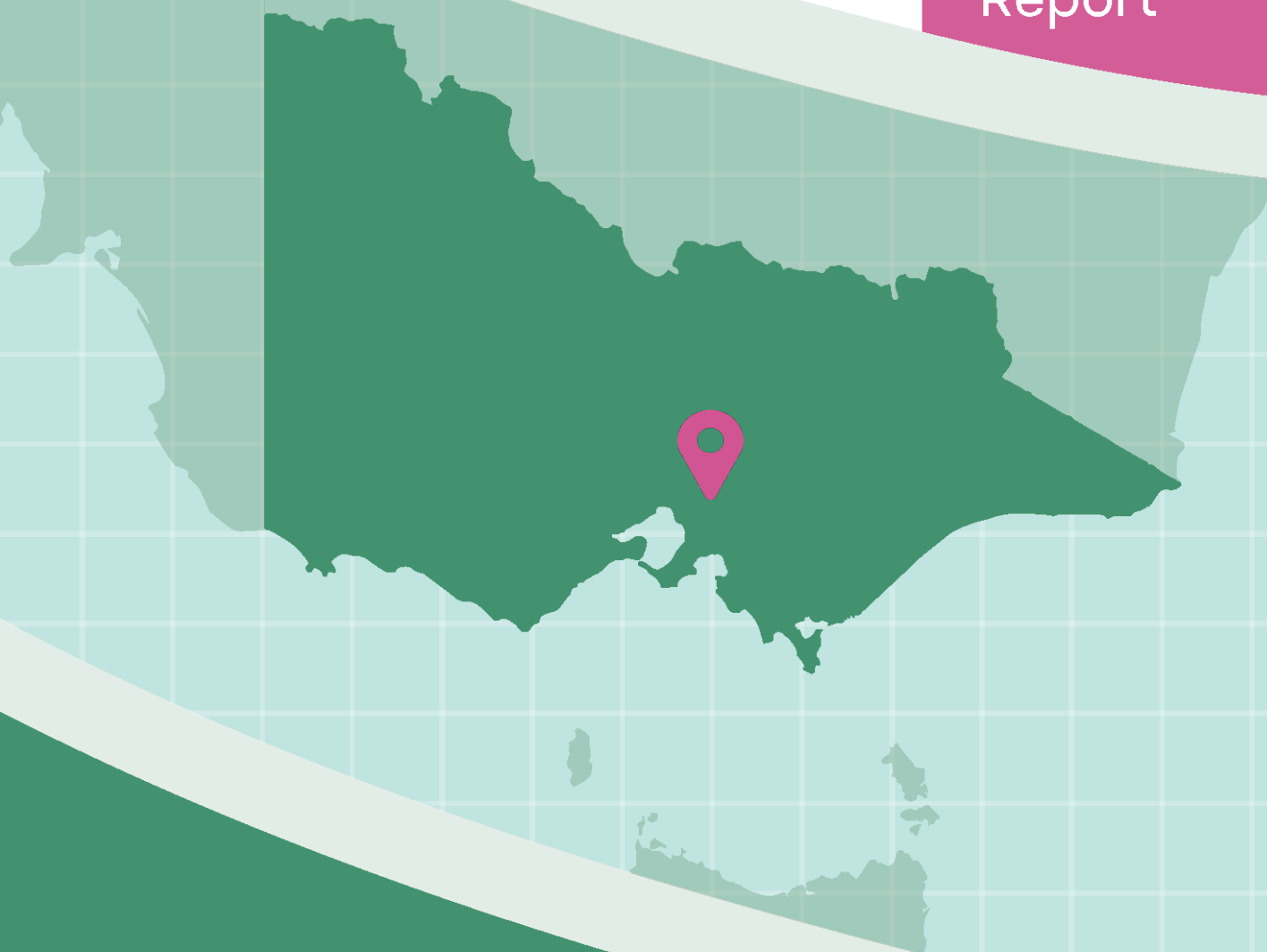


Local Council Subdivision Review

Preliminary
Report



**YARRA RANGES SHIRE
COUNCIL**
February 2020

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Executive summary

The *Local Government Act 1989* (LG Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct a subdivision review to ensure the equitable representation of all voters in a local council. The LG Act prescribes that the number of voters per councillor in each ward must be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor across the local council. This is known as the 'equality requirement'.

As population changes affect voter numbers and distribution in subdivided local councils, one or more wards may be unlikely to meet this requirement at the next general election. In such circumstances, the VEC recommends adjustments to internal ward boundaries to ensure that all wards meet the equality requirement before the next election and ideally, until the next scheduled electoral representation review.

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Yarra Ranges Shire Council currently comprises nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards. More information on Yarra Ranges Shire Council is available on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au.

In 2018, the VEC notified the Minister for Local Government that one or more wards were unlikely to meet the equality requirement at the 2020 general election. Accordingly, the Minister notified the VEC that a subdivision review of Yarra Ranges Shire Council was required before the 2020 general election.

Proposed ward boundaries

The Victorian Electoral Commission proposes adjustments to the boundaries of the following wards within Yarra Ranges Shire Council:

- Billanook Ward
- Chandler Ward
- Chirnside Ward
- Lyster Ward
- Ryrie Ward
- Streeton Ward

Proposed ward boundaries are illustrated in the map in the Appendix.

Background

Legislative basis

The *Local Government Act 1989* (LG Act) requires the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct a subdivision review to ensure the equitable representation of all voters in a local council. The LG Act prescribes that the number of voters per councillor in each ward must be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor across the local council. This is known as the 'equality requirement'.

As population changes affect voter numbers and distribution in subdivided local councils, one or more wards may be unlikely to meet this requirement at the next general election. In such circumstances, the VEC recommends adjustments to internal ward boundaries to ensure that all wards meet the equality requirement before the next election and ideally, until the next scheduled electoral representation review.

Subdivision reviews only apply to subdivided councils:

- that are not scheduled for an electoral representation review before the next general election
- and
- where, two years before the council is to hold a general election, the VEC considers one or more wards are unlikely to meet the equality requirement at the time of the next general election.

Scope

A subdivision review only considers the location of ward boundaries. A subdivision review cannot consider changes to the number of councillors or wards.

These changes are considered in a council's periodic electoral representation review. The next scheduled representation review for Yarra Ranges Shire Council will be held before the 2028 general election. An earlier review may take place if required.

A subdivision review also cannot change the external boundaries of the local council, divide local councils, or amalgamate local councils. These changes can only be made by an Order in Council.

The VEC's approach

Public consultation

The VEC encourages feedback on the proposed ward boundaries. There are two opportunities to provide feedback:

1. a response submission to this preliminary report
2. for those who have made a response submission, speaking at a public hearing to be held in the local area.

Anyone can make a submission to the review, including the council, individual councillors, community groups and individuals. Those who have made a response submission also have the option to speak at the public hearing to expand on their views.

Developing recommendations

The VEC bases its recommendations for ward boundaries on the following information:

- internal research specifically relating to the local council under review, including voter statistics from the Victorian electoral roll
- small area forecasts provided by .id¹
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government
- consideration of all input from the public in written submissions received during the review.

In considering which ward boundaries are most appropriate, the VEC considers the following matters:

- ensuring that all wards meet the equality requirement for the next election
- the number of voters affected by the changes, with the aim of affecting as few voters as possible
- communities of interest
- geographic factors, such as size and topography
- clear and identifiable ward boundaries
- the longevity of the structure.

¹ .id is a consulting company specialising in population and demographic analysis and prediction information products in most jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

Communities of interest

Each local council contains a number of communities of interest. Where practicable, ward boundaries should be designed to ensure they are fairly represented, and that geographic communities of interest are not split. This allows communities with shared concerns to elect a councillor.

Review timeline

19 Feb	Preliminary report WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2020 The VEC releases a preliminary report including proposed ward boundaries. Response submissions open from this date.
18 Mar	Response submission close 5.00 PM WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2020 The VEC must receive submissions by 5.00 pm on this day. Late submissions will not be accepted.
25 Mar	Public hearing 5.30 PM WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2020 Montrose Town Centre, 935 Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd, Montrose A public hearing will be held if anyone requests to speak about their response submission. The public hearing will not be held if there are no requests to speak.
15 Apr	Final report WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2020 The VEC submits a final report to the Minister for Local Government including the recommendation for the ward boundaries.

The VEC's findings and proposed ward boundaries

Council profile

Yarra Ranges Shire is located east of Melbourne's CBD on the metropolitan fringe. It covers an area of 2,466 square kilometres and is the largest Melbourne metropolitan council by geographical area. It includes natural environments, such as the Dandenong and Yarra Ranges, the Yarra River and numerous reservoirs, which contribute to Melbourne's water supply. Vast areas of land are national park and most of the Shire is located outside of the urban growth boundary.

The Shire includes over 50 different suburbs, small communities and townships. Most of the population is concentrated in the west of the Shire in suburbs such as Chirnside Park, Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Montrose and Belgrave. Major townships located throughout the centre and the east of the Shire include Healesville, Yarra Junction and Warburton.

The median age of people living in Yarra Ranges Shire is 40 years, which is higher than that for Greater Melbourne (36).² The Shire generally has low levels of cultural and ethnic diversity: about 78% of the population were born in Australia and 88% of the population speak only English at home.³

The Shire rates above the national, state and Greater Melbourne averages on measures of social and economic well-being.⁴ The most common industries of employment are construction (13.2%), health care and social assistance (11.8%) and retail (10.1%), with the most common occupations being technicians and trade workers (18.6%), professionals (17.8%) and clerical and administrative workers (13.5%).⁵

Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, including natural attractions such as the Dandenong and Yarra Ranges, and wineries throughout the Yarra Valley. Agriculture, including grazing, viticulture and horticulture, is also significant and primary production accounts for almost a third of all land use.⁶

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, '2016 Quickstats: Yarra Ranges (S)', https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA27450?opendocument, accessed 28 January 2020.

³ Ibid.

⁴ .id, Yarra Ranges Council: community profile', <https://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges>, accessed 28 January 2020.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Population trends

Between 2011 and 2018 the Yarra Ranges Shire population increased by 6.2% or almost 9,300 people, from 148,901 to 158,173.⁷ Since the last representation review in 2015, voter numbers increased from 113,596 (as at June 2015) to 120,239 (as at October 2019).

Population growth will continue to occur at a projected rate of about 0.8% per year for the period 2018-36, which is below the annual growth rate for both Greater Melbourne and regional Victoria.⁸ By 2026 it is expected the population will be 168,480, and 183,820 by 2036.⁹

Most of the growth in population will take place in the west of the Shire, in the suburbs of Chirnside Park, Lilydale and Mooroolbark. The population is expected to decline in some parts of the Shire, including the south-west and some of the rural areas. As a result, Chirnside and Billanook Wards are growing at a rate above the Shire average. Streeton, Chandler and Lyster Wards are in relative decline, while the Shire's other wards are expected to remain relatively stable.

There are currently an estimated 120,239 registered voters for Yarra Ranges Shire Council, with an average of 13,360 voters per councillor.

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Yarra Ranges Shire Council currently comprises nine councillors elected from nine single-councillor wards.

⁷ .id, Yarra Ranges Council: community profile', <https://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges>, accessed 28 January 2020.

⁸ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), *Victoria in Future 2019*, 2019, <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/land-use-and-population-research/victoria-in-future>, accessed 28 January 2019.

⁹ Ibid.

Diagram 1 illustrates this structure and voter statistics by ward as at 3 October 2019.

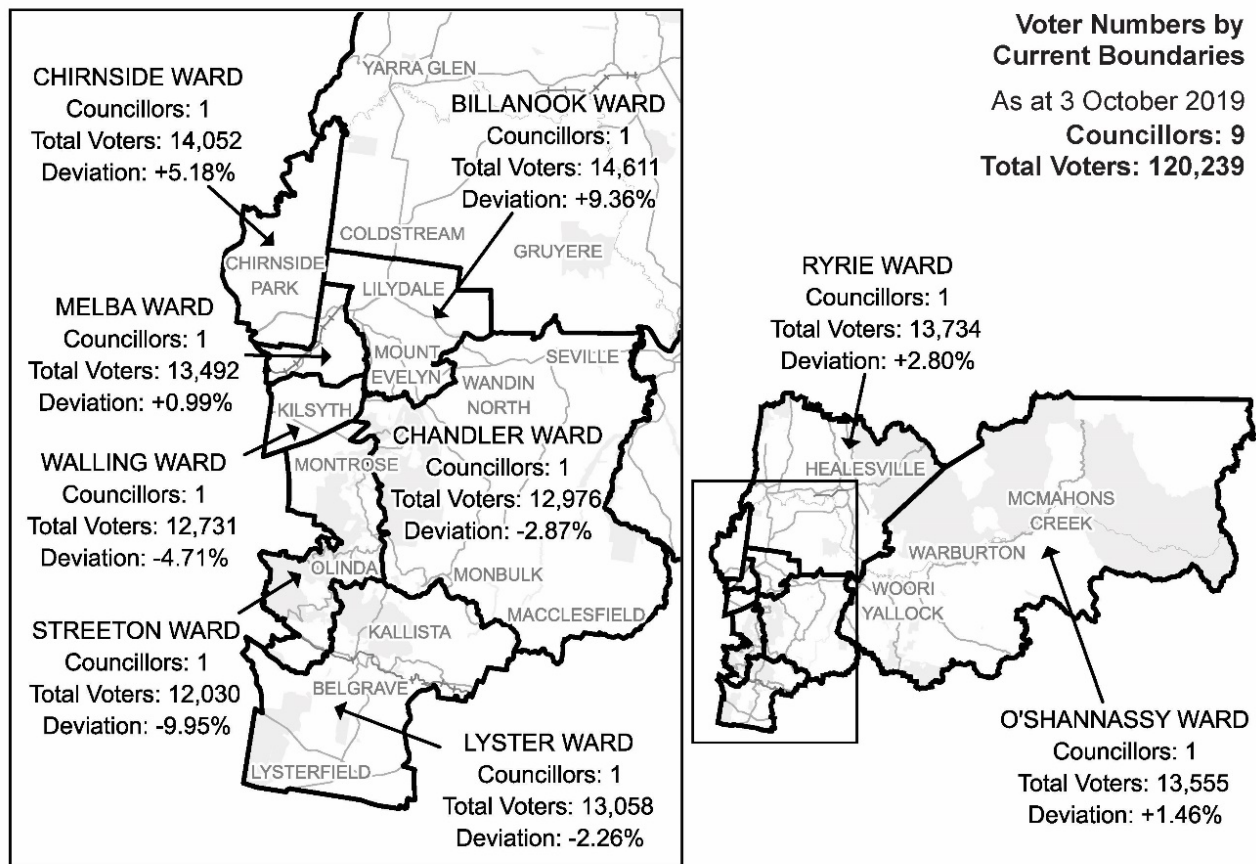


Diagram 1: Yarra Ranges Shire Council electoral structure and voter statistics.

Current subdivision review

The current subdivision review of Yarra Ranges Shire Council is required due to the voter-to-councillor ratios in Chirnside, Billanook and Streeton Wards projected to be more than plus-or-minus 10% the average number of voters per councillor by the 2020 general election. Consequently, ward boundaries need to be adjusted so that the enrolment in all wards is within the 10% tolerance at the 2020 general election.

Table 1 shows the number of voters in each ward as at 3 October 2019, ranked by the percentage this deviates from the average number of voters per councillor for the whole local council.

Table 1: Voter numbers per ward

Ward	Councillors	Voters	Deviation (%)
Streeton	1	12,030	-9.95%
Billanook	1	14,611	+9.36%
Chirnside	1	14,052	+5.18%
Walling	1	12,731	-4.71%
Chandler	1	12,976	-2.87%
Ryrie	1	13,734	+2.80%
Lyster	1	13,058	-2.26%
O'Shannassy	1	13,555	+1.46%
Melba	1	13,492	+0.99%
Total for council	9	120,239	

Proposed ward boundaries

In the current review, three wards—Chirnside, Streeton and Billanook—will likely be more than plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor prior to the 2020 general election. Chirnside and Billanook Wards need to decrease in size and voter population, while Streeton Ward needs to expand to gain additional voters. Correcting these three wards impacts surrounding ward boundaries.

The VEC proposes to move the Chirnside Ward boundary with Ryrie Ward south to follow Paynes Road, Edward Road and a property boundary, so that parts of Yering, Coldstream and Chirnside Park are transferred to Ryrie Ward. This change affects 458 voters from Chirnside Ward who would be in Ryrie Ward. The VEC considers this change acceptable from a community of interest perspective as the land in the north of Chirnside Ward is mainly rural and fits the predominantly rural character of Ryrie Ward.

The VEC suggests a small boundary adjustment to the Chirnside-Melba Ward boundary in Mooroolbark. The proposed change follows Manchester Road, Old Kent Road and Hayrick Lane rather than the less clear boundary comprising Shadowplay Road, a property boundary and Turella Court. This change affects 220 voters in Chirnside Ward who would move to Melba Ward. Together with the proposed change to the Chirnside-Ryrie Ward boundary, this brings Chirnside Ward comfortably within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for the 2020 general election.

The VEC proposes adjusting the Billanook-Chandler Ward boundary to Maurice Road, a property boundary and Boundary Road so that 185 voters in Billanook Ward would be in Chandler Ward. The change would unite Wandin North within Chandler Ward. The VEC

considers this a minor change to ensure Billanook Ward is within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for the 2020 general election.

The VEC proposes moving the ward boundary between Streeton and Chandler Wards north to contain more of Montrose in Streeton Ward. The change makes better use of the natural landscape of the Dandenong Ranges and the more easily identifiable Moore Avenue as ward boundaries. It affects 404 voters in Chandler Ward who would be in Streeton Ward. The VEC considers this a suitable change as the ward boundary no longer divides part of Montrose and overall provides clearer ward boundaries than is currently the case.

Finally, the VEC proposes moving part of the Streeton-Lyster Ward boundary to include more of Upwey in Streeton Ward. The current boundary splits Upwey along Ferny Creek. Moving the boundary to follow more of Glenfern Road and then Eloera Street and Upwey South Recreation Reserve restores part of the boundary that was in place prior to the previous representation review in 2015. The change affects 222 voters in Lyster Ward who would be in Streeton Ward and together with the above change satisfies the requirement for Streeton Ward to be within plus-or-minus 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for the next elections.

Table 2: Voter numbers per ward with proposed boundaries

Ward	Councillors	Voters	Deviation (%)
Streeton	1	12,656	-5.27%
Billanook	1	14,426	+7.98%
Chirnside	1	13,374	+0.11%
Walling	1	12,731	-4.71%
Chandler	1	12,757	-4.51%
Ryrie	1	14,192	+6.23%
Lyster	1	12,836	-3.92%
O'Shannassy	1	13,555	+1.46%
Melba	1	13,712	+2.64%
Total for council	9	120,239	

The proposed ward boundary changes would bring all wards within the 10% tolerance for the 2020 general election, with a total of 1,489 voters (1.24% of the total) being allocated to different wards. The new boundaries comply satisfactorily with geographic communities of interest and in most cases improve the current ward boundaries.

Next steps

Response submissions

Any person or group, including the council, can make a submission to the VEC in response to the proposed ward boundaries contained in this report. Your submission should clearly outline your views on the changes proposed by the VEC. The VEC must receive response submissions by 5.00 pm on Wednesday 18 March 2020. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submission methods

Submissions can be made via:



The online submission form at vec.vic.gov.au



Email to yarraranges.review@vec.vic.gov.au



Post to
Victorian Electoral Commission
Level 11, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Required information

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

- full name
- residential or postal address.

You must also indicate whether you would like to speak at the public hearing.

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the subdivision review process, all submissions will be available for public inspection at:

- the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au
- the VEC office at Level 11, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The VEC will remove personal information such as the address, phone number, and signature, if applicable, of submitters from all public copies. However, the full name and locality of submitters will be displayed.

Public hearing

There is an opportunity for people or organisations who have made a response submission to speak about their submission at a public hearing. The public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 5.30 pm

Date: Wednesday 25 March 2020

Venue: Montrose Town Centre, 935 Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd, Montrose.

Participation in the public hearing is encouraged. If you wish to speak at the public hearing, you **must** indicate this on your response submission. If there are no requests to speak at the hearing, it will not be held. Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au for more information on public hearings.

Final report

Following the public hearing, the VEC considers all the evidence it has gathered and publishes a final report for the Minister for Local Government containing the recommended ward boundaries. If the recommendation is accepted, the modified ward boundaries will take effect at the October 2020 general election.

The report is scheduled to be published on Wednesday 15 April 2020. It will be available from the VEC by visiting vec.vic.gov.au or calling 131 832. It will also be available for inspection at the offices of Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

Appendix 1: Map of proposed ward boundaries

The map is provided on the next page.

Yarra Ranges Shire Council Proposed Ward Boundaries

Legend

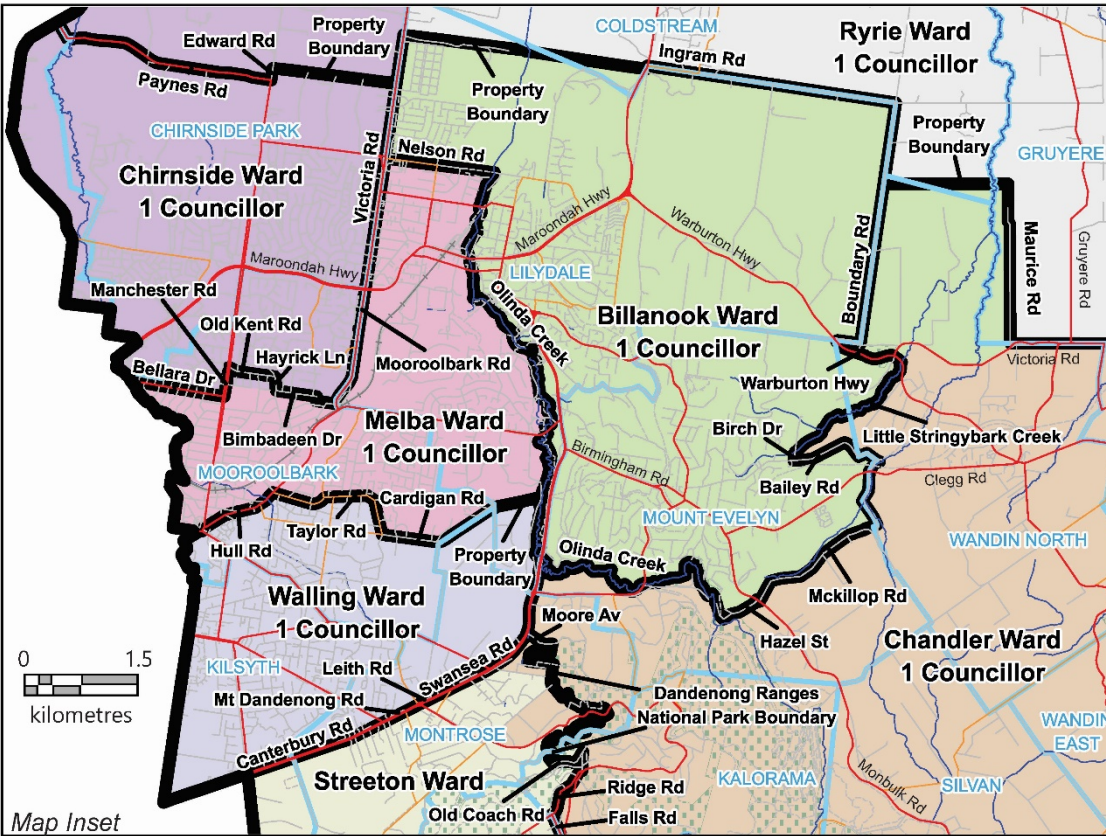
Proposed Boundary

Existing Wards

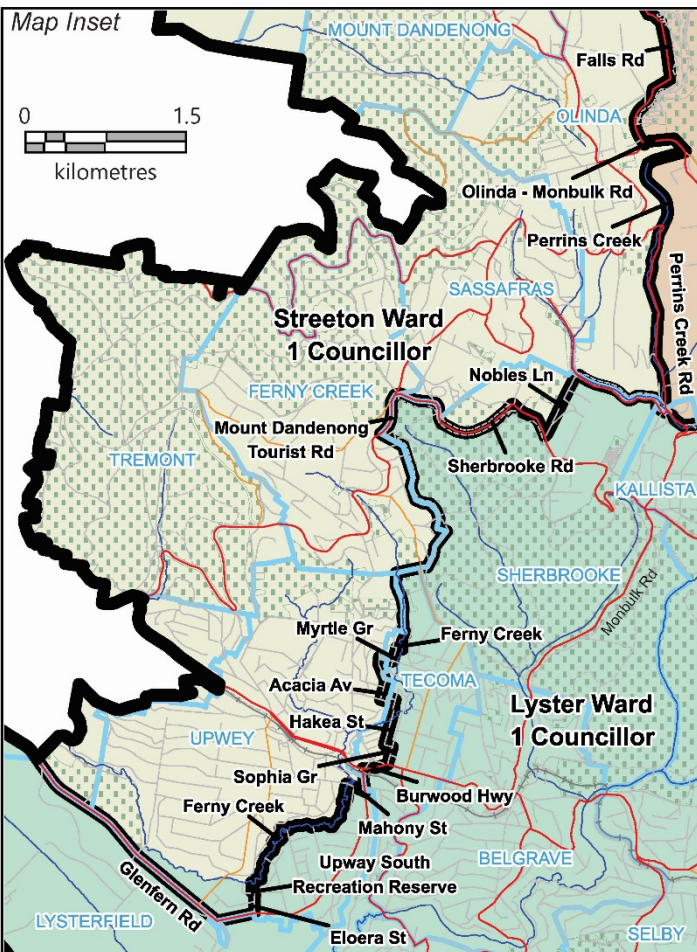
- Lyster
- Billanook
- Chandler
- Chirnside
- Melba
- Ryrie
- Streeton
- Walling
- O'Shannassy

Map Symbols

- Freeway
- Main Road
- Collector Road
- Road
- Unsealed Road
- Railway Line
- River/Creek
- Park/Reserve
- Locality Boundary



Map Inset



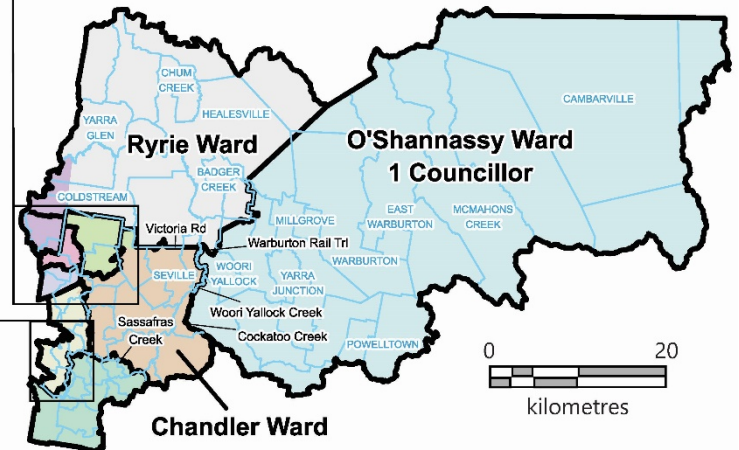
Map prepared by:

Data use:



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Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Billanook	1	14,426	+7.98%	33.06
Chandler	1	12,757	-4.51%	170.93
Chirnside	1	13,374	+0.11%	17.52
Lyster	1	12,836	-3.92%	83.69
Melba	1	13,712	+2.64%	12.96
O'Shannassy	1	13,555	+1.46%	1,561.68
Ryrie	1	14,192	+6.23%	532.74
Streeton	1	12,656	-5.27%	42.44
Walling	1	12,731	-4.71%	12.89
Total	9	120,239	-5.27% - +7.98	2,467.91
Average		13,360		274.21

*Elector numbers at 3rd October 2019

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(Victorian Electoral Commission)
February 2020

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