time (56.2% for Victoria overall), 35.7% part-time (32.3%), 6.8% were away from work (6.5%), and 4.4% were unemployed (5.0%) (ABS 2021a). The main occupations are Professionals who make up 22.7% of the working population (25% for Victoria overall), Technicians and Trades Workers at 14.5% (12.6%), Community and Personal Service Workers at 13.6% (11.0%), Managers at 11.6% (14.0%), Clerical and Administrative Workers at 11.4% (12.4%) (ABS 2021a).

In terms of the industry of employment, the main industries are hospitals, other social assistance services, supermarket and grocery stores, cafes and restaurants, and primary education, all at rates just above Victoria overall (ABS 2021a).

Median weekly incomes are slightly lower when compared to Victoria, which for individuals is \$769 (\$803 Victoria), families \$2,051 (\$2,136) and households \$1,592 (\$1,759) (ABS 2021a).

Greater Geelong City Council is considered to have relatively high levels of socio-economic advantage, though there are pockets of the council area with very high levels of disadvantage. Norlane (population of about 8,600 people) ranks as the most disadvantaged suburb in Victoria and Whittington (population 3,990) and Corio (15,500) are also areas of high disadvantage (ABS 2023).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Greater Geelong City Council is currently divided into 4 wards with a total of 11 councillors:

- one ward with 2 councillors (Windermere Ward)
- 3 wards with 3 councillors each (Bellarine, Brownbill, Kardinia wards).



Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Greater Geelong City Council.

There are approximately 212,369 voters in Greater Geelong City Council, with an approximate ratio of 19,306 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Greater Geelong City Council in 2016. 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 Greater Geelong City Council adopt a structure of 11 councillors elected from 4 wards (one ward with 2 councillors and 3 wards with 3 councillors each).

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2017 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 11 or 12 councillors to be an appropriate number for Greater Geelong City Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Greater Geelong 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 Greater Geelong 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 Council*	1,248	204,092	271,057	212,369	11	19,306
Greater Bendigo City Council*	3,000	91,892	121,470	93,852	9	10,428
Ballarat City Council*	739	84,694	113,763	87,340	9	9,704
Latrobe City Council*	1,426	58,170	77,318	59,099	9	6,566
Greater Shepparton City Council*	2,422	46,242	68,409	46,959	9	5,217
Mildura Rural City Council*	22,082	40,720	56,972	42,932	9	4,770
Wodonga City Council*	433	32,430	43,253	33,461	7	4,780
Warrnambool City Council*	121	27,279	35,406	27,731	7	3,961
Wangaratta Rural City Council*	3,645	23,267	29,808	23,904	7	3,414
Horsham Rural City Council*	4,267	16,206	20,429	15,753	7	2,250

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

Maintaining 11 councillors

Greater Geelong City Council currently has 212,369 voters represented by 11 councillors and covers an area of 1,248 km². As the population grows, the justification to increase the number of councillors to 12 (the maximum permitted) will become stronger. In light of this and given population forecasts indicating relatively high rates of population growth to continue, the panel considers it appropriate for the total 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 as such an increase would be justified and appropriate for the council's large and growing population. A structure of 12 councillors might provide a more favourable structure of wards and boundaries. The panel seeks public feedback on this and other models.

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

This model is based on the current structure by dividing each of the current wards as follows: Brownbill Ward is divided into 3 wards, Bellarine Ward into 3, Kardinia Ward into 3, and Windermere Ward into 2 wards.

The composition of the wards are:

- Buckley Ward: incorporates Wandana Heights, most of Highton, part of Waurn Ponds, parts of Belmont and some of Ceres.
- Charlemont Ward: includes Charlemont, Marshall, Armstrong Creek, and parts of Belmont and Grovedale.
- Connewarre Ward: takes in Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove, most of Connewarre, and half of Breamlea.
- Cowies Creek Ward: includes Lovely Banks, Moorabool, Staughton Vale, Norlane, Anakie, most of Fyansford and Ceres, about half of Batesford and Bell Post Hill, about a quarter of Balliang and Hamlyn Heights, and small parts of Corio, Highton, Bell Park, and North Geelong. This ward reaches down to Ceres and crosses the Geelong Ring Road into an area between the Barwon River and Barrabool Road.
- Deakin Ward: includes most of Grovedale, about half of Mount Duneed, part of Waurn Ponds, and some of Belmont.

- East Geelong Ward: includes Thomson, Breakwater, St Albans Park, Newcomb, Whittington, East Geelong, most of South Geelong and about half of Geelong. It has Coppards Road as the eastern boundary and continues to the Barwon River. The boundary follows the Barwon to Settlement Road and then runs along Fyans Street to Yarra Street and ends at the waterfront.
- Grassy Point Ward: includes Clifton Springs, Portarlington and Indented Heads. It has over half of Drysdale, close to half of St Leonards and a small part of Curlewis.
- Hamlyn Heights Ward: includes Herne Hill, most of Bell Park, Manifold Heights, and Hamlyn Heights, about half of Bell Post Hill, part of Fyansford and a small section of North Geelong.
- Kardinia Ward: includes Geelong West, Newtown, Drumcondra, and Rippleside, most of North Geelong, half of Geelong, a quarter of Manifold Heights and a small part of South Geelong. Thompsons Road and Shannon Ave form most of the boundary.
- Moolap Ward: includes Mannerim, Swan Bay, Marcus Hill, Wallington, Moolap, and Leopold, most of Curlewis and Point Lonsdale, over half of St Leonards, and less than half of Drysdale.
- You Yangs Ward: in the northeast includes the North Shore, Avalon, Lara, and Point Wilson, it also includes parts of Corio and Little River and a small section of Balliang.

The advantages of Model 1 are that it maintains current ward boundaries to the greatest extent possible, dividing each current ward into multiple wards. Where possible these boundaries follow readily identifiable and recognised geographic features and infrastructure. The more sparsely populated area in the north of the council area is divided into 2 wards, which allows the workload of representing these areas to be shared between two councillors. This is considered an advantage over one ward covering a larger area.

Model 1 also has the advantage of keeping the townships of the Barwon Peninsula largely within ward boundaries and not divided across wards. As a result, communities of interest of the Bellarine are reasonably well captured by the proposed wards of this model.

However, potential disadvantages with this model were also identified. To balance voter-to-councillor ratios across wards, it was necessary for the southernmost part of the Cowies Creek Ward to cross the Geelong Ring Road, putting voters of Anakie in the same ward as voters in Highton, and some of the communities grouped together in this ward may not share the same interests. Model 1 is expected to be within the +/-10% deviation tolerance at the 2024 election.

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

Under this model, Greater Geelong 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 2 is based primarily on localities and then uses roads as boundaries with the intent of keeping towns and Geelong suburbs together where practical.

The wards and the localities are:

- Barwon Ward: includes Ocean Grove and most of Barwon Heads.
- Breakwater Ward: has Charlemont, St Albans Park, Marshall, Breakwater, Belmont, and most of South Geelong.
- Buckley Falls Ward: includes Ceres, Fyansford, Highton, most of Wandana Heights, just under half of Batesford, and a small part of Hamlyn Heights.
- Connewarre Ward: covers a large section of Bellarine Peninsula and takes in Swan Bay, Marcus Hill, Mannerim, Wallington, Armstrong Creek, Point Lonsdale, and most of Indented Head, Connewarre, St Leonards, half of Breamlea, and a small part of Barwon Heads.
- Corio Bay Ward: covers Norlane, North Shore, Rippleside, Drumcondra, about half of Corio, under half of North Geelong and a small part of Bell Park.
- Deakin Ward: includes Waurm Ponds, Grovedale, most of Mount Duneed, and part of Wandana Heights.
- Kardinia Ward: covers the suburbs Manifold Heights, Newtown, East Geelong, Geelong, Herne Hill, and part of South Geelong.
- Midland Ward: includes Geelong West, Bell Park, most of Hamlyn Heights, most of North Geelong, and just under half of Bell Post Hill.
- Moolap Ward: incorporates Newcomb, Whittington, Moolap, Leopold, and Thomson.
- Murradoc Ward: consists of Portarlington, Bellarine, Drysdale, Clifton Springs, Curlewis, and parts of St Leonards and Indented Head.
- You Yangs Ward: is a large northern ward taking in Lara, Moorabool, Staughton Vale, Avalon, Lovely Banks, Anakie, Point Wilson, Little River, about half of Bell Post Hill, half of Corio, just under half of Balliang, and a small part of Batesford.

The model makes use of the strong boundary feature of the Ring Road for a number of wards and the division this road already provides. It accommodates projected growth reasonably well. Where possible Model 2 groups communities of interest together into wards, for example, Barwon Ward keeps Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads communities together, and Moolap Ward similarly for Newcomb, Whittington, Moolap, Leopold and Thomson. In some areas the model has maintained existing ward boundaries and the Geelong city urban area is reasonably well captured within the Buckley Falls, Midland and Kardinia wards.

However, some compromises have been necessary to comply with +/-10% requirement and consequently the model has some potential disadvantages. For example, while the large You Yangs Ward groups relatively similar communities, this ward is large compared to the other wards, possibly necessitating greater amounts of travel for the councillor representing it. The Connewarre Ward combines the Armstrong Creek area with eastern Bellarine Peninsula

localities across the Lake Connewarre Wildlife Reserve, so includes a geographic barrier within the ward itself.

Additionally, there is the unavoidable splitting of some localities, including Corio, North Geelong, Wandana Heights, and Bell Post Hill, to maintain deviations within the +/-10% threshold. The ward deviations for this model are also less stable compared to those of Model 1 and Model 3, with some risk of Breakwater Ward moving outside the +/-10% tolerance in the short-term due to high growth in this region of the council.

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

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

This model used roads and rivers as boundaries, attempts to keep rural communities in the north and Bellarine Peninsula in their own wards and seeks logical divides wherever possible, such as Torquay Road and the Barwon River.

The localities within Model 3 wards are:

- Anakie Ward: contains Lovely Banks, Norlane, Moorabool, Staughton Vale, North Shore, Anakie, about half of Bell Post Hill and Corio, about a third of Balliang, small parts of Bell Park, Batesford and North Geelong.
- Mount Duneed Ward: has half of Grovedale, a third of Mount Duneed, and a small portion of Armstrong Creek.
- Buckley Falls Ward: has the majority of Fyansford, Hamlyn Heights, Bell Park, most of Ceres, and combines parts of Bell Post Hill, Batesford, Highton, and Herne Hill.
- Cheetham Ward: has the localities of Thomson, Whittington, St Albans Park, Newcomb, Moolap, Breakwater, and East Geelong.
- Connewarre Ward: includes Leopold, Wallington, Curlewis, and part of Ocean Grove and Connewarre.
- Kardinia Ward: has South Geelong, Newtown, half of Belmont, and about a quarter of Geelong and Highton.
- Seagrass Ward: contains Clifton Springs, and also small parts of Bellarine, Portarlington, Drysdale, and a bit of Curlewis.
- Sparrovale Ward: takes in Marshall, Charlemont, Barwon Heads, most of Armstrong Creek, half of Connewarre and Breamlea, about a quarter of Grovedale, and a small part of Belmont.
- St Helens Ward: is made up of Manifold Heights, Geelong West, Drumcondra, Rippleside, most of North Geelong, Geelong, and Herne Hill, plus a part of Hamlyn Heights.

- Swan Bay Ward: is Mannerim, Marcus Hill, Swan Bay, St Leonards, and Indented Head, plus the majority of Drysdale, Point Lonsdale, Portarlington, and Bellarine, and most of Ocean Grove.
- Waurm Ponds Ward: is made up from Wandana Heights and Waurm Ponds, and small sections of Highton, Belmont, Ceres, Grovedale, and Mount Duneed.
- You Yangs Ward: takes in Avalon, Lara, Point Wilson, most of Little River, half of Corio, and a small part of Balliang.

Model 3 has 12 councillors which accommodates expected population growth. The addition of one more councillor also allows for smaller wards, which allows the large rural area in the north to be divided into 2 smaller wards (Anakie and You Yangs wards) with Bacchus Marsh Road forming a recognisable boundary between these wards. The model is expected to be within the +/-10% deviation principle at the 2024 election.

There are potential drawbacks with Model 3, particularly some arbitrary divisions of localities which have been necessary to achieve the +/-10% principle. For instance, Buckley Falls Ward has portions of about 4 different localities, Portarlington is split between Seagrass Ward and Swan Bay Ward, Ocean Grove is divided across Swan Bay and Connewarre wards, and Barwon Heads is divided from Ocean Grove. In addition to Wandana Heights and Waurm Ponds the Waurm Ponds Ward also consists of sections of 4 localities, which is not an ideal split of localities into wards.

Summary

In summary, introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral change for Greater Geelong 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. Model 1 seeks to minimise change by using the current ward boundaries, which form some of the boundaries of the 11 wards. Model 2 also has 11 wards that are based on localities which some people will be more familiar with, and provides an alternative to Model 1. However, localities do not always match communities or provide strong boundaries. In contrast, Model 3 uses main roads and rivers which may create boundaries that residents more easily identify with. Each of the 3 models have attributes that residents will have differing perspectives on, and the panel is interested in these perspectives.

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

Model 1

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

Ward names: Buckley Ward, Charlemont Ward, Connewarre Ward, Cowies Creek Ward, Deakin Ward, East Geelong Ward, Grassy Point Ward, Hamlyn Heights Ward, Kardinia Ward, Moolap Ward, You Yangs Ward.

Model 2

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

Ward names: Barwon Ward, Breakwater Ward, Buckley Falls Ward, Connewarre Ward, Corio Bay Ward, Deakin Ward, Kardinia Ward, Midland Ward, Moolap Ward, Murradoc Ward, You Yangs Ward.

Model 3

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

Ward names: Anakie Ward, Mount Duneed Ward, Buckley Falls Ward, Cheetham Ward, Connewarre Ward, Kardinia Ward, Seagrass Ward, Sparrovale Ward, St Helens Ward, Swan Bay Ward, Waurn Ponds Ward, You Yangs 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

Buckley, Charlemont, Connewarre, Cowies Creek, Deakin, East Geelong, Grassy Point, Hamlyn Heights, Moolap, and You Yangs ward names are new and are based on natural features or localities found within each ward.

Kardinia Ward is an existing name of a ward under the current electoral structure.

Model 2

Barwon, Breakwater, Buckley Falls, Corio Bay, Midland, and Murradoc ward names are new and are based on natural features or localities found within each ward.

Kardinia Ward as above.

Model 3

Anakie, Mount Duneed, Cheetham, Seagrass, Sparrovale, St Helens, Swan Bay, and Waurn Ponds ward names are new and are based on natural features or localities found within each ward.

Kardinia 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>GreaterGeelong.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 26 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 1 August 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 30 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 Greater Geelong 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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Agriculture Victoria (2023) [Invest in Victorian Agriculture](#), Agriculture Victoria, accessed 24 May 2023.

DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) (2023) [Greater Geelong Planning Scheme](#), DTP, accessed 24 May 2023.

Electoral Act 2002 (Vic)

Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic)

.id (informed decisions) (2023) [City of Greater Geelong Population Forecast](#), .id, accessed 25 May 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).	30
Model 3 – a single-councillor ward structure with 12 councillors – 12 wards with one councillor per ward.	32

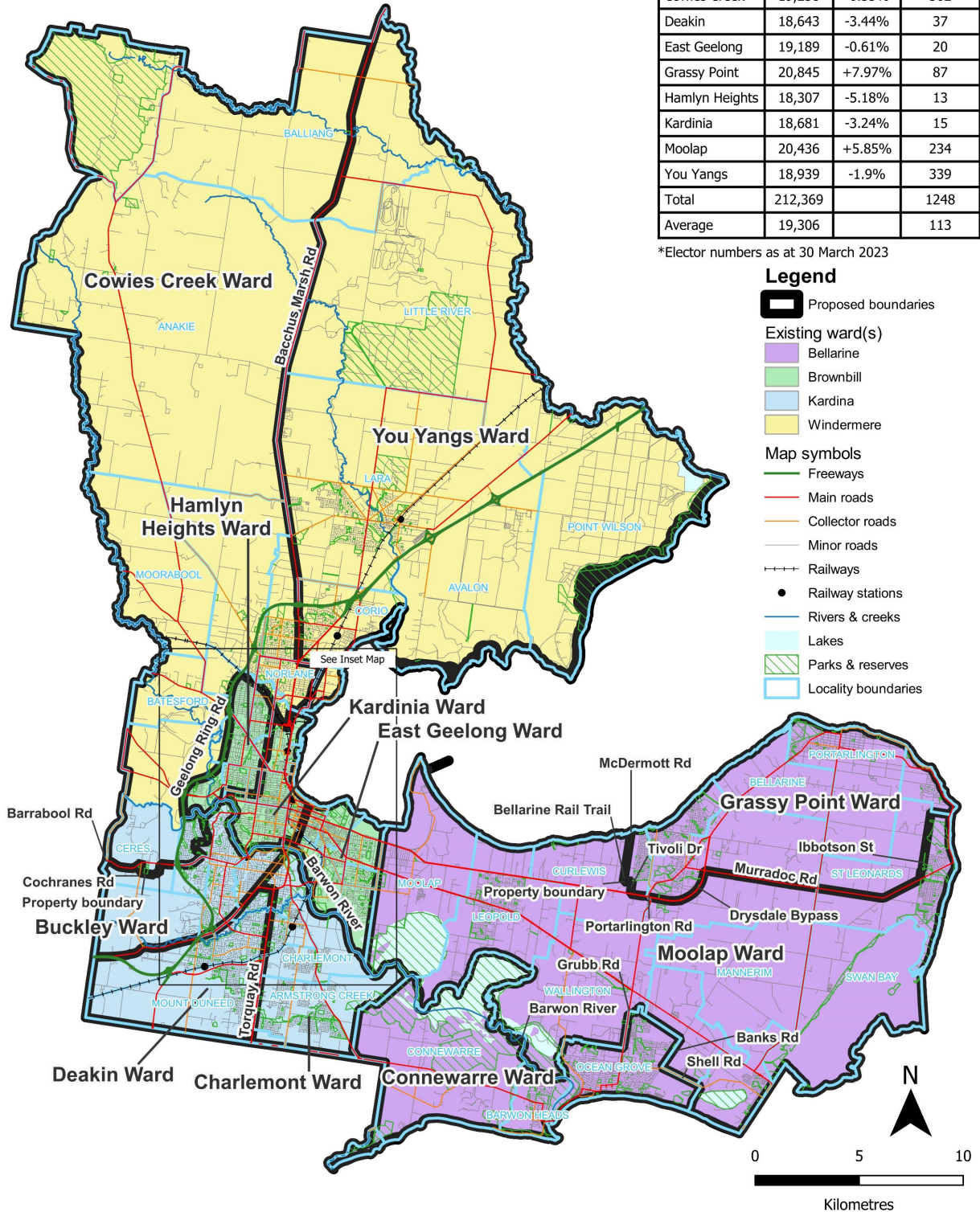
Greater Geelong City Council

Model 1

11 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Buckley	20,170	+4.47%	31
Charlemont	17,790	-7.85%	37
Connewarre	20,131	+4.27%	73
Cowies Creek	19,238	-0.35%	362
Deakin	18,643	-3.44%	37
East Geelong	19,189	-0.61%	20
Grassy Point	20,845	+7.97%	87
Hamlyn Heights	18,307	-5.18%	13
Kardinia	18,681	-3.24%	15
Moolap	20,436	+5.85%	234
You Yangs	18,939	-1.9%	339
Total	212,369		1248
Average	19,306		113

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



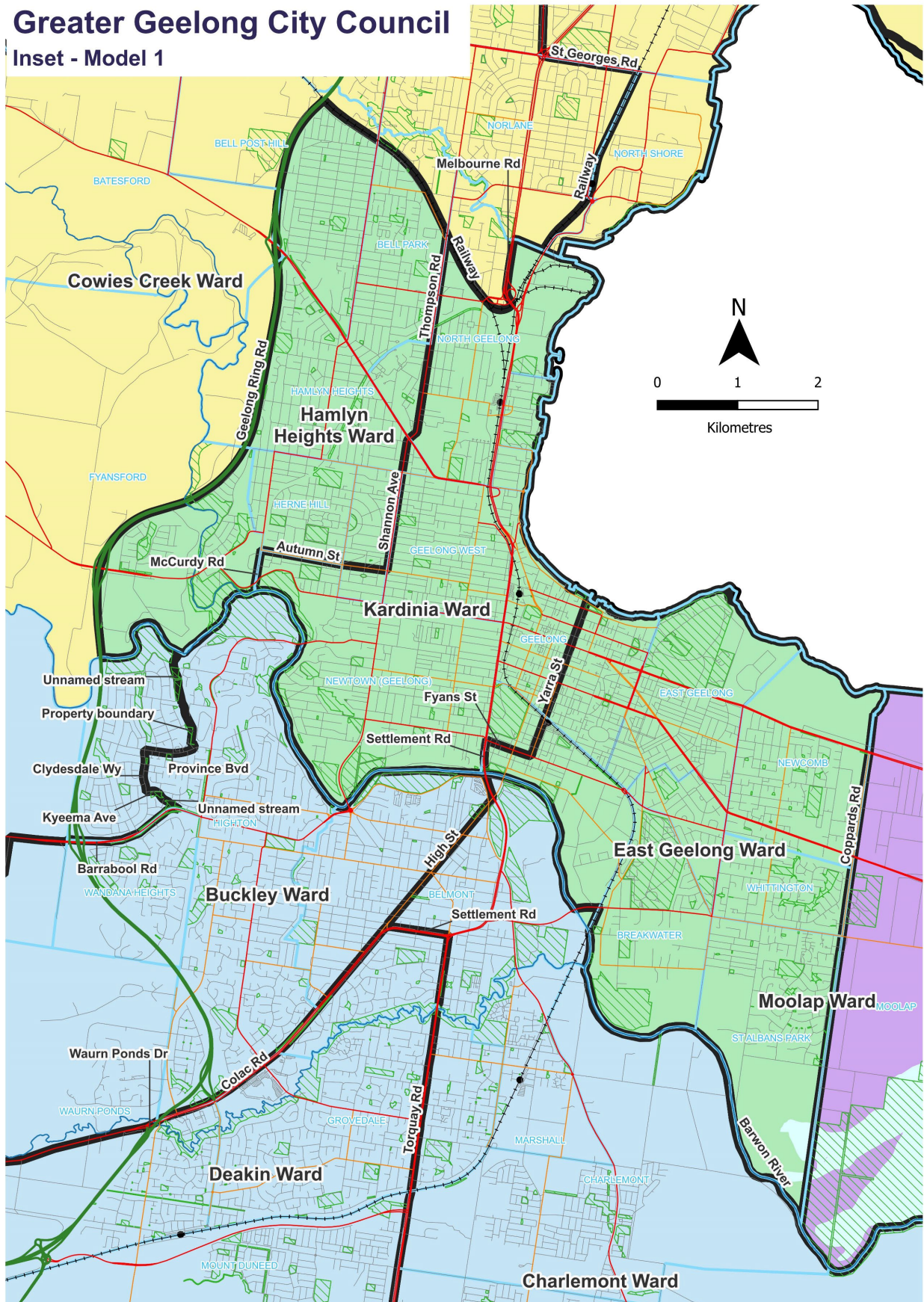
Map prepared by:
 Victorian Electoral Commission

Data use:
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Greater Geelong City Council

Inset - Model 1



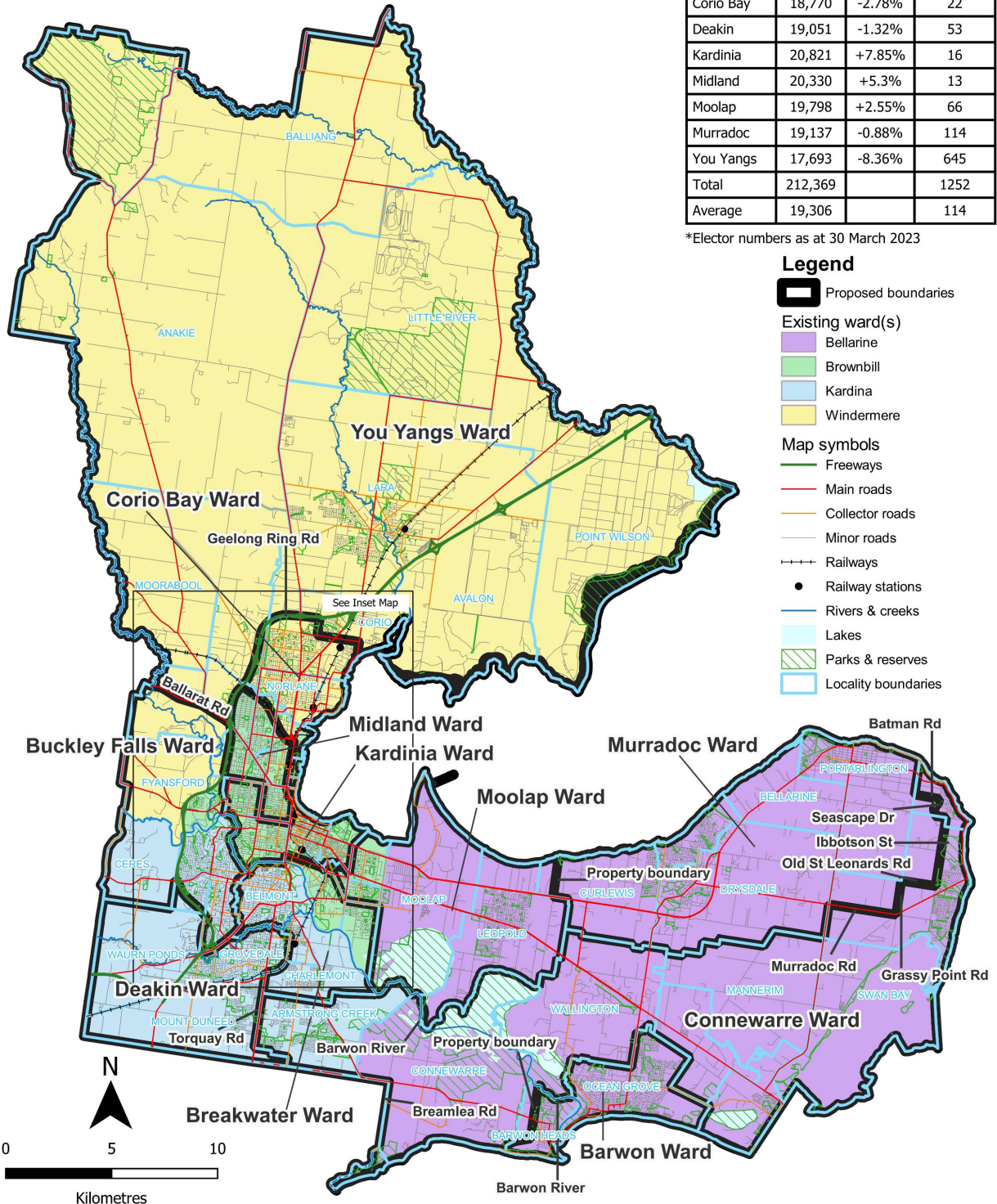
Greater Geelong City Council

Model 2

11 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Barwon	19,255	-0.27%	24
Breakwater	19,722	+2.15%	30
Buckley Falls	18,142	-6.03%	53
Connewarre	19,650	+1.78%	216
Corio Bay	18,770	-2.78%	22
Deakin	19,051	-1.32%	53
Kardinia	20,821	+7.85%	16
Midland	20,330	+5.3%	13
Moolap	19,798	+2.55%	66
Murradoc	19,137	-0.88%	114
You Yangs	17,693	-8.36%	645
Total	212,369		1252
Average	19,306		114

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data use:

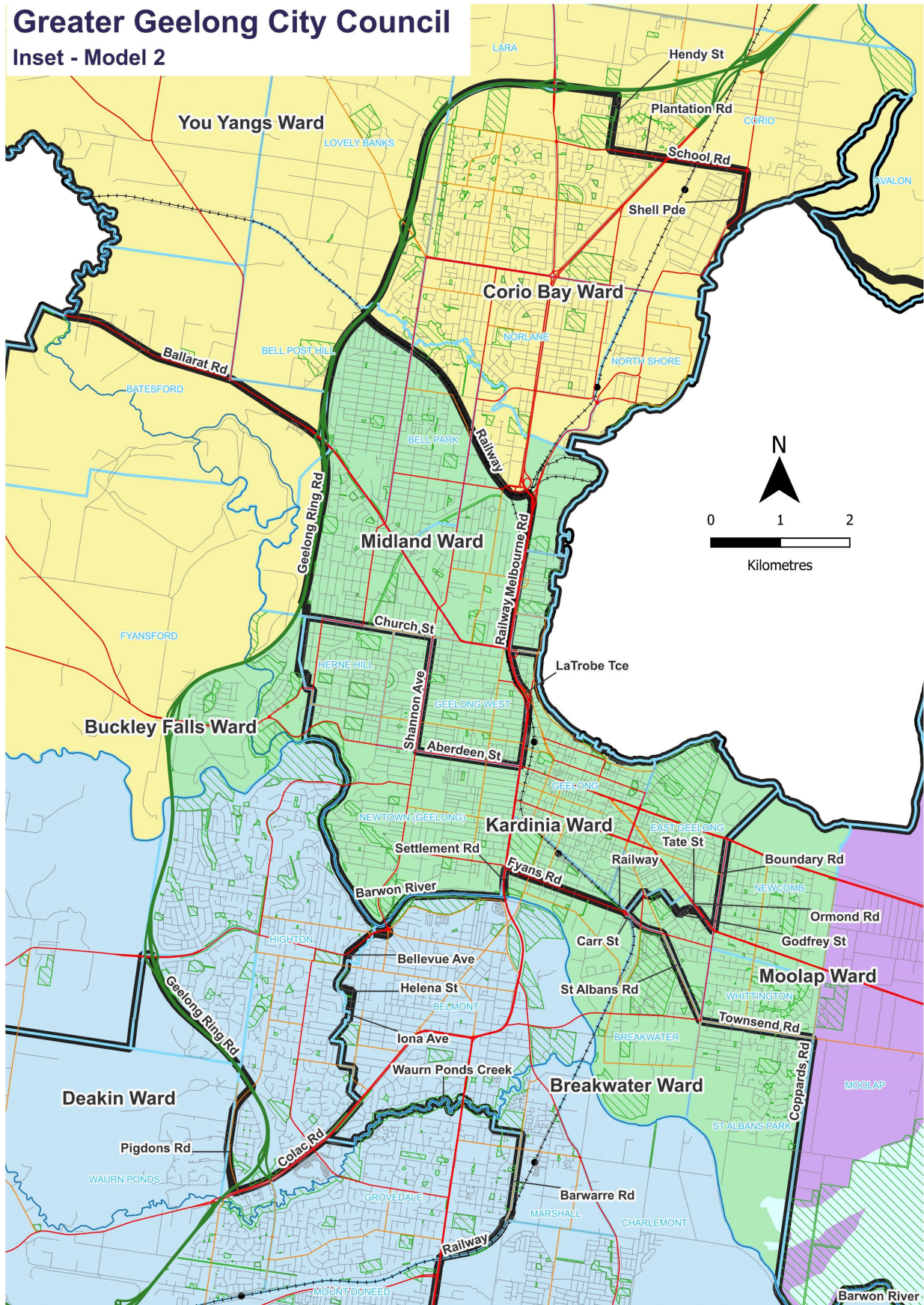


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Greater Geelong City Council

Inset - Model 2



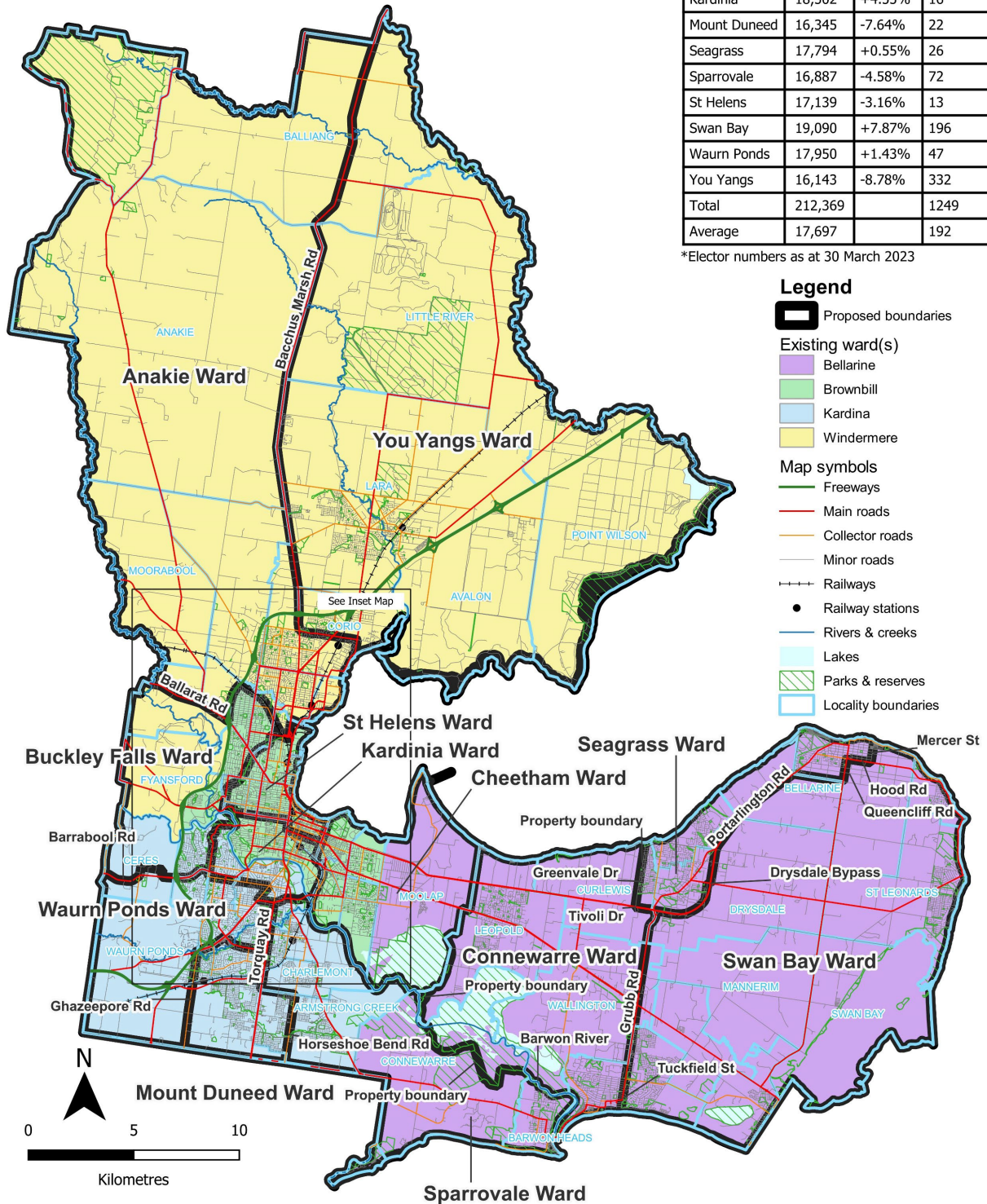
Greater Geelong City Council

Model 3

12 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Anakie	19,046	+7.62%	332
Buckley Falls	17,692	-0.03%	47
Cheetham	17,434	-1.49%	49
Connewarre	18,347	+3.67%	97
Kardinia	18,502	+4.55%	16
Mount Duneed	16,345	-7.64%	22
Seagrass	17,794	+0.55%	26
Sparrovale	16,887	-4.58%	72
St Helens	17,139	-3.16%	13
Swan Bay	19,090	+7.87%	196
Waurm Ponds	17,950	+1.43%	47
You Yangs	16,143	-8.78%	332
Total	212,369		1249
Average	17,697		192

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data use:

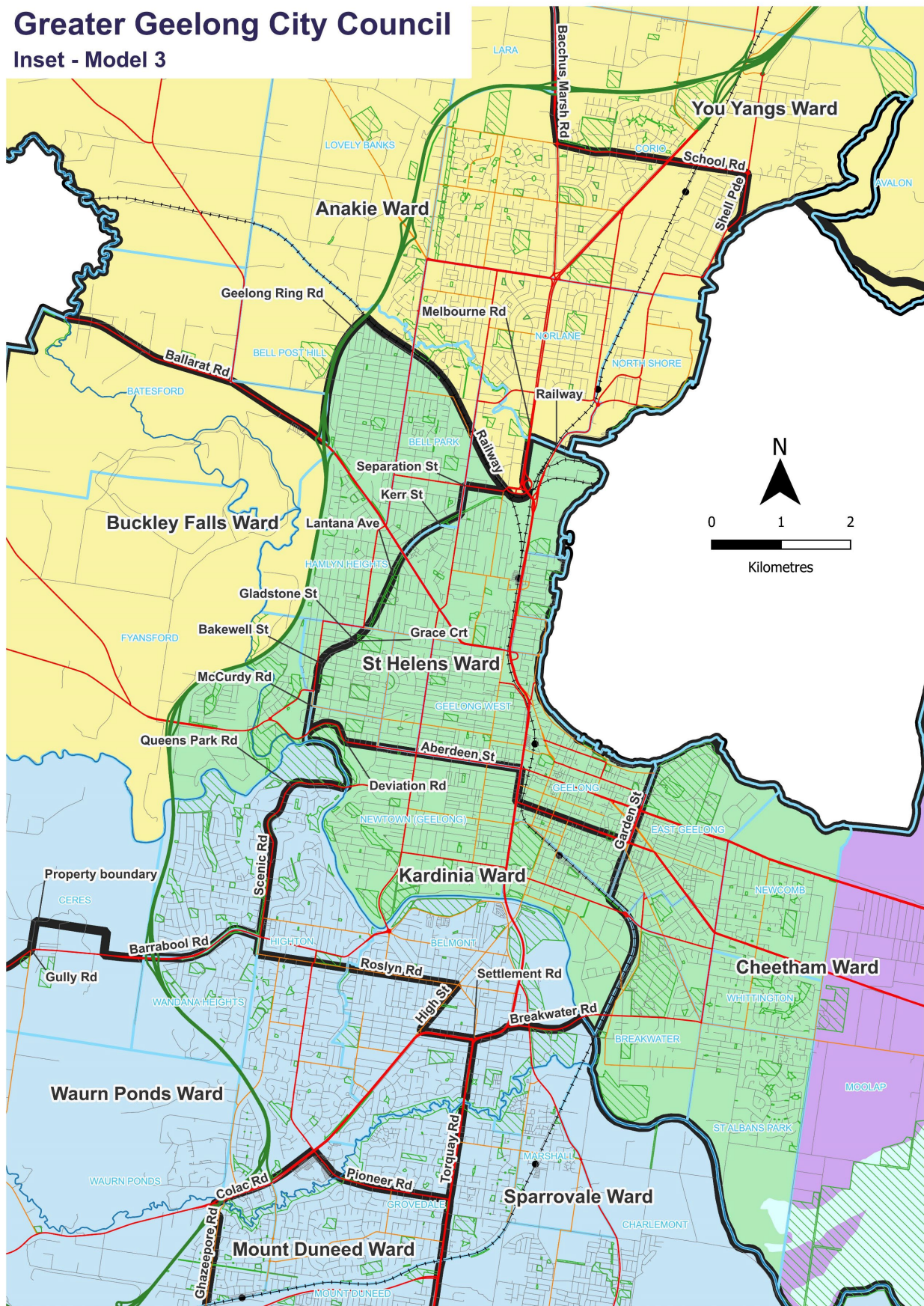


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Greater Geelong City Council

Inset - Model 3



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