

Local council ward boundary review

Preliminary Report

Murrindindi Shire Council

February 2024



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February 2024

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Content approval

Version	Date approved	Approved by
1	14 February 2024	Executive chairperson
1	14 February 2024	Program sponsor

Release approval

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1	16 February 2024	Program sponsor	Final proofread and confirmed for publication

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Taungurung and Wurundjeri 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 VEC acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

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Executive summary

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

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

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

In its review, the VEC is looking at:

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

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

This preliminary report presents proposed ward boundary adjustments for Murrindindi Shire Council.

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

Ward boundary models

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

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

Next steps

The VEC is now seeking feedback on its preliminary ward boundary models. You can make a response submission to the preliminary models until 5 pm on Wednesday 13 March 2024. If any submitters ask to speak at a public hearing, the VEC will hold this online on Tuesday 19 March 2024. Following the hearing, the VEC will present its final recommendation to the minister on Wednesday 17 April 2024.

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

Background

About the 2024 ward boundary reviews

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

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

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

This advice was based on:

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

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

Murrindindi Shire Council is one of the 10 local council areas under review.

In its review, the VEC is looking at:

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

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

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

The ward boundary review panel

Leading the VEC's review is a ward boundary review panel, which has 2 members:

- the executive chairperson
- the program sponsor.

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

Public engagement

Public information program

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

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

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

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

Public consultation

The VEC now invites input to the ward boundary review of Murrindindi Shire Council via:

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

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

Considerations in developing models

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

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

When developing the preliminary models for Murrindindi Shire Council, the VEC considered:

- whether the adjusted wards would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and how long they are likely to comply
- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- the representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of wards
- the scale of ward boundary changes, aiming for minimal change (where possible).

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

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

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

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

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

About Murrindindi Shire Council

Profile

Murrindindi Shire Council is located in central Victoria approximately 150 km north-east of Melbourne's central business district. Covering an area of 3,873 km² it stretches from the Kinglake Ranges and Great Dividing Range in the south to the Strathbogie Ranges in the north, and from Eildon in the east to Flowerdale in the west.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in Murrindindi Shire Council are the Taungurung and Wurundjeri peoples, with the majority of Murrindindi Shire located on Taungurung Country.

Landscape

Murrindindi Shire Council is serviced by 3 major highways. The Goulburn Valley Highway traverses the council area from east to west while the Melba and Maroondah Highways run in a north-south direction. With no trains and limited bus services the Murrindindi community is generally reliant on private vehicles for transport (MSC 2022).

The council area contains many National and State parks as well as many other natural attractions. These include Kinglake National Park, Lake Eildon and Yarra Ranges National Park, Cathedral Range State Park, Murrindindi Scenic Reserve and the Goulburn River. Nearby attractions on the border of the council area include the Lake Mountain Alpine Resort and Lake Eildon.

Approximately 48% of the council area is forested public land most of which is managed by the State Government (DTP 2024). Much of this forested land is rugged and mountainous. Parts of Murrindindi Shire, particularly in the south and south-east, have a significant bushfire risk and were heavily affected by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. Recent flooding events have also significantly impacted local communities and recovery is ongoing.

The council area consists of 45 localities, with the main towns being Alexandra, Yea, Eildon and Marysville. Other smaller townships include Molesworth and Yarck in the north, Flowerdale, Glenburn, Buxton, Strath Creek, Taggerty and Thornton in the centre, and Kinglake, Kinglake West, Narbethong and Toolangi in the south.

The council area is predominantly rural, with agriculture, forestry, fishing and tourism being major economic drivers. Almost 40% of land is used for forestry and over 40% is used for livestock production (DAFF 2021). The shire has a diverse agricultural base that includes beef, sheep, poultry and dairy farming, as well as olives, grapes, trout, alpaca and deer farming (ABARES 2022, MSC 2019). Tourism is largely focused around the natural environment and outdoor leisure activities. Construction and education also contribute significantly to the local economy (REMPAN 2024).

Social and economic shifts are expected to see the emergence of new industries supporting the local economy as it transitions away from native forestry, and local communities seek sustainable responses to the challenges of climate change and natural disasters (DTP 2024).

Growth industries in Murrindindi Shire Council include agri-tourism and outdoor education (REMPPLAN 2024).

Community

Murrindindi Shire Council was home to 15,197 people in 2021 (ABS 2022a), an increase of 2,139 over the previous decade (ABS 2011). Population growth for the shire is expected to be low (at less than 1% growth per year) and the population is forecast to increase to 17,455 by 2036 (DTP 2023). Most of the population growth is expected to occur within the towns of Alexandra, Yea, Eildon and Marysville (MSC 2022).

With a significantly older population compared to the overall state, the median age of residents in 2021 was 50, higher than both the Victorian average of 38 and the regional Victorian average of 43 (ABS 2022a, 2022b). Murrindindi also had a higher proportion of people aged 45 years and over (57.6%) compared to the Victorian average of 41% (ABS 2022a). The average household size of 2.3 persons in 2021 was lower than the Victorian average of 2.5 (ABS, 2022a, 2022b).

In 2021, over 80% of people were born in Australia and over 87% of people speak only English at home (ABS 2022a). Of those who were born overseas, England and New Zealand were the most common countries of origin (ABS 2022a).

Similar to much of regional Victoria, housing consists mainly of separate dwellings and in 2021 over 80% were owned outright or had a mortgage. At 13.6%, the proportion of households renting was significantly lower than the Victorian average of 28.5% (ABS 2022a). The median household weekly income in 2021 was \$1,287, lower than both Victorian and regional Victorian medians of \$1,759 and \$1,386 respectively (ABS 2022a, 2022b).

Murrindindi Shire Council's economy supports over 5,000 jobs (REMPPLAN 2024) and in 2021 54.2% of the population over 15 years of age were in the workforce, which is lower than the regional Victorian average of 57.4% (ABS 2022a, 2022b). The most common industries of employment in 2021 for residents were beef cattle farming, accommodation and hospitals (ABS 2022a).

Current electoral structure

Murrindindi Shire Council has a total of 7 councillors and is divided into 7 single-councillor wards (Cathedral, Cheviot, Eildon, King Parrot, Kinglake, Koriella and Red Gate wards).

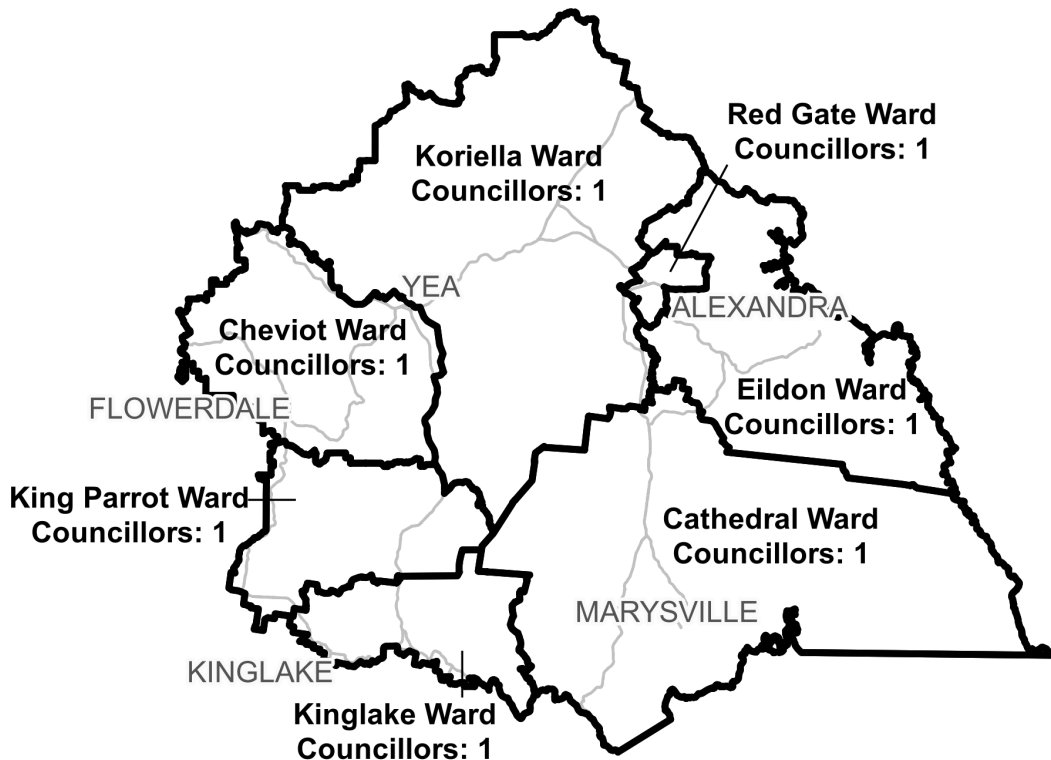


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Murrindindi Shire Council.

There are an estimated 13,910 voters in Murrindindi Shire Council, with an estimated ratio of 1,987 voters per councillor.

By October 2024, the voter-to-councillor ratios of Cheviot, Kinglake and Red Gate wards are forecast to be outside of +10%, and the voter-to-councillor ratios of Cathedral, Eildon and Koriella wards are forecast to be outside of -10%.

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on Murrindindi Shire Council.

Last electoral structure review

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

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Murrindindi Shire Council adopt a structure of 7 councillors elected from 3 wards (2 wards with 2 councillors and 1 ward with 3 councillors) to replace the 7 single-councillor ward structure that had been in place since 2008.

Coinciding with changes to permitted electoral structures under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic), the minister approved a 7 single-councillor electoral structure for Murrindindi Shire Council. This was similar to the single-councillor ward model that had been in place since 2008, with minor boundary modifications to balance voter deviations.

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

Preliminary findings and models

Based on forecast voter deviations at the 2024 local council elections, Cheviot, Kinglake and Red Gate wards are expected to be over +10% and Cathedral, Eildon and Koriella wards will be below -10%. Boundary adjustments will therefore be required to transfer voter numbers from the wards above +10% into other wards, to ensure all wards meet the legislated voter deviations at the time of the elections.

Ward boundary models for public feedback

The VEC considered a range of ward boundary adjustments for Murrindindi Shire Council and chose the following 2 models for public consultation.

- Model 1, which proposes changes to the boundaries of all wards.
- Model 2, which proposes changes to the boundaries of all wards, with different boundaries to Model 1.

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

Model 1

Model 1 proposes the least change to current ward boundaries and would affect 1,408 voters (or 10% of the voting population). Where ward boundary adjustments are proposed, locality boundaries are used as much as possible. However, Model 1 does adopt some minor roads and property boundaries where this assists in keeping communities of interest together and to ensure voter deviations are within the legislated +/-10% range.

The wards proposed under Model 1 are expected to be within the +/-10% range at both 2024 and 2028 elections.

Given the current and expected rates of voter growth across the council area, Cheviot and Kinglake wards needed to be reduced in size, transferring voters to surrounding wards. Similarly, Red Gate Ward, centred on the town of Alexandra also had to be reduced. With a lower proportion of voters, additional voters were required for Cathedral, Eildon and Koriella wards.

Model 1 proposes the following:

- Cheviot Ward retains the town of Yea, while the localities of Homewood, Kerrisdale and Strath Creek in the west move into Koriella Ward. The eastern boundary north of Murrindindi Road would move marginally west, to align with Melba Highway.
- The boundaries of Kinglake Ward are adjusted so that parts of Kinglake Central in the west move into King Parrot Ward and in the east the northern parts of Castella and Toolangi move into Cathedral Ward.
- Red Gate Ward would be reduced in size and shifted north so that areas to the south and east of the central urban area of Alexandra move into Eildon Ward, while the

northern part of Alexandra would move from Koriella Ward. As such, Red Gate Ward would retain the majority of urban Alexandra.

- Cathedral Ward would gain additional voters by extending its northern boundary to include all of Acheron and its western boundary to include parts of Castella and Toolangi.
- To increase voter numbers in Koriella Ward the boundaries would extend to the south and west. In the south, part of Glenburn east of the Melba Highway would be included. In the west, the boundary would extend south over the Goulburn River to include the rural communities of Homewood, Kerrisdale and Strath Creek. To correct voter deviations in other wards, the northern part of Alexandra, currently in Koriella Ward, would be transferred to Red Gate Ward and the western part of Acheron transferred to Cathedral Ward.
- With the lowest number of voters of all wards, Eildon Ward would gain areas in the south and east of Alexandra (currently in Red Gate Ward). Consideration was given around how to maintain communities of interest as best as possible for these 2 wards, and it was reasoned that that voters in the rural outskirts of the Alexandra locality may have links to Eildon Ward. To balance voter numbers in other wards, the eastern part of Acheron would be moved from Eildon Ward into Cathedral Ward.
- While the panel noted the existing King Parrot Ward was the only ward projected to comply with voter deviations at the 2024 elections, changes would be needed to this ward to balance boundary adjustments in other wards. As such, Model 1 proposes that King Parrot Ward extends southwards to include the southern part of Kinglake Central and move part of Glenburn east of Melba Highway into Koriella Ward.

The panel considered some potential drawbacks for Model 1. Both Koriella and Cathedral Wards are much larger in area than the other wards and include more diverse rural areas than under the current structure. The panel considered this to be unavoidable as both were expected to be well beyond the lower threshold of -10% at the 2024 elections.

At the western end of Koriella Ward, the localities of Homewood, Kerrisdale and Strath Creek are separated from other parts of the ward by the Goulburn River. Although these localities may be some distance from other parts of Koriella Ward, the panel felt this was preferable than the alternative of splitting parts of Yea across 2 wards. The rural communities to the north and south of the Goulburn River in this area are also more likely to share some communities of interest.

At its southern end, Koriella Ward extends south to include part of Glenburn. Whilst Glenburn may be some distance from the northern parts of Koriella Ward, the panel felt that there will be some communities of interest between Glenburn and areas immediately to the north which are connected via Melba Highway and the Yea and Murrindindi rivers.

Parts of Castella and Toolangi are included in Cathedral Ward, which splits communities of interest in this south-western area of the council and may create representation issues for

affected communities. The panel noted that due to topography, the northern parts of Castella and Toolangi have no direct road connection with the remainder of Cathedral Ward to the east. The panel acknowledged that this situation is not ideal. However, it highlights the challenges for this council when trying to maintain voter deviations within the +/-10% range while also retaining representation for communities of interest across this large and diverse council area under a single-councillor ward structure. To address this potential drawback, the panel has provided an alternative boundary arrangement for this area in Model 2.

Model 2

Model 2 affects 1,652 voters (12%) and provides alternative boundaries to Model 1 for the community to consider and provide feedback on. Where existing ward boundaries need to be adjusted, Model 2 uses mainly locality boundaries, with some road and property boundaries.

The wards proposed under Model 2 are expected to be within +/- 10% deviation at both the 2024 and 2028 elections.

The key differences of Model 2 when compared to Model 1 are:

- An alternate boundary between Red Gate and Eildon wards is proposed.
- Cathedral and Koriella wards extend further north and south respectively along the river valley and highway corridors to balance voter deviations resulting from boundary adjustments in the south-west of the council area.
- All townships in the south-west of the council area would be kept together within 2 wards (Kinglake and King Parrot wards).

On this latter point the panel noted that townships in the south-west of the council area (Castella, Kinglake, Kinglake Central, Kinglake West, Pheasant Creek, and Toolangi) have similar communities of interest and ideally should be retained together across 2 wards. This was challenging to achieve, as attempts to include them completely within 2 wards would require subsequent changes to all other wards. Having considered several options, the panel felt that Model 2 would provide the most effective boundaries. This model would allow townships in the south-west of the council area to be kept together, whilst still retaining logical boundaries for all other wards, generally based on locality boundaries.

Under Model 2, Kinglake Ward would include all of Castella, Kinglake and Toolangi, keeping these communities of interest together. It proposes some boundary adjustments at its western end to align with locality boundaries. Parts of Kinglake Central currently in Kinglake Ward would be transferred to King Parrot Ward, and all of Kinglake included in Kinglake Ward.

The compromise for the boundary adjustments in the south-west would result in both Koriella and Cathedral wards being large and irregularly shaped.

The western end of Koriella Ward does not extend as far south as proposed in Model 1 but would include both Kerrisdale and Homewood, south of the Goulburn River. In the south, it would extend to include a greater portion of King Parrot Ward compared with Model 1 and include all of Glenburn.

In Cathedral Ward, Model 2 proposes retaining the existing ward boundary between Kinglake and Cathedral wards, thereby avoiding a split of the Castella and Toolangi communities across 2 wards. By maintaining its existing eastern boundary, additional voters could only be captured in Cathedral Ward by extending its boundary further north, to include both Acheron and Whanregarwen.

As in Model 1, Cheviot Ward would be reduced in size, retaining the town of Yea and its eastern boundary north of Murrindindi Road which would move marginally west to align with Melba Highway. Strath Creek would be retained in the west and Homewood and Kerrisdale would move north to Koriella Ward.

The boundaries of Eildon Ward and Red Gate Ward would be adjusted slightly in Model 2 to provide an alternative to Model 1. The northern boundary of Red Gate Ward would be brought further south to Johnson Creek, with land north of Alexandra moved from Koriella Ward to Eildon Ward. This would reduce the size of Red Gate Ward further than Model 1, allowing more of the rural area around Alexandra to be included within the more rural-focussed Eildon Ward.

Potential drawbacks of Model 2 identified by the panel include:

- As in Model 1, both Koriella and Cathedral Wards are much larger in area than the other wards and cover large and diverse rural areas. The panel considered this unavoidable as the voter deviations for both wards are expected to be outside of -10% at the next election, therefore these wards require additional voters.
- Homewood and Kerrisdale would be separated from the other parts of Koriella Ward by the Goulburn River, although this is an improvement from Model 1 (which also proposed the transfer of Strath Creek). Whilst these localities may be some distance from other parts of Koriella Ward, the panel felt this would be preferable to other boundary options in this area. The rural communities in the areas north and south of the Goulburn River would be likely to share some communities of interest.
- At its southern end, Koriella Ward extends south to include all of Glenburn, thereby extending around the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of Cheviot Ward. Whilst Glenburn may be some distance from the northern parts of Koriella Ward and the shape of the ward is irregular, the panel felt that there would still be some communities of interest between Glenburn and areas immediately to the north which are connected via Melba Highway and the Yea and Murrindindi rivers.
- In order to retain its existing western boundary, Cathedral Ward would be required to extend further north to include Whanregarwen, which is some distance from the southern parts of this ward. Similar to Koriella Ward, this would result in a large and irregular shaped ward. Despite the length and shape of Cathedral Ward and the different landscapes from north to south, the panel felt that there would still be some communities of interest between the areas north and south of this ward which are connected via Maroondah Highway and the Acheron River valley.

The panel noted that under both Models 1 and 2, the proposed Cheviot Ward would not include the features in the shire that the ward was originally named after (being Cheviot Road, the former Cheviot railway station and the Cheviot railway tunnel). However, it was also noted that Cheviot Ward under the existing electoral structure does not include these features either. Given that the ward structure proposed under either Model 1 or 2 is likely to be within deviation until at least 2028, the relevance of the ward name may need to be considered by Murrindindi Shire Council in the future.

Summary

Murrindindi Shire Council is geographically large and contains many diverse landscapes and communities. Many of these communities are physically separated by rivers, mountainous areas, and rugged terrain. Given the relatively low numbers of voters and a low rate of growth focused on a limited number of towns, even small adjustments to existing ward boundaries in one location can have flow-on effects to voter deviations and ward boundaries across the whole shire. Adjusting the existing single-councillor ward model to create wards that comply with the legislated +/-10% requirement whilst still maintaining communities of interest for Murrindindi Shire Council is therefore challenging.

Each model deals with these challenges in different ways:

- Model 1 seeks to minimise change by keeping boundary adjustments to a minimum to maintain voter deviations. It also seeks to keep communities of interest together where practical.
- Model 2 would keep all townships in the south-west of the council area together and avoid dividing these communities across more than 2 wards. This would result in 2 large and irregular-shaped wards in the centre of the council area, however broader communities of interest for these rural areas would still be maintained along the river valleys and highways.




Both models have strengths and potential drawbacks and are likely to appeal to different communities of interest. The panel is keen to hear from the public about the impacts of the different boundary adjustments proposed under each model. The panel welcomes feedback and suggestions for improvement from the public through response submissions.

Next steps

Response submissions

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

You can make a submission:

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

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 13 March 2024. If you post your submission, it must reach the VEC before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

To be considered, your submission must include your:

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

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

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

Public access to submissions

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

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

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

Public hearing

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

The online public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 10 am

Date: Tuesday 19 March 2024

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

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

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

Final report

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

The final report is scheduled to be provided to the minister on Wednesday 17 April 2024. The minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the ward boundaries of Murrindindi Shire Council following this review is expected to apply at the October 2024 local council elections. Under the Act, the final council electoral structure will be set by an Order in Council published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

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(MSC) Murrindindi Shire Council (2022) [Murrindindi Shire Housing and Settlement Strategy](#) Murrindindi Shire Council website, accessed 22 January 2024.

—(2019) [Murrindindi Shire Council Fire Management Plan 2020-2023](#) Murrindindi Shire Council website, accessed 22 January 2024.

REMPPLAN (2024) [Murrindindi Shire Council Economy, Jobs and Business Insights](#), REMPLAN website, accessed 10 January 2024.

Appendix 1: Model maps

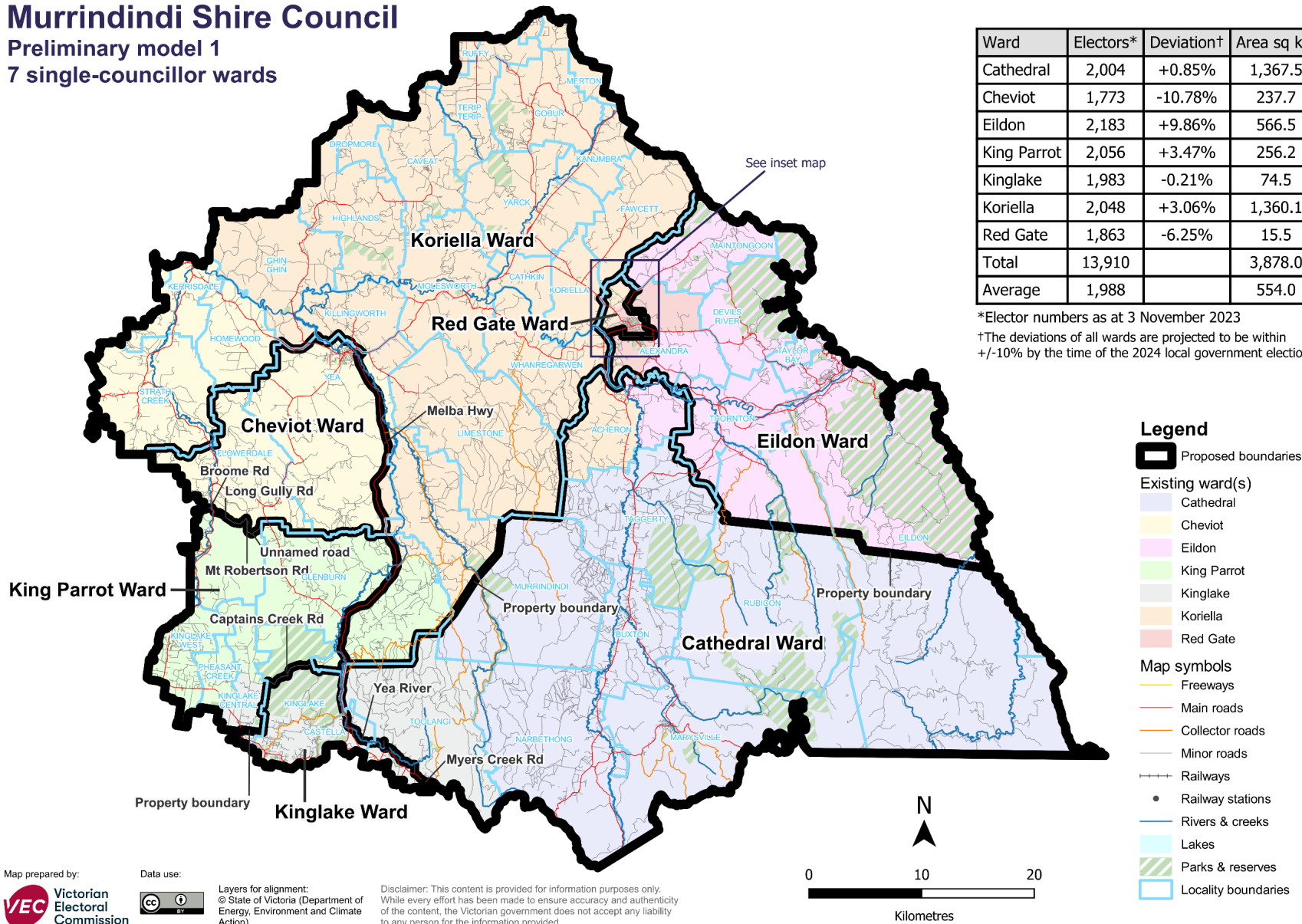
The following maps are included in this report:

Map	Page
Model 1 – with proposed changes to the boundaries of all wards.	22
Model 2 – with proposed changes to the boundaries of all wards, with different boundaries to Model 1.	25

Murrindindi Shire Council
Preliminary model 1
7 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area sq km
Cathedral	2,004	+0.85%	1,367.5
Cheviot	1,773	-10.78%	237.7
Eildon	2,183	+9.86%	566.5
King Parrot	2,056	+3.47%	256.2
Kinglake	1,983	-0.21%	74.5
Koriella	2,048	+3.06%	1,360.1
Red Gate	1,863	-6.25%	15.5
Total	13,910		3,878.0
Average	1,988		554.0

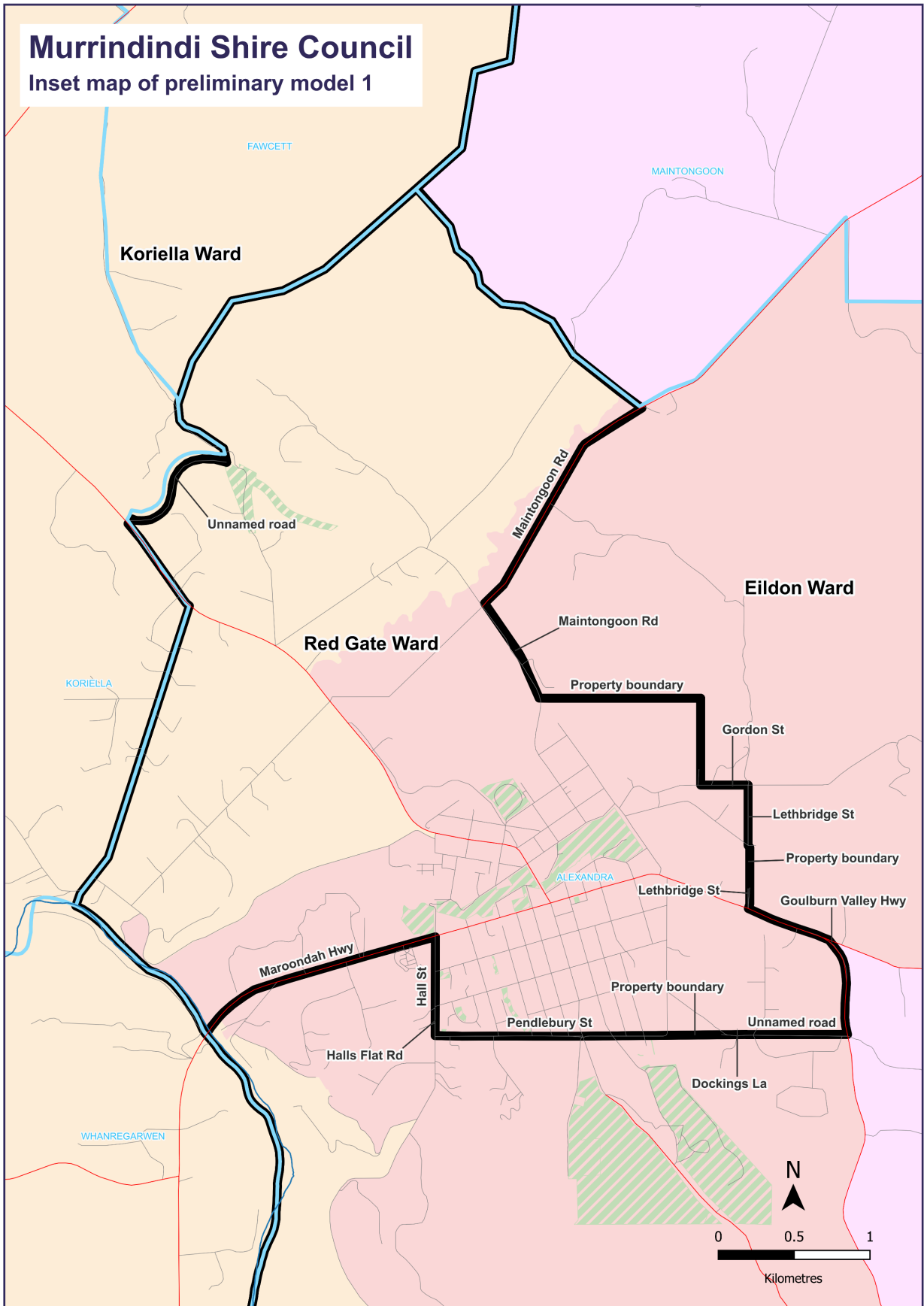
*Elector numbers as at 3 November 2023
 †The deviations of all wards are projected to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local government elections.



Map prepared by:
 Victorian Electoral Commission

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

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Data for Model 1

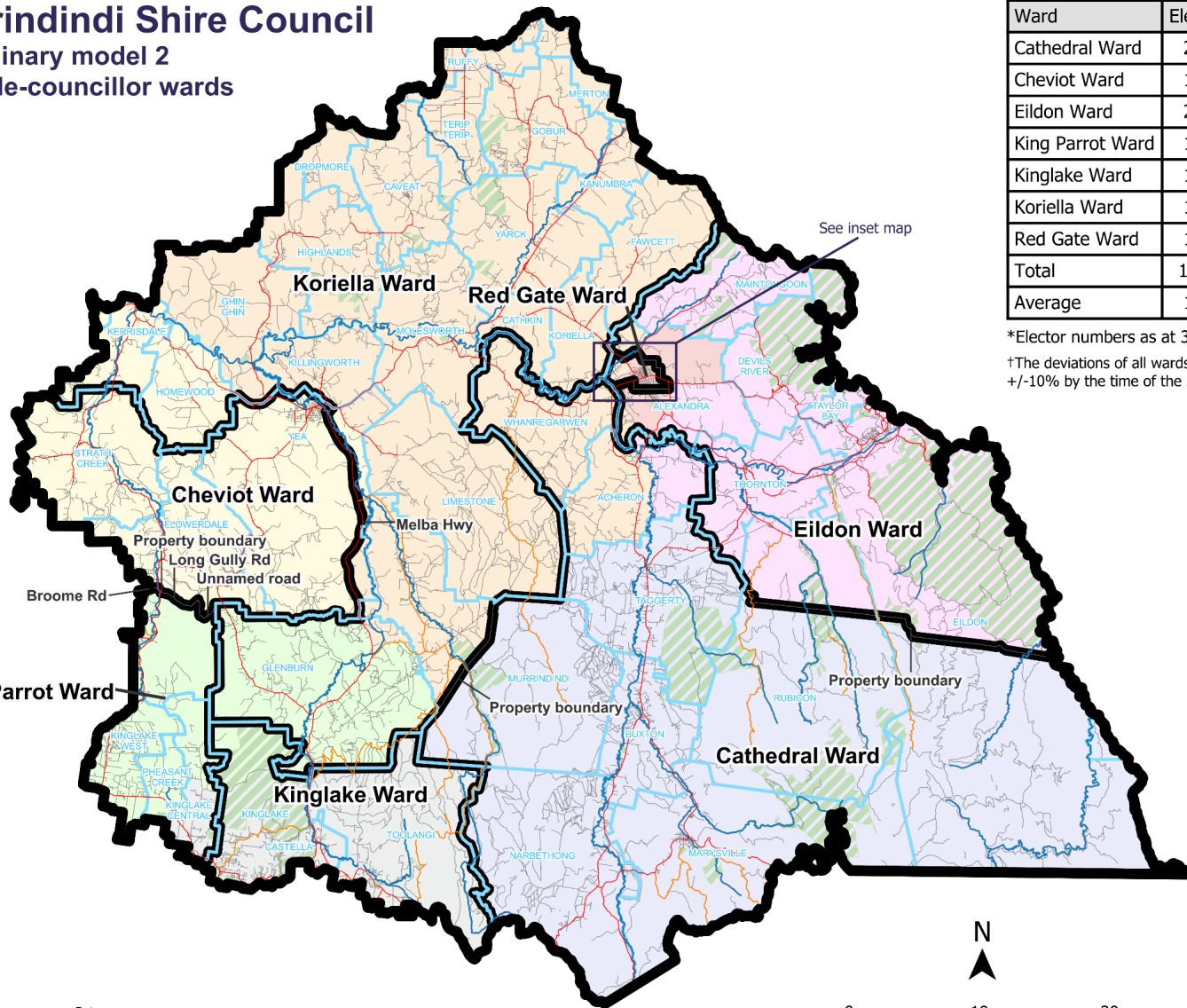
Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area# (square km)
Cathedral Ward	2,004	+0.85%	1,367.5
Cheviot Ward	1,773	-10.78%	237.7
Eildon Ward	2,183	+9.86%	566.5
King Parrot Ward	2,056	+3.47%	256.2
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Red Gate Ward	1,863	-6.25%	15.5
Total	13,910	n/a	3,878.0
Average	1,988	n/a	554.0

*Elector numbers at 3 November 2023

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

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

Murrindindi Shire Council
Preliminary model 2
7 single-councillor wards



Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area sq km
Cathedral Ward	2,048	+3.06%	1,314.9
Cheviot Ward	1,953	-1.72%	333.5
Eildon Ward	2,218	+11.62%	572.4
King Parrot Ward	1,954	-1.67%	139.3
Kinglake Ward	1,913	-3.73%	224.6
Koriella Ward	1,996	+0.45%	1,283.7
Red Gate Ward	1,828	-8.01%	9.7
Total	13,910		3,878.1
Average	1,988		555.0

*Elector numbers as at 3 November 2023

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

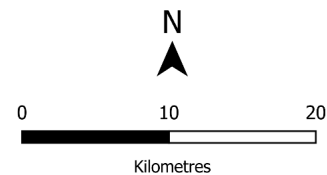
Legend

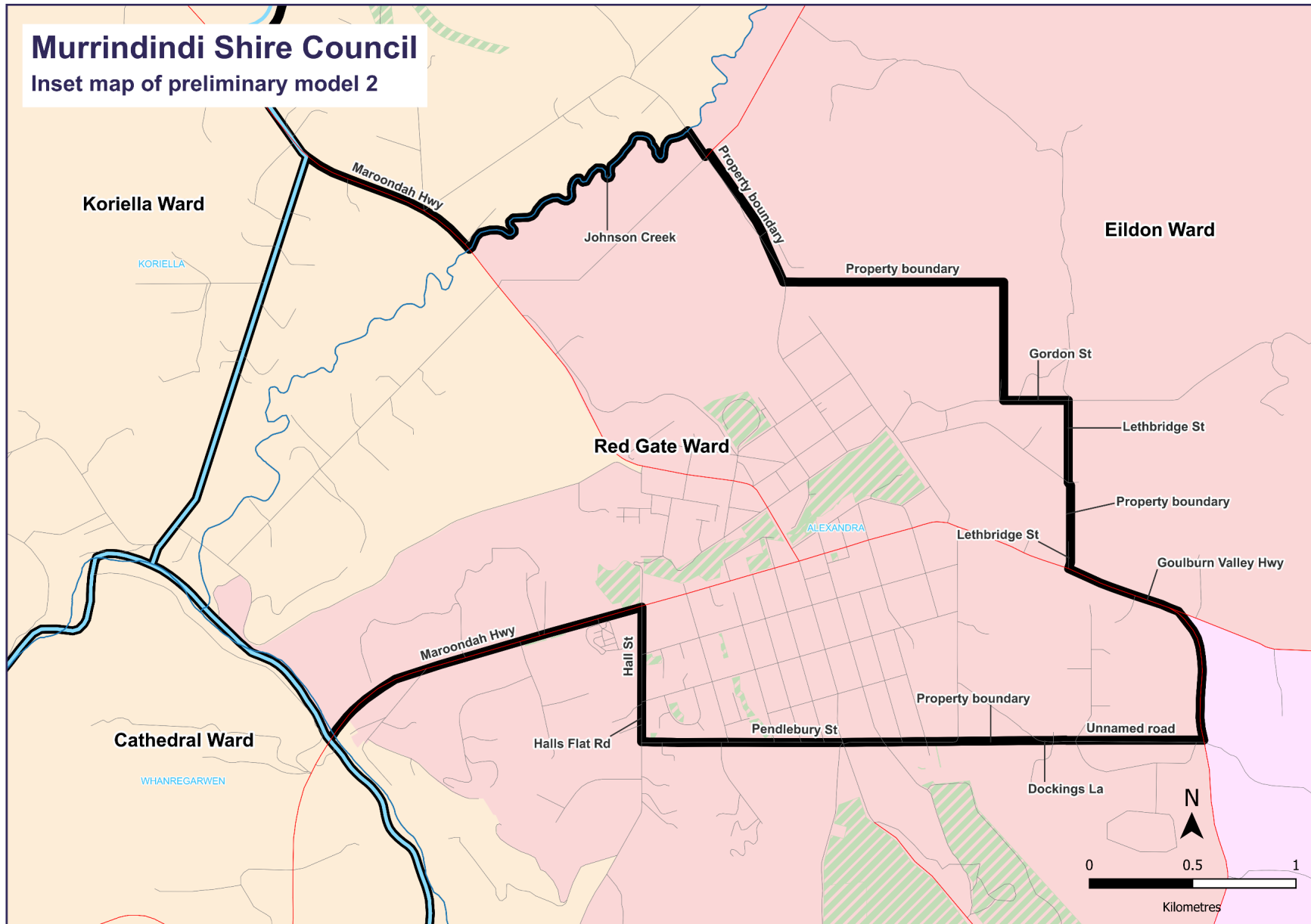
- Proposed boundaries
- Existing ward(s)**
 - Cathedral
 - Cheviot
 - Eildon
 - King Parrot
 - Kinglake
 - Koriella
 - Red Gate
- Map symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main roads
 - Collector roads
 - Minor roads
 - Railways
 - Railway stations
 - Rivers & creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & reserves
 - Locality boundaries

Map prepared by:
 Victorian Electoral Commission

Data use:
 Layers for alignment:
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Data for Model 2

Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area# (square km)
Cathedral Ward	2,048	+3.06%	1,314.9
Cheviot Ward	1,953	-1.72%	333.5
Eildon Ward	2,218	+11.62%	572.4
King Parrot Ward	1,954	-1.67%	139.3
Kinglake Ward	1,913	-3.73%	224.6
Koriella Ward	1,996	+0.45%	1,283.7
Red Gate Ward	1,828	-8.01%	9.7
Total	13,910	n/a	3,878.1
Average	1,988	n/a	555.0

*Elector numbers at 3 November 2023

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

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

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