

Local council electoral structure review

Final Report

Hume City Council

January 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation advisory panel acknowledges the Wurundjeri 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

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1	29 December 2023	Ms Julie Eisenbise
1	22 December 2023	Mr Tim Presnell
1	20 December 2023	Ms Dana Fleming

Version approval

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Executive summary

An electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government has reviewed the electoral structure of Hume 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), Hume 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 Hume 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 Hume City Council adopt a 11 single-councillor ward structure – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 11 wards in this electoral structure are Aitken Ward, Bababi Marning Ward, Burt-kur-min Ward, Emu Creek Ward, Jacksons Hill Ward, Merlynston Creek Ward, Mount Ridley Ward, Roxburgh Park Ward, Tullamarine Ward, Woodlands Ward, Yubup 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.

Detailed maps of the boundaries for the recommended electoral structure are 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 1 November 2023 with the following electoral structure models for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2.

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

Response submissions

The panel received 18 submissions responding to the preliminary report. No submissions received included maps.

A full analysis of response submissions received can be found on [page 16](#).

Public hearing

The panel held an online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 10 am on Wednesday 29 November 2023. 5 people spoke at the hearing.

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

For Hume 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 Hume City Council had 3 members:

- Ms Julie Eisenbise (Chairperson)
- Mr Tim Presnell
- Deputy 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 VEC.

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 Hume 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.

Hume City Council was also offered and took up 2 optional methods to promote the reviews:

- social media advertisements targeted at 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 Hume 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 Hume 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 Hume 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 Hume City Council

Profile

Hume City Council is 20 km north-west of the Melbourne CBD and spans an area of about 503 km². The council sits at the rural-urban interface with Macedon Ranges and Mitchell Shire councils to its north and the metropolitan councils of Brimbank, Merri-bek and Moonee Ponds City councils to its south. It is bordered by Melton City Council to its west and Whittlesea City Council to the east, with which it shares similar characteristics including rapid population growth.

Hume is home to Tullamarine Airport, which is the main airport servicing the Greater Melbourne area. Flight corridors over the council area vary depending on wind conditions. Flights are able to operate out of Melbourne Airport without a curfew due to the large wedge of non-urbanised land which bisects the two main growth corridors in the council area. Hume City Council includes a mix of urban suburbs in the south-east, major areas of growth stretching to its northern boundaries, the satellite town of Sunbury in the north-west and large stretches of farmland throughout. Merri Creek forms a strong eastern boundary and likewise the Calder Freeway and Maribyrnong River in the west and south.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in Hume City Council are the Wurundjeri people.

Landscape

Most of the population live in the east of the council area along the Hume growth corridor, which straddles the main north-south transport routes. It includes residential, commercial and industrial areas and various existing and planned activity centres in Broadmeadows, Gladstone Park, Roxburgh Park, Craigieburn, Donnybrook (Cloverton) and Mickleham (Merrifield). The Somerton industrial zone is located along the Council's eastern boundary and is vital for Melbourne's manufacturing and shipping needs.

In the north-west of the council area, the satellite town of Sunbury is an important housing, commercial and employment centre, and a key connection point to places inside and outside Hume City Council.

The council area provides important access points to Melbourne's north via major roads like Sydney, Mickleham, Sunbury, Riddell and Lancefield roads, and freeways like the Hume Highway and the Calder and Tullamarine freeways. Hume City Council is also serviced by national freight links and the Upfield, Craigieburn and Sunbury commuter train lines.

Large areas of farmland stretch across the north and throughout much of the centre of the council and south towards Melbourne Airport. Largely uninhabited, these farming areas also include protected zones with some of Victoria's most at-risk remnant vegetation, such as various trees, grasslands, and other plant types. Notable natural features are the Organ Pipes National Park and Woodlands Historic Park in the south-east, along with several other grassland and nature reserves. Spanning the Maribyrnong and Yarra River catchments,

important waterways, such as the Deep, Emu, Jacksons, and Moonee Ponds creeks run through the council area.

Population and community

In 2021 the council area was home to 243,901 people, with Craigieburn (64,178 residents), Sunbury (38,851 residents), and Roxburgh Park (24,129 residents) the most populous suburbs (ABS 2022a, .id 2023a). Forecast to continue growing at a rate of 3% per year annum between 2022 and 2028, the population of the council area will likely approach 395,000 residents by 2041, and 420,000 once all areas marked for growth are developed (Hume City Council 2022). Most of the growth will occur along the northern half of the Hume growth corridor in Mickleham, Craigieburn, Kalkallo, Roxburgh Park and then in the west around the satellite town of Sunbury (Hume City Council 2022).

At the 2021 Census, the median age in the council was 35 years, slightly lower than that for Greater Melbourne (37 years). The council area is comprised mostly of family households, at about 80% of the total, which across Greater Melbourne is around 70% (ABS 2022; 2022a). Recent homebuyers are also more common, with about 47% of dwellings owned with mortgage compared with about 37% across Melbourne metropolitan area (ABS 2022; 2022a).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprised 0.8% of the population in 2021, similar to the rate of 0.7% recorded for Greater Melbourne overall (ABS 2022).

The population in the council area is considered very diverse, with nearly 40% of its residents born overseas and almost half speaking a language other than English at home (.id 2023a). In some areas, such as Roxburgh Park and Broadmeadows, people born overseas represent well above half the population, whereas in Sunbury less than 20% of residents were born overseas (.id 2023c). The council area is home to significant Indian, Iraqi, and Turkish communities (ABS 2022). Religious diversity is evident with the presence of Christian, Islamic, and Hindu communities (ABS 2022).

The median household weekly income of \$1,703 is significantly lower than that of Greater Melbourne overall (\$1,901) (ABS 2022a; 2022b). There are large parts of the council area where people experience social disadvantage and some suburbs, such as Roxburgh Park, Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows, are measured as the most socially disadvantaged across Melbourne and the State (ABS 2023).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Hume City Council is currently divided into 3 wards with a total of 11 councillors:

- 2 wards with 4 councillors (Aitken and Jacksons Creek wards)
- one ward with 3 councillors (Meadow Valley Ward).

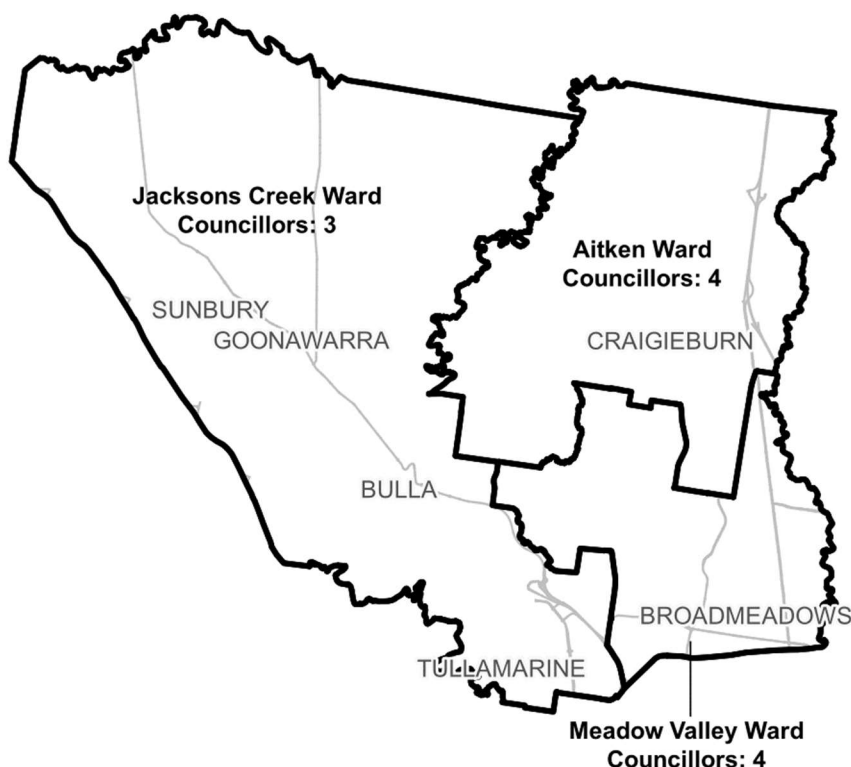


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Hume City Council.

There are approximately 170,268 voters in Hume City Council, with an approximate ratio of 15,478 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Hume City Council in 2012. 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 Hume City Council adopt a structure of 11 councillors elected from 3 wards (2 wards with 4 councillors and one ward with 3 councillors).

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2012 representation review final report.

Subdivision review

Since the 2012 representation review, the VEC also conducted a subdivision review of Hume City Council in 2020.

Subdivision reviews conducted under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) adjusted the internal ward boundaries of a council but did not change the electoral structure or number of councillors. Subdivision reviews were conducted in situations where the voter-to-councillor ratios in one or more wards of a council were forecast to move outside the legislated +/-10% tolerance before the council's next election and aimed to ensure voter-to-councillor ratios for all wards were within tolerance at the election.

The 2020 review of Hume City Council aimed to return the Aitken, Jacksons Creek and Meadow Valley wards to within the permitted +/-10% tolerance before the 2020 local council elections. Visit the [Hume City Council profile page](#) on the VEC website to access a copy of the 2020 subdivision review final report.

Preliminary report

A preliminary report was released on Wednesday 1 November 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:

After considering research and the requirements of the Act, the panel is presenting the following electoral structure models for public consultation:

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 11 councillors – 11 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1 and Model 2.

The full preliminary report is available on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au

Response submissions

The panel received 18 response submissions to the preliminary report from the public by the deadline of 5 pm on Wednesday 22 November 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 (11 single-councillor wards)	Model 2 (11 single-councillor wards)	Model 3 (11 single-councillor wards)	No preferred model indicated	Other
-	4	8	4	2

There was a good mix of support for models 2 and 3 with most supporting the latter and 2 proposing their own alternative single-councillor ward electoral structure. There were 4 submissions opposed to one or more of the proposed models.

A number of submissions supported the inclusion of Bulla within a Sunbury-based ward, mostly because they believed it had stronger historical connections westward to Sunbury rather than localities in the east of the council area.

There were 2 submissions that addressed matters outside the scope of this review.

Model 1

There were no submissions received in support of Model 1, and 3 presented arguments against its adoption. Daniel Marmion and Cr Karen Sherry both opposed Model 1 as it combined the locality of Kalkallo with north-east Craigieburn into one ward. In their view the growth area of Kalkallo and the more established part of Craigieburn were different communities with different interests and would be better served in different wards. Chris O'Neill also opposed Model 1, arguing it would potentially reduce representation in Sunbury from 3 councillors to 2. He also opposed the other models for the same reason.

Model 2

There were 4 submissions in support of Model 2, all from localities in the south-east of the council area, such Broadmeadows, Jacana, Meadow Heights, and Roxburgh Park. The submissions generally argued that Model 2 used the strongest features for ward boundaries and had well-defined wards overall which would best represent the communities within them. Another submission supported Model 2 because it placed Broadmeadows in a ward with more parkland than of any of the other proposed models.

The 4 submissions opposing Model 2 included Marmion and O'Neill, who both argued against Model 2 for the same reasons that they opposed Model 1. Cr Sherry and Solanki each viewed

Model 2 as inferior as it split Broadmeadows, a major activity centre and community of interest, across multiple wards.

Model 3

A total of 8 submitters supported Model 3. Most submitters in favour of this model came from the eastern half of the council area, such as Craigieburn (5 submitters) and Broadmeadows (2 submitters). The submission from Hume City Council also expressed qualified support for Model 3, as did Evan Mulholland MP, whose electorate includes most of the eastern half of the council area.

The main arguments in favour of Model 3 were that it would most likely foster good governance and effective representation. Model 3 captures Broadmeadows within a single ward, accommodates projected growth in the north-east of the council area, and captures the older and more established parts of Craigieburn in one ward. More generally, submitters considered Model 3 to be preferred in terms of meeting the legislated +/-10% tolerance requirement.

As was the case with Models 1 and 2, O'Neill opposed Model 3 with the view it would potentially reduce representation for Sunbury from 3 councillors to 2. Another submitter held the view that Model 3 could be improved with the inclusion of Bulla within one of the Sunbury-based wards.

Other options

Two submitters felt the panel had not adequately considered all possible single-councillor ward structures and believed the number of councillors should be increased to enable the creation of wards more reflective of geographic communities. O'Neill proposed a 12 single-councillor ward structure with 3 Sunbury-based wards and a new Tullamarine Ward.

Cr Kurt proposed a move to a 12 single-councillor ward structure to enable councillors to better represent the diverse population of Hume City Council. The submission argued that Hume is significantly diverse with many migrant and refugee communities, areas of socio-economic disadvantage, and is also undergoing rapid population growth which would be better managed by 12 councillors rather than the 11 proposed in the models.

However, the panel examined similar models during the preparation of the preliminary report and found them unsuitable, largely because there was a risk the wards in the structure would move outside the legislated +/-10% tolerance before the 2024 local council elections and did not capture communities of interest as effectively as the 11-councillor models.

Ward names

The panel received 4 submissions that proposed ward names different to those put forward in the preliminary models. Submitters also provided general suggestions to the panel on the type of names that should be considered. This included the suggestion to include Aboriginal names where possible, to use ward names based on towns or localities, to use ward names that are familiar and historical in the council, and to avoid locality-based names as they may alienate residents of wards not named after their township.

Of the 4 submissions that provided ward names, the panel received 2 submissions about possible ward names that use Aboriginal language. The panel includes these for the Minister's information but notes that it was not possible to verify whether appropriate consultation took place with relevant Aboriginal groups about the proposed names:

Kalkallo, Merri Merri, Willam Balluk

Public hearing

The panel held an online public hearing for those wishing to speak about their response submission at 10 am on Wednesday 29 November 2023. 5 people spoke at the hearing. Phillip Rowan was scheduled to address the panel but was unable to speak at the hearing. The panel would like to acknowledge this and note that Mr Rowan's submission was reviewed and given the same weight and consideration as those of the speakers and all other submitters.

You can find a list of people who spoke at the hearing in [Appendix 2](#).

Tom Burgess spoke on behalf of Evan Mulholland MP, member for the Northern Metropolitan Region. He offered qualified support to Model 3, noting that it produced the most convenient boundaries and approved of the way the panel had incorporated Aboriginal names for wards.

Burgess noted 2 main areas of concern with model:

- That Sunbury would potentially lose representation under the single-councillor ward structure as the area is represented by 3 councillors under the existing structure.
- The ward capturing Kalkallo and the north-eastern portion of Craigieburn sought to combine 2 communities with different, potentially conflicting interests.

Burgess argued that the high growth area of Kalkallo had a stronger connection with neighbouring Mickleham than the more established areas of Craigieburn and encouraged the panel to explore the option of combining those communities into a single ward. Following questions from the panel, he believed that the locality of Bulla seemed to have a stronger connection to Sunbury than to localities in the east of the council. Burgess emphasised that Sunbury and Bulla are not part of Mr Mulholland's electorate and therefore he has no specialised knowledge on the matter.

Keith Notley, a long-time Hume resident, viewed Model 2 as the best option to represent the different communities within the council. He stated that the council contains a mix of urban areas, rural areas, established suburbs and newer growth areas and Model 2 would capture those communities well. Notley argued that the high growth in Hume meant that older, more 'traditional' suburbs undergoing renewal rather than growth are being overlooked under the existing structure, and Model 2 would ensure these areas are better represented. When prompted by the panel on the issue of representation for Sunbury, Notley stated that Sunbury had long seen itself as separate to the rest of the council and the adequacy of their representation was an ongoing issue for them. When questioned about ward names, he encouraged the panel to consider Aboriginal names where possible but to avoid names that are unfamiliar or hard to pronounce as that would weaken the links that communities had to their wards.

Kendrea Pope, representing Hume City Council, supported the number of councillors in each model proposed by the panel, in keeping with other councils of similar population size. She expressed a preference for keeping suburbs intact, arguing they were established communities of interest that should be kept together. For this reason, Model 3 was supported with the view it

was the best at keeping communities of interest together. Support for Model 3 was also based on the proviso that the panel explore options to keep Bulla together within a Sunbury-based ward. Pope also queried the voter projections used in model calculations, which Pope would have liked detailed in the preliminary report.

Pope was also critical of the approach the panel used to propose ward names. It was argued that in the council's view, ward names should establish a connection and community understanding of place, and the mix of locality-based names, feature-based names and Aboriginal-language names was not seen as ideal. Pope argued for a single consistent methodology be applied for ward names and to avoid using locality-based names that may alienate smaller communities if they are grouped within a ward named after a different locality.

Pope stated that the use of Aboriginal names was supported by the council, but only if meaningful consultation was undertaken beforehand. While acknowledging the names proposed by the panel were registered in VICNAMES, Pope argued that further community consultation was needed. When asked about alternative ward names, Pope stated that the council did not put forward any alternatives but noted that there should be a community link to a common feature.

Cr Kurt, speaking in a private capacity, spoke in favour of his own alternative proposal which modelled a 12 single-councillor ward structure. Cr Kurt argued that 12 councillors was warranted to manage the workload of a council that is experiencing rapid growth, with a very diverse population containing a mix of urban and rural communities, as well areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage. In his view, if other interface councils were potentially increasing to 12 councillors, then Hume City Council should also move to 12. When prompted on the unique needs that justified an increase in councillor numbers, Cr Kurt noted that the council has 2 growth corridors to manage, a high refugee intake, and residents with low English proficiency and higher social needs.

In terms of ward names, Cr Kurt advocated for the use of town centres to create ward names that residents can easily identify with. He was not opposed to the use of Aboriginal-language names but cautioned that they could be confusing for some residents, especially those with low English proficiency.

When questioned which of the preliminary models put forward for public consultation was preferred Cr Kurt identified Model 3 as the most suitable but suggested some adjustments to keep communities of interest together. He suggested that Kalkallo and Mickleham have more in common and form a better community of interest than a combination of with Craigieburn. Cr Kurt also suggested the localities of Meadow Heights and Attwood would not identify with communities in Tullamarine Ward and therefore should not be included in that ward.

Cr Sherry, also speaking in a private capacity, argued that keeping communities of interest together was the most important consideration in the review process. For this reason, Cr Sherry supported Model 3 as it would keep Broadmeadows in a single ward and also in the same ward as Jacana, which she viewed as having traditional ties. Cr Sherry approved of the creation of a

ward for Tullamarine and the airport and believed the Aitken East and West wards created a neater division in the established areas of Craigieburn. Similar to Pope (representing the council) Cr Sherry supported a consistent approach to ward names and supported either the use of Aboriginal-language names for all wards or none. She noted that Aboriginal-language ward names may be difficult for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to pronounce and connect with. When questioned by the panel on the ward boundaries in the north of the municipality, Cr Sherry noted that while there were no models that perfectly divided the north and accommodated for projected growth, Model 3 would make it easier for elected representatives to cover. She also noted that while the township of Bulla has a farming connection with Greenvale, it has historically been grouped with Sunbury.

Findings and recommendation

The panel notes that there was strong opposition expressed in public submissions against the move to a single-councillor ward structure, and that many submitters felt a multi-councillor ward structure would better reflect and capture communities of interest.

The panel identified opposition to wards grouping ‘newer’, growing localities with ‘older’, more established areas. The panel notes that concerted efforts were made to capture and group similar communities of interest. However, high and uneven population growth within the council made it necessary to combine newer and growing areas with more established ones to stabilise the projected ward deviations in each of the proposed structures.

The panel also observed that some submitters expressed strong concern about reducing the number of councillors representing Sunbury. While the panel considered this when reviewing the proposed models, the uneven population distribution and growth in the council did not make it possible to create 3 single-councillor wards for the Sunbury area that would adhere to the +/- 10% deviation requirement.

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 to be within +/-10% of the average number of voters per councillor for all wards in the council area. 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.

The panel also noted concern in various submissions that meaningful consultation with local Wurundjeri groups had not been undertaken to ensure proposed ward names of Woi wurrung origin were adequate. The panel would like to note that the timeline for the electoral structure review presented a barrier to conducting such meaningful and significant consultation with the appropriate local Wurundjeri body. However, the panel reiterates that local councils can conduct such consultation and present their own findings and make ward name recommendations directly to the Minister for Local Government.

Number of councillors

After considering the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found 11 councillors to be an appropriate number for Hume City Council.

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

Hume City Council currently has 170,268 voters represented by 11 councillors and covers an area of 503 km². Other interface councils with a similar number of voters usually also have 11 councillors.

In some cases, a local council may have special circumstances that support a recommendation for fewer or more councillors. The panel did not identify any new circumstances for Hume City Council since the representation review in 2012. The panel recognised that an uneven distribution of voters across the council area, along with high population growth in the north-east, makes developing a satisfactory single-councillor ward structure to support good governance for Hume City Council challenging.

The panel considered Mayor Cr Kurt's suggestion for an increase to a 12 single-councillor ward structure as a possibility to provide for better representation of the diversity and geography of the council. Ultimately, the panel concluded that the council's population growth between the time of the review and the 2024 local council elections was not forecast to occur at a rate that would justify an increase to 12 councillors at this point in time. However, this increase may be justified in future reviews.

Electoral structure

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

The panel decided that when compared to models 1 and 2, Model 3 had the most compact wards that also reflected communities of interest. Model 3 also received the most support and the least opposition in the response submissions. This was largely due to its complete capture of Broadmeadows within one ward and the greater likelihood of effective representation for communities under Model 3 compared to the other models. Additionally, the panel deemed Model 3 the most amenable to incorporating public feedback and suggestions for change.

The panel also considered suggested ward boundary adjustments put forward in public submissions and made changes to the structure of the proposed Model 3 as a result. A large portion of submissions opposed grouping a newer, fast-growing locality like Kalkallo with a more established area like Craigieburn. Many of these submitters suggested it would be more suitable to group Kalkallo with Mickleham. In response to this feedback, the panel has created a new Yubup Ward which runs horizontally from Deep Creek to Merri Creek and follows the Sydenham-South Morang National Electricity Transmission line as its southern border. This change facilitates the creation of a horizontal Mount Ridley Ward directly south to group parts of Yuroke, Mickleham and Craigieburn using the southern boundaries of the former Gaayip-Yagila and Yubup wards in Model 3.

The panel also identified robust support in submissions for integrating Bulla, in its entirety, into a ward with Sunbury. As a result, the panel has adjusted the ward boundary of the proposed Jacksons Hill Ward east to follow the locality boundary of, and completely integrate, the

township of Bulla. To accommodate this change, the panel has also shifted the boundary of Jacksons Hill Ward north to Emu Creek, Gellies Road and Lancefield Road. This change emulates the boundaries between Calder and Mount Holden wards in models 1 and 2.

When making its final decision, the panel also identified an additional improvement that it wished to make to the boundaries of Model 3. The panel noted that in the preliminary model, a group of 124 electors along the Broad Street Drain boundary within the original Tullamarine Ward would be more appropriately placed within Merlynston Creek Ward. Residents in this area are only able to access the rest of the proposed Tullamarine Ward via a walking-track, and as such the panel considered it appropriate to include these electors in Merlynston Creek Ward which is accessible by road.

The panel notes that it was challenging to model an electoral structure for Hume City Council that groups communities of interest adequately in wards and complies with the Act. It was also challenging to account for uneven population growth and distribution between the localities west of Deep Creek, suburbs in the south and growth areas in the north-east. These factors contributed to increased complexity when creating wards that could comply with the +/-10% requirement through to and beyond the 2024 local council elections. The panel were required to set the current ward deviation for Yubup Ward outside the +/-10% range to account for forecast population change and increase the likelihood that all wards will be within the +/-10% range at the time of the 2024 election. The panel also acknowledges that, despite best efforts to ensure compliance with the +/-10% requirement, there remains a small risk that some wards may be outside +/-10% at the time of the election due to the volatility of population growth within the council.

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

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 past election results for Hume City Council including numbers of candidates nominating, incidences of uncontested elections and rates of informal voting. It found there to have been relatively strong candidate numbers across the council area/all wards under the current electoral structure. The panel assumes this trend will continue under a structure of 11 single-councillor wards, minimising the risk of uncontested or failed elections under this structure.

Ward names

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

- Aitken Ward: Existing ward name under the current electoral structure. Named for John Aitken.

- Bababi Marning Ward: New name based on a grassland in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register. Bababi Marning means ‘mother’s hand’ in the Woi wurrung language.
- Burt-kur-min Ward: New name based on a park in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register. Burt-kur-min means ‘calm’ in the Woi wurrung language.
- Emu Creek Ward: New name based on a creek in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Jacksons Hill Ward: New name based on a neighbourhood and park in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Merlynston Creek Ward: New name based on a creek in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Mount Ridley Ward: New name based on a natural feature in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Roxburgh Park Ward: New name based on the locality of Roxburgh Park. The entire locality is situated within the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Tullamarine Ward: New name based on a locality in the ward. The Tullamarine Freeway runs through the ward ending at Tullamarine Airport, colloquially known as Melbourne. Tullamarine is derived from the Woi wurrung word Tullamareena. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Woodlands Ward: New name based on the Woodlands Historic Park that is located in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register.
- Yubup Ward: New name based on a school in the ward. This name is registered in the VICNAMES register. Yubup means ‘parakeet’ in the Woi wurrung language.

The panel considered several ward names proposed in submissions when finalising the recommended model. In response to public feedback, the following changes were made to the ward names presented in preliminary Model 3:

- Aitken Ward replaces Aitken East Ward
- Burt-kur-min Ward replaces Aitken West Ward
- Jacksons Hill Ward replaces Calder Ward
- Yubup Ward replaces Gaayip-Yagila Ward.

The panel's recommendation

The electoral representation advisory panel recommends that Hume City Council adopt an 11 single-councillor ward structure – 11 wards with one councillor per ward.

The recommended names for the 11 wards in this electoral structure are Aitken Ward, Bababi Marning Ward, Burt-kur-min Ward, Emu Creek Ward, Jacksons Hill Ward, Merlynston Creek Ward, Mount Ridley Ward, Roxburgh Park Ward, Tullamarine Ward, Woodlands Ward, and Yubup 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, and incorporating the amendments outlined in this report.

Detailed maps of the boundaries for the recommended electoral structure are provided as [Appendix 1](#).

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [Hume 2021 Census All persons QuickStats](#), ABS, accessed 1 September 2023.

—(2022b) [Greater Melbourne 2021 Census All persons QuickStats](#), ABS, accessed 1 September 2023.

—(2023) [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas \(SEIFA\), Australia, Suburbs and Localities, Indexes, SEIFA 2021](#), ABS, accessed 1 September 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)

Hume City Council (2023) [Hume planning scheme](#), Hume City Council, accessed 1 September 2023.

.id (informed decisions) (2023) [Hume City, Community profile](#), .id, accessed 1 September 2023.

—(2023a) [Hume City, Locality snapshots](#), .id, accessed 1 September 2023.















—(2023b) [Hume City, Need for assistance](#), .id, accessed 1 September 2023.

—(2023c) [City of Hume, People born overseas](#), .id, accessed 1 September 2023.

Appendix 1: Map of recommended structure

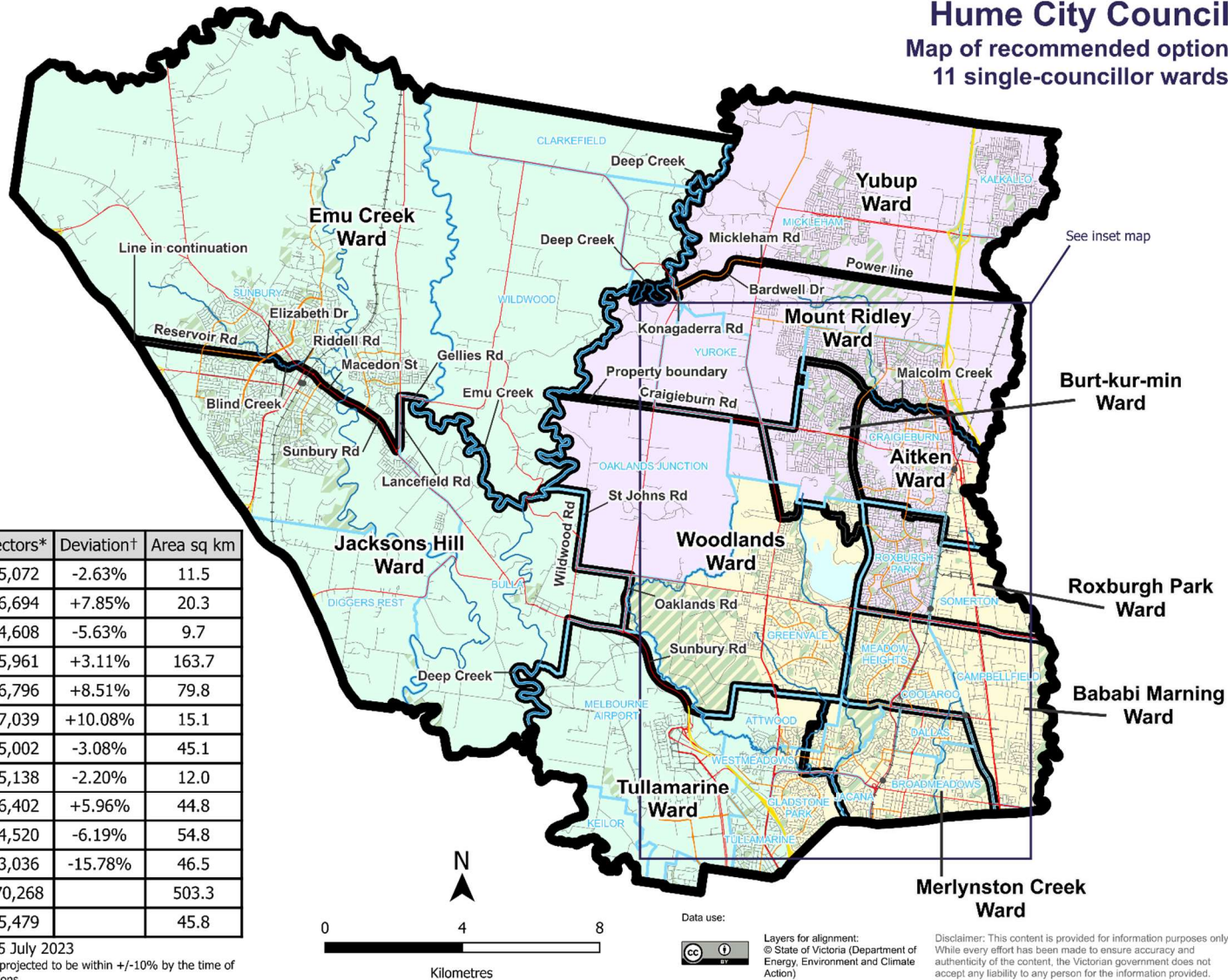
Hume City Council Map of recommended option 11 single-councillor wards

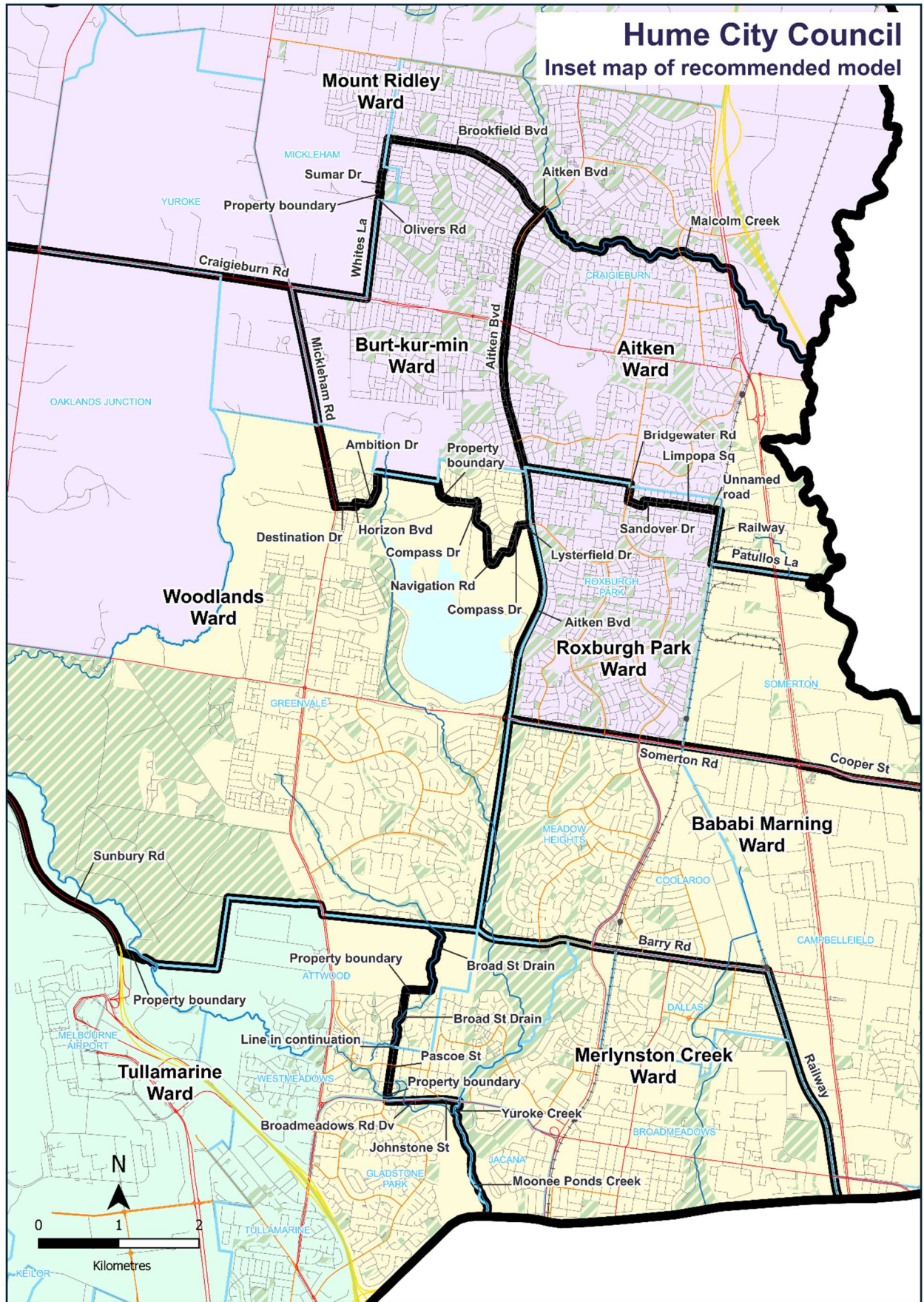
Legend

-  Recommended boundaries
- Existing ward(s)
-  Aitken
-  Jacksons Creek
-  Meadow Valley
- Map Symbols
-  Freeways
-  Main roads
-  Collector roads
-  Minor roads
-  Railways
-  Railway stations
-  Rivers & creeks
-  Lakes
-  Parks & reserves
-  Locality boundaries

Ward	Electors*	Deviation†	Area sq km
Aitken	15,072	-2.63%	11.5
Bababi Marning	16,694	+7.85%	20.3
Burt-Kur-Min	14,608	-5.63%	9.7
Emu Creek	15,961	+3.11%	163.7
Jacksons Hill	16,796	+8.51%	79.8
Merlynston Creek	17,039	+10.08%	15.1
Mount Ridley	15,002	-3.08%	45.1
Roxburgh Park	15,138	-2.20%	12.0
Tullamarine	16,402	+5.96%	44.8
Woodlands	14,520	-6.19%	54.8
Yubup	13,036	-15.78%	46.5
Total	170,268		503.3
Average	15,479		45.8

*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023
 †The deviations of all wards are projected to be within +/-10% by the time of the 2024 local government elections.





Data for recommended structure

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Tullamarine	16,402	+5.96%	44.8
Woodlands	14,520	-6.19%	54.9
Yubup	13,036	-15.78%	46.3
Total	170,268	-	503
Average	15,479	-	45.7

*Elector numbers at 25 July 2023

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

#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 and speakers at the public hearing for their participation in the review process.

Response submissions

Response submissions were made by:

Ageed, Sahar

Dance, Trevor (Councillor, Hume City Council)

Di Biase, Phillip

Fargher, Maria

Hume City Council

Jayaraman, Srimanthi

Kurt, Naim (Mayor, Hume City Council)

Marmion, Daniel

Mulholland, Evan MP

Notley, Keith

Nunn, Casey

O'Neill, Chris

Rowan, Phillip

Sasikumar, Srinivasan

Shah, Shahnoor

Sherry, Karen (Councillor, Hume City Council)

Solanki, Suraj

Tam, Bienne

Public hearing

The following people spoke at the public hearing:

Burgess, Tom (on behalf of Evan Mulholland MP)

Kurt, Naim (Mayor, Hume City Council)

Notley, Keith

Pope, Kendrea (on behalf of Hume City Council)

Sherry, Karen (Councillor, Hume City Council)

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