

WARD BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

DISCUSSION PAPER

PUBLIC EXHIBITION



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Discussion Paper

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Section 211 of the Local Government Act 1993

Section 211 of the Local Government Act 1993 states that Councils must keep ward boundaries under review. If one ward in its area differs by more than 10 per cent from the number of electors in any other ward in its area council must, as soon as practicable, alter the ward boundaries in a manner that will result in each ward containing a number of electors that does not differ by more than 10 per cent from the number of electors in each other ward in the area.

The NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) publishes monthly enrolment statistics for each Council and its wards, which is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data. The elector numbers for each ward as provided by the NSWEC on 21 July 2015 are:

- First Ward: 14,182
- Second Ward: 15,546
- Third Ward: 13,848
- Fourth Ward: 14,553

This is a total of 58,129 registered voters in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area (LGA).

The ward boundaries are being reviewed because the difference in elector numbers between Wards 2 and 3 is greater than 10%. The difference in elector numbers between Wards 1 and 2 is also approaching the 10% limit. The following table shows the variation between the ward elector numbers.

Variation between ward elector numbers (larger compared to smaller)				
Larger Ward	Elector Numbers	Smaller Ward	Elector Numbers	Variations
Ward 1	14182	Ward 3	13848	2.41%
Ward 2	15546	Ward 1	14182	9.62%
Ward 2	15546	Ward 3	13848	12.26%
Ward 2	15546	Ward 4	14553	6.82%
Ward 4	14553	Ward 1	14182	2.62%
Ward 4	14553	Ward 3	13848	5.09%

The difference in elector numbers between Wards 2 and 3 is 1,698. As a consequence, to make the number of voters in Wards 2 and 3 as even as possible, the boundary would need to be adjusted to move as close as possible to 849 voters from Ward 2 to Ward 3. The aim is to bring the elector numbers in all four wards as close as possible to the mean number of electors per ward which is 14,532. This will avoid, as much as possible, the need for incremental adjustments in response to population change.

The review of the ward boundaries is based on data provided by the NSWEC and SA1s set by the ABS.

For instance, a smaller adjustment could be made which only reduces the variation in voter numbers between the two wards to below 10%. However, this would mean that as population numbers change over time, only a small increase or decrease in the voter population in one ward or the other could result in the variation between the two being greater than 10% once again. This would result in the need to undertake another review of the ward boundaries.

To ensure that the ward boundaries will have as much longevity as possible and to minimise the need for future boundary reviews, this review has sought to make the voter distribution between the wards as even as possible. Balanced against this, there has been an effort to reduce the overall level of change.

It should be noted that the variation in elector numbers between the two wards is only just greater than the 10% allowable limit. It is important to stress that this relatively small number of voters is less than the population of whole suburbs or townships. Therefore, this is not a case of shifting towns between wards. Any adjustment will be much less significant than the last change made to the ward boundaries for the September 2008 Council Election.

This was required to redistribute a much greater variation in voter numbers between wards and which involved whole suburbs changing wards. This is not desirable and, in this case, is not necessary.

To ensure an even split of electors between wards, in reviewing the ward boundaries Council is free to review all boundaries, not just the boundaries of those wards which vary greater than 10% from each other. However, because of the small variation in voter numbers which needs to be corrected, and the predominantly lineal distribution of population across the Mountains, there are actually very limited options for adjustments to ward boundaries.

The NSWEC encourages Councils to align ward boundaries with the boundaries of the ABS Statistical Area Level 1s (SA1s), rather than having SA1s split between multiple wards where possible. This is because the NSWEC base their enrolment data on SA1s following their introduction by the ABS. This replaces the previously used Census Collection Districts (CCDs). SA1s are the smallest area of the nesting hierarchy of statistical areas by which census data is collated and published by the ABS, which consists of:

- Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) - whole regions. The Blue Mountains LGA is part of the Sydney – Outer West and Blue Mountains SA4
- Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3) - large areas, typically whole LGAs. The entire Blue Mountains LGA is a single complete SA3, made up of whole SA2s
- Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) - suburbs and groupings of suburbs, of which there are six in the Blue Mountains, these are made up of whole SA1s
- Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) - the smallest statistical area, of which there are 206 in the Blue Mountains LGA

Because of the small variation in voter numbers, which needs to be redistributed and the predominantly lineal distribution of population across the Blue Mountains, there are limited options for adjustments to ward boundaries.

The western and eastern boundaries of Wards 1 and 4 respectively are geographically fixed by the LGA boundary. As the number of voters in both Wards 1 and 4 are currently very close to the mean number of electors per ward, any adjustment to the boundary between Wards 1 and 2 on one hand or Wards 3 and 4 on the other would result in the voter distribution becoming unbalanced.

This means that it is only the boundary between Wards 2 and 3 which remains necessary to change. It is these two wards which have greater than 10% variation in elector numbers exists. As shown in the diagram below, the current boundary between Wards 2 and 3 splits the suburb of Falconbridge, running along Grose Road to Chapman Parade, before following Chapman Parade and the rear property boundaries.

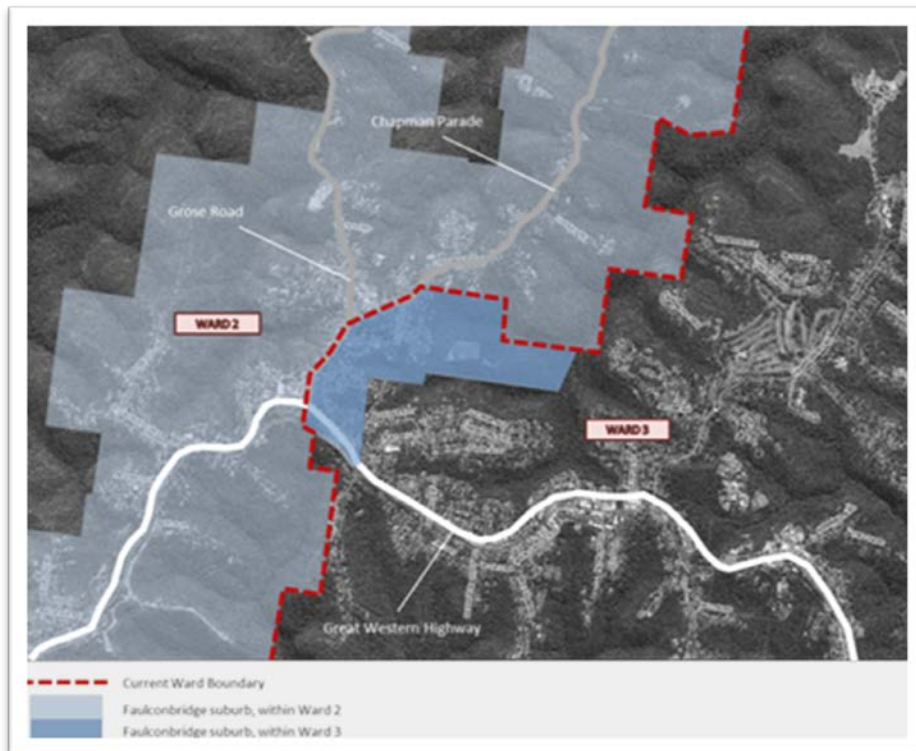


Figure 1

Ideally ward boundaries should align neatly with township or suburb boundaries. However, because the number of voters that need to be balanced between the wards is relatively small, it is not always possible to adjust the ward boundaries to align with suburb boundaries. Faulconbridge is currently split between Wards 2 and 3. The aim of this review is to create a clear and logical a boundary between the two wards, but this will necessitate Faulconbridge continuing to be split between the two wards.

Investigation into potential ward boundary adjustments has therefore focused on which SA1s from Ward 2 could be included in Ward 3, and the creation of a clearly definable and logical boundary between the two wards. The aim is to also seek to minimise the impact of having a suburb partially split between wards.

SA1s typically consist of between 200 and 400 voters. This means that to achieve the most even distribution of voters possible between the wards, the boundary would only need to be adjusted to move two or three SA1s from Ward 2 to Ward 3. Currently, Ward 2 is made up of 53 SA1s, and Ward 3 is made up of 44 SA1s.

The current ward boundary between Wards 2 and 3 does actually split two SA1s. In one instance it only affects whether Tom Hunter Park and the surrounding bushland falls within one ward or another and so has no impact on voter numbers. In the other instance it affects the Faulconbridge (Coomassie) shopping strip on the southern side of the Highway east of Grose Road. This shopping strip is included within Ward 3 despite the rest of the SA1 in which it is located being part of Ward 2. This has resulted in 30 voters from this SA1 being in Ward 3, whilst the majority, 316 voters, are within Ward 2. In reviewing the ward boundary, these split SA1s and the potential to align the ward boundary with the SA1 boundaries have been considered.

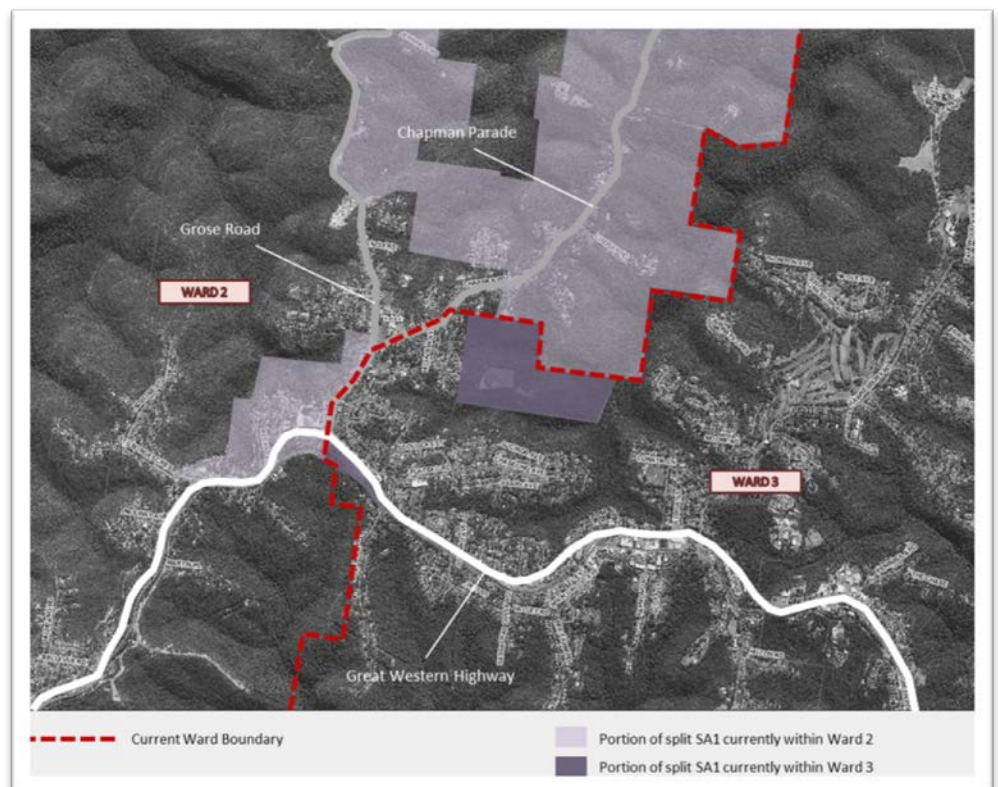


Figure 2

The proposed boundary adjustment is to make Grose Road the boundary between the two wards north of the Highway. This is achieved by moving two SA1s from north-eastern Faulconbridge from Ward 2 to Ward 3. This would create a clearly definable and logical boundary between the two wards as shown below:



Figure 3

Grose Road is currently already the boundary between the two wards for the portion of its length south of Chapman Parade. The proposed boundary adjustment would result in a change of ward for residents on Chapman Parade and the streets which run off it, and also the residents on the eastern side of Grose Road north of Chapman Parade.

The diagram below shows the proposed ward boundary alignment and distribution of Falconbridge between the two wards.

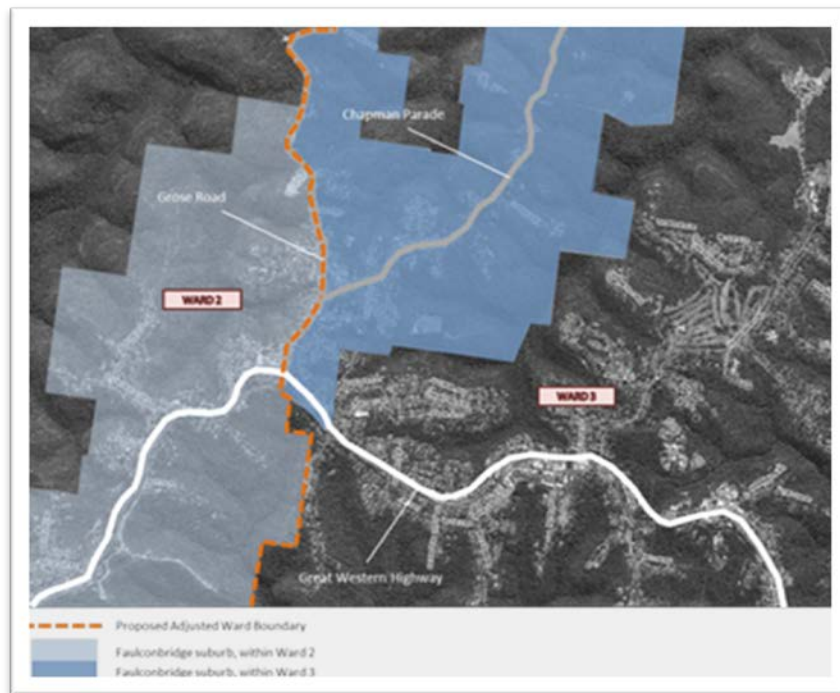


Figure 4

The two SA1s proposed to be moved are:

- SA1: 1-14-54-37 (containing 452 voters)
- SA1: 1-14-54-38 (containing 255 voters)

Consequently there will be 707 voters moving from Ward 2 to Ward 3. SA1 1-14-54-37 is one of the SA1s currently split between the two wards and is proposed to be wholly included in Ward 3. The second instance of a split SA1 is not proposed to be modified because there is logic to the shopping strip affected remaining in Ward 3 given the residential areas which surround it will also be located in Ward 3.

The following diagram (Figure 5) shows the proposed distribution of areas between the two wards.

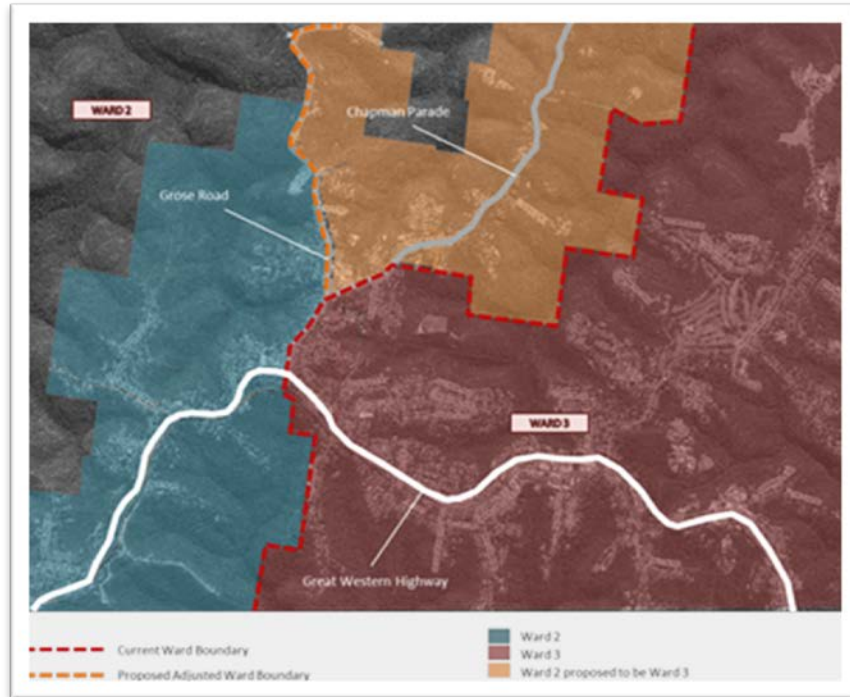


Figure 5

This proposed boundary adjustment (shown in Figure 4) would result in the following distribution of electors between wards (based on the NSWEC 21 July 2015 elector numbers):

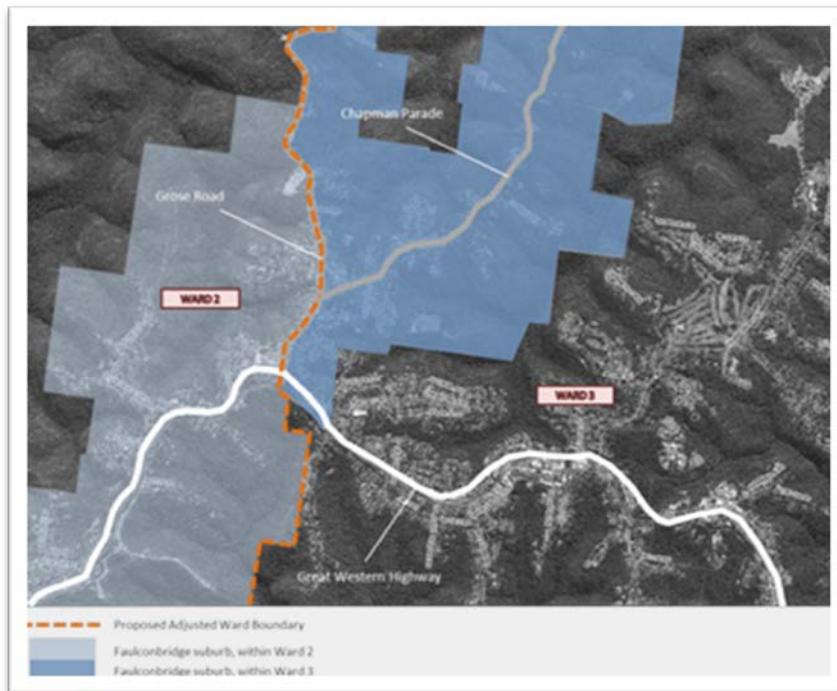
- Ward 1: 14,182
- Ward 2: 14,839
- Ward 3: 14,555
- Ward 4: 14,553

This would reduce the variation between the largest and smallest ward well below the 10% mark as shown in the following table.

Variation between ward elector numbers based on proposed ward boundary adjustment (larger compared to smaller)				
Larger Ward	Elector Numbers	Smaller Ward	Elector Numbers	Variations
Ward 2	14839	Ward 1	14182	4.63%
Ward 2	14839	Ward 3	14555	1.95%
Ward 2	14839	Ward 4	14553	1.97%
Ward 3	14555	Ward 1	14182	2.63%
Ward 3	14555	Ward 4	14553	0.01%
Ward 4	14553	Ward 1	14182	2.62%

**Ward 2 and Ward 3
split will occur at
Grose Road**

The ward boundary between Ward 2 and 3 should be adjusted as per Figure 4.

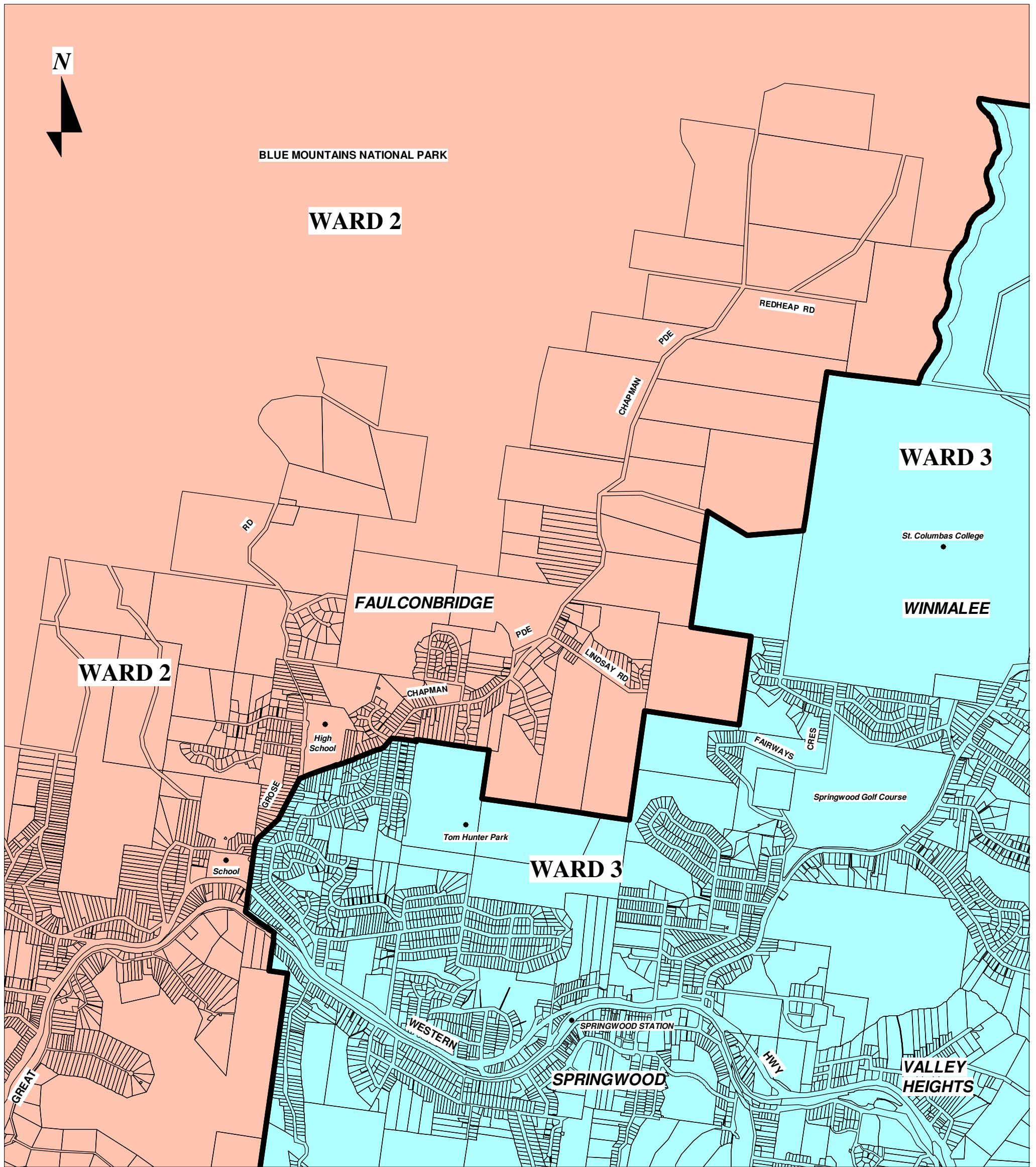


This is a minimal change, which will result in a City distribution of voters as follows:

- Ward 1: 14,182
- Ward 2: 14,839
- Ward 3: 14,555
- Ward 4: 14,553

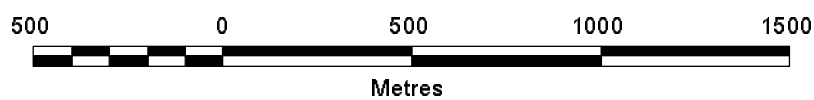
At a practical level, Grose Road is a defining collector road and is well-known to residents in Faulconbridge. It provides a ready reference and (improved) division between Ward 2 and 3.

Locality Map showing boundary between WARDS 2 & 3 in the vicinity of FAULCONBRIDGE.



KEY

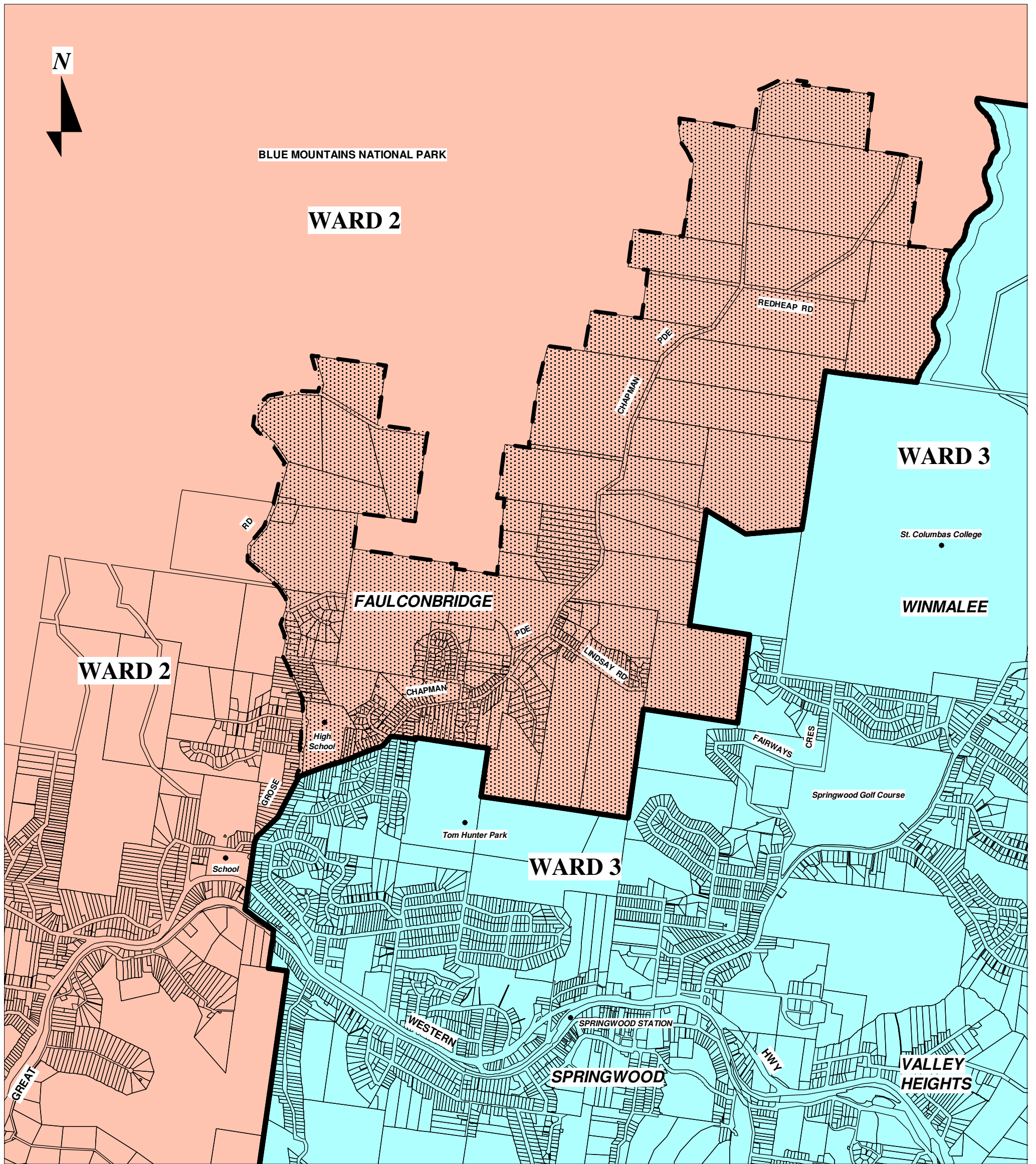
Existing Ward Boundary



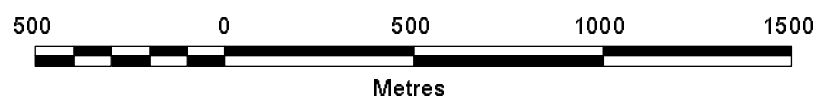
Prepared by:
City of Blue Mountains July 2015

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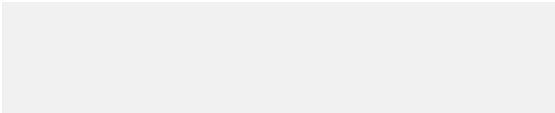
Locality Map showing boundary between WARDS 2 & 3 in the vicinity of FAULCONBRIDGE.



KEY
 Existing Ward Boundary
 Area affected by proposal:
 Ward 2 proposed to be Ward 3



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 City of Blue Mountains July 2015
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The proposed ward boundary plan will be on public exhibition commencing 2 September 2015 and ending 30 September 2015 with community submissions being received for a further 14 days until 14 October 2015.

Submissions Close Wednesday 14 October 2015

Submissions need to be clearly marked “Submission: Ward Boundary Adjustment” – File F02653 and can be submitted through the following ways:

On Line at www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au

Post: The General Manager, Blue Mountains City Council, Locked Bag 1005, Katoomba NSW 2780

Deliver: Katoomba and Springwood Council Offices

E-Mail: counc@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

For more information contact Lydia Kolar on **(02) 4780 5000**

