

Submission to the Mildura Rural City Council electoral structure review

Michael DiFabrizio, Mildura, 16 July 2023

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Mildura Rural City Council electoral structure review. This submission contains background comments, responses to the preliminary report's three models and an alternative proposal. Hopefully some of it can be helpful to the panel.

Author background

I'm a Mildura resident and have been a journalist here for the past eight years. In addition to gaining an understanding of the various communities of the Mildura municipality, my work has included reporting on local government, elections and previous reviews to both state and federal electoral boundaries. I am writing this submission in a private capacity.

Recommendations

1. That if new models aren't to be considered, and if substantial changes to existing models aren't to be considered, the panel should adopt the boundaries of Model 2.
2. That regardless of which model is chosen, this submission's boundary suggestions (on p6 for Model 1 and p9 for Model 2) and ward name suggestions (p6 for Model 1, p9 for Model 2 and p11 for Model 3) be given consideration.
3. That if new models or substantial change is to be considered, this submission's Alternative proposal (p13) be given consideration for input.

Contents

General comments..... 3

Key considerations..... 3

Response to number of councillors.....5

Response to Model 1..... 6

Response to Model 2..... 9

Response to Model 3.....11

Alternative proposal..... 13

General comments

It is disappointing that the Local Government Act 2020, and a subsequent decision not to exempt Mildura Rural City from the single-member wards requirement, took away the ability for different structures to be evaluated on their merit and with community input. The 2015 Mildura Rural City Council Electoral Representation Review found a subdivided structure was “not considered viable”. Yet this time, not only has the choice already been made to pursue such a structure, the choice was made without community consultation. It is possible that a fresh review would have found single-councillor wards to be the right structure for Mildura Rural City, but we’ll never know, and the community is left with an outcome they weren’t invited to shape.

I also express concern at the timeframes and stages to this review. Round 1 electoral structure reviews earlier this year had an extra step of consultation, with preliminary submissions accepted before a preliminary report was released for further submissions. Round 2 reviews, including this one, went straight to the preliminary report, with only one opportunity for public submissions. I note that in the 2015 Mildura review, there were more preliminary submissions than there were submissions at the later stage. Limiting feedback to one window, after options had already been narrowed down, seems inadequate and an opportunity may have been missed to get answers to key questions before a map was drawn.

Furthermore, in the submission guide for Round 2 reviews, it was said: “Due to the time limitations of the review, it is unlikely that the panel will consider other electoral structure models at this stage.” It is disappointing that “time limitations” are a factor in a process such as this. My view is that if a change is worth doing, it is worth doing properly.

I suspect, with the volume of reviews needed as a result of the Act, the sped-up consultation and time constraints are not the fault of the panel. If that is true, I can only encourage the relevant minister and members of the government to reflect on whether the process set up was consistent with good governance.

Key considerations

When developing this submission, I have sought to follow the same guidelines as the panel, and have also relied on two inclinations specific to local considerations, which I’ll detail here.

Drawing rural boundaries

The most important question for the panel to answer when it comes to boundaries is whether to adopt one large rural ward, encompassing both sides of the Murray-Sunset National Park, or whether the areas to the national park’s north (known as the Millewa) and south (known as the Mallee Track) are to be in separate wards.

A key argument for one ward is that it groups dryland farming communities together, capturing a community of interest. There are similar characteristics to both the Millewa and Mallee Track.

In the unsubdivided structure, it has been fairly typical for voters to elect one councillor from one of the dryland farming communities. By “splitting” the vote of the two dryland farming regions across two wards, it is possible this could lead to a lack of representation that might have otherwise occurred. That said, this is a risk with wards generally and there would be other parts of the municipality where this risk is also present.

A split also requires joining these rural communities with satellite towns such as Merbein and Red Cliffs, areas in and around Mildura’s outskirts, and/or irrigated farming communities. Compromises have to be made and some of these are bound to be less than ideal.

On the other side of the debate, a key argument for two wards is the large size covered by the municipality’s rural areas and the long distances required to travel between them.

In the panel’s Model 2, the Murray-Sunset Ward makes up 21,772 sq km of the municipality’s 22,080 sq km, or 99 per cent. In Model 3 it is 21,487 sq km, or 97 per cent. Representing such a large area is a significant responsibility to place on one councillor, especially relative to the other councillors sharing the remaining 1-3 per cent between them.

The Murray-Sunset prevents direct travel between Mallee Track and Millewa communities, exacerbating the large-area difficulties. Driving from Underbool and Cullulleraine, for example, is a two hour and 20 minute drive via Ouyen and Red Cliffs, according to Google Maps.

Given high travel demands, on top of the regular councillor's workload, it should be considered whether there is more risk of uncontested elections under a model with one large rural ward.

While any two-ward option for these communities would involve sharing wards with areas closer to Mildura, there may be some community of interest benefits to doing this. People from the Millewa are not likely to be travelling to the Mallee Track to access council services, for example, and vice versa.

For these reasons, the inclination I have is that there should be two wards that are inclusive of the outer rural parts of the municipality. However, this shouldn’t be read as a firm conclusion and I would urge the panel to give far more weight to any submissions made from the affected areas on this question than my own submission.

Drawing Mildura boundaries

For inner-Mildura wards, a guiding principle that I have used can be stated with a simple rule: **Wards that cross Deakin Avenue should be avoided as much as possible.** This is particularly true between Seventh and Fifteenth streets.

Deakin Avenue is a long, straight and central line in Mildura that is easily understood as a boundary. It is also practical as a boundary, as it requires both cars and pedestrians to pass through two sets of traffic-light intersections to cross. Each side has footpaths, parking, a bike lane and two vehicle lanes, and they share a wide centre median.

The communities extending out beyond each side of Deakin Avenue often have different characteristics, helping to capture communities of interest. Even opposite sides of Deakin Avenue itself typically have very obvious differences in land use. Examples at different points include a supermarket being directly opposite a park, medical services opposite houses, a leisure centre opposite units, et cetera.

Beyond Fifteenth Street, the principle of avoiding crossing Deakin Avenue/Sturt Highway can still provide benefits, though it is also fair and valid to treat Mildura South as a community of interest spanning both sides that should be kept together.

Going in the other direction, Seventh, Eleventh, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth streets are particularly useful options for boundaries that should be used as much as possible.

Response to number of councillors

The panel found seven or nine councillors to be an appropriate number for Mildura Rural City. Referring to the table in the preliminary report comparing similar regional city councils, it is accepted that Mildura's council had the lowest number of voters among those with nine councillors. However, Greater Shepparton City, next highest in the same cohort with just 4027 more voters, did not have a seven-councillor model put forward in its electoral structure preliminary report – in fact, the panel wrote it had “serious reservations” about decreasing the number of councillors. It is also true that if a change were made, Mildura's council would have the highest number of voters among comparison councils with seven councillors.

While it's a given that somewhere has to be highest and lowest, another aspect of the table that stands out is Mildura Rural City's geographic area relative to the comparison councils, reducing the effectiveness of comparing purely on population or voter numbers. The average area of the eight comparison councils was smaller than one-tenth the size of Mildura Rural City. The nearest comparison (Horsham Rural City) was less than 20 per cent the size. There are some notable implications from having a larger geographic area, ranging from the amount of travel councillors need to do, to the amount of community knowledge they need to be across, to how accessible voters feel their representatives are. Appropriate weight therefore needs to be given to the Mildura municipality's significant geographic size.

There may be a case for seven councillors being the right number for Mildura Rural City, but I do not believe such a case can be made on the basis of comparison with similar councils. Under these terms, remaining at nine councillors would seem to be appropriate.

Response to Model 1

Ward boundaries

If the panel does decide to adopt a seven-councillor structure, Model 1 does a reasonable job of dividing the municipality and keeping communities of interest together to the extent it can be achieved.

The three wards outside Mildura make sense and would be fairly easy to explain (“Merbein with the Millewa, Red Cliffs with the Mallee Track, and Irymple with Nichols Point” would do it in one sentence). Two suggestions that should be considered are:

1. Ideally Cabarita and Birdwoodton would not have ward boundaries running through their township boundaries. Lake Hawthorn remaining with Cabarita would also be ideal. Given their shared community of interest and closeness to Merbein, the remainder of these locations would seem best served by being shifted from Mildura North Ward to Lake Wallawalla Ward. This would result in -434 voters for Mildura North Ward and +434 voters for Lake Wallawalla Ward. Alternatively, making the above changes but instead shifting the boundary near the river to McEdward Street rather than Gibbs Street would result in a -393/+393 change. Although both wards remain within quota under either scenario, Mildura North may become problematic as it would have significantly fewer voters than other wards.
2. Consideration could be given for Cardross to be shifted from Lake Wallawalla Ward into Sunset Country Ward, given that community’s close ties with Red Cliffs. The change in numbers would depend on how the boundaries are drawn.

Of the inner wards, Mildura South Ward perfectly captures that growth area. However, the rest of Mildura is awkwardly divided. The Walnut Park Ward dog-leg shape would ideally have been avoided, and that section beyond Etiwanda Avenue feels a bit “tacked on” to the rest. Keeping the CBD/City Heart area in one ward would have some community of interest benefit, despite the benefits offered when wards do not cross Deakin Avenue, but it does lump residents from areas with different characteristics together. I do not see any obvious opportunities for minor boundary changes that would offer improvement in Mildura under this model, though a more substantial rethink on Mildura Central Ward, Walnut Park Ward and possibly Mildura North Ward could potentially lead to a better outcome (see Alternative proposal for ideas).

Ward names

Kings Billabong and Mildura South are appropriate. On the remaining wards:

| Name could be reconsidered | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Lake Wallawalla | Lake Wallawalla is not especially well-known, so it would not be a useful identifier. |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | <p>Millewa Ward would be more appropriate. Millewa is used to describe the region that includes Meringur, Cullulleraine and Werrimull¹, and is also a well-understood term. It is the name of local football and netball leagues, with a strong presence in the ward. Millewa is on the Register of Geographic Names as an irrigation channel and pumping station within the ward, and as a county that includes most if not all of the ward. As an alternative, Merbein Ward, named after the most populated town in the ward, could be an option.</p> |
| Sunset Country | <p>Sunset Country is not ideal, as there are better options.</p> <p>Walpeup Ward would refer to a well-known township within the ward, while also evoking the former Shire of Walpeup, which from 1911 to 1995 served an area making up roughly the southern half of this ward's boundaries. This would give an appropriate nod to the history of local government within the ward and Mildura Rural City Council's origins.</p> <p>Mallee Track Ward would describe a common name for the string of towns at the southern end of the ward, while also adopting the name of a road at Hattah, roughly halfway between Red Cliffs in the north and Ouyen in the south. It is a well-understood term.</p> <p>Lastly, Mallee Ward is another option perhaps more inclusive of the northern end of the ward, however Mallee is also the name of the local federal electorate, which may cause confusion.</p> |
| Walnut Park | <p>Walnut Park is away from main roads, so may not be a useful identifier. It does evoke the much more well-known Walnut Avenue, a key road on the western side of Mildura, however in Model 1 the ward extends further east of Deakin Avenue than west, so this could be confusing. For Model 1, no obvious replacement emerges. Something along the lines of Schools Ward or Education Ward may highlight that three important education institutions for the municipality – Mildura Senior College, SuniTAFE and La Trobe University – are within these boundaries, while Ranfurly Primary School extends the relevance of these names to the ward's western boundaries. However, it's unlikely to be immediately obvious to people what is being referred to.</p> <p>Though I am not sure this suggestion would satisfy the criteria, within this ward there is a small Gambetta Court. The SuniTAFE library is also the Gambetta Library (not as a registered place name). Kaye Gambetta was the first woman to be elected Mayor of Mildura². Gambetta Ward</p> |

¹ Millewa Community Plan, Mildura Rural City Council,
<https://www.mildura.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/document-resources/publications/community-plans/millewa-community-plan-2016-2020.pdf>

² "Remembering Mildura's first female mayor", *Sunraysia Daily*,
<https://www.sunrasyiadaily.com.au/events-that-shaped-sunraysia/1505424/first-woman-mayor-of-mildura>

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | <p>could be worth consideration, should the panel deem it appropriate. Mildura Central Ward could work but should be assessed cautiously, given it shares a name with the privately owned Mildura Central shopping centre. That said, this ward is located between Mildura South Ward and a northern ward, so “central” happens to make some sense. The ward also includes the shopping centre, so at least it avoids the confusion of using the name in a ward where that isn’t true.</p> |
| Name is not appropriate | |
| Mildura North | <p>Mildura North is not appropriate for the ward as drawn. The area it covers would be more typical of what is known as the “west” side of town among locals. Mildura West Primary School, Mildura West Kindergarten and Mildura West Cricket Club are all within this ward. Mildura West Ward would be appropriate.</p> |
| Mildura Central | <p>Mildura Central is the name of the well-known large shopping centre at Fifteenth Street. As such, the term is likely to evoke the opposite end of town than where this ward is. “Central” generally can also be interpreted in different ways (from the “central business district” to the “central” part of Mildura’s grid layout). For Model 1, well-known place names in the riverfront precinct would be appropriate: Nowingi Place Ward, Jaycee Park Ward or Rio Vista Park Ward. Chaffey Ward could be a possibility, as it captures both Chaffey Avenue at the northern end and Chaffey Secondary College at the southern end. The Chaffey brothers established the Mildura irrigation colony. The panel would need to be satisfied that “Chaffey” as a standalone name would meet the registered place name criteria, however.</p> |

Response to Model 2

Ward boundaries

On Murray-Sunset Ward, I refer to my earlier comments on drawing rural boundaries (p3). A further comment would be that the ward's -0.57 per cent deviation from the average in this model is commendable. While I don't have access to the projections used by the panel, my suspicion is a large rural ward would not be projected to grow excessively. This can create a temptation to draw the ward well above the current average in order to account for future lack of growth, however the trade-off in this case would be that an already large ward becomes even larger. Keeping the ward close to the average seems appropriate.

On the wards that include Merbein and Red Cliffs, some suggestions if this model is adopted:

1. The remainder of the Birdwoodton boundaries (to Gibbs Street) would ideally move from Lake Ranfurly Ward (-141 voters) to Lake Hawthorn Ward (+141), to keep all of Birdwoodton in the same ward as Merbein.
2. Consideration could be given to moving some or all of Cardross from Murray-Sunset Ward into Kings Billabong Ward, to keep Cardross in the same ward as Red Cliffs.

River Boulevard Ward is appropriate. Should the panel be considering any changes, expansion should only be considered on the Sixteenth Street or Morpung Avenue sides, the ward should not shift any further towards Mildura than these boundaries. Contraction if needed should come from shifting further away from Mildura.

On the five Mildura wards, the zig-zagging nature of some of the boundaries isn't ideal. But overall, this model does create five distinct Mildura wards and there is merit to the choices that have been made. I do not see any obvious opportunities for minor boundary changes that would offer improvement in Mildura under this model, though I would encourage further consideration of different ways the Lake Ranfurly Ward, Henderson Park Ward and Mildura Central Ward area could be divided (see Alternative proposal).

Ward names

Henderson Park, Kings Billabong, Lake Ranfurly and Mildura Wetlands are appropriate. On the remaining wards:

| Name could be reconsidered | |
|----------------------------|--|
| River Boulevard | River Boulevard covers a small stretch of one corner of the ward, away from the ward's population clusters. More relevant options exist. Irymple Ward , named after the ward's major town and the second-most populated town in the municipality, would be appropriate. This would |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | <p>make the area being described much more obvious. That this ward includes Nichols Point would not be a significant concern with using the name Irymple, given the connections between these communities.</p> <p>Karadoc Avenue Ward, named after the central street running through this ward, is another option that would help signify the ward's location.</p> |
| Lake Hawthorn | <p>Lake Hawthorn may be appropriate, but for each of the two models it is used in, town names might improve identification.</p> <p>For Model 2, Merbein Ward may be more appropriate.</p> |
| Murray-Sunset | <p>Murray-Sunset is appropriate.</p> <p>Walpeup Ward could also be considered, for the reasons outlined in the response to Sunset Country in Model 1. Although its origins are in the south, Walpeup is a rural township so could potentially be considered reflective of the types of communities that make up this ward.</p> |
| City Gate | <p>City Gate is not widely used. In fact, outside of Mildura Planning Scheme perusers, it might never have been uttered. But "gateway" is sometimes used, including by the Gateway Tavern, a recognisable business in the ward. So, while City Gate may prompt quizzed looks, people might just be able to work it out. (Though Mildura has many "gates" – plenty of people arrive in town from the west, south and north, too.)</p> <p>Among alternatives, Mildura South Ward doesn't work because such a ward would ideally go to Seventeenth Street, to reflect the Mildura South growth area, and even then, would more likely tend west than east. The Mildura Central shopping centre is located within this ward, but naming a ward after a private commercial enterprise seems undesirable, and the ward doesn't quite evoke "central" with a lower-case c.</p> <p>I considered Oasis Ward, firstly to borrow from the small Oasis Boulevard located within the ward, but also as a general observation of the ward's streets being lined with palm trees and other evidence of greenery, drawing a contrast to the city's desert surroundings. The term "oasis" has long been used in marketing the city. I wasn't fully sold.</p> <p>Referring to my response to the Walnut Park Ward in Model 1, the small Gambetta Court is in this ward also. Gambetta Ward could be worth consideration, should the panel deem it appropriate.</p> <p>City Gate is not ideal, but may be necessary due to a lack of obvious other options.</p> |
| Name is not appropriate | |
| Mildura Central | <p>Mildura Central is not appropriate, as discussed in the response to Model 1 (p8).</p> <p>For Model 2, Nowingi Place Ward would be appropriate, given the ward boundaries skew to the eastern side of Deakin Avenue.</p> |

Response to Model 3

Ward boundaries

On Murray-Sunset Ward, I refer to my earlier comments on drawing rural boundaries (p3). Further, the ward's +8.3 per cent deviation from the average seems excessive. While projections of future voters likely suggest this will come down over time, it is already a substantially larger ward than the others by geographic area. Having such a gap in voter numbers would create another aspect of imbalance. Lastly, combining Merbein with the Mallee Track would seem to do both a disservice. Whereas the Millewa and Mallee Track share a dryland farming interest, and the Millewa and Merbein have proximity, it is unclear what benefits are offered by bringing Merbein and the Mallee Track together.

On Lake Hawthorn Ward and Red Cliffs Ward, these are both good ways to combine these communities. However, if Merbein were to be separated from Murray-Sunset Ward, it is fair to assume neither of these wards would be able to remain as drawn in this model.

Of the remaining wards, Kings Billabong Ward is fine and the Mildura wards are simpler to understand than Model 2, which is a benefit. Ideally, the crossing of Deakin Avenue and the splitting of communities around Hunter Street and San Mateo Avenue (each of these lines divide a very clear community of interest) would not occur.

Ward names

Kings Billabong, Red Cliffs and Murray-Sunset are appropriate. On the remaining wards:

| Name could be reconsidered | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Etiwanda Wetland | Etiwanda Wetland may be appropriate. Even if voters are not familiar with the wetlands, the location of Etiwanda Avenue is well-understood and so this name should give an indication of where the ward is. If another name is sought, Showgrounds Ward would be appropriate. Showgrounds is a registered name referring to a fairly central and recognisable community space within the ward. |
| Washington Park | Washington Park may be appropriate, but there are better options. Chaffey Bend Ward is a natural feature within the ward in a reasonably well-known location, given it surrounds the popular Apex Park river beach. This name would also acknowledge the Chaffey brothers, who established the Mildura irrigation colony. Mildura West Ward would be appropriate. Old Aerodrome Ward , in reference to the Old Aerodrome Sports Complex, a significant community sport and recreation area within the ward, could also be considered. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Walnut Park | Walnut Park may be appropriate for Model 3. While Walnut Park may not be especially well-known, it does evoke Walnut Avenue, a key road that runs through this ward, so it would likely give a reasonable indication of the ward's area. No alternative is proposed. |
| Lake Hawthorn | Lake Hawthorn Ward may be appropriate, but for each of the two models it is used in, town names might improve identification of the areas being spoken about. For Model 3, Mildura South Ward may be more appropriate. |
| City Gate | City Gate is not ideal, as discussed in the response to Model 2 (p10). The same comments apply here. |
| Name is not appropriate | |
| Mildura Central | Mildura Central is not appropriate, as discussed in the response to Model 1 (p8). For Model 3, Jaycee Park Ward or Rio Vista Park Ward would be appropriate, given the ward boundaries skew to the western side of Deakin Avenue. |

Alternative proposal

Using the VEC Public Submission Tool, I have drawn boundaries and written names that sought to reflect the thinking contained in this submission.

While I've done my best to come up with realistic boundaries within the constraints, the panel was said to be unlikely to consider different models, so this proposal might simply serve as another model for the panel to contrast its own thinking with.

Ward boundaries

This model has nine wards. In addition to having two wards share the outer rural areas, the five Mildura wards are split either side of Deakin Avenue. Other main roads are also used for the east-west boundaries, creating an easy-to-grasp layout that heavily uses straight lines.

Millewa Ward includes Merbein, its surrounds, the Millewa and parts of Mildura south of Seventeenth Street and west of San Mateo Avenue.

Walpeup Ward includes the Mallee Track, Nangiloc-Colignan, outskirts of Red Cliffs, Cardross and outskirts of Mildura and Irymple, ending at Sixteenth Street and San Mateo Avenue.

Kings Billabong Ward would include the Red Cliffs town centre and its northern and eastern outer areas, plus the parts of Irymple and Nichols Point east of Morpung Avenue. Most of Coorong Avenue would serve as its western boundary.

Irymple Ward would include the remainder of Irymple and Nichols Point north of Sixteenth Street and west of Morpung Avenue. It would extend into Mildura by one block, with the western boundary largely following Benetook Avenue.

Mildura East Ward would span from Benetook Avenue to Deakin Avenue, with Fourteenth Street as its southern boundary and Seventh Street the northern boundary until the George Chaffey Bridge, after which it will follow the river back to Benetook Avenue.

Chaffey Bend Ward would include an area west of Deakin Avenue and north of Eleventh Street, with the Murray River, starting west of the George Chaffey Bridge, providing the other significant portion of its boundaries.

Mildura West Ward would include the area west of Deakin Avenue between Eleventh and Fourteenth streets, and the area west of Walnut Avenue between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, including Lake Ranfurly.

Mildura South Ward would include the area from Deakin Avenue to Riverside Avenue between Fifteenth and Seventeenth streets, plus Deakin Avenue to Walnut Avenue between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets.

City Gate Ward would span Deakin Avenue to Benetook Avenue between Fourteenth and Sixteenth streets, plus Deakin Avenue to San Mateo Avenue between Sixteenth and Seventeenth streets.

All wards are within 4 per cent of the average voter count, well clear of the +/-10 per cent limits. The highest are the three northernmost Mildura wards. The two southern Mildura wards, each capturing growth areas, are slightly under the average, while the lowest-count wards Irymple (-3.46 per cent) and Kings Billabong (-2.21 per cent) can accommodate future growth. Some restraint was shown with Millewa (-1.16 per cent) and Walpeup (-1.79 per cent) wards, taking into account their large geographic size, the community-of-interest difficulties when carving out more area for these wards and their encroachments into Mildura's outskirts, which may be a source of growth. As I do not have the growth projections the panel has, certain tweaks may yield more appropriate outcomes.

While pleased with some of the benefits this model offers, I do find some of the outcomes surrounding the Walpeup Ward and Kings Billabong Ward somewhat regrettable. The Walpeup Ward reaching Sixteenth Street is further north than what might be considered ideal. That area south of Mildura and Irymple does include small townships and (albeit irrigation) farming communities, so it's not a completely illogical pairing. It probably beats the alternative of going slightly less north and then instead taking a big turn west, all the way to the South Australian border. But the trade-off isn't great for communities that appear more suited to Kings Billabong Ward. That said, within Walpeup Ward, 2084 voters are north of Millewa Road, while 1812 are between Murrayville and Ouyen, so each of these ends are of comparable size. This exercise does illustrate that there are trade-offs with any ward model.

Strengths of this model:

- Deakin Avenue provides a clear and practical dividing line across all five Mildura wards, and many other boundaries are straight lines on main roads or the Murray River.
- "East" and "west" division of Mildura keeps communities of interest together.
- Having a sole large rural ward is avoided.
- Communities of interest around Merbein (Cabarita, Birdwoodton, Merbein South and Merbein West) are kept together.

Potential drawbacks of this model:

- Splitting parts of Red Cliffs into separate wards results in separating this community, and Cardross is also separate from Red Cliffs.
- The dryland farming communities of the Mallee Track, and irrigation farming communities and townships closer to Mildura, are paired together.
- The dryland farming communities of the Millewa, and irrigation farming communities and the town of Merbein, are paired together.

Ward names

Ward names are a mix of natural features (Chaffey Bend, Kings Billabong), town names with and without compass directions (Mildura East, Mildura South, Mildura West, Irymple and Walpeup), the registered name of multiple places within the ward (Millewa) and a description from the Mildura Planning Scheme (City Gate).

Some of the compass directions are different to those proposed by the panel, to reflect how local people refer to the different sides of Mildura.

Of the names not proposed by the panel, Chaffey Bend is a Murray River feature in its ward, with the Chaffey brothers also playing a notable role in Mildura's history. Irymple is the most populated town within its ward and would instantly identify the area. Millewa is the registered name of an irrigation channel, pumping station and county within/including the ward, as well as being a term for a significant region in the ward. Walpeup, as well as being a rural township worthy of reflecting a ward made up of rural townships, was previously prominent in local government through the former Shire of Walpeup from 1911 to 1995.

Voter breakdown and maps




























| Wards ▲ | Councillors ⓘ | Voters ▲ | Deviation ▲ ⓘ |
|--|------------------------------------|----------|--|
|  Chaffey Bend ...  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,951 | +3.79%  |
|  City Gate Ward  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,726 | -0.93%  |
|  Irymple Ward  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,605 | -3.46%  |
|  Kings Billabong...  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,665 | -2.21%  |
|  Mildura East W...  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,883 | +2.36%  |
|  Mildura South ...  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,750 | -0.42%  |
|  Mildura West ...  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,952 | +3.81%  |
|  Millewa Ward  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,715 | -1.16%  |
|  Walpeup Ward  | – <input type="text" value="1"/> + | 4,685 | -1.79%  |

Figure 1: Alternative proposal – voter numbers for each ward

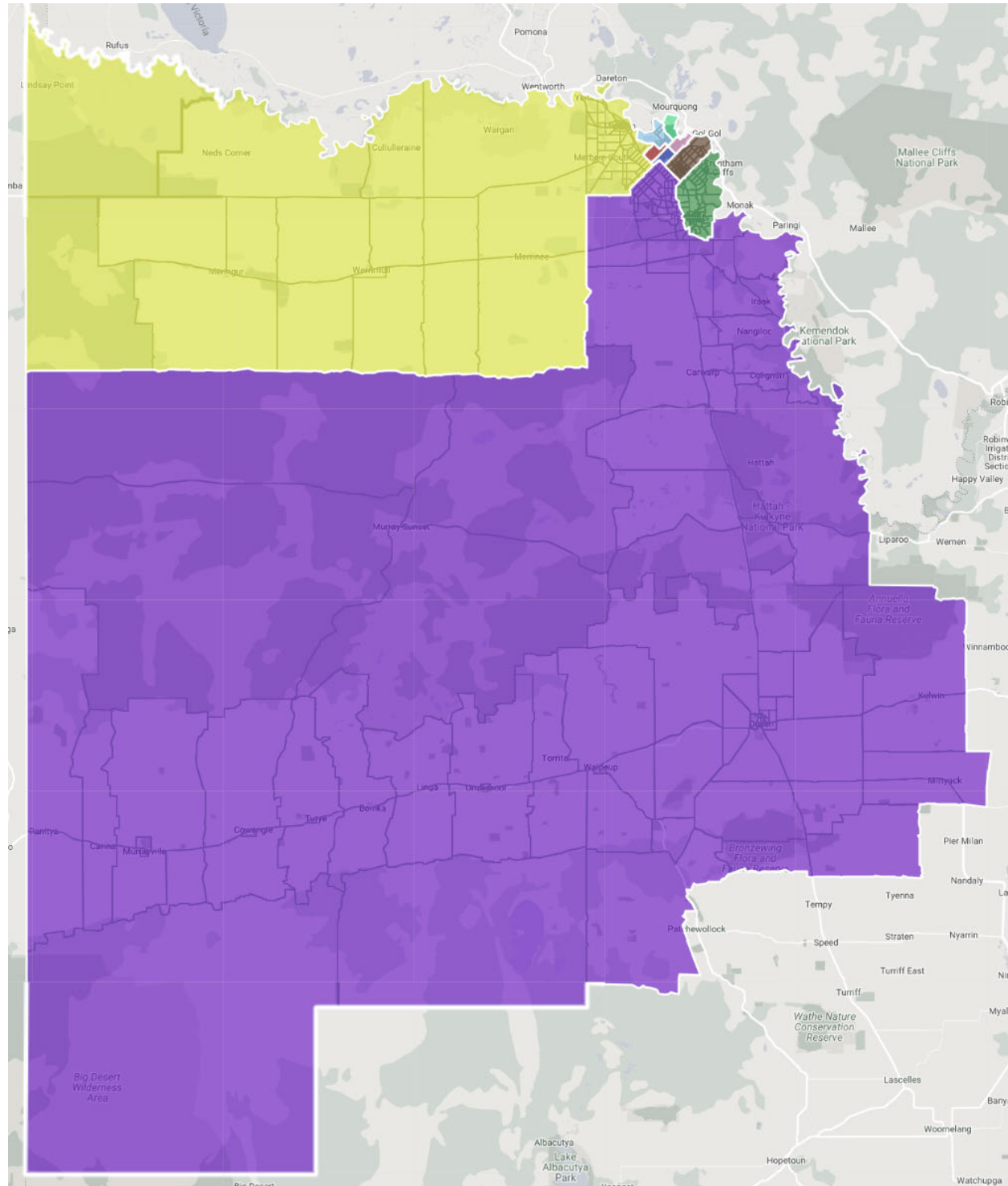


Figure 2: Alternative proposal – map of entire municipality

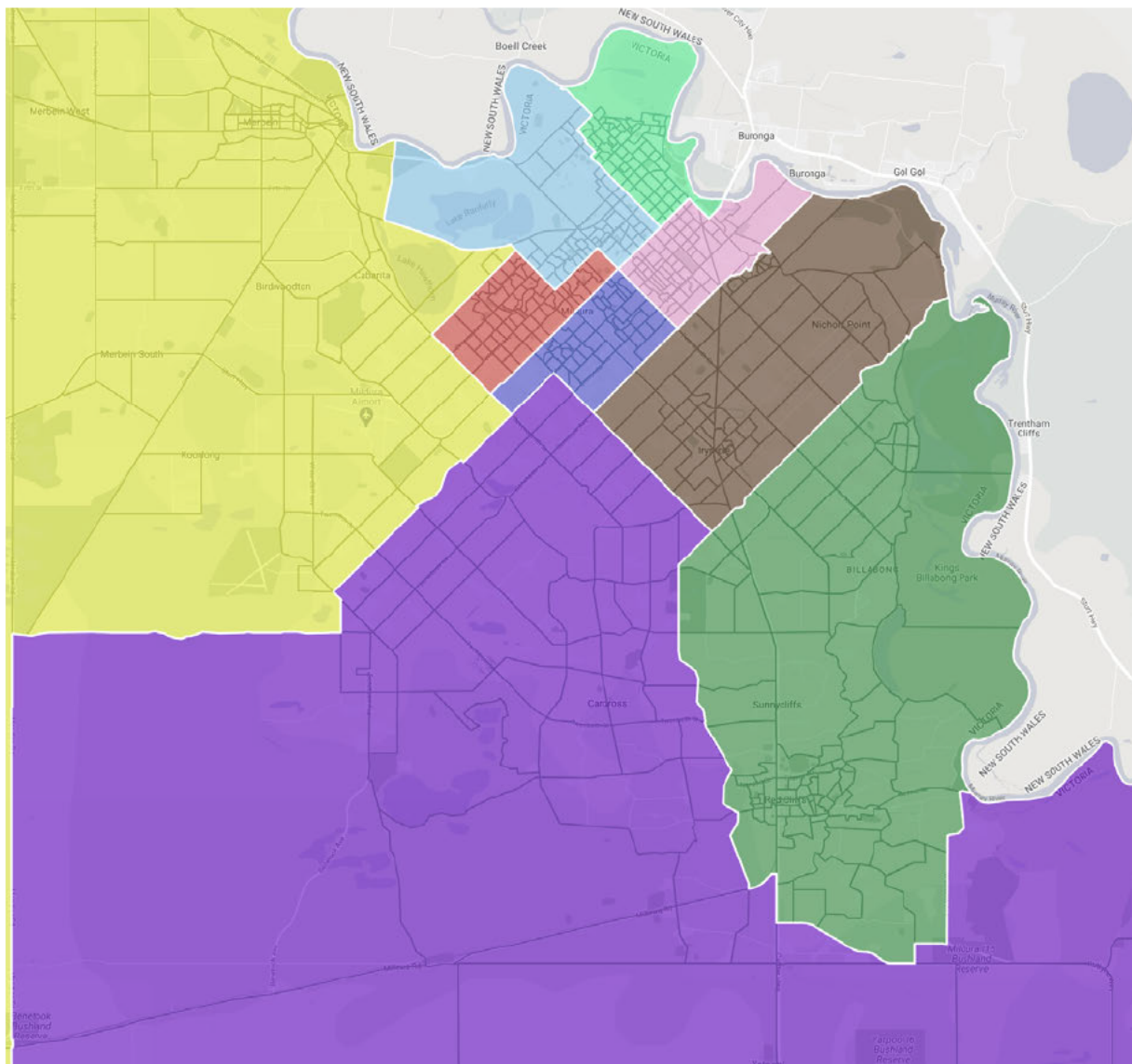


Figure 3: Alternative proposal – map inclusive of Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs

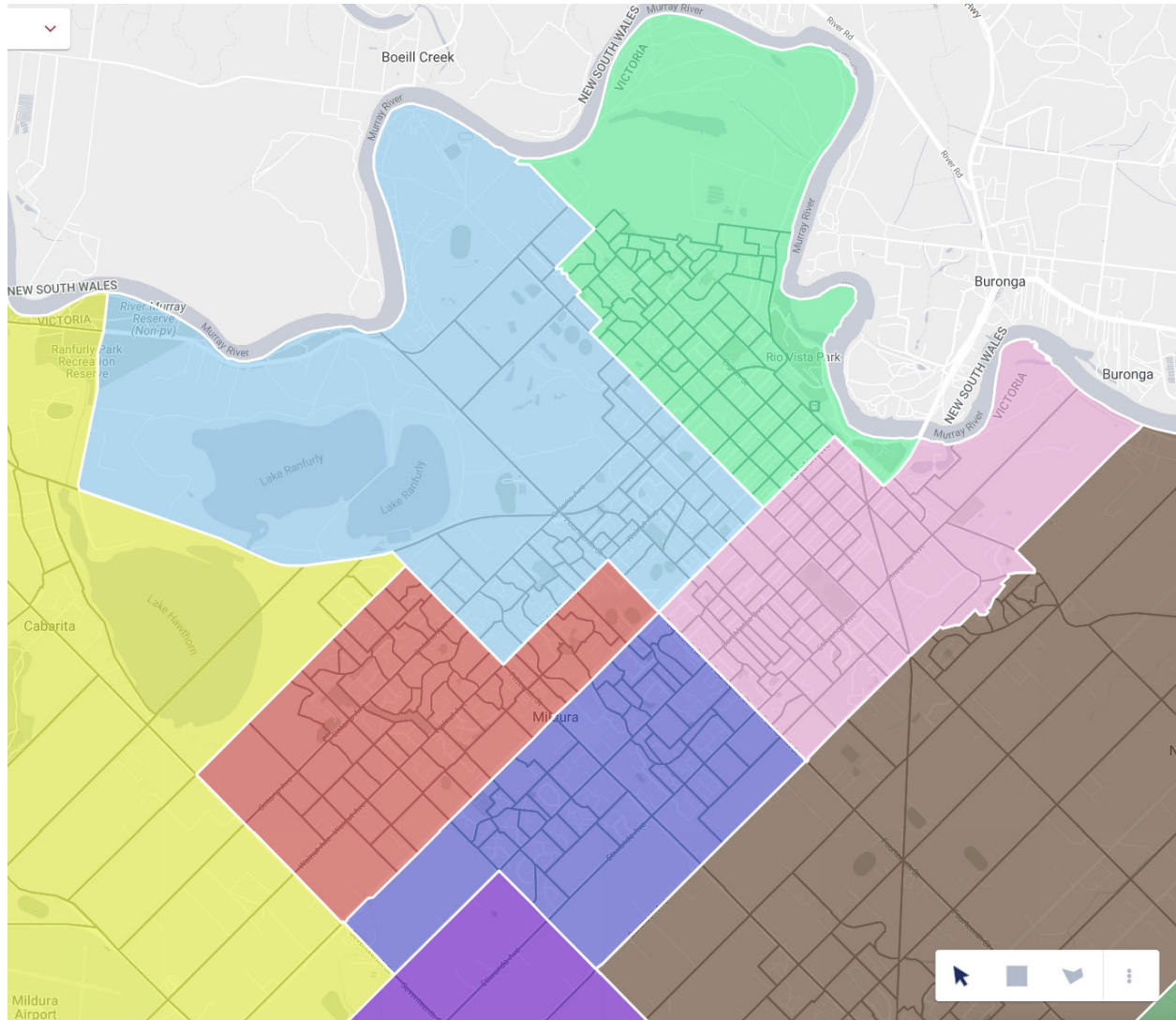


Figure 4: Proposed alternative – map of Mildura