



Review of Elector Representation

Notice is hereby given that the Adelaide Plains Council is undertaking a review to determine whether a change of arrangements are required in respect to elector representation, so as to ensure that the electors of the area are being adequately and fairly represented.

Pursuant to Section 12(7) of the *Local Government Act 1999*, notice is hereby given that Council has prepared a Representation Options Paper which examines the advantages and disadvantages of the various options available in regards to the composition and structure of Council, and the division of the Council area into wards.

A copy of the Representation Options Paper is available on the Council's website (www.apc.sa.gov.au/representationreview). Interested persons may also obtain a hardcopy of the Representation Options Paper during opening hours at the Mallala Principal Office at 2A Wasleys Road, Mallala and the Two Wells Service Centre at 69 Old Port Wakefield Road, Two Wells.

Written submissions are invited from interested persons from **Wednesday 25 November 2020** and should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer, Adelaide Plains Council, PO Box 18, Mallala SA 5502, or emailed to info@apc.sa.gov.au by close of business on **Friday 29 January 2021**. Alternatively, electronic submissions can be made via the Council website (www.apc.sa.gov.au/representationreview).

Note: Written submissions will become public record, including forming part of a report to Council.

Information regarding the elector representation review can be obtained by contacting Sheree Schenk, General Manager – Governance and Executive Office, on telephone (08) 8527 0200 or email info@apc.sa.gov.au.

James Miller
Chief Executive Officer



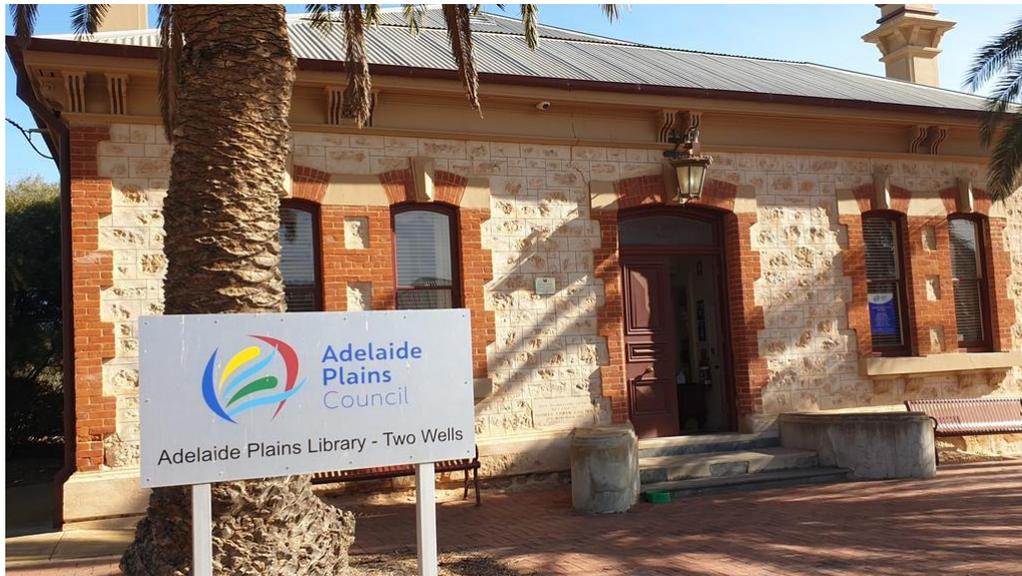
ELECTOR REPRESENTATION REVIEW

REPRESENTATION OPTIONS PAPER

(SECTION 12(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999)



Adelaide Plains
Council



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1. INTRODUCTION

Section 12(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) indicates that the purpose of an “elector representation review” is to determine whether its community would benefit from an alteration to Council’s composition or ward structure.

Section 12(4) of the Act states: *“A review may relate to a specific aspect of the composition of the council, or of the wards of the council, or may relate to those matters generally – but a council must ensure that all aspects of the composition of the council, and the issue of the division, or potential division, of the area of the council into wards, are comprehensively reviewed under this section at least once in each relevant period that is prescribed by the regulations”.*

The Minister for Local Government has specified (by way of a notice published in the Government Gazette on the 9th July 2020) that Council is required to undertake and complete a review during the period June 2020 – October 2021.

This paper has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 12(5) and (6) of the Act and examines the advantages and disadvantages of the various options that are available to Council in respect to its future composition and structure. It contains information pertaining to the review process; elector distribution and ratios; comparisons with other councils; demographic trends; population projections; residential development opportunities which may impact upon future elector numbers; and alternative ward structure options.

The key issues that need to be addressed during the review include:

- the principal member of Council, more specifically whether it should be a mayor elected by the community or a chairperson selected by (and from amongst) the elected members;
- the composition of Council, including the number of elected members required to provide fair and adequate representation to the community and the need for area councillors in addition to ward councillors (where the council area is to be divided into wards);
- the division of the council area into wards or the abolition of no wards; and
- the levels of ward representation within, and the names of, any proposed future wards.

The review also needs to be mindful of the potential ramifications of The Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020 (the Bill) which was introduced to state parliament in June 2020. This Bill seeks to amend the provisions of the Act, including matters relating to the composition of councils and the elector representation review process.

At the end of the review process, any proposed changes to Council’s composition and/or the ward structure (and/or the abolition thereof) should serve to uphold the democratic principle of “one person, one vote, one value”.

2. BACKGROUND

The council area was originally proclaimed the District Council of Light in 1935 following the amalgamation of the then District Councils of Dublin, Port Gawler and Grace. The District Council of Light was renamed to the District Council of Mallala in 1937; and in September 2016 the name of the Council was formally changed to Adelaide Plains Council.

The council area covers approximately 932.1km² and had an estimated resident population of 9,137 as at the 30th June 2019. In August 2020 there were 6,180 eligible electors within the council area, this equating to an elector ratio (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor) of 1:687.

The council area is divided into three wards and is represented by nine councillors. The Mayor is the tenth and principal member of Council. The current structure, which was adopted by Council at the previous elector representation review in 2012/2013, came into effect at the periodic Local Government elections in November 2014.

Table 1 provides data pertaining to the number of electors within each of the current wards, and demonstrates the variance in respect to the elector ratios between the wards.

Table 1: Current ward structure - Elector numbers and elector ratios

	Councillors	H of A Roll	Council Roll	Electors	Elector Ratio	% Variance
Mallala/Dublin	3	1,956	7	1,963	1:654	- 4.71
Two Wells	3	1,891	16	1,907	1:636	- 7.43
Lewiston	3	2,307	3	2,310	1:770	+12.13
Total	9	6,154	26	6,180		
Average					1:687	

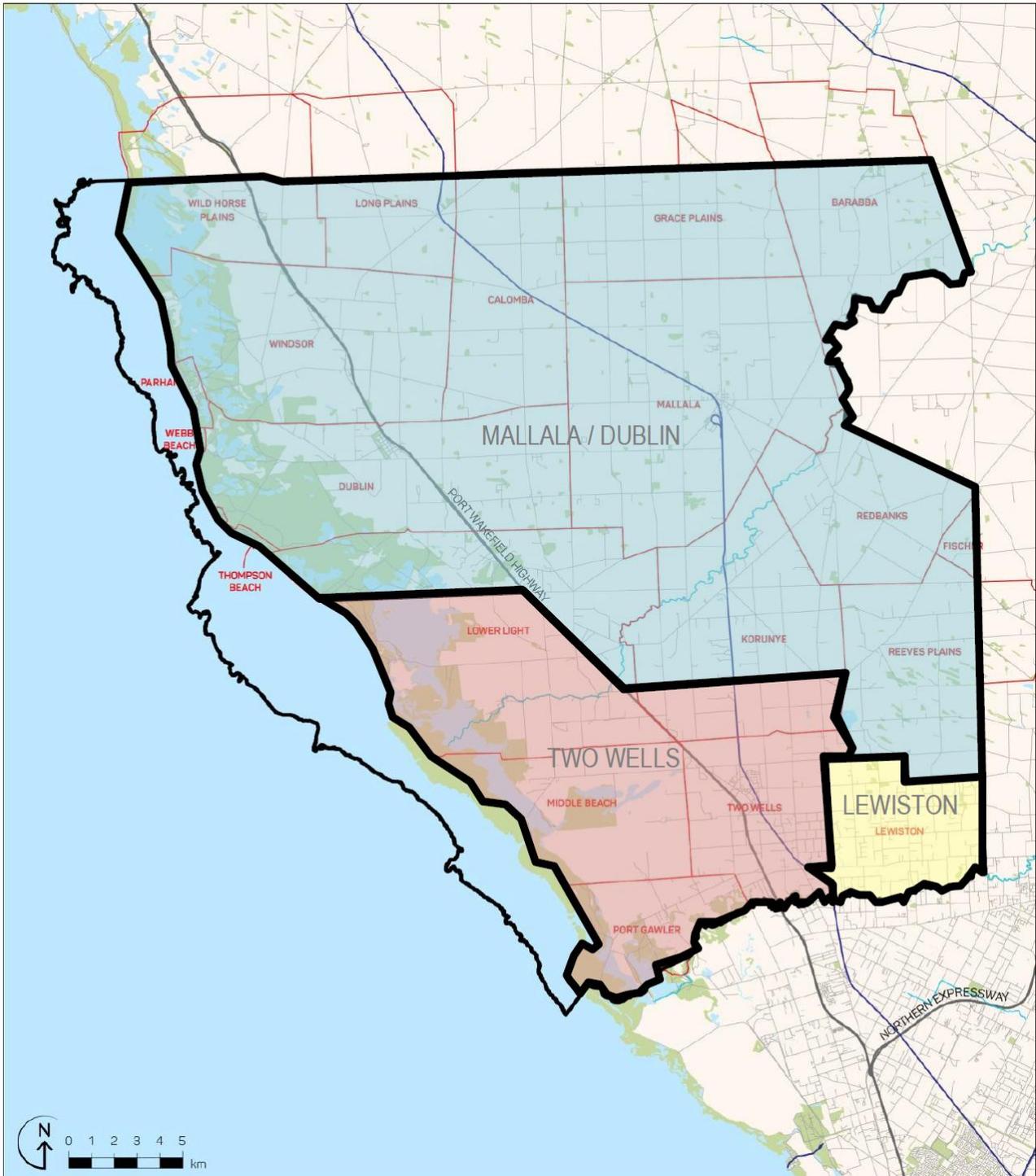
Source: Electoral Commission SA (13 May 2020 and 14 August 2020) and Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (26 July 2020)

The current ward structure cannot be retained because the elector ratio in the existing Lewiston Ward breaches the specified 10% quota tolerance limit prescribed under Section 33(2) of the Act (refer 7.3 Quota). This being the case, alternative ward structure options must be considered with the view to identifying a structure that:

- provides a more equitable balance of electors (which can be maintained, within tolerance, over the extended period between reviews);
- allows for likely fluctuations in elector numbers, primarily as a consequence of future population growth and residential development; and
- exhibits an elector ratio that is similar, by comparison, to that exhibited by other councils of a similar size and type (i.e. avoids over-representation).

Alternative ward structure options have been presented later in this paper (refer 8. Ward Structure Options, page 19).

Map 1: Current Ward Structure



3. REVIEW PROCESS

Sections 12(5) - 12(12a) of the Act outline the process that Council must adhere to when undertaking its review. A brief summary of this process is as follows.

3.1 Representation Options Paper

The review is commenced with the preparation of a "Representation Options Paper" by a person who, in the opinion of Council, is qualified to address the representation and governance issues that may arise during the course of the review.

The "Representation Options Paper" must examine the advantages and disadvantages of the options available in respect to a range of issues relating to the composition and structure of Council, including the number of required elected members and whether the division of the council area into wards should be retained or abolished.

3.2 First Public Consultation

Council is currently advising the community that the review is being undertaken and the "Representation Options Paper" is available for consideration. An invitation is being extended to any interested person to make a submission to Council by close of business on Friday 29th January 2021.

Section 12(7)(a)(ii) of the Act specifies that the consultation period shall be at least six (6) weeks in duration.

3.3 Representation Review Report

At the completion of the first of the prescribed public consultation stages Council will consider the available options in respect to its future composition and structure, as well as the submissions received from the community. Council will make "in principle" decisions regarding the elector representation arrangements it favours and desires to bring into effect at the next Local Government elections. Council will then prepare a "Representation Review Report" which will outline its proposal and the reasons for such, as well as provide details of the submissions that were received during the first public consultation period and its responses thereto.

3.4 Second Public Consultation

Council will initiate a second public consultation (by means of public notices) seeking written comments on the "Representation Review Report" and the preferred proposal.

Section 12(9)(b)(ii) of the Act specifies that the second consultation period shall be at least three (3) weeks in duration.

3.5 Final Decision

Council will consider the submissions received in response to the second public consultation; hear from the individual community members who may wish to address Council in support of their submission; finalise its decision; and prepare a report for presentation to the Electoral Commissioner.

3.6 Certification

The final stage of the review involves certification of the Council proposal by the Electoral Commissioner and gazettal of any amendments to Council's composition and/or ward structure.

Any changes to Council's composition and/or ward structure as a consequence of the review will come into effect at the next Local Government election (scheduled for November 2022).



4. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

Section 51 of the Act indicates that a council may constitute a mayor or chairperson, with all other elected members being known as councillors, whether they represent the council area as a whole or a ward. The key issues relating to the future composition of Council are as follows.

4.1 Mayor/Chairperson

The principal member of Council has been a mayor (elected by the community as a representative of the council area as a whole) since the periodic Local Government elections in November 2014. Currently, the only alternative is a chairperson.

The roles and responsibilities of a mayor and a chairperson are identical in all respects, however, there are differences in their election/selection and their voting rights in chamber.

A mayor is elected by all of the electors for a period of four years and, as such, provides stable community leadership. By contrast, a chairperson is chosen by (and from amongst) the elected members of council for a term of one to four years (as determined by Council). The latter provides flexibility and the opportunity for a number of elected members to gain experience as the principal member over the term of a council.

In addition, an elected mayor does not have a deliberative vote on a matter before council but has a casting vote, whereas a chairperson has a deliberative vote at a council meeting but, in the event of a tied vote, does not have a casting vote.

Further, as an election (or supplementary election) for an elected mayor must be conducted across the whole of the council area, a significant cost can be incurred by council on every occasion the position is contested. The selection of a chairperson is not reliant upon an election and, as such, costs will only be incurred by council where the incumbent's position as a councillor is contested.

It should also be noted that:

- the Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020 seeks to abolish the position of selected chairperson;
- at present all of the metropolitan councils have an elected mayor and only fifteen regional councils have a chairperson, although all bear the title of mayor (as currently allowed under Section 51(1)(b) of the Act);
- candidates for the office of mayor cannot also stand for election as a councillor and as such, the experience and expertise of unsuccessful candidates will be lost to council; and
- any proposal to change the principal member from an elected mayor to a selected chairperson (or vice versa) at this time cannot proceed unless a poll of the community has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 12 (11a-d) of the Act and the result of the poll favours the proposed change.

4.2 Area Councillors (in addition to ward councillors)

Section 52 of the Act indicates that councillors can be elected as a representative of a ward, or alternatively, to represent the council area as a whole (whether or not the council area is divided into wards).

Where the council area is divided into wards, an area councillor adopts a similar role to that of the former office of alderman and focuses on the council area as a whole rather than a ward.

Arguments in favour of "area councillors" (in addition to ward councillors) include:

- the area councillor should be free of parochial ward attitudes and responsibilities;
- the area councillor may be an experienced elected member who can share his/her knowledge and experience with the ward councillors;
- the area councillor is free to assist the principal member and ward councillors, if required; and
- the lines of communication between Council and the community are enhanced through the greater number of elected members.

The opposing view is that an area councillor holds no greater status than a ward councillor; has no greater responsibilities than a ward councillor; and need not comply with any extraordinary or additional eligibility requirements. In addition, it should be noted that:

- additional elected members ("area councillors") will create additional expense;
- any contested election for area councillors must be conducted across the whole of the council area at considerable cost;
- area councillors are considered to be an unnecessary tier of representation and therefore are not a popular option amongst councils (i.e. only the City of Adelaide has "area councillors" in addition to councillors);
- ward councillors do not have to reside in the ward which they represent and, as such, the traditional role and/or basis for the ward councillor has changed to a council-wide perspective;
- ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only their ward, but the council area as a whole (like an area councillor), and it is suggested that their role and actions within the council chamber, and the functions they perform on behalf of council, generally reflect this attitude and circumstance; and
- the task and expense of contesting council-wide elections for an area councillor can be prohibitive, and may deter appropriate/quality candidates.

4.3 Ward Councillors

Section 52(2)(b) of the Act indicates a councillor will, if the council area is divided into wards, be elected by the electors of a particular ward, as a representative of that ward.

As a person elected to Council, a ward councillor is required to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers; to provide community leadership and guidance; and to facilitate communication between the community and Council.



5. ELECTOR REPRESENTATION

Council must provide adequate and fair representation and generally adhere to the democratic principle of “one person, one vote, one value”.

Section 12(6) of the Act requires that, where a Council is constituted of more than twelve members, the elector representation review must examine the question of whether the number of elected members should be reduced.

In addition, Sections 26(1) and 33(1) of the Act express the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

The comparison of councils is not a straightforward exercise, given that no two councils are identical in terms of their size (elector numbers and/or area), population, topography, communities of interest and/or predominant land uses. However, it can provide some guidance in regards to an appropriate elector ratio or level of representation (number of councillors).

a) Table 2 provides (for comparison purposes) the elector data; elector ratios (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor); and the size/area of the regional councils which are considered to be of a similar type and size (elector numbers) as the Adelaide Plains Council. The data indicates that the Adelaide Plains Council is one of the smaller councils in regards to area; but is “middle of the road” in respect to the number of elected members and elector ratio.

Table 2: Elector data and representation (Regional councils of a similar size in elector numbers)

Council	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio
Naracoorte Lucindale (4,517 km ²)	10	5,851	1:585
Grant (1,904 km ²)	9	5,475	1:608
Adelaide Plains (932.1 km ²)	9	6,180	1:687
Mid Murray (7,957 km ²)	9	6,527	1:725
Clare & Gilbert Valleys (1,840 km ²)	9	6,799	1:755
Renmark Paringa (915.5 km ²)	8	6,498	1:812
Berri Barmera (508 km ²)	8	7,330	1:916

Source: Electoral Commission SA (13 May 2020 and 14 August 2020) and Council Supplementary Voter’s Roll (26 July 2020)

The difference in elector representation and elector ratios is more evident when the current elector representation arrangements of Council are compared to those of the regional councils which have slightly greater elector numbers (refer Table 3). This data suggests that whilst all of the cited councils have the same or a greater number of elected members, they all obviously have higher elector ratios because of the greater number of electors.

Table 3: Elector data and representation (Regional councils comprising larger elector numbers)

Council	Councillors	Electors	Elector Ratio
Adelaide Plains (932.1 km ²)	9	6,180	1: 687
Wattle Range (3,924km ²)	11	8,471	1: 770
Yorke Peninsula (5,834 km ²)	11	8,878	1: 807
Loxton Waikerie (7,957 km ²)	10	8,171	1: 817
Pt Augusta (1,153 km ²)	9	9,452	1:1,050
Light (1,278 km ²)	10	10,536	1:1,054
Pt Lincoln (30.4 km ²)	9	10,472	1:1,164
Copper Coast (773 km ²)	9	11,405	1:1,267

Source: Electoral Commission SA (13 May 2020 and 14 August 2020) and Council Supplementary Voter's Roll (26 July 2020)

When determining the appropriate future composition of Council, some consideration needs to be given to the role of the elected members, as the commitment and workloads of the elected members need to be taken into account. Section 59 of the Act specifies that the role of a member of Council is:

- to participate in the deliberation and activities of Council;
- to keep Council's objectives and policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and effective; and
- to keep Council's resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery, under review.

Section 59 also requires a person elected to the Council to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers; to provide community leadership and guidance; and to facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

If considering a reduction in the number of councillors, care must be taken to ensure that:

- sufficient elected members are available to manage the affairs of Council;
- the elected member's workloads do not become excessive;
- there is an appropriate level of elector representation;
- a diversity in member's skill sets, experience and backgrounds is maintained; and
- adequate lines of communication will exist between a growing community and Council.

A reduction in the number of elected members will serve to increase the elector ratio from the current 1:697 to 1:773 (eight councillors) or 1:883 (seven councillors). These elector ratios are more consistent with the existing elector ratios exhibited by most of the cited regional councils in Tables 1 and 2.

As for increasing the number of elected members, an increase to ten councillors would serve to reduce the elector ratio to 1:618. Such a proposal would likely be difficult to justify, given the aforementioned provisions of Sections 26 and 33 of the Act which speak against over-representation when compared to other councils of a similar size and type.

Notwithstanding the above, arguments in favour of an increase in elected members include:

- enhancing the lines of communication between Council and the community;
- the greater the number of elected members, the greater the likelihood that the elected members will be more familiar with the experiences of, and issues confronting, the local community;
- the greater the number of elected members, the more diverse the skill sets, expertise, experience and opinions; and
- an increase in the number of elected members may provide greater opportunity for community scrutiny and can make the elected members more accountable to their immediate constituents.

Finally, there are no inherent disadvantages in having an even or odd number of councillors. An odd number of councillors may serve to reduce the incidence of a tied vote in the Council chamber; however, it may also require the development/implementation of a ward structure which exhibits a varying level of representation between wards. The latter can be perceived as an imbalance by the community.

6. WARD STRUCTURE

Section 12(1)(b) of the Act indicates that Council can "divide, or redivide, the area of the council into wards, alter the division of the area of the council into wards, or abolish the division of the area of a council into wards".

6.1 Wards/No Wards

6.1.1 Wards

The advantages of a ward structure include:

- wards guarantee some form and level of direct representation to all parts of the council area and existing communities of interest;
- ward councillors can focus on local issues as well as council-wide issues;
- ward councillors may be known to their ward constituents (and vice versa);
- ward councillors can have an affiliation with the local community and an understanding of the local issues and/or concerns;
- the task and expense of contesting a ward election may be less daunting to prospective candidates;
- Council only has to conduct elections and supplementary elections within the contested wards (potential cost saving); and
- ward based elections have the potential to deliver councillors from different parts of the Council area, potentially resulting in a greater diversity of skill sets, experience, expertise and opinions amongst the elected members.

The disadvantages of a ward structure include:

- ward councillors do not have to reside within the ward that they represent and, as such, may have no affiliation with the local community and/or empathy for the local issues and/or concerns;
- electors can only vote for councillors/candidates within their ward;
- candidates can be favoured by the peculiarities of the ward based electoral system (e.g. candidates elected unopposed or having attracted less votes than defeated candidates in other wards);
- ward councillors may develop ward-centric attitudes and be less focused on the bigger council-wide issues;
- ward boundaries are lines which are based solely on elector distribution and may serve to divide the community rather than foster civic unity;

- despite comparable ward elector ratios, inequitable levels of representation between wards and/or the physical sizes of wards can create a perception of imbalance in voting power within Council; and
- ward councillors generally consider themselves to represent not only their ward but the council area as a whole and, as such, the need for wards is questionable.

6.1.2 No Wards

The advantages of a "no wards" structure (i.e. the abolition of wards) include:-

- "no wards" is the optimum democratic structure as the electors vote for all of the vacant positions on Council;
- the most supported candidates from across the Council area will likely be elected;
- the elected members should be free of ward-centric attitudes;
- the lines of communication between Council and the community should be enhanced, given that members of the community will be able to consult with any and/or all members of Council, rather than feel obliged to consult with their specific ward councillors;
- the structure still affords opportunities for the small communities within the council area to be directly represented on Council, if they are able to muster sufficient support for a candidate;
- the structure automatically absorbs fluctuations and there is no requirement for compliance with specified quota tolerance;
- the introduction of postal voting has facilitated the dissemination of campaign literature throughout the council area, thereby reducing the difficulty and cost of contesting a council-wide election campaign; and
- successful candidates generally have to attract no more votes than they would have received/required under a ward based election.

The disadvantages of a "no wards" structure include:-

- the elected members could come from the more heavily populated parts of the council area rather than from across the whole of the council area;
- a single interest group could gain considerable representation on Council;
- concern council-wide elections will not guarantee that elected members will have any empathy for, or affiliation with, all communities across the whole council area;
- Council has to conduct elections and supplementary elections across the whole of the council area (at a significant expense);
- the more popular or known councillors may receive more enquiries from the public (i.e. inequitable workloads); and

- potential candidates for election to Council may be deterred by the perceived difficulties and expense associated with contesting council-wide elections.

6.2 Ward Representation

6.2.1 Single Councillor Ward

Wards represented by a single councillor are generally small in area and therefore afford the ward councillors the opportunity to be more accessible to their constituents and able to concentrate on issues of local importance. Due to the small size of the wards it can be difficult to identify suitable ward boundaries; maintain entire communities of interest within a ward; and sustain significant fluctuations in elector numbers (and therefore comply with the specified quota tolerance limits for any length of time). The work load of the ward councillor can also be demanding, and absenteeism by the elected member (for whatever reason and/or period) will leave the ward without direct representation.

6.2.2 Two Councillors per Ward

Two councillors representing a ward is traditional and/or common; allows for the sharing of duties and responsibilities between the ward councillors; can lessens the likelihood of ward-centric attitudes given that the ward is represented by two individuals; and affords continuous ward representation should one ward councillor be absent.

6.2.3 Multi-Councillor Ward

Multi-councillor wards are generally larger in area and therefore the overall ward structure can be relatively simple. Councillor absenteeism can be easily covered; the work load of the ward councillors can be shared; there are greater perceived lines of communication between ward councillors and their constituents; and there is more flexibility in regards to ward quota (i.e. the larger wards can accommodate greater fluctuations in elector numbers); and there is a greater likelihood that communities of interest can be incorporate (in their entirety) in a ward.

6.2.4 Varying Ward Representation

There are no inherent disadvantages associated with varying levels of representation between wards. However, such structures can be seen to lack balance and/or equity, with the larger wards (in elector and ward councillor numbers) being perceived as having a greater, more influential voice on Council, even if the elector ratios within the wards are consistent.

6.3 Ward Boundaries

A ward structure should have a logical basis and, where possible, exhibit boundaries which are easily identified and readily accepted by the community. Accordingly, every effort should be made to align proposed possible future ward boundaries with existing, long established district boundaries; main roads; or prominent geographical and/or man-made features.

6.4 Ward Identification

The means of ward identification are limited.

The allocation of letters, numbers and/or compass points (e.g. north, south, central etc) are all considered to be acceptable, but lack imagination and fail to reflect the character and/or history of the council area. The same cannot be said for the allocation of place names or names of local heritage/cultural significance (as per the current ward structure).

Council welcomes suggestions from the community in respect to the issue of the identification or naming of any future wards.



7. WARD STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Section 33(1) of the Act requires that the following matters be taken into account, as far as practicable, in the formulation of a proposal that relates to the boundaries of a ward or wards:

- a) the desirability of reflecting communities of interest of an economic, social, regional or other kind;
- b) the population of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- c) the topography of the area, and of each ward affected or envisaged by the proposal;
- d) the feasibility of communication between electors affected by the proposal and their elected representatives;
- e) the nature of substantial demographic changes that may occur in the foreseeable future; and
- f) the need to ensure adequate and fair representation while at the same time avoiding over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term).

Relevant information pertaining to the above matters is as follows.

7.1 Communities of Interest

The issue of “communities of interest” can be very complex and, as such, local knowledge will be particularly valuable.

In the past the then Local Government Boundary Reform Board indicated that:

- “communities of interest”, for the purpose of structural reform proposals, are defined as aspects of the physical, economic and social systems which are central to the interactions of communities in their living environment;
- “communities of interest” are identified by considering factors relevant to the physical, economic and social environment, including neighbourhood communities; history and heritage communities; sporting facilities; community support services; recreation and leisure communities; retail and shopping centres; work communities; industrial and economic development clusters; and environmental and geographic interests; and
- the analysis of the demographic data and profile will provide socio-economic indicators relevant to “communities of interest”.

In addition, Sections 26 and 33 of the Act make reference to “communities of interest” of an economic, social, regional or other kind.

The obvious existing communities of interest within the council area include the long-established townships of Two Wells, Mallala and Dublin; the developing suburb of Lewiston; the settlements of Port Gawler (part), Redbanks, Wild Horse Plains (part), Port Parham and Barabba (part); and the various rural localities of Calomba, Fischer, Grace Plains (part), Korunye, Long Plains (part), Lower Light, Middle Beach, Reeves Plains (part), Thompson Beach, Webb Beach and Windsor.

The retention of entire townships, districts and/or localities within a proposed ward should serve (in part) to maintain and protect a perceived existing "community of interest".

7.2 Population and Demographic Trends

When developing potential future ward structures, consideration was given to demographic trends, as allowances have to be made to accommodate any identified or likely future fluctuations in elector numbers.

The following information should be of assistance in respect to this matter.

7.2.1 Elector Numbers

According to data provided by Electoral Commission SA, the total number of electors eligible to vote within the council area has increased by 442 (7.7%) since the last elector representation review was completed in September 2013 (refer Table 4). The Two Wells and Lewiston wards experienced growth, as anticipated, and the decrease in the Mallala/Dublin ward can largely be attributed to a decrease (-15) in enrolments on Council's Supplementary Voter's Roll.

Table 4: Eligible electors per ward, September 2013 – August 2020

Ward	Electors September 2013	Electors July 2020	Variation	% Variance
Mallala/Dublin	1,983	1,963	- 20	- 1.01
Two Wells	1,730	1,907	+177	+10.23
Lewiston	2,025	2,310	+285	+14.07
Total	5,738	6,180	+442	+ 7.7

7.2.2 Residential Development

Council is aware that there is potential for considerable population growth in the foreseeable future, given the following.

- On-going residential development in and about the township of Two Wells (e.g. the "Liberty" development to the north of the town) which potentially could accommodate an additional 6,000 – 8,000 residents in coming years.

- The proposed division of land to the north of the township of Mallala (i.e. the “Konzag” land) which, if approved, could potentially realize approximately 370 additional allotments (and an additional 600 – 800 residents).
- Continued low density infill development within the existing Rural Living and Animal Husbandry Zones within the district/locality of Lewiston.

7.2.3 Population Projections

Population projections prepared by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (2020) indicate that the population of Adelaide Plains Council is anticipated to increase by 1,012 (11.4%) during the period 2016 – 2036 (i.e. 8,912 to 9,924).

Whilst these projections are useful because they provide an indication of the magnitude of the estimated future population increase within the council area, DPTI warns that the projections represent a possible future population outcome based on assumption of continued population growth and a spatial distribution that is a reflection of current and likely government policies. Further, the population projections are not forecasts for the future but are estimates of future population based on particular assumptions about future fertility, mortality and migration.

7.2.4 Census Data

Data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (refer 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia) indicates that the estimated population of Adelaide Plains Council increased every year during the period 2005 – June 2019 (i.e. 8,023 to 9,137), which equates to a total increase of 1,114 or 13.88%.

In addition, the Australian Bureau of Statistics “Quick Stats” indicates that the estimated population of the council area increased over the years, being 7,073 in 2001; 7,900 in 2006; 8,343 in 2011; and 8,801 in 2016. These figures equate to an increase in the estimated population of 1,728 people (24.43%) during the period 2001 to 2016.

7.3 Quota

Section 33(2) of the Act indicates that a proposal which relates to the formation or alteration of wards of a council must also observe the principle that the number of electors represented by a councillor must not, as at the relevant date (assuming that the proposal were in operation), vary from the ward quota by more than 10%.

According to Section 33(2a)(b) of the Act, ward quota is determined to be: *“the number of electors for the area (as at the relevant date) divided by the number of councillors for the area who represent wards (assuming that the proposal were in operation and ignoring any fractions resulting from the division).”*

Given the aforementioned, any proposed future ward structure must incorporate wards wherein the distribution of electors is equitable, either in terms of numbers (if the wards have equal representation) or elector ratio. Under the latter circumstance, the elector ratio within each ward must be within 10% of the average elector ratio for the council area.

Notwithstanding the above, Section 33(3) of the Act allows for the 10% quota tolerance limit to be exceeded in the short term, if demographic changes predicted by a Federal or State government agency indicate that the ward quota will not be exceeded at the time of the next periodic election.



8. WARD STRUCTURE OPTIONS

As indicated earlier, the existing ward structure cannot be retained because the elector ratio exhibited in the Lewiston Ward exceeds the specified quota tolerance limits.

In addition, Council is conscious of the potential for considerable residential development and resultant population growth in and about Lewiston and Two Wells in coming years. In addition, there is also potential future land division/residential development to the north of Mallala. Council believes that it would be prudent that its future composition and structure of Council allow for this anticipated growth.

Four ward structure options have been provided to **demonstrate** how the Adelaide Plains Council can be divided into wards, should the retention of wards be preferred over the alternative "no wards" arrangement. These options are only **examples** of how the council area could be divided into wards under various composition scenarios, ranging from seven to nine ward councillors. The presented ward structures have been developed to reflect some logical basis and an equitable distribution of elector numbers; to accommodate the anticipated future growth in population/elector numbers; and to maintain existing communities of interest, where possible. They also demonstrate the difficulty of developing appropriate ward structures given the size of the council area (932.1km²); the concentration of population/elector numbers in and about the major townships/localities; the relatively sparsely populated rural area; and the anticipated future growth in the Lewiston and Two Wells areas.

In addition, all of the presented ward structures incorporate proposed ward boundaries which are (in the main) aligned with existing district boundaries and/or main features.

It should be noted that Council's considerations are not limited to the ward structure examples presented herein and, as such, any suggestions and/or alternative ward structures provided by the community will be welcomed and duly assessed.

The "no wards" structure has also been presented, given that it is an identified option under the provisions of Section 12(1)(b) of the Act.

8.1 Option 1 (Two wards, nine councillors)

8.1.1 Description

The division of the council area into two wards, with one of the proposed wards being represented by three councillors; and the second of the proposed wards being represented by six councillors

Proposed ward 1 incorporates the districts/localities of Barabba, Calomba, Dublin, Fischer, Grace Plains, Korunye, Long Plains, Lower Light, Mallala, Parham, Redbanks, Reeves Plains, Thompson Beach, Webb Beach, Wild Horse Plains and Windsor.

Proposed ward 2 incorporates the districts/localities of Middle Beach, Port Gawler, Two Wells and Lewiston.

8.1.2 Ward Representation

WARD	COUNCILLORS	ELECTORS	RATIO	% VARIANCE
Ward 1	3	2,083	1:694	+ 1.12
Ward 2	6	4,097	1:683	- 0.56

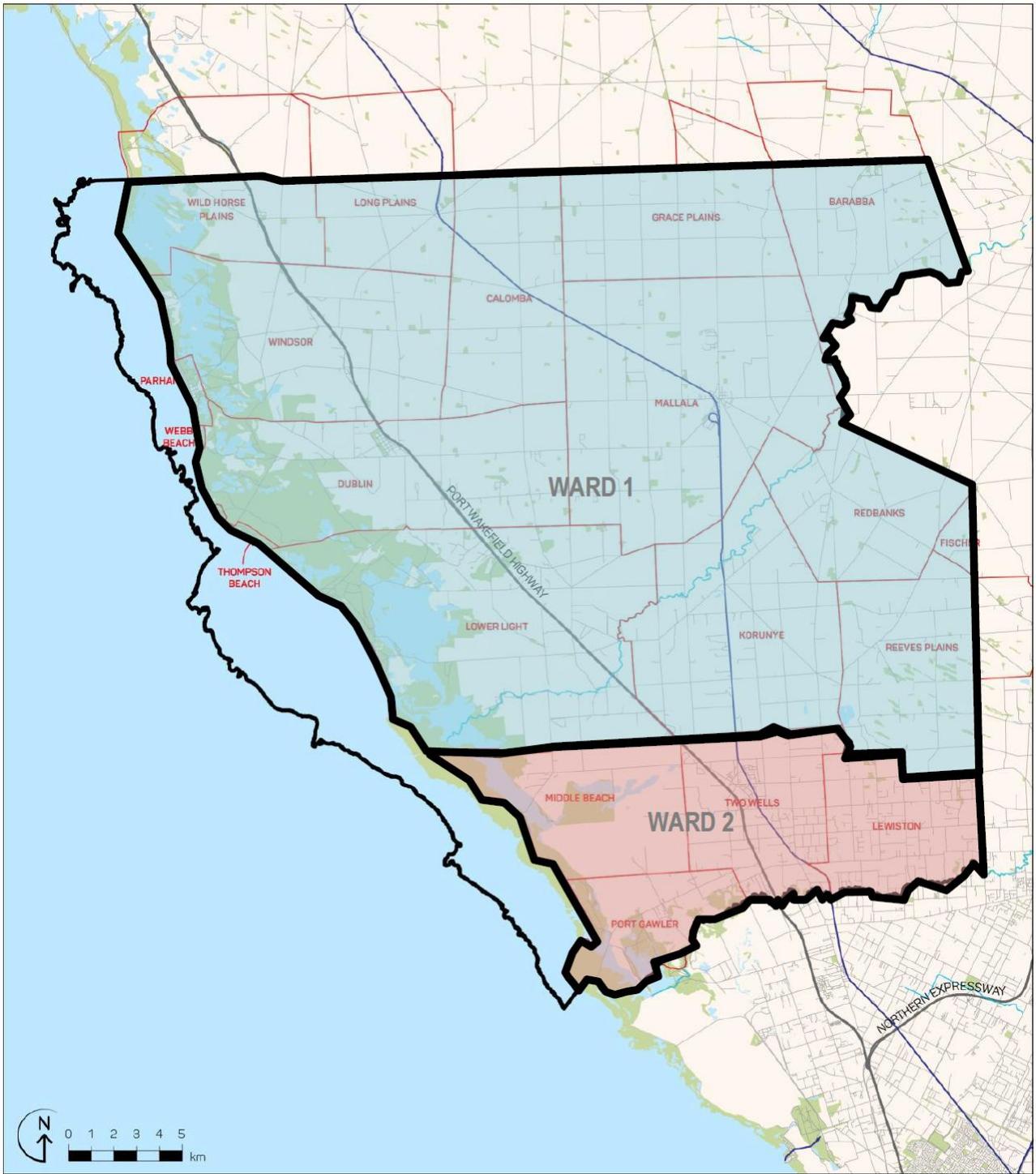
8.1.3 Comments

This proposed ward structure seeks to retain the existing number of elected members (nine councillors in total) but proposes only two wards. The elector ratio (i.e. the average number of electors represented by a councillor) within the proposed wards is consistent; and lies well within the specified quota tolerance limits (refer 7.3 Quota).

Proposed ward 1 is not dissimilar to the existing Mallala Ward in configuration; area; elector numbers; and/or the proposed level of representation.

Proposed ward 2 is essentially a consolidation of the existing Lewiston and Two Wells Wards, with some minor adjustments to the existing boundaries so as to ensure that no district/locality is divided between wards. This ward has specifically been developed to sustain considerable future growth in elector numbers.

With six ward councillors (which is proportionate to the number of electors), proposed ward 2 can sustain significant fluctuations in elector numbers. For example, depending on the rate of future population/elector growth elsewhere in the council area, the proposed ward could conceivably accommodate 1,000 or more additional electors over the next 8 years (i.e. the likely period until the next review) without breaching the specified quota tolerance limit time. This is beneficial, given the anticipated future population growth; and the fact that elector numbers within the council area have increased by only 442 since the last elector representation review in September 2013.



8.2 Option 2 (Four wards, eight councillors)

8.2.1 Description

The division of the council area into four wards, with two of the proposed wards each being represented by two councillors; and the remaining two proposed wards each being represented by three councillors

Proposed ward 1 incorporates the districts/localities of Calomba, Dublin, Long Plains, Parham, Thompson Beach, Webb Beach, Wild Horse Plains and Windsor.

Proposed ward 2 incorporates the districts/localities of Barabba, Grace Plains and Mallala.

Proposed ward 3 incorporates the districts/localities of Fischer, Korunye, Lower Light, Middle Beach, Port Gawler, Redbanks, Reeves Plains and Two Wells.

Proposed ward 4 incorporates the district/locality of Lewiston.

8.2.2 Ward Representation

WARD	COUNCILLORS	ELECTORS	RATIO	% VARIANCE
Ward 1	1	764	1:764	- 1.10
Ward 2	1	778	1:778	+ 0.71
Ward 3	3	2,328	1:776	+ 0.45
Ward 4	3	2,310	1:770	- 0.32

8.2.3 Comments

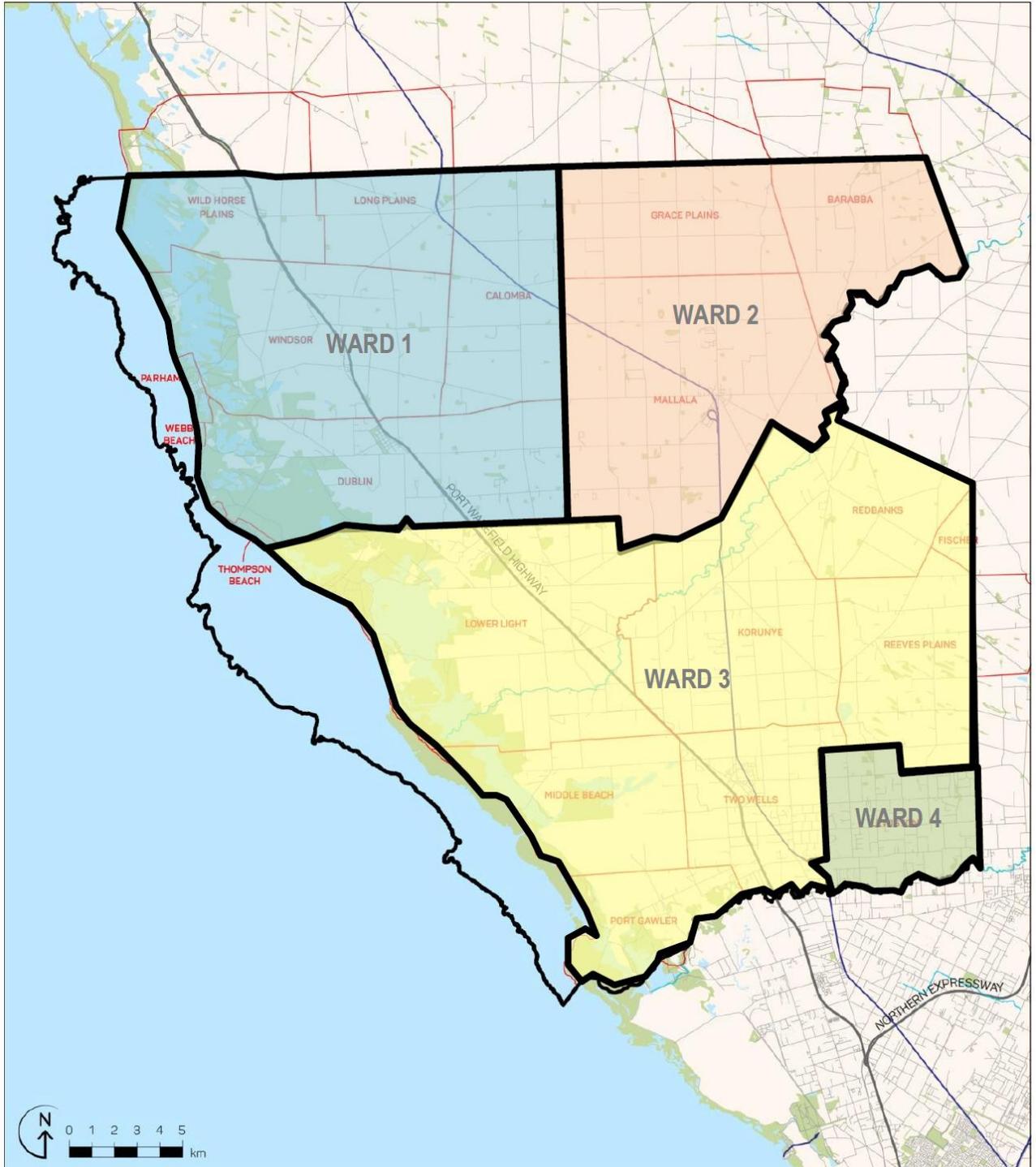
As this ward structure is based on eight councillors, Council (and the community) could benefit through some cost savings.

The elector ratios in each of the proposed wards are similar; and lay comfortably within the specified quota tolerance limits. In addition, all of the proposed ward boundaries align with long existing district boundaries and, as such, no existing community is divided between the wards.

Whilst the two proposed single-councillor wards will provide some level of direct representation to the localities/communities in the northern part of the council area, they are relatively small (in elector numbers) and, as such, are only be capable of sustaining relatively small fluctuations in elector numbers (i.e. approximately 80 – 100 additional electors) before breaching the upper quota tolerance limit. In addition, the role and responsibilities of a single ward councillor can be demanding; and the ward will have no direct representation under circumstances whereby the ward councillor is absent.

On the other hand, the two larger wards (in terms of elector and elected member numbers) are capable of sustaining reasonable levels of future growth (i.e. a minimum of 400 additional electors in each ward)

This ward structure can be modified through the amalgamation of proposed wards to create a two ward structure (through the consolidation of proposed wards a 1 and 2; and proposed wards 3 and 4) or a three ward structure (through the consolidation of proposed wards 1 and 2).



8.3 Option 3 (Two wards, eight councillors)

8.3.1 Description

The division of the council area into two wards, with one of the proposed wards being represented by two councillors; and the second of the proposed wards being represented by six councillors

Proposed ward 1 incorporates the districts/localities of Barabba, Calomba, Dublin, Grace Plains, Long Plains, Mallala, Parham, Thompson Beach, Webb Beach, Wild Horse Plains and Windsor.

Proposed ward 2 incorporates the districts/localities of incorporates the districts/localities of Fischer, Korunye, Lewiston, Lower Light, Middle Beach, Port Gawler, Redbanks, Reeves Plains and Two Wells.

8.3.2 Ward Representation

WARD	COUNCILLORS	ELECTORS	RATIO	% VARIANCE
Ward 1	2	1,542	1:771	+ 0.20
Ward 2	6	4,638	1:773	- 0.06

8.3.3 Comments

A simple two ward alternative of the ward structure presented as Option 2, with proposed ward 1 guaranteeing representation of the communities in the north of the council area; and proposed ward 2 providing representation to the remainder of the council area, including the growth areas of Lewiston and Two Wells.

The elector ratios in the proposed wards are basically identical and lay well within the specified quota tolerance limits; the ward boundary aligns with long established district boundaries; and no existing community is divided between the proposed wards.

Further, as previously indicated, the greater the level of ward representation, the greater the capability of the proposed ward to sustain significant fluctuations in elector numbers. This being the case, proposed ward 2 could potentially accommodate 1,000 or more additional electors over time without breaching the specified maximum quota limit, depending on the extent of population/elector growth in proposed ward 1.



8.4 Option 4 (Two wards, seven councillors)

8.4.1 Description

The division of the council area into two wards, with one of the proposed wards being represented by two councillors; and the second of the proposed wards being represented by five councillors.

Proposed ward 1 incorporates the districts/localities of Barabba, Calomba, Dublin, Grace Plains Long Plains, Mallala, Parham, Redbanks, Thompson Beach, Webb Beach, Wild Horse Plains and Windsor; and parts of the districts/localities of Korunye and Lower Light.

Proposed ward 2 incorporates the districts/localities of Fischer, Lewiston, Middle Beach, Port Gawler, Reeves Plains and Two Wells; and parts of the districts/localities of Korunye and Lower Light.

8.4.2 Ward Representation

WARD	COUNCILLORS	ELECTORS	RATIO	% VARIANCE
Ward 1	2	1,824	1:912	+ 3.30
Ward 2	5	4,356	1:871	- 1.32

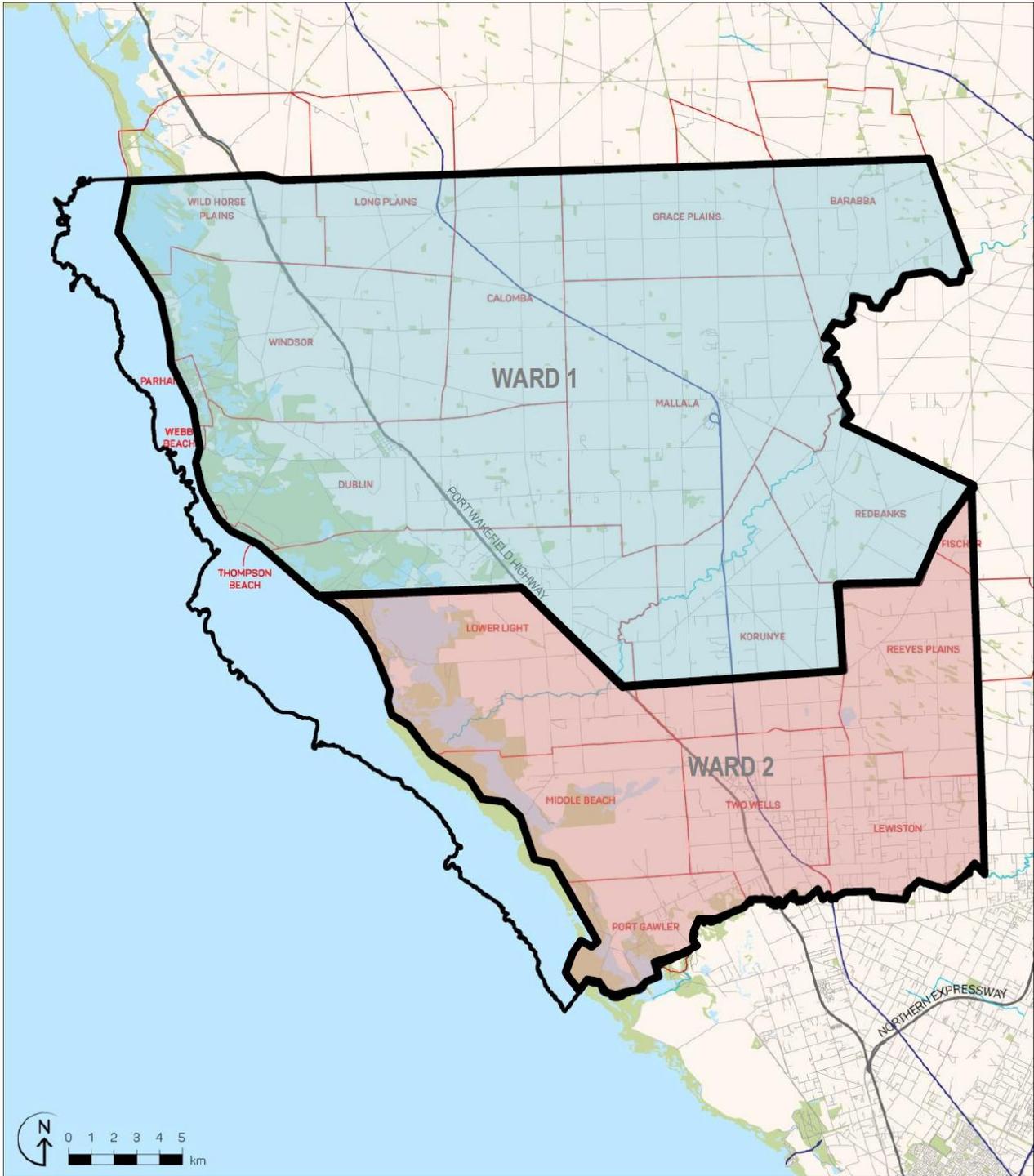
8.5.3 Comments

A simple two ward configuration which allows for the anticipated future population growth in and about the Lewiston and Two Wells areas.

In the main this proposed ward structure retains whole communities within a ward, the exceptions being the districts of Korunye and Lower Light (which is the case under the current ward structure).

A reduction to seven councillors is a significant move. Whilst it will likely result in cost savings, there must be sufficient members to adequately represent the community; meet the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of Council; and provide a desired diversity in the skill sets, experience and opinions of the elected members. It should be noted that there are only fourteen regional councils within South Australia which comprise six or seven councillors.

The elector ratios in both of the proposed wards are acceptable and lay well within the quota tolerance limits. In addition, this ward structure is capable of accommodating a significant number of additional electors (i.e. potentially 2,300 or more additional electors in proposed ward 2, depending on the fluctuation in elector numbers experienced in proposed ward 1).



8.5 Option 5 (No wards)

8.5.1 Description

The abolition of wards which requires all members to be elected at council-wide or "at large" elections.

8.5.2 Comments

The "no wards" structure can accommodate any number of "area" councillors (i.e. councillors elected to represent the whole council area), as determined appropriate by Council. Further, the "no wards" structure automatically absorbs any fluctuations in elector numbers and there is no requirement for compliance with the specified quota tolerance limits which are applicable to wards.

The arguments for and against the "no ward" option have been previously presented (refer 6.1 Wards/No Wards).

Primarily, the "no wards" structure will:

- overcome the division of the local community into wards based solely on the distribution of elector numbers (which can be perceived as being inequitable given the concentration of electors in and about the main townships/districts of Lewiston and Two Wells);
- prevent ward-centric attitudes; and
- enable the electors within the community to vote for all members of Council, with the most favoured candidates being elected to represent (and act in the best interests of) the whole of the council area, despite the geographical location of their place of residence.

At present, thirty-five councils within the state have abolished wards. All but one of these are outer-metropolitan or regional councils.

9. SUMMARY

The representation review being undertaken by the Adelaide Plains Council must be comprehensive; open to scrutiny by, and input from, the local community; and, where possible, seek to improve elector representation. Further, Council must examine and, where necessary, identify amendments to its current composition and structure, with the view to achieving fair and adequate representation of all of the electors across the council area.

This early stage of the review process entails the dissemination of relevant information pertaining to the review process and the key issues; and affords the community the opportunity to participate over a six week public consultation period. At the next stage of the review process Council will have to make some “in principle” decisions in respect to its future composition, and the future division of the council area into wards (if required), taking into account the practical knowledge and experience of the individual elected members and the submissions made by the community.

The principal member of Council is the **mayor** who is elected by the community to lead the Council for a term of four years. Currently, the only alternative is a **chairperson** who is selected by and from amongst the ward councillors for a determined period of time. Fundamentally the roles and responsibilities of the mayor and chairperson are the same, with the only difference being in respect to the voting rights in chamber. At present only fifteen regional councils have a chairperson as the principal member, and all of these bear the title of mayor.

The provisions of the Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020 seek to abolish the position of selected chairperson.

All elected members other than the principal member bear the title of councillor.

Area councillors represent the whole of the council area and are generally associated with those Councils which have abolished wards. The alternative is a **ward councillor** who is specifically elected to represent a particular ward area. The legislation allows for area councillors, in addition to ward councillors, where the council area is divided into wards.

Whilst there is no formula that can be utilised to determine the appropriate **number of elected members**, the provisions of the Local Government Act 1999 give some guidance as they specifically require Council to avoid over-representation in comparison to other councils of a similar size and type (at least in the longer term); and, where a Council is constituted of more than twelve members, examine the question of whether the number of elected members should be reduced. In addition, consideration should be given to the Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2020 which seeks to restrict the maximum number of elected members in a council to twelve (including the principal member).

The Adelaide Plains Council currently comprises nine councillors; and has an elector ratio of 1:687. This level of elector representation came into effect in 2014. The existing number of elected members is comparable with other councils of a similar size and type, but the elector ratio is considered to be somewhat low. As such, a reduction in the number of elected members warrants some consideration.

When considering a reduction in the number of elected members, care must also be taken to ensure that any future Council will comprise sufficient elected members to adequately represent the community; meet its obligations in respect to its roles and responsibilities; afford sufficient lines of communication with the community; provide for a diverse range of skill sets, expertise, experience and opinions; and manage the workloads of the elected members.

The council area has long been divided into wards, albeit under varying configurations.

The **division of the council area into wards** guarantees the direct representation of all parts of the council area; enables ward councillors to focus on local as well as council-wide issues; prevents a single interest group from gaining considerable representation on Council; enables and attracts candidates to contest ward elections; reduces the cost and effort required to campaign at an election; and potentially provides cost savings to Council in regards the conduct of elections and supplementary elections.

On the other hand, the abolition of wards (i.e. a **“no wards”** structure) enables an elector to vote for all of the vacant positions on Council; ensures that the most supported candidates from across the council area will be elected; and overcomes parochial ward attitudes. Wards can also be seen as an unnecessary division of the community, an assertion that has some basis given that ward councillors do not have to reside within the ward that they represent.

Four ward structure options have been presented herein to demonstrate how the council area can be divided into wards under circumstances whereby the Council comprises seven to nine councillors. These ward structures are all relatively well balanced (in regards to elector numbers); comply with the quota tolerance limits; allow for anticipated growth in elector numbers (particularly in the Lewiston and Two Wells areas); and exhibit proposed boundaries which generally align with existing district/locality boundaries.

As for the issue of **ward identification**, further consideration will have to be given to this matter later in the review process. The allocation of district/locality names (as per the current ward structure) and/or names of local heritage or cultural significance may be the most appropriate means of ward identification.

Interested members of the community are invited to make a **written submission** expressing their views on the future composition and structure of Council.

Submissions can be made as follows; and will be accepted until 5.00pm on Friday 29th January 2021.

- Via Council's website (www.apc.sa.gov.au).
- Written submission addressed to the Chief Executive Officer,
PO Box 18, Mallala 5502
- Emailed to info@apc.sa.gov.au

Further information regarding the elector representation review can be obtained on Council's website or by contacting Sheree Schenk, General Manager, Governance and Executive Office, on telephone 8527 0200 or email info@apc.sa.gov.au





Public Response Form – Elector Representation Review

SECTION 12 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

This document is provided to assist community members to make a submission to Council regarding the key issues being addressed under the current elector representation review. Interested persons should take the opportunity to read the Representation Options Paper prior to making a submission; and are encouraged to provide any additional relevant comments.

Please ✓ where appropriate.

1. PRINCIPAL MEMBER:

Section 51 of the *Local Government Act* currently indicates that a council may have a mayor (elected by the community) or a chairperson (selected by, and from amongst, the elected members) as its principal member.

Should the principal member of Adelaide Plains Council be a mayor or a chairperson (perhaps with the title of mayor)?

MAYOR

CHAIRPERSON

2. WARDS/NO WARDS:

Adelaide Plains Council is currently divided into three wards. This structure was adopted by Council during the elector representation review that was undertaken in 2012/2013 and came into effect at the 2014 Local Government elections.

Should Council retain a ward structure or abolish wards?

WARDS

NO WARDS

3. WARD STRUCTURE:

If you support the retention of a ward structure, which (if any) of the ward structure options presented in the Representation Options Paper is your preference?

Option 1 -
2 Wards,
9 Councillors

Option 2 -
4 Wards,
8 Councillors

Option 3 -
2 Wards,
8 Councillors

Option 4 -
2 Wards, 7
Councillors

If you have a preference for an alternative ward structure, please provide details.

.....
.....

4. NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS:

Adelaide Plains Council currently comprises a total of nine councillors.

How many councillors are required to provide fair and adequate representation to the electors within the Adelaide Plains Council?

9 8 7 Other

5. WARD NAMES:

If the Adelaide Plains Council were to continue to be divided into wards, what would be suitable ward names?

.....

6. OTHER COMMENTS:

.....
.....

Name:

Address:

Note: 'Name' and 'Address' are required for identification purposes, in order to determine that the respondent is a real person and genuinely affected by the Representation Review. Council may not consider anonymous submissions.

Please return completed form to:

Chief Executive Officer,
Adelaide Plains Council
PO Box 18,
MALLALA, SA 5502

by **5pm on Friday 29 January 2021.**

Information regarding the Representation Review can be obtained by contacting Sheree Schenk, General Manager, Governance and Executive Office, on telephone (08) 8527 0200 or email info@apc.sa.gov.au

Thank you for your interest in the future of the Adelaide Plains Council