



REVIEW OF WARDS AND REPRESENTATION

DISCUSSION PAPER

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Background

Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) requires local governments with wards, such as the Shire, to carry out reviews of ward boundaries and the number of councillors for each ward every 8 years. These reviews are submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board (the Board) for assessment.

The Shire previously carried out a review in 2006 and resolved to maintain the current situation.

Current situation

Currently the Shire of Ashburton has 9 councillors elected from 6 wards as follows:

Ward	Number of Electors	Number of Councillors	Councillor / Elector Ratio	% Ratio Deviation
Ashburton	50	1	1:50	-84.71
Onslow	385	1	1:385	17.73
Pannawonica	309	1	1:309	-5.50
Paraburdoo	624	2	1:312	-4.58
Tableland	131	1	1:131	-59.94
Tom Price	1446	3	1:482	47.40
Total	2945	9	1:327	

(Figures at 06/01/2014)

The % ratio deviation gives an indication of the % difference between the average councillor / elector ratio for the whole of the Shire and the councillor / elector ratio for each ward.

Review process

The review process involves a number of steps:

- Council resolves to undertake the review.
- Public submission period opens.
- Information provided to the community for discussion.
- Public submission period closes.
- Council considers all submissions and relevant factors and makes a decision.
- Council submits a report to the Local Government Advisory Board for its consideration.
- If a change is proposed the Board submits a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development.

Any changes approved by the Minister where possible will be in place for the next ordinary election in October 2015.

Factors to be considered

When considering changes to wards and representation, Schedule 2.2 of the Act specifies factors that must be taken into account by a local government as part of the review process:

1. Community of interest;
2. Physical and topographic features;
3. Demographic trends;
4. Economic factors; and
5. Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards.

The Board offers the following interpretation of these factors:

Community of interest

The term community of interest has a number of elements. These include a sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in economic activities. It can also include dependence on the shared facilities in an area as reflected in the catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging.

Physical and topographic features

These may be natural or man made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations. Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be as relevant as many other man made features such as railway lines and roads.

Demographic trends

Several measurements of the characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information. Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the Shire.

Economic factors

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area. This may include the industries that occur in a local government area and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks.

Ratio of Councillors to Electors in the various wards

The Local Government Advisory Board expects that each local government will have similar ratios of electors to councillors across the wards of its district.

Important Note: Whilst the existing structure of the Wards results in Councillor/Elector ratios that vary widely, Council and the Local Government Advisory Board have previously accepted this position as justifiable in light of the size of the Shire of Ashburton.

Council would particularly like to receive feedback in regard to the community view on this issue.

Options to consider

The Council will consider the following options and members of the community may suggest others:

- Option 1 Maintain the current ward system
- Option 2 Two wards
 - (a) Two Wards - 1
 - (b) Two Wards - 2
- Option 3 Three wards
- Option 4 Four wards
 - (a) Four Wards 1
 - (b) Four Wards 2
- Option 5 Five wards

Option 6 No wards

The attached maps indicate the options.

Also under consideration will be the number of councillors for each ward and the district.

Public submissions

Members of the community are invited to make a written submission about any aspect of ward boundaries and representation and lodge it at:

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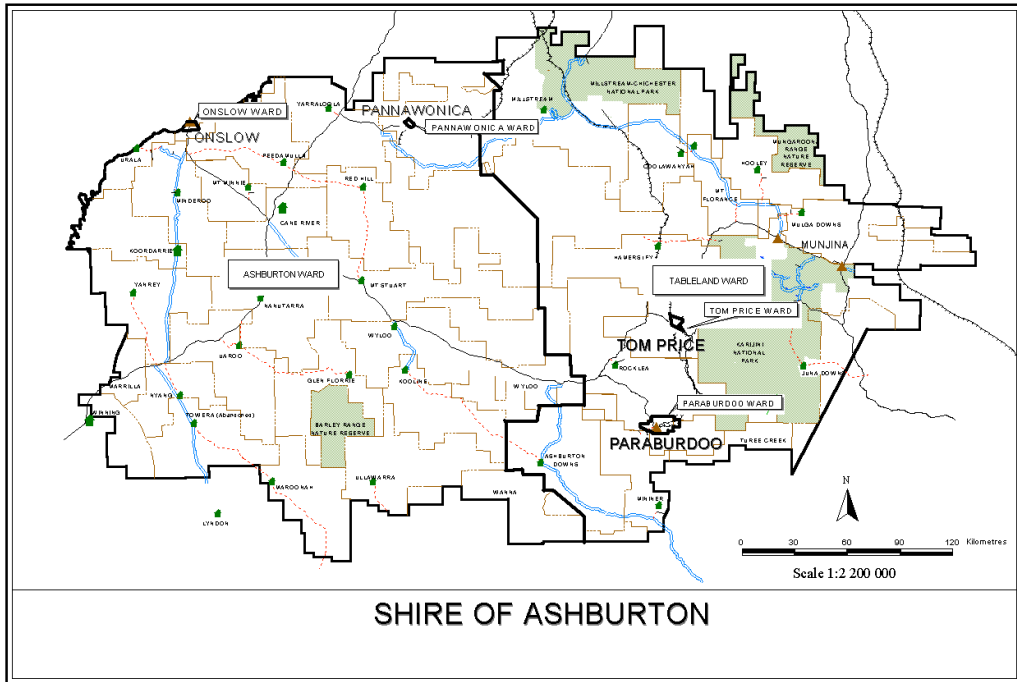
All submissions must be received by 2 June 2014.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this review. Council welcomes your comments on any matters that may assist it to make informed and responsible directions for the benefit of the people of the Shire of Ashburton.

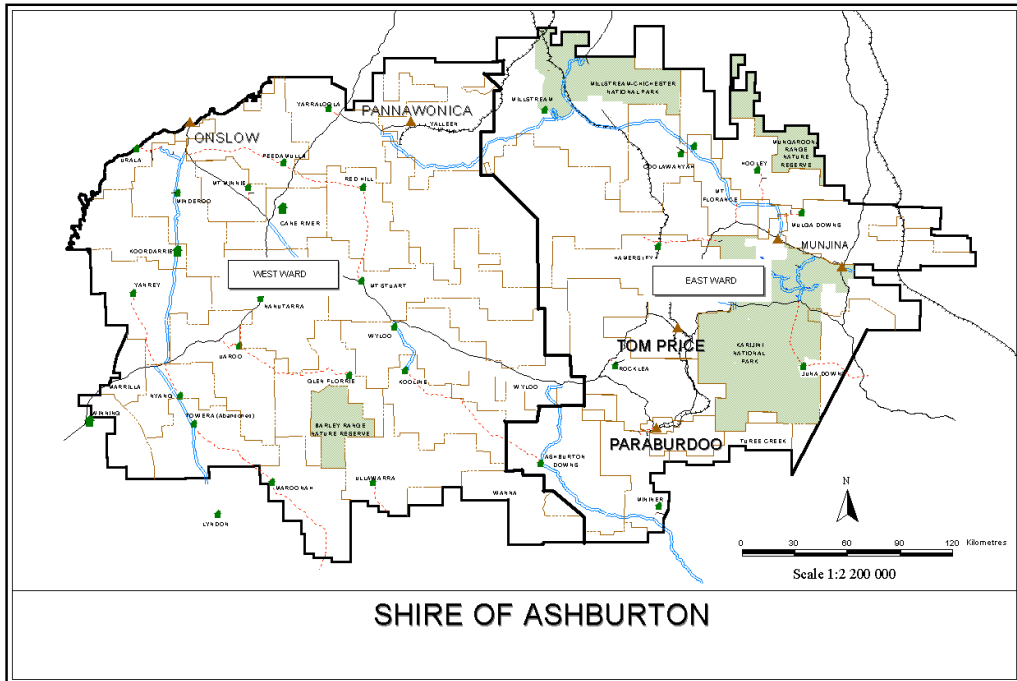
Councillor Kerry White
PRESIDENT

Neil Hartley
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

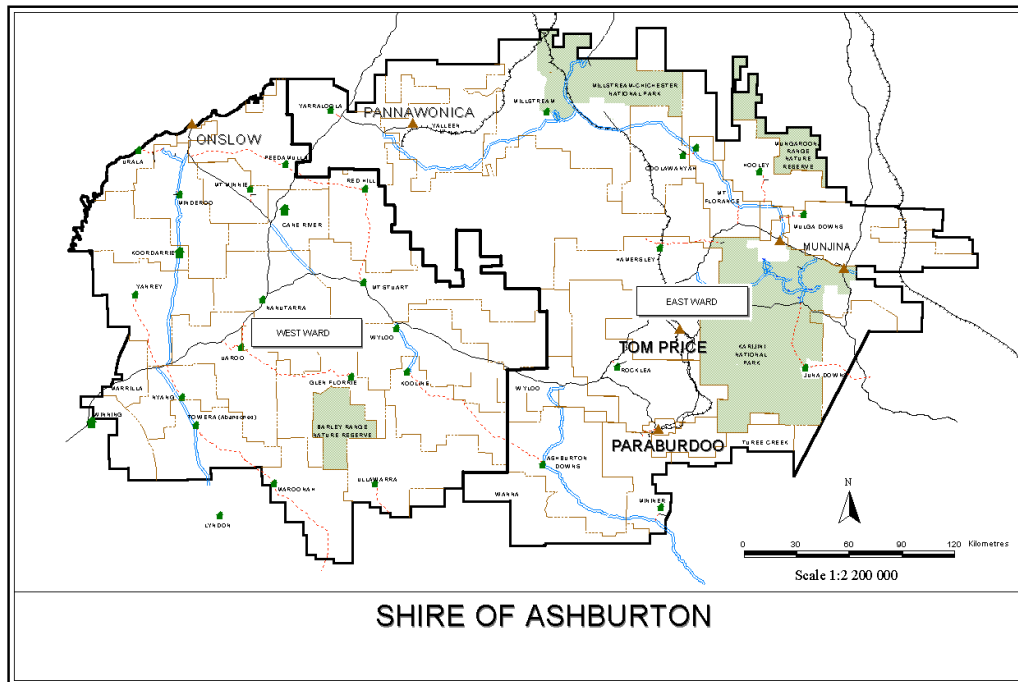
Option 1: Maintain the current ward system



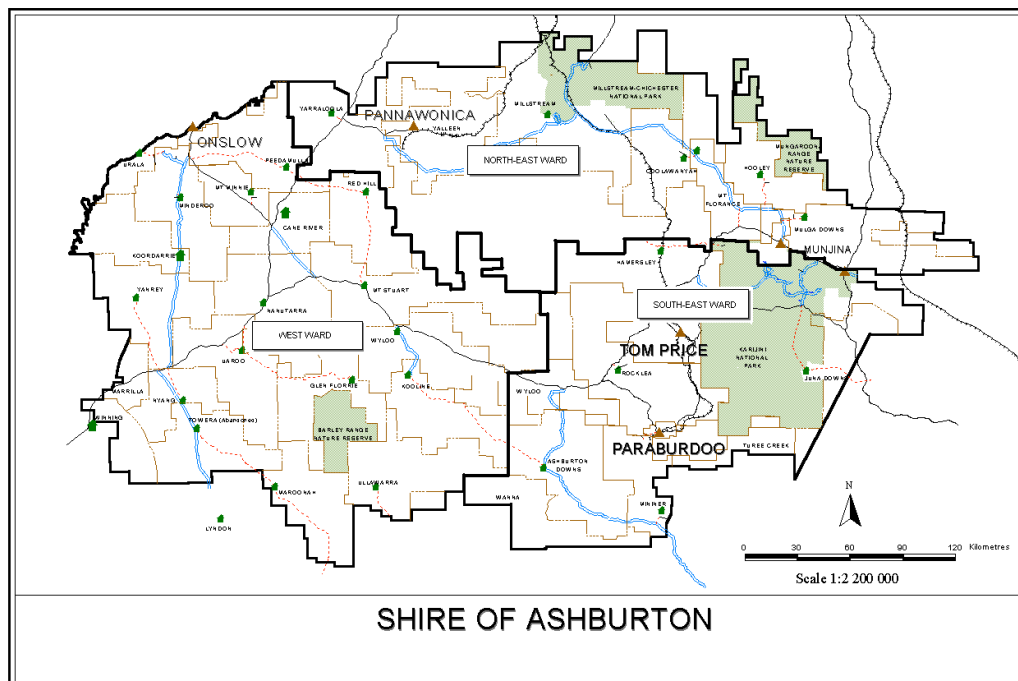
Option 2 (a): Two Wards 1



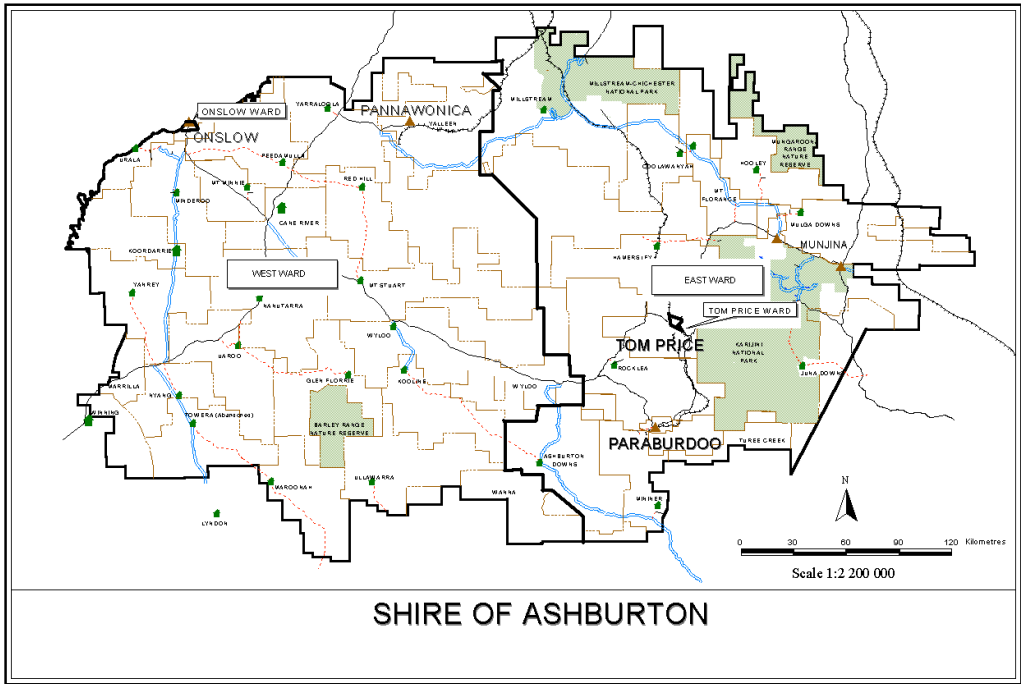
Option 2 (b): Two Wards 2



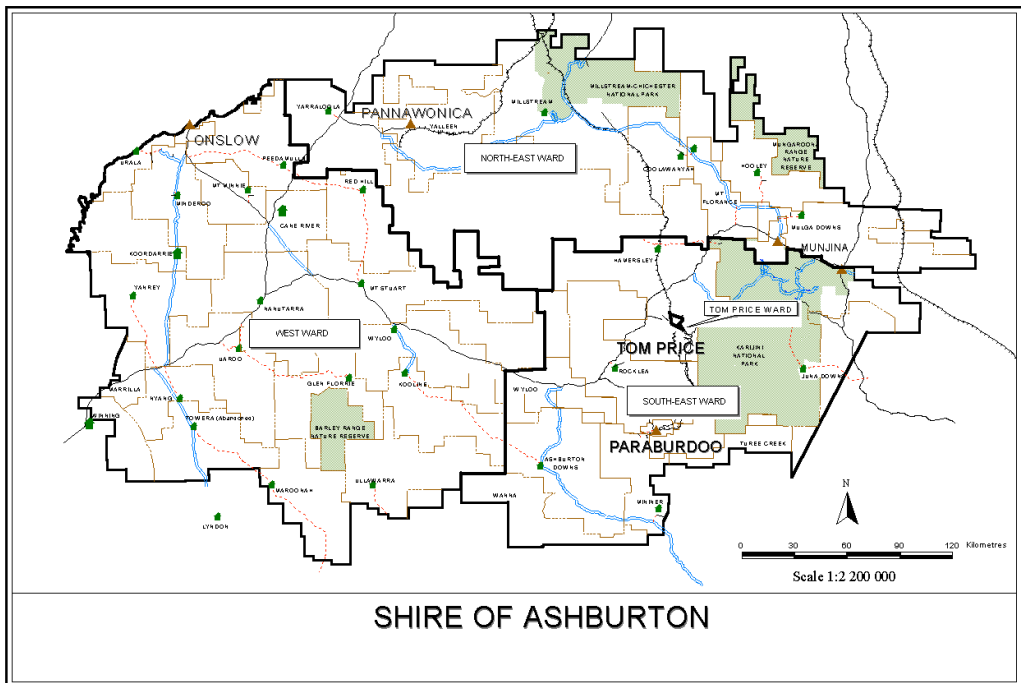
Option 3: Three Wards



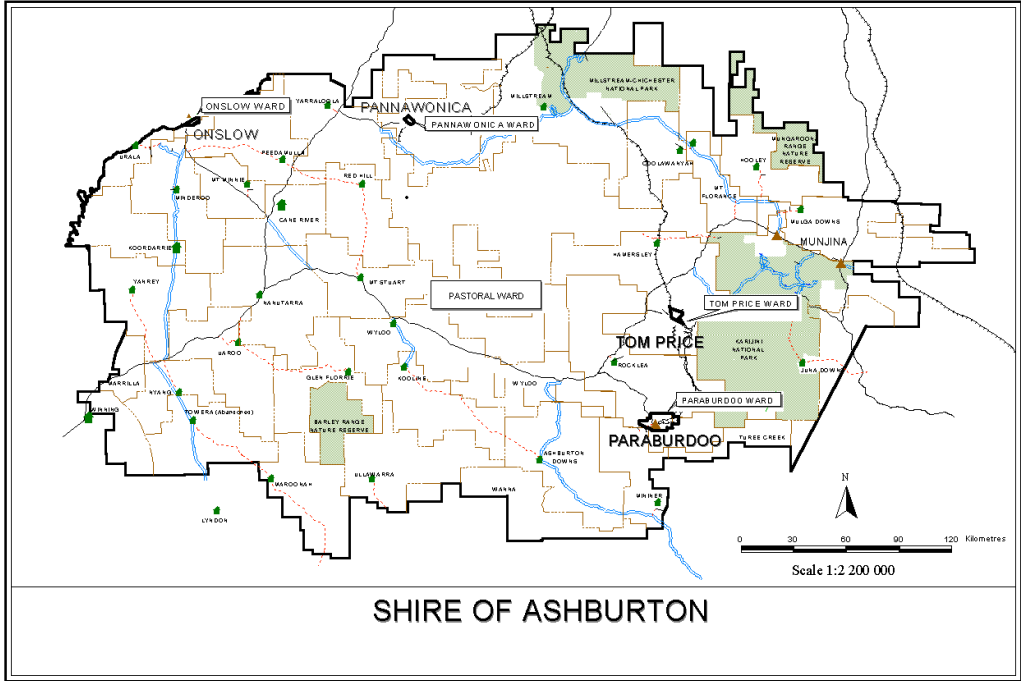
Option 4(a): Four Wards 1



Option 4(b): Four Wards 2



Option 5: Five Wards



Option 6: No Wards

