

## **Additional Council Meeting - 24 July 2023 Attachments**

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24 July 2023

Ms Julie Eisenbiser  
Chairperson  
Electoral Representation Panel



Dear Ms Eisenbiser

**RE: Warrnambool City Council Preliminary Submission**

On behalf of the Warrnambool City Council I would like to thank the panel for providing the opportunity to be a part of the Warrnambool City Council Electoral Structure Review process. A ward structure that captures the unique communities of Warrnambool effectively is a crucial part of ensuring the good governance of council.

Council has carefully considered the preliminary report released on 5 July 2023 and have found that while each of the three proposed models have some beneficial elements, they all have considerable drawbacks that we feel need to be addressed. This submission provides some feedback on the proposed models before proposing a hybrid solution based on model 2, but incorporates the best elements of model 1 and model 3. It also provides some suggestions on ward names.

**Preliminary Report's Proposed Models**

Model 1 does a good job of mapping some of Warrnambool's communities of interest but it also has some issues around combining largely unrelated communities as well as creating a ward with a strange shape that may be difficult for residents to understand. Capturing the community of Dennington in a single ward is greatly beneficial and should be seen as crucial thing for any ward structure to achieve, however the extension of this ward through Merrivale and into South Warrnambool starts to undermine the benefits of the ward. The communities in the new housing estates in Dennington's north have concerns and issues which are unique to those in the some of the much more established parts of South Warrnambool. It would be better if these communities could each have their own wards. Additionally, the size and shape of Victoria Park Ward is strange and will be difficult for the community to easily understand. Running across Raglan Parade compounds this issue.

Model 2 does a better job of mapping the communities of interest that exist south of Raglan Parade and overall provides a good basis for a ward structure that would suit our community. However, it has a major issue in that it splits the community of Dennington in half. While the highway does represent a good topographical border, it is not a border that the community would recognise as having any social basis. It also fails to capture Yangery and the rural northwest of the municipality in the same ward as Woodford and Bushfield like Models 1 and 3 do. Finally, having residents south of Russells Creek but north of Moore Street in the Hopkins River Ward is undesirable. These residents are part of North Warrnambool and have much more in common with the people who live around Whites Road than they do with the people who live in Allansford.

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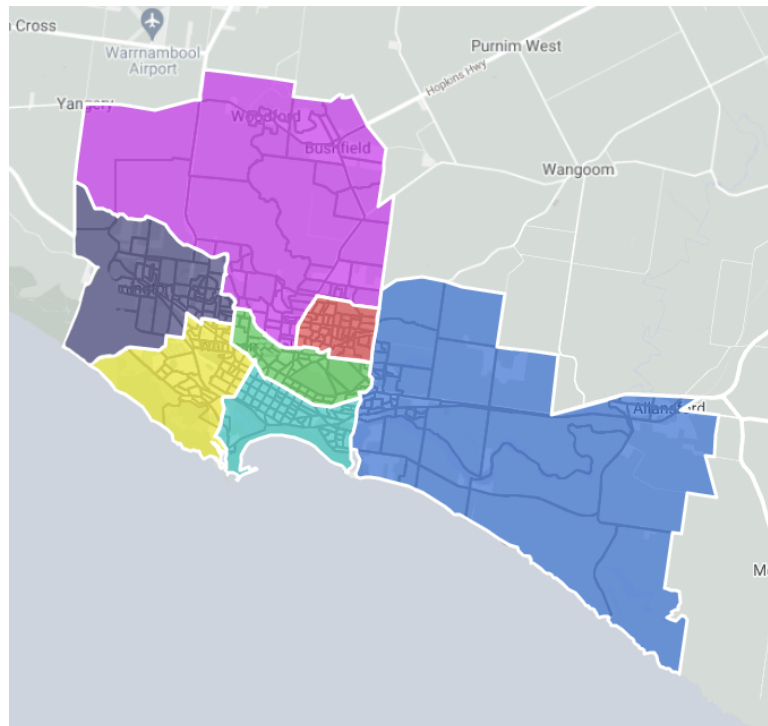
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Model 3 does a good job of keeping North Warrnambool residents inside city centred wards, as well as keeping the community of Dennington in a single ward. However it forces together some communities that would be better suited to being in different wards. The Moyjil Ward in this model is far too long and combines communities with different characteristics and profiles. Merrivale is a community which is quite distinct from Hopkins Heights. Likewise, combining Dennington with Woodford and Bushfield is possibly tolerable, but it is far from an ideal solution and is a weakness when compared to Models 1 and 2.

### Hybrid Model

After considering all three models carefully, Council has determined that the best possible ward structure for our community can be achieved through combining the best elements of all three models into a proposed ward structure that would effectively map communities of common interest, be understandable and recognisable for our residents, comply with section 15(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and allow room for the future growth of our municipal population.



This hybrid model uses Model 2 as its base but makes the following significant amendments:

- It removes the divide in Dennington and does not combine it with unrelated communities of interest by creating a dedicated ward centred on that community. It does this by using the boundary to the north of Dennington proposed in Model 1 and the boundary to its south proposed in Model 3. This eliminates concerns around that community being arbitrarily split along the highway which both Council and the VEC found undesirable. It is proposed this ward simply be called Dennington Ward.

- It makes Russells Creek Ward somewhat flatter and wider. With its northern boundary moving a block south from Wangoom Road but extends the ward further South and East, using Moore Street and Aberline Road as its boundaries, making it closer in appearance to the equivalent ward in model 3. It also keeps more of the northern corridor of the city that surrounds Whites Road in a single ward and out of the Hopkins Heights Ward. Aberline Road is a sensible boundary as over time the parts to its east will become new housing developments that will be distinct in character from the more established homes and communities to the road's west.
- It moves the boundary of Botanic Ward north, now running to Russells Creek. This keeps the communities around the Botanic Gardens and Botanic Road in a single ward and would be a very recognisable boundary for the community. It also assists with population tolerances.
- It makes Wollaston Ward flatter and more balanced in shape. It now protrudes less into the northern parts of the city and becomes more of a dedicated rural ward servicing the communities of Bushfield and Woodford, but not splitting off the northwest parts of the municipality like Model 2 initially did.
- Hopkins River Ward is also now balanced in terms of size and shape. It runs east to west along the river and then has an almost straight line border along its western side that includes the River and Aberline Road as its boundary. This makes the ward truly based on the river and is easier to understand. It does not insert Hopkins Heights into unrelated communities as is the case in some proposed models.
- It creates a dedicated ward for the communities of South Warrnambool and Merrivale that is largely absent from all other models. These communities increasingly blend together with shared interests and are well suited to having their own dedicated ward. We propose this ward be called Merri River Ward.

This model also complies with population tolerances and allows scope for the growth of our population in different pockets of the city.

Ward Name	Colour	Population	Tolerance
Botanic Ward	Green	3,722	-6.05%
Dennington Ward	Grey	4,221	+6.55%
Hopkins River Ward	Blue	3,903	-1.48%
Merri River Ward	Yellow	3,948	-0.34%
Moyjil Ward	Teal	3,892	-1.76%
Wollaston Ward	Purple	3,865	-2.44%
Russells Creek Ward	Red	4,180	+5.51%

This is a very balanced distribution that allows for growth of the city at Hopkins Heights, around Wollaston Road, and east of Aberline Road. One potential drawback is that Dennington Ward is at +6.55% with some further growth anticipated, however there is still some room for growth without exceeding the tolerance and the accommodation of Dennington in a single dedicated ward is desirable enough to justify this. The matter could be reassessed at future reviews if it were to become an issue.

### Ward Names

Council believes the preliminary report does a good job of identifying appropriate ward names. However, we would argue the names of Marrang Park and Playpus Park are unlikely to be recognisable to our community. We also feel Russells Creek is a more appropriate name than Brierly Basin for any northeast based ward, as 'Brierly' carries an association with a former mental health facility of the same name.

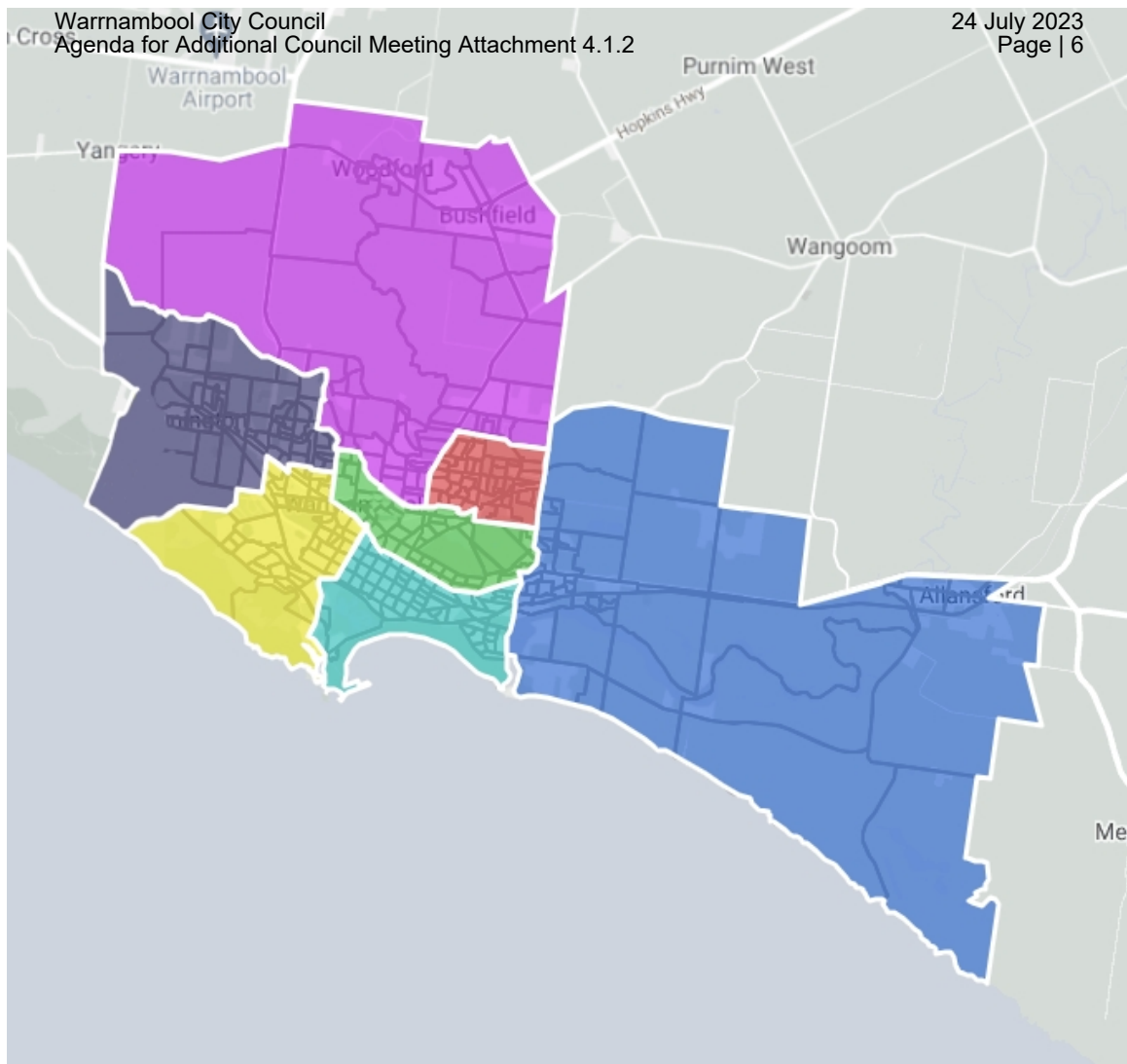


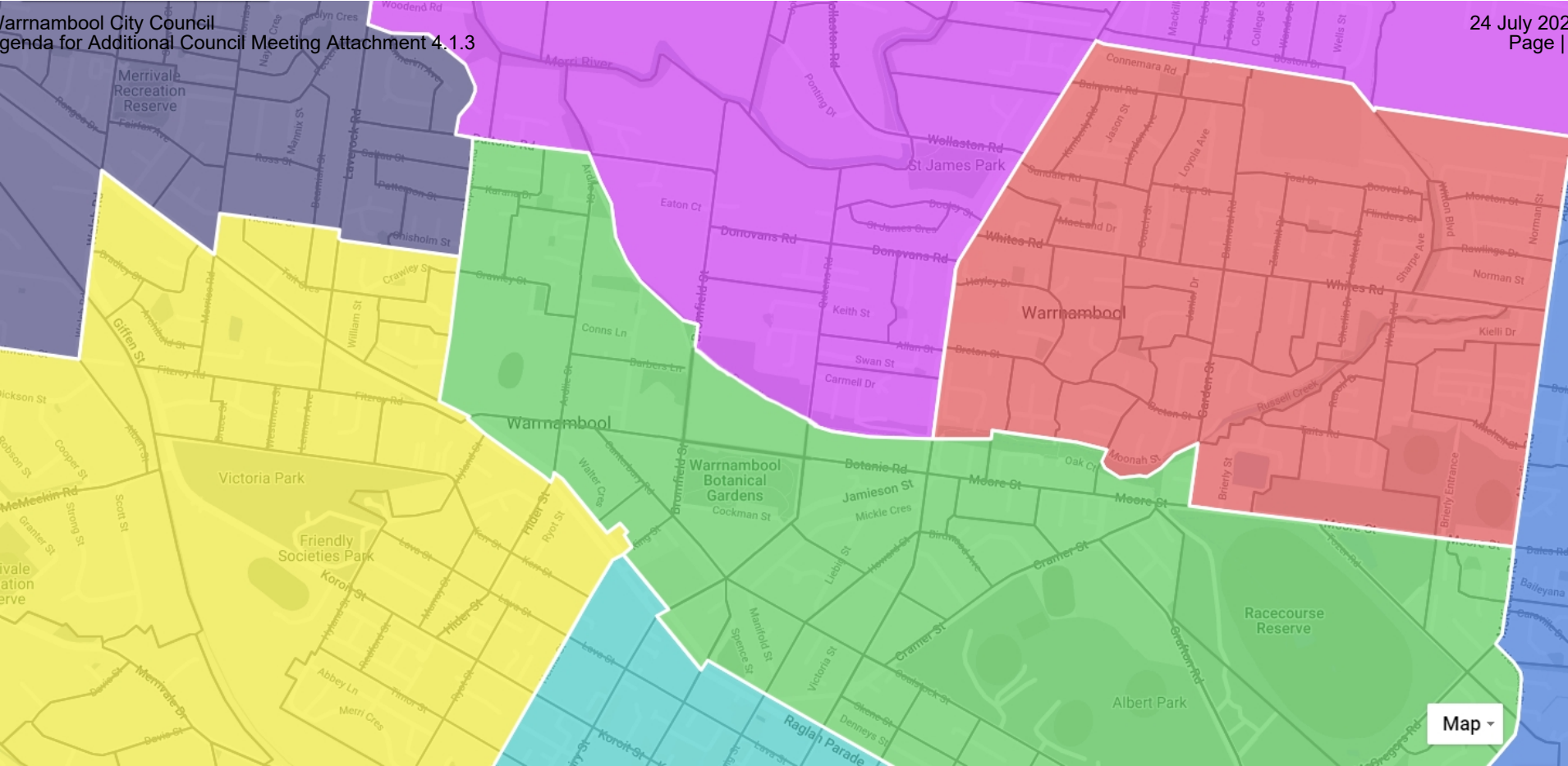
Our proposed model creates two new wards around Dennington and Merrivale/South Warrnambool respectively. The names that we propose as best suited and most recognisable for these wards are Dennington Ward and Merri River Ward.

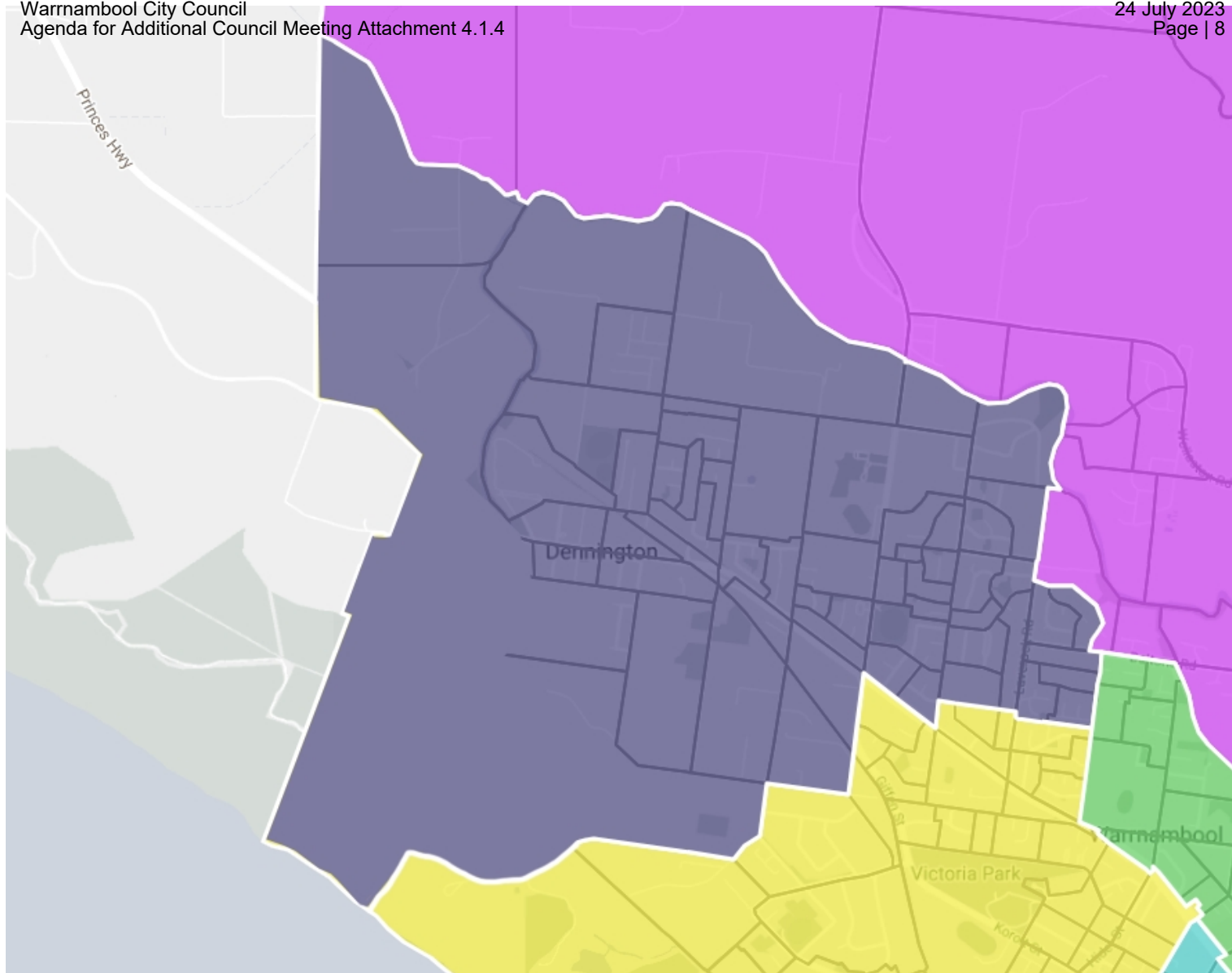
Council would also like to register to speak at the public hearing to be held at 10am on Wednesday 2 August 2023.

Sincerely

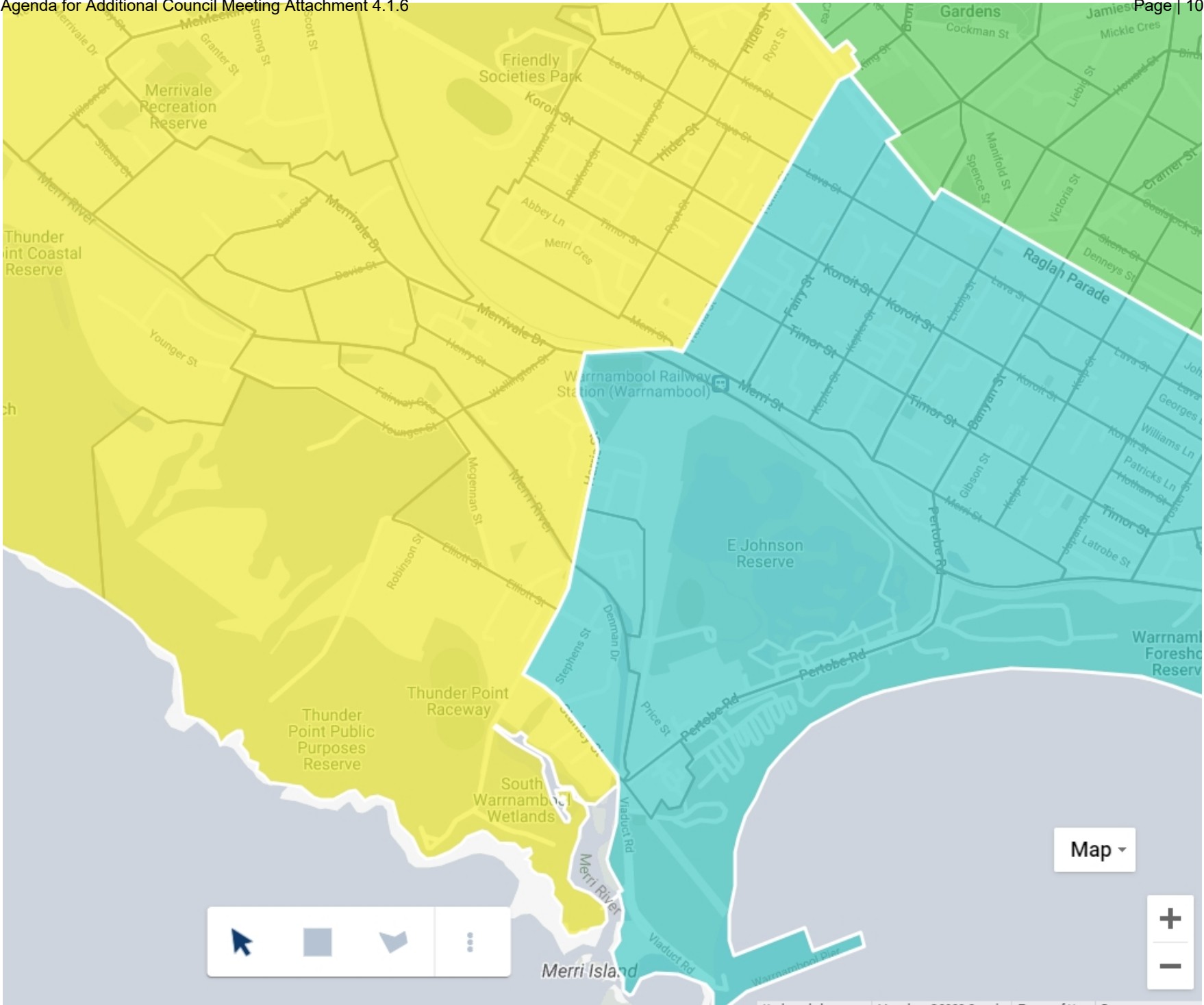
**Cr Debbie Arnott**  
Mayor  
Warrnambool City Council











# Local council electoral structure review

# **Preliminary Report**

Warrnambool City Council  
July 2023

Local council electoral structure review – Preliminary report – Warrnambool City Council

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Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Eastern Maar 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

Version	Date approved	Submission approved by	Brief description
1	30 June 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 Warrnambool 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), Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool 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 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 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

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hearing on Wednesday 2 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](https://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 Warrnambool City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool City Council electoral structure review. This has included:

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- 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](https://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 Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool 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)

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- 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 Warrnambool 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

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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

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- 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 Warrnambool City

### Profile

Warrnambool City Council is a regional city in the Barwon South West region of Victoria, about 260 km west of Melbourne. It is the smallest regional city council in Victoria at 121 km<sup>2</sup> and is surrounded by Moyne Shire Council and the Southern Ocean. The Traditional Custodians of the Warrnambool area are the Eastern Maar people.

### Landscape

Warrnambool City Council is part of south-west Victoria's Shipwreck Coast. Its landscape includes the ancient dune systems of Thunder and Pickering points, the Merri and Hopkins river estuaries, and the expansive Lady Bay (DTP 2023). Southern right whales frequent the Logans Beach area, which acts as a whale nursery in winter and spring (DTP 2023). The Warrnambool foreshore, botanic gardens, and Lake Pertobe provide recreational space for residents and tourists (Warrnambool Council 2022a).

At the 2021 Census, Warrnambool City Council's population was 35,406 (ABS 2022a). By far, most of the population lives in Warrnambool and Dennington (DTP 2023). The Warrnambool urban centre, an area of concentrated urban development, includes the suburb of Dennington on the western boundary of the council area, and the suburb of Warrnambool including Sherwood Park Station and Deakin University in the east. It had a population of 32,894 in 2021 or almost 93% of the municipality's total population (ABS 2022d).

In the east of the council area, the Hopkins River runs through Allansford, a rural town with a population of 718 (ABS 2022b). Representing an area of concentrated urban development, the urban centre of Bushfield-Woodford (population 619 in 2021) is in the north of the council area, among rolling hills and rural views (Warrnambool Council 2022b, ABS 2022c).

The Princes and Hopkins highways and Great Ocean Road serve the council area, along with several regional bus services and a V/Line train service to Melbourne.

### Community

Warrnambool City Council area is a main service centre for health, education, retail, and business (RDV 2023). Tourism is an important economic driver, as are the dairy, beef, and lamb industries (DTP 2023). Health care and social assistance remains an important industry sector employing 23% of total employment (Remplan 2022b).

Between 2011 and 2021, the population of the council area increased from 32,029 to 35,406 (ABS 2011, ABS 2022a). The trend of modest growth is expected to continue at an average rate of about 1.1% per year and the population is estimated to reach 39,900 by 2036 (RDV 2023).

People aged 60-to-64 years were the largest age group in the council at 6.6% of the population in 2021, while the proportion of those aged 70-to-74 years increased the most between 2016

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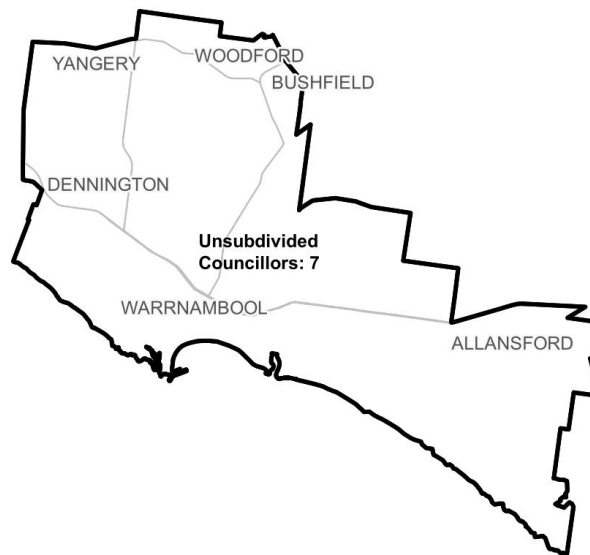
and 2021 (Remplan 2022a). The median age was 42 which is slightly lower than the regional Victorian median of 43. (ABS 2022a).

In 2021, almost 85% of Warrnambool City Council residents were born in Australia and residents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 2.1% of the municipality's population. English was the only language spoken at home for 89% of residents, compared with 86.4% for regional Victoria overall (ABS 2022a).

Most people in the municipality (68.9%) owned their own home either outright or with a mortgage in 2021 and the median weekly household income was \$1,396 (ABS 2022a).

## Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Warrnambool City Council is currently unsubdivided with a total of 7 councillors:



**Figure 1:** Diagram of current electoral structure of Warrnambool City Council.

There are around 27,731 voters in Warrnambool City Council, with an estimated ratio of 3,961 voters per councillor.

Visit the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au) for more information on Warrnambool City Council.

## Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool City Council continue to consist of 7 councillors elected from an unsubdivided ward structure.

Visit the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://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 7 councillors to be an appropriate number for Warrnambool City Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool City Council						
Local council	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Number of voters at 2020 election	Population (2021 Census)	Current total estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor
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	3,141
Horsham Rural City Council*	4,267	16,206	20,429	15,753	7	2,250

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

### Maintaining 7 councillors

Warrnambool City Council currently has 27,731 voters represented by 7 councillors and covers an area of 121 km<sup>2</sup>. Other regional city councils with a similar number of voters usually also have 7 councillors. Forecasts indicate modest population growth is expected however this growth is anticipated to remain in Warrnambool urban area. Given this, and the relatively small size of the council area and concentration of the population in Warrnambool city, the panel considered 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 Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool City Council community:

- a subdivided electoral structure of 7 single-councillor wards (Model 1)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 7 single-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 (Model 2)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 7 single-councillor wards, with different ward boundaries to models 1 and 2 (Model 3).

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

### **A single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors (Model 1)**

Under this model, Warrnambool City Council would adopt a 7-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Model 1 uses rivers and creeks as the basis for its proposed boundaries to create 4 larger wards enclosing 3 smaller central wards. Most wards capture both segments of urban and rural voters and attempt to use clear recognisable boundaries to balance the uneven population growth anticipated across the council area.

In the west of the council area, Marrang Park Ward includes most of Dennington, Illowa, and more urban parts of the suburb of Warrnambool. To the south, it follows the foreshore to Pickering Point, extending to the train line and Caramut Road to the east, and Merri River and Yangery Creek to the north. Wollaston Ward, which takes in most of the north of the council area, captures the more rural towns of Yangery, Woodford, and Bushfield, and extends down to Botanic Road near Warrnambool's city centre.

South of Wangoom Street, Russells Creek Ward captures an urban residential area in the north of the suburb of Warrnambool, bounded by the Merri River in the west and Russells Creek in the east and south. Extending east to the council boundary, Brierly Basin Ward includes Albert Park, the Racecourse, Brierly Basin, and the Brierly Recreation Reserve. It also includes the land to the Princes Highway in the south.

Moyjil Ward takes in most of the south-east of the council area from Allansford and Lake Gilleard at the council area's eastern boundary. It follows the foreshore west toward Warrnambool's city centre and includes the mouth of the Hopkins River and Granny's Grave Beach up to the train line. Heading further west, Lake Pertobe Ward contains the Warrnambool city centre and

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remaining foreshore, extending north to Botanic Street and west to Henna Street. Victoria Park Ward takes in an urban area in the west of the suburb of Warrnambool as well as Victoria Park.

The panel believed the proposed boundaries in Model 1 to be effective for several reasons:

- The boundaries would accommodate and balance the anticipated growth in the council area, particularly in Marrang Park and Wollaston wards.
- The town of Dennington is in one ward.
- The model reflects the needs of communities of interest.

The panel considered the larger size of Moyjil Ward to be a possible drawback because it could increase travel requirements for the elected councillor. However, it found the proposed boundaries provide a reasonable split between the rural and more urban areas in the ward and would accommodate expected growth on the east bank of the Hopkins River mouth.

The panel believed the use of rivers and creeks as the basis of the ward boundaries mostly kept communities together and was an appropriate structure for both the council area's current population, distribution, and projected growth.

**A single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors (alternative version) (Model 2)**

Under this model, Warrnambool City Council would adopt a 7-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

The proposed boundaries of Model 2 create 3 smaller central wards, surrounded by 4 larger wards. In this model, the basis for the boundaries are roads and parts of Merri River and Russells Creek. Model 2 also has a focus on keeping the towns and communities that occupy the foreshore and Warrnambool's retail and business city centre together. It provides an alternative approach to accommodating future and uneven growth.

Model 2 divides the town of Dennington into 2 wards along the Princes Highway and Raglan Parade. South of this boundary, Marrang Park Ward encompasses the southern part of Dennington, extending to Levys Point Coastal Reserve and following the foreshore to Thunder Point and Henna Street in the east.

To the north, Yangery Creek Ward captures most of Dennington, along with the more rural towns of Illowa, and Yangery. The eastern ward boundary is formed by Caramut Road and follows the edge of Merri River and part of Russells Creek. Wollaston Ward in the north of the council area contains the towns of Bushfield and Woodford, and more urban residential parts of the suburb of Warrnambool in the south.

In a similar way to Model 1, Russells Creek Ward takes in a more densely populated residential pocket of the suburb of Warrnambool but uses Mortlake Road as its west boundary. It includes the Racecourse, Albert Park, and the botanical gardens.

In the east of the council area, Hopkins River Ward includes the town of Allansford and a large rural area. As such, the ward includes a more urban segment of the council area as far west as Tozer Road, but less of the coastline than Model 1.

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Moyjil Ward takes in a large part of foreshore, including the mouth of the Merri River in the west, across to Hopkins River, and Logans Beach. The ward includes Lake Pertobe and the retail and business city centre of Warrnambool.

The panel believed this model used clear and identifiable ward boundaries to reasonably capture the council's communities of interest. The panel viewed combining the 2 residential communities around the Hopkins River mouth in the same ward positively. It felt this would allow the communities expected to grow in the coastal Hopkins growth area to connect to the Warrnambool retail and business city centre. While the panel acknowledged splitting Dennington over 2 wards (Yangery Creek and Marrang Park wards) was not ideal and could split a community of interest, the boundary runs along a physical divide that already exists.

Overall, the panel considered the proposed boundaries of Model 2 would effectively respond to the growth expected for the council area. It also believed the model provided clear ward boundaries in most cases, and longevity for the plus-or-minus 10% tolerance for the next local council elections in October 2024.

**A single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors (alternative version) (Model 3)**

Under this model, Warrnambool City Council would adopt a 7-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act.

Taking a different approach to models 1 and 2, the proposed boundaries of Model 3 make more use of rivers and the train line, with a focus on keeping rural towns together as well as beachfront communities. The model would create 2 rural-centred wards (Wollaston and Hopkins River wards), a central foreshore ward (Moyjil Ward), and 4 urban-centred wards (Central, Botanic, Platypus Park and Brierly Basin wards)

Wollaston Ward takes in most of the north of the council area, capturing the more rural towns of Bushfield, Woodford, and Yangery, as well as Dennington, which is more urban and expected to undergo population growth.

In the east of the council area, Hopkins River Ward contains a large section of rural land, the town of Allansford, the Deakin University Campus, and a section of urban land north of the train line bounded by Darby Street and Grafton Road.

Moyjil Ward takes in a larger portion of the foreshore than proposed in Model 2, extending west. It runs close to the council's external boundary and includes both the Merri and Hopkins river mouths. It captures most of the foreshore land up to the train line, and includes Lake Pertobe.

Central Ward sits to the north and takes in the Warrnambool city centre with Fitzroy, Botanic and Canterbury roads and Raglan Parade forming its northern boundary. Platypus Park and Botanic wards are located above Central Ward and capture the urban areas north of the Princes Highway. In the north-east, the ward includes a similar area to the 2 variations of Russells Creek Ward in models 1 and 2.

While the panel considered the clear boundaries to be a strength of Model 3, it felt the larger size of the 2 rural wards (46 km<sup>2</sup> and 49 km<sup>2</sup>) compared with the smaller urban-centred wards

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(between 3 km<sup>2</sup> and 10 km<sup>2</sup>) may result in uneven workloads and travel times for councillors. Additionally, the panel felt the long coastal foreshore of Moyjil Ward could group unrelated communities of interest together.

However, the panel found Model 3 would manage the growth expected for the council area well and would keep communities and towns together in most cases, particularly in the rural areas of the council.

### **Summary**

In summary, introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral change for Warrnambool 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 uses rivers and creeks as the basis of boundaries and includes a segment of both urban and rural communities in most wards, while balancing uneven population growth anticipated across the council area. Model 2 provides an alternative approach to ward boundaries and the division of the Warrnambool city centre and foreshore areas. Model 3 seeks to keep rural communities together with the creation of 2 rural-focused wards. It makes more use of rivers and the train line in its boundaries, and like models 1 and 2, accommodates the future and uneven growth in the council area.

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

### Model 1

Warrnambool City Council has 7 councillors and is divided into 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Brierly Basin Ward, Lake Pertobe Ward, Marrang Park Ward, Moyjil Ward, Russells Creek Ward, Victoria Park Ward, Wollaston Ward.

### Model 2

Warrnambool City Council has 7 councillors and is divided into 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Botanic Ward, Hopkins River Ward, Marrang Park Ward, Moyjil Ward, Russells Creek Ward, Wollaston Ward, Yangery Creek Ward.

### Model 3

Warrnambool City Council has 7 councillors and is divided into 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names: Botanic Ward, Brierly Basin Ward, Central Ward, Hopkins River Ward, Moyjil Ward, Platypus Park Ward, Wollaston 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

Brierly Basin, Lake Pertobe, Marrang Park, Moyjil, Russells Creek, Victoria Park, and Wollaston ward names are new and are based on natural features or registered places found within each ward.

### Model 2

Botanic, Hopkins River, Marrang park, Moyjil, Russells Creek, Wollaston, and Yangery Creek ward names are new and are based on natural features or registered places found within each ward.

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**Model 3**

Botanic, Brierly Basin, Central, Hopkins River, Moyjil, Platypus Park, and Wollaston ward names are new and are based on natural features, or compass directions, or registered places 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:

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

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](https://vec.vic.gov.au/privacy)

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### 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](https://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: Wednesday 2 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](https://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 Warrnambool City Council following on from this review is expected to apply at the October 2024 local council elections. Under the Act, the final council electoral structure will be set by an Order in Council published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

## References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [2021 Census All Person QuickStats, Warrnambool \(LGA\)](#), ABS website, accessed 15 May 2023.

——(2022b) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Allansford \(UCL\)](#), ABS website, accessed 15 May 2023.

——(2022c) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Bushfield - Woodford \(UCL\)](#), ABS website, accessed 15 May 2023.

——(2022d) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Warrnambool \(UCL\)](#), ABS website, accessed 15 May 2023.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2011) [2011 Census All Person QuickStats, Warrnambool \(LGA\)](#), ABS website, accessed 15 May 2023.

DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) (2023) [Warrnambool Planning Scheme](#), DTP website, accessed 15 May 2023.

Electoral Act 2002 (Vic)

Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic)

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

RDV (Regional Development Victoria) (2021) [Regional City of Warrnambool](#), RDV website, accessed 15 May 2023.

Remplan (2022a) [Our Place – Our Community Population](#), Remplan website, accessed 15 May 2023

——(2022b) [Economy, Jobs and Business Insights](#), Remplan website, accessed 15 May 2023.

Warrnambool City Council (2022a) [Public Spaces](#), Warrnambool Council website, accessed 15 May 2023.

——(2022b) [Council news – Strategic Framework Plan Bushfield-Woodford](#), Warrnambool Council website, accessed 15 May 2023.

## Appendix 1: Model maps

The following maps are included in this report:

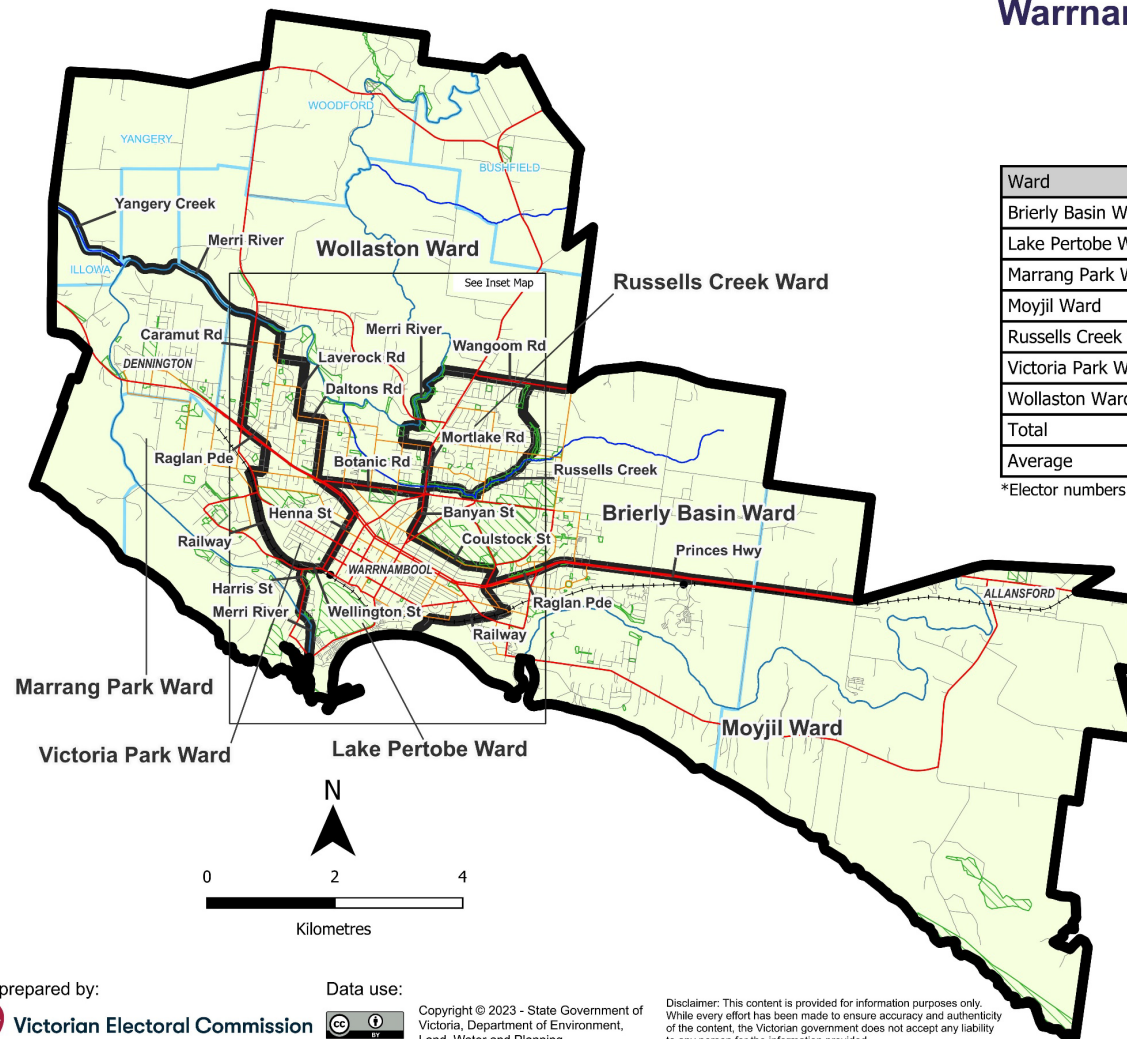
Map	Page
Model 1 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.	25
Model 2 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward (with boundaries different to Model 1).	27
Model 3 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward (with boundaries different to models 1 and 2).	29

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## Warrnambool City Council

### Model 1

#### 7 single-councillor wards



Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Brierly Basin Ward	3,840	-3.07%	16
Lake Pertobe Ward	4,272	+7.84%	5
Marrang Park Ward	3,761	-5.06%	17
Moyjil Ward	3,818	-3.62%	39
Russells Creek Ward	4,120	+4.0%	3
Victoria Park Ward	4,192	+5.82%	4
Wollaston Ward	3,728	-5.9%	37
Total	27,731		120
Average	3,962		17

\*Electors numbers as at 30 March 2023

- Legend**
- Proposed boundaries
  - Existing ward(s)
  - Warrnambool City
  - Map symbols**
    - Freeways
    - Main roads
    - Collector roads
    - Minor roads
    - Railways
    - Railway stations
    - Lakes
    - Rivers & creeks
    - Parks & reserves
    - Locality boundaries

Map prepared by:



Data use:



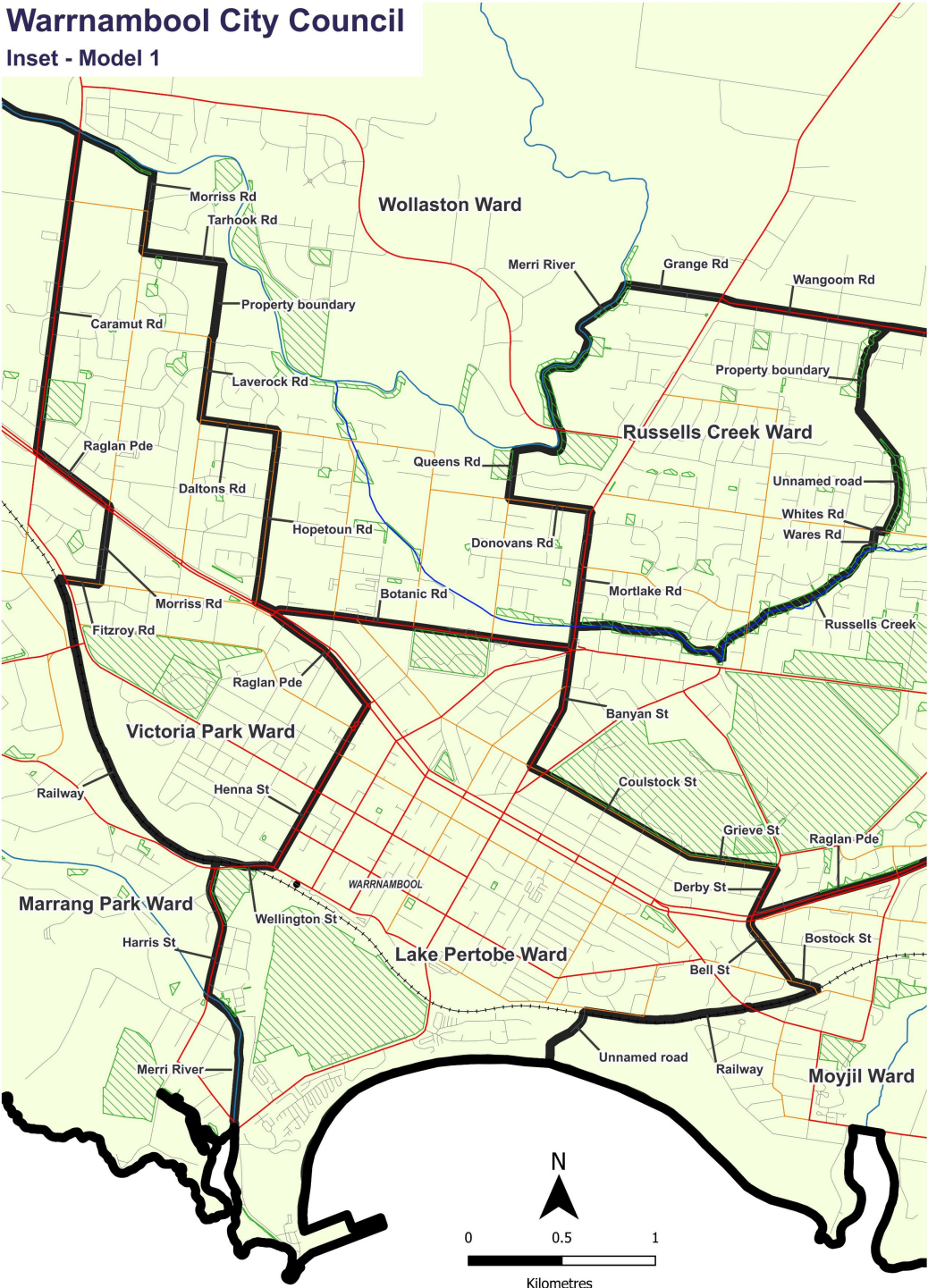
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Warrnambool City Council  
Inset - Model 1





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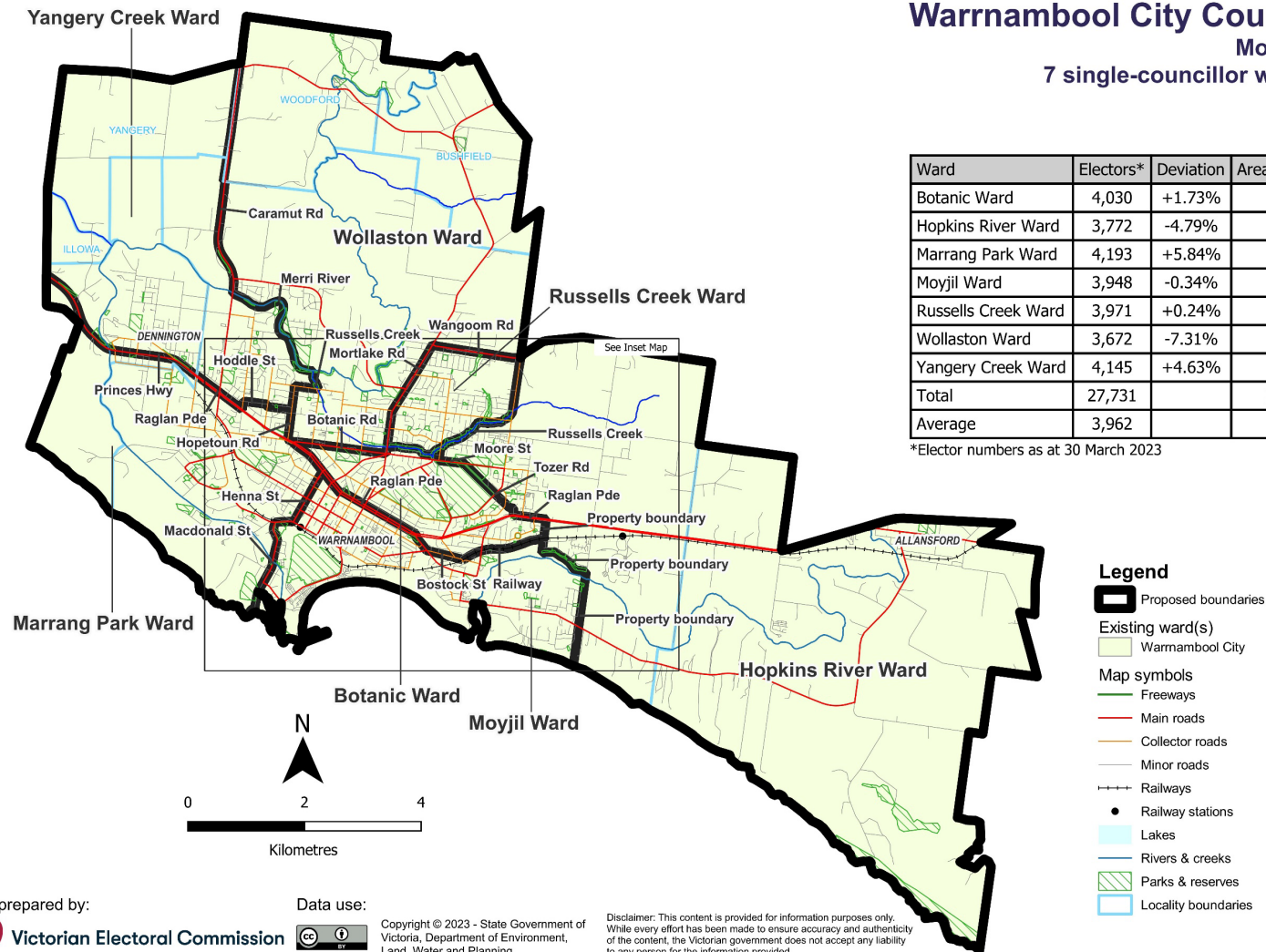
## Warrnambool City Council

### Model 2

#### 7 single-councillor wards

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Botanic Ward	4,030	+1.73%	4
Hopkins River Ward	3,772	-4.79%	47
Marrang Park Ward	4,193	+5.84%	13
Moyjil Ward	3,948	-0.34%	8
Russells Creek Ward	3,971	+0.24%	3
Wollaston Ward	3,672	-7.31%	29
Yangery Creek Ward	4,145	+4.63%	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,731</b>		<b>120</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,962</b>		<b>17</b>

\*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data use:

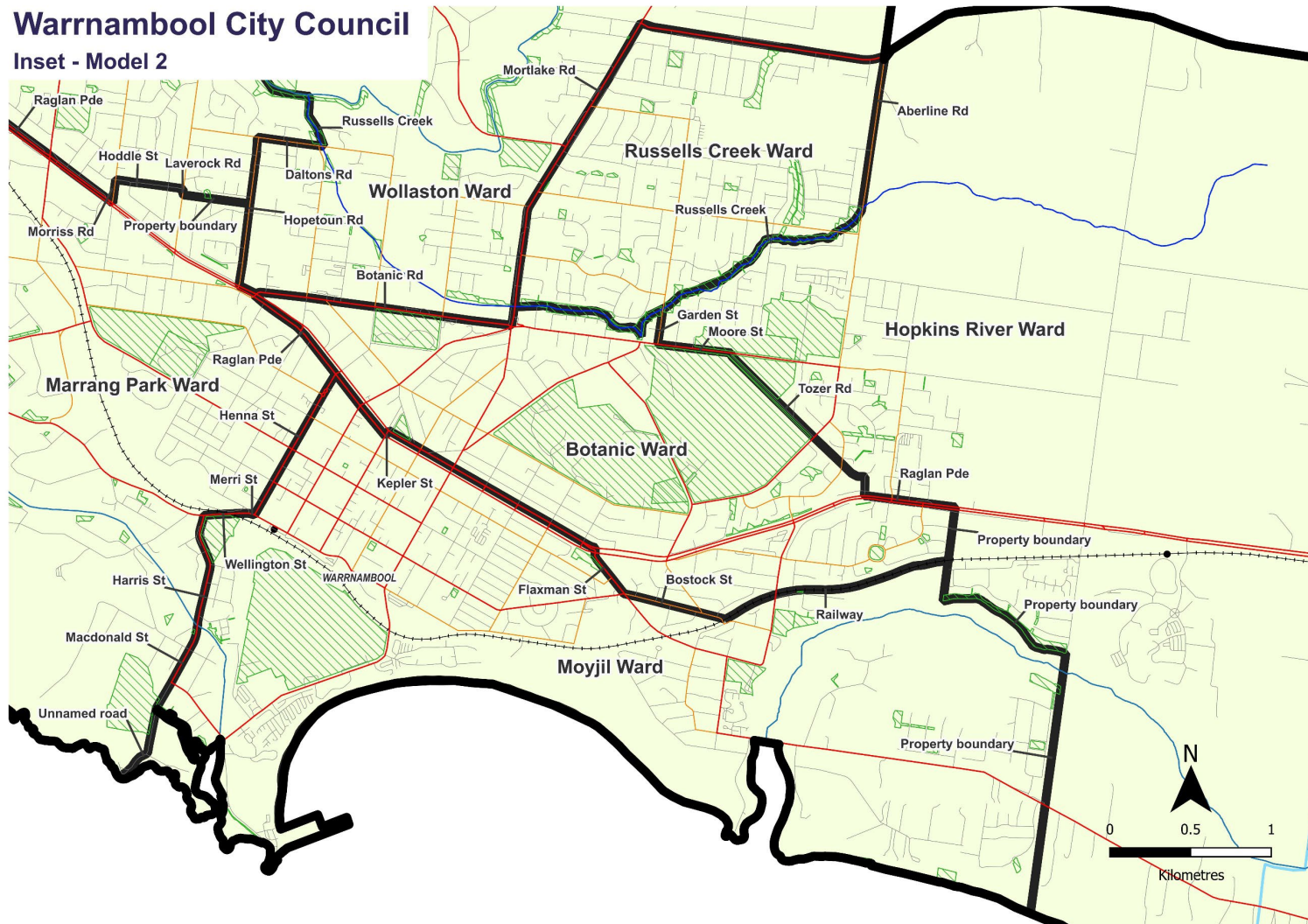


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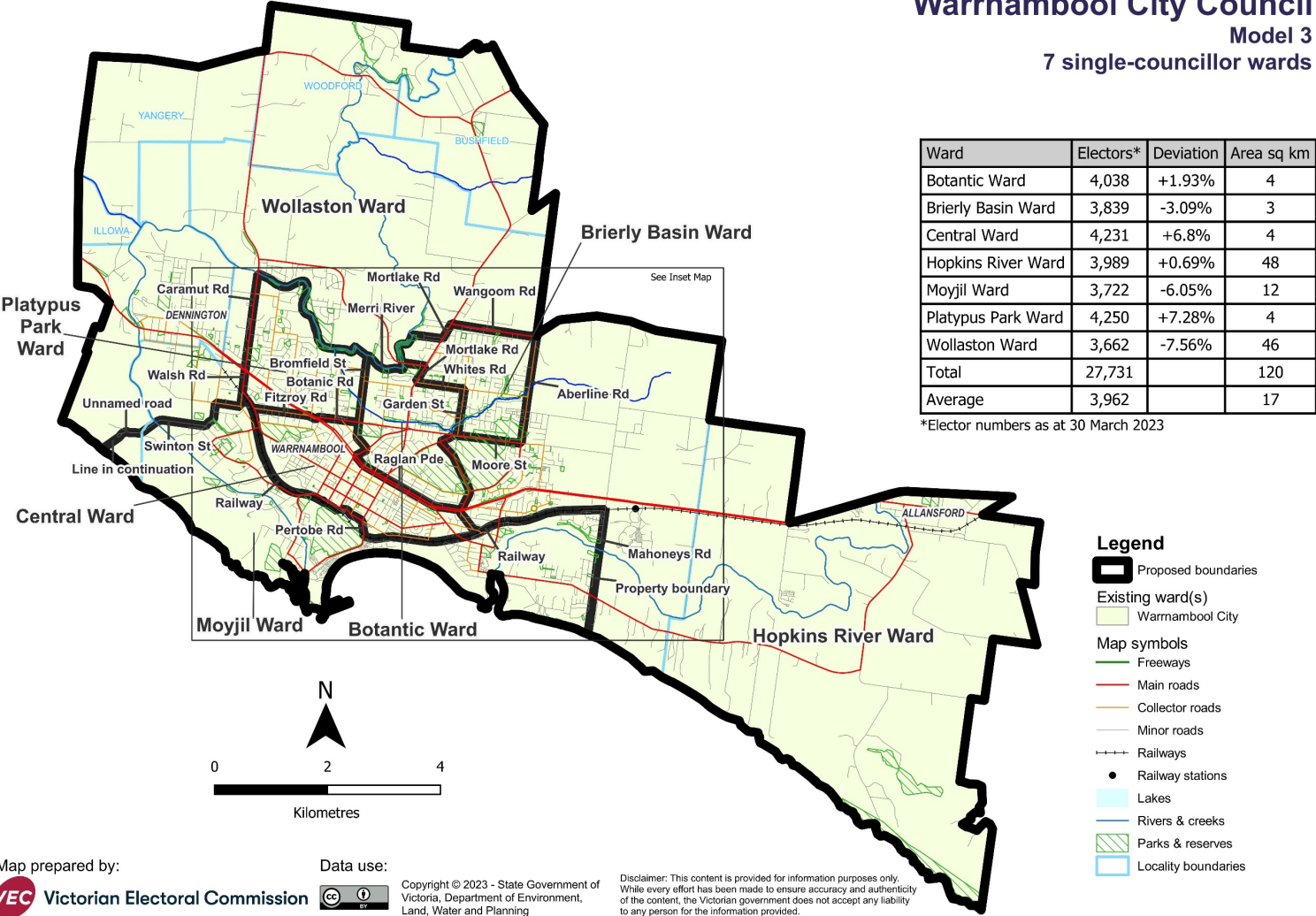
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## Warrnambool City Council

### Inset - Model 2



Warrnambool City Council  
Model 3  
7 single-councillor wards



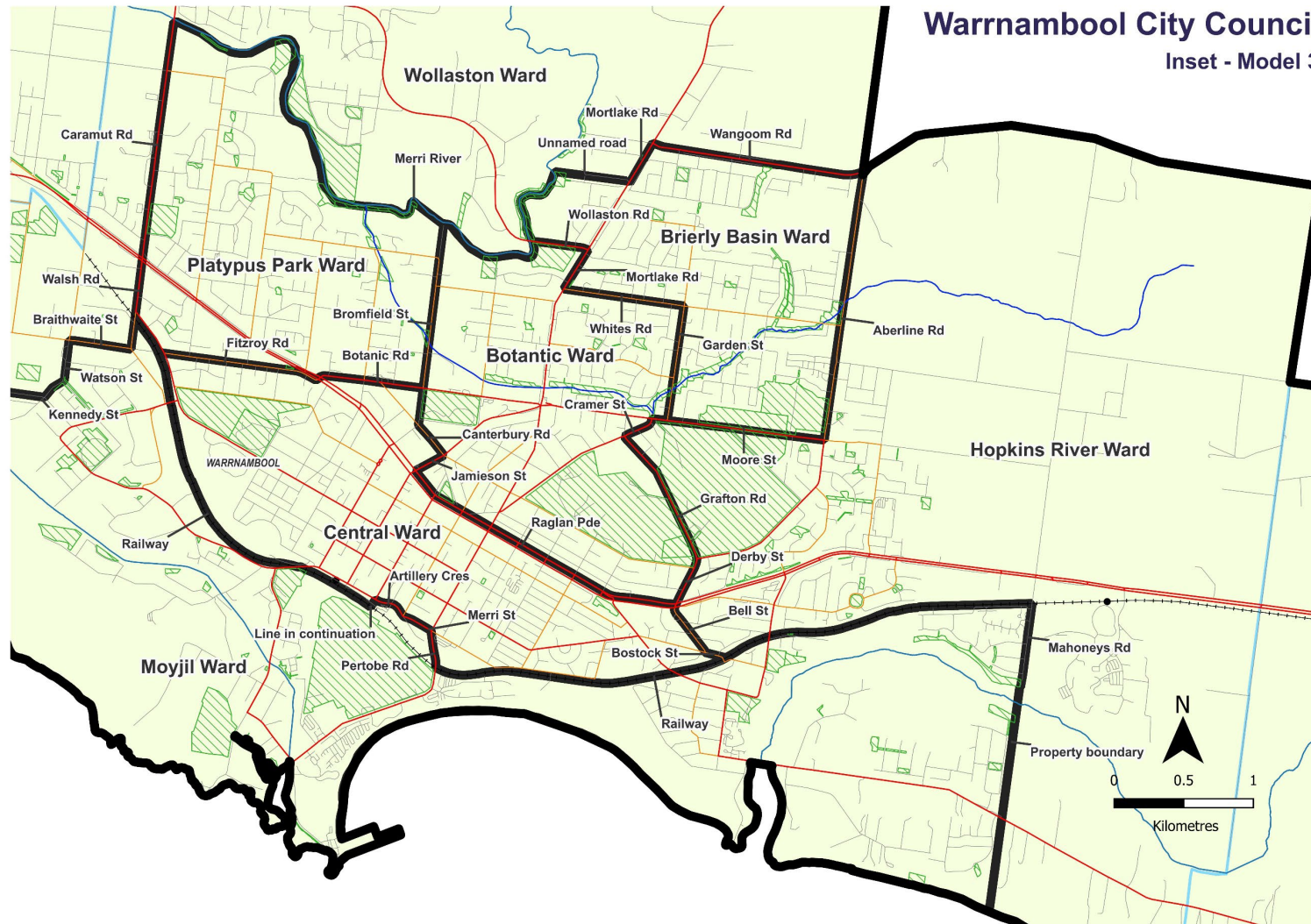
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