

**Electoral structure review - Maribyrnong City Council - Response Submission
Maribyrnong City Council - Footscray - 10 November 2023, 11:15 am**

Maribyrnong City Council considered the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review Report at a Special Council Meeting on 8 November 2023 and resolved that:

- it supports the seven single-councillor ward structure for Maribyrnong City Council
- Its preferred ward and name structure for Maribyrnong City Council is Model 2.

A copy of the Council Agenda and Minutes is attached for your referral.

COUNCIL MEETING

**Wednesday 8 November, 2023
6:00 PM**

**Community Hall
Braybrook Community Hub
107–139 Churchill Avenue
Braybrook**

AGENDA

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MARIBYRNONG CITY COUNCIL - ELECTORAL STRUCTURE REVIEW

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present for consideration Council's preferred model for submission to the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review, October 2023.

ISSUES SUMMARY

- In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government established Electoral Representation Advisory Panels to conduct electoral structure reviews of 39 local councils not compliant with structures permitted under the Local Government Act 2020, including Maribyrnong City Council.
- The Electoral Representation Advisory Panel released the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review Report on 25 October 2023.
- The Electoral Representation Advisory Panel's preliminary view is that Maribyrnong City Council comprise seven single member wards.
- The Electoral Representation Advisory Panel has also developed two ward models for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Maribyrnong City Council - Local Council Electoral Structure Review Preliminary Report [↓](#) 

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Note the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review Report;**
2. **Request the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel noting that:**
 - a) **The preferred representation structure for Maribyrnong City Council is seven single-councillor wards; and**
 - b) **The preferred ward and name structure for Maribyrnong City Council is Model 2.**

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 2020 (LGA2020)* introduced several changes to local government representation, including the types of electoral structures councils may comprise. All metropolitan councils, including Maribyrnong City Council, must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures from October 2024 onwards.

In October 2022, the Minister for Local Government formed Electoral Representation Advisory Panels (ERAP) to review and provide advice on the electoral structures of 39 local councils, including Maribyrnong City Council.

The ERAP released the draft Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review Report on 25 October 2023 for the purpose of community consultation. The ERAP has assessed and made recommendations on the number of councillors and wards, ward boundary alignments and the names of each ward for Maribyrnong City Council.

The ERAP will hear and consider submissions before making a final recommendation to the Minister for Local Government on 20 December 2023. If the Minister for Local Government accepts the electoral structure recommended by the ERAP, those changes will take effect at the Maribyrnong City Council October 2024 election.

DISCUSSION/KEY ISSUES

1. Key Issues

The ERAP considered the following criteria in its review of the electoral structure of Maribyrnong City Council:

- whether the structure would comply with the *LGA 2020* (section 15(2));
- how long it would likely comply given predicted population growth;
- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries could be established easily identifiable to local communities;
- the representation of communities of interest;
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area; and
- past Maribyrnong Council election statistics.

Councillor Representation

After taking into consideration the requirements of the *LGA 2020* and the above criteria, the ERAP has recommended seven councillors to be the appropriate number for Maribyrnong City Council.

Maribyrnong City Council currently has 69,232 voters represented by seven Councillors over 31 km². This is the second-lowest number of voters for any metropolitan council. The ERAP population growth forecasts indicate only moderate population change and therefore considers the existing number of Councillors appropriate.

It is recommended that Maribyrnong City Council support the ERAP's preliminary view of seven Councillors. It is considered that any reduction in the number of Councillors potentially increases the risk of reducing the diversity of Maribyrnong Councillors, and compounds the impact of moving away from multi-member wards. Smaller wards with fewer electors also provides an opportunity for Councillors with specific appeal in a particular geographic area to be elected.

Fewer Councillors also increases the potential of the temporary absence of a Councillor (due to reasons such as illness, leave of absence, conflict of interest) having a greater impact on the orderly operation of Council meetings, and a possibly greater influence on the outcome of Council decisions. Fewer Councillors also potentially increases the likelihood of a Council meeting lapsing due to a failure to achieve a quorum.

Conversely, given Maribyrnong City Council's relatively small geographic footprint, any increase in the number of Councillors would result in wards that would be very small. The larger a ward is, the easier it is for a Councillor to represent the interests of the community as required under the *LGA 2020*, rather than only the interests of a specific ward.

Any increase in the number of Councillors in Maribyrnong would also increase the governance costs to the community, including Councillor allowances, professional development and associated support costs.

An increase even to eight Councillors would result with the potential to increase the likelihood of the Mayor having to exercise a casting vote on occasions, which is not considered good governance at Maribyrnong City Council.

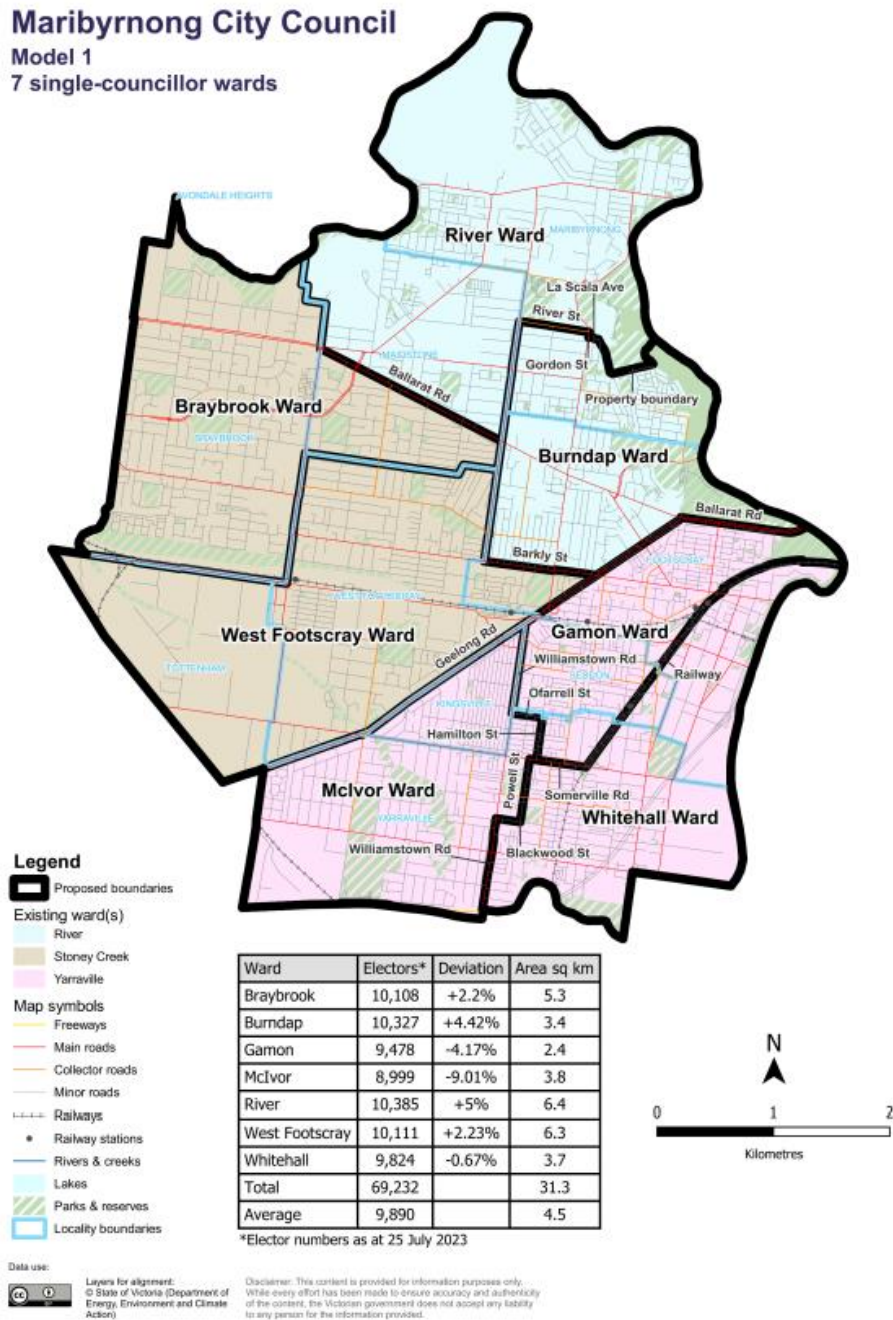
Ward Boundary Structure

ERAP has developed two models for consultation, based on the requirements of the *LGA 2020*, communities of interest, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and the best potential for fair and equitable representation.

In preparing these two models, the ERAP noted that Maribyrnong City Council has several strong physical barriers that divide groups of voters, including major roads and train lines, different demographic characteristics and uneven patterns of future growth.

Model 1

Maribyrnong City Council Model 1 7 single-councillor wards

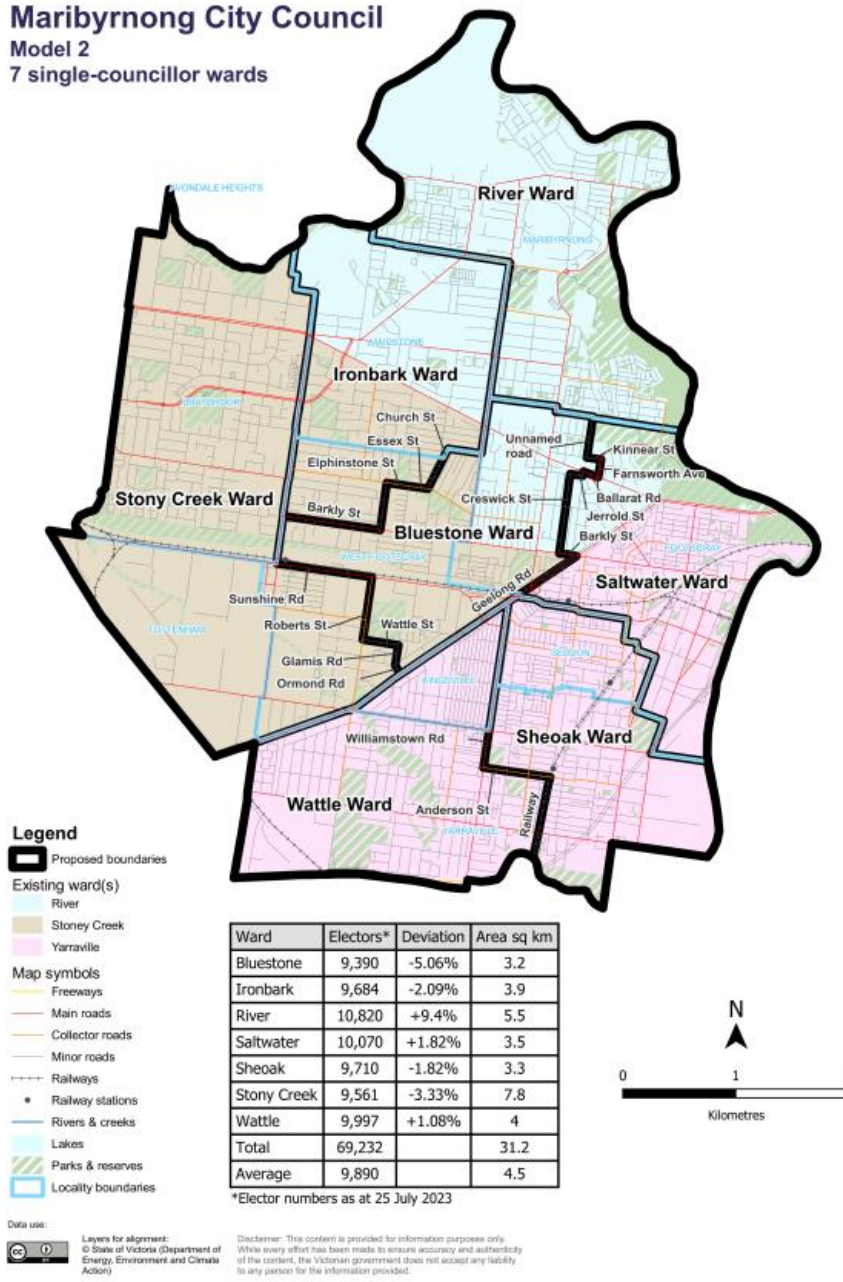


Model 1 proposes minimal-change, creating seven new wards based on the three multi-councillor wards in the current electoral structure. Each existing ward is divided into single councillor wards according to the existing number of councillors in each ward. Proposed wards capture communities of interest and localities reasonably well, using roads and train lines to create strong boundaries.

There are some anomalies including the Yarraville community being divided across three wards and Footscray being divided across three wards. The ERAP noted in their report that Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville generally identify as one community of interest, however is too large to be included in one ward.

Model 2

Maribyrnong City Council Model 2 7 single-councillor wards



Model 2 uses locality boundaries where appropriate to retain communities of interest and broadly resembles the single-councillor ward structure in place for Maribyrnong City Council before 2012, with some modified boundaries to reflect changes in voter distribution since that time. A key difference from Model 1 is that the Footscray Activity Centre is contained in one ward.

There are also anomalies with Model 2, including the Stony Creek Ward being physically divided by the train line and the Tottenham industrial area, and the community of West Footscray being divided over three wards.

It is noted that both models developed by the ERAP have potential strengths and drawbacks and will appeal to different communities of interest.

2. Council Policy/Legislation

Council Plan 2021-2025

This report contributes to Council's strategic objectives contained in the Council Plan 2021-2025 by considering:

- Strategic Objectives
 - Council will proactively lead our changing City using strategic foresight, innovation, transparent decision making and well-planned and effective collaboration and community engagement to support community and economic growth during the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and beyond.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2020

Conflicts of Interest

No officer responsible for, or contributing to, this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to this report.

Human Rights Consideration

This report complies with the rights listed in the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

3. Engagement

Nil.

4. Resources

Nil.

5. Environment

Nil.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Councillors support the ERAP's preliminary view of a seven single-councillor ward representation structure and nominate Model 2 for its submission to the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review.

Local council electoral structure review

Preliminary Report

Maribyrnong City Council

October 2023

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

Acknowledgement of Country

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

Report approval

Version	Date approved	Approved by
1	18 October 2023	Ms Julie Eisenbise
1	18 October 2023	Mr Tim Presnell
1	18 October 2023	Ms Dana Fleming

Version approval

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
1	20 October 2023	Program Sponsor	Final proofread and confirmed for publication

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

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

Executive summary

An electoral structure review panel appointed by the Minister for Local Government is reviewing the electoral structure of Maribyrnong 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), Maribyrnong 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 Maribyrnong 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 on Wednesday 15 November 2023. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public hearing on Tuesday 21 November. Following this, the panel will present its final recommendation to the Minister on Wednesday 20 December 2023.

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

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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 are expected to 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 Maribyrnong City Council) must now have single-councillor ward electoral structures.

For Maribyrnong City Council, the 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 Maribyrnong City Council has 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 nominated representative) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

On behalf of the panel, the VEC conducts a public information and awareness program to inform the public about the Maribyrnong City Council electoral structure review. This includes:

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- printed public notices in state-wide newspapers
- public information sessions to outline the review process and respond to questions from the community
- a media release to announce the start of the review
- information on social media channels
- website content on vec.vic.gov.au, including:
 - current information on the review process
 - fact sheets for each council under review and a submission guide.

Maribyrnong City Council was also offered 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.

Maribyrnong City Council took up the social media option but not the VoterAlert option.

Public consultation

The panel now invites input to the electoral structure review of Maribyrnong 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 to determine the appropriate number of councillors. 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 Maribyrnong City Council, the panel considered the following criteria:

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- 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 Maribyrnong 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.

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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 takes the following approach to naming wards:

1. The panel retains 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 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

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- 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.

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About Maribyrnong City Council

Profile

Maribyrnong City Council is located on the Maribyrnong River, 4 km west of central Melbourne. Covering an area of 31 km², it includes the suburbs of Braybrook, Footscray, Kingsville, Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Seddon, West Footscray, Tottenham and Yarraville. It is bordered by Hobsons Bay City Council to the south, Melton City Council to the west, Moonee Valley City Council to the north and Melbourne City Council to the east.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in the Maribyrnong City Council area are the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples.

Landscape

Close to the Port of Melbourne, airports and central Melbourne, Maribyrnong City Council is well serviced by major roads and public transport.

The council area supports a range of land uses, including significant industrial areas, activity centres and diverse residential neighbourhoods. There are major open space areas along the Maribyrnong River. Economic shifts have led to many former industrial sites in the council area being redeveloped for residential use (DTP 2023).

The council area includes the Western Hospital, Victoria University, Footscray Community Arts Centre and the Whitten Oval.

Community and population

Maribyrnong City Council was home to 85,209 people in 2021 (ABS 2022a), an increase of 13,575 over the previous decade (ABS 2011). The median age of residents in 2021 was 35, with more people aged 25 to 49 (47.5%) than for Greater Melbourne overall (37.4%) (.id 2022a).

The council area's population is forecast to grow by about 2.5% per year to over 135,000 by 2041 (.id 2022c). Growth will be uneven, with most new housing in strategic redevelopment sites and activity centres (MCC 2018). Footscray will be a focal point for new residential and commercial development (DTP 2023).

In 2021, 38% of residents were born overseas (from over 100 countries) compared to 35.7% for Greater Melbourne overall (.id2022a). Over 42% of residents spoke a language other than English at home. Residents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in 2021 accounted for 0.7% of the population, which is the same proportion as the average for Greater Melbourne (ABS 20221; 2022b).

More than half of dwellings were medium or high density in 2021, compared to 34.4% for Greater Melbourne overall (.id 2022a). A higher proportion of residents (41.1%) were also renting compared to Greater Melbourne (29.2%) (.id 2022a). The median household weekly income was \$1,998 in 2021, higher than the average for Greater Melbourne of \$1,901 (ABS 2022a; 2022b).

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Maribyrnong City Council has more than 9,700 local businesses that employ over 47,000 people (.id 2022b). The labour force participation rate in 2021 for all residents aged 15 years and over was 69.4%, higher than the average for Greater Melbourne overall (.id 2022a).

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Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Maribyrnong City Council is currently divided into 3 wards with a total of 7 councillors:

- one ward with 3 councillors (Yarraville)
- 2 wards with 2 councillors each (River and Stony Creek wards).

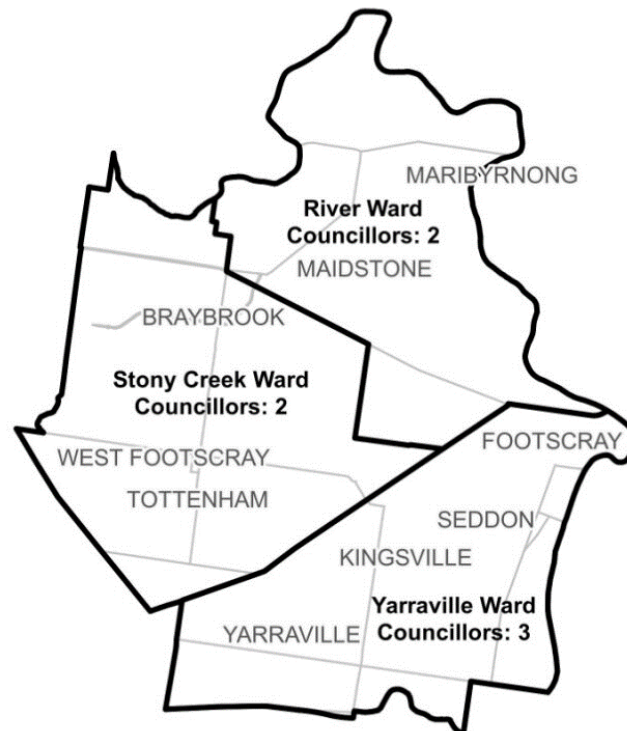


Figure 1: Diagram of current electoral structure of Maribyrnong City Council.

There are an estimated 69,232 voters in Maribyrnong City Council, with an estimated ratio of 9,890 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Maribyrnong City 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 Maribyrnong City Council adopt a structure of 7 councillors elected from 3 wards (one ward with 3 councillors and 2 wards with 2 councillors each).

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

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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 Maribyrnong City Council.

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

Similar metropolitan councils to Maribyrnong 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
Stonnington City*	26	89,600	104,703	86,821	9	9,646
Maroondah City	61	85,275	115,043	85,033	9	9,448
Yarra City*	20	78,793	90,114	83,253	9	9,250
Bayside City	37	76,020	101,306	76,043	7	10,863
Maribyrnong City*	31	63,456	85,209	69,232	7	9,890
Hobsons Bay City*	65	68,321	91,322	67,836	7	9,690

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

Maintaining 7 councillors

Maribyrnong City Council currently has an estimated 69,232 voters represented by 7 councillors and covers an area of 31 km². This is the second-lowest number of voters for any metropolitan council. Other metropolitan councils with a similar number of voters usually also have 7 councillors. As forecasts indicate only moderate population change is forecast for the council, the panel considers it appropriate for the total number of councillors to remain unchanged.

Electoral structure

To identify the most appropriate electoral structure, various factors were considered. This included the requirements of the Act, the communities of interest in Maribyrnong City Council, the appropriateness of ward boundaries and which models offered the best potential for 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 Maribyrnong City Council community:

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

Model 1 takes a minimal-change approach, creating 7 new wards based on the 3 multi-councillor wards in the current electoral structure. Each existing ward is divided into single-councillor wards according to the existing number of councillors in each ward.

River Ward is divided to create the proposed Burndap and River wards, which both use roads as strong boundaries with some local streets and property boundaries where required. Burndap Ward contains the northern part of Footscray and the southern part of the suburb of Maribyrnong. The new River Ward includes the northern parts of Maribyrnong and Maidstone.

Stony Creek Ward is divided to create the proposed Braybrook and West Footscray wards. Braybrook Ward contains Braybrook and part of Maidstone south of Ballarat Road. It uses strong road and rail boundaries, with the southern boundary the same as the suburb of Maidstone. The proposed West Footscray Ward includes West Footscray, the south-west part of Footscray, and Tottenham.

Yarraville Ward is divided into 3 wards to create the proposed Gamon, Mclvor, and Whitehall wards. Geelong Road provides a strong boundary for Mclvor and Gamon wards. The Williamstown and Werribee train line separates Gamon and Whitehall wards. Some local roads are used as boundaries where the 3 wards connect.

The panel noted that the residents of Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville generally identify as one community of interest but is too large to be included in one ward. In Model 1, this community is split into 3 wards that cover the same geographic area as the current 3-councillor Yarraville Ward.

Splitting the Yarraville community across 3 wards is a potential drawback of Model 1, which could potentially divide communities in this area.

Splitting Footscray across 3 wards is also a potential drawback. However, this split would also ensure voter ratios continue to comply with the requirements of the Act by spreading population growth across wards. It also allows for 3 councillors to share the responsibilities for issues affecting Footscray. Model 2 provides an alternative to this option for consideration.

Another drawback of Model 1 is the unusual shape of the proposed Braybrook Ward. The panel noted that the suburb of Braybrook does not have enough voters to form a ward, so must extend in at least one direction. Model 2 provides an alternative to this option for consideration.

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

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

Model 2 is an alternative to Model 1, and uses locality boundaries where appropriate. It broadly resembles the single-councillor ward structure in place for the council before 2012, with some modified boundaries to reflect changes in voter distribution since that time.

The 7 new wards proposed in Model 2 are:

- Bluestone Ward – centrally located and including part of West Footscray (north and south of the train line) and the western part of Footscray. It uses road and locality boundaries, with some local streets where required.
- Ironbark Ward – includes all of Maidstone and part of West Footscray, using strong road and locality boundaries.
- River Ward – contains the suburb of Maribyrnong.
- Saltwater Ward – includes the eastern part of Footscray and the Footscray activity centre.
- Sheoak Ward – includes all of Seddon and the eastern part of Yarraville. Uses locality, road and train line boundaries.
- Stony Creek Ward – includes all of Braybrook, Tottenham, and part of West Footscray. This ward is almost identical to the Stony Creek Ward that existed before 2012.
- Wattle Ward – includes all of Kingsville and the western part of Yarraville. This ward is almost identical to the Wattle Ward that existed before 2012, with some modifications for voter numbers in the south-east corner.

Potential drawbacks of Model 2 include:

- Stony Creek Ward includes Braybrook to the north and part of west Footscray to the south-west. This means it combines 2 communities that are physically divided by the train line and Tottenham industrial area.
- West Footscray is split over 3 wards – Ironbark, Bluestone and Stony Creek wards, which could potentially divide communities in the area.

Summary

Introducing single-councillor wards represents a large electoral structure change for Maribyrnong 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.

Maribyrnong City Council has several strong physical barriers that divide groups of voters, including major roads and train lines. Communities of interest across the council have different demographic characteristics, and future growth is expected to be uneven.

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

Model 1 represents the least change from the current electoral structure. It maintains the boundaries of the existing 3 wards and divides them into 7 new single-councillor wards. Model 1 retains the existing level of representation across the same geographic areas. Proposed wards capture communities of interest and localities reasonably well, using roads and train lines to create strong boundaries.

Model 2 uses locality boundaries where possible to reflect communities of interest centred on suburbs. A key difference from Model 1 is that the Footscray activity centre is contained in one ward. Model 2 broadly resembles the single-councillor ward structure in place for Maribyrnong City Council before 2012, though modified to reflect changes in voter distribution since that time.

Both models presented in this report seek to achieve meaningful and effective boundaries for communities of interest while also balancing population growth and the legislated voter deviations across the wards. Both models have strengths and potential drawbacks and will appeal to different communities of interest. The panel welcomes feedback and suggestions for improvement from the public through response submissions.

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

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

Model 1

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

Ward names: Braybrook Ward, Burndap Ward, Gamon Ward, Mclvor Ward, River Ward, West Footscray Ward, Whitehall Ward.

Model 2

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

Ward names: Bluestone Ward, Ironbark Ward, River Ward, Saltwater Ward, Sheoak Ward, Stony Creek Ward, Wattle 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

Braybrook and West Footscray ward names are new and are based on localities within these wards.

Burndap and Mclvor ward names are new and based on the registered names of parks in these wards.

Gamon and Whitehall ward names are new and based on the registered names of streets within these wards.

River Ward is the existing name of a ward under the current electoral structure.

Model 2

Bluestone, Ironbark, Saltwater, Sheoak and Wattle ward names are new and are former names of wards for Maribyrnong City Council used before 2012.

River and Stony Creek ward names are existing names of wards under the current electoral structure.

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

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.

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

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:

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

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 15 November 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

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

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: 10 am

Date: Tuesday 21 November 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 20 December 2023. The Minister will consider the final reports, including any determination to make the reports publicly available. Any change to the electoral structure of Maribyrnong 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.

Agenda Item 5.1 - Attachment 1

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

References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022a) [2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Maribyrnong \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 21 September 2023.
- (2022b) [2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Greater Melbourne](#), ABS, accessed 16 October 2023.
- (2011) [2011 Census All persons QuickStats, Maribyrnong \(LGA\)](#), ABS, accessed 21 September 2023.
- DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) (2023) [Maribyrnong planning scheme](#), DTP website, accessed 19 September 2023.
- Electoral Act 2002 (Vic).
- FPSR (First Peoples State Relations) (2023) [Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners](#), First Peoples State Relations website, accessed 19 September 2023.
- Geographic Place Names Act 1998 (Vic).
- MCC (Maribyrnong City Council) (2018), [Maribyrnong Housing Strategy](#), Maribyrnong City Council website, accessed 22 September 2023.
- .id (Informed Decisions) (2022a) [City of Maribyrnong community profile](#), .id website, accessed 21 September 2023.
- (2022b) [City of Maribyrnong economic profile](#), .id website, accessed 21 September 2023.
- (2022c) [City of Maribyrnong population forecast](#), .id website, accessed 21 September 2023.
- Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).
- Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic).

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

Appendix 1: Model maps

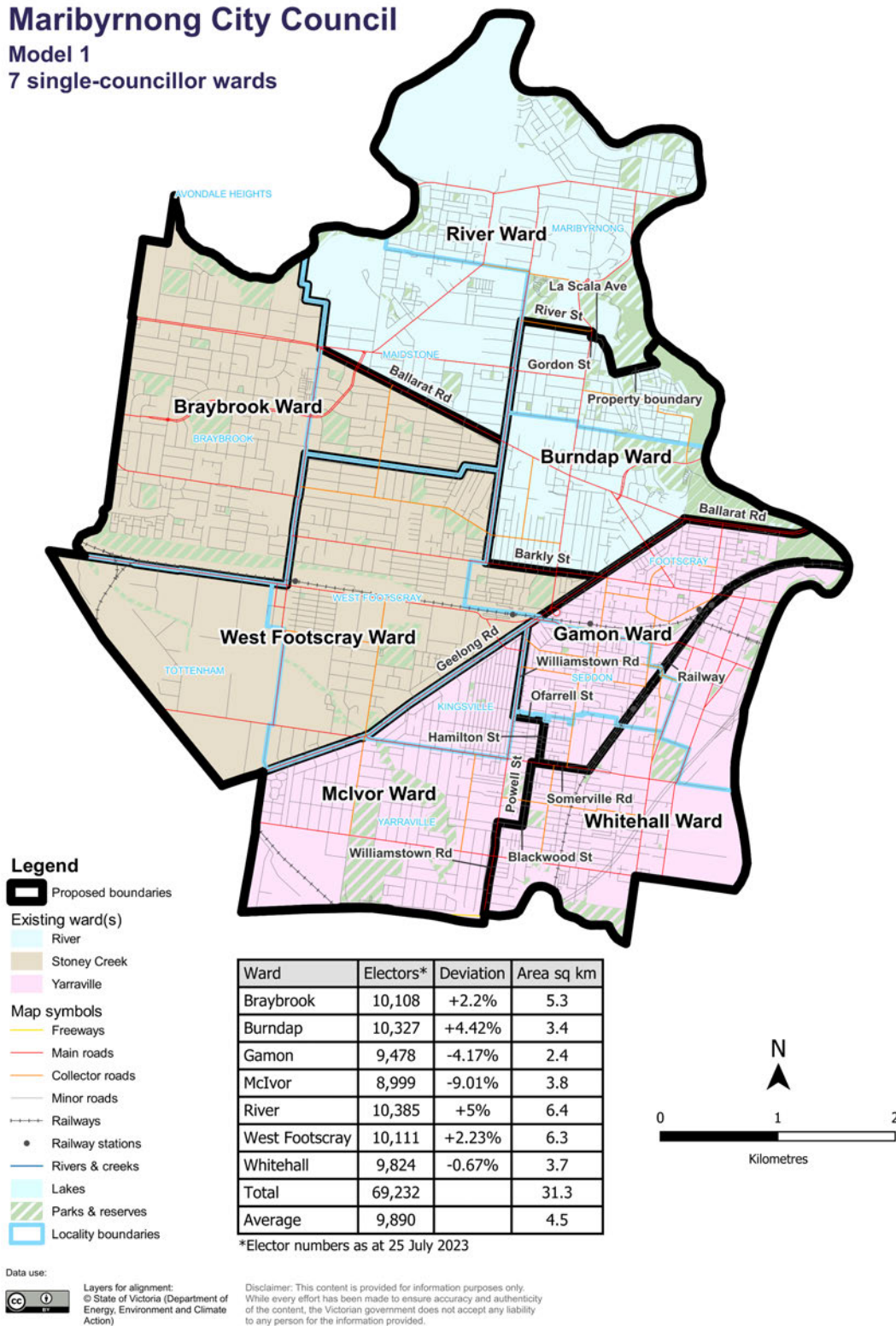
The following maps are included in this report:

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

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

Maribyrnong City Council
Model 1
7 single-councillor wards



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

Data for Model 1

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Braybrook	10,108	+2.2%	5.3
Burndap	10,327	+4.42%	3.4
Gamon	9,478	-4.17%	2.4
Mclvor	8,999	-9.01%	3.8
River	10,385	+5%	6.4
West Footscray	10,111	+2.23%	6.3
Whitehall	9,824	-0.67%	3.7
Total	69,232	n/a	31.3
Average	9,890	n/a	4.5

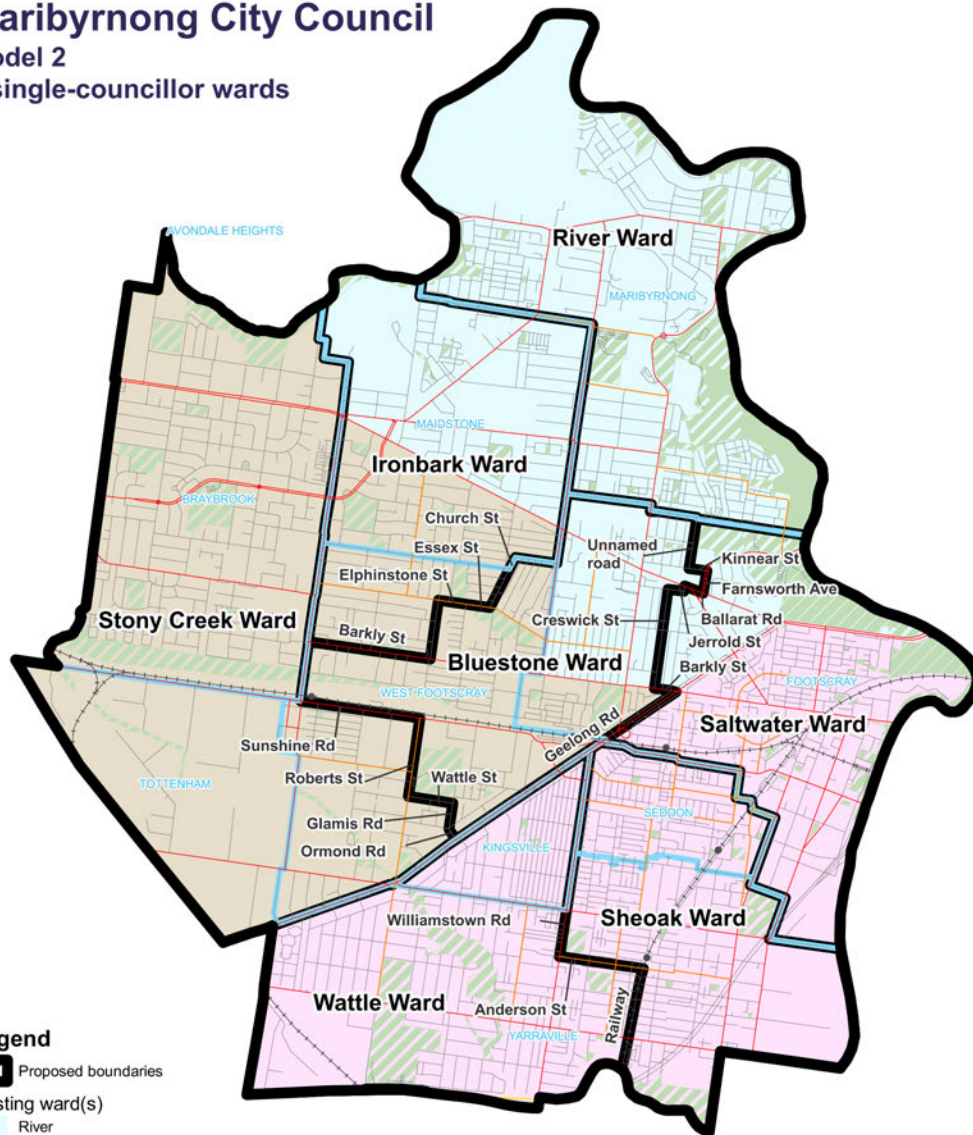
*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023

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

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

Maribyrnong City Council
Model 2
7 single-councillor wards

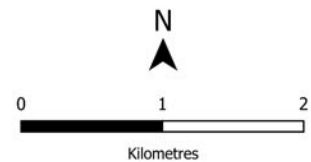


Legend

- Proposed boundaries
- Existing ward(s)**
 - River
 - Stony Creek
 - Yarraville
- 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
Bluestone	9,390	-5.06%	3.2
Ironbark	9,684	-2.09%	3.9
River	10,820	+9.4%	5.5
Saltwater	10,070	+1.82%	3.5
Sheoak	9,710	-1.82%	3.3
Stony Creek	9,561	-3.33%	7.8
Wattle	9,997	+1.08%	4
Total	69,232		31.2
Average	9,890		4.5

*Elector numbers as at 25 July 2023



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

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Agenda Item 5.1 - Attachment 1

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

Data for Model 2

Ward	Electors*	Deviation	Area# (square km)
Bluestone	9,390	-5.06%	3.2
Ironbark	9,684	-2.09%	3.9
River	10,820	+9.4%	5.5
Saltwater	10,070	+1.82%	3.5
Sheoak	9,710	-1.82%	3.3
Stony Creek	9,561	-3.33%	7.8
Wattle	9,997	+1.08%	4
Total	69,232	n/a	31.2
Average	9,890	n/a	4.5

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Agenda Item 5.1 - Attachment 1

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

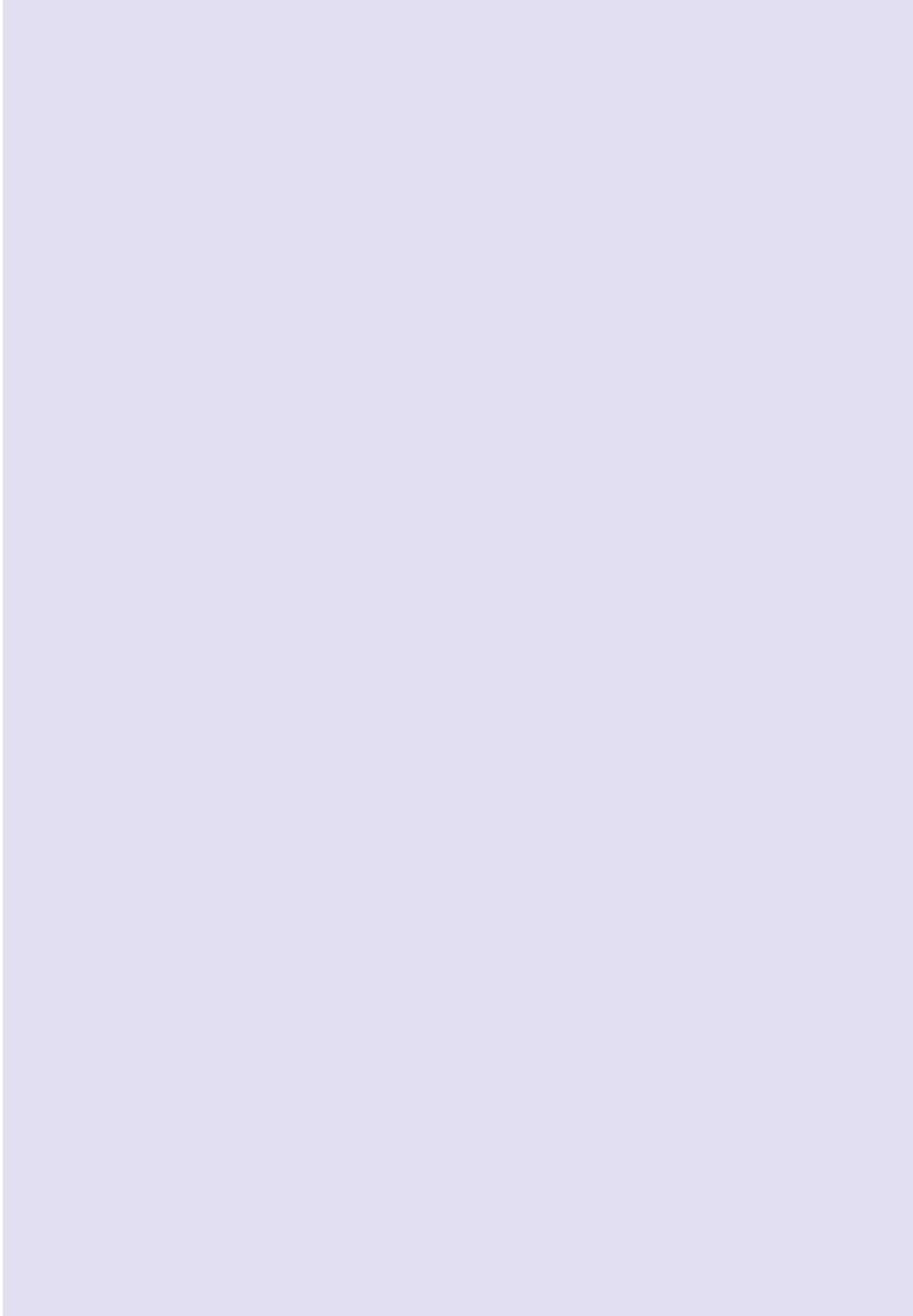
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Agenda Item 5.1 - Attachment 1

Agenda Item 5.1 - Attachment 1



U N C O N F I R M E D M I N U T E S



Maribyrnong City Council

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday 8 November, 2023
6:00 PM**

**Community Hall
Braybrook Community Hub
107–139 Churchill Avenue
Braybrook**

MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Sarah Carter (Chair)
Councillor Michael Clarke
Councillor Simon Crawford
Councillor Jorge Jorquera
Councillor Cuc Lam
Councillor Bernadette Thomas
Councillor Anthony Tran

To be confirmed at the Ordinary Council Meeting
to be held on 21 November, 2023

U N C O N F I R M E D M I N U T E S

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U N C O N F I R M E D M I N U T E S

1. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING AND WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 6.13pm.

The Chair, Cr Sarah Carter made the following acknowledgement statement:

“We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present”.

PRESENT

Councillor Sarah Carter (Chair)
Councillor Michael Clarke
Councillor Simon Crawford
Councillor Jorge Jorquera
Councillor Cuc Lam
Councillor Bernadette Thomas
Councillor Anthony Tran

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive Officer, Celia Haddock
Director Infrastructure Services, Patrick Jess
Director Corporate Services, Lisa King
Director Planning and Environment, Laura Jo Mellan
Acting Director Community Services, Alix Massina
Manager Governance and Commercial Services, Phil McQue
Coordinator Governance, Christopher Southavong
Manager Customer Engagement, Lauren McKenzie

2. APOLOGIES

Nil.

3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

U N C O N F I R M E D M I N U T E S

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nil.

5. OFFICER REPORTS

5.1. Maribyrnong City Council - Electoral Structure Review

The purpose of this report is to present for consideration Council's preferred model for submission to the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review, October 2023.

Council Resolution

That Council:

1. *Note the Maribyrnong City Council Electoral Structure Review Report;*
2. *Request the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel noting that:*
 - a) *The preferred representation structure for Maribyrnong City Council is seven single-councillor wards; and*
 - b) *The preferred ward and name structure for Maribyrnong City Council is Model 2.*

Moved: Cr Michael Clarke
Seconded: Cr Cuc Lam

CARRIED

6. COUNCILLOR QUESTION TIME

Nil.

7. MEETING CLOSURE

The Chair, Cr Sarah Carter, declared the meeting closed at 6.17pm.

To be confirmed at the Ordinary Council Meeting
to be held on 21 November, 2023.

Chair, Cr Sarah Carter