

## NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL

### EARLY YEARS INFRASTRUCTURE DISCUSSION PAPER

#### What is early years infrastructure?

Early years infrastructure supports the service delivery of three and four year old kindergarten; maternal and child health, long day care and occasional care; playgroups; and parent education and training.

#### What is Council's role in early years services?

The *Local Government Act 1989* states that the primary objective of a council is to achieve the best outcomes for its local community. For early years services, Council has identified this to include: strategic planning and quality assurance; providing Council owned and managed buildings; running a central registration system for kindergarten places; supporting committees of management and other early years service providers; and some direct provision of services, if there is a gap in the sector.

#### What is Council's early years infrastructure?

Council has 27 buildings out of which early years services are delivered.

Facility Name	Services
Coniston Street Family Centre	Preschool, playgroups, community space
Diamond Creek Community Centre-Maternal and Child Health	Maternal and child health
Diamond Creek Memorial Preschool	Preschool
Diamond Creek Occasional and Long Day Care Centre	Childcare, preschool
Diamond Hills Preschool	Preschool
Eltham Childcare Cooperative	Childcare, preschool
Eltham North Maternal and Child Health	Maternal and child health, playgroups
Eltham North Preschool	Preschool
Eltham Playhouse	Childcare
Eltham Preschool	Preschool
Eltham South Preschool	Preschool
Eltham War Memorial Hall-Maternal and Child Health	Maternal and child health
Eltham Woods Family Centre	Preschool, childcare, maternal and child health
Ferguson Park Preschool	Preschool
Hohnes Road Playhouse*	Childcare
Hurstbridge Community Hub	Childcare, preschool, maternal and child health
Hurstbridge Preschool	Preschool
Kangaroo Ground Preschool*	Preschool
Meruka Childcare Cooperative	Childcare, preschool
Ness Reserve Preschool*	Preschool
North Warrandyte Family Centre	Preschool, maternal and child health
Panton Hill Playhouse	Childcare
Panton Hill Preschool	Preschool
Research Preschool	Preschool, maternal and child health
Wattletree Preschool	Preschool
Woodridge Preschool	Preschool
Yarrambat Preschool	Preschool

\*Land owned by the State of Victoria

## What are the key factors that influence early years infrastructure provision?

The key factors that influence early years infrastructure provision include the following.

Influencing factor	Description																						
Federal and State Government policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access to long day care to support working families</li> <li>universal access to quality early childhood programs in the year before school (minimum of 600 hours per year / 15 hours per week)</li> <li>integration of services in the one, larger building</li> <li>location of services on or adjacent to primary schools</li> </ul>																						
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nillumbik's population of 0 to 4 years olds is forecast to remain relatively static over the next 20 years</li> <li>residents are high users of cars to access services</li> <li>high workforce participation of residents with young children</li> <li>high participation rates in funded kindergarten programs (above the State average)</li> <li>varied population distribution across the municipality (urban and rural areas)</li> </ul>																						
Supply and demand for early years services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>licensed capacity of Council's 16 four year old kindergartens is 1,180 places; enrolments in 2016 are 607 children; surplus capacity of 573 places</li> <li>five maternal and child health centres are open three days a week; one is open one day a week; and one is open five days a week- 40% surplus capacity</li> <li>long day care centres run at full capacity with substantial waiting lists for the younger aged children; all centres also offer four year old kindergarten</li> <li>two playhouses are generally not well attended</li> <li>concentration of buildings in Eltham and Diamond Creek</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="451 930 1360 1444" data-label="Figure"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Buildings by Suburb</b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Buildings by Suburb</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Suburb</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Diamond Creek</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eltham</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eltham North</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greenborough</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hursbridge</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kangaroo Ground</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Warrandyte</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Panton Hill</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Research</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yarrambat</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>previously buildings were neighbourhood based (ie within walking distance) now the emphasis is on centralised and integrated buildings</li> <li>new buildings generally have 2+ preschool rooms (33 places per room), multi-purpose room/s for childcare, and spaces for allied services, eg maternal and child health, counselling, etc</li> <li>government funding priority is for larger, integrated buildings, ie not single purpose</li> </ul>	Suburb	Number	Diamond Creek	5	Eltham	9	Eltham North	3	Greenborough	1	Hursbridge	3	Kangaroo Ground	1	North Warrandyte	1	Panton Hill	2	Research	1	Yarrambat	1
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Current conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% of early years buildings are over 40 years old and are nearing the end of their useful life</li> <li>enrolments in some kindergartens are very low and the services are not operationally or financially viable</li> <li>some sites are in strategic locations that could be used for higher use purposes</li> <li>some buildings are very close to one another</li> <li>required level of funding for capital replacement/upgrade works is estimated at \$430,000 pa over the next 10 years with maintenance estimated at \$500,000 pa.</li> <li>some buildings are no longer fit for purpose</li> <li>the current estimated combined replacement cost of these facilities is \$16.2 million</li> </ul>																						

## **What is Council planning to do?**

Council has embarked upon a review of its early years infrastructure to ensure that it meets current and future requirements. This includes analysing whether buildings:

- are consistent with government policy directions and funding priorities
- support existing and emerging family needs
- are in the most appropriate locations
- are viable and sustainable
- enable service flexibility
- enable the provision of services in an integrated manner.

The review is timely due to the ageing of the infrastructure, most of which reflects a different era, the increasing complexity involved in the governance and management of early years services and the ongoing need to ensure that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively.

Through the review process it has been identified that there is an over-supply of early years facilities in relation to current and future demand. Consolidation of facilities may result in a reallocation of facilities to meet other unmet community demand.

The review is taking a 10 to 20 year planning horizon.

## **Your views are important**

What would you like Council to take into account in its planning for early years infrastructure?

Are there particular factors relevant to your community?

What do you see as being the future early years services needs of families?

## **How do I provide feedback?**

The Shire encourages you to provide written feedback on the information provided, which will be included in a report to Council; to assist them in determining future early infrastructure needs.



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# **Community Engagement and Communication Plan**

## **Nillumbik Early Years Community Infrastructure Plan**

## Document Acceptance and Release Notice

This document is Version 0.01 date: 8 February 2017 of the *Nillumbik Early Years Community Infrastructure Plan* Project Charter (attached).

This document is authorised for release once all signatures have been obtained.

PREPARED: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
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Services  
Project Owner

ACCEPTED: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
(for release) Pauline Gordon, General Manager Community &  
Leisure  
Project Sponsor

## Document Version History

### Build Status:

Version	Date	Author	Reason/Description	Change Auth #
0.01	8 February 2017	Narelle Hart	Initial Release	N/A

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## Project Background

Nillumbik Shire Council manages 27 facilities across the Shire (see Appendix 1 for list of facilities). With the exception of two facilities which are owned by the Department of Education and Training, all are owned by Nillumbik Shire Council.

These facilities are used for a range of early years programs which include (but are not limited to):

- Three and four year old preschool
- Maternal & Child Health
- Long day care and occasional care
- Playgroups
- Parent education & training

The programs operating from these facilities are run either by Council or not for profit community groups.

Currently the management, maintenance, renewal and new works of these early years community facilities are approximately \$500,000 per year. If Council's early year's facility allocation remains as it is at present, Council should budget for replacement/upgrade costs of \$430,000 per annum over the next 10 years and maintenance costs of \$500,000 per annum.

The challenges facing the Shire include the demographic changes affecting our ageing population, ageing social and community infrastructure, transport limitations, maximising diverse housing and accommodation options for different household types, and maintaining quality service delivery outcomes for the community.

Nillumbik's current population is 62,596 people (ERP 2011) of which 4,131 are children under the age of five years.

The population within the Shire is forecast to remain stable with predicted growth of 7.36% between 2014 and 2036. Currently there are 750 new births per year. As a result of this, Nillumbik continues to have a lower proportion of preschool aged children than the Victorian average. While some growth has occurred during the 2007-2012 census periods in the 0-4 year's age group in some suburbs including Hurstbridge and Wattle Glen, this is offset by a reduction in other areas such as Research (2012, Town and Country profiles).

Statistics also show that Nillumbik's children have a higher than state average participation rate in funded kindergarten programs with 98.15% of children attending preschool even though Nillumbik has a high proportion of families with young children whose both parents are engaged in the paid work force.

These factors impact heavily on Council's capacity to meet the changing needs of the population and associated infrastructure challenges.

In 2014 Council commenced a strategic approach to the planning and management of the early years community infrastructure to consider:

- Major changes by Federal and State Government affecting the operations and demand for early years programs particularly kindergarten and child care programs.
- Factors relating to lower birth rates, demographic change and projected population growth having impact on service demand and therefore service viability.

- The ageing nature of the facilities given the average age of Council's early years community infrastructure is 35 years old.
- The current direction of Federal and State Governments in promoting greater service integration when the current facilities are stand-alone capacity only.

The outcome of this work illustrated the increasing importance for Council to develop a comprehensive plan for an efficient and effective way of managing these facilities in the short and longer term. The consequence of not doing this is an unsustainable and ad hoc approach to planning, maintenance and management of these facilities.

In 2015 Council commenced a two phased approach to undertaking this work. The first phase was to review and develop a status report of the current early years infrastructure and then in 2016 the second phase was undertaken to develop a management plan and report.

The Management Plan:

- Provides Council with a clear statement about the current supply and demand requirements for early years community infrastructure;
- Shows how this Plan aligns with the current and projected demographic changes in Eltham, Diamond Creek, Hurstbridge and smaller townships in the northern end of the municipality;
- Provides clear and unambiguous criteria for making decisions about which facilities require upgrade, or extension, or be decommissioned
- Identifies a process for prioritization and implementation over a 10 year period.

This was achieved by addressing the following questions:

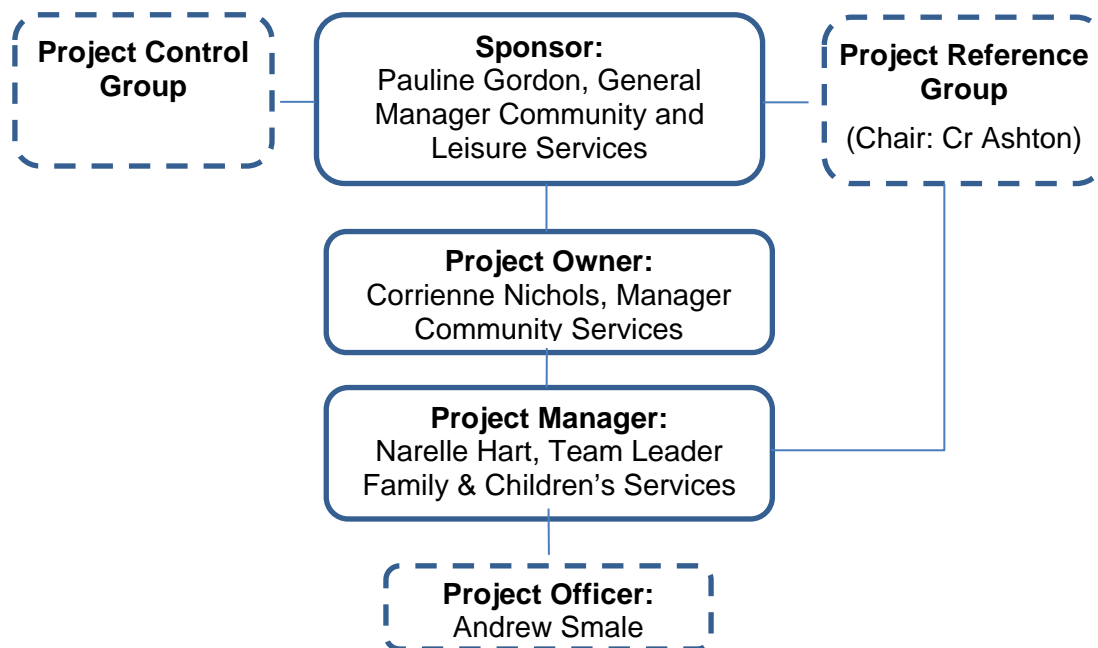
- What is there now?
- Who does it serve and how well is it working?
- How are things going to change – how many people, where and when?
- What is needed to provide for the future community (existing and new)?
- What is the best way for this to be provided?
- How will it be paid for?
- What are the service planning drivers for the facility?
- How will we decide what to upgrade, expand or decommission?

While part of the process in undertaking both phases of this project was to inform and consult with targeted stakeholders both internal and external to Council the next step is to inform the community of early years community infrastructure planning through the distribution of a Discussion paper.

Once feedback to the Discussion paper is summarised, it will be presented for Council's consideration at a further briefing. The process for determining the priority for infrastructure changes necessary to sustain the sector into the future will also be considered.



## Communication and Engagement Governance



### Rationale for Community Engagement

- Provision and access to quality early years education is a priority of State and Federal Governments.
- Positive outcomes for children is determined by children having access and participating in quality early years education and support.
- Ensures all stakeholders are informed and given the opportunity to provide feedback into the future planning for early years infrastructure.
- Involving the community ensures Council understands the needs and priorities of communities when future planning for early years infrastructure.
- Through deliberative engagement it enables the community to be involved in assisting Council in making the more difficult decisions.
- Collaboration with Council departments, external service providers, peak bodies, community groups and other interested parties creates partnerships and commitment to a future plan for the provision of early years infrastructure.

### Scope

This communication and engagement plan identifies the stakeholders and establishes the level of engagement within the IAP2 community engagement framework and in accordance with the Nillumbik Community Engagement Policy.

The IAP2 Framework for reference is shown below. It is intended that most work will be within the Inform and Consult levels of the framework within the red circle.

Once the feedback from the discussion paper has been summarised, Council will need to consider the next phase of engagement to assist them in determining the priority for infrastructure changes necessary to sustain the sector into the future.

<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Public Participation Goal:</b>				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the Public:</b>				
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

## Identifying Stakeholders

Because access to quality early years programs and services for children and families is a right and therefore a priority of all levels of government, it is critical to try to identify and understand the future needs and priorities of stakeholder groups:

- Families with children aged 0-4 years
- Families planning to have children in the future
- Early years educators
- Early years operators

## Methodology

Engaging with the community will be facilitated by Council staff in a targeted approach through the distribution of a discussion paper. The opportunity for community to provide feedback/responses to key questions will be by written submission, online or by phone. Whilst this is the preferred engagement in this first phase, individual meetings can be established if it is the preferred method to provide input.

## Communication Objectives

- To inform the community about the current status of Council's early years community infrastructure.

- To provide context to the community about the factors driving and influencing the provision of early years infrastructure.
- To inform and provide the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on future needs of families for early years programs and therefore infrastructure.
- Demographic data influencing demand including:
  - Population projections
  - Working families
  - Access to transportation
- Government policy direction
- Current status of early infrastructure:
  - Condition
  - Ability to be fit for purpose
  - Cost to council to maintain

## Key Messages

1. Council has embarked upon a review of its early years infrastructure to ensure that it meets current and future requirements. This includes analysing whether buildings:
  - a. are consistent with government policy directions and funding priorities
  - b. support existing and emerging family needs
  - c. are in the most appropriate locations
  - d. are viable and sustainable
  - e. enable service flexibility, and
  - f. enable the provision of services in an integrated manner.
2. The review is timely due to the ageing of the infrastructure, most of which reflects a different era, the increasing complexity involved in the governance and management of early years services and the ongoing need to ensure that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively.
3. Through the review process it has been identified that there is an over-supply of early years facilities in relation to current and future demand. Consolidation of facilities may result in a reallocation of facilities to meet other unmet community demand.
4. The review is taking a 10 to 20 year planning horizon.
5. Your views are important to assist Council in making considered decisions in its future provision of early years infrastructure.
  - a. What would you like Council to take into account in its planning for early years infrastructure
  - b. Are there particular factors relevant to your community?
  - c. What do you see as being the future early years services needs of families?

## Engagement and Communication Action Plan

Stakeholder	Level of engagement (IAP2)	Tool/Actions	Timeline/ deadline	Responsible
Families with children aged 0-4 years	Consult	<p>Distribution of discussion paper at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M&amp;CH centres</li> <li>• Child Care Services</li> <li>• Breastfeeding Mothers Association</li> <li>• GP's</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Leisure &amp; Community Centres</li> <li>• Allied Health Programs/Centres</li> <li>• Community Playgroups</li> </ul> <p>Link to discussion paper through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Facebook pages</li> <li>• Email to families on Nillumbik's Preschool Central Registration database</li> <li>• Email to families on Nillumbik's M&amp;CH database</li> </ul>	<p>2/3/17 – 16/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17-16/3/17</p> <p>Weekly posts commencing 2/3/17</p> <p>2/3/17</p>	<p>M&amp;CH Admin</p> <p>Preschool Admin</p> <p>Preschool Admin</p> <p>M&amp;CH Admin</p>
Families planning to have children in the future	Consult	<p>Distribution of discussion paper at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP's</li> <li>• Leisure and community facilities</li> </ul> <p>Link to discussion paper through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Council social media</li> <li>• Diamond Valley Leader</li> </ul>	<p>2/3/17</p> <p>Weekly commencing 2/3/17</p>	<p>Preschool admin</p>

Nillumbik's community based early years educators	Inform	Distribution of hard and electronic copy to early years educators	2/3/17	Preschool Admin
Nillumbik's community based early years operators	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and distribution of discussion paper at Committees of Management, Roles &amp; Responsibilities training</li> <li>• Email discussion paper to Chairperson/Presidents</li> </ul>	2/3/17  2/3/17	Andrew Smale  Preschool Admin

Phase 2:

Engagement Plan to be determined with Council