

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Wodonga City Council

July 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

While there are no formally recognised Traditional Custodian groups for the lands within Wodonga City Council, the panel recognises the connection Aboriginal peoples have to the lands across Victoria. The panel acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways within Wodonga City Council. They acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and recognise their continuous connections to lands, waters and communities across the country.

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Submission approved by	Brief description
1	30 June 2023	Acting Electoral Commissioner	Final version for publication

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Executive summary

An independent electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government is reviewing the electoral structure of Wodonga City Council.

The purpose of the review is to advise the Minister on the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structure, including ward names, for the council.

Under Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Wodonga City Council must now have a single-councillor ward electoral structure.

The panel is looking at:

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

This report outlines the preliminary models the panel is presenting for public consultation, for the proposed new electoral structure of Wodonga City Council to meet the requirements of the Act.

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

Developing electoral structure models

The panel considered a range of factors when deciding on the models in this report, including:

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time.

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

Electoral structure models

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

- Model 1: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward, with different ward boundaries to Model 1.

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

Next steps

The panel is now seeking feedback on the preliminary electoral structure models. You can make a response submission to the preliminary models until 5 pm Wednesday 26 July. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public hearing on Wednesday 2 August. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 30 August 2023.

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

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

For Wodonga City Council, the electoral representation advisory panel is examining:

- the number of councillors and wards
- where the ward boundaries should be
- the name of each ward.

The Act requires electoral structures to provide fair and equitable representation and facilitate good governance. Each ward must have an approximately equal number of voters per councillor (within +/-10% of the average). While conducting the review, the panel also notes the role of a councillor as specified under section 28 of the Act.

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel conducting the electoral structure review of Wodonga City Council has 3 members:

- The Honourable Frank Vincent AO KC (Chairperson)
- Ms Liz Williams PSM
- Acting Deputy Electoral Commissioner 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 has conducted a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Wodonga City Council electoral structure review. This has included:

- printed public notices in state-wide newspapers

- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- media releases to announce the start of the review
- information on social media channels
- updated website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - current information on the review process
 - submission guide and fact sheets for each council under review with background information.

The VEC will continue to promote the review on behalf of the panel during the response submission stage via media releases, the VEC’s social media channels and the VEC website.

Public consultation

The panel now invites input to the electoral structure review of Wodonga City Council via:

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

Public submissions are an important part of the review process and are considered alongside other factors addressed during the review. These are outlined below.

Developing recommendations

The electoral structure models the panel is presenting in this preliminary report comply with the Act and were developed through careful consideration of:

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

Deciding on the number of councillors

The Act allows local councils to have between 5 and 12 councillors, but neither the Act nor the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 specify how the number of councillors is to be determined. Therefore, the models put forward by the panel in this report are guided by the Act’s intention for fairness and equity in voter representation.

In examining the appropriate number of councillors for Wodonga City Council, the panel considered the following criteria:

- the population and number of voters in the council area, compared to other councils with a similar population size and number of voters in the same category (for example, other comparable metropolitan, interface or regional city councils)
- patterns of population change and voter growth or decline in the council area over time

- the current and past numbers of councillors
- the representation needs of the communities of interest in the council area.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

Local councils with a larger number of voters will often have more councillors. Large populations generally have greater diversity, both in the type and number of communities of interest and issues relating to representation. However, the ideal number of councillors can also be influenced by the circumstances of each council, such as the:

- nature and complexity of services the council provides
- geographic size and topography of the area
- forecast population and voter growth or decline
- social diversity.

Deciding the electoral structure

Under the Act, regional city, metropolitan and interface councils must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

When developing single-councillor ward models for Wodonga City Council, the panel considered these criteria:

- whether the structure would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and for how long it would likely comply
- the appropriate number of councillors, as outlined above
- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- the representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of wards
- past elections for the council, including:
 - numbers of candidates nominating
 - incidences of uncontested elections
 - rates of informal voting.

The panel's final recommendation will also consider any matters raised in public response submissions not already listed above.

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

During this review, the panel aims to recommend a structure that will comply with section 15(2) at the time of the 2024 local council elections and, if possible, also comply based on voter numbers at the time the review is conducted. The panel uses forecasts of population and voter change to assess compliance at the 2024 elections with as much accuracy as possible. In some cases, population change and other factors impacting voter numbers mean it is not possible to create compliant subdivided structures based both on voter numbers that were current at the time of the review and forecast voter numbers. In these instances, the panel prioritises compliance at the 2024 local government elections to ensure each vote will have approximately equal value at the 2024 election.

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

Deciding on ward names

The panel has taken the following approach to naming wards.

1. Retaining existing ward names if these are still relevant to the area covered by the ward.
2. When a new name is required, the panel bases this on features such as:
 - places (registered under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*) in the ward
 - compass directions
 - native flora or fauna.

Use of Aboriginal language

The panel recognises that there should first be meaningful consultation with local Aboriginal communities and groups before a ward is named using Aboriginal language. Meaningful consultation is a significant process that the panel is not able to undertake within the timeframes of the current review program.

The panel also recognises that many of the place names in current use across Victoria are based on Aboriginal language. As such, the panel may put forward new ward names using Aboriginal language if:

- it is the name of a place within a ward
- it is currently in common use

and

- 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 Wodonga City Council

Profile

Wodonga City Council is located on the Murray River, about 300km from Melbourne. It shares its borders with Towong Shire to the east and Indigo Shire to the west and south. The Murray River (Victorian-New South Wales border) forms the council's northern boundary. There is a strong community connection with its 'twin city' of Albury, on the New South Wales side of the border. The two municipalities form the Greater Albury-Wodonga Region. Albury City is smaller in area to Wodonga City, but has a larger population.

Landscape

The Wodonga City Council covers 433 km². The council consists of the main urban centre of Wodonga, substantial industrial areas, and a significant rural hinterland. It is a major livestock selling centre, and a regional manufacturing and distribution hub.

The current population of the city is 43,253 (ABS 2022a), with over 68% of residents residing in the urban localities of Baranduda, Belvoir, Martin Park, Melrose, and Wodonga Central, South and West. About 60% (264 km²) of the council's land area is used for agriculture (primarily grazing and dairy farming) (DAFF 2023).

Recognised as a strategic distribution hub along the eastern seaboard, the city is served by the Hume Freeway, the Kiewa Valley and Murray Valley highways, along with the Melbourne to Sydney rail line.

Community

Population growth in Wodonga City has been relatively strong over the last decade, increasing from 35,519 in 2011 to 43,253 in 2022 (ABS 2022a, ABS 2011). Leading into 2028, the population is projected to grow by an average rate of 1.3% annually. Much of this growth will be in the urban towns immediately south-east of central Wodonga - Baranduda, Bandiana and North Leneva (.id 2022b).

The Wodonga City economy supports an estimated 20,600 jobs, with health care and social assistance accounting for 16.9% of employment, followed by public administration (11.6%), retail trade (10.8%) and manufacturing (9.8%). The main occupation of residents is professionals (17.8%), followed by technicians and trades workers (15.8%) (.id 2022a). The unemployment rate across the city is 4.2%, marginally higher than regional Victoria at 4.1%.

The city has a median age of 38 years. While this has increased from 36 years at the 2016 Census, it remains lower than the regional Victoria median of 43 years (ABS 2022a).

The proportion of the population who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander was 3.4% at the 2021 census, higher than the 2% in regional Victoria (ABS 2022a, 2022b). Of the population, 83.6% were born in Australia and 88.1% speak only English at home (both higher than regional Victoria at 81% and 86.4% respectively) (ABS 2022a, 2022b).

Home ownership in the city is common, with almost 64% of residents owning their property outright or with a mortgage. This is at a lower rate than regional Victoria overall, where the combined rate is 72.5% (ABS 2022a, 2022b). Conversely, more people rent in Wodonga City Council (32.6%) (ABS 2022a) than in regional Victoria (23.6%) (ABS 2022b). The weekly median household income is \$1,498, higher than the regional Victorian median of \$1,386 (ABS 2022a).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

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

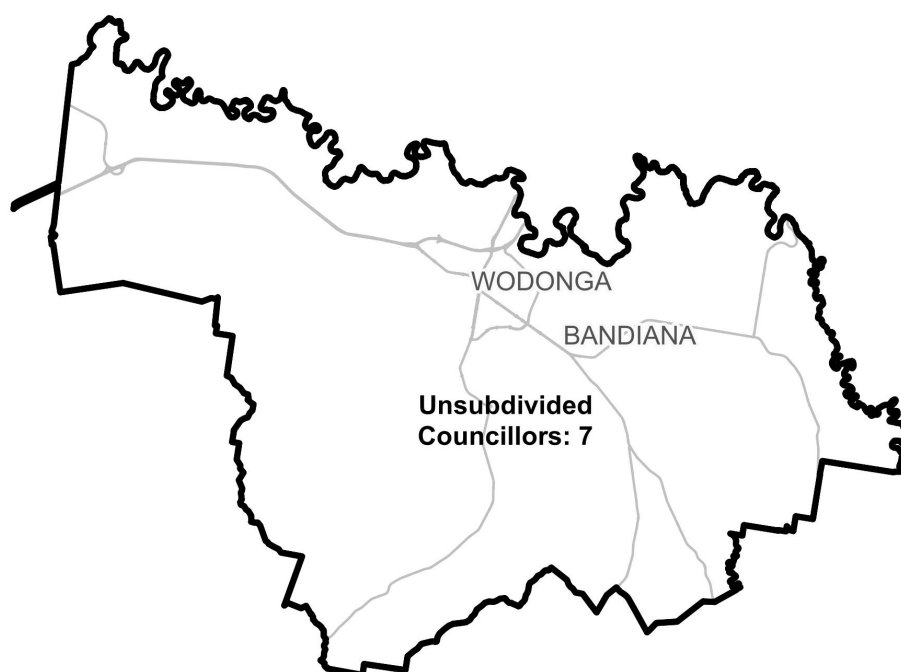


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Wodonga City Council.

There are around 33,461 voters in Wodonga City Council, with an estimated ratio of 4,780 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

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

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Wodonga City Council continue to consist of 7 councillors elected from an unsubdivided electoral structure.

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

Preliminary findings and models

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act and the agreed criteria, the panel found 7 councillors to be an appropriate number for Wodonga City Council.

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

Similar regional city councils to Wodonga City 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
Ballarat City*	739	84,694	113,763	87,340	9	9,704
Latrobe City*	1,426	58,170	77,318	59,099	9	6,566
Greater Shepparton City*	2,422	46,242	68,409	46,959	9	5,217
Mildura Rural City*	22,082	40,720	56,972	42,932	9	4,770
Wodonga City	433	32,430	43,253	33,461	7	4,780
Warrnambool City*	121	27,279	35,406	27,731	7	3,961
Wangaratta Rural City*	3,645	23,267	29,808	23,904	7	3,414
Horsham Rural City*	4,267	16,206	20,429	15,753	7	2,250

*These local councils are undergoing an electoral structure review in 2023–24.

Maintaining 7 councillors

Wodonga City Council currently has around 33,461 voters represented by 7 councillors. The council covers an area of 433 km². The city is at the higher end of the number of voters per councillor compared with other 7-councillor regional city councils. Because of this the panel considered increasing councillor numbers to either 8 or 9. The panel considered projected population growth, the relatively small area of the council, and any other special circumstances that might justify an increase. However, in the absence of a compelling 8 or 9-councillor single ward electoral structure, the panel agreed it was more appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain unchanged.

Electoral structure

To identify the most appropriate electoral structure, various factors were considered. This included the requirements of the Act, the communities of interest in Wodonga City Council, the appropriateness of ward boundaries, and which models best offered fair and equitable representation and consequently facilitate good governance.

In developing the preliminary models presented in this report, the panel considered a range of models. The strongest 2 models have been put forward for further public comment.

The panel proposes 2 models for the consideration of the Wodonga City Council community:

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

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

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

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

The proposed boundaries in Model 1 were developed using major infrastructure (roads, rail line), geographic features (rivers, creeks) and localities to create 2 rural-focused wards and 5 predominately urban wards. One of these urban wards would capture a large portion of the city's future growth.

The panel considered the significance of the Murray River as a dominant feature of the council's geography and as a major focus of community and economic activities. Four of the wards proposed in Model 1 – Barnawartha North, Gateway Island, Racecourse, and the expansive Baranduda Range – extend up to the Murray River. The centre of Wodonga itself is captured in the Gateway Island Ward, which is bordered by High Street to the east, Brockley and Lawrence Streets to the south, and Parkers Road, University Drive, Sheathers and Goynes roads to the west. Gateway Island Ward also includes Wodonga Regional Park and captures nearly half of the Wodonga locality and most of the Gateway Island locality.

The Wattle Park and Willow Park wards sit immediately south of Gateway Island Ward and are primarily residential areas. Wattle Park Ward is bordered by Lawrence Street in the north, Melrose Drive in the east and Parkers Road to the west, with the land south of Sundew and Tussock tracks primarily rural reserve. Willow Park Ward, divided by Pearce Street, includes well developed residential areas in the northern zone, with a mix of established and new housing in the south, either side of Yarralumla Drive.

Racecourse Ward takes in 25% of the localities of Wodonga, Bandiana and Gateway Island, and includes a large commercial zone to the west of Bandiana Link Road. The residential areas surrounding Wodonga racecourse and showgrounds, and the Albury/Wodonga Military Area are dominate features in the south-east of this ward.

Bear Hill Ward includes the residential development in North Leneva, which is projected to grow by over 800 people (+9% p.a.) by 2028 (.id 2022b). The ward's boundaries consist mainly of minor roads, geographic features (creeks) and locality boundaries. To the south and east of Bear Hill Ward is the large Baranduda Range Ward, covering over half of the council area. While primarily rural, the ward captures the growing locality of Bandiana, along with the recreational and tourist destination of Lake Hume.

The other mainly rural ward is the proposed Barnawartha North Ward, which sits west from central Wodonga. This ward covers all the Barnawartha North locality and nearly all West Wodonga. The western side of the ward includes a large logistics hub, the eastern side of Wodonga Golf Club and a developing residential estate on the northern side of Drage Road.

While the panel considered that communities of interest across the city would be reasonably well-represented by Model 1, there were concerns about its ward structure. The large Baranduda Range Ward, stretching from the council's western boundary across to the eastern boundary of Lake Hume, might possibly include various communities of interest that do not have much in common. This large ward might also result in a heavier workload for the elected councillor and potentially impact their ability to connect and represent voters and diverse communities.

Concern about the size of the rural ward should be considered along with the strengths that this model offers. For example, Gateway Island Ward effectively captures the central area of Wodonga, and 4 of proposed wards extend up to the Murray River, which is a dominant and important part of the council area.

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

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

As in Model 1, the proposed ward boundaries of Model 2 use key infrastructure, geographic features and localities. The model divides the council into a mix of 3 urban wards, one predominately rural ward and 3 rural-urban wards.

Using the Murray River as the northern boundary, the proposed Barnawartha North Ward and Lake Hume Ward include the western and eastern residential zones of the urban centre of Wodonga. Like Model 1, Barnawartha North Ward uses the city's southern, western and northern boundaries, with an eastern boundary running from Felltimber Creek Road in the south, north along Marshall Street, Kingfisher Drive, Parkers Road and University Drive to the Hume Freeway. The boundary then follows the freeway north to Lincoln Causeway, and to the juncture of the ward and city boundary at the Murray River bridge crossing.

The proposed Lake Hume Ward captures the commercial and residential areas east of High Street and a large percentage of the expanding residential localities of Bandiana and Killara. After leaving the Kiewa Valley Highway at Middle Creek, the eastern boundary follows the Kiewa River intersecting with the city's boundary with Indigo Shire, close to Mahers Road. The

ward also uses Lake Hume and the Murray River (from Mitta Junction) as its eastern and northern boundaries.

Approximately a third of the city's residents are captured by the proposed Marimba Park, Sumsion Gardens and Racecourse wards. These are areas of relative stability with limited room for significant population growth. Covering an area of only 15 km² (3.5% of the total city area), collectively these 3 wards contain the localities of Wodonga and West Wodonga, capturing over 40% of the city's voters. Both the Marimba Park and Sumsion Gardens wards have the Hume Freeway as their northern boundary and Felltimber Road as the southern Boundary. The proposed Racecourse Ward in Model 2 differs from the Model 1 version in that it:

- covers an area of only 5 km² (1/3rd of Model 1)
- is predominately residential
- includes a large portion of Wodonga Bushland Reserve.

A key difference in Model 2 is that the large geographic area covered by the Baranduda Range Ward in Model 1 is split across 3 smaller wards – Huon Creek, Baranduda Range, and Lake Hume. In addition, most of the projected population growth in the southern region of the city will likely be absorbed by residential developments in both the Huon Creek and Baranduda Range wards.

Overall, the panel considered the advantages of Model 2 as strong. It divided the rural areas of the council across 4 wards, with each ward incorporating parts of the urban localities where growth is projected to occur. For these reasons, it determined Model 2 would provide fair and equitable representation to the various communities of interest within each of the 7 wards.

The panel commented that the ward boundaries in both Model 1 and Model 2 had been developed so that all wards remained within the permitted +/- 10% tolerance through to the 2024 local council elections.

Models considered but not put forward

A single-councillor ward structure with 8 councillors

The panel also considered an 8-ward electoral structure, which was developed following a similar approach to models 1 and 2, using infrastructure, geographic features and localities for ward boundaries.

Whilst this model also included 4 mainly urban wards, the panel felt it did not divide the council into wards any better than Model 1 or Model 2. As both models were considered to effectively represent the communities of interest across Wodonga City Council, the panel determined there to be no justification for an increase to an 8-councillor ward model. As such, the 8-councillor model was not put forward for further consultation.

Summary

In summary, introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral change for Wodonga City Council. Achieving models that divide communities into appropriate wards while

also accounting for population growth and ensuring they comply with the +/-10% requirement can be challenging. Model 1 uses major infrastructure, geographic features and localities to create 2 rural-focused wards and 5 predominately urban wards. While the panel considered the communities of interest across the city would be reasonably well-represented by Model 1, there were concerns about the workload for one councillor in representing communities across the large Baranduda Range Ward. Model 2 again uses key infrastructure, geographic features and localities, dividing the city into a mix of 3 urban wards, one predominately rural ward and 3 rural-urban wards - where the rural areas of the council are incorporated into wards that capture the city's projected population growth. Each of the 2 models have attributes that residents may have differing perspectives on, and the panel is interested in these perspectives.

Models for public feedback

The panel considers all models outlined below to be the single-councillor ward electoral structures with the best potential to offer fair and equitable representation for voters in Wodonga City Council and consequently facilitate good governance. Please see [Appendix 1](#) for detailed maps of these models.

Model 1

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

Ward names: Baranduda Range Ward, Barnawartha North Ward, Bears Hill Ward, Gateway Island Ward, Racecourse Ward, Wattle Park Ward, and Willow Park Ward.

Model 2

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

Ward names: Baranduda Range Ward, Barnawartha North Ward, Huon Creek Ward, Lake Hume Ward, Marimba Ward, Racecourse Ward, and Sumsion Gardens Ward.

Ward names

The panel has suggested ward names to identify the wards in each model and invites comments from the community on these names as part of submissions responding to the preliminary report. The basis of the ward name recommendations for each model are described below.

Model 1

Baranduda Range, Barnawartha North, Bears Hill, Gateway Island, Racecourse, Wattle Park, and Willow Park ward names are new and are based on registered natural features, survey markers or localities found within each ward.

Model 2

Baranduda Range, Barnawartha North, Huon Creek, Lake Hume, Marimba, Racecourse, and Sumsion Gardens ward names are new and are based on registered natural features or localities found within each ward.




The panel will review ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage when forming the final advice to the Minister for Local Government on the electoral structure of the council. Suggested ward names should comply with the panel's approach to naming wards (see [Deciding on ward names](#) and [Use of Aboriginal language](#)). All ward name suggestions received during the response submission stage will be provided to the Minister for consideration at the conclusion of the electoral structure review.

Next steps

Response submissions

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

You can make a submission:

	<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>Wodonga.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 26 July 2023. If you post your submission, make sure it has enough time to reach the panel before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

For your submission to be considered, you must include your:

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

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

On behalf of the panel, the VEC will handle information provided by submitters in accordance with the privacy policy available at vec.vic.gov.au/privacy

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).

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

Public hearing

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

The online public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 2 pm

Date: Wednesday, 2 August 2023

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

Anyone can attend a public hearing, but you will only be able to speak if you asked to in your response submission. If you ask to speak, the VEC will contact you to arrange a time for you to speak at the hearing. You will have 10 minutes to address the public hearing panel, which will include at least 2 of the review panel members. The members of the public hearing panel may ask you questions.

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

Final report

Following the public hearing, the review panel will consider all evidence gathered and prepare a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing a recommendation for the number of councillors and the electoral structure for the local council.

The final report is scheduled to be provided to the Minister on Wednesday 30 August 2023. The Minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the electoral structure of Wodonga City Council following on from this review is expected to apply at the October 2024 local council elections. Under the Act, the final council electoral structure will be set by an Order in Council published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

References

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Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

REMPLAN (2022) [Economy, Jobs and Business Insights](#), REMPLAN website, accessed 5 May 2023.

Appendix 1: Model maps

The following maps are included in this report:













Map	Page
Model 1 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward.	24
Model 2 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors – 7 wards with one councillor per ward (with boundaries different to Model 1).	26

Wodonga City Council

Model 1

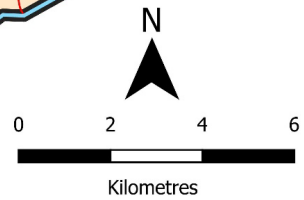
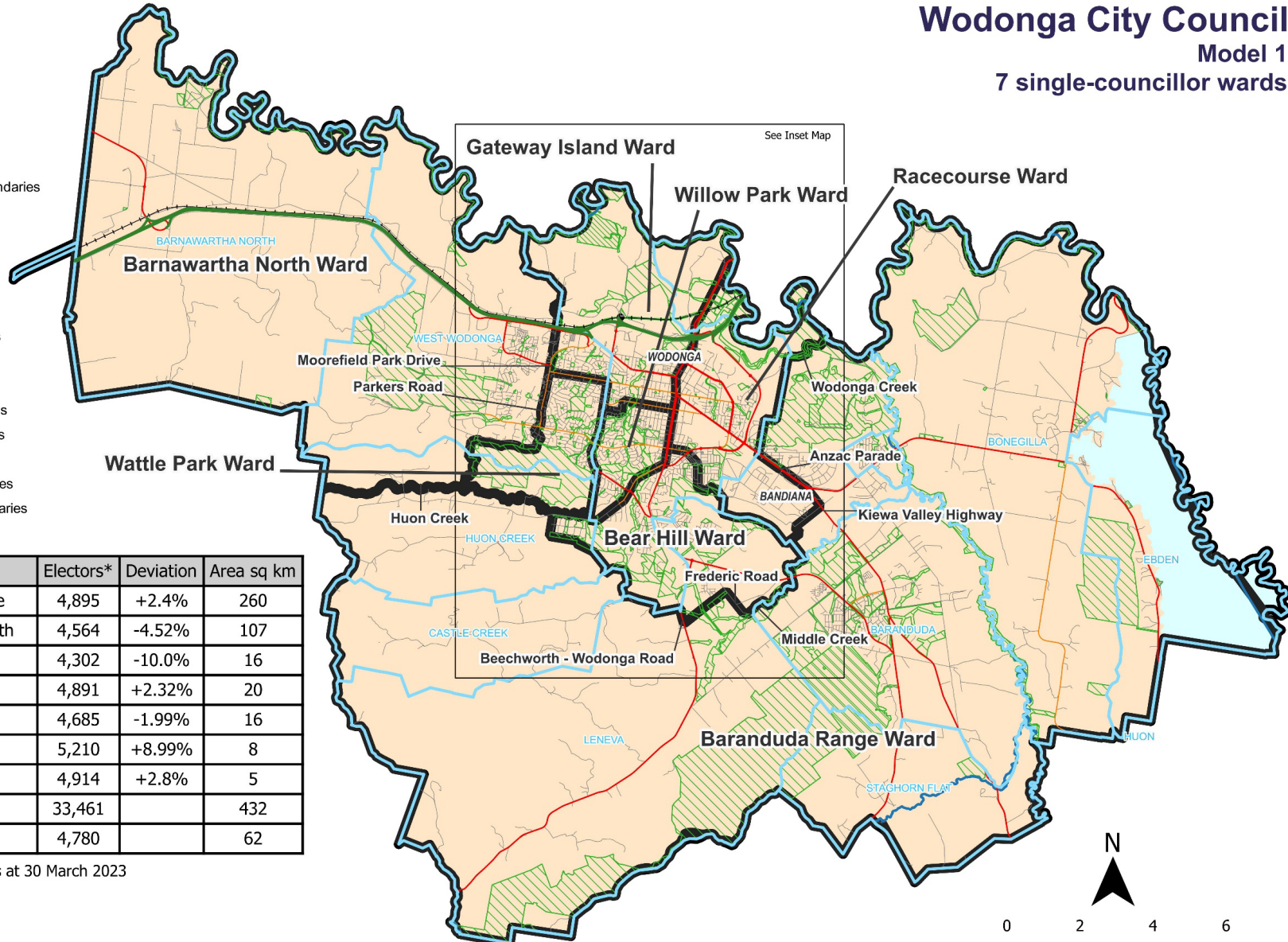
7 single-councillor wards

Legend

-  Proposed boundaries
- Existing ward(s)
-  Wodonga City
- 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
Baranduda Range	4,895	+2.4%	260
Barnawartha North	4,564	-4.52%	107
Bear Hill	4,302	-10.0%	16
Gateway Island	4,891	+2.32%	20
Racecourse	4,685	-1.99%	16
Wattle Park	5,210	+8.99%	8
Willow Park	4,914	+2.8%	5
Total	33,461		432
Average	4,780		62

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data used:

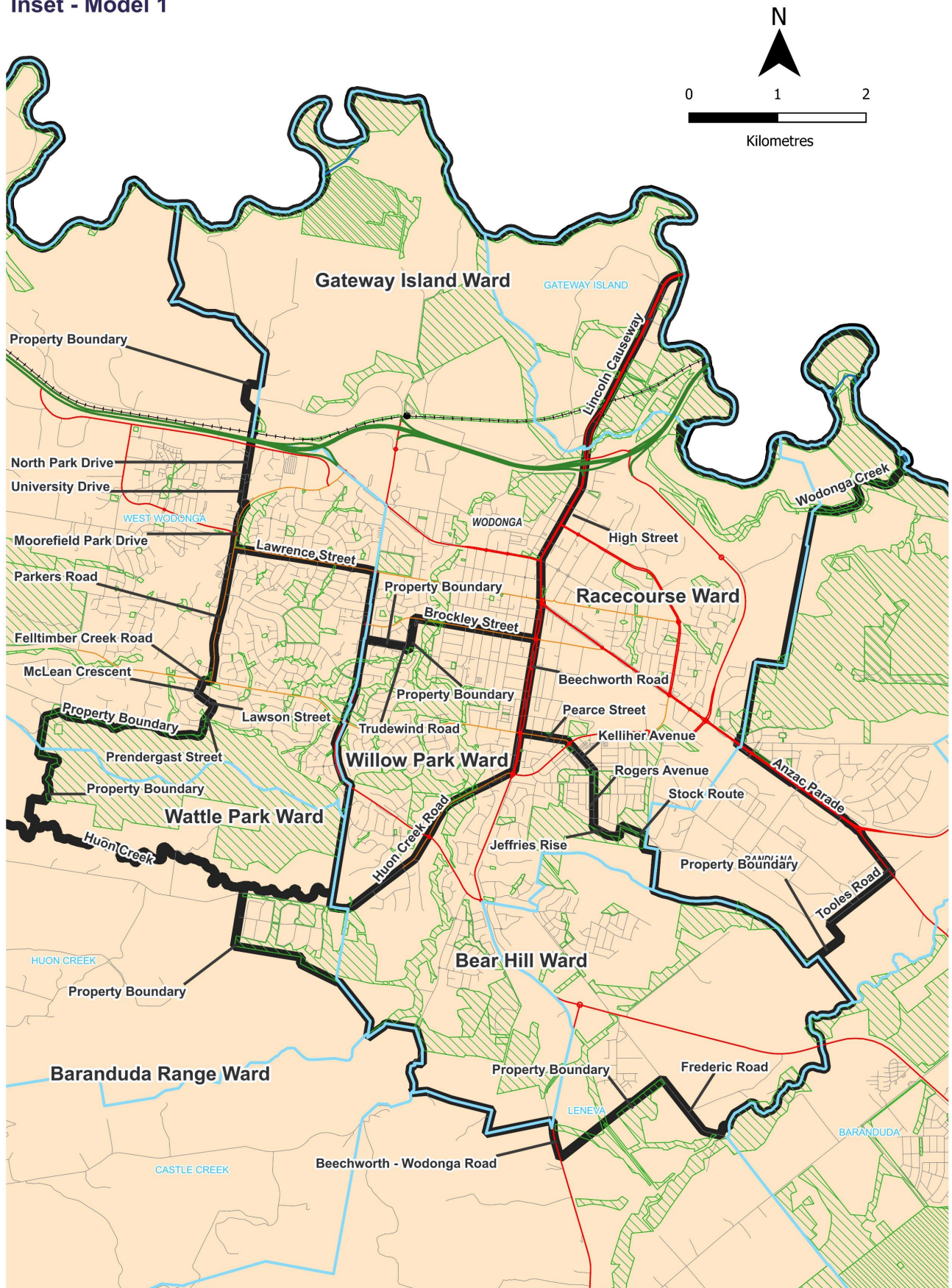


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Wodonga City Council

Inset - Model 1















Wodonga City Council

Model 2

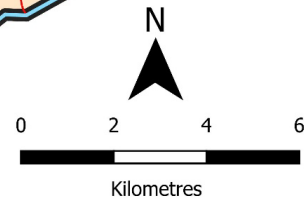
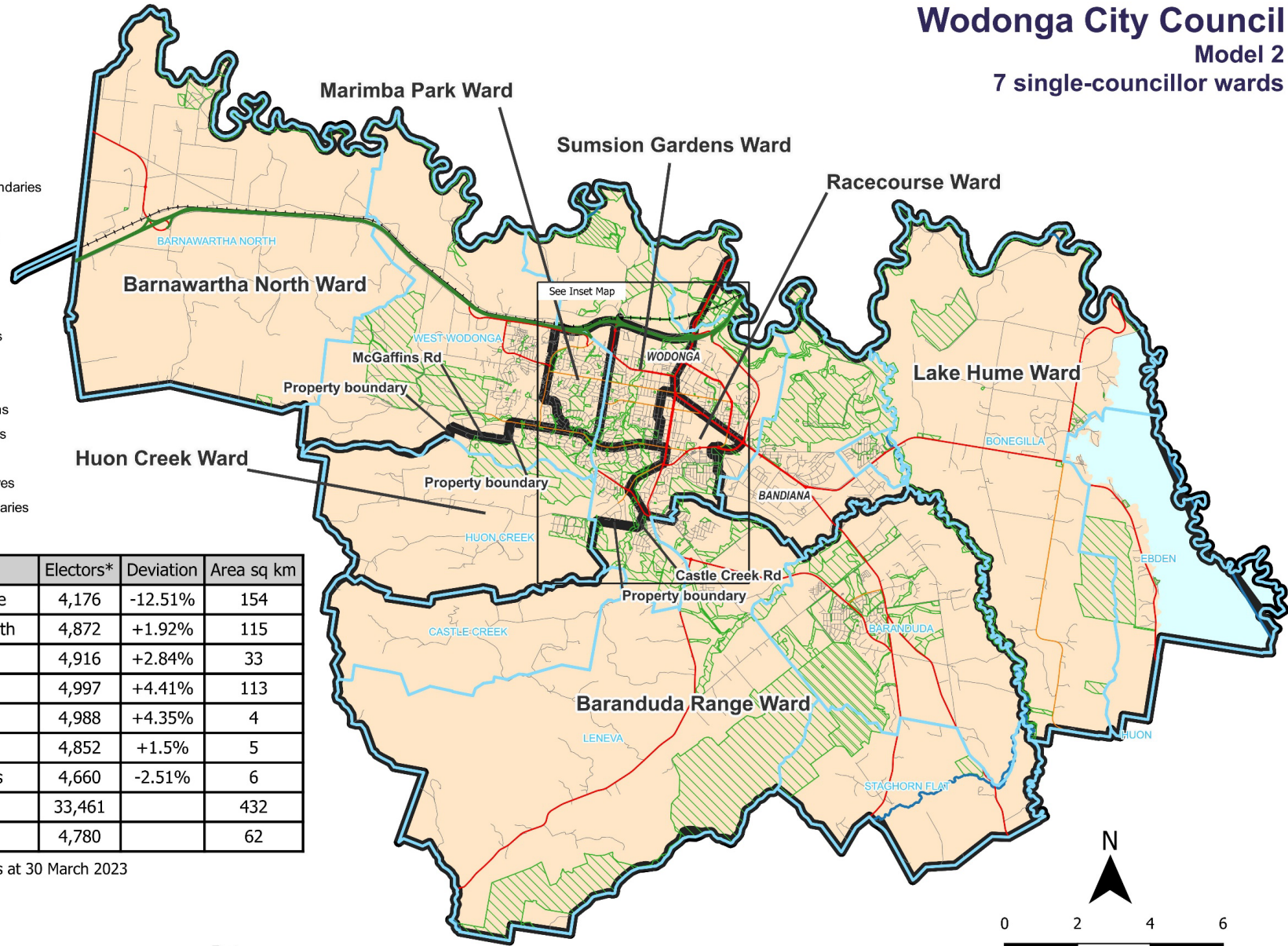
7 single-councillor wards

Legend

-  Proposed boundaries
- Existing ward(s)
-  Wodonga City
- 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
Baranduda Range	4,176	-12.51%	154
Barnawartha North	4,872	+1.92%	115
Huon Creek	4,916	+2.84%	33
Lake Hume	4,997	+4.41%	113
Marimba Park	4,988	+4.35%	4
Racecourse	4,852	+1.5%	5
Sumsion Gardens	4,660	-2.51%	6
Total	33,461		432
Average	4,780		62

*Elector numbers as at 30 March 2023



Map prepared by:



Data use:

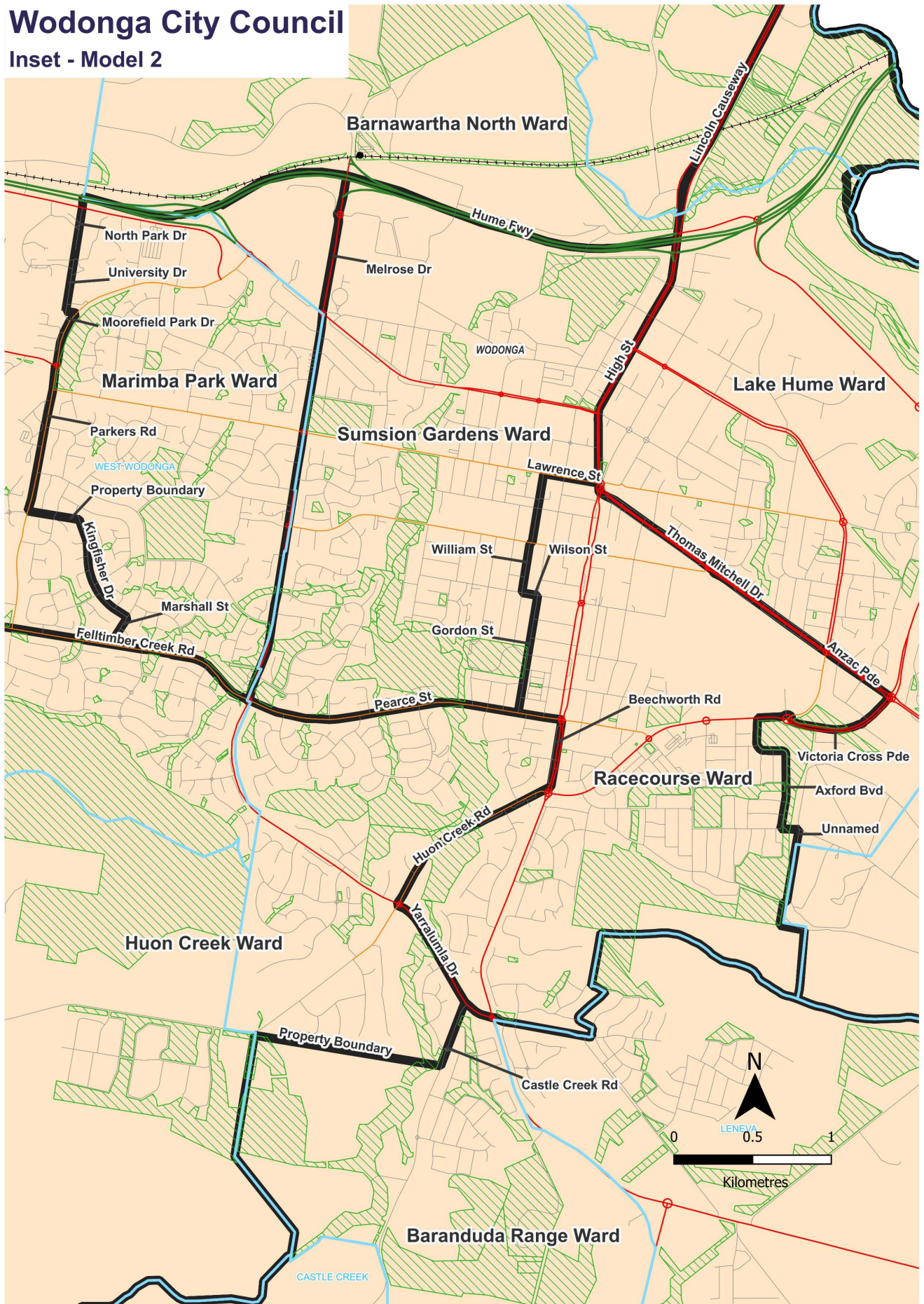


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Wodonga City Council

Inset - Model 2



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