



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Council wards and numbers to change at 2023 local government elections**

The Shire of Northam finalised the review of its wards and representation at its Ordinary Council Meeting held on 16 November 2022. Council has resolved to change from a Council elected President to a public vote; its ward boundaries by reducing to 3 wards (West, Central and East); and reducing the number of elected members on council to 9 at the 2023 elections and 8 in the 2025 elections.

It is a legislative requirement for local governments with wards to undertake a review at least every 8 years with the last review being undertaken in 2015.

In September 2022, the state government announced a suite of local government reforms. These reforms required the Council to implement actions which were incorporated into this review which included changing the method for electing the President and reducing its number of elected members to between 5 and 9 in accordance with population thresholds.

Shire President, Cr Chris Antonio said *"the Local Government Advisory Board provides guidelines which takes into consideration the ratio of councillors to electors for its wards and details that the ratio deviation should fall within plus or minus 10%. The current ward structure did not allow for equal representation across its wards with some being significantly over or underrepresented. The guidelines detail that the Board is reluctant to recommend to the Minister for Local Government changes to ward boundaries and representation where the ratio deviation is not achieved and as such the Council considered the options against the five factors when determining the new structure"*.

All option must be assessed against community of interest, physical/topographical features, demographic trends, economic factors and the ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards.

Significant community consultation was undertaken through the review process which commenced in August 2022. Community drop-in sessions were held in Bakers Hill, Grass Valley, Northam and Wundowie over an 8 week period in addition to various notifications through print and digital media seeking community input.

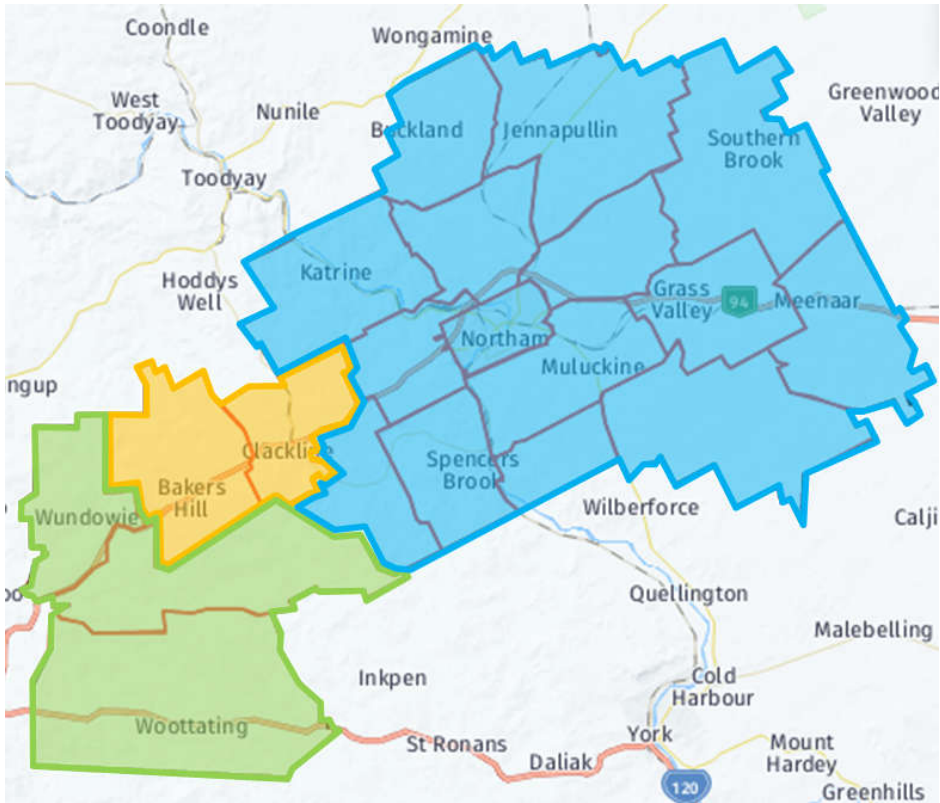
Shire President, Cr Chris Antonio said *"There was a mixed response from the community in relation to the preferred system with 14 of 19 responses preferring to maintain the current situation, four submissions preferred to dispense with wards and 1 submission preferred to create three wards"*.





## Media Release

An updated ward map is provided below which will form part of the submission to the Local Government Advisory Board for consideration prior to making its recommendation to the Minister for local government.



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