

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Mount Alexander Shire Council

March 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

The electoral representation review panel acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which it is holding this review and pays respects to ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging. The panel acknowledges their custodianship for many thousands of years and their continuing living culture.

Document history and version control

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Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government has reviewed the structure of Mount Alexander Shire Council.

The panel looked at:

- whether the council had an appropriate number of councillors
- whether it should be unsubdivided or subdivided.

This report outlines the preliminary models that the panel is presenting for the proposed new electoral structure of Mount Alexander Shire Council to meet the requirements of Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).

More information about the background to the reviews is available on [page 5](#).

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
- public submissions (see below).

More information on the way the panel decided on the models is available on [page 6](#).

Preliminary submissions

The panel received 5 preliminary submissions. Of these, no submissions included maps.

A full analysis of submissions received can be found on [page 11](#).

Electoral structure models

The panel is presenting the following electoral structure models for further public consultation:

Model 1: an unsubdivided electoral structure with 7 councillors.

Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 8 councillors, 4 wards and 2 councillors per ward.

Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 8 councillors, 8 wards and 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 electoral structure models. You can make a response submission to these models until Wednesday 19 April 2023. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public hearing on Friday 28 April 2023. Following this, it will present its final recommendation to the Minister by Wednesday 24 May 2023.

More information about the review process is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Background

About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government formed 2 electoral representation advisory panels to review the electoral structures of 39 local councils, under section 16 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). If the Minister accepts the electoral structures the panels recommend, they will take effect at the October 2024 elections.

The Act introduced several changes to local government representation, including the types of electoral structures local councils may have. Large and small rural shire councils (including Mount Alexander Shire Council) can have one of 3 electoral structures:

- unsubdivided (entire council area with no wards)
- single-councillor wards
- multi-councillor wards with the same number of councillors per ward.

For Mount Alexander Shire Council, the electoral representation advisory panel is examining:

- the number of councillors
- whether the council should be subdivided into wards or unsubdivided.

For subdivided structures, it is also examining:

- the number of wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the name of each ward
- how many councillors should be elected for each ward.

The Act requires electoral structures to provide fair and equitable representation and facilitate good governance. For subdivided structures, each ward must have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor (within +/-10% of the average).

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel conducting the electoral structure review of Mount Alexander Shire Council has 3 members:

- Ms Julie Eisenbise (Chairperson)
- Mr Tim Presnell
- Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Ms Dana Fleming (Electoral Commissioner delegate).

The panel is independent of councils and the 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

To educate and inform the public about the Mount Alexander Shire Council electoral structure review, the VEC began a public information program in mid-December 2022. The VEC:

- printed public notices in state-wide newspapers
- held public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- sent out media releases to announce the start of the review
- published information on its social media channels
- provided updated website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - information on the review process
 - submission guides and fact sheets for each council under review with background information
 - preliminary submissions from the public.

The VEC will continue to promote the review during the response submissions stage via media releases, the VEC's social media channels and updated content on the VEC website.

Public consultation

The panel encouraged public input to the review of Mount Alexander Shire Council via preliminary submissions at the start of the review. The panel now invites further input via:

- response submissions to this preliminary report
- an online public hearing to provide anyone who makes a response submission the opportunity to expand on their submission.

Public submissions are an important part of the review process but the panel also considers other factors during a review. These are outlined below.

Developing recommendations

The panel's electoral structure models presented 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 factors
- rates or patterns of population and voter growth or decline 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 from the public in written submissions during the preliminary submissions phase.

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 to determine the number of councillors a council needs. 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 number of councillors Mount Alexander Shire Council should have, the panel considered these factors:

- 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, metropolitan, interface, regional city, large rural shire, small rural shire)
- 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
- if a particular type of electoral structure best suits the council (see 'Deciding the electoral structure' below)
- any matter raised in public submissions not already listed above.

Generally, local councils with a larger number of voters will have a higher number of councillors. Large populations are often more likely to 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 particular circumstances of a 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

The electoral structure of large and small rural shire councils can be:

- unsubdivided (entire council area with no wards)
 - made up of single-councillor wards
- or
- made up of multi-councillor wards with the same number of councillors per ward.

When developing electoral structure models for Mount Alexander Shire Council, the panel considered these main 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 can be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- 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 any 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.

The panel recommends structures that will comply with section 15(2) at the October 2024 local council elections and uses current voter numbers and forecasts of population and voter change to assess this with as much accuracy as possible. In some cases, population changes and other factors mean it is not possible for a subdivided electoral structure to comply with section 15(2) based on current voter numbers. If this occurs, compliance at the 2024 local government elections will be the priority to ensure each vote has approximately equal value.

About Mount Alexander Shire Council

Profile

Mount Alexander Shire Council is in central Victoria and covers an area of 1,530 km². It is bounded by the City of Greater Bendigo and Loddon Shire in the north, Hepburn Shire in the south, Macedon Ranges and Mitchell shires in the east, and Central Goldfields Shire in the west.

The Traditional Custodians of the Mount Alexander area are the Dja Dja Wurrung people.

Landscape

Major geographic features of the shire are the eponymous Mount Alexander, Mount Tarrengower, and the Loddon and Coliban Rivers. Castlemaine Diggings National Park can be found in the south of the shire.

The major population centre is Castlemaine, which contains roughly half the shire's population (including Campbells Creek). The gold rush town of Maldon, with its population of 1,381, is the second largest town in the shire. Other small towns are Harcourt, Newstead, and Guilford.

Mount Alexander Shire is serviced by the Calder Highway which runs south-east to north-west, connecting Melbourne with Bendigo. The Bendigo railway line runs through the shire, stopping at Castlemaine and other towns. It operates both passenger and freight trains and is a major railway corridor for north-western Victoria.

Community

At the 2021 Census, Mount Alexander Shire had a population of 20,253, an increase from 18,761 in 2016 and 17,591 in 2011 (ABS, 2016; ABS 2011). Between 2022-2028, the shire's population is projected to grow by a rate of 0.7% per annum.

Of the population, 80.5% were born in Australia, and 87% speak only English at home (ABS, 2021a). The proportion of the population identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people at the 2021 census was 1.3%, below the overall proportion of 2% for regional Victoria.

Manufacturing is a key industry within the shire, accounting for 19% of all jobs. Other major employment areas are healthcare and social assistance (15%), public administration and safety (10%), retail trade (10%), construction (9%), education and training (7%), and accommodation and food services (6%) (ABS, 2021a). Harcourt, in the shire's north, is a major centre for apple production, with 40% of the state's apples coming from the area (Department of Transport and Planning, 2022, p. 10).

Home ownership is common in Mount Alexander, with 48.5% owning their property outright, and a further 33.4% owning with a mortgage (ABS, 2021a). This is compared to the regional Victoria rate of 39.3% outright ownership, and 33.2% owned with a mortgage. Fewer people rent (15%) in Mount Alexander than in regional Victoria overall (23.6%) (ABS, 2021b).

The median weekly income is \$1,252, slightly lower than the regional median of \$1,386 (ABS, 2021b).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Mount Alexander Shire Council is currently divided into 5 wards with a total of 7 councillors:

- one ward with 3 councillors (Castlemaine)
- 4 wards with one councillor each (Calder, Coliban, Loddon River, and Tarrengower wards).

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Mount Alexander Shire Council in 2011. 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 Mount Alexander Shire Council continue to consist of 7 councillors elected from 5 wards (one ward with 3 councillors and 4 wards with one councillor each).

Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au to access a copy of the 2011 representation review final report.

Preliminary submissions

The panel received 5 preliminary submissions from the public by the deadline of 5 pm on Wednesday 1 March 2023. You can view these submissions on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au and find a list of people or organisations who made a submission in [Appendix 3](#).

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

	Unsubdivided structure	Single-councillor wards	Multi-councillor wards	Subdivided structure (unspecified)	No comment on structure
Decreased number of councillors	-	-	-	-	-
Maintain current councillor number	2	2	-	-	-
Increased number of councillors	-	-	1	-	-
No comment on number of councillors	-	-	-	-	-

Number of councillors

Of the 5 submissions received the majority favoured maintaining the current number of councillors with only one suggesting an increase in councillor numbers.

Maintaining 7 councillors

There was significant public support for retaining the current number of councillors, with 4 of 5 public submissions advocating for this position. Most of these submitters appeared content with the status quo and believed that 7 councillors worked well for the shire. In support of retaining 7 councillors, Mount Alexander Shire Council stated ‘this number allows for a fair and equitable representation of the various communities of interest’ and is ‘similar representation to other comparable councils.’

Increasing to 9 councillors

One submitter proposed increasing councillor numbers to 9 to allow for a multi-councillor ward structure comprising 3 wards with 3 councillors in each, and to ensure the shire’s rural areas would have more representation.

Reducing councillors

There were no submissions proposing a decrease in councillor numbers.

Electoral structure

There were differing opinions in the public submissions about the most appropriate electoral structure for Mount Alexander Shire Council. Submissions were split between advocating for single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards or an unsubdivided structure.

Unsubdivided

Two submitters proposed an unsubdivided structure and argued this might decrease perceived parochialism and create shire-wide accountability. One submitter favoured an unsubdivided structure as they felt the current structure created disparities between wards due to there being an unequal number of councillors per ward. Another submitter argued the diversity of interests throughout the shire would be better represented in an unsubdivided structure. Both suggested an unsubdivided structure would provide voters with a larger pool of candidates to choose from at election time than is currently the case under the existing ward-based structure.

Single-councillor wards

Two submitters proposed a single-councillor ward structure. One suggested this structure would foster greater councillor accountability, contending that single-councillor wards meant that each councillor would be responsible for their own workload.

Mount Alexander Shire Council contended strongly that a single-councillor ward structure would be the best way to provide representation for the shire's main township and its multiple satellite towns, all of which had a different focus and varying representation needs. It expressed reservations that an unsubdivided structure might lead to the centralisation of councillors and 'therefore may not reflect the diversity of the Shire's community.'

Multi-councillor wards

One submitter proposed a multi-councillor ward structure, consisting of 3 wards with 3 councillors each. The proposal had wards representing the rural east, the rural west, and a more urban ward covering Castlemaine. The submitter suggested this ward structure would work best to capture the representation needs of the shire's rural communities, as distinct from those with an urban focus. While noting that rural areas have their own needs, this submitter suggested the current system created too much rural division, and proposed that the shire's rural areas be divided into larger wards.

Preliminary findings and models

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found 7 or 8 councillors to be an appropriate number for Mount Alexander Shire Council.

The panel considered the characteristics of Mount Alexander Shire Council in relation to similar rural shire councils, including its size and geography, population and the number and distribution of voters across the shire.

Similar rural shire councils to Mount Alexander Shire Council						
Local council	Area (km ²)	Number of voters at 2020 election	Population (2021 Census)	Current total estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor
Moira Shire	4,046	24,290	30,522	24,974	9	2,775
Colac Otway Shire	3,438	19,697	22,423	20,060	7	2,866
Golden Plains Shire	2,703	18,643	24,985	19,702	7	2,815
Glenelg Shire	6,219	16,862	20,152	17,061	7	2,437
Mount Alexander Shire	1,530	16,507	20,253	16,923	7	2,418
Hepburn Shire*	1,473	14,858	16,604	16,283	7	2,326
Moyne Shire	5,482	14,531	17,374	14,375	7	2,054
Indigo Shire	2,041	13,968	17,368	14,279	7	2,040
Murrindindi Shire	3,880	13,651	15,197	14,231	7	2,033

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

Maintaining 7 councillors

The panel considered retaining 7 councillors to be an appropriate option. This was due to this being the option of least change, as well as factors related to the area of the shire and its population compared to other councils with 7 councillors (seen in the table above). There was also support for maintaining the current number of councillors in public submissions.

Increasing councillor numbers

Increasing councillor numbers was also considered appropriate if it enabled a favourable single- or multi-councillor ward structure for the shire. The Act stipulates that an electoral structure with multi-councillor wards must have an equal number of councillors in each ward, which is not possible with 7 councillors. There was also some support in submissions for an increase in councillor numbers.

As the panel must consider communities of interest when developing viable and robust ward structures, the drawbacks of proposing an even number or changing the number of councillors should be balanced with the benefits of a particular ward structure. Considering the distinct communities of interest in Mount Alexander Shire Council, the panel felt a subdivided electoral structure might benefit community representation and that 8 councillors could be justified on the basis that it provided for a suitable subdivided electoral structure for the shire.

Additionally, Mount Alexander Shire sits at the high end of shires with 7 councillors, with a current voter-to-councillor ratio of 2,418. While not at the very top of the shires with 7 councillors, the shire is growing, and it was considered that an increase to 8 councillors may be justified.

Reducing councillor numbers

The panel found that reducing councillor numbers was not warranted. This was due to the relative councillor numbers compared to other shires, the lack of support for this in public submissions, and the lack of any viable subdivided models based on 5 or 6 councillors. As such, the panel considered there to be no special or compelling reasons for Mount Alexander Shire Council to reduce its councillor numbers.

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 Mount Alexander Shire Council, public submissions, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and which models best offered fair and equitable representation.

In developing the preliminary models presented in this report, a range of models were considered. The strongest 3 models have been put forward for further public comment.

The panel proposes 3 models for the consideration of the Mount Alexander Shire Council community:

- an unsubdivided electoral structure (Model 1)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 4 wards, with 2 councillors per ward (Model 2)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 8 single-councillor wards (Model 3).

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

Unsubdivided structure (Model 1)

Under this model, Mount Alexander Shire Council would adopt an unsubdivided electoral structure, represented by 7 councillors. This model maintains the current number of councillors, had support in public submissions, would not involve the possibility of dividing towns and communities arbitrarily, and would remove any need to balance voter numbers across wards. An unsubdivided structure may also foster a greater shire-wide perspective in council business.

While unsubdivided structures may result in an increase in voter informality in cases where large numbers of candidates appear on the ballot paper, Mount Alexander Shire Council has had relatively low voter informality at past elections.

In acknowledging concerns that an unsubdivided structure could lead to a concentration of candidates in major towns the panel noted firstly, in an unsubdivided structure, elections are held using the proportional representation system. This means that there is a 'quota' of votes that a candidate needs to meet to be elected. A sufficiently strong candidate (or candidates) from the shire's rural areas would only need to achieve this vote quota to be elected. Furthermore, it was noted that a candidate does not need to live in the ward they are nominating for. At the last council election, 12 of the 18 shire-wide candidates resided in the Castlemaine area, and a candidate residing outside Loddon River Ward was elected to represent the ward. As such, having subdivided wards does not necessarily guarantee local representation or that the elected councillor will reside in the local area.

The panel gave serious consideration to the shire's communities of interest, namely Castlemaine and the various rural areas. However, it felt that an unsubdivided structure could still adequately provide representation for Castlemaine, as well as smaller towns and localities. Finally, an unsubdivided electoral structure may address the history of uncontested elections for some wards in the shire. As such, the panel was interested in gauging the public response to such a proposal.

Multi-councillor ward structure (Model 2)

Under this model, Mount Alexander Shire Council would adopt a 4-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by 2 councillors, in line with the requirement of the Act for there to be the same number of councillors per ward.

The panel found this model had many benefits, such as containing Castlemaine entirely in 2 relatively even wards, while giving the rural areas 2 wards. This would provide an even split of councillor numbers representing or elected from Castlemaine and the shire's rural areas. Furthermore, this model might help to address uncontested elections in the shire.

The proposed ward boundaries were considered to be strong and recognisable. For example, the 2 rural ward boundaries are kept largely the same as the current structure; the current Tarrengower and Loddon River wards are combined into a new western rural ward, and the current Calder and Coliban wards are combined into a new eastern rural ward. These use as many of the current boundaries as possible and introduce new boundaries that are clear and logical. As such, the panel was interested in public feedback on this model.

Single-councillor ward structure (Model 3)

Under this model, Mount Alexander Shire Council would adopt an 8-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by one councillor, in line with the requirements of the Act for there to be the same number of councillors per ward.

The panel considered various benefits of the model, including the division of the shire into roughly equal wards for the urban centre of Castlemaine and for the 4 wards covering the larger rural areas. Castlemaine would have 4 wards, each of approximately equal size, as would the rural areas. This would provide an even split in representation. Indeed, the boundaries of this model are near identical to the current boundaries, with the only major difference being the division of Castlemaine into 4 wards. The Castlemaine ward boundaries follow the major roads of Barker Street, Midland Highway, Pyrenees Highway, and Maldon Road.

Unlike a 7 single-councillor ward structure, increasing the number of councillors to 8 enables this model to contain all of Castlemaine within 4 wards, and maintains the current shape and focus of each rural ward. The 4 wards covering Castlemaine also allow for urban growth in the town's west and south. This model may also address any concerns about the division of councillor workloads, as each councillor would be responsible for their own ward.

One drawback of this model relates to the history of uncontested elections in the shire, which this model may not address. However, the panel was interested in the public response to this model.

Models considered but not put forward

A single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors

The panel considered a model of 7 councillors with single-councillor wards (see map in [Appendix 2](#)). It maintained the current number of councillors, followed similar boundaries to the current structure, had support in public submissions (including that of Mount Alexander Shire Council), and captured communities of interest to some degree. While the rural wards maintained similar boundaries to the current structure, there were reservations about the division of Castlemaine. In this model, Castlemaine was divided across 3 wards, which, in order to accommodate the +/-10% requirement, excluded the town's outer fringes, particularly in the north, south and west.

Ultimately, the panel felt that the division of Castlemaine in this manner was a major drawback to this model. It decided that Model 3, with 4 Castlemaine wards, better captured the Castlemaine community and factored in future urban growth.

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

The panel considered another model of 7 councillors with single councillor wards (see map in [Appendix 2](#)). In this model there were 4 Castlemaine wards, however, to accommodate the +/-10% requirement, one ward extended out into the rural area south-east of Castlemaine capturing the localities of Fryerstown, Taradale, and half of Elphinstone.

Ultimately, the panel felt that this was a major drawback to this model. As such, it was decided that Model 3 was preferable to this model.

Models for public feedback

The panel considers all models outlined below to offer fair and equitable representation for voters in Mount Alexander Shire Council. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for detailed maps of these models.

Model 1

Mount Alexander Shire Council has 7 councillors and an unsubdivided structure.

Model 2

Mount Alexander Shire Council has 8 councillors and is divided into 4 wards with 2 councillors per ward.

Model 3

Mount Alexander Shire Council has 8 councillors and is divided into 8 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names

The panel has suggested ward names to identify the wards in Models 2 and 3 and invites comments from the community on these names as part of submissions responding to the preliminary report.

Next steps

Response submissions

Any person or group, including the local council under review, can make a response submission to the electoral representation advisory panel. In your submission, you should address the models proposed by the panel in this preliminary report.

You can make a submission:

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

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 19 April 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.

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.

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

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the electoral structure review process, your submission will be published on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au. The VEC will remove your signature and contact details, including residential and postal addresses, from all public copies but must publish your full name (or group name) and locality (suburb or town).

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: 2 pm

Date: Thursday 27 April 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 at the hearing. You will have 10 minutes to address the public hearing panel, which will include at least 2 of the review panel members. The members of the public hearing panel may ask you questions.

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

Final report

Following the public hearing, the review panel will consider all evidence gathered and publish 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 published on Wednesday 24 May 2023. If the recommendation is accepted, any changes will apply at the October 2024 local council elections.

The final report will be available on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au or you can request a printed copy by calling 131 832.

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Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

Appendix 1: Model maps

The following maps are included in this report:

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Model 3 – a single-councillor ward structure with 8 councillors, 8 wards and one councillor per ward	25

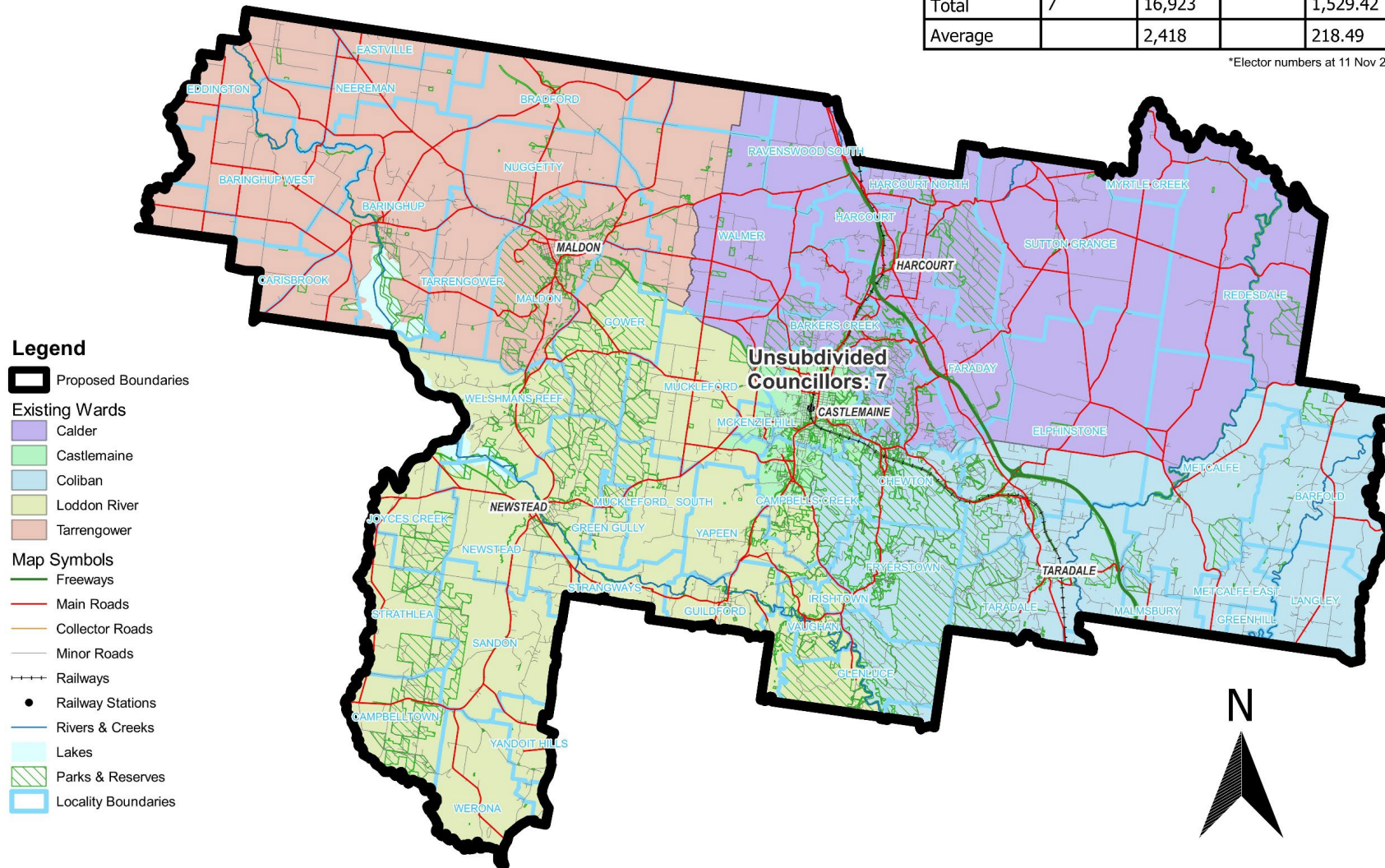
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Mount Alexander Shire Council

Model 1

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Unsubdivided	7	16,923	0%	1,529.42
Total	7	16,923		1,529.42
Average		2,418		218.49

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022



Map prepared by:

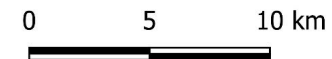


Data use:



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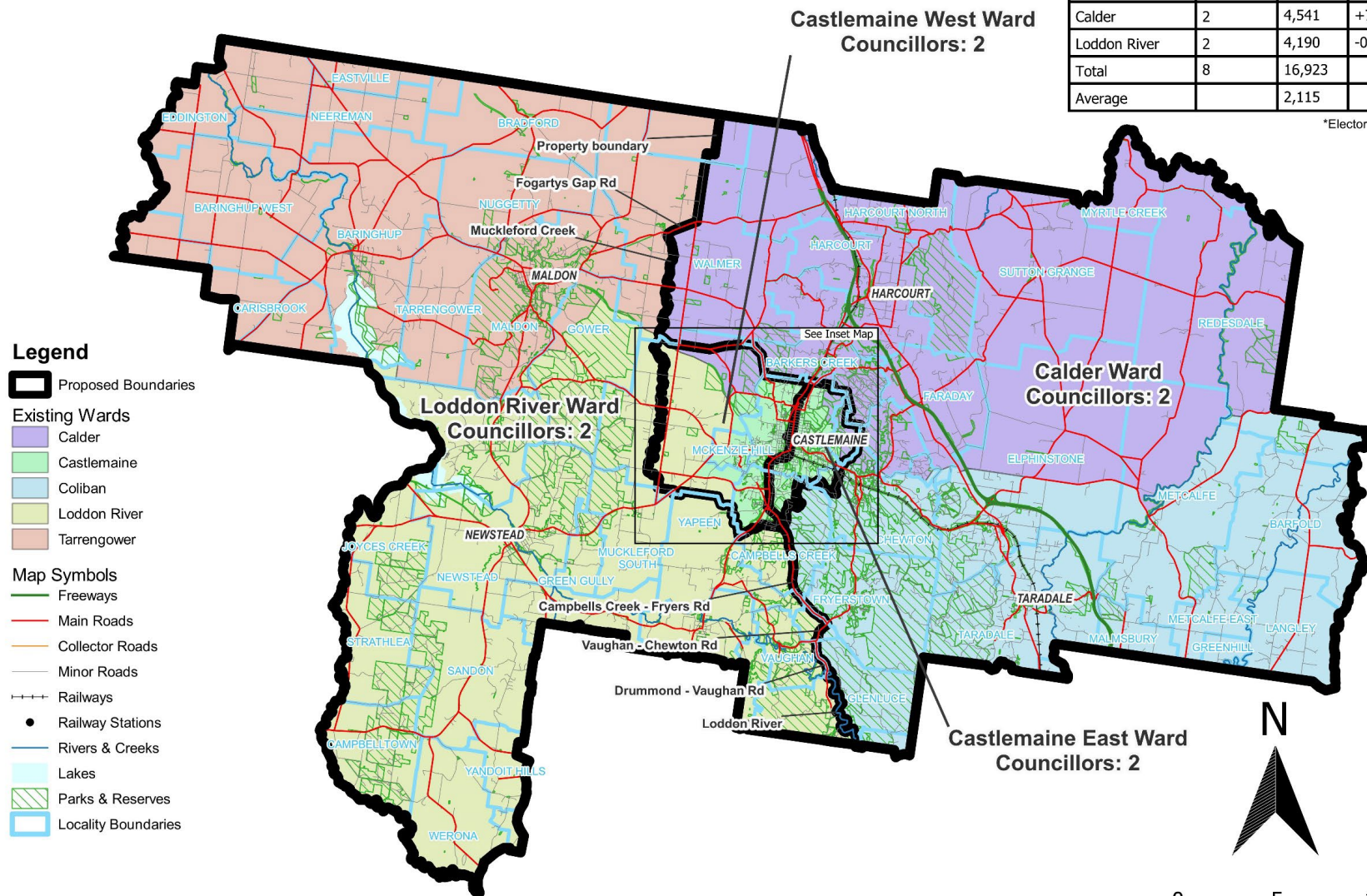


Mount Alexander Shire Council

Model 2

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Castlemaine West	2	3,909	-7.61%	51.03
Castlemaine East	2	4,283	+1.24%	17.59
Calder	2	4,541	+7.33%	714.53
Loddon River	2	4,190	-0.96	746.26
Total	8	16,923		1,529.42
Average		2,115		191.18

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022



Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
- Calder
- Castlemaine
- Coliban
- Loddon River
- Tarrengower
- Map Symbols**
- Freeways
- Main Roads
- Collector Roads
- Minor Roads
- Railways
- Railway Stations
- Rivers & Creeks
- Lakes
- Parks & Reserves
- Locality Boundaries

Map prepared by:

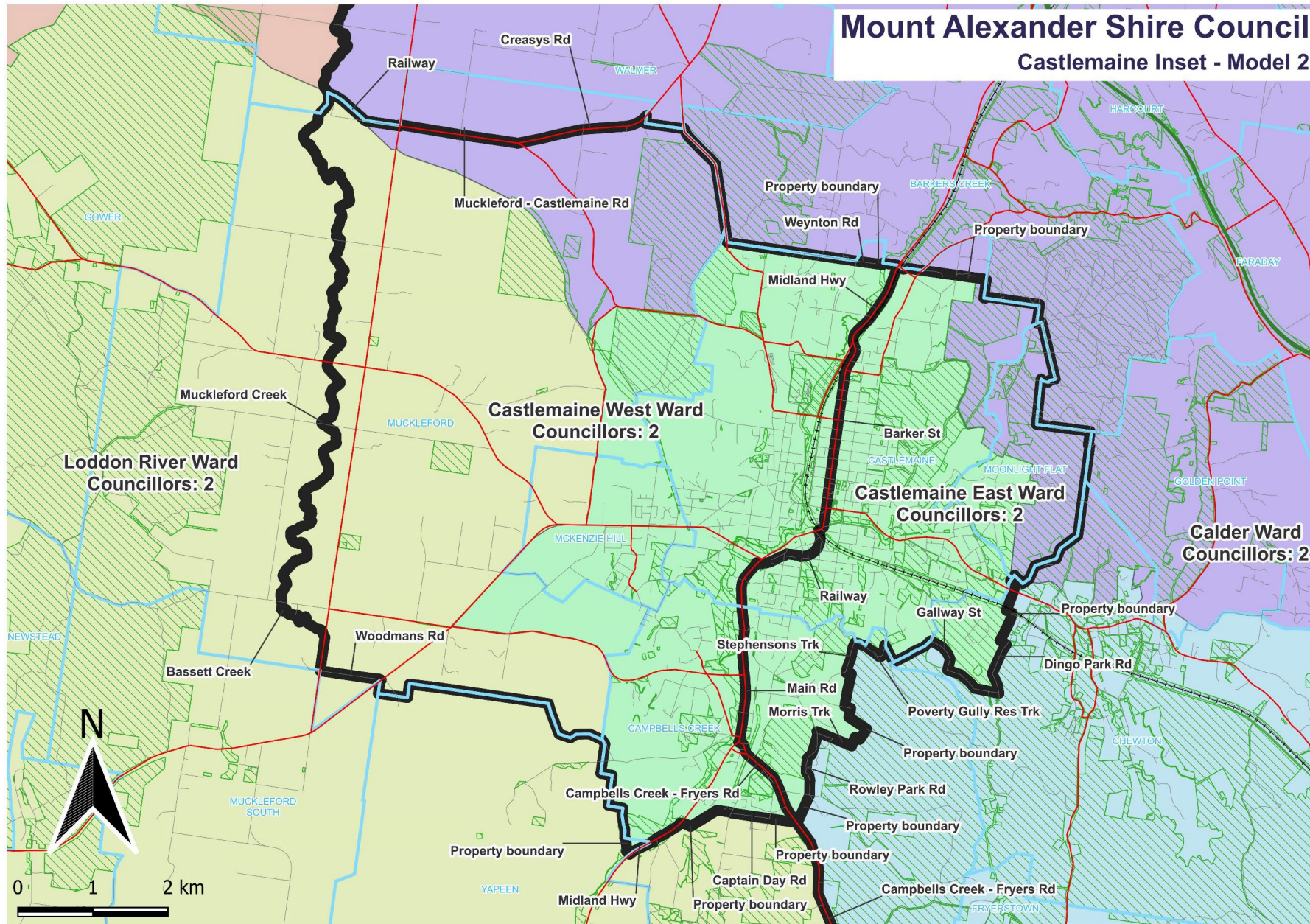


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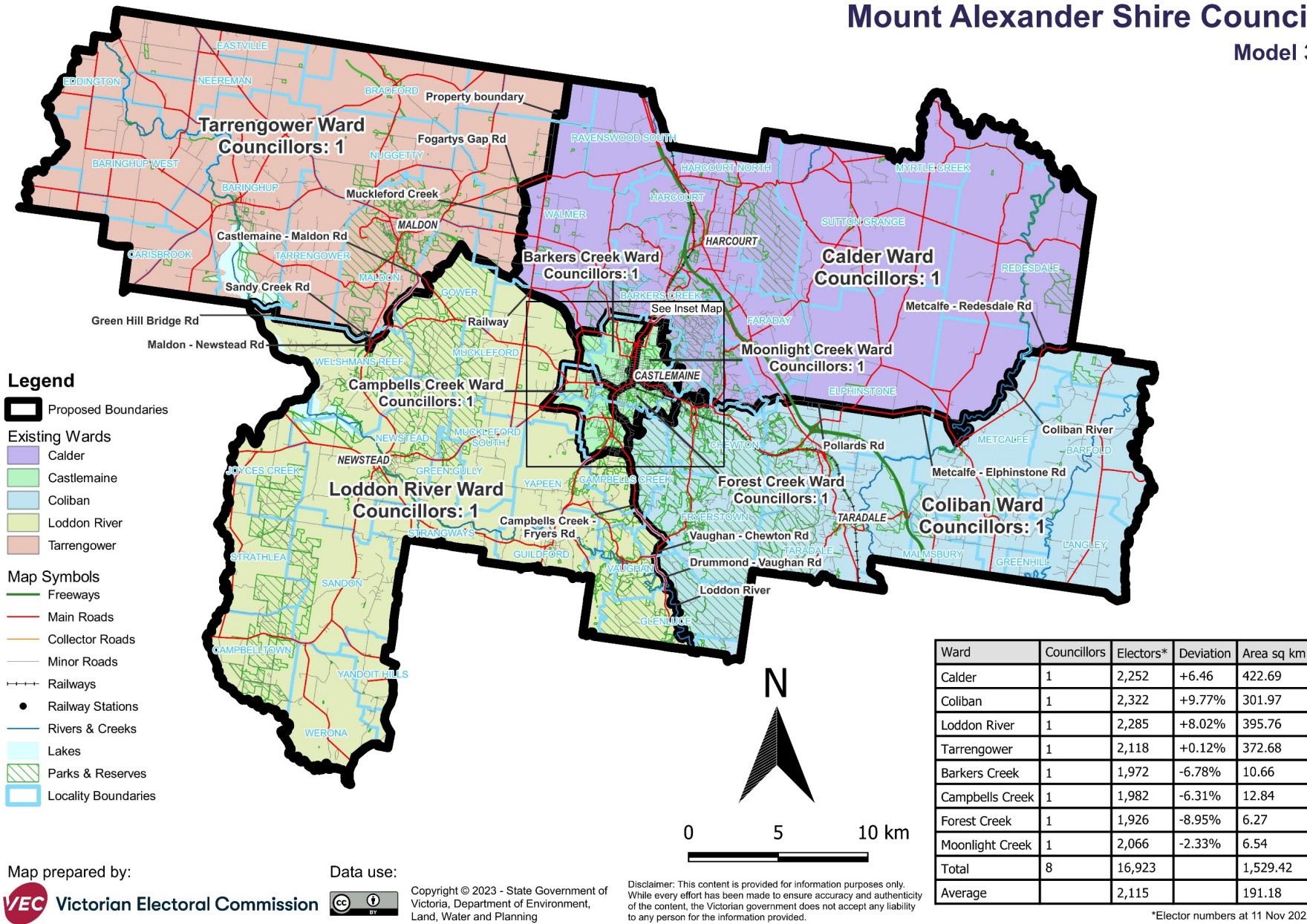
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Mount Alexander Shire Council

Model 3



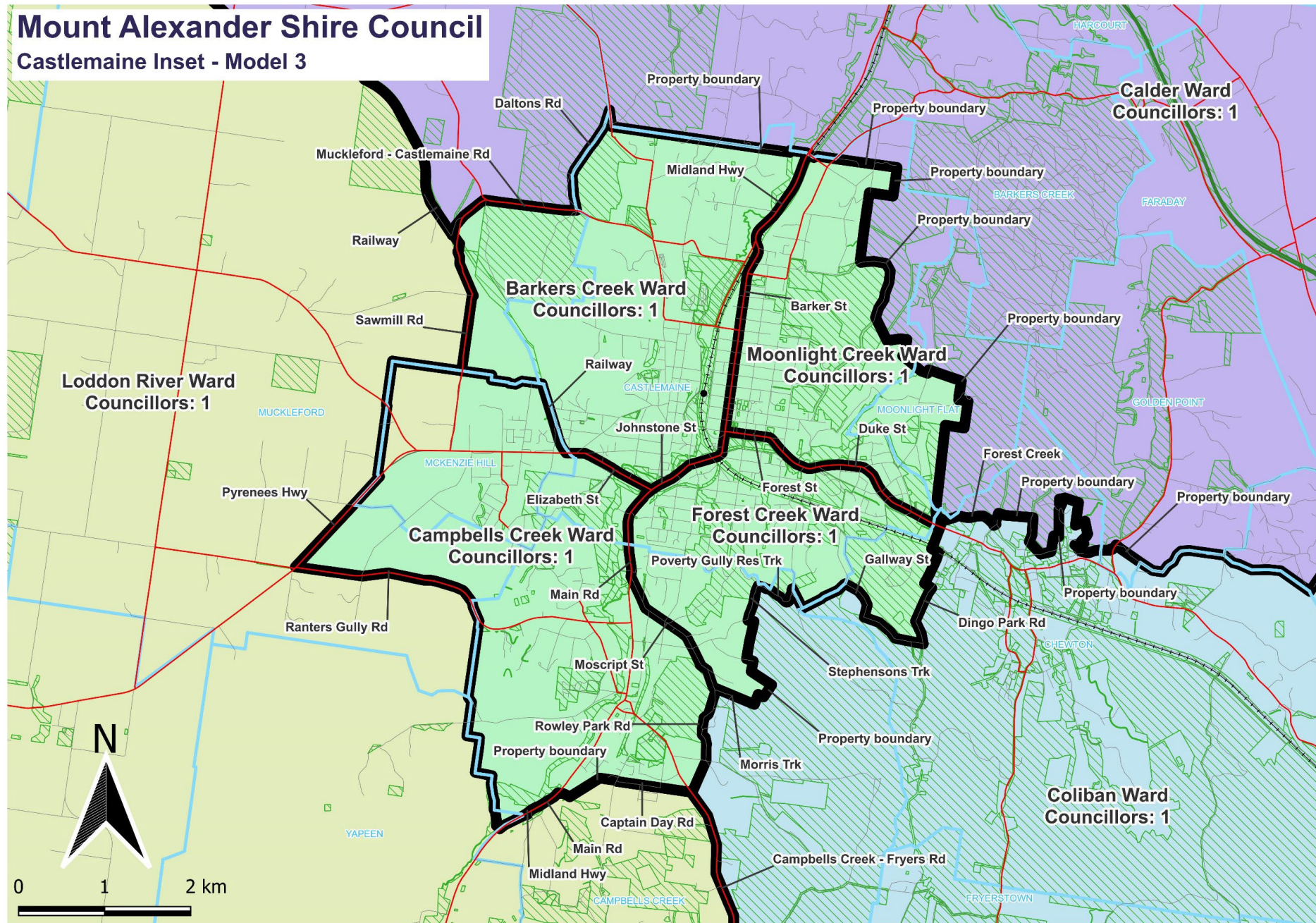
Map prepared by:
 Victorian Electoral Commission

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Mount Alexander Shire Council

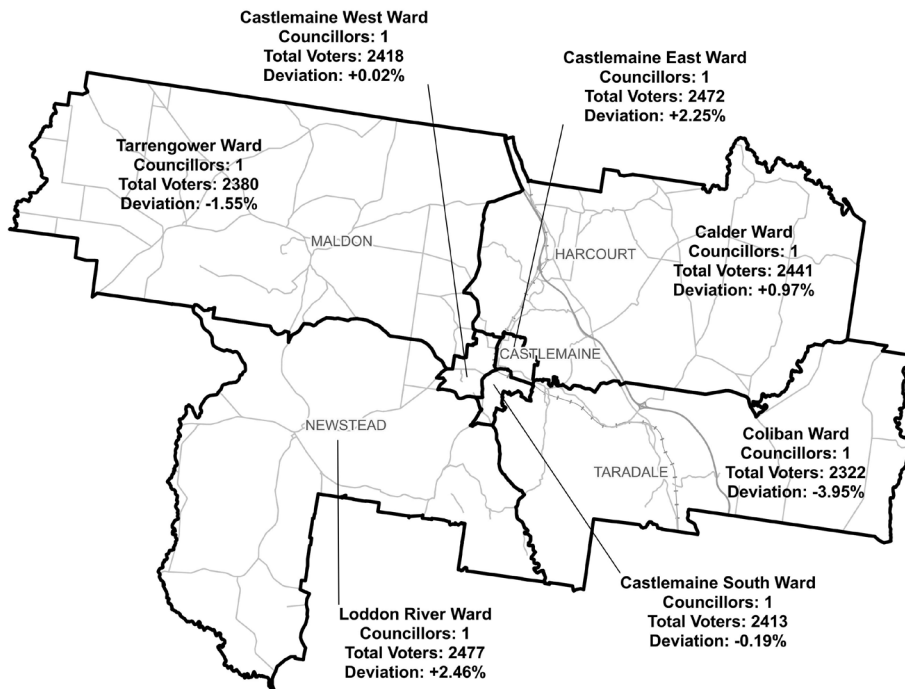
Castlemaine Inset - Model 3



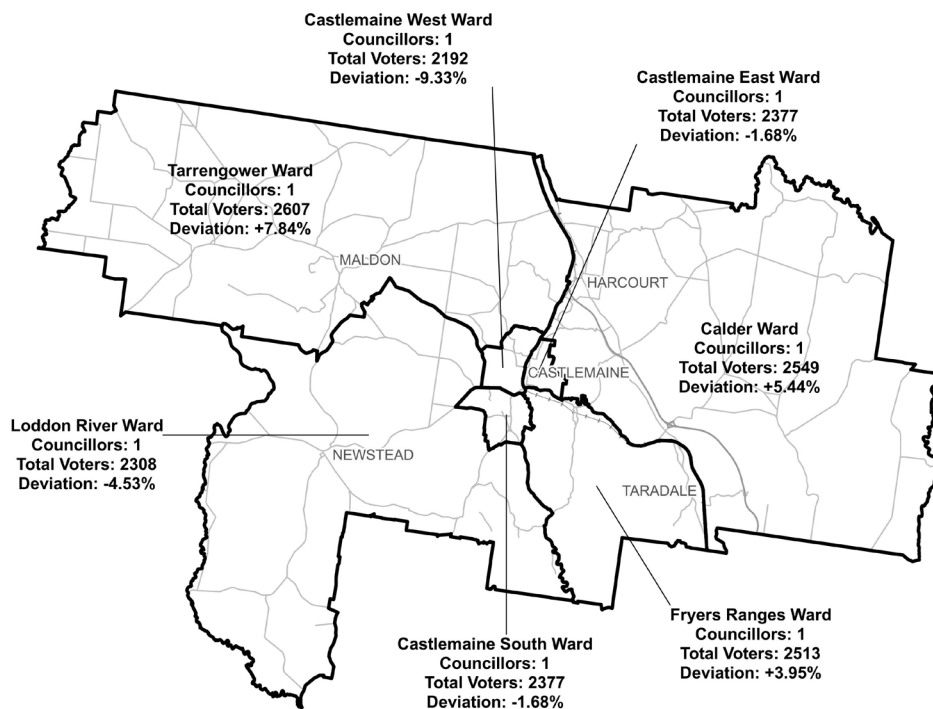
Appendix 2: Additional models considered

The following models were closely considered by the panel but are not being put forward for further public consultation. See [Models considered but not put forward](#) for further information.

A single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors



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



Appendix 3: List of preliminary submitters

The review received 5 preliminary submissions.

Preliminary submissions were made by:

Frape-Linton, Diane

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Reid, Derek

Sinclair, Cate

Thomson, Gavan

