

Local council electoral structure review

Final Report

Wangaratta Rural City Council

September 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Bpangerang people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters for which it held this review and pays respects to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging. The panel acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

Report approval

Version	Date approved	Approved by
1	29 August 2023	The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC
1	29 August 2023	Ms Máiréad Doyle

Version approval:

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1	1 September 2023	Program Sponsor	Final proofread and confirmed to be sent

Contents

Executive summary	4
Recommendation	4
Summary of approach	5
Developing electoral structure models	5
Preliminary report.....	5
Response submissions	5
Public hearing	5
Background	6
About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews.....	6
The electoral representation advisory panel.....	6
Public engagement	6
Developing recommendations.....	7
About Wangaratta Rural City Council	11
Profile	11
Current number of councillors and electoral structure	13
Last electoral structure review.....	14
Preliminary report	14
Response submissions	15
Ward names	16
Public hearing	16
Findings and recommendation	17
Number of councillors	17
Electoral structure	17
Ward names	19
The panel’s recommendation	20
References	21
Appendix 1: Map of recommended structure	22
Appendix 2: Public involvement	25
Response submissions	25

Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government has reviewed the electoral structure of Wangaratta Rural City Council.

The purpose of the review was 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), Wangaratta Rural City Council must now have a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

The panel looked at:

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

This report presents the panel's final advice to the Minister on the recommended new electoral structure of Wangaratta Rural City Council to meet the requirements of the Act.

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

Recommendation

The electoral representation advisory panel recommends that Wangaratta Rural City Council adopt a 7 single-councillor ward structure – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 7 wards in this electoral structure are Appin Ward, Bullawah Ward, King River Ward, Ovens Ward, Warby Ward, Wareena Ward and Yarrunga Ward.

This advice is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the Terms of Reference of the electoral representation advisory panel and the Act.

A detailed map of the boundaries for the recommended electoral structure is provided as [Appendix 1](#).

Summary of approach

Developing electoral structure models

The panel considered a range of factors when deciding on its final recommendation including:

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time
- public submissions (see below).

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

Preliminary report

The panel published a preliminary report on Wednesday 12 July 2023 with 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, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to models 1 and 2.

The full preliminary report is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Response submissions

The panel received 4 submissions responding to the preliminary report. Of these, no submissions included maps.

A full analysis of response submissions received can be found on [page 15](#).

Public hearing

An online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission was scheduled for Tuesday 8 August 2023. As no submitters asked to speak, the hearing did not go ahead.

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 Wangaratta Rural City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Wangaratta Rural City Council, the electoral representation advisory panel examined:

- the number of councillors and wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the names 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 noted the role of a councillor as specified under section 28 of the Act.

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel that conducted the electoral structure review of Wangaratta Rural City Council had 3 members:

- The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC (Chairperson)
- Ms Liz Williams PSM
- Acting Executive Director, Electoral Functions Ms Máiréad Doyle.

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

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

Public engagement

Public information program

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

- public notices in state-wide newspapers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases announcing the start of the review with the release of the preliminary report
- 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
 - response submissions from the public.

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

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

Public consultation

The panel encouraged public input to the review of Wangaratta Rural City Council via:

- response submissions to the preliminary report
- an online public hearing for anyone who made 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 panel's final recommendations 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)
- input received during public consultation.

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. As such, the recommendation put forward by the panel in this report is guided by

the Act's intention for fairness and equity in voter representation and the consequent facilitation of good governance.

In examining the appropriate number of councillors for Wangaratta Rural 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 and 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 communities of interest in the council area
- any matter raised in public 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 Wangaratta Rural 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.
- other matters raised in public 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 aimed to recommend a structure that would 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 was conducted. The panel used 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 prioritised 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 voters. 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 took 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 were still relevant to the area covered by the ward.
2. When a new name was required, the panel based 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 was 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 has only 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 Wangaratta Rural City Council

Profile

The Rural City of Wangaratta is located approximately 250 km north-east of Melbourne in the Ovens Murray region of Victoria. Covering an area of 3,646 km², the municipality is bordered by Moira Shire Council to the north-west, Benalla Rural City Council to the west, Mansfield and Wellington Shire Councils to the south, Alpine Shire Council to the east and Indigo Shire Council to the north-east.

The Traditional Custodians of the lands within the Rural City of Wangaratta are the Yorta Yorta, Taungurung and Bpangerang people (FPSR 2023).

Landscape

About 17% of land in the council area is reserved for nature conservation (ABARES 2023), including parts of the Alpine National Park in the south, the Warby-Ovens National Park in the north-west, and the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park in the north-east. The King River and the Ovens River are also important geographical features of the area, flowing down from the Alpine National Park from the south and the east of the municipality respectively. These river systems support fertile valleys and floodplains, which are important ecological corridors sustaining agriculture and communities alike (DTP 2023).

Around 55% of land in the council area is used for agriculture, primarily for grazing and livestock production. Irrigated cropping, horticulture and pastures accounts for only a small proportion of this agricultural land use (ABARES 2023).

The population of the Rural City was 29,808 in 2021 (ABS 2022a), an increase from 26,815 recorded in 2011 (ABS 2012). Wangaratta is the municipality's largest urban centre, home to 19,172 people or about two-thirds of the population (ABS 2022a). Other large townships include Glenrowan, Oxley, Milawa, Moyhu and Eldorado. Just over a quarter of the population live in smaller towns and rural areas across the municipality (ABS 2022a).

The Hume freeway runs through the north of the municipality connecting the region to Melbourne and Sydney. V/Line passenger and freight services operate on the railway line passing through Wangaratta in the north. The Wangaratta Aerodrome is used for emergency, charter and flight training services (DTP 2023, RDV 2023a).

Community

The population grew at an annual rate of approximately 1% from 2011-2021 (RDV 2023b) and is forecast to continue to grow at an annual rate of 0.8% from 2022 to 2028, with this growth concentrated in the town of Wangaratta.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.9% of the population compared to 2% for regional Victoria (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). Nearly 85% of the population was born in Australia, and 89% of people speak only English at home, at rates higher than those recorded for regional Victoria as a whole (81% and 86.4% respectively) (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

The median age of the population is 45 years, slightly higher than the median for regional Victoria of 43 years (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

The median weekly household income was \$1,326 in 2021, slightly lower than the average of \$1,386 for regional Victoria (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b). Home ownership is high in the municipality. Of occupied homes, 41% were owned outright, higher than the average for regional Victoria of around 39%, while 32% of people own homes with a mortgage and 22.2% were rented, both lower than the regional Victoria average (ABS 2022a, ABS 2022b).

Agriculture is significant to the economy of the municipality. The major agricultural activities are sheep and cattle grazing, beef, lamb and dairy production, viticulture, cereal cropping and stone fruit production (DTP 2023). Forestry is also important to the economy, with plantation forest and production native forest covering about 21.5% of land, mostly in the south of the municipality (ABARES 2023). Together, agriculture and forestry employ 7.2% of employed people, accounting for 8.9% of economic output (REMPPLAN 2023).

However, with the Wangaratta Hospital and expanding public and private medical facilities, health care and social assistance is the largest industry by employment. The industry employs 22.4% of workers and represents 10.9% of economic output (REMPPLAN 2023). Manufacturing and construction are also important industries, together representing almost 17% of jobs in the municipality. Major manufacturing activities include metal fabrication, textiles, timber processing and some food processing (DTP 2023).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Wangaratta Rural City Council is currently divided into 4 wards with a total of 7 councillors:

- one ward with 4 councillors (City Ward)
- 3 wards with one councillor each (North Ward, South Ward, Warby Ward).

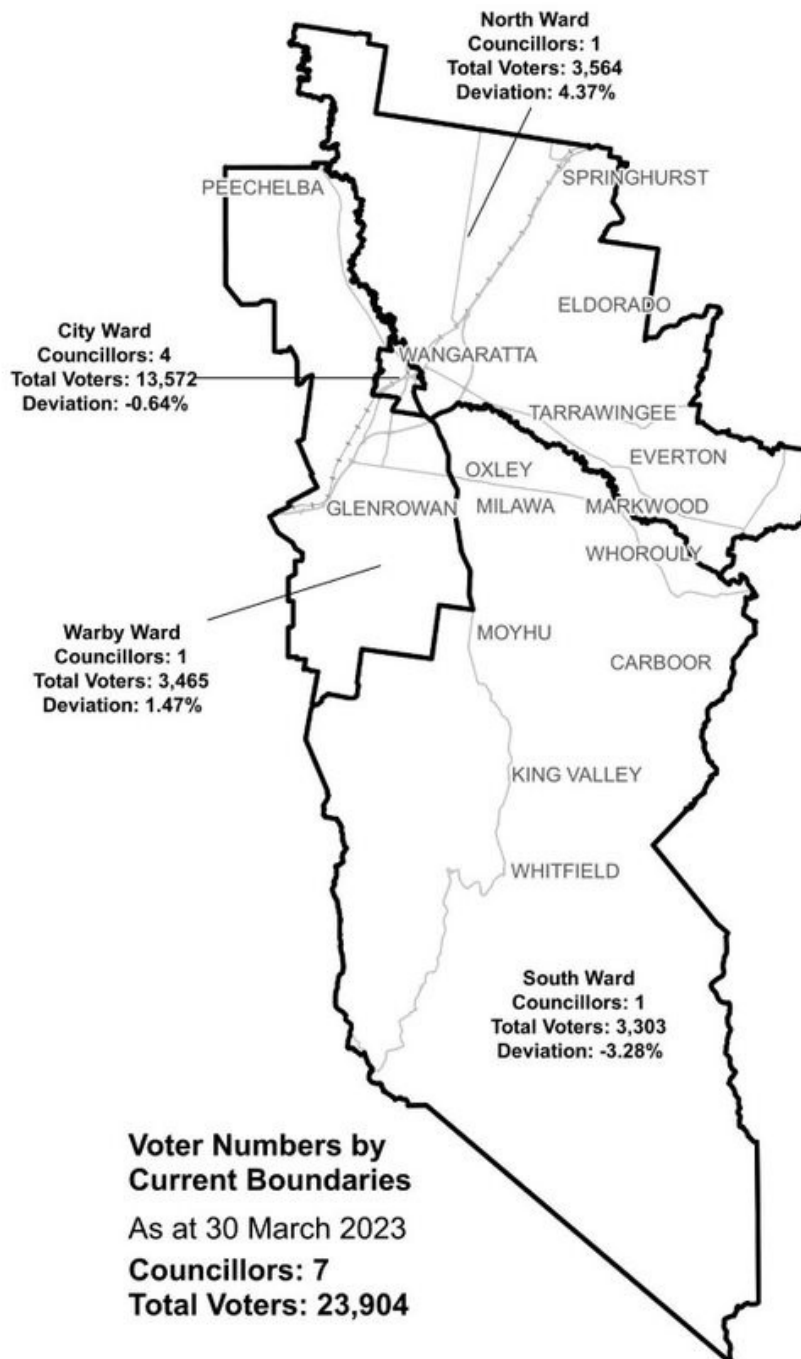


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Wangaratta Rural City Council

There are an estimated 23,904 voters in Wangaratta Rural City Council area, with an estimated ratio of 3,414 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Wangaratta Rural City Council in 2015. This review was carried out under the *Local Government Act 1989*, which was replaced by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Wangaratta Rural City Council change to consist of 7 councillors elected from 4 wards (one ward with 4 councillors and 3 wards with one councillor each).

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

Before the 2015 review, the VEC held a representation review of Wangaratta Rural City Council in 2004. After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Wangaratta Rural City Council change to consist of 7 councillors elected from an unsubdivided council.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 12 July 2023. The panel considered research findings and the requirements of the Act when formulating the models presented in the preliminary report.

After careful consideration, the following electoral structure models were put forward 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, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to models 1 and 2.

The full preliminary report is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Response submissions

The panel received 4 response submissions to the preliminary report from the public by the deadline of 5 pm on Wednesday 2 August 2023. You can find a list of people or organisations who made a response submission in [Appendix 2](#).

The table below provides an overview of preferences in response submissions. You can read an analysis of submissions below this table.

Table 1: Preferences expressed in response submissions		
Model 1 (7 single-councillor wards)	Model 2 (7 single-councillor wards)	Model 3 (7 single-councillor wards)
1	1	2

Model 1

The submission from Wangaratta Rural City Council supported Model 1 and stated that 7 councillors appeared in line with other similar regional cities. The council strongly preferred a model that resembled the current structure, with an urban centre and 3 rural wards. The council favoured the boundaries in Model 1, which follow waterways and major rural roads. It felt the Ovens River formed a strong and recognisable boundary between wards in the council area's east.

Model 2

Jennifer Garrett, a resident of Whorouly, supported Model 2 and advocated to retain 3 rural wards to reflect communities of interest. Garrett favoured having the majority of Whorouly in the same ward as Eldorado, Everton, Tarrawingee and agricultural areas in the north-east because of common interests. Garrett believed the current electoral structure with Whorouly in South Ward had led to a lack of recognition and representation for the community. Garrett also argued that strong connections exist over the Ovens River around Whorouly, so Snow Road would be a clearer boundary than the Ovens River.

Model 3

Denise Pirko and Michael Masin, residents of the town of Wangaratta, both supported Model 3 because they felt it would better capture the urban areas around the town. Pirko and Masin believed Model 3 accommodated current and future urban growth by balancing urban and peri-urban areas (areas outside or around a town or city), across and within wards. Both submitters criticised other models for placing established urban areas of the town of Wangaratta into rural wards. Masin elaborated that Model 3 better supported rural representation without urban encroachment and suggested minor ward boundary adjustments as improvements to 2 of the wards.

Ward names

Two submissions suggested ward names. The council submission proposed that Reedy Creek Ward in Model 1 be named Ovens Ward and Warby-Ovens Ward be named Warby Ward. The council suggested no change to the King River Ward name.

Garrett's submission suggested that the Eldorado Ward proposed in Model 2 be named either Ovens Ward or Reedy Creek Ward.

Public hearing

An online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission was scheduled for 10 am on Tuesday 8 August 2023. As no submitters asked to speak, the hearing did not go ahead.

Findings and recommendation

As outlined in the submission guide for this review, the panel is committed to the principle of 'one vote, one value', which is a requirement for subdivided electoral structures under the Act. This is to ensure that every person's vote counts equally. When undertaking an electoral structure review, the panel must adhere to the Act's legislated equality requirement to seek to ensure the number of voters per councillor in a ward is within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor in any other ward.

The equality requirement exists to support fair and equitable representation for all voters within a local council (and consequently facilitate good governance), which is a major aim of this review. All wards in a subdivided electoral structure recommended by the panel must aim to be within the legislated tolerance in time for the 2024 local council elections. The panel cannot make exceptions to legislated requirements.

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 Wangaratta Rural City Council.

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

Wangaratta Rural City Council currently has 23,904 voters represented by 7 councillors and covers an area of 3,645 km². Other regional city councils with a similar number of voters usually also have 7 councillors.

As forecasts indicate only modest population change for the council area, the panel considers it appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain unchanged. Geospatial modelling also supports keeping the existing number of councillors.

Electoral structure

After considering the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found Model 3 to be the single-councillor ward model with the best potential to promote fair and equitable representation for voters in Wangaratta Rural City Council and consequently facilitate good governance.

The panel noted the support for all 3 models published in the preliminary report and considered all to have merit. Models 1, 2 and 3 all used strong recognisable boundaries and provided representation for communities of interest in different ways:

- Model 1 maintained links to the current structure, providing continuity.
- Model 2 used roads instead of rivers to unite rural communities on either side of significant waterways.

- Model 3 accommodated changes to the urban community of the town of Wangaratta with a novel ward arrangement.

Whilst the submission by Wangaratta Rural City Council supported Model 1 because it most closely resembled the current structure, for the reasons discussed below the panel did not find the 'least change' argument convincing. The panel noted it would have been useful for the council to have discussed the other models in their submission.

The panel considered a potential drawback of both models 1 and 2 to be that the urban ward boundaries captured most, but not all, of the town of Wangaratta. Submitters generally agreed with the panel's view that residents east of Murdoch Road should not be in a rural-focused ward because they have strong connections to the town. In coming to this view, the panel considered changes in population and voter distribution in the town since the last review when the current electoral structure was introduced. While not perfect and involving a level of compromise, it felt the ward boundaries capturing the urban areas of Wangaratta in Model 3 better reflected these changes. The panel considered that a structure of 3 urban wards, 2 rural wards and 2 peri-urban wards would better support the mix of housing and land use across the council, particularly in and around the town of Wangaratta, and more likely to accommodate future change and growth.

Appin, Wareena and Yarrunga wards contain predominantly established urban areas. Bullawah Ward unites residential and commercial areas in the town of Wangaratta with semi-rural areas to the east of the town. Warby Ward is the most diverse, capturing south-west urban Wangaratta, some growth areas to the north-west, and Waldara, Wangandary, the rural township of Glenrowan and the Warby-Ovens National Park. On balance the panel felt these peri-urban wards reasonably mixed urban, urban fringe and townships near Wangaratta and provide effective representation to for communities of interest in those areas.

Model 3 also provided 2 rural-focused wards. The Ovens and King River wards contained the rural communities of the council area without having to include urban-focused communities. The panel considered these wards would provide more dedicated representation to rural interests as a result. Model 3 would also use Snow Road as a boundary for the Whorouly community, which was supported by Garrett's submission.

The panel also explored additional ward boundary changes to Model 3, including Masin's proposed change to the boundaries of Wareena and Mount Warby wards. Although this change met deviation requirements, it included an industrial zone in Wareena Ward that the panel felt was better suited Mount Warby Ward. As such, the panel decided the previously proposed boundaries provided a better fit for the communities in these wards.

The panel noted the challenge of creating a single-councillor ward structure for Wangaratta Rural City Council that both complied with the legislated +/-10% requirement and captured all relevant geographic communities within wards. Due to the uneven distribution of the population across the council area, it is also challenging for any single-councillor ward structure to comply with the +/-10% requirement beyond the 2024 local council elections.

While it is difficult to predict the number of candidates likely to stand at future elections, past election results provide some indication. The panel examined election results for Wangaratta Rural City Council, including numbers of candidates nominating, incidences of uncontested elections and rates of informal voting, and found there were relatively strong candidate numbers across the current wards. The panel assumed this trend will continue with a structure of 7 single-councillor wards, minimising the risk of uncontested or failed elections.

The panel noted valid arguments for and against the different single-councillor ward structures examined in this review. However, the panel considered Model 3 to be the single-councillor ward model with the best potential to promote fair and equitable representation for voters in Wangaratta Rural City Council and consequently facilitate good governance under the requirements of the Act.

Ward names

When considering ward names, the panel agreed with Wangaratta Rural City Council's suggestion that Ovens Ward and Warby Ward were simpler names for the wards west and east of the town of Wangaratta in Model 1. The panel applied this logic to also remove 'Mount' from the Mount Warby Ward name and 'River' from the Ovens River Ward name in Model 3. The panel also agreed with Garrett's suggestion to change the name of Warby-Ovens Ward to Ovens Ward for the ward east of the town of Wangaratta

The ward names for the panel's recommended electoral structure were based on the following:

- Appin Ward – a previously used ward name relevant to the new ward area. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register and reflects ward features such as Appin Street and Appin Primary school.
- Bullawah Ward – new name named after the Bullawah Cultural Trail in this ward. This name is registered in VICNAMES.
- King River Ward – new name based on a previous ward name. Name after King River in this ward. This name is registered in VICNAMES.
- Ovens Ward – a previously used ward name relevant to the new ward area. Named after the Ovens River in this ward. This name is registered in VICNAMES.
- Warby Ward – a previously used ward name relevant to the new ward area. Named after Mount Warby geographic feature in this ward. This name is registered in VICNAMES.
- Wareena Ward – new name based on Wareena park in the ward. This park name is registered in VICNAMES.
- Yarrunga Ward – a previously used ward name relevant to the new ward area. This named is registered in the VICNAMES register and reflects the ward feature Yarrunga Primary School.

The panel's recommendation

The electoral representation advisory panel recommends that Wangaratta Rural City Council adopt a 7 single-councillor ward structure – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 7 wards in this electoral structure are Appin Ward, Bullawah Ward, King River Ward, Ovens Ward, Warby Ward, Wareena Ward and Yarrunga Ward.

This advice is submitted to the Minister for Local Government as required by the Terms of Reference of the electoral representation advisory panel and the Act. This electoral structure was designated as Model 3 in the preliminary report.

A detailed map of the boundaries for the recommended electoral structure is provided as [Appendix 1](#).

References

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) (2023) [Catchment scale land use profile dashboard](#), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website, accessed 12 April 2023.

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [2021 Census All Person QuickStats, Wangaratta \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 30 March 2023.

—(2022b) [2021 Census All Persons QuickStats, Rest of Vic](#), ABS, accessed 30 March 2023.

—(2012) [2011 Census All Person QuickStats, Wangaratta \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 30 March 2023.

DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) (2023) [Wangaratta Planning Scheme](#), DTP, accessed 28 March 2023.

Electoral Act 2002 (Vic).

FPSR (First Peoples – State Relations) (2023) [Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners](#), First Peoples State – Relations website, accessed 2 May 2023.

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) (2023a) [Regional City of Wangaratta](#), Regional Development Victoria website, accessed 12 May 2023.

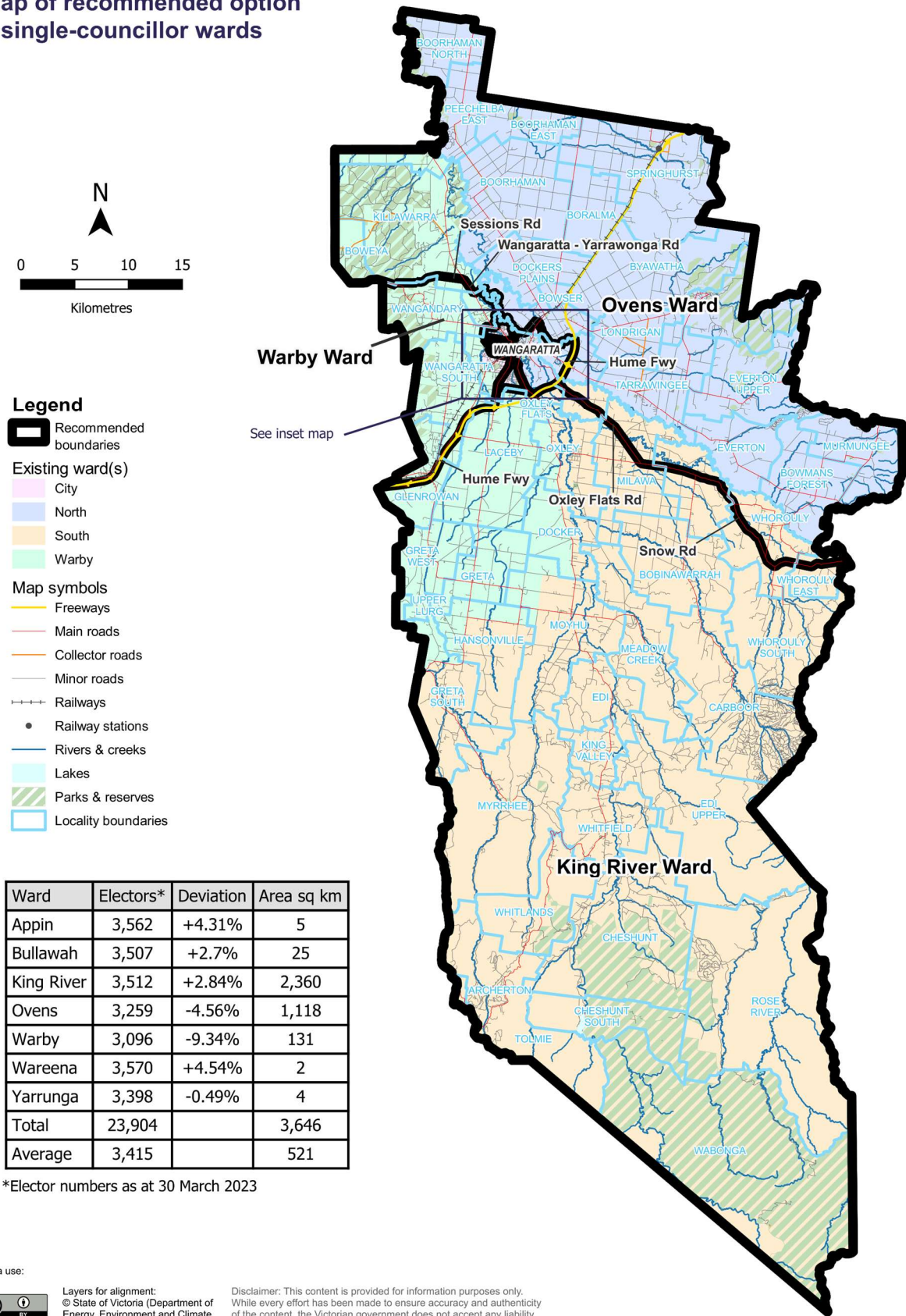
REMPLAN (2022) [Economy, Jobs and Business Insights \(Wangaratta\)](#), REMPLAN website, accessed 11 May 2023.

Wangaratta Online Mapping (2023) [Wangaratta Online Mapping \(pozi.com\), Wangaratta Rural City Council, accessed 1 August 2023.](#)

Appendix 1: Map of recommended structure

Wangaratta Rural City Council

Map of recommended option 7 single-councillor wards



Data use:



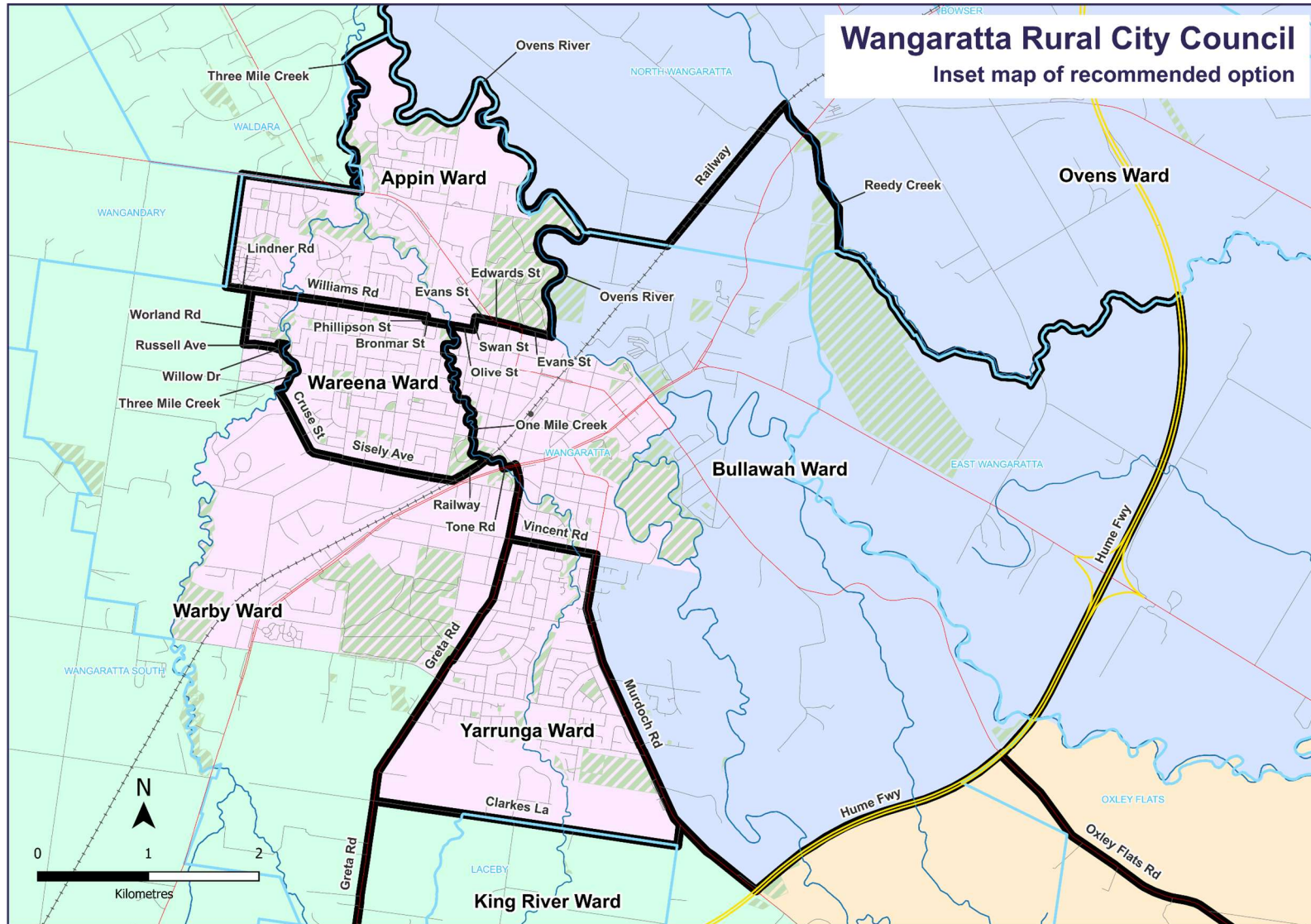
Layers for alignment:
© State of Victoria (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)

Disclaimer: This content is provided for information purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and authenticity of the content, the Victorian government does not accept any liability to any person for the information provided.

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Appin Ward	3,562	+4.31%	5
Bullawah Ward	3,507	+2.7%	25
King River Ward	3,512	+2.84%	2360
Ovens Ward	3,259	-4.56%	1118
Warby Ward	3,096	-9.34%	131
Wareena Ward	3,570	+4.54%	2
Yarrunga Ward	3,398	-0.49%	4
Total	23,904		3,646
Average	3,415		521

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023.

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



Appendix 2: Public involvement

The panel wishes to thank all submitters to the review for their participation in the review process.

Response submissions

Response submissions were made by:

Garrett, Jennifer

Masin, Michael

Pirko, Denise

Wangaratta Rural City Council

Forecast information referred to in the text of this report is based on forecasts prepared by .id – informed decisions id.com.au. .id and its licensors are the sole and exclusive owners of all rights, title and interest subsisting in that part of the report content where .id are identified. Some of .id content is a derivative of ABS Data, which can be accessed from the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics at abs.gov.au, and licensed on terms published on the ABS website.

