



COUNCIL MEETING 6pm Tuesday 18

April 2023 Room 1 Community Hub

Burns Street, Maryborough

AGENDA

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1. Commencement of Meeting and Welcome

Councils must, in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles in the *Local Government Act 2020*.¹ These are included below to guide Councillor consideration of issues and Council decision making.

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;
- f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

¹ Section 9.

2. Apologies

Council's Governance Rules require that the minutes of Council meetings record the names of Councillors present and the names of any Councillors who apologised in advance for their non-attendance.¹

The annual report will list councillor attendance at Council meetings.

Councillor attendance at Councillor briefings is also recorded.

¹ Chapter 2, rule 62.

3. Leave of absence

One reason that a Councillor ceases to hold the office of Councillor (and that office becomes vacant) is if a Councillor is absent from Council meetings for a period of 4 consecutive months without leave obtained from the Council. (There are some exceptions to this - see section 35 for more information.)

A Councillor can request a leave of absence. Any reasonable request for leave must be granted.¹

Leave of absence is approved by Council. Any request will be dealt with in this item which is a standing item on the agenda. The approvals of leave of absence will be noted in the minutes of Council in which it is granted. It will also be noted in the minutes of any Council meeting held during the period of the leave of absence.

¹ See *Local Government Act 2020* s 35 (4) and s 35 (1) (e).

4. Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of Interest must be disclosed at the commencement of a Council meeting or Councillor briefing, or as soon as a Councillor recognises that they have a conflict of interest.

The relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2020* include those in Part 6, Division 2 (from section 126). Failing to disclose a conflict of interest and excluding themselves from the decision making process is an offence.

Disclosures at Council meetings

Under the Governance Rules:¹

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a Council meeting at which he or she:

1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the Council meeting immediately before the matter is considered; or

2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the Chief Executive Officer before the Council meeting commences a written notice:

2.1 advising of the conflict of interest;

2.2 explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and

2.3 detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:

(a) name of the other person;

(b) nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and

(c) nature of that other person's interest in the matter,

and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the Chief Executive Officer under this sub- Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the Council meeting immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

¹ Chapter 5, Rule 3.

Disclosures at councillor briefings (and other meetings)

Also under the Governance Rules,² a Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered by a meeting held under the auspices of Council at which he or she is present must:

- 1 disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered;
- 2 absent himself or herself from any discussion of the matter; and
- 3 as soon as practicable after the meeting concludes provide to the Chief Executive Officer a written notice recording that the disclosure was made and accurately summarising the explanation given to those present at the meeting.

Councillor form to disclose conflicts of interest

Name: _____

Date: _____

Meeting type:

- Briefing
- Meeting
- Other

Nature of the conflict of interest (describe):

If the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person:

name of the other person (gift giver): _____

nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person: _____

nature of that other person's interest in the matter: _____

² Chapter 5, Rule 4.

5. Reports

5.1 ELECTORAL STRUCTURE REVIEW

Author: **Manager Governance Property and Risk**

Responsible Officer: **General Manager Corporate Performance**

The Officer presenting this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

SUMMARY/PURPOSE

The report provides information on the progress of the Central Goldfields Shire Council Electoral Structure Review currently being conducted by the Victorian Electoral Commission and describes the opportunity for further public submissions.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. the Council authorise the CEO to submit the attached *Submission to the Preliminary Report Local council electoral structure review - Central Goldfields Shire Council - March 2023*; and
2. that Councillor/s xxxxxxxx be nominated to represent Council at the public hearing to be held by the Electoral Representation Advisory Board on Wednesday 26 April 2023.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

Central Goldfields Shire Council's Council Plan 2021-2025 - Leading

Change Community's 4. Good planning, governance, and service delivery
The vision

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Central Goldfields Shire Council is one of 39 local councils which currently does not meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 in terms of its electoral structure, and a review commenced in February 2023 to review this.

The Electoral Representative Advisory Panel has been conducting the review, including online information sessions and statewide advertising in major newspapers. Council conducted its own advertising, inviting community input through its weekly newspaper advertisement.

The panel is considering:

- how many wards the council should have
- how many councillors should be in each ward
- the ward boundaries
- the name of each ward

REPORT

Council made a preliminary submission (attached) on 1 March recommending that seven Councillors be retained, distributed evenly over seven wards, including the division of Maryborough ward into four wards - North, East, South and West, and maintaining Flynn, Tullaroop, and Paddys Ranges wards.

The submission also considered some changes to ward boundaries to take into account the even distribution of voters, "limiting the disruption and impact to the local community and delivering the requirements of the Act".

The panels will consider if the council:

- has an appropriate number of councillors
- should be one large unsubdivided area or subdivided into wards.

Preliminary report

The ERAP released its preliminary report (attached) on 29 March 2023. In its report, the panel considered the three submissions it received from:

- Central Goldfields Shire Council
- Anne Doran (attached)
- John Moyle (attached)

Taking those submissions into account, the Act and agreed criteria, the ERAP has provided three proposed models (attached):

- Model 1 - unsubdivided, seven Councillors
- Model 2 - subdivided with three wards and two Councillors in each ward
- Model 3 - subdivided with seven wards - Flynn, Paddy's Ranges, Tullaroop, Maryborough Central, Maryborough North, Maryborough East, and Maryborough South.

While none of these exactly match Council's proposal, Model 3 is the closest. The proposed ward boundaries follow railway lines and major and minor roads, and the business and administrative centre of Maryborough is captured in the Maryborough Central Ward.

The ERAP noted a perceived drawback of this model as "including the division of Maryborough across four wards, which would almost certainly divide a community of interest to a significant degree."

The panel considered however the drawbacks of Model 3 "may be balanced by continuation of a subdivided model similar to the current structure".

Next steps

Submissions on the proposed model can be made in writing to the ERAP by 5pm 19 April 2023.

Submitters may also ask in that submission to speak in support of it at a public hearing at 2pm on Wednesday 26 April 2023. The hearing will be held online. The hearing will not be held if no submission asks to be heard.

Proposed Council Submission

A proposed submission from Council to the Preliminary Submission is attached. The submission outlines the Council's response to the three models offered.

Option 1 - not supported due to previous lack of support for an unsubdivided model, the challenge to providing meaningful representation for rural communities outside of Maryborough, and the benefits of the visibility and accessibility of ward Councillors.

Option 2 - not supported as the reduction in the number of Councillors does not reflect the anticipated growth of the Shire, the proposed ward structure would not reflect the needs and interests of the communities involved, and would work against the quality of representation sought.

Option 3 - supported as it retains the strength and continuity of the current structure, provides an appropriate number of Councillors and supports representation for the needs of different communities of interest.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Council has been promoting the review through its weekly newspaper advertisement, and its social media, and advised its intended preliminary submission through a public Council Meeting.

FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Councils are responsible for meeting the cost of Electoral Structure Reviews. Council has made representations to Rural Councils Victoria and the Municipal Association of

Victoria to seek support for relief from the Minister for Local Government for the cost, which is estimated to be around \$60,000.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This item addresses the strategic risk Governance - Failure to transparently govern and embrace good governance practices by ensuring electoral representation that best meets the community needs.

CONCLUSION

Councillors have an opportunity to prepare a report to come to the Special Council Meeting scheduled for 18 April 2023 to consider endorsing a submission to the Electoral Representation Advisory Panel to provide feedback on the preferred model put forward in the ERAP's preliminary report.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Submission to the *Preliminary Report Local council electoral structure review - Central Goldfields Shire Council - March 2023*
2. Local council electoral structure review - Preliminary Report Central Goldfields Shire Council - March 2023
3. Preliminary Submission - Local council electoral structure review Central Goldfields Shire Council
4. Local council electoral structure review - Submission - Anne Doran
5. Local council electoral structure review - Submission - John Moyle
6. Local council electoral structure review - Model 1
7. Local council electoral structure review - Model 2
8. Local council electoral structure review - Model 3

5.1.1 Electoral Review Submission



*Please Quote Reference:
Enquiries:*

18 April 2023

Electoral Representative Advisory Panel
C/O Victorian Electoral Commission
Via Email - CentralGoldfields.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Julie Eisenbise

Council appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Preliminary Report of the Local Government Electoral Structural Review and wishes to address the options proposed in the Preliminary Report as required by the submission guidelines.

Councillor Numbers

Council agrees with the conclusion in the Preliminary Report that seven Councillors is the appropriate number for Central Goldfields Shire and notes that this number sits comfortably within the comparisons provided. This number was advanced in Council's initial submission.

Council is keen to qualify the modest growth assumptions referred to in the Preliminary Report. Council's current four-year Council Plan targets population growth as a key priority. There are several factors which support that opportunity:

- Central Goldfields Shire sits between, and Maryborough is equidistant from, the two fastest growing regional cities in Australia (Ballarat and Bendigo)
- The Ballarat-Maryborough Growth Corridor is supported by passenger rail with increasing services being added¹.
- Within that growth corridor the Victorian Government has invested in a Talbot Futures project to plan for added population growth for Talbot supported by town sewerage.
- Council has prioritised added growth for Maryborough including Maryborough North² with recent growth and development trending up.
- Flood mitigation work has been completed for Carisbrook including a levee and appropriate planning amendments have been made to prepare for growth.
- Dunolly is positioned to accommodate added growth.
- The Victorian Government has invested in funding to develop a UNESCO World Heritage Listing Bid for the Victorian Goldfields. UNESCO expert consulting advice suggests that Bid is likely to be successful. Central

¹ <https://www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/Council/News-Media/More-trains-Gallery-Garden-and-sporting-upgrades-funded-thanks-to-2022-23-State-Budget>

² <https://www.centralgoldfields.vic.gov.au/Council/Policies-Plans-Strategies-and-Documents/Council-Plans/2021-2025-Council-Plan> - page 7 Our Key Opportunities For Growth

Goldfields Shire, as the name suggests, is the centre of the Goldfields and has an exceptionally high level of gold rush heritage housing stock which is likely to be in high demand.

Accordingly, Council remains firmly of the view that seven Councillors are appropriate and does not support a reduction to six as proposed in Model 2 within the Preliminary Report.

Option 1 Unsubdivided Structure

It is important to note that none of the previous submitters to the Review favoured an unsubdivided structure. The option of an unsubdivided structure was also canvassed in the previous review in 2011 and again there was a distinct lack of support for this model.

Council has argued in its initial submission to the Review that the population distribution within Central Goldfields Shire may well create a situation where the residents in rural townships and locations may not be able to achieve meaningful representation in relation to Maryborough residents. This is a serious concern and it is pleasing this issue has been noted within the Preliminary Report.

Importantly many of the issues impacting residents in the Maryborough are separate and different to those for residents in rural wards. As noted in the Preliminary Report the average age of residents within the Shire is older than the Victorian average. These older residents relate more comfortably to a known and identified individual ward Councillor within their locality than would be facilitated by a more nebulous unsubdivided structure. Residents find comfort in ready and close identification of the Councillor they elect.

As previously submitted a Proportional Representation arrangement for council representation would be foreign to rural voters and may well be confusing and potentially result in higher level of informal votes.

Council would like to challenge two issues identified within the Preliminary Report:

- It was stated that: *“retaining a subdivided structure would not necessarily guarantee locally-based representatives, given that the Councillor elected for Flynn Ward in the 2020 local government election did not reside within it.”* In fact the Councillor from Flynn Ward and her husband have a farm within Flynn Ward and she is very readily identified within that Ward. The practice over time has been almost extensively for Councillors to live within their wards and have direct connection with them.
- The Preliminary Report also states: *“this model may also foster a shire-wide approach to representation and to council business.”* The operating culture of successive councils has been for all Councillors to take a whole-of- Shire perspective. Silo lobbying or barriers have never been issues. Put simply all Councillors realise the importance of developing Maryborough for the future prosperity and sustainability of the Shire. Maryborough Councillors have always recognised, and been ready to address, the challenges of rural residents and the benefits of developing the range of lifestyle and accommodation issues which the rural townships and locations add to the Shire offering.

- In addition a recent report on the [Commission of Enquiry into Moira Shire Council](#) noted that residents in that municipality felt that “their interests were no longer being adequately represented” by the unsubdivided structure.

In summary the unsubdivided model has been previously proposed for consideration in 2011 and the finding then was it was not appropriate or wanted by the community. The situation in 2023 is no different and the lack of any submission in favour of it into the Preliminary Report is a good indication of this.

Option 2 Multi Councillor Ward Structure

Council understands the benefit of carefully considering the benefits and disadvantages of each option available under the *Local Government Act 2020*, however this particular option which proposes three wards of two Councillors has, in Council’s view, serious disadvantages.

As previously stated, Council believes the present number of Councillors is appropriate and notes that is in line with the Preliminary Report conclusions. There are very clear population growth opportunities which have been outlined and has been indicated Council is actively seeking to capture these. Reducing the number of Councillors to six works against this.

Reducing the number of Maryborough Councillors from four to two is of particular concern. As indicated earlier, Council is actively targeting population growth in Maryborough and with current resolutions for development in Maryborough North.

It has also been pointed out, and noted within the Preliminary Report, that the issues for residents in Maryborough and rural locations are separate and different. It was for that reason that Council, noting the actual and future planned growth in Maryborough, proposed in its initial submission that the Maryborough boundaries be broadened. In Option 2 the boundaries would actually be compressed with the result that many Maryborough residents would be located together with rural residents in hybrid type wards. This works directly against what Council believes should take place.

Council also challenges the view in the Preliminary Report that “*this model broadly captures geographic communities of interest in the shire.*” Maryborough residents who would be integrated with the rural communities have no direct community of interest. Similarly, the communities of Carisbrook and Talbot have had longstanding separate community of interest treatments extending back to pre-amalgamation local government structures and extending back to the gold rush period.

Of the three models advanced within the Preliminary Report Council believes this would be entirely unsupported by residents and work against the quality representation sought.

Option 3 Single Councillor Ward Structure

Council continues to believe this structure, with changes to Maryborough Ward to reflect the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and slightly modified ward boundaries in the rural wards, is best suited to provide quality representation for the residents of Central Goldfields Shire.

- The Electoral Boundaries Review of 2011 arrived at the model it did after considerable consultation and input. In essence Council is of the view that this model, which has worked so well, remains essentially absolutely fit for purpose recognising some minor changes are necessary to reflect growth

changes since then and to address the need for change in the non-complying Maryborough Ward structure.

- The Preliminary Report states “*Model 3 has some potential drawbacks, including the division of Maryborough across four wards, which would almost certainly divide a community of interest to a significant degree.*” Council wishes to challenge that view.

The very reason Council proposed retaining the Maryborough name within the four proposed new wards rather than quite different names was simply to retain the distinct Maryborough identity.

This would mean residents within each of the proposed four Maryborough wards would be able to relate to their own ward Councillor on individual resident issues, a model which clearly is attractive especially to older residents. Importantly though the four Maryborough Councillors would be able to work together on cross-boundary community of interest issues and it would be expected that is exactly what they would choose to do as they do now in the multi-Councillor ward.

- Council has thought carefully about the Maryborough structure and absolutely accepts the community of interest view in the Preliminary Report. There is a clear community of interest in Maryborough which is separate and different for the rural communities. Council believes that Option 3 absolutely addresses that need and will achieve it, which neither of the other options will deliver. It also will ensure that Maryborough residents retain the same number of Councillors and enables the Maryborough wards to accommodate projected growth.
- The Preliminary Report identifies that individual wards may result in lower candidate numbers in some wards. It should be noted that over years Council has regularly been refreshed by new candidates who are elected as Councillors. In fact the majority of Councillors are newly elected for the first time in 2020 with only two Councillors presently elected who served on council before 2016.

In summary Council considers that the main drawback which the Preliminary Report identified in relation to Maryborough community of interest is actually not a drawback and facilitates the continued development of that opportunity. If indeed the Panel believes there may potentially some drawbacks with this model, Council shares the Panel’s conclusion that any “*drawbacks of Model 3 may be balanced by continuation of a subdivided model similar to the current structure*”.

Conclusion

The Preliminary Report has provided options which Council has considered very carefully and thoughtfully. This follows considerable discussion and reflection leading to our original submission which we based on our own deep understanding of our community and its needs as well as the planned evolution and development of Central Goldfields Shire. Interestingly throughout the process there was ready agreement between Councillors on the most suitable model for our Shire and its residents.

As stated initially, the opportunity to have further input after consideration of the Preliminary Report is appreciated. This further reflection and evaluation of the alternatives presented leads Council to conclude unhesitatingly that Option 3 is, and remains, the preferred model for Central Goldfields Shire.

We would like to take the online opportunity to present our case to the Panel. Xxxx are nominated to represent Council.

Yours sincerely

Cr Grace La Vella

MAYOR, CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

Local council electoral structure review
Preliminary
Report

Central Goldfields Shire Council

March 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

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

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Approved for publication by	Brief description
1	27 March 2023	Electoral Commissioner	Final version

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Executive summary

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

The panel looked at:

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

This report outlines the preliminary models that the panel is presenting for the proposed new electoral structure of Central Goldfields Shire Council to meet the requirements of Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). More information about the background to the reviews is available on [page 5](#).

Developing electoral structure models

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

- research and analysis
- voter growth or decline over time
- public submissions (see below).

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

Preliminary submissions

The panel received 3 preliminary submissions. Of these, 1 submission included a map. A full analysis of submissions received can be found on [page 11](#).

Electoral structure options

After considering submissions and research, the panel is presenting the following electoral structure models for further public consultation:

- Model 1: an unsubdivided electoral structure with 7 councillors.
- Model 2: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 6 councillors – 3 wards and 2 councillors per ward.
- Model 3: a subdivided electoral structure with a total of 7 councillors – 7 wards and one councillor per ward.

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

Next steps

The panel is now seeking feedback on the electoral structure models. You can make a response submission to these models until 5 pm on Wednesday 19 April 2023. If any response submitters wish to speak at a public hearing, the panel will hold an online public hearing on Wednesday 26 April 2023. Following this, it will present its final recommendation to the minister by 24 May 2023. More information about the review process is available on the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) website at vec.vic.gov.au

Background

About the 2023–24 electoral structure reviews

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

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

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

For Central Goldfields Shire Council, the electoral representation advisory panel is examining:

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

For subdivided structures, it is also examining:

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

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

The electoral representation advisory panel

The panel conducting the electoral structure review of Central Goldfields Shire Council has 3 members:

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

The panel is independent of councils and the State government.

Under the Act, the VEC is not responsible for reviewing council electoral structures but must provide administrative and technical support to the panel. The Electoral Commissioner (or their delegate) must be a member of each panel.

Public engagement

Public information program

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

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

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

Public consultation

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

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

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

Developing recommendations

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

- research and analysis conducted by the VEC support team, including geospatial and demographic factors
- rates or patterns of population and voter growth or decline over time, and relevant forecasts of growth or decline based on forecast information provided by .id (informed decisions, a company specialising in demographics and forecasting)
- input received from the public in written submissions during the preliminary submissions phase.

Deciding on the number of councillors

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

In examining the number of councillors Central Goldfields Shire Council should have, the panel considered these factors:

- the population and number of voters in the council area, compared to other councils with a similar population size and number of voters in the same category (for example, metropolitan, interface, regional city, large rural shire, small rural shire)
- patterns of population change and voter growth or decline in the council area over time
- the current and past numbers of councillors
- the representation needs of the communities of interest in the council area
- if a particular type of electoral structure best suits the council (see 'Deciding the electoral structure' below)
- any matter raised in public submissions not already listed above.

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

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

Deciding the electoral structure

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

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

When developing electoral structure models for Central Goldfields Shire Council, the panel considered these main criteria:

- whether the structure would comply with section 15(2) of the Act (see below), and for how long it would likely comply
- the appropriate number of councillors, as outlined above

- whether meaningful and effective ward boundaries can be established and whether these would be easily identifiable to local communities
- representation of communities of interest
- the voter distribution and physical features of the area, and the impact these may have on the shape and size of any wards
- past elections for the council, including:
 - numbers of candidates nominating
 - incidences of uncontested elections
 - rates of informal voting.
- other matters raised in public submissions not already listed above.

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

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

About Central Goldfields Shire Council

Profile

Central Goldfields Shire is located about 120 km north-west of Melbourne and is about one hour's drive from the regional centres of Ballarat and Bendigo. The shire covers an area of 1,533 km² and shares its borders with Loddon Shire Council to the north, Northern Grampians Shire Council to the northwest, Pyrenees Shire Council to the west, Hepburn Shire Council to the south and Mount Alexander Shire Council to the east.

The Traditional Custodians of the land in Central Goldfields Shire are the Dja Dja Wurrung people.

Landscape

Within the shire there are large areas of land designated for conservation (Department of Transport and Planning, 2022), including Paddys Ranges State Park and several other large nature reserves. Ecologically significant Box-Ironbark forests surround Maryborough and cover large areas in the shire's north and south. Other important features of the natural landscape are Mt Bealiba Range, Moolort Plains and Talbot's volcanic rises.

Several creeks flow through the shire, including the Bet Bet, Tullaroop and McCallums Creeks. The Tullaroop and Cairn Curran Reservoirs are in the southeast, and the Avoca River forms part of the shire's western boundary. These waterways traverse extensive farmland covering much of the rural area of the shire. This agricultural land is used mainly for cropping and beef and sheep raising (Department of Transport and Planning, 2022).

The shire has a population of 13,483 people (ABS, 2021a). Its largest town, Maryborough, is home to 7,769 people or almost 60% of the population (ABS, 2021a). It is the shire's major business, health and administrative centre. Other major towns include nearby Carisbrook, Dunolly to the north and Talbot to the south. Approximately 27% of the population live in smaller communities and rural areas across the shire (ABS, 2021a).

The Pyrenees Highway runs east to west through Maryborough, located at the centre of the shire. Railway lines pass north-south and east-west through the shire carrying freight trains, as well as passenger trains from Melbourne to Talbot and Maryborough.

Community

The shire has an older age profile compared to regional Victoria. The median age in Central Goldfields Shire is 52 (ABS, 2021a), higher than the regional Victorian median age of 43 (ABS, 2021b) and more than half of the population (53.6%) is aged over 50 years (ABS, 2021a). The population is forecast to grow at a rate of 0.7% annually from 2022 to 2028.

Of the population, 82.3% were born in Australia and 89.7% speak only English at home (ABS, 2021a). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 2.3% of the population (ABS, 2021a).

Manufacturing is the main industry in the shire, employing 12.2% of workers and accounting for 20.5% of economic output (REMPPLAN, 2023). This includes sectors such as printing, publishing and food processing. Other major industries by employment include health care and social assistance (21.2% of workers), retail (12.4%), education and training (9.4%), accommodation and food services (7.5%) and agriculture (7%) (ABS, 2021a; REMPLAN, 2023).

In 2021, unemployment in the shire was 5.9%, higher than the average rate for regional Victoria (4.1%). Nearly half (49%) of population are not in the labour force, which is also above that for regional Victoria at 36.8%.

The median weekly household income is \$904, lower than the regional Victorian median of \$1,386 (ABS, 2021a; ABS, 2021b). At 46.8%, rates of home ownership in shire are higher than the rate of 39.3% for the rest of regional Victoria (ABS, 2021a; ABS, 2021b).

Current number of councillors and electoral structure

Central Goldfields Shire Council is currently divided into 4 wards with a total of 7 councillors:

- one ward with 4 councillors (Maryborough Ward)
- 3 wards with one councillor each (Flynn, Paddys Ranges and Tullaroop).

There are approximately 11,329 voters in Central Goldfields Shire Council, with a ratio of 1,618 voters per councillor.

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

Last electoral structure review

The VEC conducted an electoral representation review of Central Goldfields Shire Council in 2011. This review complied with the *Local Government Act 1989*, which was replaced by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

After conducting the review, the VEC recommended that Central Goldfields Shire Council continue to consist of 7 councillors elected from four wards:

- one ward with 4 councillors
- 3 wards with one councillor each.

The VEC recommended that the boundaries of four wards be slightly adjusted.

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

Before the 2011 review, the VEC held a representation review of Central Goldfields Shire Council in 2005. This resulted in the current electoral structure being implemented. Before the 2005 representation review, Central Goldfields Shire Council comprised five single-councillor wards.

Preliminary submissions

The panel received 3 preliminary submissions from the public by the deadline of 5 pm on Wednesday 1 March 2023. You can view these submissions on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au and find a list of people or organisations who made a submission in [Appendix 2](#).

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

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

Number of councillors

There was one submission in favour of maintaining 7 councillors, one that preferred decreasing the number of councillors to 5 and another proposing to increase the number to 8.

Maintaining 7 councillors

Central Goldfields Shire Council argued that 7 is an appropriate number of councillors in comparison to similar rural shires, particularly when considering the number of voters per councillor. The council stated that 7 councillors better facilitates 'sustainable representation' of the shire's diverse and growing communities, all of which have different needs and socio-economic circumstances. The council's submission identified these communities as urban Maryborough and the shire's smaller rural townships and farming communities.

Decreasing to 5 councillors

In a submission arguing against multi-councillor wards, Anne Doran suggested that the number of councillors should be reduced to 5 to facilitate a single-councillor ward structure similar in some ways to the current electoral structure.

Increasing to 8 councillors

In support of increasing councillor numbers, John Moyle argued that 8 councillors would allow for 4 councillors to represent Maryborough and 4 councillors to represent the rest of the shire. It was suggested that this would provide equal representation for these areas in that every voter would be able to elect the same number of councillors for their respective communities

The submission also suggested that having an equal number of councillors for Maryborough and for the rest of the shire was the fairest approach the best way to address community concerns of the shire's rural areas having less of a say on the council than Maryborough.

Electoral structure

Each of the 3 preliminary submissions received favoured a subdivided electoral structure. One of these supported a structure of 2 wards with four councillors in each ward, another was for 7 single-councillor wards, while the third did not outline a specific subdivided electoral structure. No submissions advocated for an unsubdivided electoral structure.

Unsubdivided

Of submissions received, 2 argued against an unsubdivided structure for the following reasons. In an unsubdivided electoral structure, candidates and councillors from Maryborough would likely outnumber those from smaller towns and rural areas due to its large population and number of voters. Consequently, many felt issues specific to urban Maryborough might dominate council business, and relatedly councillor based in Maryborough would possibly dominate voting at council meetings. As such, one submitter suggested an unsubdivided structure was likely be very unpopular with voters outside Maryborough.

Central Goldfields Shire Council suggested in its submission that ballot papers would be larger in an unsubdivided structure due to more candidates standing for election, and this may confuse voters and increase informal voting rates.

Multi-councillor wards

Moyle argued that an electoral structure consisting of 2 four-councillor wards would ensure fair representation for both urban Maryborough and for smaller townships and rural areas, as it would allow every voter in each ward the opportunity to vote for the same number of councillors to represent their interests.

Single-councillor wards

Central Goldfields Shire Council put forward an electoral structure consisting of 7 single-councillor wards in its submission and argued this would facilitate strong representation of the shire's different communities, in particular the smaller towns and communities of interest outside of Maryborough. The shire also stated that this structure could facilitate a stronger connection between community and council through local representation.

Doran proposed an electoral structure consisting of 5 single-councillor wards. The submission called for the creation of a new ward to capture Carisbrook and surrounds, and named 'Tilly

Aston Ward', after an important local historical figure Matilda Aston. Doran felt each ward should have the same number of councillors elected in each, preferably one councillor per ward. It was argued that this structure may make representation and council decision-making fairer, as those elected to represent Maryborough would no longer outnumber the councillors elected to represent the shire's rural wards.

Moyle opposed moving to a 7 single-councillor ward structure, on the grounds that it would hinder representation by allowing voters to only elect one councillor and thus have no say in the composition of the council as a whole. The submission also suggested that low candidate numbers and continued uncontested elections would be more likely under this structure.

Preliminary findings and options

Number of councillors

After taking into consideration the requirements of the Act, public submissions and the agreed criteria, the panel found either 6 or 7 councillors to be an appropriate number for Central Goldfields Shire Council.

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

Similar rural shire councils to Central Goldfields Shire Council						
Local council	Area (km ²)	Number of voters at 2020 election	Population (2021 Census)	Current total estimate of voters	Number of councillors	Number of voters per councillor
Corangamite Shire*	4,407	13,283	16,115	13,826	7	1,975
Southern Grampians Shire	6,654	13,058	16,588	13,151	7	1,879
Benalla Rural City	2,353	11,755	14,528	12,022	7	1,717
Alpine Shire	4,788	11,169	13,235	11,566	7	1,652
Central Goldfields Shire	1,533	11,169	13,483	11,329	7	1,618
Strathbogie Shire*	3,303	9,806	11,455	10,963	7	1,566
Mansfield Shire	3,844	10,205	10,178	10,910	5	2,182
Northern Grampians Shire*	5,730	10,424	11,948	10,172	7	1,453
Gannawarra Shire*	3,738	9,129	10,683	9,449	7	1,350

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

Maintaining 7 councillors

Taking into consideration the modest forecast population growth, the area of the shire and its various communities of interest, maintaining 7 councillors was found to be appropriate. This was also supported in public submissions.

Decreasing to 6 councillors

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

with 7 councillors. As such, 6 councillors was considered to be an appropriate number as it allowed for a subdivided structure consisting of 3 wards and 2 councillors per ward.

Neighbouring Pyrenees Shire Council and Loddon Shire Council are similar rural shires with 5 councillors. Although these shires have smaller populations, they cover much larger areas and have a comparable number of voters per councillor.

It was considered that any drawbacks of the decrease in councillor numbers may be balanced by the potential benefits of retaining a subdivided electoral structure.

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

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

The panel proposes 3 models for the consideration of the Central Goldfields Shire Council community:

- an unsubdivided electoral structure (Model 1)
- a subdivided electoral structure of with 6 councillors, 3 wards, with 2 councillors per ward (Model 2)
- a subdivided electoral structure of 7 single-councillor wards (Model 3).

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

Unsubdivided structure (Model 1)

Under this model, Central Goldfields Shire Council would adopt an unsubdivided electoral structure, represented by 7 councillors.

Although this model was not supported in public submissions, it would allow the council to retain 7 councillors.

The panel considered potential drawbacks of this model. Given the concentration of voters in Maryborough, there is the potential for the main town to gain a greater number of local representatives compared to the towns and communities outside Maryborough with lower populations and numbers of voters. However, it was also noted that retaining a subdivided structure would not necessarily guarantee locally-based representatives, given that the councillor elected for Flynn Ward in the 2020 local government election did not reside within it and that candidates are not required to reside in the ward in which they might nominate.

The panel considered that an unsubdivided electoral structure would likely provide voters increased choice of candidates at an election and possibly reduce the risk of uncontested elections. An unsubdivided structure would not divide geographic communities or communities

of interest into different wards. Additionally, this model may also foster a shire-wide approach to representation and to council business.

Model 1 was also considered of benefit as it would accommodate any unequal population growth in the shire, particularly as forecast for Maryborough and Carisbrook. This would eliminate any need for future boundary adjustments to account for such change.

Multi-councillor ward structure (Model 2)

Under this model, Central Goldfields Shire Council would adopt a 3-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by 2 councillors, in line with the requirement of the Act for there to be the same number of councillors per ward.

The southern boundary of current Flynn Ward has been moved south to encompass localities including Simson, Alma and Wareek. This boundary follows the Castlemaine-Ararat railway line, major roads and some minor roads. Model 2 combines much of the current Paddys Ranges and Tullaroop wards into a single new Tullaroop Ward represented by 2 councillors. The new Flynn and Tullaroop wards cover areas currently contained within Maryborough Ward. The central Maryborough ward covers a smaller area of the main town than under the current structure. Represented by two councillors, the boundary of this ward follows a mix of major and minor roads.

Despite a reduction in the number of councillors, the panel considered Model 2 to be reasonably consistent with the current structure and may be supported by those who support the current ward structure.

This model broadly captures geographic communities of interest in the shire. Most of Maryborough is captured within the central Maryborough Ward. The main town of Dunolly and connected towns such as Bet Bet, Havelock and Bealiba, continue to be captured within Flynn Ward. In the south, Carisbrook and Talbot are included along with connected towns such as Moolort, Majorca and Mount Glasgow.

This model provides for fair and equitable representation for the separate geographic communities and communities of interest in the shire with the same number of councillors representing each of the three wards.

Model 3 also reflects the principle of equal representation for the shire's urban and rural communities, as outlined by some submitters, where each ward has an equal number of councillors so that all voters the same number of councillors to represent them.

The main drawbacks considered of this model were a reduction in councillor numbers, and potentially a reduction in the number of councillors representing Maryborough alone from 4 to 2. These potential drawbacks may be balanced by the continuation of a subdivided model with similarities to the current structure and local representation for communities outside of Maryborough.

Single-councillor ward structure (Model 3)

Under this model, Central Goldfields Shire Council would adopt a 7-ward structure. Each ward would be represented by 1 councillor, in line with the requirement of the Act for there to be the same number of councillors per ward.

Model 3 largely retains the boundaries of the current Flynn, Paddys Ranges and Tullaroop wards. Minor adjustments have been made to the Tullaroop Ward boundary to encompass the entire locality of Flagstaff and to accommodate anticipated population growth. The current Maryborough Ward has been divided into 4 new wards each represented by 1 councillor. These ward boundaries follow railway lines and major and minor roads. The business and administrative heart of Maryborough is captured within the Maryborough Central Ward. Maryborough North, East and West Wards surround Maryborough Central Ward capturing most of the area of the main town. Maryborough North Ward extends north beyond the current Maryborough Ward boundary to capture areas of expected urban growth.

Central Goldfields Shire Council's proposal to retain the existing ward names for the rural wards and to use cardinal directions for the 4 new wards covering the Maryborough township was adopted.

Model 3 had support in public submissions and would allow the shire to retain the current number of 7 councillors. With Flynn, Paddys Ranges and Tullaroop Wards left largely untouched, this model is similar to the current structure. This provides for continuity of representation for people living in the towns and rural communities outside the main population centre of Maryborough. The number of voters represented by each councillor in each ward also falls comfortably within the required +/-10% tolerance well into the future.

Model 3 has some potential drawbacks, including the division of Maryborough across four wards, which would almost certainly divide a community of interest to a significant degree. Additionally, recent uncontested elections and patterns of low candidate numbers in some wards may continue under Model 3.

The panel considered the drawbacks of Model 3 may be balanced by continuation of a subdivided model similar to the current structure.

Models considered but not put forward

Although a range of possible electoral structures for Central Goldfields Shire Council were investigated during geospatial modelling, no other viable models were identified for further consideration by the panel.

Models for public feedback

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

Model 1

Central Goldfields Shire Council has an unsubdivided electoral structure with 7 councillors.

Model 2

Central Goldfields Shire Council has 6 councillors and is divided into 3 wards with 2 councillors per ward.

Model 3

Central Goldfields Shire Council has 7 councillors and is divided into 7 wards with one councillor per ward.

Ward names

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

Next steps

Response submissions

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

You can make a submission:

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

The panel must receive all response submissions before 5 pm on Wednesday 19 April 2023. If you post your submission, make sure it has enough time to reach the panel before the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Required information

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

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

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

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

Public access to submissions

To ensure transparency in the electoral structure review process, your submission will be published on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au The VEC will remove your signature and

contact details, including residential and postal addresses, from all public copies but must publish your full name (or group name) and locality (suburb or town).

Public hearing

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

The online public hearing is scheduled for:

Time: 2 pm

Date: Wednesday 26 April 2023

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

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

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

Final report

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

The final report is scheduled to be published on Wednesday 24 May 2023. If the recommendation is accepted, any changes will apply at the October 2024 local council elections.

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

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021a). *2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Central Goldfields*. <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA21670> accessed 14 March 2023.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b). *2021 Census All persons QuickStats, Rest of Vic*. <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/2RVIC> accessed 14 March 2023.
- Department of Transport and Planning. (2022). *Planning Scheme, Central Goldfields*. <https://planning-schemes.app.planning.vic.gov.au/Central%20Goldfields/ordinance> accessed 13 March 2023.
- Local Government Act 1989* (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020* (Vic)
- Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (Vic)
- REMPPLAN, 2023. *Economy, Jobs and Business Insights, Central Goldfields*. <https://app.rempln.com.au/centralgoldfields/economy/industries/employment?state=yXjGF9!PDqGHkAoIP9WNaTB92GMS8sgfovt6RQRoikpPpzIrfQZTnfwhyJ7F7PX> accessed 14 March 2023.

Appendix 1: Model maps

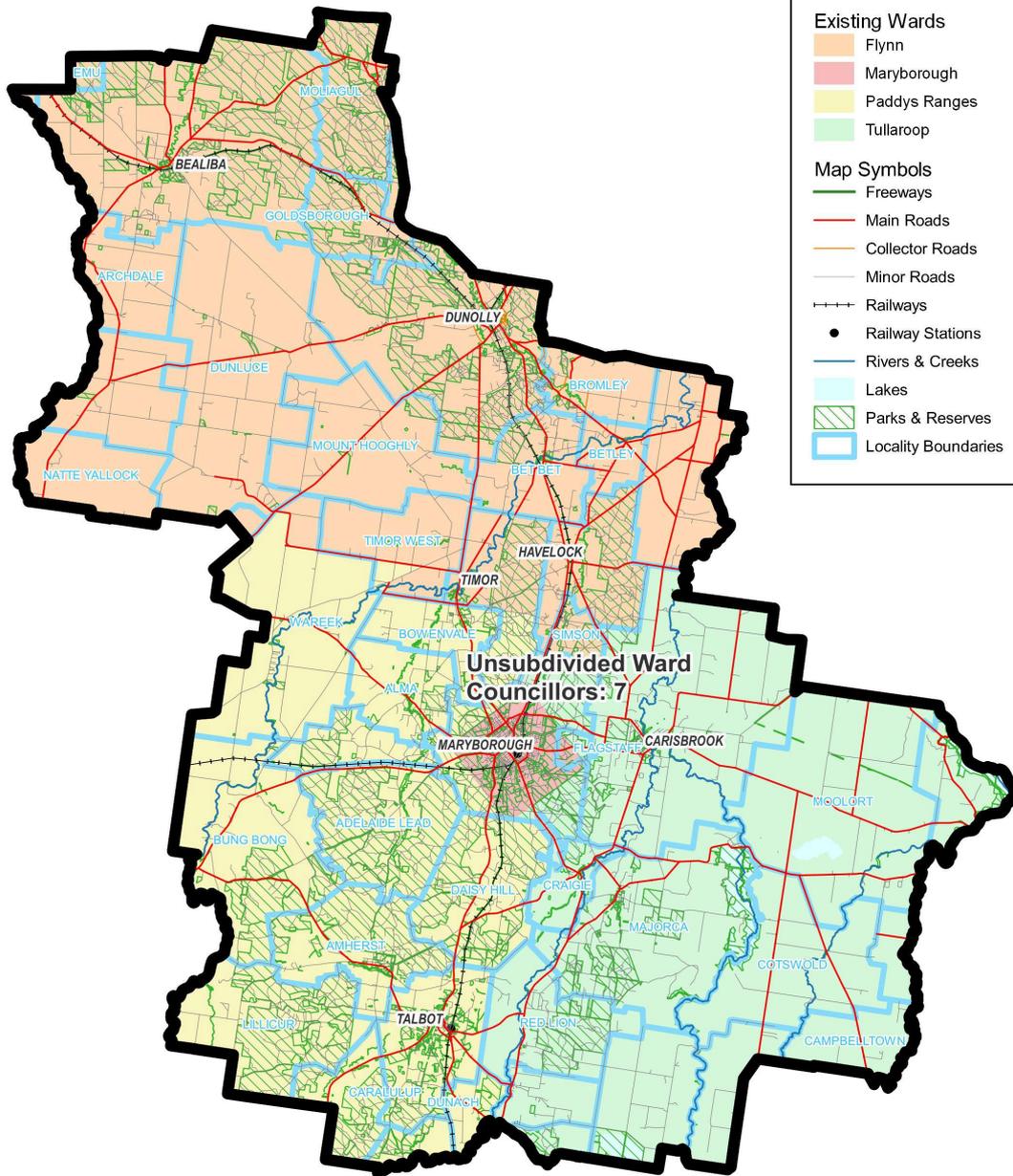
The following maps are included in this report:

Map	Page
Model 1 – an unsubdivided electoral structure with 7 councillors	23
Model 2 – a multi-councillor ward structure with 6 councillors, 3 wards and 2 councillors per ward	24
Model 3 – a single-councillor ward structure with 7 councillors, 7 wards and one councillor per ward.	25

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Central Goldfields Shire Council

Model 1

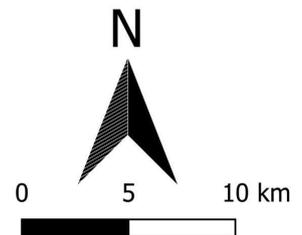


Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
 - Flynn
 - Maryborough
 - Paddys Ranges
 - Tullaroop
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Minor Roads
 - Railways
 - Railway Stations
 - Rivers & Creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Locality Boundaries

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Unsubdivided	7	11,329	0%	1,533.4
Total	7	11,329		1,533.4

*Electors numbers at 11 Nov 2022



Map prepared by:



Data use:



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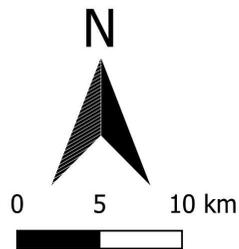
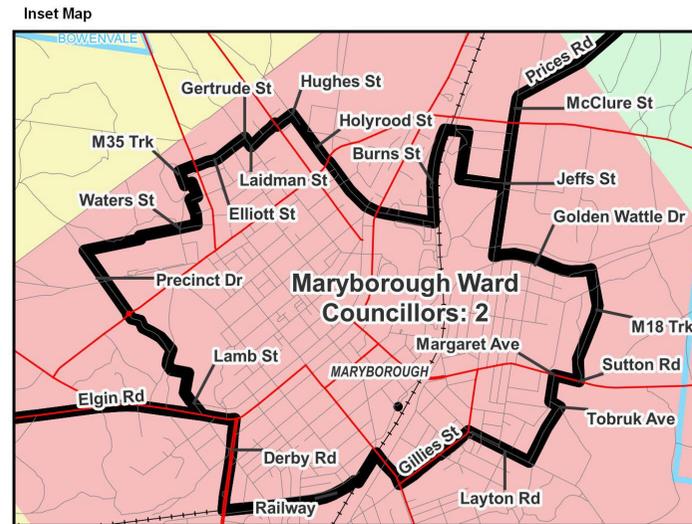
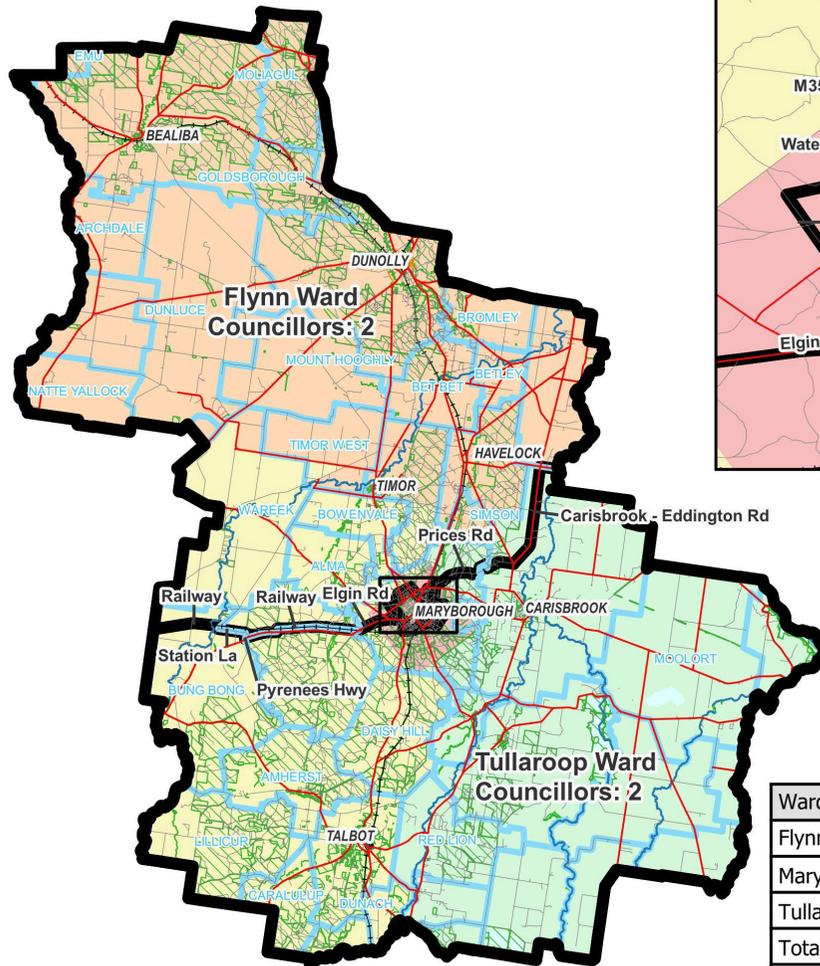
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Central Goldfields Shire Council

Model 2

Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
 - Flynn
 - Maryborough
 - Paddys Ranges
 - Tullaroop
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Minor Roads
 - Railways
 - Railway Stations
 - Rivers & Creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Locality Boundaries



Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Flynn Ward	2	3,660	-3.08%	783.8
Maryborough Ward	2	3,875	+2.61%	5.2
Tullaroop Ward	2	3,794	+0.47%	744.4
Total	6	11,329		1,533.4
Average		1,888		1,533.4

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022

Map prepared by:



Data use:



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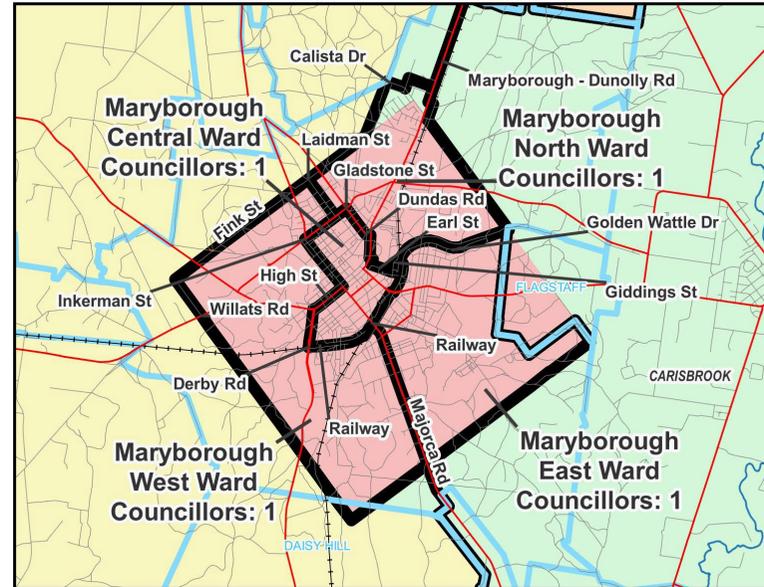
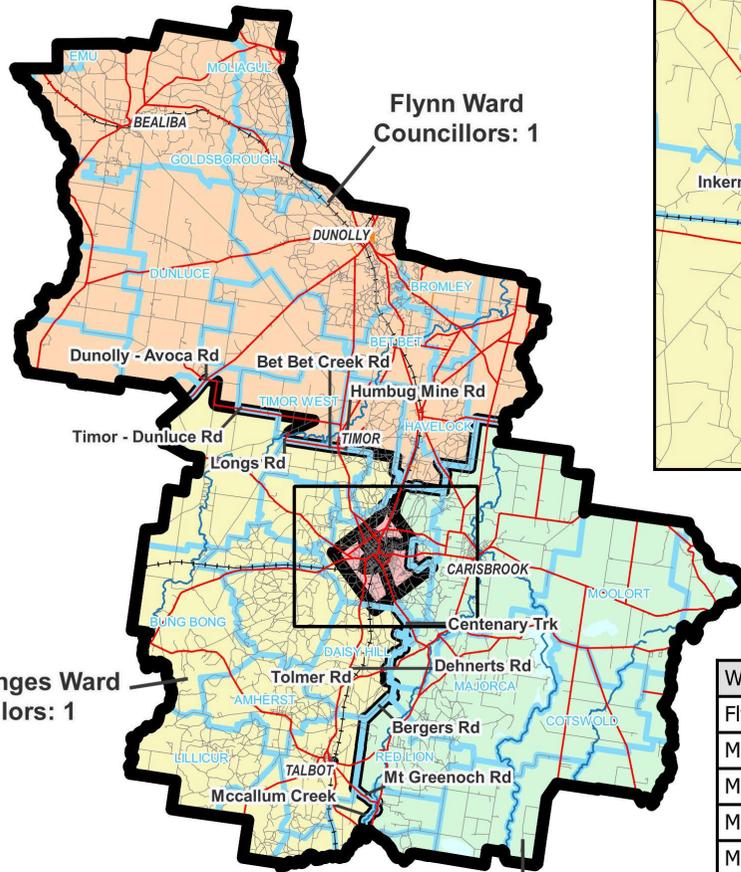
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Central Goldfields Shire Council

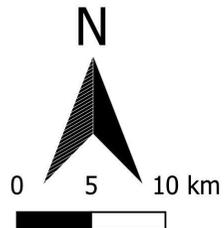
Model 3

Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
 - Flynn
 - Maryborough
 - Paddys Ranges
 - Tullaroop
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Minor Roads
 - Railways
 - Railway Stations
 - Rivers & Creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Locality Boundaries



Inset map



Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Flynn Ward	1	1,657	+2.38%	628.1
Maryborough Central Ward	1	1,638	+1.21%	1.9
Maryborough North Ward	1	1,545	-4.54%	4.8
Maryborough East Ward	1	1,558	-3.73%	6.3
Maryborough West Ward	1	1,699	+4.98%	9.4
Paddys Ranges Ward	1	1,609	-0.58%	411.6
Tullaroop Ward	1	1,623	+0.28%	471.3
Total	7	11,329		1,533.4

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022

Map prepared by:



Data use:



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Appendix 2: List of preliminary submitters

The review received 3 preliminary submissions.

Preliminary submissions were made by:

Central Goldfields Shire Council

Doran, Anne

Moyle, John

5.1.3 Electoral Review Preliminary Submission



*Please Quote Reference:
Enquiries:*

22 February 2023

Electoral Representative Advisory Panel
C/O Victorian Electoral Commission
Via Email - CentralGoldfields.ERAPSubmissions@vec.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Julie Eisenbise

I refer to the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2023–24 electoral structure review of Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) to meet the governance requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

Central Goldfields Shire Council provides a joint submission which covers off on the key components the panel is seeking to review during stage one.

Number of Councillors

The number of councillors within CGSC currently sits at seven and when evenly distributed amongst the number of eligible voters in the municipality facilitates between 1500 and 1700 voters per councillor. This number is consistent with many other small rural councils and facilitates sustainable representation of the diverse and growing communities within the shire. Retention of the current number of councillors that are already in place also facilitates easy distribution of voters when subdivided into wards. Taking this into consideration it is recommended the number of councillors is retained at the existing number of seven.

Electoral Structure

CGSC has a diverse community with varying needs across the entire municipality. The varying nature of the municipality which includes a large district town, smaller rural townships and farming communities located between, requires diverse representation. The differing social economic circumstances within these varying localities, also necessitates the need for diverse representation.

Taking this into account the implementation of a subdivided council into wards with one councillor in each, facilitates representation amongst the diverse needs of the entire municipality. This approach also facilitates greater local access to councillors and reduces the likelihood one particular point of view or sectional interest dominates the Council plan and agenda.

Without t a subdivided structure, the current dominant population level and anticipated growth of the large district town of Maryborough could lead to interests of surrounding communities becoming ignored due to uneven representation.

The introduction of a subdivided structure may also potentially avoid large ballot papers at municipal elections seeking to reduce confusion for voters and reduce likelihood of informal or nil voting.

Ward Boundaries

Within CGSC the representation across councillors is fairly evenly distributed, with the Tullaroop ward having the highest deviation of +9.8%. The most appropriate approach to implement a subdivided ward structure with one councillor in each, that achieves fair representation is detailed below:

- Split the existing Maryborough ward into four distinct new wards and implement minor boundary shifts if required to achieve even distribution of voters between 1500 and 1700 voters for these new wards.
- Slightly realign the ward boundaries for existing ward of Tullaroop, particularly around the growth area to the north of Maryborough to facilitate even voter distribution.
- Move the Mount Glasgow locality from the Tullaroop ward into the existing Paddys Ranges ward to even voter distribution across these wards.
- Move Timor and Red Lion into Paddys' Ranges ward; Move Simpsons Rd & Dooley's Rd, into a Maryborough Ward; (western boundary is Slaughter Rd Track) to improved connection between communities of interest.
- This approach reduces the number of proposed changes within CGSC, whilst limiting the disruption and impact to the local community and delivering the requirements of the Act.

Ward Names

To facilitate the changes required under the Act, whilst limiting disruption to the community, retention of existing ward names is the most appropriate outcome. Utilising existing ward names of Flynn, Tullaroop, Paddys Ranges and then adding compass directions of North, South, East and West to the four new Maryborough wards achieves this outcome.

Should the panel seek to deviate from this approach it should be aware of the local history across the municipality and take this into consideration when putting forward ward names.

Council thanks you for the opportunity to submit to the 2023–24 electoral structure review of CGSC and should you like to discuss this submission in further detail please contact me on 03 5461 0610 or our Chief Executive Officer, Lucy Roffey on 03 5461 0610.

Yours sincerely

Grace La Vella
MAYOR, CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

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5.1.4 Central Goldfields Shire Letter from Anne Doran

**Electoral structure review - Central Goldfields Council - Preliminary Submission
Anne Doran - Eddington - 17 February 2023, 9:00 am**

The CEO M/s Lucy Roffey

Central Goldfields Shire

Maryborough. 3472 Vic.

27th January 2023.

Dear Lucy,

Reading the Maryborough Advertiser (24.1.23) re : “Local Shire to undergo electoral structure review”, it has prompted me to respond.

I propose now, as I did back then, of the time when shire amalgamations came into being, that a new Ward be created at Carisbrook, as many young families were starting to establish their way of life there. I suggested then, as now, the ward name to be the “Tilly Aston” ward, after the young blind girl, born in Carisbrook, became a writer in later life and founded the Vic. Association of Braille writers, and later, went on to establish the Association for Advancement of the Blind, with herself as Secretary. Her memorial is still in Carisbrook at present.

The number of ratepayers could be reallocated from neighbouring rural wards like Flynn and Paddy’s Ranges and taking away 3 Crs. away from Maryborough ward to make up the required allocations, leaving only 1 councillor then. This way, any future decisions would then be fair and not be lost, as Maryborough ward had the more dominating voting rights.

My submission had then not been acknowledged by Central Goldfields council, or even acted upon.

But let me go back in time, and fill Council in on what transpired prior to amalgamations. Please bear with me.

I decided to stand for Council in the former Riding of Tarnagulla in 1988, in the former Shire of Bet Bet, which then comprised of Tarnagulla, Dunolly and Moliagul which had been recognized here in Australia and around the world, as Australia’s original “Golden Triangle”, where more big gold nuggets have been discovered than anywhere else in the world, with our own famous “Welcome Stranger” nugget in 1869 with a weight of 72 kilos of almost pure gold. The

Welcome Stranger monument still remains today at Moliagul, and remains a stark reminder of the great wealth our mining history has brought to Central Victoria.

I was elected in August 1988, as the first female councillor in the history of the shire of Bet Bet. My platform was on history, heritage, mining and tourism. When shire amalgamations became imminent, and now proposed rural shires were to amalgamate with Maryborough City Council. I met the local mayor then, and was asked for a suitable name. I suggested "Goldfields Shire", trying to keep our gold mining identity alive. The name was adopted and became known as "Central Goldfields Shire". I knew then, that rural shires would not work out, as rural interests are very different to city needs.

I had also been successful in changing the boundary line from Loddon Shire to now include Moliagul into Goldfields Shire and try and retain the "Golden Triangle" alive, as our own mining history of the area and proposed tourist attraction.

My next proposal to a VEC officer at Maryborough, I further suggested that the new name of North ward be changed to Flynn ward, after the Rev. John Flynn, born in Moliagul in 1880, went on to established the Royal Flying Doctor Service and brought safety and health services to the outback. His memorial is still present in Moliagul today. The VEC officer agreed and said, it is about time someone recognised the great Rev. Flynn for his services. The Flynn Ward was accepted and is now the present name for our ward.

As a former lady councillor in Bet Bet, I was always outnumbered and outvoted by the existing 6 male councillors who thought little of their history, heritage, mining and tourism potentials, as they all mainly had farming as their main objectives.

Very often, multi councillors in a single ward, have vested interests, but as they always win the vote, a single ward councillor loses, and some decisions never see daylight.

Maryborough once had the title "City of Maryborough Council", with a Mayor at its head. It has since lost this "City" status, and when shire amalgamations were enacted, the multi councillors carried on as usual. I doubt very much that anyone had any consideration as this would eventually become an unworkable policy.

My final point I wish to bring to your attention, and I'll be brief.

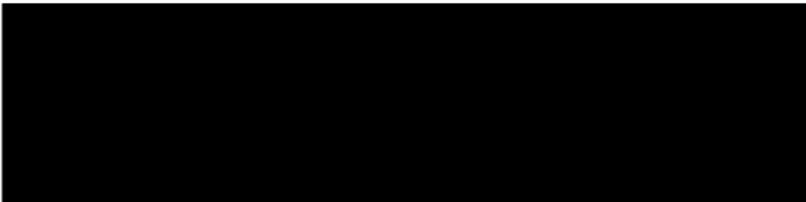
The Maryborough Technical School, which had been training students in metallurgy, assaying, trade skills, life skills, career paths and professions for over 100 years. It also had teachers who taught English at night classes for newly arrived skilled migrants from West European countries, that came to this "Lucky Country", for a better life and future for their children after war-torn WW2. The majority went on to become naturalised Australian citizens, and have been the foundation stone on which Australia became a productive country.

I was on the Technical School council and cheque signatory, I volunteered for 13 years in the school's canteen and was involved in the 3 schools' transition, which would never work. The day the Tech. school (as it was referred to) closed, was a black day for our entire district, and to find now, that Goldfields Shire Council had moved into this grand old historic building, was an enormous disappointment to countless people.

A copy of this letter is forwarded to the Victorian Electoral Commission for their consideration as well.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Anne Doran.



[Redacted], Eddington. Vic. 3472.

Phone - [Redacted].

5.1.5 Central Goldfields Shire Letter **from John Moyle**

Electoral structure review - Central Goldfields Shire Council - Preliminary Submission **John Moyle - Maryborough - 27 February 2023, 02:59 am**

While my true belief is that one single ward with a total of 7 councilors would be the most ideal model, this will cause a lot of angst with the voters who live in the part of the shire that is outside of Maryborough.

There is a great belief that the rural part of the shire should have as much voice on the council as the city of Maryborough does. I think the concern with having just one ward is that there is the possibility of the majority of the council being from Maryborough and therefore not representing the rest of the shire.

For me the only way around that would be to have 2 wards as I showed in my map (and yes I know this is not considered a preferred option).

My reasoning here is that if you divide the shire into Maryborough and then the rest of the shire, both represented by 4 councilors, then it would be considered more fair to the rest of the shire.

I definitely don't think the current situation is suitable and certainly would not like to see the shire divided into 7 wards with one councilor per ward because then residents are not getting to elect more than one councilor and therefore the vast majority of the council they have no say in being there.

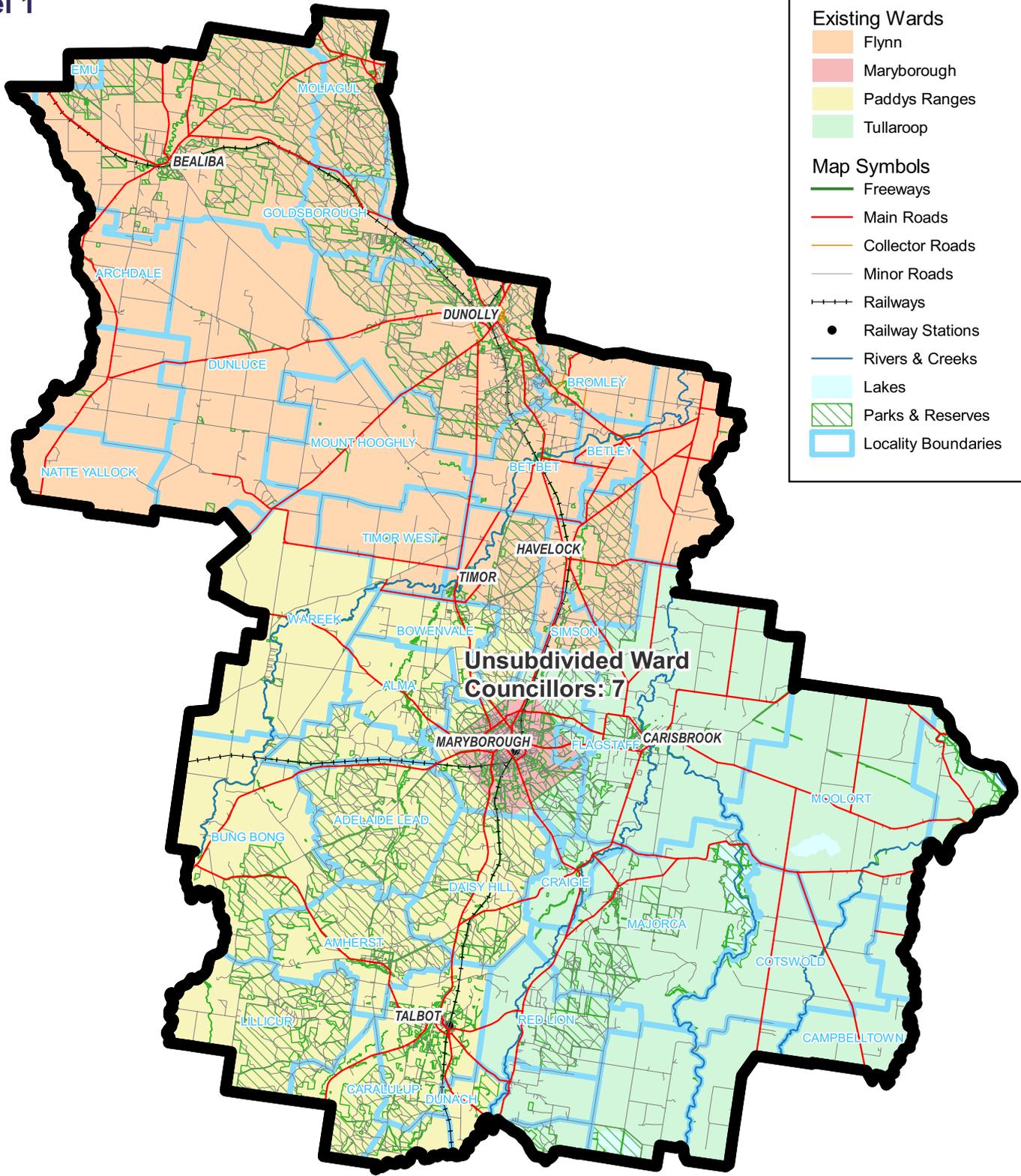
There is also the probability of councilors getting elected unopposed, as has happened recently in one ward where there is a councilor who no one will run against for several different reasons. It is totally unfair that the residents of that ward get absolutely no say in who represents them at all.

In my opinion, every voter in the council election should have the ability to elect the same number of councilors and that number should be at least half of the total number of councilors. Therefore, it would mean either one large ward with everyone voting for the full number of councilors or the shire being divided in half and each ward making up half the council.

I also think preferential voting in council elections is outdated and should be removed from being used but I know that is not part of this review, but just feel it is also something that really needs to be changed so that the people with the most number of votes get elected, not someone who gets less votes and is carried into council because of preferences from their mates on council.

5.1.6 Central Goldfields Shire Council

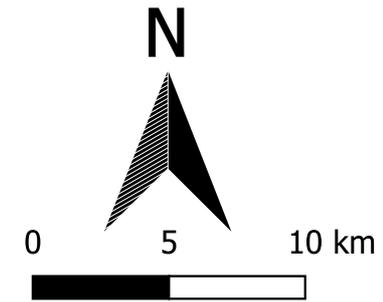
Model 1



**Unsubdivided Ward
Councillors: 7**

Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Unsubdivided	7	11,329	0%	1,533.4
Total	7	11,329		1,533.4

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022



Map prepared by:



Data use:



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Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

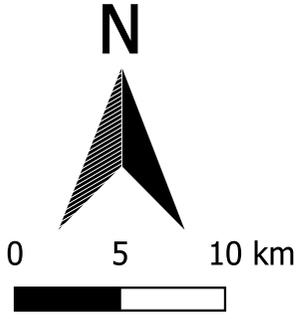
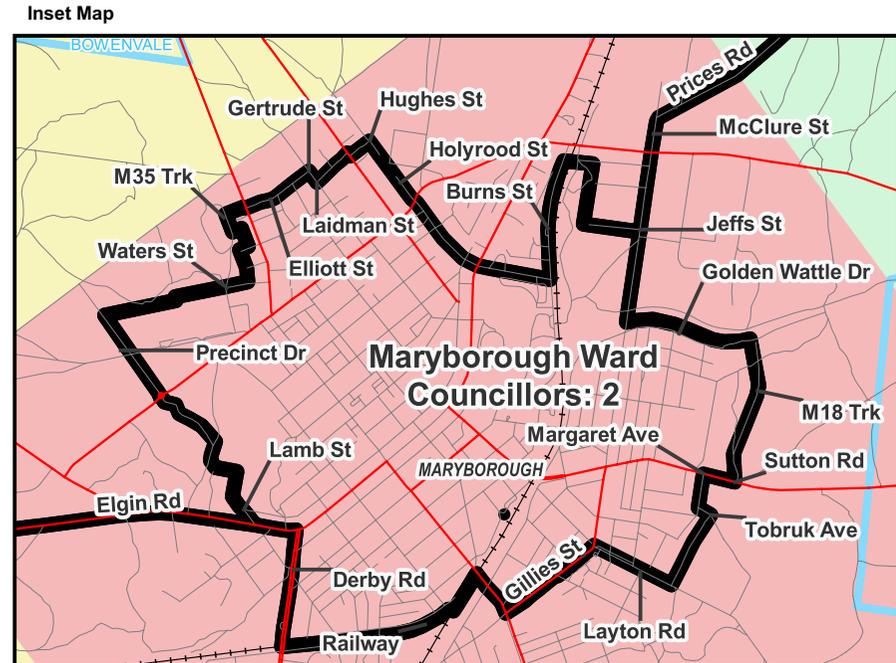
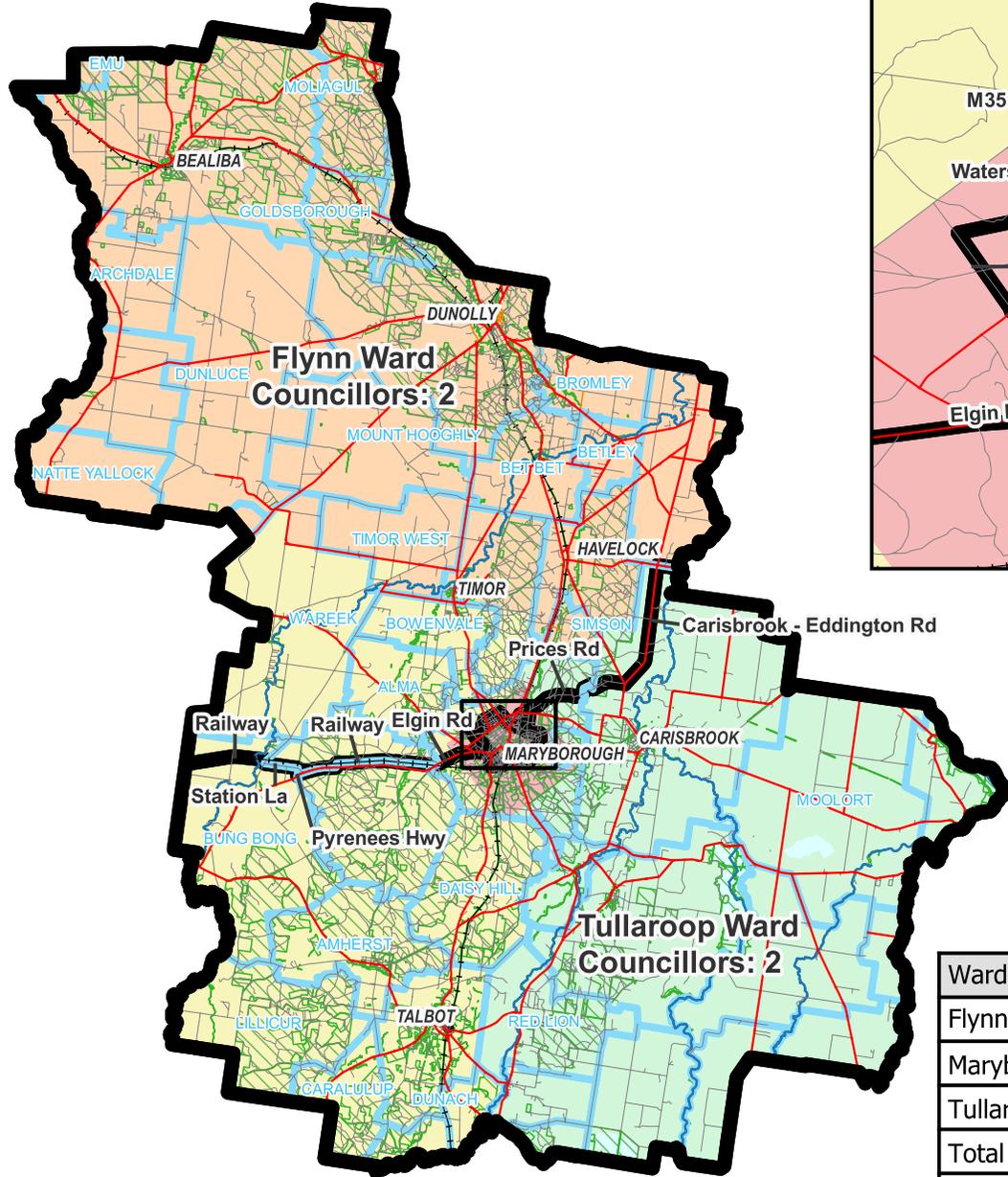
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5.1.7 Central Goldfields Shire Council

Model 2

Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
 - Flynn
 - Maryborough
 - Paddys Ranges
 - Tullaroop
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Minor Roads
 - Railways
 - Railway Stations
 - Rivers & Creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Locality Boundaries



Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Flynn Ward	2	3,660	-3.08%	783.8
Maryborough Ward	2	3,875	+2.61%	5.2
Tullaroop Ward	2	3,794	+0.47%	744.4
Total	6	11,329		1,533.4
Average		1,888		1,533.4

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022

Map prepared by:



Data use:



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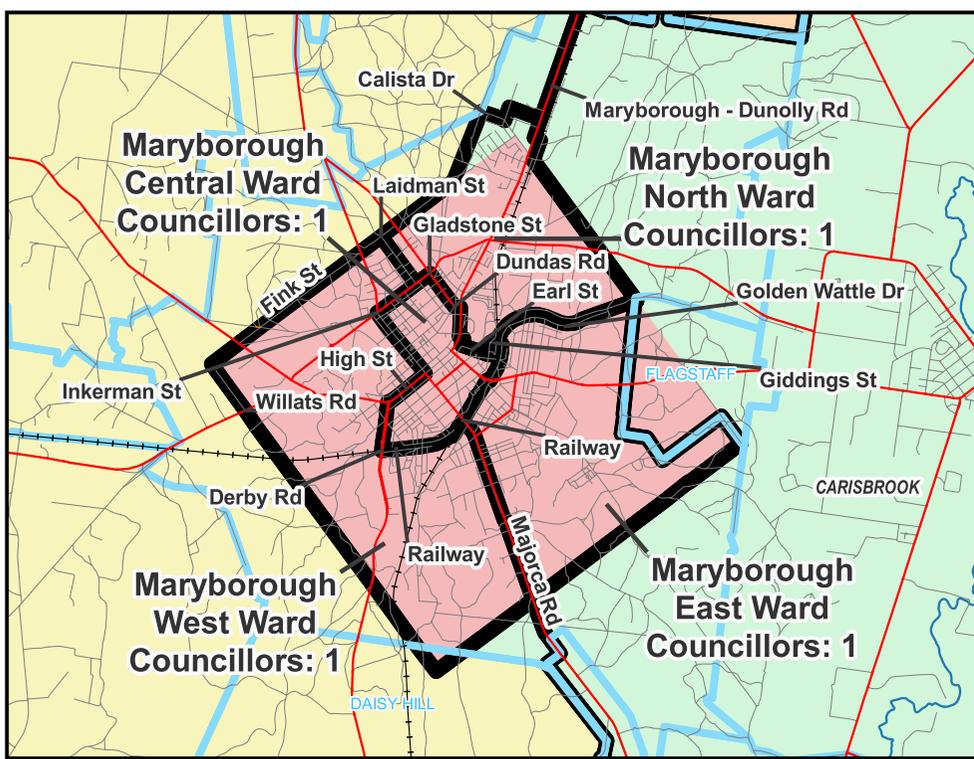
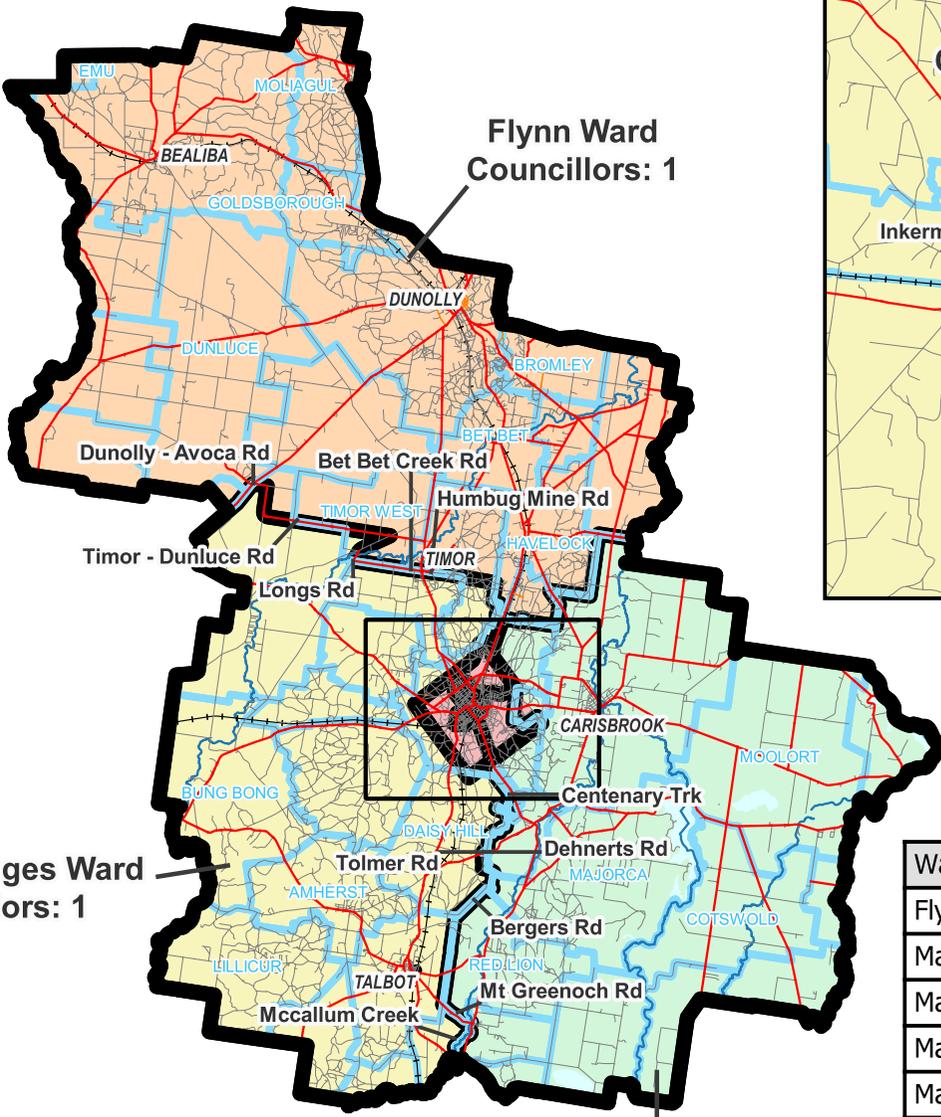
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5.1.8 Central Goldfields Shire Council

Model 3

Legend

- Proposed Boundaries
- Existing Wards**
 - Flynn
 - Maryborough
 - Paddys Ranges
 - Tullaroop
- Map Symbols**
 - Freeways
 - Main Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Minor Roads
 - Railways
 - Railway Stations
 - Rivers & Creeks
 - Lakes
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Locality Boundaries



Inset map

**Paddys Ranges Ward
Councillors: 1**

**Flynn Ward
Councillors: 1**

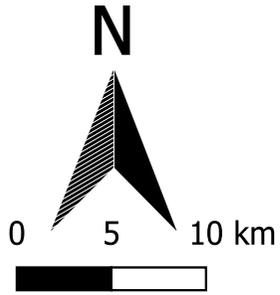
**Tullaroop Ward
Councillors: 1**

**Maryborough
Central Ward
Councillors: 1**

**Maryborough
North Ward
Councillors: 1**

**Maryborough
West Ward
Councillors: 1**

**Maryborough
East Ward
Councillors: 1**



Ward	Councillors	Electors*	Deviation	Area sq km
Flynn Ward	1	1,657	+2.38%	628.1
Maryborough Central Ward	1	1,638	+1.21%	1.9
Maryborough North Ward	1	1,545	-4.54%	4.8
Maryborough East Ward	1	1,558	-3.73%	6.3
Maryborough West Ward	1	1,699	+4.98%	9.4
Paddys Ranges Ward	1	1,609	-0.58%	411.6
Tullaroop Ward	1	1,623	+0.28%	471.3
Total	7	11,329		1,533.4

*Elector numbers at 11 Nov 2022

Map prepared by:



Data use:



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5.2 WHITE PAPER ON TILT INITIATIVE ENDORSEMENT

Author: Responsible **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Officer: **General Manager Infrastructure Assets and Planning**

The Officer presenting this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

SUMMARY/PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of a White Paper on Advancing Regional Skills & Innovation Leadership in the Central Goldfields Shire. This White Paper is the culmination of two workshops, held in November 2022 and March 2023, to address the gaps in education to work pathways in collaboration with the Triggering Innovation and Leadership Training (TILT) program, which is a partnership between La Trobe University, The Australian National University and Fraunhofer IESE in Germany.

The White Paper is designed to highlight the approach used to date and the request for additional support through funding and investment of resources from both government and the private sector to create a model of community leadership and innovation that could also be transferable to other non-metropolitan regions across Australia.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Latrobe University commissioned White Paper on Advancing Regional Skills & Innovation Leadership in Central Goldfields Shire incorporating the Co-Designing of a Maryborough Learning Hub

LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

Central Goldfields Shire Council's Council Plan 2021-2025 - *Our Growing Economy*

The Community's vision 2. *A vibrant and thriving economy with a growing population*

This report has been developed in accordance with the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Economic Development Strategy was adopted by Council on 24th March 2020. It is centred on four key themes each with several individual strategies that highlighted the lead Unit of Council and internal and external partners and the timeframes ranging from short term to long term as well as ongoing.

One of the key strategies within the document identifies a need for improved education and training pathways within Theme 1: PRODUCTIVE, SUSTAINABLE and CREATIVE.

STRATEGY 1: Improve education and training pathways:

1.2 Collaborate and partner with institutions such as Federation University and La Trobe University to improve pathways for secondary students and increase proportion of students enrolling and attaining tertiary level qualifications.

1.4 Advocate for additional courses including vocational and university programs within Shire to meet current skills gap.

REPORT

An opportunity arose to partner with La Trobe, ANU and Fraunhofer to build a local solution to the gaps in both the education and training pathways and the existing skills shortages facing multiple businesses by bringing together a broad cohort of businesses, youth, tertiary and vocational entities, government agencies and the two Maryborough schools to address this critical issue within our community.

Two workshops were held in November 2022 and March 2023 which have led to outcomes for a Maryborough Learning Hub model that is a multi-level and multi-partnership approach.

A White Paper has been prepared by La Trobe University to be shared with a broad range of existing and potential stakeholders, government agencies and the private sector following completion of the workshops. This White Paper has identified a number of actions including a Learning Hub pilot project, nominations for a Steering Committee and a project action group to deliver on projected delivery timelines.

A request has been received from the La Trobe University to endorse this white paper and it is recommended Council does so due to strong alignment with its Economic Development Strategy.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Over sixty people have been directly involved in the development of the outcomes contained in two reports from the initial workshops. The workshops were targeted at a broad cross section of Maryborough and region stakeholders. Additional businesses, organisations, and individuals have also expressed support and interest in participation. This White Paper emanates from those two workshops.

FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Staffing resource costs in the initial phases of the project will continue to be absorbed within existing operational budget. The White Paper sets a request for additional support through funding and investment of resources from both government and the private sector to create a model of community leadership and innovation that could also be transferable to other non-metropolitan regions across Australia.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Utilising a partnership approach to pursue this strategic action will mitigate risks associated with potential lack of support from stakeholders and other levels of government. Utilisation of a piloting approach also reduces issues with potential unknown costs and lost investment from failed ventures.

CONCLUSION

An opportunity exists for the Council to formally acknowledge the initiative of the TILT project to provide a practical solution to the gaps in the pathways from school to work as identified in the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025.

Endorsing the White Paper that captures the stories, data and the ask to both the public and private sectors to create a Maryborough Learning Hub and subsequent pilot projects will underpin and foster this community orientated stakeholders' program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. White Paper for Maryborough Regional Innovation-Learning Hub 2023-03-31



LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

**CO-DESIGNING
MARYBOROUGH'S
LEARNING HUB**

DRAFT for stakeholder feedback

**WHITE PAPER
ON
ADVANCING
REGIONAL SKILLS &
INNOVATION
LEADERSHIP IN THE
CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS SHIRE**



March 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges and extends appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elder's past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

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Advancing Regional Skills & Innovation Leadership in the Central Goldfields Shire

Foreword



Dr Anton Kriz
Lead of TILT

Capturing the attention of our youth, and tapping into their passions, is now a nationwide challenge.

We set up the environment, structures and processes that lead to opportunities (or lack thereof) that our young people experience, so we all share in the responsibility. Interestingly regional companies are some of the first signalling that we need to rapidly turn this around. Given they employ many of our youth straight from school; these companies are privy to many of the deeper issues.

What we find exciting is when local communities, like Maryborough and the Central Goldfields, take the lead and say enough is enough. Watching local stakeholders working together brings hope and what we have seen in Maryborough has been outstanding. Ours is the easy part. We bring evidence to place-based initiatives through TILT or triggering innovation leadership transformation. Unlocking change needs great leadership and our job is to train regions in how to do this more effectively.

This project is an exciting spin-off of a Greater Bendigo Region industry-university TILT initiative. Major Maryborough employers in our TILT program asked for help in building the skills and better engaging with local youth. Fortunately, we had Fraunhofer IESE from Germany working with us. We really believe the community of Maryborough has what it takes to co-create something very special and a first for Australia.



Cr Grace La Vella
Mayor of Maryborough

There is a defined gap in employment in Central Goldfields Shire together with no post-secondary training to support our young adults to stay within their communities.

Covid-19 has brought an awareness that many people are relocating to regional towns and cities, however one of the measures of appeal is employment.

Maryborough is unique in its infrastructure with four major supermarkets, a selection of restaurants and popular eatery franchises, a huge variety of retail outlets and a vast choice of sporting opportunities. Yet, due to an ageing population, we are facing a range of economic challenges. We have a responsibility to our young and the community to ensure the sustainability of our Shire by offering a local tertiary institution such as a ground-breaking co-designed Learning Hub.

A Learning Hub in our Shire will encourage post-secondary students to undertake tertiary education at university or through vocational training. By offering diverse learning experiences, career advice, mentors/coaches, the Learning Hub will build aspiration and interest in local education, training and work pathways. In turn, this will be an investment in our region's future by supporting local industries and businesses overcome employment challenges.

This white paper is a research-based report offering a focused description of a complex topic. It presents a thought-out view to help educate the reader through the eyes of local students, educators, academics and local industry and business experts.

Executive Summary

Maryborough is a regional town ready for transformation through innovation leadership. Maryborough's serious challenge of retaining young people due to a lack of post-secondary education options requires a response. Equally challenging, is supporting local industries and businesses to grow amid a shortage of suitably skilled employment applicants.

Maryborough's crisis of a gap in education-to-employment pathways is being met by the community who have collaborated to develop solutions. Through a series of workshops involving local industries, school students, universities and TAFE centres, the Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) and a range of community organisations, Maryborough has begun co-designing a Learning Hub to provide young people with opportunities for further study, connections to local jobs and mentoring for skill and mindset development. In preparation for the Learning Hub, invested stakeholders will be running pilot projects to test key program features such as industry tours and after school student mentoring and study spaces.

Designing a Learning Hub is a significant milestone for Maryborough indicative of a broader strategy for change being facilitated by the TILT R&D group. TILT R&D (Triggering Innovation Leadership Transformation Research and Development) is a partnership between La Trobe University, The Australian National University (ANU), and Fraunhofer IESE who have provided industry 5.0+ technical support from Germany. This partnership demonstrates an ongoing commitment from TILT to continue supporting Maryborough to build its Learning Hub and with other regional innovation projects in the Central Goldfields Shire.

This white paper documents how the Maryborough community is actively working towards positive transformation with support from TILT R&D. It is a call for support through funding and investment of resources from government and private investors. The investment in supporting Maryborough's young people to study and work locally is an investment in the region's future. It is also a model of community leadership and innovation that would apply to other regions of Australia.



On behalf of the Maryborough Community, we welcome all forms of support

Introduction

Background to the TILT project in Maryborough

Maryborough was identified by TILT R&D as a town facing a range of economic challenges related to an aging demographic, its location as peripheral to Bendigo and Ballarat, and a lack of education and employment opportunities. In contrast, Maryborough also revealed strengths such as a newly appointed council with strong leadership, a small cluster of high performing industries, and a connected community resolved to address Maryborough's challenges. The combination of issues and community readiness for change made Maryborough an ideal candidate town for research and development into regional innovation.

TILT R&D became active in the Maryborough community through a leadership program focused on supporting local small to medium Enterprises (SMEs) to survive the 'valley of death'. A group of industries from Bendigo and Maryborough partnered with La Trobe University, Australian national University (ANU) and Fraunhofer IESE (Institute for Experimental Software Engineering) from Kaiserslautern, Germany. This program was called TILT5.0+.

One of the pressure points identified by local industries is a lack of suitably skilled applicants for available positions. Employee demand for Maryborough's industries exceeds supply. In contrast, the perception of school leavers is that Maryborough does not offer suitable study and employment opportunities causing young people to leave Maryborough, resulting in high levels of unemployment. This complex local issue of: a) lack of suitable employees, b) lack of further education options and c) unawareness of employment opportunities became the 'wicked challenge' to be addressed. Addressing this wicked challenge required engaging with more stakeholders from community, education, industry and CGSC to understand the specific context of Maryborough and the interrelated factors causing these complex issues.



Stakeholders from education, industry and community in Workshop 2, Maryborough, 2023

The Maryborough Context

Location and Population.

Maryborough is in the Central Goldfields Shire, in the Loddon Campaspe Region of Victoria, approximately 140 kms northwest of Melbourne. It is situated approximately 60 kms southwest of Bendigo (also part of the Loddon Campaspe Region) and 60 kms north of Ballarat (Grampians Central Highlands Region). The Central Goldfields Shire is known for food manufacturing, historic buildings from the gold mining era, and events such as the annual Energy Breakthrough and the Highland Games.

The population of Central Goldfields Shire is approximately 13,000 people. Maryborough is the Shire's major business centre and is a health and retail centre for surrounding towns including Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Avoca, Talbot and Dunolly. The population of Maryborough is approximately 7,900 people (the largest in the Central Goldfields Shire). The next largest population is approximately 1,200 people in Carisbrook (including Flagstaff). These two cities account for 70% of the population of the Central Goldfields Shire (Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2025)



From the Tourism & Events Strategy 2020 – 2025 (p. 15)

Demographics.

There appears to be two dominant demographic challenges for sustainable development in the Central Goldfields Shire: a lack of young people in the region and a low socio-economic index. The Central Goldfields Shire population is disproportionately weighted towards an older population compared to other regions in Victoria (median age is 50 years).

There is a decline in all younger cohorts including parents and homebuilders, babies and pre-schoolers, and secondary school students. From 2011-2016 there was an increase in the 20-34-year age groups moving to Central Goldfields Shire, mostly from surrounding areas (Population, Housing and Residential Strategy). The projected increase in elderly residents (aged 70+ years) and the decrease in younger cohorts could create economic issues related to a supply of employees and providing suitable care for older residents including medical services, suitable housing, infrastructure for shopping and transport in and around the city of Maryborough.

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index score for Central Goldfields Shire is 870. This is well below the national average of 1,000 which has placed Central Goldfields Shire as one of the most disadvantaged Local Government Areas in Victoria with issues related to low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations (Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2025).

Employment Profile.

Economic challenges for Central Goldfields Shire include a need to attract a younger and more diverse population to the shire to provide labour and skills for diverse industry and business positions. To attract families to the shire and retain school leavers, there is a need for tertiary education pathways as well as adult education opportunities for upskilling existing and newly arrived lower-skilled workers.

Most businesses are small businesses (less than 20 employees). “98% of businesses in the Shire are considered small business and 55% of those are non-employing businesses. Only 2% of business in the Shire employ between 20 and 199 staff and there are currently no businesses in the Shire that employ more than 200 staff” (Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2025, p. 26). Since this report was written, one industry (True Foods) has exceeded 200 staff. A few local industries have endeavoured to build improved training and recruitment strategies to match growth with employee numbers.



Data and graphs from the Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2025, p. 26.

Education.

The Central Goldfields Shire has one state school: Maryborough Education Centre (MEC) with approximately 1000 students enrolled in Year Levels Prep to 12. The school provides a HeadStart program (Year levels 10-12) which includes apprenticeships while studying and a careers coordinator. Maryborough also has an Ecumenical Christian School for Year levels 7-12: Highview College, with a focus on VCE pathways. There is no tertiary institution in the Central Goldfields Shire as the Maryborough TAFE closed approximately seven years ago. This leaves a gap in post-secondary school education with students needing to travel or move to Bendigo, Ballarat or Melbourne for tertiary studies. The Maryborough District Health Service (MDHS) provides student clinical placements, graduate nurse programs and work experience. The planned \$100 million redevelopment of the MDHS could create further opportunities for health-related internships and university health placements.

This summary of the Maryborough context establishes a rationale for developing a coordinated multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach to respond to Maryborough's challenges and opportunities. This response had commenced through different action groups such as the Community for Maryborough, CGSC and other stakeholders. TILT R&D has capitalised on the existing relationships and goodwill of the community to formalise research and development through the input of university researchers from Fraunhofer IESE, ANU and La Trobe University. Bringing together Maryborough's diverse stakeholders (especially young people) has been a central task of the TILT program in the Central Goldfields Shire.



Some of our young ambassadors from the Maryborough Education Centre, Highview College and the Youth Council after Workshop 2: Co-designing Maryborough's Learning Hub, 2023

The Research and Development Process

Desktop Research

TILT R&D commenced its partnership with the Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) through a review of research reports on a range of sectors impacting on Maryborough's regional development. These reports addressed the following sectors: economy, employment, housing, transport, climate action, industrial land, Council planning, tourism as business and cultural historical assets. The review provided TILT R&D and CGSC with a synthesis of key findings from all reports into a single scoping review. Some key themes which emerged from the synthesis of findings included:

- A need to redress the age imbalance in Maryborough by attracting younger professional workers and encouraging new families to settle in Maryborough and other parts of the Shire.
- A need to make education pathways within the Central Goldfields Shire a priority to keep school leavers in the region through post-secondary schooling, work training and employment opportunities.
- A need for Maryborough to develop a vision for becoming a leader in specialised growth sectors such as health care, social services, manufacturing, green industries and agriculture which are strengths for the Central Goldfields Shire.

A key recommendation from the scoping review was to conduct a study on supporting education pathways for school leavers in Maryborough and whether the creation of a local tertiary institution was needed. This recommendation was also listed as a priority for CGSC in its Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025.



Co-Designing a Learning Hub in Maryborough

Maryborough Workshop 1: Community Insights on Education to Employment

The study into education-to-employment pathways began with a workshop to consult with 16 key stakeholders from education, industry, CGSC and community organisations. This was facilitated by TILT5.0+. The result of Workshop 1 was the identification of a need to:

- Support young people to gain qualifications, skills and aspirational mindsets to apply for local jobs.
- Improve systemic supports for young people by better connecting schools, tertiary education institutions (such as TAFE, universities) and businesses.
- Make Maryborough an attractive place to study, work and live by showcasing its local industries and providing social, economic and educational opportunities for young people.

The workshop resulted in the conceptualisation of a physical and digital Learning Hub in Maryborough with diverse work and learning experiences, career advice and mentors/coaches to build aspiration and interest in further study and local careers.

Maryborough Workshop 2: Co-Designing Maryborough's Learning Hub

Building on the concept of a Maryborough Learning Hub, a second workshop was run to hear from a broader range of stakeholders including students from both local schools (Maryborough Education Centre, Highview College) and the Maryborough Youth Council. Approximately 40 representatives from schools; industry and business; CGSC; universities; TAFE and community organisations participated in the workshop.

Participants in Workshop 2 developed a solid concept of what the Maryborough Learning Hub would aim to achieve by identifying the following key components:

- *Practical and engaging programs:* Hands-on workshops and practical onsite learning
- *Mentorship and advice:* Having a Q & A forum as well as a range of mentors
- *Networked community of support:* Broader opportunities for support by connecting agencies in a network through the Learning Hub
- *Diverse learning spaces:* Safe and comfortable youth-centred spaces
- *Accessibility:* Transport for physical access and online programs

These broad components of the proposed Maryborough Learning Hub were more clearly defined by developing blueprints of how the components could be trialled as prototypes for the Learning Hub programs, events and spaces. These prototypes were combined into 2 pilot projects to be run in Maryborough:

- ***Industry Launch:*** A Q & A Forum inviting guest speakers from industry and tertiary education to schools during school term to answer questions in preparation for an *Industry Open House* tour to local industries and businesses during the school

holidays. The Industry Open House would include a tour, discussions with staff and interactive activities for students to learn about different roles in the companies.

- **Youth Learning Hub:** A *Mentoring Program* and *Student Study Support Space* held after school at an existing central venue (such as the Council Community Hub or the Go Goldfields Atrium). Programs could range from study support, peer discussion and career skills with a focus on peer and near-peer support for young people. An online community of practice could also be developed for student peer-learning to increase accessibility for students unable to attend in person.

These pilot projects will trial the key components of the future Learning Hub. Evaluation of the projects' success through community feedback, participant attendance and engagement will provide a clearer understanding of how the proposed Learning Hub can be built and managed to best serve the needs of young people, local businesses and community organisations. The pilot projects are a low-cost investment enabling committed stakeholders to immediately support education-to-employment issues for young people and actively contribute to the development of future Learning Hub programs.

Workshop 3: Strategically Coordinating the Development of the Learning Hub

The next workshop planned for early May 2023 will establish a steering committee, strategic plan for the development of the Learning Hub and project action groups to coordinate the two pilot projects. A list of expressions of interest for steering committee members and project coordinators was collected at the end of Workshop 2. The list demonstrates a commitment from community members to be actively involved in the development of the Learning Hub. Prior to this workshop, a strategic planning meeting will be undertaken with a small group of leading industries, the Committee for Maryborough and CGSC. A proposed schedule for the development of the Maryborough Learning Hub is included on the following page.



"I didn't realise elders cared that much about the youth community"
(Maryborough student)



"I would love to see our young people and industry engage in a way that sets them up to achieve more than they ever thought possible within their community" (Mark Thurlow, True Foods)



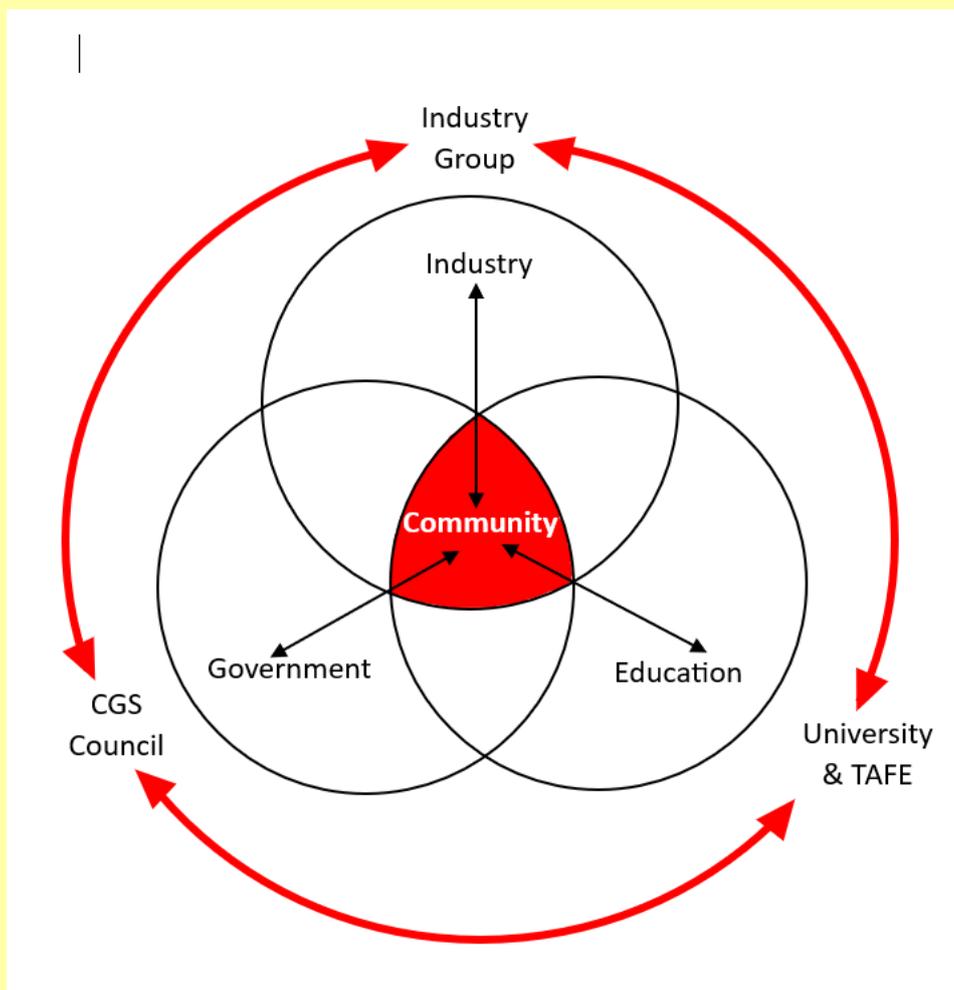
Next Steps for the Learning Hub: Phase 2

A proposed schedule of next steps for stakeholders of the development of the Maryborough Learning Hub project is provided. The proposal will be revised through future steering committee meetings.

2023	
April	Initial consultation with a small number of leading industries, CGSC and the Committee for Maryborough to establish a long-term regional innovation strategy. Part of the strategy will be developing a framework to support the organisation of the Learning Hub steering committee and project action groups.
May	Formation of a steering committee to coordinate the future development of the Learning Hub. The steering committee will endeavour to source funding and resources for the pilot projects. The steering committee will develop a timeline for the trial of the projects prior to the commencement of the construction — or repurposing of an existing facility — as the permanent Learning Hub.
June	Project action groups will be organised to lead the pilot projects. The project action groups will coordinate the logistics of venues, participants, communication, program development and evaluation.
July-Dec	A trial period to test the pilot projects will be determined to gain participant feedback and other forms of evaluative data on the effectiveness of the pilot projects.
2024	
Jan-July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A suitable location will be found for the Learning Hub for a new construction or rebuilding of an existing venue -Funding proposal with architectural plans for the Learning Hub facility -Formalisation of curriculum including bolt-on courses and programs with external education providers such as TAFE, universities and partner organisations such as MDHS and industry training services
Sept-Dec	Construction of the Maryborough Learning Hub.
2025	
Feb	Opening of the Maryborough Learning Hub (This is Phase 3 of the Maryborough Learning Hub project).
July	Mid-year evaluation of programs (later evaluations to be conducted every 12 months).

Co-developing a Vision for The Central Goldfields Shire

TILT R&D is committed to supporting the Central Goldfields Shire to envision innovative responses to challenges and to build from its strong industry and community commitment to transformation. A bold approach to regional development is proposed with a strong partnership between university researchers, CGSC, local industries and community organisations. The Learning Hub project is a proof of concept for a range of projects that address complex challenges for the region. A model of this multi-level and multi-stakeholder partnership is provided. The TILT model is an adaptation of the *Triple Helix Model* by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000).



Model of Community and Regional Levels of Mediated Stakeholder Partnership (TILT, 2023)

This model represents TILT's two levels of intermediary support in the Central Goldfields Shire (in red):

- The central involvement of the Maryborough community to connect industry with education and government. TILT R&D has fostered community-orientated stakeholder projects through workshops and action groups. The development of the

Learning Hub is an example of this bottom-up approach. Specifically, the Learning Hub creates a formerly lacking connection between community and education.

- An outer layer of strategic planning with a small group of leading industries, education institutions (TAFE and universities) and CGSC. This institutional layer of partnership provides long-term strategic vision for the Central Goldfields Shire. TILT R&D is fostering leadership capacity for institutions to work as a group to achieve innovative transformation of the region over a 3–5-year period. TILT R&D has been providing research and facilitation of meetings to support this top-down strategic planning.

By simultaneously working with community stakeholders from the bottom-up and leading organisations from the top-down, Maryborough has been undertaking a process of coordinated transformation. TILT R&D is committed to providing ongoing support to the Central Goldfields Shire to achieve its regional innovation goals. Future involvement of TILT R&D is dependent on further funding. This and other required funds are discussed in the following section.

Funding the Learning Hub, Pilot Projects and Maryborough’s Regional Innovation

Immediate funding for Maryborough’s short term regional innovation can broadly be divided into three categories:

- Funding for the Learning Hub pilot projects, steering committee and project action groups. Funding through grants would enable resources to be provided for each project covering venue costs, materials, transport and possible payment to mentors and participating industries. Funding may also cover a salary for a lead position in the steering committee to oversee the development of the Learning Hub. Funding to support members of the project action groups through work release time to dedicate to the pilot projects, may also be required. This funding may come from local government grants.
- A 12-month contract for a TILT researcher to work half-time on research and development for the development of the Learning Hub, support for the pilot projects and Maryborough’s long-term strategic planning with leading organisations. Funding for this contract can be split evenly between government, university and industry.
- The construction of the Learning Hub at the end of 2024 and hiring of staff in 2025. This will require a commitment from state government for a set number of years against measurable outcomes from the Learning Hub such as an increased number of employed school leavers and partnerships with tertiary education such as universities and TAFE centres.

“The ability to have my voice about my future”
(Maryborough student)

“It takes a village to raise a child - I would like: to break down the barriers for youth and make the pathways safer and clearer” (Windsor Main, Edlyn Foods)

Closing Remarks

This white paper has summarised the beginning of a process of transformation for Maryborough and the Central Goldfields Shire. It has outlined the challenges that Maryborough has been facing and a process of collaborative community initiative and innovation to address these challenges. Building from the excellent research and planning already undertaken by CGSC, the TILT R&D group has crystallised a key project for Maryborough: the development of a Learning Hub. The combination of community workshops and strategic planning with leading organisations provides a model of coordinated action for all stakeholders.

The aim of this white paper has been to draw attention to the success of the Maryborough regional innovation process so far in gaining strong support from community, industry, university and CGSC. We hope that this white paper will attract funding from government and committed stakeholders in Maryborough's future. Funding is required to launch the pilot projects and maintain research and development from the TILT R&D group. Beyond this, funding is required for the construction of the permanent Maryborough Learning Hub and its operations. The construction of Maryborough's Learning Hub will be a key milestone in demonstrating a successful model of innovation for the region which can be applied to other bold projects in the Central Goldfields Shire and other regions. We believe that the provision of funding and other support is an investment in the future of this region and its next generation of learners, workers and their families. It is also a model that can serve other regions to support regional innovation with significant social and economic impacts.

For all inquiries, please contact Brian Gould, Economic Development Officer CGSC
brian.gould@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au

Please send feedback on this draft to Dr Aimé Sacrez:

a.sacrez@latrobe.edu.au



Thank you from our Maryborough community stakeholders

Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by the TILT R&D group in collaboration with the following leaders in the Central Goldfields Shire:

List of names of stakeholders who reviewed this document and the name of the organisations in which they work:

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If you are happy to have your name and business/organisation name listed on the final version of this white paper as an endorser, please email your name and business/organisation name to:

Dr Aimé Sacrez: a.sacrez@latrobe.edu.au

Thank you.

References

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Aerial view of Maryborough, Central Goldfields Shire, Victoria.



6. Confidential Business

The public transparency principles include that Council decision making processes be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue an Act.¹

Except in specified circumstances, Council meetings must be kept open to the public.² One circumstance is that the meeting is to consider confidential information.³

If a Council determines that a meeting is to be closed to the public to consider confidential information, the Council or delegated committee must record in the minutes of the meeting that are available for public inspection:⁴

(a) the ground or grounds for determining to close the meeting to the public by reference to the grounds specified in Act's definition of confidential information;⁵

(b) an explanation of why the specified ground or grounds applied.

Confidential information, as defined by the *Local Government Act 2020*,⁶ is:

(a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;

(b) security information, being information that if released is likely to endanger the security of Council property or the safety of any person;

(c) land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values;

(d) law enforcement information, being information which if released would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation into an alleged breach of the law or the fair trial or hearing of any person;

(e) legal privileged information, being information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies;

(f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information affairs;

(g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that—

(i) relates to trade secrets; or

(ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage;

(h) confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a);

¹ *Local Government Act 2020* s 58 (a). ² *LGA 2020* s 66 (1). ³ *LGA 2020* s 66 (2)

a).

⁴ *LGA 2020* s 66 (5).

⁵ Section 3 (1).

⁶ Section 3 (1).

- (i) internal arbitration information, being information specified in section 145;
- (j) Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information, being information specified in section 169;
- (k) information prescribed by the regulations to be confidential information for the purposes of this definition;
- (l) information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the Local Government Act 1989;

The Governance Rules provide for information relating to a meeting to be confidential:⁷

- If the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that information relating to a meeting is confidential information within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 2020*, he or she will advise Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly.
- Information which has been identified as confidential information within the meaning of the Act, and in respect of which advice has been given to Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly, will be presumed to be confidential information.

⁷ Chapter 6.

6.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Author: Responsible **General** **Manager** **Corporate**
Officer: **Performance** **General** **Manager**

Corporate Performance
The Officer presenting this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

While the report provided below is made public, this item is to be considered in confidential business for the reason the subject matter contains confidential information under section 3(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 for the reason that it concerns (personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

This section applies because it relates to the individual performance review of an employee, and it is therefore unreasonable to release.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council close the meeting to the public in accordance with section 66(2) and section 3(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUMMARY/PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the recommendations from the Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters Advisory Committee report on the Chief Executive Officer Performance Review.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note that the CEO's performance review has been conducted by the CEO Employment Matters Committee in accordance with the CEO Employment Matters Policy.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

Central Goldfields Shire Council's Council Plan 2021-2025 - Leading Change

The Community's vision 4. Good planning, governance, and service delivery

Local Government Act 2020 s45

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Council has in place a Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters Advisory Committee (the Committee), the purpose of which is to advise the Council on all contractual matters relating to the employment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Membership of the Committee comprises the Mayor of the Central Goldfields Shire Council together with a minimum of two Councillors and the Independent Chairperson. Council appointed Mr Chris Eddy as the independent chairperson in September 2020 and remains contracted until 31 March 2024.

Mr Eddy is an experienced executive with more than 30 years of management experience in private and public sector roles, including 18 years as a senior local government executive. He is the chair of Sunshine Transport Precinct Community Reference Group and provides executive consultancy services to local and state government agencies.

At its Meeting of 15 November 2022, Council reappointed the Mayor Cr La Vella and Councillors Meddows-Taylor and Lovett to the Committee.

REPORT

The Committee has an advisory role in relation to contractual matters relating to the Chief Executive Officer.

These matters include:

- Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer.
- The remuneration and conditions of appointment of the Chief Executive Officer (including annual remuneration review).
- Negotiating any extension of the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer under section 94(4) of the Act.
- Conduct of the annual performance review of the Chief Executive Officer; and
- Performing other functions as required in supporting the performance review and performance development of the Chief Executive Officer.

A performance review of the CEO has been conducted in accordance with the CEO Employment Matters Policy.

A copy of the performance review report from the Committee has been circulated separately to Councillors as a confidential report in accordance with the CEO Employment Matters Policy.

The Local Government Act 2020 states that a Council meeting must be open to the public unless specified circumstances apply (s66). Section 66(2)(a) lists the consideration of confidential information as a specified circumstance.

Confidential information is defined under section 3(1)(f) of the Act as personal information which would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person. As the performance review of personnel is personal information which would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person it is confidential information as defined under the Act, and this discussion will therefore be closed to the public in accordance with s66 of the Act.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Internal only for this report

FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The policy allows for the payment of a set fee, to the Independent Chairperson as determined through a competitive procurement process. The Chairperson of the Committee will also be reimbursed for any transport costs they have incurred in participating in meetings and related activities. All these costs are included in the operating budget.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This report addresses Council's strategic risk Governance - Failure to transparently govern and embrace good governance practices by utilising an independent person to assist in the review process.

CONCLUSION

The performance review of the Chief Executive Officer has been conducted by the CEO Employment Matters Committee in accordance with the CEO Employment Matters Policy with a confidential report provided to Council for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

CONFIDENTIAL_ Final Central Goldfields CEO Review - April 2023

This document has been provided to Councillors under separate cover for the reasons stated above.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council open the meeting to the public.

7. Meeting closure