

Shire Plan 2050 Research Paper

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Executive Summary

This Research Paper provides a high-level overview to assist Council's understanding of the forecasts and future trends of life in Nillumbik in 2050. It is anticipated that this research paper will be used to help inform the development of a Community Vision for Nillumbik; the Nillumbik Shire Plan 2050.

Developing a long-term community vision is now considered best practice and is consistent with the objective of restoring community engagement as a core role for councillors. This is highlighted by the proposed Local Government Bill 2019 that will introduce the new requirement for all councils to have a long-term community vision developed in consultation with the local community and articulating a vision for the municipality.

This Paper provides a high level overview of the key changes, challenges and opportunities that impact Nillumbik now and into the future.

The key findings of the research include:

- The Northern Region of Melbourne is forecast to have a population increase of around 40 per cent over the next 18 years, reaching more than 1.38 million residents by 2036.
- Based on current estimates, Nillumbik's population will grow from 64,940 to 70,310 by 2036.
- Forecasted demographic changes will impact many aspects of the shire including housing, ageing in place, the delivery of services and the provision of community infrastructure.
- The impact on liveability and the value of liveability aspects in Nillumbik are likely to become amplified as growth in other parts of Melbourne continues to increase pressure on urban environments.
- The effects of climate change will be disproportionately felt by those in society who are vulnerable, such as those with lower socio-economic and health status.
- By 2050 Melbourne's transport network will need to cater for almost 24 million trips a day – up from 13.4 million today.
- While work is likely to become more flexible, the future distribution of jobs will most likely result in residents still needing to travel outside of Nillumbik for work, requiring improved transport options.
- The planning and design of local neighbourhoods is an important influence on physical activity, health outcomes, social connectedness and sustainability.
- The pressure for councils to decrease their spending, despite the increasing demand for council-related services is unlikely to cease.
- As rate-capping continues, many councils may face challenges in meeting their community service and asset renewal obligations.
- Council will need new forms of governance if it is to address challenges and realise emerging opportunities.
- A collaborative approach is required across a number of key policy areas to ensure that Nillumbik remains liveable, safe, resilient, economically viable and capable of meeting the needs of climate change.
- Growth and change will bring significant opportunities for Nillumbik, the manner in which these are embraced will determine future outcomes for the community.

Introduction

Background and context

This Research Paper provides a high-level overview to assist Nillumbik Shire Council's understanding of the forecasts and future trends of life in Nillumbik in 2050

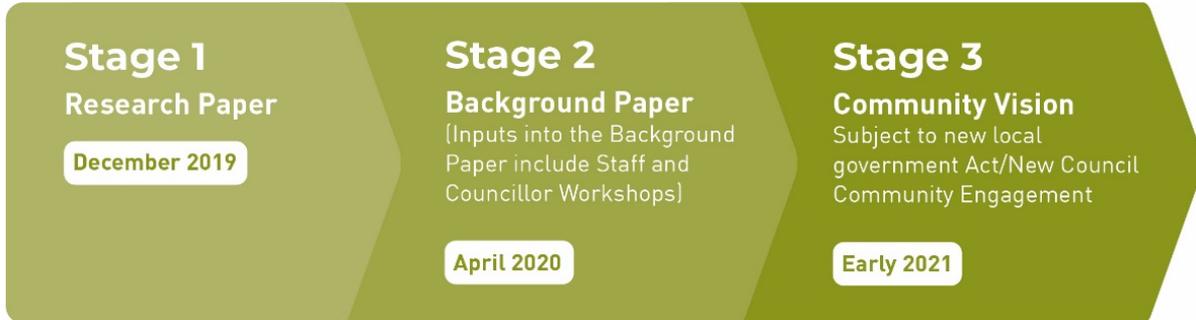


Figure 1 – Shire Plan 2050 Project Stages

A new Local Government Act for Victoria

This project is being undertaken in line with the introduction of the new Local Government Act (currently proposed Local Government Bill 2019).

In 2015, the Victorian Government embarked on a local government reform agenda with the aim of developing a new principle Act for local government to improve the democracy, accountability and service delivery of Victoria's councils.

A Bill intended to become the new Local Government Act for Victorian councils was introduced into Parliament in May 2018. The Local Government Bill 2018 (2018 Bill) was passed by the Legislative Assembly but lapsed in the Legislative Council when Parliament expired before the November 2018 Victorian election.

The proposed Local Government Bill 2019 will introduce the new requirement for all councils to have a long-term community vision developed in consultation with the local community and articulating a vision for the municipality, including both what council will deliver and areas of responsibility of others in the municipality.

The new Bill will retain the substance of accountability and provision of services and will also include some additional reforms designed to further improve and strengthen the 2018 Bill.

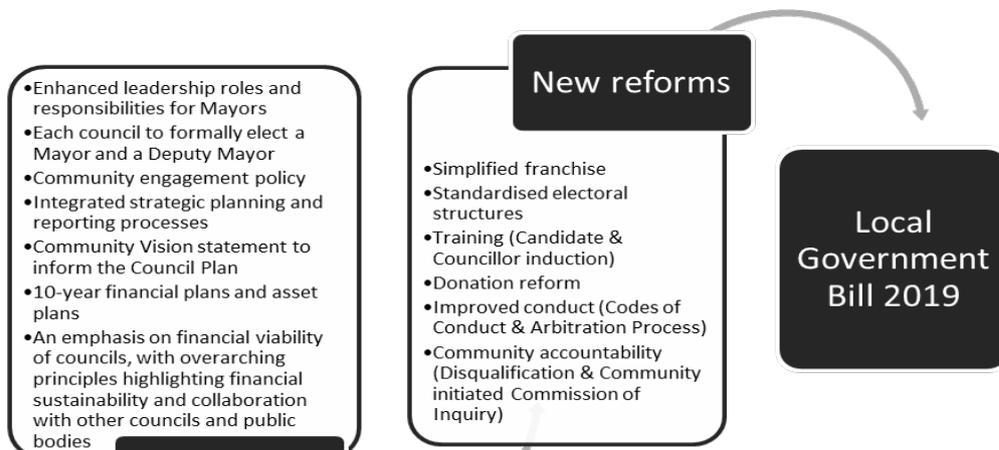


Figure 2 – proposed Local Government Bill 2019

Community planning

A community vision will be expected to have a 10-plus year horizon and describes the community's long-term vision and aspirations. Developing a Community Vision is a way of directly involving the community in long-term strategic planning and it will inform Council Plans and other medium-term Shire strategies and plans.

Further, it includes a vision and actions that the council, the community, businesses, non-government organisations and others will take to deliver the community's collective vision for the municipality.

Developing a long-term community vision is now considered best practice and is consistent with the objective of restoring community engagement as a core role for councillors. The community vision complements the Council Plan by including the contributions required to meet the vision, not only from the council but from other levels of government and other contributors (such as business and non-government organisations).¹

A clear objective of community planning is to seek to obtain the views and engage with a wide cross section on the community.² A rigorous community planning process seeks the views and provides opportunities for every member of the community to participate. This often requires a combination of traditional and innovative approaches to community engagement, based on local knowledge of communities.

A review of varied local government community visions reveals a common set of features and practices of community planning including:

- An evolutionary process that changes and develops over time as each council and their communities gain experience and confidence
- Endorsed by councillors and senior management as a legitimate and important function for local government
- Guided by a set of community planning policies and processes
- Intended to be linked to other strategic planning processes
- Characterised by processes that include high levels of community engagement and a desire for community ownership of the plan.

The new Bill requires council to conduct a deliberative community engagement process to prepare its community and council plans, and to demonstrate how these plans reflect the outcomes of the community engagement process.

The relative success of community visioning and planning can be measured in the benefits and outcomes delivered to communities, in particular community connectedness and improving social wellbeing.³ As such, community planning can be understood as having a key community development role; most specifically in the fostering of social capital.

¹ The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2016) Act for the Future – Directions for a new Local Government Act (online) https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0042/397968/Act_for_the_Future_-_Directions_for_a_new_Local_Government_Act.pdf

² LG Pro (2008) Embedding Community Principles into Council Planning, the State Government of Victoria, p. 6.

³ *ibid.*

Community visioning for Nillumbik

While the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan have identified a vision and direction for Nillumbik, a number of community-led projects have also sought to contribute to a vision for the Shire.

Most notably is the '2020 Vision – A Preferred Future' and 'Picture Nillumbik' and the 'Green Wedge Management Plan'.

2020 Vision – A Preferred Future: Following council amalgamations, a series of community consultations were undertaken in 1995 to inform the development of a cohesive vision for the newly formed Shire of Nillumbik.

Picture Nillumbik: Between October 2011 and June 2012, Nillumbik Shire Council undertook a community information gathering project to ask residents "what is your vision for your local community?" Picture Nillumbik represents a collection of responses from community groups, schools and households via online submissions, photos, interviews and workshop contributions. The resulting document provides a snapshot of the values, ambitions and resilience of Nillumbik communities. The project aimed to inform community planning and identify how Council can work better with residents.

Green Wedge Management Plan: The Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) is a council adopted strategy that identifies a vision, objectives and actions for the sustainable management of the green wedge. The GWMP is currently under review.

Research paper structure

This paper provides a high level overview of the key changes, challenges and opportunities that impact Nillumbik now and into the future, to inform the development of a Background Paper which will be used to inform the development of a Community Plan for Nillumbik in line with proposed changes under the new Local Government Act.

The paper address a broad range of issues and seeks to provide an overall narrative rather than a deep dive into any one topic.

The project team undertook a literature review of both academic and policy-related documents to identify and inform the range of topics explored throughout this paper.

While the paper focuses on issues and trends affecting Nillumbik now and over the next 30 years or so (2050), data limitations mean that on occasions forecasts only extend to 2036.

The research paper is presented in three sections:

- *Part One* describes Nillumbik in its current form and identifies what our residents value
- *Part Two* explores the demographic changes that Nillumbik is likely to experience between now and 2036
- *Part Three* provides an overview of the key issues and trends that are likely to affect Nillumbik in 2050.

Nillumbik and surrounds

Northern Melbourne

The Northern Region spans six Local Government Areas (LGAs): the inner LGAs of Moreland, Darebin and Banyule; and the outer growth and interface LGAs of Hume, Nillumbik and Whittlesea.

The Northern Metro Region is one of Melbourne’s largest, with a population of more than 986,230 residents – approximately 20 per cent of metropolitan Melbourne’s total population.

Northern Melbourne’s population is projected to increase by around 40 per cent over the 18 years, reaching more than 1.38 million residents by 2036.⁴

The Northern Region includes some of Melbourne’s most strategically important infrastructure such as the Melbourne Airport and Hume Highway – and plays a major role as one of Melbourne’s key economic regions and gateway to Australia’s national economy.⁵ Together these locations contain significant concentrations of private, government and community sector jobs and services and are critical to meeting the employment, service and infrastructure needs of the region’s growing population.

Accommodating this growth requires support to revitalise established suburbs and to expand local services and infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population. Timely delivery of infrastructure and services in the region’s newest outer suburbs will be critical to its success. NORTHLink’s *Northern Horizons*, a 50 year infrastructure strategy for Melbourne’s north, identifies the need for enhanced infrastructure and improved access, particularly in relation to road infrastructure, health and aged-care facilities.⁶

Key indicators: Population, Households and Dwellings

	2016	2018*	2021	2026	2031	2036
Total Population	933,140	986,230	1,058,180	1,169,780	1,277,780	1,381,710
Total Households**	341,990		389,440	431,150	472,650	515,560
Household Size	2.73		2.53	2.45	2.47	2.48
Total Dwellings	349,790		401,000	445,310	486,790	530,080

* Population data for 2018 **Average persons/households

Figure 3 - Northern Melbourne Key Indicators: Population, Households and Dwellings

While Nillumbik Shire Council has strong and established links with the Northern region of Melbourne, the importance of developing relationships with other councils and regions should not be understated. Opportunities could and should be sought in instances where Nillumbik shares common geographic boundaries and/or shared regional interests.

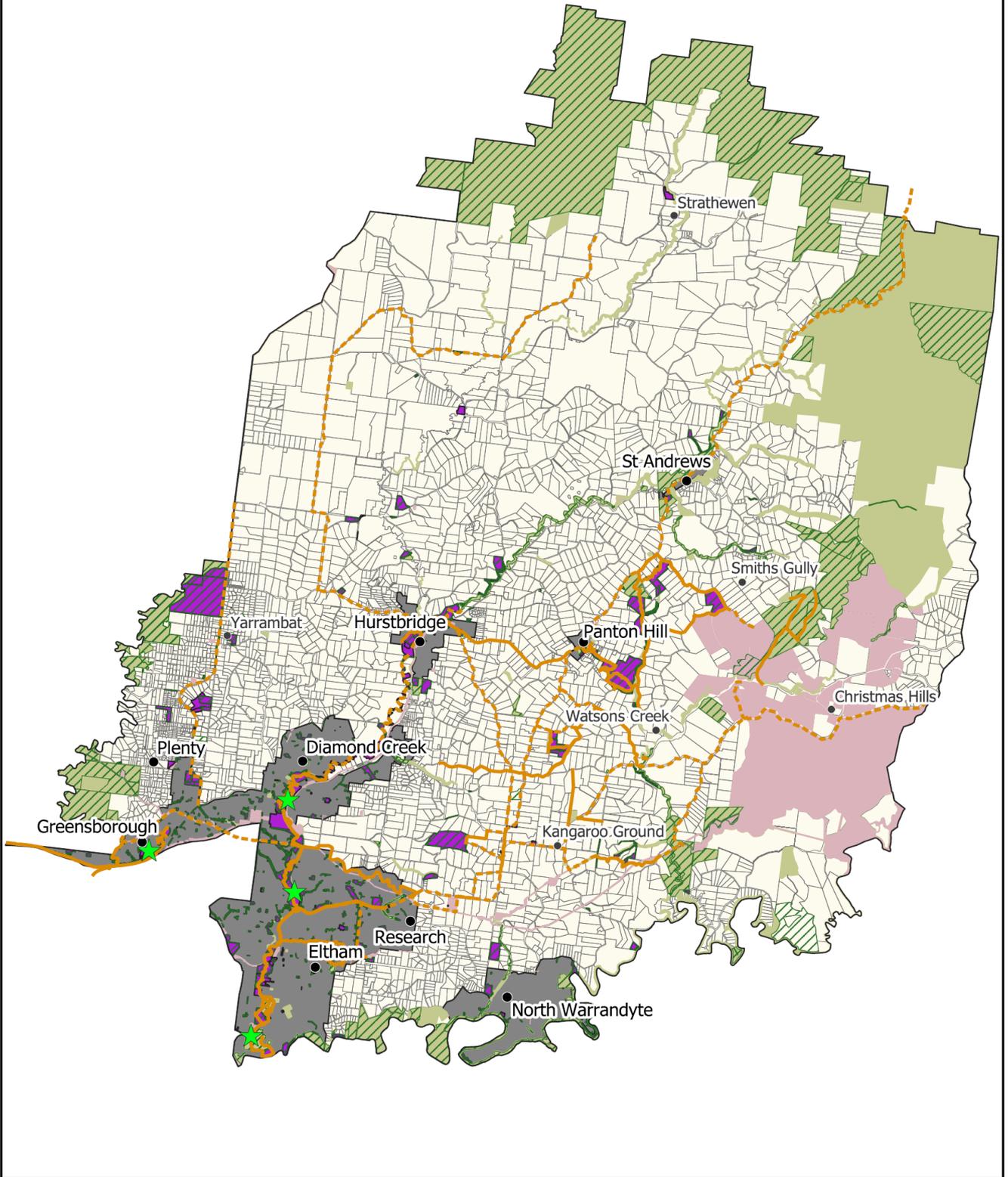
⁴ The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019) Victoria in Future 2019 – Northern Melbourne Profile.

⁵ NORTH Link (2016) Northern Horizons Delivery through Partnerships – Report Update (online)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/neg769h85p2otnn/Northern%20Horizons%20Update%20Report.pdf?dl=0>

⁶ *ibid.*

Figure 4 – Map of Nillumbik Shire



Legend

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Crown Land | Government Land | Trails - Proposed |
| Nillumbik Shire Council Land | Urban Area | Regional Playgrounds |
| Private Land | Reserves | Trails - Existing |

The Shire of Nillumbik

Nillumbik Shire is located in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs, about 25 km from the Melbourne CBD. Nillumbik Shire is bounded by Murrindindi Shire in the north, the Yarra Ranges Council area in the east, the Manningham City Council area and the City of Banyule in the south, and the City of Whittlesea in the west. Nillumbik Shire's boundaries are the Kinglake National Park in the north, the Yarra escarpment in the east, the Yarra River in the south, and the Plenty River and Yan Yean Road in the west.

Nillumbik is a collection of suburbs, townships and villages, each with its own unique identity and heritage. Villages include Smith's Gully, Watsons Creek, Strathewen, Christmas Hills, Kangaroo Ground and Yarrambat. St Andrews, Panton Hill and Hurstbridge make up Nillumbik's townships; and Nillumbik's suburbs include Plenty, Greensborough, Research, North Warrandyte, Eltham and Diamond Creek, the later containing Nillumbik's two Activity Centres.

Our townships offer residents and visitors distinctive village-style shopping, access to professional services and public transport and places to meet and socialise. Striking mud-brick buildings and award-winning wineries complement the Shire's unique and diverse landscape.

Residents feel connected to their local townships and have a strong sense of community.

The community values and wants to enhance the green wedge with its history and diversity, its open spaces, bushland environment and artistic heritage.

Snapshot of the Shire

64,940

in population
2019 VIF



1.5

persons per hectare
in population density



0.4%

Population growth
persons per hectare



43,201

hectares (432²)
in land area



Figure 5 – Nillumbik Snapshot: Key Statistics

Aboriginal History

The area now comprising the Shire of Nillumbik was roamed for centuries by the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people. The Woi wurrung people belonged to the confederacy known as the Kulin who inhabited areas around Melbourne. The Kulin consisted of five groups of people and had an intermarriage network and language ties. At the time of contact, the Kulin nation was made up of the Boon wurrung, Woi wurrung, Dja Dja wurrung, Taungrung and Wauththurung.⁷

The woi wurrung people comprised a number of clans. Nillumbik Shire is located within the clan boundary of the Wurundjeri Willam ('white gum tree dwellers'). Wurundjeri is the clan name, willam refers to a subsection of the clan associated with a specific land area recorded as the Yarra and Plenty.

The Woi-wurrung territory encompassed the watersheds of both the Yarra (Birrarrung) and Maribyrnong (Mirring-gnay-bir-nong) rivers and therefore occupied much of present-day Melbourne. The Wurundjeri people called our region 'nillumbik', meaning shallow earth – a name later used by the Europeans who settled here.

At the time of Melbourne's establishment, the Wurundjeri were recorded as being divided into three clans with their respective leaders and land boundaries. The arrival of Europeans in the Port Phillip region had a significant impact on the Woi-wurrung populations of the area.⁸

Nillumbik Shire Council has made a strong commitment to reconciliation with the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation. This commitment has been demonstrated through the development of Council's Policy Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians 1998, and the Nillumbik Shire Council Reconciliation Charter adopted in 2008.

A formal acknowledgement statement is read at the beginning of each Council meeting and other public events to respect and give recognition to the culture, language and practices of the traditional owners of the land now known as the Shire of Nillumbik.

Post contact settlement

European settlement of the Nillumbik area dates from the late 1830s, with land used mainly for grazing, timber cutting and viticulture.⁹ In spite of grazing and timber, the area was slow to develop until the discovery of gold in the 1850s. The gold rushes brought prospectors and with them a demand for transport, services, food, accommodation, fuel and water. Gold saw the establishment of townships such as Panton Hill, Research and Queenstown (now St Andrews) and Diamond Creek in the late 1850s and 1860s. Some gold mining continued into the early 20th century, though it was not enough to sustain the remote townships.¹⁰

Increasing population following the gold rushes created a need for a permanent water supply. The Shire's water resources were harnessed by first extending the Yan Yean Reservoir's catchment area in the 1870s. In 1886, work began on a weir on the Watts River near Healesville and on construction of the Maroondah Aqueduct to carry this water 66 km into Melbourne. The aqueduct travels through Christmas Hills, Kangaroo Ground, Research and Greensborough on its way to Preston. While it is no longer in use, the Maroondah Aqueduct can still be traced across the Shire. In the 1970s, the Sugarloaf Reservoir was constructed inundating 445 hectares of land in Christmas Hills. Sugarloaf was officially opened in 1980 and serves as a water storage and treatment plant supplying Melbourne.

Many of the early routes through the shire were laid down, not by official surveyors, but by those who used the district: pioneer settlers, timber-cutters and gold seekers. Many of these routes, later

⁷ Mills. P. & Westbrooke, S. (2017) Nillumbik Shire Thematic Environmental History, p.17.

⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018) Green Wedge Management Plan: Community Panel Background Report (online)

[https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-](https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation?BestBetMatch=council%20plan|d13b95b2-5146-4b00-9e3e-a80c73739a64|4f05f368-ecaa-4a93-b749-7ad6c4867c1f|en-AU#C)

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⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

adopted by government, laid the basis for the pattern of roads that exists in the shire today. The first road through the district was, reputedly, a dray track established in about 1838 by the Ryrie brothers as the most direct route between Melbourne and their pastoral run at Yering. This track joined the Heidelberg Road at Lower Plenty then roughly followed the route of the present Main Road, Eltham and Eltham–Yarra Glen Road to Yarra Glen. Another early track through the district followed the Diamond Creek from the Melbourne Road (at Lower Plenty) up to the present site of Hurstbridge. The track crossed and re-crossed the creek at some points avoiding difficult terrain.¹¹

Problems in building and maintaining roads and bridges affected the local authorities and hampered the development of the shire for many years. In their Thematic Environmental History of Nillumbik, Mills and Westbrooke cite an example of, a wooden bridge privately built across the Yarra below Eltham being swept away by floods in 1863. Although the Eltham Roads Board made several attempts to initiate the building of another, an agreement was never reached with the authorities on the Bulleen side of the river and there was not a direct bridge built over the Yarra at Eltham until 1961 when the Fitzsimmons Lane Bridge was opened (to be duplicated 30 years later). While the suburbs south of the river developed apace, the Shire of Nillumbik remained a quiet locale, insulated against development.¹²

From 1870 to 1900, orchards spread along the Diamond Valley, with the prosperity of the fruit-growing industry resulting in the townships of Arthurs Creek, Doreen, Plenty and Strathewen. A railway was built to Eltham and later Hurstbridge in the early 1900s.¹³ The railway brought the city closer to the district. People could now commute to work in the city and live at Eltham, Diamond Creek or Hurstbridge. This attracted many artists, in particular, who liked the environment of the shire, but needed to attend classes in Melbourne. The Eltham Railway Station was located one kilometre north of the township centre, which had a substantial effect on the future development of the town, leading to a gradual relocation of businesses and resulting in the present shopping centre and residential development near the railway station. Other settlements remote from the railway, such as those at Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill, St Andrews or Arthurs Creek, missed the added commercial activity that a railway station brought to a town.¹⁴

The Shire of Eltham was proclaimed in 1871, which was quite late for a Melbourne municipality and replaced the former District Roads Board. The new shire council continued to meet at Kangaroo Ground, as the earlier body had done and finally in 1937 the council's activities were returned to Eltham.

New shire offices were constructed in Main Road, Eltham in 1960. These offices were demolished in 1994 despite community opposition. The two cypress trees still stand in Main Road marking the former location of the 1960s building.

Diamond Creek, along with Greensborough, Yarrambat and Plenty, lay within the City of Heidelberg for most of its European history. The Shire of Diamond Valley, with its civic centre in Greensborough, was not created until 1964, when the North Ward of the City of Heidelberg was severed from the rest. The current Nillumbik Shire offices in Greensborough were formerly the Diamond Valley Shire offices and have been used as the Nillumbik Shire offices since the 1994 amalgamations that formed the current shire.

The Shire of Nillumbik was created in 1994 from four shires: Eltham, Diamond Valley, Healesville and Whittlesea, with the former Shires of Eltham and Diamond Valley.

Pre-war, there was little population growth, with the most significant residential development occurring in the post-war years, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s. The population at Nillumbik Shire has increased since the early 1990s, with growth slowing from 2001. The population has risen from about 53,100 in 1991 to approximately 62,700 in 2011 and currently 64,940.

¹¹ Op. cit. (2017)

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

Bushfire

Bushfire occurs naturally within Nillumbik's landscape. Many of the plants and animals in Nillumbik have evolved to survive fire events, and are reliant on bushfire to regenerate and maintain their health. Bushfires occur each year. Most are brought under control quickly, however, occasionally fires occur in conditions where they cannot be controlled. Such conditions existed in February 2009. The rural areas of the Shire suffered significantly as a result of the Black Saturday bushfires in February 2009, with the loss of approximately 130 dwellings, principally in the townships of Strathewen, St Andrews, Christmas Hills and Arthurs Creek.¹⁵

Significant fires affecting Nillumbik –

1939	Fires in Strathewen
1957	Fires impacted from Plenty down into Greensborough
1962	Major fire front from St Andrews through to Warrandyte and Wonga Park
1964	Plenty Gorge Area
1969	Diamond Creek through to Research and Warrandyte
1978	Plenty Gorge Area
1980	Plenty Gorge Area
1990	Plenty Gorge Area
1991	Pound Bend (Warrandyte)
2009	Black Saturday Fires (Strathewen, St Andrews, Christmas Hills and Arthurs Creek)
2014	Koos Road Kangaroo Ground

Natural Environment and the green wedge

Nillumbik's natural environment is characterised by steep ridges and gentle sloping hills enclosing plains and flats. The south is dominated by lowland hills while further north the Shire's boundary is framed by the mountains of the Kinglake Ranges. The Yarra River flows along Nillumbik's southern boundary, around the special rural conservation living zone of the Bend of Islands, onto Warrandyte, Research and Eltham, providing bushland and flood plain environments.

Nillumbik is characterised by open grassy woodland, with relatively shallow soils dominated by long-leafed and red box eucalypts and occasional stands of ironbark still remain on the hillside, ridge tops and along the creeks.

The fertile soils of an old volcano at Kangaroo Ground offer rich farming land. The Arthurs Creek and Strathewen areas have seen a long history of orchards and quality cattle farming, yet still retain many stands of ancient eucalypts and a wide variety of fauna and flora. The shire has 1000 indigenous flora species, including terrestrial orchids, some not found anywhere else.¹⁶

There are more than 340 indigenous fauna species in the Shire of Nillumbik, 70 of which are listed as rare or threatened in Victoria by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and 16 of which are listed as threatened in Australia by the Department of Environment and Energy. This includes brush-tailed phascogales, lace monitors, powerful owls and Eltham copper butterflies. Kangaroos are a relatively common resident, and a myriad of birds frequent urban backyards.¹⁷

Despite clearing by European settlers, Nillumbik retains large areas of native vegetation on public and private land, and sites of national, state and regional significance for their fauna. This remnant indigenous vegetation of various classes and conservation status covers a large proportion of Nillumbik.¹⁸

¹⁵ Op. cit. (2018)

¹⁶ Nillumbik Shire Council 2012, Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy p. 2

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018a) Op. cit.

The main classes of indigenous vegetation in the shire are Grassy Dry Forest, Valley Grassy Forest, Heathy Dry Forest and Herb-rich Foothill Forest. Three major creeks – Diamond Creek, Arthurs Creek and Watsons Creek - run through the Shire and Nillumbik also contains significant natural wetlands.¹⁹

Nillumbik’s green wedge is host to a number of state and national parks and Council also manages a number of important environmental reserves.

Green wedges are described as open landscapes that were set aside more than 40 years ago to conserve resources between the growth areas of metropolitan Melbourne as they spread out along major road and rail links.²⁰

Nillumbik’s green wedge covers approximately 39 600 hectares and is home to 12,639 residents in a range of diverse communities. Rural landowners work to manage their properties, visitors enjoy what the area has to offer and volunteers contribute to its ongoing sustainability. Its communities are supported by urban areas including Diamond Creek and Eltham, the three rural townships of Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill and a number of other small rural settlements that provide local facilities and act as focal points for community activities.

The Nillumbik green wedge is highly valued locally and regionally because of its biodiversity, natural beauty, rolling hills, landscapes, visitor experiences, steep escarpments, water courses, agriculture, rural living and open space.

Artistic and cultural heritage

Nillumbik has long been renowned for, and continues to foster its deep connections to the arts. In the early 1900s. Heidelberg School era artists, Clara Southern and Walter Withers resided and painted in the locale. Australia’s oldest artist commune, Montsalvat was founded in the 1930s by Justus Jorgensen. Montsalvat attracted significant artists, intellectuals, tradespeople and artisans including Matcham Skipper, Helen Lempriere, Leonard French and Albert Tucker. In the 1940s, sustainable designer, Alistair Knox and landscape designer Gordon Ford championed the earth building movement, setting the architectural visual language of the area known as the ‘Eltham style. Cottles Bridge artist, Clifton Pugh (AO) a three-time Archibald Prize winner renowned for his contemporary landscape painting, established the Dunmoochin Foundation in 1989.²¹

Since 1985, Nillumbik Shire Council has supported emerging literary talent through the Alan Marshall Short Story Award, named in honour of the former Eltham resident and Australian literary icon Alan Marshall. Over 60 writers have won the award’s open and local categories over its 34 year history, including Gillian Mears and Gary Disher. The award continues to share excellence in fiction writing with the local community and beyond. The strength of the literary arts extends to a thriving poetry community in Nillumbik.²²

Nillumbik also supports and encourages artists across the wider creative sector. The Laughing Waters Artist Residency on the Yarra River in Eltham was established in 2001 through a partnership between Nillumbik Shire Council and Parks Victoria. Almost 100 local, Victorian, interstate and international professional artists have lived and worked at the two residences, River Bend and Birrarung, including John Nixon, Jill Orr, Miranda Burton and Elizabeth Gower.²³

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018b) Arts and Cultural Plan 2018 – 2022: Celebrating Nillumbik’s Heartbeat (online)

<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation?BestBetMatch=council%20plan|d13b95b2-5146-4b00-9e3e->

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

The Nillumbik Prize has long been synonymous with the creative industry. The prize supports professional contemporary practice and celebrates the wider arts community's connection to Nillumbik's rich artistic heritage.²⁴

The creative life of the community is highly valued and large numbers of artists live and work here in the quiet beauty of our landscape. Nillumbik's existing artist communities such as Butterfly Studio, Dunmoochin, Baldessin Studios, and Montsalvat, and the strength of artistic traditions commencing from the early Australian Impressionist painters through to current practice in contemporary arts is showcased at local, regional and international forums. The Shire also has a strong performing arts community. Nillumbik Shire Council's Youth Services have long engaged the young people of Nillumbik through the arts, and this continues to grow, particularly through Nillumbik Youth Theatre.²⁵ Nillumbik's wider cultural heritage is celebrated through 12 local history groups that operate independently but collaboratively through the Yarra Plenty Heritage Group.

Liveability

The Council Plan 2017-2021 vision is for Nillumbik to be 'Australia's most liveable Shire'. Liveability reflects the wellbeing of a community and comprises the many characteristics that make a location a place where people want to live now and in the future.²⁶

Liveable communities can be defined as those that are healthy, safe, harmonious, attractive and affordable, they have high amenity, provide good accessibility and are environmentally sustainable.²⁷

Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods and services are socially cohesive. Appropriate housing, adequate transport infrastructure and a mix of land use, encourage recreation and social interaction to increase social capital and improve social connectedness.

Many of the social, economic and environmental features that enhance liveability in Nillumbik and make it a desirable place to live, work and play are also the determinants of good public health and wellbeing.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (2008) A State of Liveability: An Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability (online) <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/enhancing-victorias-liveability-inquiry.pdf>

²⁷ Lowe, M., Whitzman, C., Badland, H., Davern, M., Aye, L., Hes, D., Butterworth, I. and Giles-Corti B. (2015) Planning Healthy, Liveable and Sustainable Cities: How Can Indicators Inform Policy? *Urban Policy and Research*, 33:2, 131 – 144.

Social determinants	Description
Socio-economic position	Educational attainment is associated with better health because it equips people to achieve stable employment, secure income, adequate housing and provide for families. Higher education increases the likelihood of higher-status occupations and higher incomes. Income and wealth improve socio-economic position and allow for greater access to better food and housing and healthcare options.
Early life	The foundations of adult health are laid in early childhood development. Healthy physical development and emotional support during the first years of life provide building blocks for future social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.
Social exclusion	Social exclusion covers social disadvantage and lack of resources, opportunity, participation and skills. Social exclusion may result from unemployment, discrimination, stigmatisation and other factors. It can increase the risk of illness, disability and social isolation.
Employment and work	The stress of unemployment brings higher risk of illness and disability. Unemployment rates are higher among people with no or few qualifications or skills, those with disability or poor mental health, people who have caring responsibilities, those in ethnic minority groups and those who are socially excluded for other reasons.
Housing	Safe and affordable housing is associated with better health outcomes, which in turn impacts positively on people's participation in work, education and the broader community. It also impacts parenting, family and social relationships.
Residential environment	Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods and services are socially cohesive.

Figure 6 – Social determinants of health

In this way, liveable places in the context of health can be defined as:

“Safe, attractive, socially cohesive and inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse housing linked to employment, education, public open space, local shops, health and community services and leisure and cultural opportunities; via convenient public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.”²⁸

This definition provides a useful framework for Nillumbik to measure aspects of liveability throughout the Shire. It responds well to the goals of both the *Council Plan 2017-2021* and the *Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*, along with other key Council strategies, policies and plans. Further, it and the concept of ‘liveability’ could influence the development of new Council initiatives such as community infrastructure and service planning.

Measuring liveability

Liveability indicators can be useful for monitoring progress towards achieving policy reform, engaging government in conversations with the private and community sectors, and enhancing the connection between urban planning and public health.²⁹ Further, they can provide a framework to find out what are the key community concerns and needs and for Council to compile a more detailed and comprehensive base of information on its community. This information can then be used to shape

²⁸ Lowe, M., Whitzman, C., Badland, H., Davern, M., Aye L., Hes, D., Butterworth, I. and Giles-Corti, B. (2013) *Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable: What are the Key Indicators for Melbourne Neighbourhoods?* University of Melbourne.

²⁹ *ibid.*

policy and strategic directions at a local level, assist the alignment of services to match the changing needs of the community and to highlight issues of local concern to other tiers of government and to the wider community.³⁰

Monitoring and measuring effectiveness and satisfaction in community services and the provision and utilisation of infrastructure through the domains of liveability can make explicit the links between employment, education, housing and social policies, and how access to these underlying determinants of health can be provided in an integrated and effective manner.³¹

The use of liveability indicators has been incorporated into a range of Australian urban policies, and a strong history of their inclusion exists in Victorian local government where their inclusion has informed the development of council and health plans.³²

The Centre for Urban Research has developed a Pilot Victorian Urban Liveability Index for use in policy.³³ The index conceptualises the social determinants of health through seven domains of liveability using a socio-ecological framework. The Index encompasses the following:

- Employment
- Food
- Housing
- Public open space
- Social infrastructure
- Transport
- Walkability.

The intent of the index is to allow integrated urban planning policies for liveable neighbourhoods to be evaluated in terms of how well they are being delivered across the Melbourne metropolitan region, the health impact of the integration of those policies and to whom.

The Interface Councils of Melbourne have used liveability indicators to identify the unique characteristics and the specialised challenges facing interface councils now and into the future.

The Interface Councils include the growth councils of Melton, Mitchell, Wyndham, Whittlesea, Cardinia, Casey and Hume, some of which contain the largest and fastest-growing suburbs in Australia. At the same time, some of the most environmentally sensitive areas are also located in the Interface.

Nillumbik joins Yarra Ranges and the Mornington Peninsula as local government areas that support Melbourne with significant productive agricultural land, water catchments and forest areas necessary to offset the carbon footprint of the city.

The Interface Councils have identified key priority outcomes that align with the aforementioned seven liveability domains. These priority outcomes are critical for future success of the Interface Councils region. Furthermore, the domains have been aligned with the leading research on liveability in Victoria and paired with priority outcomes that are geared towards meeting the objectives of Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy and Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.³⁴

³⁰ LG Pro, Op. cit.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Davern, M., West S., Bodenham, S. and Wiseman. J. (2011) *Community Indicators in Action: Using Indicators as a Tool for Planning and Evaluating the Health and Wellbeing of a Community.*

³³ Centre for Urban Research (2017) *Developing a Pilot Victorian Urban Liveability Index*, (online) <http://cur.org.au/project/developing-pilot-victorian-urban-liveability-index/>

³⁴ Interface Councils of Melbourne (2017) *Interface Councils Liveability Snapshot* (online) https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e90bcb_a55714c1a77149c4a1ff5df5865dc339.pdf

In their collection of liveability data, the Interface Councils have been able to clearly identify the specific characteristics of the Interface region as well as enabling evidence-based targeted responses to ensure that the liveability of these unique communities is not compromised.³⁵

Nillumbik currently measures aspects of liveability through the Council and Health and Wellbeing plans, however, this has not been consistent due to varying approaches to setting and measuring priorities. As a result, it is often difficult to measure liveability and compare Nillumbik with municipalities across Victoria. The Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Profile 2016 provides useful data on which to measure aspects of Nillumbik's liveability.

Social Determinants of Health – In general, Nillumbik rates better than average for Greater Melbourne on a range of social determinants; however, this does not mean that health inequalities do not exist. Housing diversity is low in Nillumbik, with a shortage of smaller homes for older people and younger people leaving the family home. Walking and transport is less viable in Nillumbik compared to neighbouring areas. Nillumbik's ageing population means that there will be a greater percentage of the community who will be vulnerable to social, economic and environmental impacts, particularly the impacts of climate change.³⁶

Wellbeing – The Nillumbik community has a high level of engagement with green space and the arts which is a protective factor for both physical and mental health. There is a strong sense of cohesiveness and trust within neighbourhoods.³⁷

Social Capital - Nillumbik has a healthy rate of social capital. It is important that networks are continually built and maintained. Networks that cross between groups are the most valuable, and will become more important in the future as the municipality becomes more diverse.³⁸

A continued and enhanced focus on the development of liveability indicators for Nillumbik would strengthen Council's position in being able to identify and highlight community priorities, better inform service delivery and advocacy and improve integration with broader Council planning processes now and into the future.

³⁵ Interface Councils of Melbourne (2016) Creating Liveable Communities in the interface

³⁶ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Profile (online)

<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/people-and-family/nillumbik-community-health-and-wellbeing-profile-2016.pdf>

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

Part one: What the Nillumbik community values

Over the past few years, there has been extensive community engagement on a large number of significant and long-term Council plans and strategies, including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022, Green Wedge Management Plan, Eltham and Diamond Creek Activity Centre Reviews, Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022, and Lifetime Play Strategy 2017. Through examining what the community told us through the various community engagement activities carried out in the development of these strategies and plans, it is possible to identify a number of key themes around what the community values.

Natural environment

The community places a very high value on the natural bushland environment and Nillumbik's green wedge. A strong theme that came through community engagement on the Green wedge Management Plan in particular was the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment, with a particular focus on biodiversity, mitigating the effects of climate change, reducing bushfire risk, and preventing environmental degradation due to poor land management practices.

Community connectedness

Our residents consider community connectedness very important. It is seen as building resilience, fostering a feeling of belonging, and playing an important role in preventing and reducing social isolation. Participation in artistic and cultural activities, volunteering and life-long education are considered key contributors to community connectedness. The role of leisure and recreation facilities, as well as community festivals, events and activities in promoting connections between community members is often cited. The need for easier access to public or community transport is seen as central to enabling connections, especially for young people and older residents.

Urban/Rural lifestyle

The community says that they value the Shire's easy access to Melbourne, its services, job opportunities and facilities. They also value the proximity to open space and the natural environment, notably for the physical and mental health benefits this provides through encouraging participation in a range of easily accessible outdoor activities, including cycling, walking, horse-riding, organised sports and leisure activities such as visiting wineries and markets. The community places a high importance on access to local services such as public or community transport, health services, varied and quality retail and dining options, and education, while enjoying the "village feel" of the townships. Key concerns related to lack of public and community transport and access to services for residents in rural areas.

Artistic and cultural identity

Our residents and visitors value the rich local artistic heritage, as well as the Shire's history and culture, both indigenous and non-indigenous. The creative life of the community is highly-valued and artistic practices are seen as varied, flourishing and reflecting the connection to the natural environment. People value the Shire's public art, attractive streetscapes, and the numerous artistic and cultural events, festivals and activities.

Limits to residential and economic development

The community generally appreciates the limits and controls placed on residential and economic development, particularly in the green wedge area of the Shire. They cite over-development of the green wedge in terms of housing growth and business growth as a concern. However, there is also some community concern about the lack of business and employment opportunities, and access to suitable and affordable housing.

Part two: Population and demographic change

Nillumbik has a population of 64,940³⁹ people who enjoy a healthy, safe, family-friendly lifestyle within close knit communities.

↔ No significant change since previous Census (less than ±0.5%) ▲ Increased since previous Census ▼ Decreased since previous Census



Figure 7 – Nillumbik Community Profile

³⁹.id Consulting (2019) Nillumbik Shire Community Profile (online) <https://profile.id.com.au/nillumbik>

Over the period of 2011 to 2017, Nillumbik's population increased by an annual average of 0.5 per cent. This is significantly lower than Greater Melbourne's annual average population growth rate of 2.6 per cent over the same period.

Almost 25 per cent of Nillumbik's residents are aged 0-17 years and almost 20 per cent are aged 60 years and over.

Our community has a high rate of employment with 98 per cent of our residents employed either full or part time. Some 70 per cent of workers travel to their place of employment by car, either as a driver or passenger.⁴⁰

Nillumbik has a higher level of participation in sport and recreation activities than the state and national averages. Walking for recreation is the most popular activity, followed by aerobics/fitness, swimming, cycling and running. Horse riding and bike riding are also popular recreational activities. Nillumbik's participation in more structured sports such as tennis, golf, football and netball are all higher than the state and national averages and the Shire is experiencing unprecedented growth in women's participation in sport.⁴¹

In Nillumbik in 2016, there was a higher proportion of couple families with children as well as a lower proportion of one-parent families compared with greater Melbourne. Overall, 47 per cent of total families were couple families with children compared with 33.5 per cent for greater Melbourne, and 9.2 per cent were one-parent families compared with 10.14 per cent for greater Melbourne.⁴²

There was a lower proportion of lone-person households (13.8 per cent compared with 22 per cent in greater Melbourne) and a slightly higher proportion of couples without children (24.7 per cent) compared with 22.9 per cent for greater Melbourne.⁴³

In 2016, there were 20,235 separate houses in the area, 1400 medium density-dwellings, and 25 high-density dwellings. Analysis of the types of dwellings in Nillumbik Shire in 2016 shows that 93 per cent of all dwellings were separate houses; 6.4 per cent were medium-density dwellings, and 0.1 per cent were high-density dwellings, compared with 66.1 per cent, 22.9 per cent, and 10.1 per cent in the Greater Melbourne respectively.⁴⁴

The Shire of Nillumbik has a relatively healthy and affluent community. Nillumbik is at the higher end of the socio-economic gradient in Victoria, indicating that in many aspects, the population of Nillumbik enjoys better than average health and wellbeing. In 2016, Nillumbik had a Socio-economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) of 1099, representing the economic and social conditions of people and households in Nillumbik as well above the national average.⁴⁵

Based on current estimates, Nillumbik's population is forecast to grow to 70,310 by 2036 representing an increase/change of 8.3 per cent.

In the future, it is projected that Nillumbik will have more people aged 55 years and older. By 2036, one in three residents will be in this age group compared to one in four in 2015. The future trend is that Nillumbik will transition from primarily housing mature families to instead housing empty nesters and retirees.⁴⁶

Victorian Government projections indicate that about 4200 additional dwellings will be needed in Nillumbik between 2016 and 2036.

⁴⁰ibid.

⁴¹ Nillumbik Shire Council (2010) Recreation Strategy (online) https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/council-publications/strategies-etc/recreation_strategy_2011-2019.pdf

⁴² .id Consulting, Op. cit.

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴ ibid.

⁴⁵ ibid.

⁴⁶ .id Consulting (2016) Housing Implications for Nillumbik's Ageing Population: Final Report, Melbourne.

Population by Age 2016¹



Nillumbik Population by Age 2016-2036¹

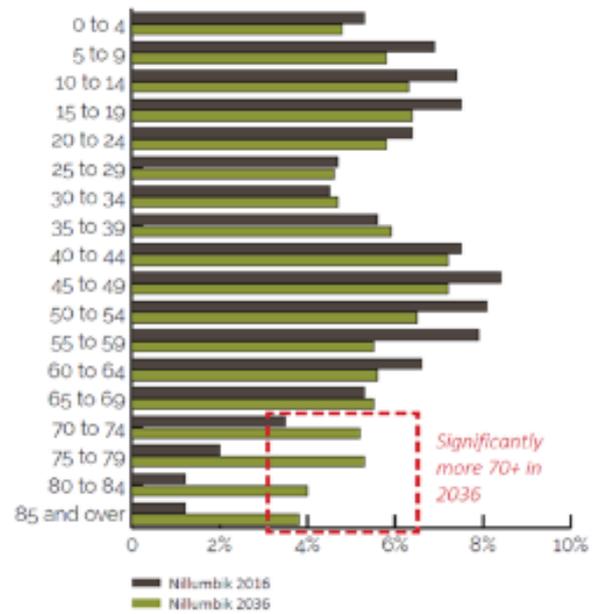


Figure 8 – Nillumbik Population by Age

In terms of household types, couples with children households are currently the dominant category. However, it is projected that the number of couple and one person households will increase substantially by 2036, with very little change in the other types. Only 114 additional households will be couples with children, whereas 2199 additional households will be couples without children, and there will be 1609 additional lone-person households.

Household types 2016 to 2036¹

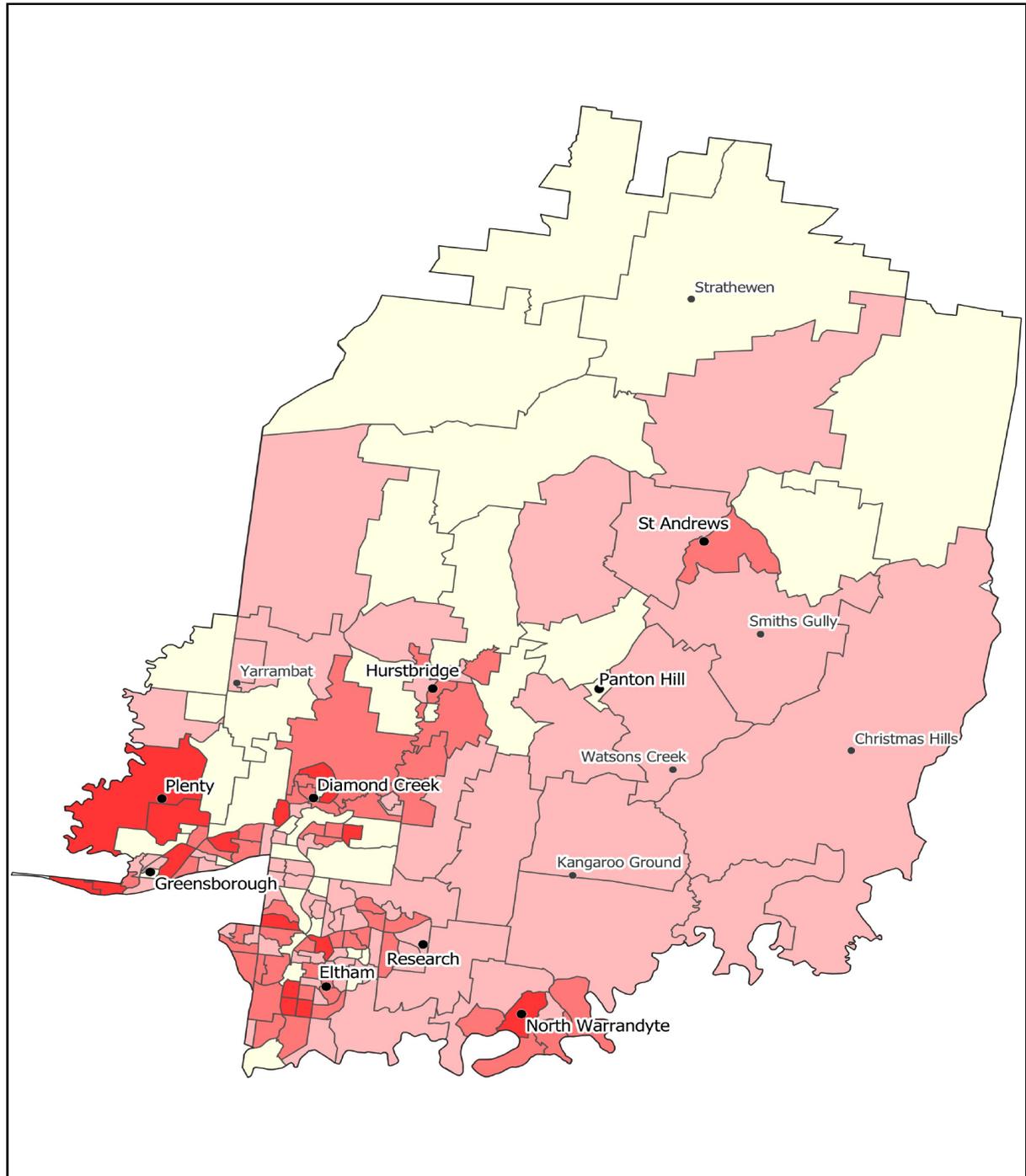
Household type	2016	2016%	2036	2036%	Additional households 2016-2036	Share of additional households 2016-2036
Couples with children	10,535	48.0%	10,649	40.9%	114	2.8%
Couples without children	5,699	26.0%	7,898	30.3%	2,199	53.5%
One parent families	1,991	9.1%	2,170	8.3%	179	4.4%
Other families	132	.0%	138	0.5%	6	0.1%
Group households	285	1.3%	292	1.1%	7	0.2%
Lone person	3,300	15.0%	4,909	18.8%	1,609	39.1%

Figure 9 – Forecast Household Types

These demographic changes have implications for the types of housing that may be needed in Nillumbik in the future.

Nillumbik's population is growing, although at a slower rate than in Greater Melbourne. Victorian Government population forecasts suggest that about 3800 additional dwellings will be needed between 2016 and 2036 to accommodate the just over 5000 additional people living in Nillumbik.

Figure 10 – Map of Nillumbik's Population (persons per hectare)



Given the environmental and other constraints in Nillumbik's green wedge areas and many parts of its established urban areas, most of the additional dwellings will be required in Eltham and Diamond Creek. As per the population projections, almost all of these dwellings will be needed for couples without children and lone-person households.⁴⁷

Forecast dwellings and development map

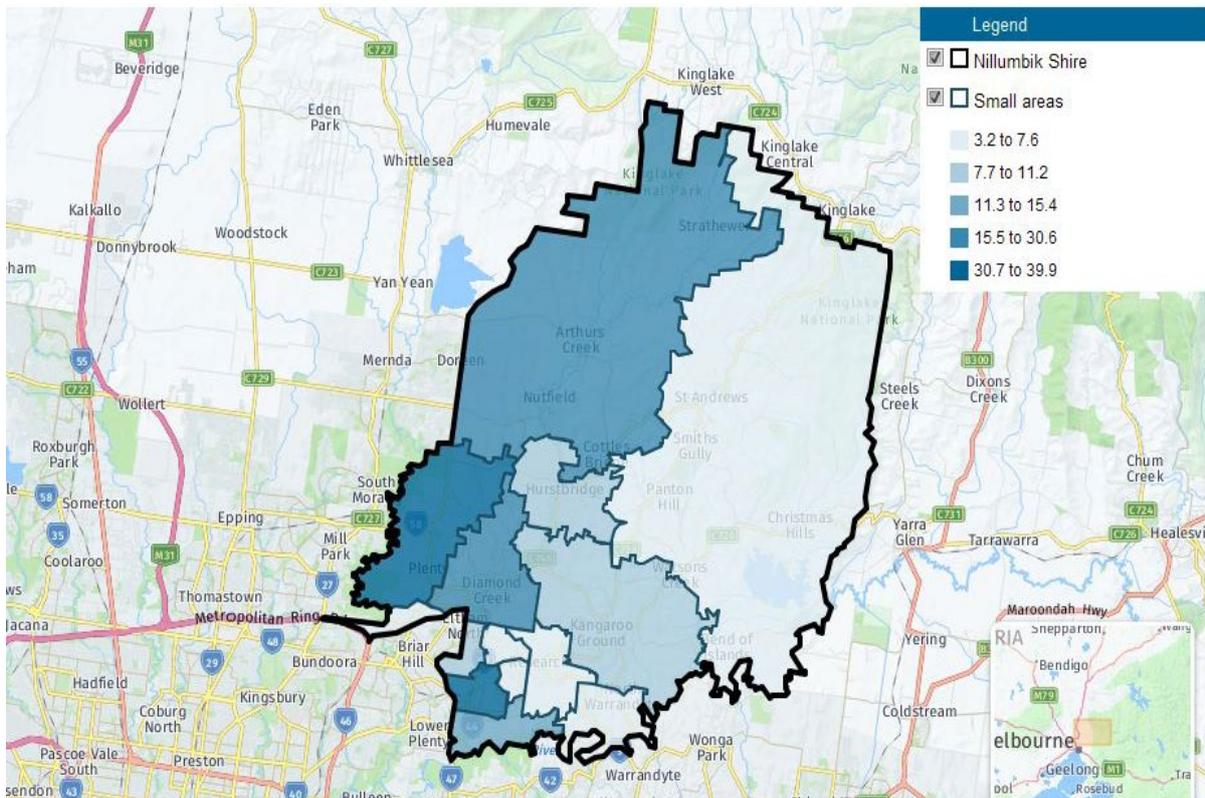


Figure 11 – Forecast Dwellings and Development Map

⁴⁷ SGS Economics and Planning (2014) Housing Analysis (online)
<http://sonic/teams/sep/Programs/Nillumbik%20Housing%20Analysis%20Draft.pdf>

Forecast Dwellings and Development*						
Nillumbik Shire	2016		2036		Change between 2016 and 2036	
Area	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Nillumbik Shire	22,005	100.0	25,881	100.0	+3,876	+17.6
Diamond Creek	4,180	19.0	5,393	20.8	+1,213	+29.0
Eltham (Central)	3,260	14.8	4,532	17.5	+1,272	+39.0
Eltham (East)	1,352	6.1	1,395	5.4	+43	+3.2
Eltham (Edendale)	1,091	5.0	1,165	4.5	+74	+6.8
Eltham (South)	1,187	5.4	1,321	5.1	+134	+11.3
Eltham North	1,579	7.2	1,701	6.6	+122	+7.7
Greensborough	1,868	8.5	1,955	7.6	+87	+4.7
Hurstbridge	1,271	5.8	1,383	5.3	+112	+8.8
Kangaroo Ground - Wattle Glen	1,020	4.6	1,133	4.4	+113	+11.1
North Warrandyte	1,054	4.8	1,119	4.3	+65	+6.2
Plenty - Yarrambat	1,296	5.9	1,694	6.5	+398	+30.7
Research	942	4.3	1,009	3.9	+67	+7.1
Rural East	1,242	5.6	1,315	5.1	+73	+5.9
Rural North West	663	3.0	766	3.0	+103	+15.5

Figure 12 – Forecast Dwellings and Development

* Figures displayed are theoretical

Part three: Towards 2050

The Australian National Outlook 2019 Report combines CSIRO's integrated modelling and research with inputs from leaders, organisations, industry, not-for-profits and education sectors to provide a view of Australia's future. The report was created in order to help Australians continue to enjoy the best quality of life available, and for future generations to have access to even better opportunities.⁴⁸

While the report states that Australia had enjoyed nearly three decades of uninterrupted economic growth and has historically enjoyed strong social cohesion; there is no guarantee that this will continue into the future. The report identifies six key challenges that Australia must acknowledge and adapt to if its prosperity is to continue.⁴⁹

1. The rise of Asia is shifting the geopolitical landscape. By 2030, the Asia-Pacific region will be home to 65 per cent of the world's middle class. Australia will need to boost its competitiveness and diversify its export mix to meet changing demands in order to make the most of this opportunity.
2. Technological change, such as artificial intelligence, automation and advances in biotechnology are transforming existing industries and changing the skills required for high-quality jobs. Australia will need to reverse recent declines in educational performance, otherwise its future workforce could be poorly equipped for the jobs of tomorrow.
3. Climate change and environment poses a significant economic, environmental and social threat both globally and locally. Significant action needs to be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Changing demographics including population growth and ageing is putting pressure on cities, infrastructure and services. As the population grows and workforce participation drops, increasing investment in infrastructure and services will be required to support the Australian population, estimated to reach 41 million by 2060.
5. Trust in governments, businesses, private businesses and the media has declined. Unless trust can be restored, Australia will find it difficult to build consensus on the long-term solutions required to address future challenges.
6. Social cohesion measures have declined over the past decade. Issues related to trust, financial stress, slow wage growth and poor housing affordability have been linked to this decline.

The Victorian Government's current metropolitan planning strategy, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 envisages that by 2050, Melbourne will⁵⁰:

- Grow in population from 4.5 million (2015) to 7.9 million (2051) within the existing urban growth boundary
- Have 3.1 million additional dwellings (680,000 in the northern region)
- Have become a metropolis of neighbourhoods
- Have investment and growth concentrated in the central city, seven national employment and innovation clusters, 11 metropolitan activity centres, five state-significant industrial precincts, 11 transport gateways, 25 health and education precincts and 10 major urban renewal precincts in inner Melbourne. With the addition of the Suburban Rail loop all of these locations will be accessible by public transport and predominantly by rail

⁴⁸ CSIRO (2019) Australian National Outlook (online) <https://www.csiro.au/en/Showcase/ANO>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2017a) Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 (online) https://planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/377206/Plan_Melbourne_2017-2050_Strategy_.pdf

- Continue to have 122 other major activity centres distributed across the metropolitan area (including Diamond Creek and Eltham) whose growth will be determined by local planning
- Have a completed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (E6)
- Have rail access to the airport
- Continue to have agricultural production in its green wedges and peri-urban areas
- Continue to conserve areas of biodiversity, waterways and coastlines
- Be significantly more dependent on renewable energy and recycled water
- Have expanded its forest in urban areas
- Be better connected to Victoria's regional cities.

As much as it is now, the future contrast in density between Nillumbik and much of metropolitan Melbourne will be stark. At the same time the accessibility to key employment, transport and education destinations across the metropolitan area will be much better and it should be expected that the existing railway stations will be very important to the functioning of the Shire and their surrounds will need to be developed to enable this. This, combined with the lifestyle advantages of Nillumbik's environment and expected low growth, will strengthen the desirability (and therefore the cost and exclusivity) of Nillumbik as a place to live and commute from.

As our population and economy changes between now and 2050, Nillumbik's ability to maintain and/or improve its liveability will be shaped by how we meet challenges and optimise opportunities. For Nillumbik, the impact on liveability and the value of liveability aspects are likely to become amplified as growth in other parts of Melbourne continues to increase pressure on urban environments.

Services and infrastructure

Demand for services and infrastructure will grow to 2050.⁵¹ Victoria is growing faster than at any other time in the state's history, with Melbourne forecast to become Australia's most populous city by 2050. As such, ensuring the right infrastructure and land use planning settings is vital.

Services and planning

Victorian councils are responsible for local roads and community infrastructure worth more than \$102 billion. This includes roads, bridges, public libraries, sporting grounds and kindergartens.

With the introduction of a rate cap in 2016, many councils implemented efficiency reforms to save costs including organisation restructures, asset sales, collaborative purchasing, reviews of discretionary services and fleet vehicle reductions. However, evidence is also emerging of an under investment in capital infrastructure by financially-constrained smaller councils.⁵²

Over time, the under-investment in roads maintenance and infrastructure renewal by councils will have long-term negative impacts on the quality and safety of local roads, and the availability of community facilities across Victoria.⁵³

⁵¹ Deloitte Access Economics (2016) The Current and Future State of Victoria: A Macro Perspective (online) <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-current-future-state-victoria-infrastructure-150216.pdf>

⁵² Infrastructure Victoria (2019) Growing Victoria's Potential: The Opportunities and Challenges of Victoria's Population Growth (online) <http://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Growing-Victorias-Potential-April-2019.pdf>

⁵³ SGS Economics and Planning (2018) Whittlesea 2040: Background Paper (online) <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/3736/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf>

The provision of infrastructure

Council should provide infrastructure that the community values. In addition to adequately providing for the community's needs through meeting community infrastructure service standards, Council should facilitate maximising their usage to ensure that maximum value is gleaned from its capital works expenditure. For example, a lack of disabled access, unsafe footpaths or inadequate lighting or a lack of CCTV leading to fears of safety, could hinder utilisation of community infrastructure. A viable asset that is underused provides no value to the community for the spent capital.

Infrastructure Victoria's 30-year strategy⁵⁴ makes several recommendations for the Victorian Government to assist local government and community organisations in the provision of community infrastructure. These are supported by the State Government and include:

- Support the sharing of state facilities, e.g. schools, with standardised community shared space agreements⁵⁵
- Create an incentive to refurbish or rationalise community assets (such as kindergartens, sports facilities and parks) to better meet the needs of the community (e.g. Growing Suburbs Fund)⁵⁶
- Transform state schools into community facilities (e.g. integrating kindergartens, long day care and other family services, providing spaces for community education, and sharing arts facilities, sports facilities and libraries, depending on the needs of the local community)⁵⁷
- Finalise and accelerate investment in the roll-out of Victoria's Strategic cycling corridors and identified walking network improvements⁵⁸
- Develop a stronger evidence base and more transparent decision-making processes to support future State Government investment in community sport and recreation; and community cultural infrastructure. This should include consideration of the condition and use of existing facilities, gaps in provision and demand forecasts, changing trends in participation and more integrated delivery models.⁵⁹

Planning for the future

One of Nillumbik's greatest challenges into the future will be to ensure that the right community infrastructure is in the right locations at the right times so that service providers can respond to community needs proactively and flexibly. Additionally, evolving demographic profiles, consumer preferences, technologies and service delivery models will need to be taken into consideration in the planning and provision of community infrastructure.

Integrating infrastructure planning with land use is a critical factor, but striking a balance between major new builds and initiatives that reduce demand and get the most out of Nillumbik's existing infrastructure is just as important.

Achieving this balance will require open conversations with residents and ratepayers about the level of infrastructure that is expected, and the extent to which they are willing to pay for access to improved infrastructure and the trade-offs between the two. Crucial to these discussions will be

⁵⁴ Infrastructure Victoria (2019) Op. cit.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

evidence-led polices, robust data and careful analysis to support investment proposals and to base decisions on.⁶⁰

Adequate planning for established areas such as Nillumbik requires an appreciation of the existing services and facilities, including capacity, condition and the potential to increase, decrease or modify the services that are offered there.⁶¹

To ensure they realise full value from these assets, councils need to effectively plan for, manage, and utilise them. Effective management of these assets requires the collection of appropriate information, including their value, cost to maintain and operate, condition, performance, risk and utilisation. Councils should then use this information to make decisions about their assets. These asset management decisions include how and when to invest in new assets, as well as decisions about maintenance, replacement, upgrades, and disposals.⁶²

A proposed Community Infrastructure Planning Framework for Nillumbik encompasses key assessments including supply and demand forecasts along with gap analysis to inform key aspects of the planning process including the following:

- Consideration of community infrastructure needs in long-term financial planning
- Identifying timing of expected major capital expenditure and any periods where this may coincide (see figure 13 'red areas')
- Repurposing surplus assets (see figure 13 'blue areas') to address areas of shortage (see figure 13 'red areas') which reduces the need for costly new capital expenditure to address shortages
- Divestment of surplus assets and acquisition of new assets funded by the divestments
- Ability to access rental opportunities to address short-term shortages.

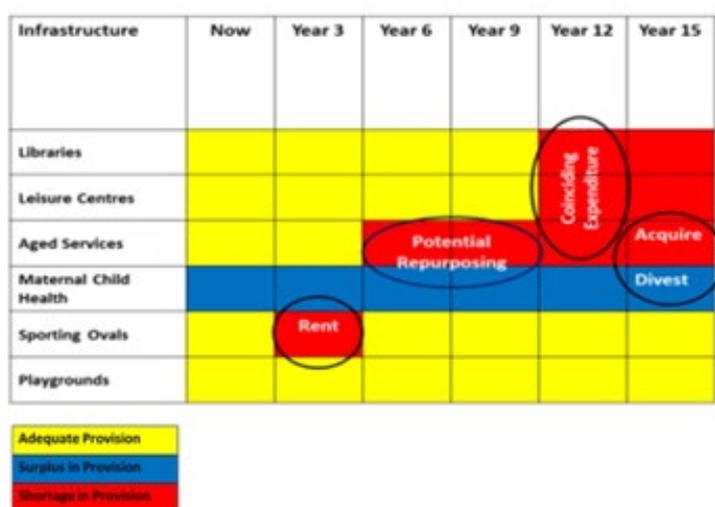


Figure 13 – Addressing current and forecast gaps in infrastructure provision

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ SGS Economics and Planning (2018) Whittlesea 2040: Background Paper, p. 19.

⁶² Victorian Auditor General's Office (2019) Local Government Assets: Asset Management and Compliance, Victorian Government, p.7.

Infrastructure challenges for Nillumbik now and into the future

One of Council's biggest challenges in relation to the provision of infrastructure is the ability to adequately address the funding gap for renewal and maintenance of existing infrastructure assets. Nillumbik's Financial Sustainability Plan (2013) estimates that Council assets depreciate at about \$9 million per annum. However, despite incremental growth in capital works spending in recent years, Council in 2013-14 still only budgeted to spend about \$6 million per annum on renewal of these assets. Underspending on renewal is not a saving, as higher costs will eventually be borne by future ratepayers.

A number of Nillumbik's facilities managed by or on behalf of Council are ageing and will require significant expenditure to upgrade them to contemporary standards, both in terms of community expectations and current design standards. Further, local conditions present a number of infrastructure challenges for Council. Nillumbik has steep topography and is heavily treed, which both add to infrastructure and maintenance costs. Also, when much of Nillumbik was first subdivided, only low-scale infrastructure was provided.

Community expectations for roads, footpaths and drainage are now different, and a higher level of infrastructure is often required as demographics and associated needs change.

Summary

- Changing demographics will impact on the provision of services and infrastructure
- The successful planning and provision of services and infrastructure will need to be monitored using appropriate indicators (such as Liveability Indicators)
- Partnerships, colocation and innovative delivery solutions to the provision of Services and infrastructure will become more important in the future.

Employment and the economy

Victoria's economy is impacted by global and local trends, including geopolitical developments, environmental pressures, demographic changes, information and capital flows and technological developments.

The need for sustainable economic development, particularly in relation to climate change, is also a global trend that will have implications for Victoria's economy.⁶³

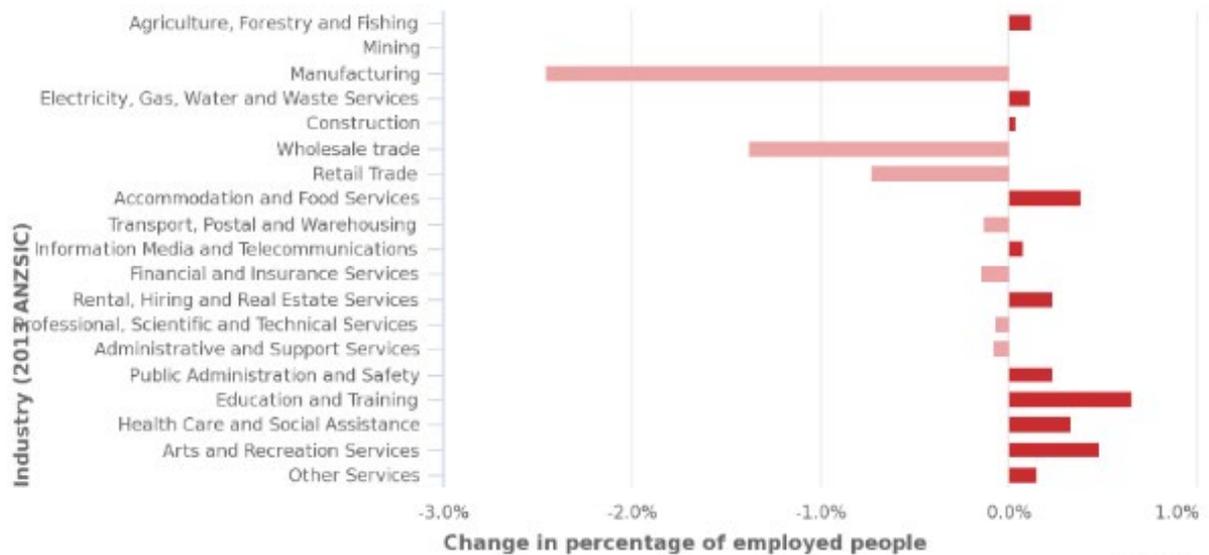
Historically, Victoria has been described as the manufacturing belt of Australia. While it is true that manufacturing is a bigger share of Victoria's economy compared to its share in other state economics, Victoria has increasingly been making a transition from an industrial economy based on manufacturing to a tertiary economy based on services.⁶⁴

⁶³ Deloitte Access Economics (2016) Op. cit.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

Change in industry sector of employment, 2011 to 2016

Nillumbik Shire - Total employed persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

Figure – 14 - Change in industry sector employment for Nillumbik

Industry sector of employment

Nillumbik Shire - Employed persons (Usual residence)	2016			2011			Change
	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	Number	%	Greater Melbourne %	2011 to 2016
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	207	0.6	0.6	170	0.5	0.5	+37
Mining	76	0.2	0.2	75	0.2	0.2	+1
Manufacturing	2,121	6.5	7.7	2,966	9.0	10.8	-845
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	338	1.0	1.0	306	0.9	1.0	+32
Construction	4,006	12.3	8.2	4,056	12.3	8.2	-50
Wholesale trade	1,070	3.3	3.5	1,541	4.7	5.0	-471
Retail Trade	2,982	9.2	10.1	3,269	9.9	10.6	-287
Accommodation and Food Services	1,508	4.6	6.5	1,404	4.2	5.9	+104
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	1,093	3.4	5.0	1,152	3.5	4.8	-59
Information Media and Telecommunications	635	1.9	2.2	618	1.9	2.3	+17
Financial and Insurance Services	1,170	3.6	4.5	1,236	3.7	4.8	-66
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	500	1.5	1.7	431	1.3	1.5	+69
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,804	8.6	9.0	2,871	8.7	8.9	-67
Administrative and Support Services	939	2.9	3.6	979	3.0	3.5	-40
Public Administration and Safety	1,964	6.0	5.0	1,916	5.8	5.1	+48
Education and Training	3,716	11.4	8.6	3,558	10.8	7.9	+158
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,153	12.8	12.0	4,109	12.4	11.1	+44
Arts and Recreation Services	758	2.3	2.1	609	1.8	1.8	+149
Other Services	1,256	3.9	3.6	1,225	3.7	3.6	+31
Inadequately described or not stated	1,269	3.9	4.9	587	1.8	2.5	+682
Total employed persons aged 15+	32,565	100.0	100.0	33,078	100.0	100.0	-513

Figure 15 – Change in industry sector comparison⁶⁵

⁶⁵ .id Consulting (2019) Op. cit.

Over the next 25 years, the strongest rates of employment growth are expected to be seen in health care, social assistance, education and training, professional, scientific and technical services, financial and insurance services and construction. Those industries are expected to decline include agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and manufacturing.⁶⁶

As older industries decline, new industries will emerge requiring different infrastructure needs.

For example, the manufacturing industry has a pattern of demand for infrastructure including a strong reliance on electricity, which is quite different from the infrastructure requirements for service-based industries.⁶⁷

For Nillumbik, a range of macro-forces are expected to influence Nillumbik’s economy into the future⁶⁸:

- Shift to knowledge industries is having major spatial impacts on employment growth
- Infrastructure such as transport, telecommunications and service amenities is a precondition for stronger growth
- Healthcare and education are key employment generators in the outer metropolitan areas
- Increasing participation of older workers, working longer and in less labour-intensive jobs
- Shifting residential developments driven by jobs, amenities and housing affordability
- Technological advancements and the growing popularity of the ‘gig’ economy.

The Nillumbik economy is unique, given the limited supply of dedicated employment land, the absence of big business and large land areas of the green wedge. Additionally, Nillumbik’s projected population growth is low when compared with neighbouring councils. These factors, coupled with a low-level job containment contributes to a more niche economy in Nillumbik relative to nearby council areas such as Banyule, Whittlesea and Hume.⁶⁹

	Nillumbik Shire	Melbourne’s North
GRP (2018)	\$1.88 billion	\$43.16 billion
Local Jobs (2018)	16,510	372,557
Local Businesses (2017)	6,438	74,696
Employed Residents (2018)	38,730	520,112
Median House Price (2017)	\$871,483	\$737,550

Figure 16 – Nillumbik Economic Snapshot⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Deloitte Access Economics (2016) Op. cit.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Urban Enterprise (2019) Nillumbik Shire Economic Development Strategy: Issues and Options Paper (DRAFT – WORKING DOCUMENT)

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

A consequence of Nillumbik's distance from the central business district (CBD), a low population density and a lack of commercial development, is fewer local opportunities for increased economic sustainability relative to more rapidly urbanising neighbouring councils. With minimal local employment opportunities, more than 70 per cent of employed residents currently travel outside the Shire to work.⁷¹

Nillumbik Shire	2016	% of population
Location	Number	%
Live and work in the Shire	7255	22.3%
Live in the Shire but work outside	23,404	72%
No fixed place of work	1848	5.7%
Total residents employed in the Shire	32,507	100%

Figure 17 – Employed resident's location of employment⁷²

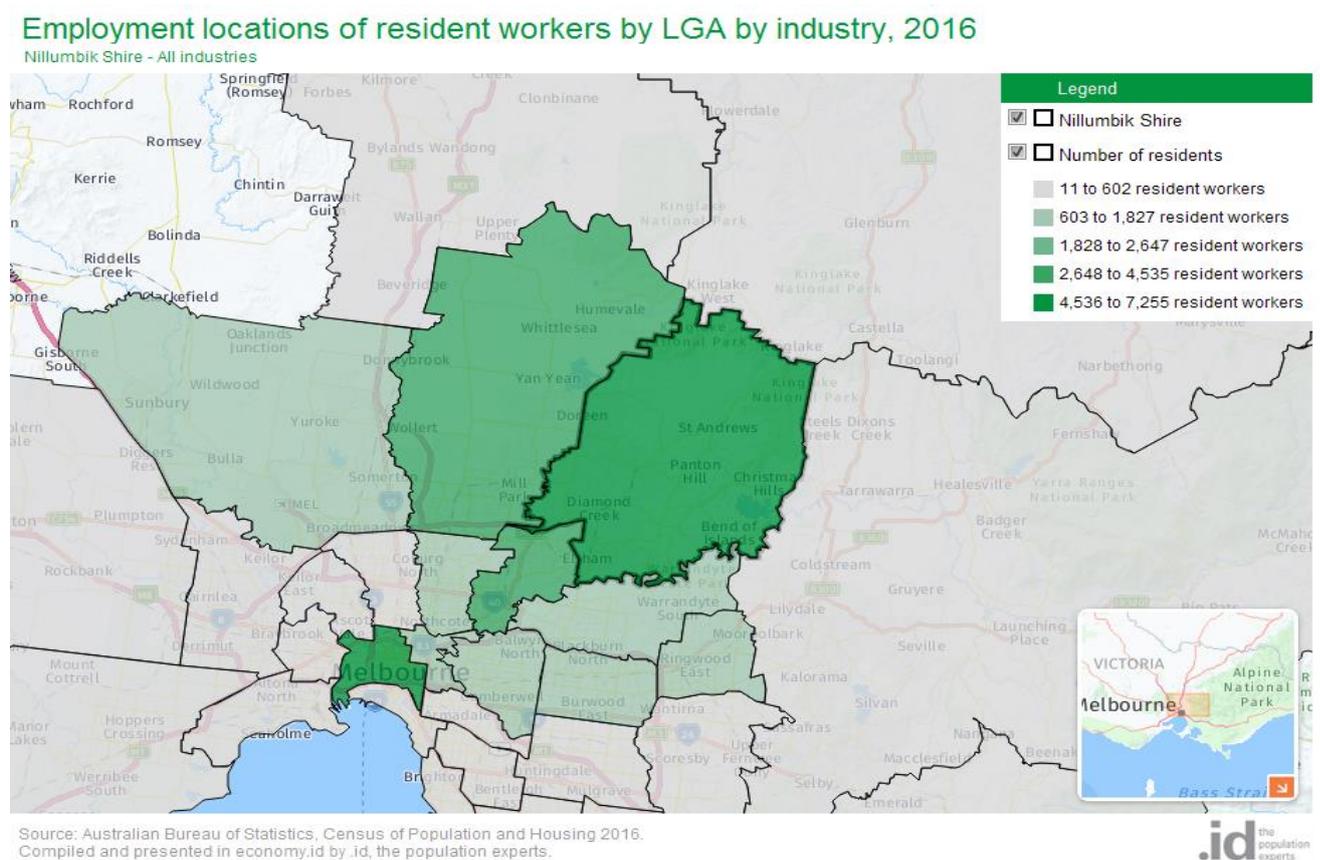


Figure 18 – Employed resident's location of employment

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² *ibid.*

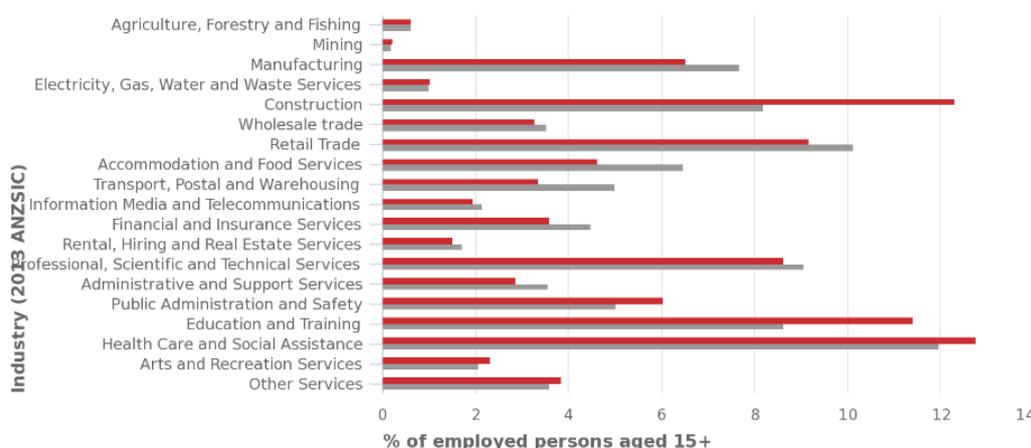
A higher proportion of residents working outside the Shire may exacerbate issues such as escape spending⁷³, traffic congestion, environmental concerns and negative impacts on health and wellbeing. Additionally, a higher level of escape employment may indicate a mismatch between jobs available locally, and the skill set of resident workers. For example, the high proportion of professionals in Nillumbik and the low level of job containment highlights that local employment opportunities are not available for these workers.⁷⁴ Additionally, higher escape employment can indicate that local economic opportunities are not available to resident workers.⁵⁹

Additionally, higher escape employment can indicate that local economic opportunities are not available to resident workers.

Industry sector of employment, 2016

Total employed persons

■ Nillumbik Shire ■ Greater Melbourne



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

.id the population experts

Figure 19 – Industry sector of employment

The most common industries of employment for Nillumbik residents are health care and social assistance (12 per cent), construction (12 per cent), education and training (11 per cent). Retail trade (11 per cent) and professional, scientific and technical services (9 per cent).

Knowledge Economy

The rise of the knowledge economy is based on a highly educated labour force, sophisticated technologies and innovative products and services. The large population of highly educated and highly skilled professionals in Nillumbik aligns well with this transition.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

Nillumbik Shire - Persons aged 15+ (Usual residence)	2016	
	%	Greater Melbourne %
Qualification level		
Bachelor or Higher degree	28.4	27.5
Advanced Diploma or Diploma	10.9	9.5
Vocational	19.0	15.3
No qualification	34.9	38.6
Not stated	6.8	9.2
Total persons aged 15+	100.0	100.0

Figure 20 – Highest qualifications achieved⁷⁵

Continued support for education and training options will be an important consideration in the future as jobs continue to change, particularly in mitigating job losses in industries within the Shire that are deemed to be less viable.

Activity Centre Revitalisation

Nillumbik's core employment areas are focused around the Eltham and Diamond Creek Activity Centres. These commercial areas support a range of employment activities including retail and hospitality, professional services and health care and education. Employment statistics show that the Activity Centres support approximately 5470 jobs combined and have recently experienced an increase of 900 jobs between 2011 and 2016.⁷⁶

The economic role of Nillumbik's Activity Centres is changing due to a range of macro-economic conditions. The changing nature of retail and the increasing popularity of online retail, as well as the consolidation of higher-order retailers across the metropolitan area is placing greater importance on convenience-based retail, retail services and hospitality/entertainment activities in Nillumbik's Activity Centres.⁷⁷

A priority for Nillumbik's Activity Centres could be to focus on convenience-based retail and retail services but also to develop the hospitality and entertainment products to meet the needs of residents and to encourage the visitor economy.

Careful planning of the retail and hospitality sector provides an opportunity to develop a mix of uses in activity centres, and to create a diversity of spaces, places and experiences. Holding special events in centres which reflect and celebrate the unique identity of the local population will draw both residents and visitors to key economic centre within the Shire.

Activity centres also play a key role in providing/supporting housing outcomes. *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* supports new and diverse housing in activity centres that offer good access to jobs, services and public transport.

A 2016 analysis of housing stock in Nillumbik showed that 93 per cent of dwellings within the Shire were separate dwellings, 6.4 per cent were considered medium density and only 0.1 per cent were considered to be high-density dwellings; compared with 66.1 per cent, 22.9 percent and 10.1 per cent in Greater Melbourne respectively.⁷⁸

Given demographic changes (see Population and Demographics) there will be increased demand for one and two-bedroom dwellings that are accessible and adaptable.⁷⁹

A mix of housing types increases residential density and promotes population growth which can support and grow the local economy. Additionally, by providing greater housing choice, Nillumbik

⁷⁵ .id Consulting (2019) Op. cit.

⁷⁶ Urban Enterprise (2019) Op. cit.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ SGS Economics and Planning (2014) Op. cit.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

would be better placed to meet the needs of its residents across their life course by providing appropriate options for young people, families, older residents and residents with a disability.⁸⁰

Support growth in home-based and micro business (self-employment)

There are a number of home-based businesses and micro businesses in Nillumbik. Given the increasingly popularity of the 'gig economy' and the ability to work remotely, the proportion of these businesses are expected to increase in the future.⁸¹

The increase in supply and growing popularity of co-working spaces are providing critical support infrastructure and services to assist businesses in their infancy to grow and mature. The benefits of the co-working model area associated with creating spaces and places which support collaboration, openness, knowledge sharing and innovation.⁸²

Tourism product development

The Shire's close proximity to Melbourne and evident tourism strengths in nature-based assets, agriculture and arts and culture sees it well placed to attract an increase in domestic and international visitors.⁸³

Health related industries

The Nillumbik economy has strengths in health and education, given the growing employment supported in these sectors both locally and regionally. Further, the growing demand for health and education services is more broadly driven by population growth, an ageing population and an increase in chronic health conditions.

Summary

- Technology, local and global trends will continue to transform the types available work, replacing routine-type jobs with higher-skilled work in 'high knowledge' industries
- The population will need new skills for the new economy, particularly people whose employment is affected by automation
- While work is likely to become more flexible, the future distribution of jobs will most likely result in residents still needing to travel outside of Nillumbik for work, requiring improved transport options.

Environment

Nillumbik's natural environment underpins the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. It provides access to nature, recreation, open spaces, healthy soils, clean air and water. It also sustains rural businesses including agriculture, agribusiness, viticulture and tourism, all of which rely on a healthy ecosystem to thrive.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity encompasses all components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including fungi and micro-organisms, across land, rivers, coasts and

⁸⁰ .id Consulting (2016) Op. cit.

⁸¹ Urban Enterprise (2019) Op. cit.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

ocean. It includes the diversity of their genetic information, the habitats and ecosystems within which they live, and their connections with other life forms in the natural world.⁸⁴

A feature of Nillumbik is the continued existence of naturally occurring, native vegetation which provides habitat for native wildlife and the green, leafy visual character of the Shire. The vision of Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2012 is that "Nillumbik's ecosystems are healthy, resilient, productive and connected at a landscape scale for the future".⁸⁵ Yet a range of processes are contributing to an incremental decline of biodiversity and functionality of ecosystems in Nillumbik and across Victoria. These processes include climate change, the presence and spread of pest plants, animals and pathogens, soil erosion and the altered water quality and flows.

There are a number of legislative and regulatory instruments to protect biodiversity in Victoria. Additionally, interest from landowners and community groups is an important contribution which provides thousands of volunteer hours on private and public land controlling threats to biodiversity.⁸⁶ It will also be important to ensure that climate adaptation in other sectors like agriculture and urban development does not inadvertently reduce the ability of biodiversity to adapt and persist.

Climate Change

The Shire of Nillumbik recognises that climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing the world today and into the future.

Council understands the importance of preserving the green wedge, contributing to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, conserving natural resources and to promoting a healthy, safe and resilient community.

Over the past 50 years, growing greenhouse gas concentrations have contributed to warming of Australian air and sea surface temperatures, and this trend is set to continue. *The Fifth Assessment Report* has identified eight key impacts of climate change in Australia, now and into the future. The eight key impacts are:

1. Significant change in the composition and structure of coral reefs
2. Loss of mountain ecosystems and some associated native species
3. Increased frequency and intensity of flood damage to communities
4. Increased constraints on water resources within southern Australia
5. Increased illness, death and infrastructure damage during heat waves
6. Increased damage, economic loss and risk to human life from bushfires
7. Increased risk to coastal infrastructure from continuing sea level rise
8. Significant reduction in agricultural production due to continued drying.

The effects of climate change will be disproportionately felt by those in society who are vulnerable, such as those with lower socio-economic and health status. Many climate change risks to health and safety will arise indirectly from a variety of non-health sectors such as agriculture, water, disaster management and planning. An understanding of approaches to reduce vulnerability to the health and social risks of climate change must incorporate an understanding of equity issues, as well as a focus on multi-sectoral activities. Community-based and social service organisations will play a vital role in responding to climate change risks, given the need for these responses to be delivered at a local level.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (2019) Biodiversity 2037 (online) <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

⁸⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2012) Op. cit.

⁸⁶ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018), Op. cit.

⁸⁷ Bowen, K. & Friel, S. (2015) *Health and social impacts of Climate Change*, in Climate Change Adaptation for health and Social Services, p. 3.

Future changes to the climate will depend upon the rate at which society emits greenhouse gases: the higher the emission levels, the greater the effect on the climate.

By 2070 Melbourne can expect that:

- With low greenhouse gas emissions growth: 1.3 degrees Celsius warmer with 6 per cent less rainfall, or
- With high greenhouse gas emissions growth: 2.6 degrees Celsius warmer with 11 per cent less rainfall.⁸⁸

The expected weather impacts on the Shire of Nillumbik include:

- Increased number of hot days and nights
- Increased frequency and duration of heatwaves
- Increased intensity and duration of droughts
- Less rainfall, particularly in winter and spring
- Increased number of heavy precipitation events
- Increased frequency of windy days and higher wind speeds.

The anticipated impacts of climate change in the coming decades are such that these types of events will increase in frequency and severity and will have a substantially negative impact on food production and therefore food security.⁸⁹ Further, the patterns of warming, a volatile and drying climate will place considerable strains in Australia's and Victoria's primary foodbowl production regions. This reinforces the importance of protecting valuable farmland closer to major population centres with secure access to water.

The Victorian Government has committed to legislating a long-term target for Victoria of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.⁹⁰ To achieve net zero emissions, Victoria will need to transition to renewable energy, and significantly reduce waste outputs.

The Four Pillars of Emissions Reduction

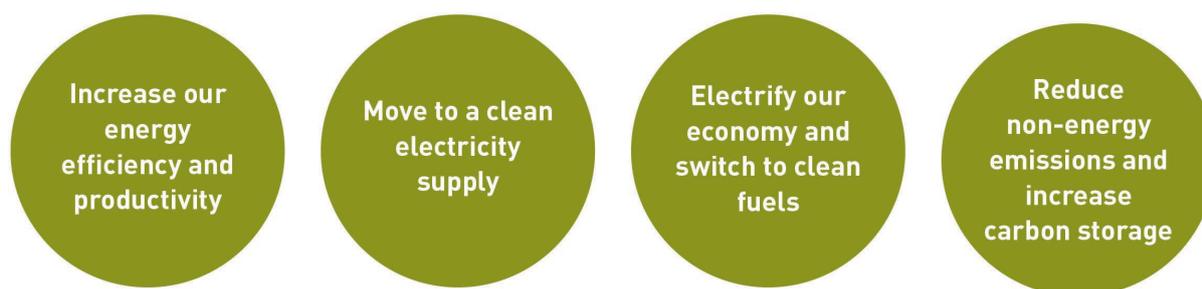


Figure 21 – The four pillars of emissions reduction

⁸⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016a) Climate Change Action Plan (online) <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation#C>

⁸⁹ *ibid*, p.19

⁹⁰ The State Government of Victoria (2016) Victoria's Net Zero by 2050 Emissions Reduction Target (online) <https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/media-releases/victorias-net-zero-by-2050-emissions-reduction-target>

Local governments and their communities will need to contribute significantly to this. Innovation is underway in many local areas where local governments are divesting from fossil fuel, building local energy solutions and examining ways to reduce car dependency.⁹¹

Local government can help the community respond to climate change through direct operations as well as specific initiatives. This can include:

- Supporting water recycling in Council-managed parks, gardens and open spaces
- Reducing the impact of health through tree planting and urban forestry
- Supporting and encouraging renewable energy
- Reducing the use of fossil fuels in transport.

Nillumbik is taking proactive steps to reduce emissions through undertaking a detailed feasibility study into developing a solar energy facility focusing on the Council-owned Plenty and Kangaroo Ground landfill sites. This is in line with Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Drawing on previous work, Nillumbik's Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 recognises that the climate has already begun to change and therefore an additional focus of adaptation is required for further and future work.

Figure 22 – Nillumbik Shire Council's response to climate change



⁹¹ SGS Economics and Planning, Op. cit., p. 32.

The overarching mitigation goal of the plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by Council operations by 17 per cent and from community activities by 6 per cent from 2012 levels by 2020. Council is working to achieve these targets through a combination of energy savings, renewable energy generation and community education activities.

The overarching adaptation goal of the Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 is to ensure that Council and the community have identified risks and vulnerabilities related to climate change and have considered pathways to implement appropriate measures to reduce potential impacts.

The vision, objectives and targets outlined in the plan were developed through cross-organisational review and community consultation.

Nillumbik Shire Council's Commitment

Council operations are carbon neutral through a combination of energy-efficient buildings, infrastructure and vehicles, the use of renewable energy and carbon offsets. Actions to address climate change impacts are embedded through Council policies, strategies and plans. The Nillumbik community has a low reliance on fossil fuels and is actively engaged in lower greenhouse gas emissions, preserving our natural environment and finding ways to become more resilient in the face of climate change.

Water

Access to water and the protection of waterways is controlled by state legislation. Full coordination of governance and planning of the Yarra River corridor by the Victorian Government has been enabled by the passage of the *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murron) Act 2017*. Further *Water for Victoria*, the State Government's water plan provides a framework to strengthen water security for community, protect jobs and agriculture, recognise Aboriginal water values and improve environmental health with a vision that water is fundamental to our communities.⁹²

Management of water is required to support a healthy environment and thriving communities, now and into the future. *Victoria's Integrated Water Management Framework* states that the best approach to integrated water cycle management is a collaborative approach to planning that brings together organisations that influence all elements of the water cycle, including waterways, bays, wastewater management, alternative and portable water supply, stormwater management and water treatment.⁹³

At a local level, Council's *Integrated Water Management Strategy* sets targets for a diverse water supply and for stormwater quality and flow patterns discharged to feeders in the Yarra River, Plenty River, Diamond Creek, Arthurs Creek and Watsons Creek catchments.

Nillumbik's ecosystem and the liveability of the Shire depends upon maintaining water supply to support every aspect of the natural environment.

Bushfire

Bushfire occurs naturally within Nillumbik's landscape. Many of the plants and animals in Nillumbik have evolved to survive fire events, and are reliant on bushfire to regenerate and maintain their health. Bushfires occur every year. Most are brought under control quickly however, occasionally fires occur in conditions where they cannot be controlled. Such conditions existed in February 2009. The Black Saturday Fires devastated the Nillumbik community with tragic loss of life from a fire that burned a quarter on the landscape.⁹⁴

⁹² Nillumbik Shire Council (2019) Nillumbik Shire Council (2019) Green Wedge Management Plan – Draft Revision.

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018) Op .cit.

Summary

- By 2050, Victoria will be hotter and will experience more extreme weather events. The increase of these events will subsequently increase risks to human health, property and infrastructure⁹⁵
- Council must determine the most effective way to respond to climate change within its confines of their influences and resources⁹⁶
- Climate change will have a substantially negative impact on food production and therefore food security
- A collaborative approach is required across a number of key policy areas to ensure that Nillumbik remains liveable, safe, resilient, economically viable and capable of meeting the needs of climate change.
- The transition to renewables has the potential to create new opportunities in Nillumbik. The technological skills developed in economies that embrace renewable energy have been shown to be transferable to a range of other industries.⁹⁷

Transport

By 2050 Melbourne's transport network will need to cater for almost 24 million trips a day – up from 13.4 million today.⁹⁸

Current transportation planning will increase the future options for urban travelling to and from Nillumbik, particularly for work, business, and tourism and higher education purposes.

Plans for additional transport Infrastructure

Upgrade of the Hurstbridge Rail Line, Melbourne Metro Tunnel and High Capacity Train

A 1.2 km single section of track between Heidelberg and Rosanna on the Hurstbridge line was duplicated in 2018.

The second stage of this upgrade is planned to start in 2020 and finish by 2022, including a new train station at Greensborough, the duplication of 3 km of track between Greensborough and Montmorency and the duplication of 1.5 km of track between Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen.

This will allow more train services to run during the morning peak. At Greensborough, trains would run every six-and-a-half minutes, every 10 minutes at Eltham and Montmorency, and every 20 minutes at Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen. Two extra express services would also be added to the Hurstbridge line.⁹⁹

The additional train services will increase passenger capacity from the 2019 timetable by approximately 21 percent at Eltham and 28 percent at Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge.

Through Melbourne Metropolitan, Nillumbik will enjoy improved rail access to inner Melbourne and the University of Melbourne.¹⁰⁰

High-capacity trains are being introduced to Melbourne's rail network, together with advanced signalling systems. The new trains will carry 20 percent more passengers than the 2019 fleet and will be first on the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines. It is not known whether or when they will be introduced to the Hurstbridge line.

⁹⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016) Op. cit.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ SGS Economics and Planning, Op. cit., p 36.

⁹⁸ Transport for Victoria, *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28*.

⁹⁹ The State Government of Victoria (2019) Metro Tunnel – Metropolitan Lines (online)

https://metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/313410/MT-Line-Benefits-Brochure-Metropolitan-Lines.pdf

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

Airport Rail Link

A rail link from the Melbourne CBD via the Sunshine rail station to Melbourne Airport is in detailed planning to be built in 2022-2031. Interchanging at Southern Cross station, residents of Nillumbik will catch two trains to access the international airport.

Suburban Rail Loop

The proposed 90 km Suburban Rail Loop would connect the middle suburban regions including the Monash NEIC, Burwood education precinct, Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC), La Trobe NEIC, Broadmeadows MAC, Melbourne Airport, Sunshine NEIC and Werribee NEIC. It would connect three of our major university precincts — Monash, La Trobe and Deakin.¹⁰¹

In addition to the upgrade of the Hurstbridge line and the Melbourne Metro, it will give residents of Nillumbik rail access to all of Melbourne's universities, airport and major employment centres.

The proposal is currently subject to business case planning. At this stage, implementation timetables are only speculative. It is suggested that it could commence in 2022 and take several decades to complete.

North-East Road Link

North East Link provides a new freeway standard connection between the M80 Ring Road and an upgraded Eastern Freeway. It is planned to be built between 2020 and 2027.

Accessibility improvements for businesses due to North East Link are expected increase productivity across Melbourne, with flow-on benefits for the wider Victorian economy.¹⁰² In 2016-36, Nillumbik is expected to gain an additional 5 percent growth in employment (1090 people) as a result of faster access to employment opportunities.¹⁰³

Nillumbik local planning policy identifies that the municipality contains good road linkages to the north and west of Melbourne. However, arterial routes within the Shire are experiencing pressure for improvements to the road network to allow for better access to and from non-urban and urban areas.

While North East Link has been designed to largely avoid Nillumbik, the project will address some of the transport and accessibility objectives by improving road links to the wider region.¹⁰⁴

East-West Road Link

It is uncertain whether or when the East West Link proposed in 2013-14 will proceed, particularly as many had seen it as the alternative to the North East Link and the West Gate Tunnel, now under construction.

Public Transport

Good access to public transport is an important feature of a sustainable community. Public transport reduces the need to travel by car, and improves the mobility of the vulnerable segments of the population such as disabled, older persons, children, adolescents, and people unable to afford buy and/or run a car. Consequently, public transport access is often mentioned in terms of reducing transport-related disadvantage and is seen as a tool to improve social inclusion and community wellbeing. Better public transport access is also associated with reduced car travel, which can in turn help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support public health through increased walking and physical activity.⁷

¹⁰¹ Victorian Government, *Suburban Rail Loop Strategic Assessment*, 2018.

¹⁰² Victorian Government, *North East Link Environment Effects Statement, Summary Report*, 2019.

¹⁰³ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Victorian Government, *North East Link Environment Effects Statement, Chapter 13 Land Use Planning* 2019.

Transport indicator	Nillumbik	Metropolitan Melbourne
Percentage of workers who commute more than two hours daily	16.5%	12.6%
Percentage of population near to public transport	50.0%	84.5%
Percentage of worker journeys that are by public transport	8.7%	14.0%
People who used public transport to travel to work, 2011	1.5%	4.2%
Passenger vehicles per 1,000 population	626.1	601.3

Figure 23 - Transport indicators¹⁰⁵

Long commute time is associated with a range of negative health effects including: stress, lower life satisfaction, negative impact on family and community relationships, financial costs, and lack of time available for health-promoting behaviours.

Council should continue to advocate strongly for improved public transport. Opportunities may emerge through technology platforms to provide more choice and accessibility to transport solutions. The sharing economy continues to grow and the ability to reach more people with innovative solutions might enable transport to be delivered more efficiently by on-demand booking systems integrated into the broader transport network.

Walkability

Walking is the foundation for all mobility and always will be. Safe, accessible, desirable and interesting walking for people of all abilities is an enabler and an indicator of communities that want to be known as liveable. Walkability needs to be planned for and maintained.

Walking is a fundamental part of the transport system so needs infrastructure that enables people to go to where they need to go with reasonable comfort. Every road should be able to be walked along. Walking is fundamental to human health so needs to be built into everyday life as well as recreation.

Walking is fundamental to social interaction so infrastructure needs to enable places of rest, congregation and conviviality. The future is the same as the past. The only difference is the level of care by which it is facilitated in the built environment.

The planning and design of local neighbourhoods is an important influence on physical activity, health outcomes, social connectedness and sustainability.

¹⁰⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Profile (online)
<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/people-and-family/nillumbik-community-health-and-wellbeing-profile-2016.pdf>

Examples of high and low connectivity are shown below:

High Connectivity



Low connectivity



Figure 24 - Examples of walkable connectivity

Previous research has identified three key factors in determining Walkability for Transport: Land Use Mix (something to walk to); Road Connectivity (a way to get there); and Housing Density (more housing supply in walkable areas). These three factors have been used to calculate a measure of Walkability for Transport for all metropolitan Local Government. Measures are ranked in deciles (low=1, high=10).¹⁰⁶

- Walkability for Transport in Nillumbik in 2012 was in the lowest decile (1)
- Proportion of the population within 400m of the Principle Bicycle Network: 18.5 percent. The average for metropolitan Melbourne is 28.5 percent
- Average distance from Nillumbik residences to the Principle Bicycle Network: 34.4km.
- Nillumbik has one of the lowest rates of walking for transport in the metropolitan area. Only 24 percent of residents walk for transport at least two days per week compared to 37 percent for whole metropolitan area
- School walkability scores are scaled between 0-2. In Nillumbik, school walkability is 0.9. The average score for school walkability in metropolitan Melbourne is 1.2.

¹⁰⁶ Giles-Corti, et. Al. (2014) How Walkable is Melbourne? The Development of a Transport Walkability Index for Metropolitan Melbourne.

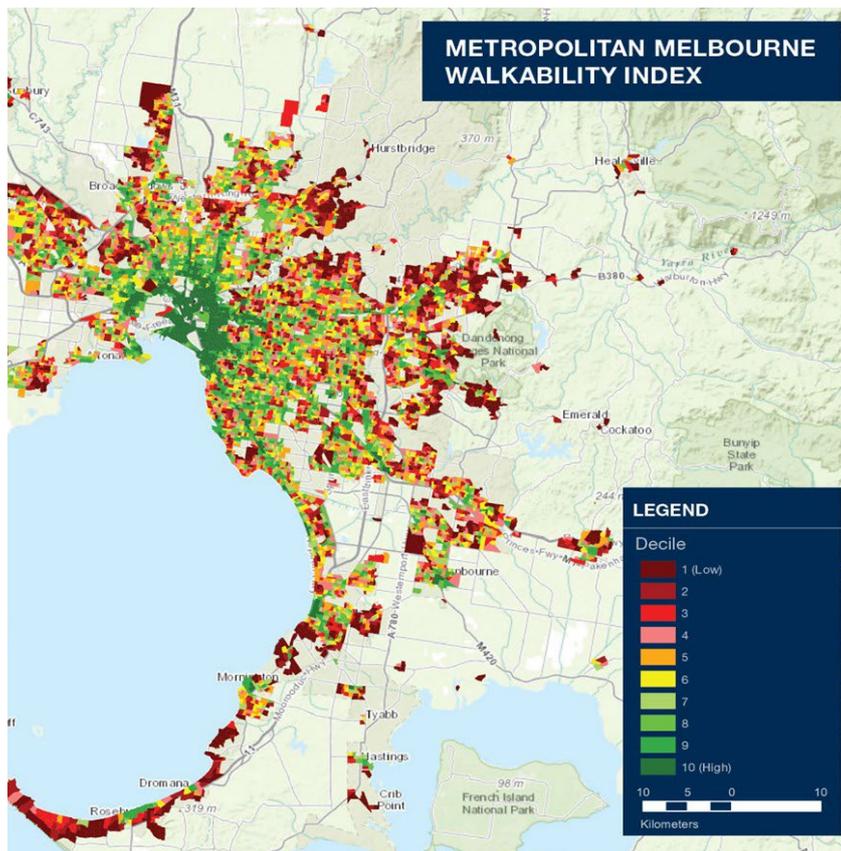


Figure 25 - Transport Walkability Index

Transport and accessibility in the Green Wedge

The rural community experiences challenges of access and mobility, particularly for isolated children, young and elderly people. Accessibility can have a range of health and wellbeing impacts, including access to employment or how socially connected people are. Surveys that supported the development of Council's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* and the community engagement that informed this plan both revealed relatively low resident satisfaction with public transport in the green wedge.¹⁰⁷

The bicycle and shared trail networks (see Figure 4), footpaths and bus stops, are also important for mobility: and accessibility within the green wedge. Council implements a municipal road management plan. High-use and higher-maintenance roads are prioritised for sealing, which is considered to be of environmental benefit to reduce dust, silt and debris run-off into waterways. This can be a significant problem in the peri-urban area where rural unsealed roads are heavily used as if they are suburban roads.

Summary

- Changing population, living and working conditions will mean more trips; more people moving around accessing jobs and services
- Reducing reliance on cars and increasing public transport options will have a positive impact on air quality and climate change
- Creating mixed-use places where people can access a range of services and facilities will be important.

¹⁰⁷ Nillumbik Shire Council (2019) Green Wedge Management Plan – Draft Revision, p. 14.

Community health and wellbeing

Overall, the population of Nillumbik is at the higher end of the socio-economic gradient in Melbourne. This means that in many aspects, the population of Nillumbik enjoys better than average health and wellbeing.

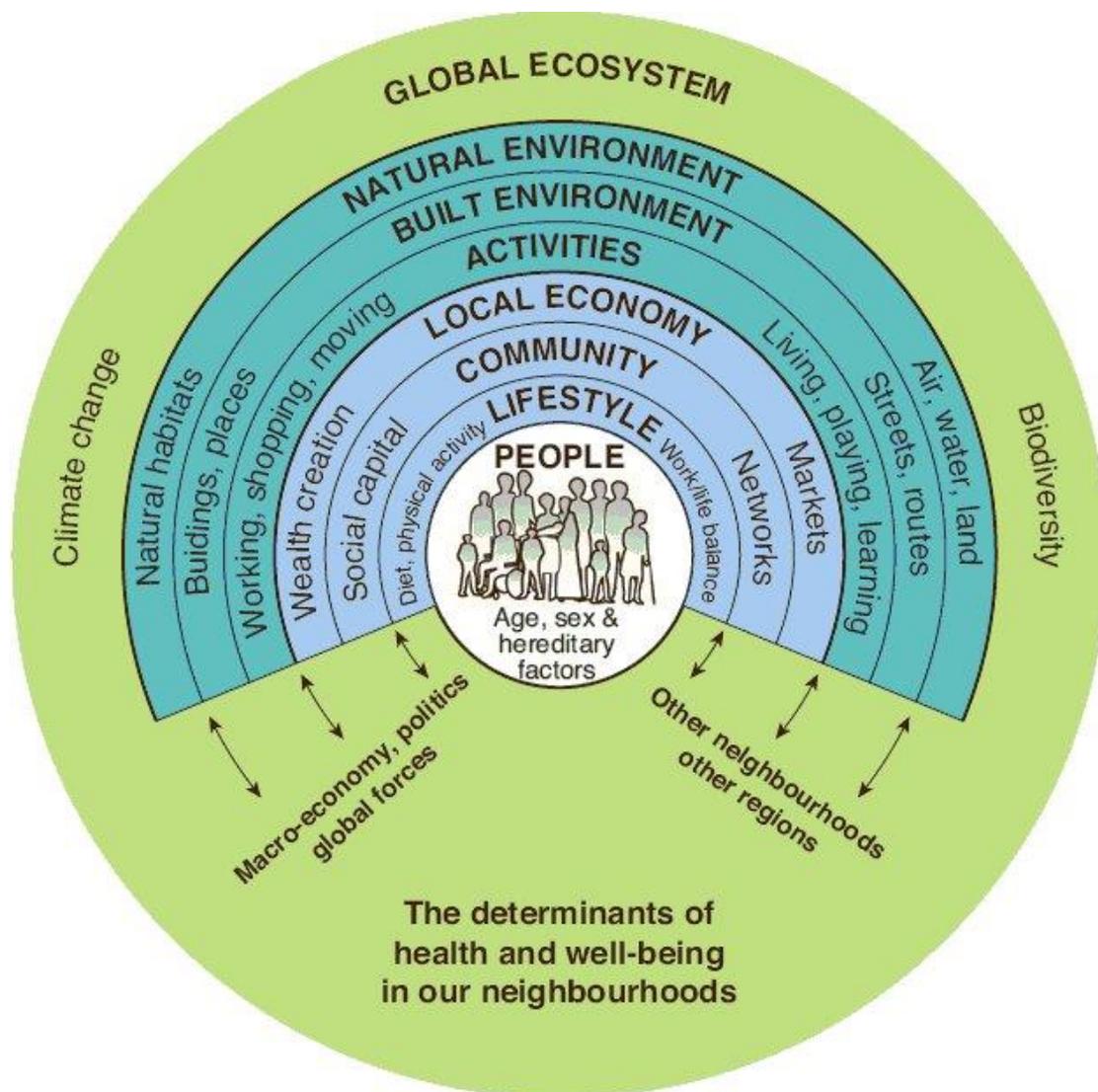


Figure 26 – Health map of the determinants of health and wellbeing in neighbourhoods

Our relatively healthy population also demonstrates that Nillumbik provides an environment that fosters good health. However, certain widespread health inequalities persist within our municipality, affecting different population groups in different ways.

Health equality means that women and men, girls and boys have the opportunity to attain their full health potential, and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this.

Some examples of health inequalities in Nillumbik are¹⁰⁸:

- Gender inequalities in terms of pay, higher caring responsibilities, higher overall workloads and vulnerability to violence affect women's physical and mental health.
- Educational status, as a key social determinant to health is changing in Nillumbik. The older population is more qualified than on, average, the metropolitan area, the younger generation is less so.
- Higher socio-economic status of a population sees a reverse impact of alcohol misuse. Drinking more than recommended is significantly more prevalent in Nillumbik compared to the average of Victoria, with 56 percent of adults in Nillumbik drinking at risky levels at least monthly, compared with 39 percent of Victorians
- People with disabilities are more likely to have a low income, have lower levels of workforce participation and education, and be socially excluded or marginalised.

Community health and wellbeing trends

The tables below provide information on health and wellbeing trends in Nillumbik. The trend lines in green show improvement and the trend lines in olive show a decline. These include trends in chronic disease, risk factors and protective factors.

These indicator trends show that the prevalence of chronic disease is increasing, consistent with trends in Victoria and at a global level. The prevalence in chronic disease in Nillumbik is lower than average Victoria, and self-reported health is improving.¹⁰⁹

The modifiable risk factors for health and wellbeing show corresponding trends on several indicators. While smoking and psychological distress show improvements, the rate of overweight, physical inactivity, vegetable intake and alcohol intake area all trending towards higher risk for chronic ill-health. The rate of family violence reports in Nillumbik is also trending upwards, although it is still below the Victorian average.

Social factors that impact health and wellbeing can have a protective effect have also reduced in recent years, but again tend to be stronger in Nillumbik compared to Victorian averages. Indicators like feeling safe walking alone at night and ability to count on help from neighbours, volunteering and acceptance of multi-culturalism have seen declines, whereas membership of local groups, such as a sports group, and participation in the arts and local events have strengthened.

¹⁰⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

Figure 27 - Community health and wellbeing trends

Trends in chronic diseases, Nillumbik

TREND	OVERVIEW
<p>Fair or poor health</p>	<p>Self-reported health status is a good indicator of health. The proportion of population reporting poor health declined from 16% in 2008 to 13% in 2014.</p>
<p>Heart disease</p>	<p>The proportion of population reporting heart disease increased from 5.7% in 2008 to 7.4% in 2014.</p>
<p>Cancer</p>	<p>The proportion of population reporting cancer increased from 7.1% in 2008 to 7.9% in 2014.</p>
<p>Stroke</p>	<p>The proportion of population who reported stroke increased from 2.5% in 2008 to 3.3% in 2014.</p>
<p>Diabetes type 2</p>	<p>The prevalence of reported diabetes type 2 is relatively low in Nillumbik but increased from 1.8% in 2008 to 2.8% in 2014.</p>
<p>Depression/Anxiety</p>	<p>Self-reported diagnoses of depression or anxiety (during lifetime) increased from 20% in 2008 to 24% in 2014. This may be due to reduced stigma in seeking treatment.</p>
<p>Overweight</p>	<p>The proportion of population who are overweight or obese is increasing. The rate increased from 41.3% in 2008 to 52.1% in 2014.</p>
<p>Chlamydia</p>	<p>The rate of chlamydia in Nillumbik is higher than for other Victorian populations.* Most diagnoses are in young people under 25 years.</p>

* Women's Health in the North. (2016). Nillumbik Sexual and Reproductive Health Snapshot 2016. Source: Victorian Population Health Surveys 2008, 2011, 2014.

Trends in modifiable factors that are risks to health and wellbeing, Nillumbik

TREND	OVERVIEW
<p>Smoking status</p>	<p>The self-reported smoking rate decreased from 15% in 2008 to 11% in 2014.</p> <p>The rate among school students is about the same as the adult rate.</p>
<p>Physical inactivity</p>	<p>45% of adults do not meet the physical activity guidelines. This grew from 26% in 2008.</p>
<p>Inadequate vegetable intake</p>	<p>9 out of 10 adults do not eat the recommended serves of vegetables each day.</p> <p>The rate is about the same for teenagers.</p>
<p>Psychological distress</p>	<p>The proportion of people experiencing high or very high distress is decreasing. The rate was 9% in 2008 and 4% in 2014.</p> <p>The rate is much higher for teens (13.6%).</p>
<p>Family violence</p>	<p>The rate of family violence reported to police is increasing.* In 2012, the rate was 397 per 100,000 population, compared to 618 per 100,000 in 2016.</p>
<p>Alcohol risk</p>	<p>Self-reported drinking at risk for short-term harm is increasing (from 51% in 2008 to 56% in 2014).</p> <p>Risky drinking is higher in Nillumbik than on average for Melbourne.</p>
<p>Pokies expenditure</p>	<p>Expenditure on gaming machines increased from \$7.76 million in 2013 to \$8.3 million in 2017.†</p> <p>The number of gaming machines increased from 80 to 90.</p>

* Crime Statistics Agency. (2017). † Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation. (2017). Source: Victorian Population Health Surveys, 2008, 2011, 2014.

Trends in social factors that are protective of health and wellbeing, Nillumbik

TREND	OVERVIEW
<p>Housing diversity</p> <p>2011 2016</p>	<p>In the 5 years between 2011 and 2016, medium or high-density housing increased from 5% to 6%.*</p> <p>Diverse housing allows older and younger people to remain in Nillumbik through life transitions.</p>
<p>Perception of safety</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The proportion of people who feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night decreased from 81% in 2008 to 72% in 2014.</p>
<p>Able to get help from neighbours</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The proportion of people who feel they can definitely get help from their neighbours declined from 76% in 2008 to 51% in 2014.</p>
<p>Belong to sports group</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The proportion of people who belong to a sports group increased from 32% in 2008 to 39% in 2014. However, across Victoria, membership is much higher among men and young people than women and older people.</p>
<p>Volunteering</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>Volunteering declined from 39% in 2008 to 23% in 2014, but is stronger in Nillumbik compared to other areas.</p>
<p>Attend local events</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>Attendance at local events remains strong in Nillumbik, at 68% in 2008 and 70% in 2014.</p>
<p>Multiculturalism</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The proportion of people in Nillumbik who think multiculturalism makes life better declined from 76% in 2008 to 49% in 2014.</p>

* Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). QuickStats.
Source: Victorian Population Health Surveys, 2008, 2011, 2014.

Food Security

Supporting a thriving food system is fundamental to supporting a thriving community. As such, the development of the food economy requires an open and coordinated approach where all aspects are considered.

Food security 'exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary need and food preference for an active and healthy life'.¹¹⁰ A 2017 report undertaken by SUSTAIN – The Australian Food Network and supported by the Victorian Local Governance Association (VGLA) estimates that at least 60 per cent more food will be needed to feed Melbourne by 2050 and yet less water and land will be available.¹¹¹

While historically cities were located close to secure supplies for fresh food, this nexus was broken in post-World War II urban planning strategies in Australian cities. With the emergence of global food systems, there appeared to be little need for planners to incorporate issues relating to food security into planning schemes; the rationale for which appears to be aligned to the perspective that Australia's food system is secure because we produce 60 per cent more food than we consume.¹¹² However, a more critical assessment, taking climate change into account suggests that such a situation cannot be taken for granted.

Melbourne's foodbowl currently produces enough vegetables to meet 82 percent of Greater Melbourne's needs, but by 2050, urban sprawl could reduce the capacity of the foodbowl, so that it can only produce enough food to meet 18 percent of the city's food needs.¹¹³

Easy access to land for growing food is critical for improving access to nutritious food. Many Victorian local government food policies already exist, particularly in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

¹¹⁰ Thomson, D. (2018) Nillumbik Food Environment Research Project Outcome Report, Monash University, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Rose, N. and Hearn A.H. (2017) Food systems and the Role of Local Government, Melbourne: SUSTAIN, p.9.

¹¹² *ibid*, p.20.

¹¹³ Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015) Melbourne's Foodbowl – Now and at Seven Mission (online)

<https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/112596/Melbourne%20Foodbowl%20Now%20and%20at%20seven%20million%20higher%20res.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

These policies frame food security in terms of low-carbon production, efficient water use, and reduction on the 'food miles' required to transport agricultural produce to customers.¹¹⁴

If Melbourne is able to accommodate the predicted population increase in a way that contains urban sprawl and retains the city's capacity for peri-urban food production, Melbourne's foodbowl could contribute to a more resilient city food supply despite the increasing climate pressures on food production.¹¹⁵

Food production also opens innovative pathways to improving community health and wellbeing. Food growing, preparation and sharing are all ways to engage diverse groups and reduce social exclusion; which in itself is a determinate of health (see 'Community Wellbeing'). Community food practices offer a way to build social cohesion and community resilience. A 2017 research project conducted by Monash University and supported by Nillumbik Shire Council and healthAbility detailed the many and varied ways food and food production can increase the availability and affordability of essential food items within Nillumbik, encourage tourism to the region, and improve the health of residents.

Social Cohesion

Social gathering, personal wellbeing and community activities are all important aspects of social cohesion and community connectedness.

Research indicates that show that community cohesion in Australia is declining. The changes describe in this paper in relation to population growth, climate change and economic activity can create anxieties in populations that can impact on cohesion.¹¹⁶

A lack of social cohesion can affect the health and wellbeing of individuals. In addition to Council facilitating good planning to activate diverse housing, community infrastructure, access to transport and economic opportunities, strategies need to be found to encourage and support active and engaged communities.¹¹⁷

These strategies should be flexible, innovative and allow for the interests and aspirations of the affected communities. Additionally, the opportunity for direct engagement and development of community driven initiatives should be strongly represented.

Work such as this not only builds connections, it also provides an opportunity to address people's concerns about change and focuses engagement on the opportunities that the future brings.

These aspects are integral to an appreciation of diversity, the importance of collaboration and the building of resilience.

Recovery and resilience

Resilient communities foster social cohesion by increasing a sense of belonging and engagement which in turn strengthens self-reliance and empowerment to address local issues.

The February 2009 bushfires led to a tragic loss of life and far-reaching damage to Nillumbik's communities. The bushfires caused major disruptions in the everyday lives of those living in or near the affected communities. Across Victoria, there were 173 fatalities and 2,133 homes were damaged or destroyed. In Nillumbik there were 43 fatalities and 150 homes were damaged or destroyed.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* p.9.

¹¹⁵ Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015), *op .cit.*

¹¹⁶ SGS Economics and Planning (2008) *op .cit.*

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018a), *Op. cit.*

A six-year study of the bushfire recovery in Victoria found that there was progressive recovery at a community level over time, however there was also evidence of delayed impacts on mental health and extended impact at five years post-bushfires.¹¹⁹

Summary

- Overall, Nillumbik experiences a high level of advantage, this however does not negate the need to address areas of disadvantage
- Nillumbik is in a strong position to further develop its existing programs and frameworks to promote health and wellbeing within the community
- Improved collection of health and wellbeing data is required
- By 2050, at least 60 per cent more food will be required to feed Melbourne's growing population; while relatively limited in its scale of production, Nillumbik will need to consider its impact and contribution to broader Melbourne
- Innovative pathways to incorporate food and food production into local community activities can improve health and wellbeing.

Local Government

SGS Planning and Economics maintain that the challenges local government will need to address in the future are created globally and nationally, but are felt on the ground by local communities.¹²⁰

The pressure for councils to decrease their spending, despite the increasing demand for council-related services is unlikely to cease. Councils have limited means to raise funds, and currently have their rates capped under State Government policies.

Responding to future challenges

The 2013-14 Audit of Local Government¹²¹, conducted by the Victorian Auditor General's Office, makes specific mention of some councils facing significant challenges in maintaining existing assets and developing new infrastructure. The report also notes challenges faced by local Councils in delivering high quality services to their local communities. Rate capping will exacerbate this problem, making it more difficult for Local Government to meet the needs of their communities. As a result, Local Governments will have the responsibility to adequately represent their community, without the financial resources to do so under all circumstances.

Research and modelling shows that councils will not be able to meet increasing demands on them by continuing to implement the status quo nor will through implementing efficiency measures alone.¹²²

Councils will need to adopt new ways of working to create opportunities.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) recently acknowledged the challenges facing local government into the future at a recent Future of Local Government Conference and formalised their approach to meeting these challenges through the development of a set of principles to inform future practice.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Gibbs, L., Bryant, R., and Harris, L. (2016) Beyond Bushfires: Community Resilience and Recovery Final Report (online) https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/3043187/Beyond-Bushfires-Final-Report-2016.pdf

¹²⁰ SGS Economics and Planning, op. cit. p.51.

¹²¹ VAGO - Local Government: Results of the 2013–14 Audits

http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_and_publications/latest_reports/2014-15/20150226-localgovernment.aspx

¹²² SGS Economics and Planning, op. cit. p.51.

¹²³ Municipal Association of Victoria (2018) Future of Local Government Network Commitment (online) <http://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/sector-development/future-of-local-government>

MAV maintain that in order for councils to play a valued and effective role in a new system of community-based governance, councils need the legislative flexibility and scope to take further steps along the road to localism. MAV recommends that councils:

- Have the courage to embrace the future and take informed risks to bring about necessary change
- Learn how to be community led, making space for communities to take action themselves, and responding positively to local initiatives
- Deepen their understanding of communities, listening to all their people and engaging with them in new and different ways that reflect community diversity
- Empower citizens through participatory and deliberative democracy, including community boards, precinct committees, cooperatives, citizens juries and others
- Embrace new ways of working to ensure that local needs are met through joined-up planning and services
- Forge more local and regional partnerships that address issues and drive change at community, state and federal levels
- Promote local networks, co-production of goods and services.

In a similar vein, the City of Whittlesea Council explored six capabilities that they believe will be necessary for councils to develop in the future in the development of their Community Vision, Whittlesea 2040. These are:

1. Strong advocacy capacity
2. Capability with technology
3. Staff and internal culture/processes that can facilitate partnerships and collaboration
4. New methods for involving communities in governance
5. Expertise in complex communities needs
6. New business models to transform public service.

Nillumbik Shire Council already demonstrates many of these capabilities, and recent changes to the organisation will ensure that these capabilities will be developed and enhanced. As Nillumbik continues to embrace its agenda for best-value services delivered in an innovative way, it will move closer to generating the greatest outcomes for its community.

Local government reform

Victoria's councils need to be equipped to deliver a range of services and infrastructure for the diverse communities they represent. Modern councils play a vital and extensive role on delivering for their community's. Councils create the social capital that make places into communities. Given councils manage more than \$89 billion of public infrastructure and deliver services valued in excess of \$7 billion every year, the legislative framework which determines the governance and representation of this level of government is critically important.

In 2015, the Victorian Government embarked on a local government reform agenda with the aim of developing a new principle Act for local government to improve the democracy, accountability and service delivery of Victoria's Councils. The development of the *Local Government Bill 2019*, has been informed by five key reform themes:

1. Improved Service Delivery – thorough deliberative engagement and principles to support councils in delivering effective essential services.
2. Strong Local Democracy – by making councillors directly accountable to their community.
3. Improved Conduct – by providing clear standards of behaviour in regulations and stronger mechanisms for conduct breaches, including requiring Councillors to complete training and providing arbiter's powers to address misconduct.
4. Community Confidence – improved community confidence through reforms to electoral processes, electoral structures and candidate requirements. A balanced legislative framework will be provided that gives power back to the local community and makes councils and councillors directly accountable.

5. A New Relationship – to support a new relationship between state and local government and the community by removing unnecessary ministerial approvals and arbitrary powers. Autonomy is afforded to councils to develop and adopt their own policies and procedures in accordance with principles of transparency, accountability and sound financial management.

Further Council Amalgamations?

It has been over 20 years since the Victorian government reduced Victoria’s 210 local government authorities to 78 local council areas through amalgamations. In the time that has followed, other jurisdictions have undergone a similar transition including New South Wales and Queensland.

Given the time since Victoria’s last review, possible further amalgamations may not be out of the realm of possibility by 2050.

The role of Council

Council’s role in the implementation of the, community plan will be just and important and diverse as its role in the Plans development.



Figure 28 – Role of Council

Regardless of the role Council is performing, public trust is a key enabler for effective governance.

With the trust and support of the community Council can go further to deliver fundamental services and innovative programs to facilitate the best possible outcomes.

Moving beyond standard compliance measures and taking a proactive approach to accountability, transparency and integrity demonstrates a commitment to improving engagement with the community. This is something that local governments are increasingly being asked to do in order to facilitate meaningful engagement with their communities.

Summary

- Governments at all levels are under increasing pressure to decrease their spending despite increasing demand for varying services
- Council will need new forms of governance if it is to address challenges and realise emerging opportunities
- Growth and change will bring significant opportunities for Nillumbik, the manner in which these are embraced will determine future outcomes for the community.

Conclusion

The themes identified throughout this research paper provide a high level overview of the issues, challenges and opportunities for Nillumbik to consider as it moves towards the development of a Community Vision.

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