

Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2030

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Executive Summary

The Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) aims to strengthen the economy and facilitate job creation over the next 10 years. In 2018, Nillumbik's gross regional product was \$1.88 billion. There are four key sectors within the economy. These sectors are:

- Knowledge-based – education, health care and professional services
- Creative and culture – arts, culture, recreation and tourism
- Primary industry and trade – construction, agribusiness and manufacturing
- Population driven – retail and hospitality.

Strategic drivers of the economy were established through the use of industry data and research. These are identified as crucial focus for responding to challenges and opportunities relevant to locals, businesses and Council. These drivers are:

- Nillumbik residents have a high level of expenditure outside of the Shire
- Low population forecasts
- Dwelling growth is low and there is a need for diverse housing options
- Need to create local businesses and jobs.
- Opportunity to increase visitation and yield through showcasing Nillumbik's recreation, cultural and tourism assets.

The Strategy has four objectives:

1. Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses
2. Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek
3. Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge
4. Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.

Initiatives have been developed to implement the Strategy and achieve its aim.

Collaboration with strategic partners such as local businesses and associations, community, regional economic bodies and State Government will be key to success.

Annual implementation plans will be prepared and reported on through Council's annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes.

This Strategy will provide direction over the next decade, with priorities determined every four years through the preparation of the *Council Plan*.

Introduction

Overview of Nillumbik

Nillumbik Shire is located on the north-east edge of metropolitan Melbourne with both activity centres approximately 25 km north east of Melbourne's CBD. The Shire is generally bound by the Yarra River to the south and Kinglake National Park to the north.

Nillumbik's key employment areas are predominantly concentrated in the Eltham and Diamond Creek activity centres. Further, there are neighborhood centres such as Hurstbridge and the local centres of Christmas Hills, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully, St Andrews, Wattle Glen and Yarrambat.

Most of the Shire is semi-rural or rural in character. Further, one of the metropolitan green wedges, the Nillumbik green wedge, is fully contained within the Shire. This green wedge accounts for 91 per cent of the Council area¹, 80 per cent of that green wedge is privately owned. As a significant proportion of the Shire's land is green wedge, there is a limited supply of dedicated employment land (commercial and industrial).

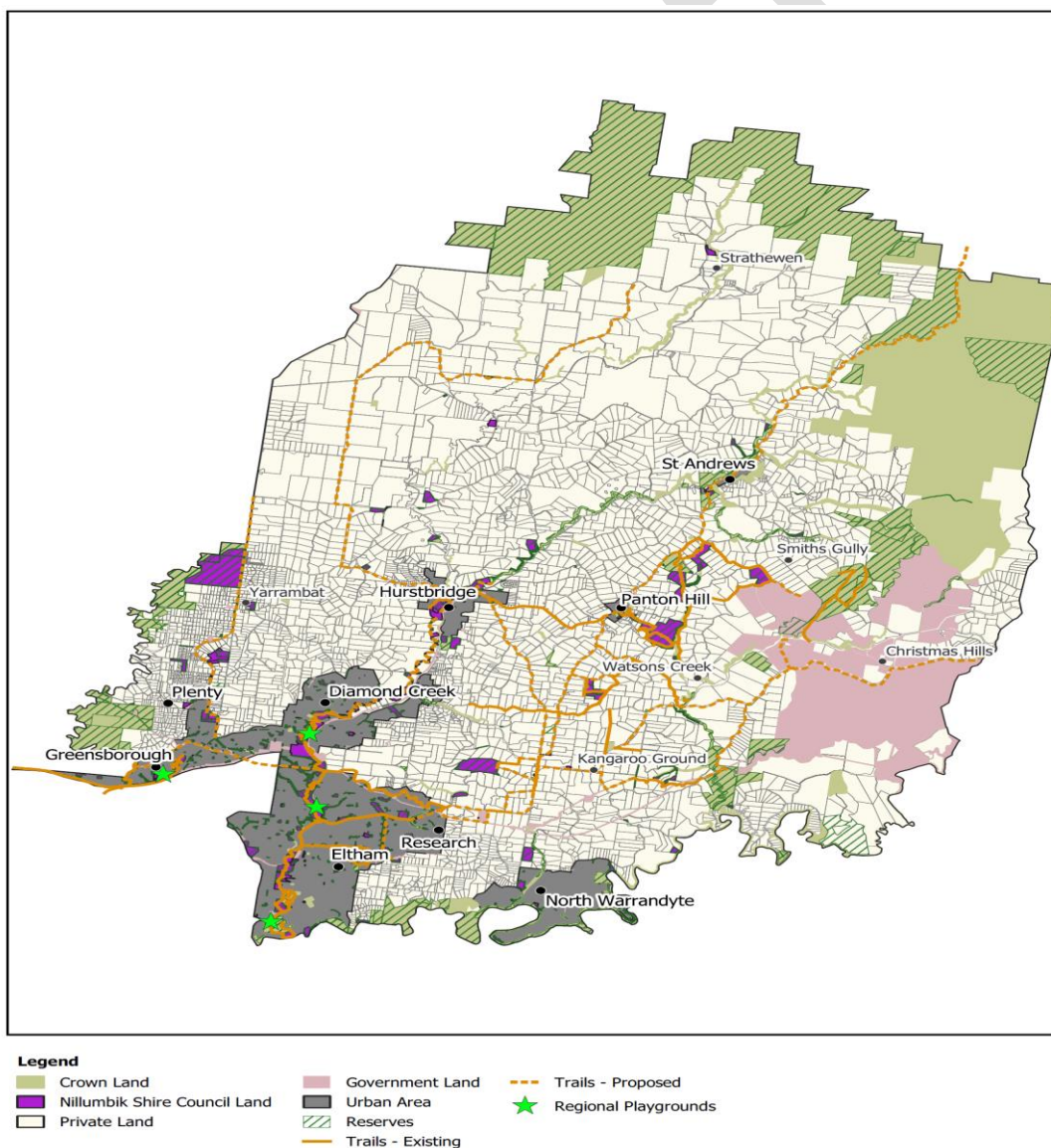


Figure 1: Map of Nillumbik Shire

¹ Green Wedge Management Plan, Nillumbik Shire Council, 2019

Background and Context

The *Council Plan Living the Landscape 2017-2021* lists action 4.1.1 as “Adopt a new Economic Development Strategy and create a set of indicators to measure success”.

This Strategy follows from the Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016. It is consistent with the Victorian Government’s *Plan Melbourne*, adopts the goals of the Shire’s *Council Plan 2017-21* and does not seek to substantially change the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, which governs and guides land use and development.

Melbourne’s north

Nillumbik sits within the Melbourne north region that encompasses six other Local Government Areas. This region consists of a diverse range of economic activities including education, food, fibre and beverages, digital and professional services, advanced manufacturing, health and well-being and freight and logistics which are well serviced due to the proximity to the airport and well-connected road networks.

The region is home to 75,000 local businesses that support 36,000 jobs². It hosts some large employers including La Trobe University and RMIT, the Austin and Northern hospitals, Melbourne Wholesale Market.

There are a number of proposed infrastructure projects in the northern region that will create a positive economic impact for the Shire including:

- Hurstbridge rail line duplication
- North-East Link
- Eltham Community Hospital.

Key to realising this Strategy will be collaboration between state and local government and businesses within Nillumbik. Additionally, it will be important to continue to work with NORTH Link, a regional partnership of industry, education and government, to collaborate and advocate for economic development initiatives.

Council’s strategies and plans

This Strategy forms part of a suite of Council policies, plans and strategies that are intended to work together to realise economic, social and environmental benefits for the Shire. It will provide the economic direction for the next 10 years with priorities established every four years through the Council planning process and the four-yearly review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

Annual implementation plans will be prepared and reported through Councils annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes. The Strategy will inform future versions of the *Council Plan*, Municipal Strategic Statement and other strategies including housing, positive ageing, arts and culture, climate change and recreation. It will also influence advocacy initiatives between Council and State and Commonwealth governments. The relationships between these documents and activities are outlined in Figure 2.

² NORTH Link Investment prospectus 2018

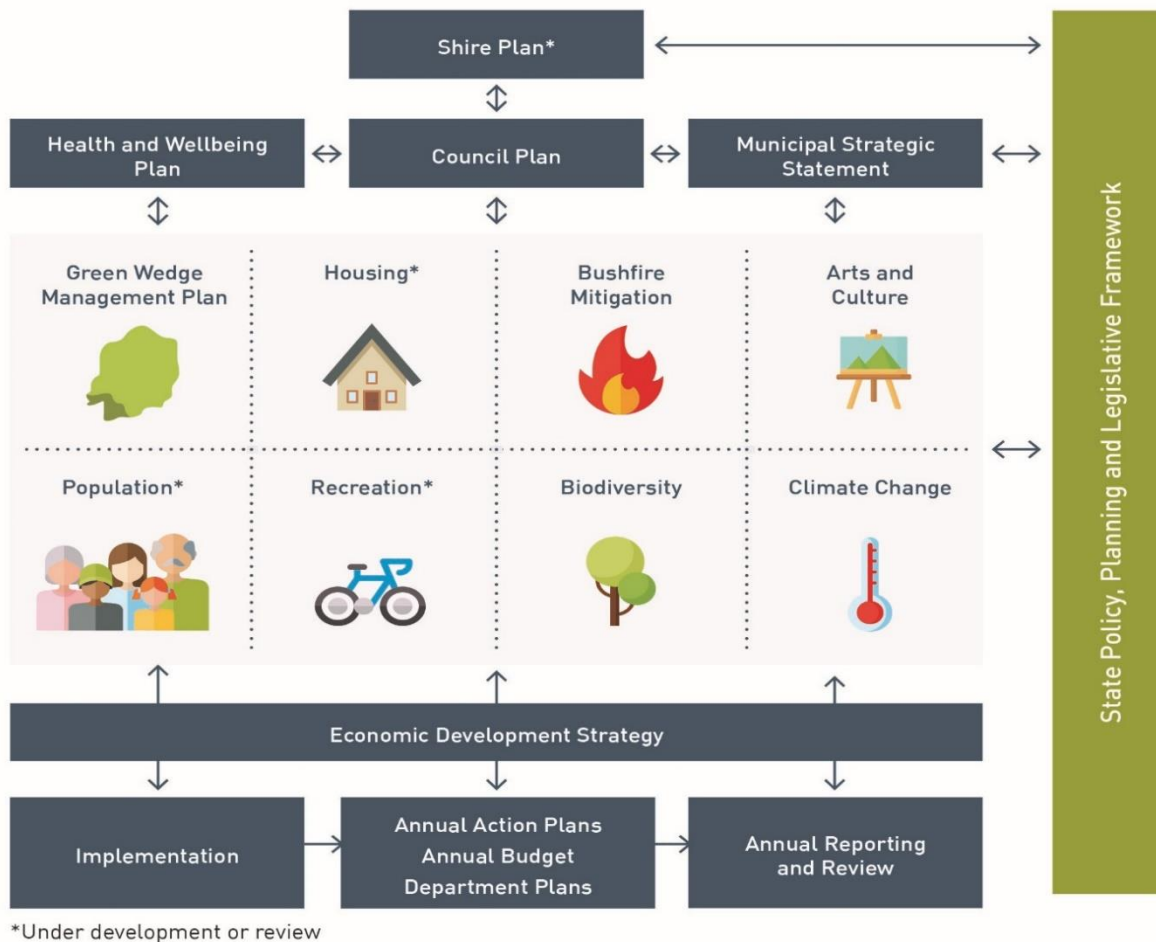


Figure 2. Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework

Economic Vision

The Strategy aims to grow and sustain the Shire's economy over the next 10 years and beyond.

We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, compatible with the Shire's unique natural environment.

Nillumbik at a glance

Population¹

64,941

[2018]

70,391

[Forecast Population 2036]



Dwellings²

22,005

[2018]

25,881

[Forecast Dwellings 2036]



Average Household Size³

2.9 persons

[2018]



Median House Price⁴

\$944,462

[2018]



Socio-Economic Profile⁵

**Ranked 1st
in Victoria**

[most advantaged]



Gross Regional Product⁶

\$1.88 billion

[2018]



Most Common Occupations⁷

Professionals

[26%]

Managers

[16%]



Number of Local Businesses⁸

6,438

[2017]



Number of Local Jobs⁹

16,510



Employed Residents¹⁰

38,730

[2018]



¹ Population Forecasts, Forecast id, id Consulting 2018

² Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2016 / Forecast id, id Consulting 2018

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2016 / Forecast id, id Consulting 2018

⁴ <https://economy.id.com.au/nillumbik/housing-values>

⁵ Socio Economic Index of Areas, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016

⁶ National Economics, Australian Bureau of Statistics / Economy id, id Consulting 2018

⁷ Occupation, Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 - 2016

⁸ Nillumbik Economic Profile, Economy id, id Consulting 2018

⁹ Nillumbik Economic Profile, Economy id, id Consulting 2018

¹⁰ Nillumbik Economic Profile, Economy id, id Consulting 2018

Strategic Economic drivers

Strategic drivers have been identified as opportunities to sustain and grow the Nillumbik economy.

1. Nillumbik residents have a high level of expenditure outside of the Shire

Nillumbik residents spend approximately \$1billion per annum outside the Shire, predominantly in Melbourne, Greensborough and Doncaster³. This leakage from the Nillumbik economy impacts the sustainability and mix of local businesses and, combined with online retail, limits investment attraction and job creation within the Shire. Addressing this escape expenditure is key to growing the number of local businesses and jobs.

2. Need to create local businesses and jobs

Develop the Eltham and Diamond Creek Activity centres as vibrant hubs of economic activity

The Eltham and Diamond Creek activity centres are important hubs for the creation of business opportunities and employment. Their design and operation will provide spaces where business can thrive, residents and visitors can congregate and people can live. These centres are critical to Nillumbik's economic future.

A growth in the number of businesses in emerging industries

The Shire has seen an increase in the number of businesses within the emerging industries which are considered new or restructured industries that are growing faster than the overall economy. This is particularly prevalent in townships that rely on visitors for economic sustainability. These businesses provide unique experiences for locals and visitors and require specialist support in order to become and remain sustainable.

Support for businesses throughout the Shire

While the population is predominantly located near the two activity centres, Council needs to ensure the economic viability of the whole Shire. It is important that there is adequate support for businesses that service residents and visitors and provide local employment throughout the Shire.

The business base is primarily small to medium enterprises

Ninety-nine per cent of businesses are either non-employing or employ less than 20 people⁴. The proliferation of small business in Nillumbik places a greater demand for business engagement to ensure that they receive the required support to operate productively.

A profile of businesses by size in Nillumbik is outlined in Table 1 below⁵.

Table 1. Registered businesses in Nillumbik by number of employees

	Number of businesses
Non-employing	3882
1 - 4 employees	2018
5 - 19 employees	439
20+ employees	77

³ Nillumbik Activity Centre Final Report: Land Use and Economic Capacity, Geographia 2019 (Spendmapp data 2018)

⁴ Business Entries/Exits, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2017

⁵ ABS Counts of Australian Businesses 2016

There is a low level of job containment within the Shire

Seventy-seven per cent of Nillumbik's working residents are currently travelling outside the Shire for work⁶.

There is an opportunity to grow jobs within the Shire through the implementation of major infrastructure projects such as the proposed Eltham hospital, investment attraction and facilitating an environment conducive to business creation.

3. Low population forecasts

Low projected population growth

The Shire has low projected population growth when compared with the state, nearby local government areas and the metropolitan Melbourne average⁷. This presents challenges for Nillumbik's economy to remain sustainable and attract investors. Low population growth may result in stagnant consumer demand.

A forecast higher proportion of senior residents in the next 20 years

The proportion of retirees and seniors is forecast to increase⁸. This will have implications for housing preferences including access to dwellings that facilitate ageing in place. Additionally, as the population ages the Shire may experience an exit of a proportion of the work force. Further, at retirement these persons may close their local business. As people age, their lifestyle and health needs change and they will require different products from local businesses.

4. Dwelling growth is low and there is a need for different types of housing

Low dwelling growth

The Shire has low dwelling growth when compared with the state, nearby local government areas and the metropolitan Melbourne average⁹. The lack of housing limits population growth and therefore local consumer demand.

A need for increased diversity of dwellings

The type, location and price of available housing will impact on the ability of Nillumbik's population to age in place in addition to attracting new residents to the Shire.

5. Opportunity to increase visitation and yield through showcasing Nillumbik's recreation, cultural and visitor assets

Enhance Nillumbik as a desirable place to establish a business, live, work and play

The Shire's proximity to Melbourne's centre and major transport infrastructure makes establishing and operating businesses efficient due to access to markets. This coupled with the natural environment and open spaces provides a desirable rural ambience for residents and visitors.

Locals and visitors value a semi-rural setting with open spaces

The green wedge and townships that have retained their rural characteristics are an attraction for locals and visitors. There is a need to ensure economic development aligns with the values of the green wedge while supporting appropriate local businesses and job creation.

A community desire for a sustainable economy

Community feedback from engagement activities carried out in the development of various strategies and plans highlights that the community values their natural environment, connectedness and an urban/rural lifestyle. These values create opportunities to trial initiatives that facilitate alternate energy

⁶ Journey to work, Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016

⁷ Population Forecasts, Forecast Id, Id Consulting 2018, derived by Urban Enterprise 2018

⁸ Age Profile Forecasts, Forecast Id, Id Consulting 2018, derived by Urban Enterprise 2018

⁹ Population Forecasts, Forecast Id, Id Consulting 2018, derived by Urban Enterprise 2018

sources, crop types, reduced food miles, reduced waste and the implementation of sustainable agricultural techniques.

Nillumbik offers many and varied recreation and cultural pursuits for locals and visitors

The Shire has a strong offering of sport and recreational activities and facilities throughout the municipality. Additionally, heritage, arts and culture play a role within the economy, particularly as it applies to visitor attraction. There is an opportunity to ensure these are strengthened as contributors to the economy, well-being of residents and attracting visitors and events.

Objectives

The Strategy has four objectives. Each objective will be implemented through the initiatives outlined below.

Objectives

1. Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses.
2. Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek.
3. Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.
4. Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.

Objective 1: Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses

Council will deliver an economic development program of work centered on business engagement, collaboration and facilitation.

1. Continue to engage with local businesses to understand and respond to opportunities

Business engagement and support is a core element of economic development at the local government level and an effective approach to promoting and facilitating local economic growth.

Council will progressively modernise its business engagement tools and techniques to better understand business needs and tailor future services so they can start, grow and prosper.

2. Provide businesses with improved assistance with the planning process

Council will implement the State Government's *Better Approvals Project*. This will improve Council's interface with customers and the efficiency and effectiveness of administering local regulatory processes. Additionally, it will assist with improving the development of Council guidelines, policy and strategy¹⁰. Combined with the implementation of the Council's *Customer First Strategy 2019-2022*, this initiative will make customer service more service centric, modern and improve customers' experience in working with Council.

3. Develop and implement a business education program focusing on priority needs

As 99 per cent of businesses in the Shire are considered small (i.e. employ less than 20 people)¹¹, supporting small businesses through targeted workshops and seminars and the provision of information will remain a priority.

Given the rate of technological change and its impact on running a business, such as the prominence of on line retailing, it is important that businesses continue to upskill and understand trends, identify opportunities and employ new and innovative ways of working and engaging with customers.

¹⁰ <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/what-we-do/small-business>

¹¹ Business Entries/Exits, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2017

4. Facilitate the creation and implementation of a business mentoring program

Council will facilitate a business mentoring program. The program will focus on starting a business through to improving marketing, financial management and strategy development and implementation.

5. Facilitate networking, collaboration and partnerships between businesses and government

Local businesses indicate that they are interested in attending local business networking and collaborative events¹². Council will facilitate networking opportunities for business-to-business and business-to-government connections and explore partnerships.

6. Support businesses in emerging sectors

Council will facilitate tailored engagement that focuses on specific issues and opportunities for these businesses. These sectors include arts and culture, food and beverage, visitor attraction, sustainable agri-business and home-based businesses.

7. Initiate the creation and implementation of a women's business network

Council will initiate the creation of a women's business network to help businesswomen connect to their peers. The network will be designed to encourage, showcase and empower women in business within Nillumbik.

8. Facilitate jobs and training opportunities for people with a disability

Council will work with local groups within the disability sector, including support and employment services, and state and commonwealth governments to facilitate training and job opportunities. Council will participate and deliver on actions from Disability Services Networks that enhance the provision of disability support services, community education and opportunities within the local community.

9. Create and implement a buy local campaign

Council will generate a campaign to encourage residents to support local businesses and promote the benefits of buying locally. Through collaboration with local business associations, the implementation of this campaign will raise awareness of businesses and their products, increase loyalty to local businesses and assist to decrease escape expenditure.

10. Continue to advocate for projects within the Shire and strengthen strategic partnerships

Council will maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships with the State Government, surrounding councils and regional economic development bodies such as NORTH Link. In particular, Council will advocate for the proposed Eltham hospital to be located where it will clearly support the economic performance of the Shire. For example, the hospital could act as an anchor employer in one of the two activity centres.

The proximity of La Trobe University provides opportunity to collaborate on projects pertinent to advancing the economy such as innovation in agriculture and sustainability.

11. Promote opportunities for youth employment

Council will continue to work with the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network (BNLLEN) to assist in the establishment of partnerships and pathways to provide training and employment opportunities for local youths.

Objective 2: Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek

Since 2002, the State Government's key policy to provide a successful and sustainable structure for metropolitan Melbourne is to require that activity centres are located across the city and are developed as highly functional and attractive hubs of social and economic activity, well-served by public transport. Under this policy, many of Melbourne's traditional town centres are activity centres including Eltham and Diamond Creek.

The State Government's current planning strategy for metropolitan Melbourne, *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, strongly supports activity centre policy, as does the State Planning Policy Framework within each metropolitan planning scheme. Metropolitan councils are required to support the policy, by providing a

¹² Nillumbik Business Survey, Urban Enterprise, 2016

suitably current structure plans to guide development of each activity centre and by setting planning scheme provisions that implement each structure plan.

Council has consistently supported the growth of its activity centres and has long-standing structure plans for each. However, both of these structure plans are now dated and do not adequately respond to the considerable social, economic and environmental change experienced by Melbourne in the past 15 years. Considering this, Action 4.3.1 of the *Council Plan* is to review and update the structure plans.

A key aim of both the Diamond Creek and Eltham activity centre structure plans will be to encourage an anchor employer to locate in each centre. There are significant benefits with establishing anchor employers, particularly anchors which suit the skill and employment base of the local community. Examples of these benefits include an increase in job containment within the Shire, reduced escape expenditure during the working day, synergies with other businesses, positive redevelopment and activation of a key part of each centre, a greater vibrancy for the centre (e.g. through additional foot traffic in and around the centre), a raised profile for each centre and further, other potential anchor employers will likely be stimulated to consider locating to one of the centres. Examples of anchor employers that would be highly suitable for either centre are considered to be municipal offices, a major medical facility (such as the State Government's proposed community hospital) or a sizeable office facility for a business or public department.

1. Reduce escape expenditure

There is a high level of escape expenditure from Nillumbik including 70 per cent of all retail. Much of the escape spend is captured by Greensborough (\$157 million p.a.) and Doncaster (\$67 million p.a.), with the most significant escape expenditure categories being dining and entertainment (\$159 million p.a.) and professional services (\$121 million p.a.)¹³.

The high level of escape expenditure is likely due to a combination of factors including:

- A high rate of commuting working residents
- Underutilisation of the activity centres
- Ongoing commercial investment in neighbouring activity centres and large shopping centres and their consumer pull impact drawing away spending
- Functional inefficiencies of Nillumbik's major activity centres¹⁴, resulting from an undulating topography, low-density development and traffic congestion.

Addressing escape expenditure is an effective way to increase demand and loyalty for local businesses. Additionally, it promotes investment attraction for the major activity centres¹⁵. Key opportunities are in dining and entertainment and specialised food retailing. Raising awareness of existing businesses and their products will be key to responding to this issue.

2. Activate and promote the night-time economy

Night-time activities (post 6pm) are generally focused on dining, retail, accommodation, performance venues, film, theatre, music, cultural experiences, and sporting and leisure.

The most significant category for escape expenditure is dining and entertainment. Council will explore ways to develop a stronger night-time economy that will in turn enhance the vibrancy of activity centres.

3. Facilitate commercial land and office accommodation within the activity centres

Seventy seven per cent of employment in white-collar industries escapes to the City of Melbourne and other central Local Government Areas¹⁶. The lack of dedicated employment land is an ongoing challenge in supporting the provision of additional commercial office accommodation in the Shire. Future demand for additional floor space will need to be accommodated through innovative reimagining of existing sites and/or improved zoning settings.

A number of local businesses identified that there is a shortfall of commercial floor space in the Shire¹⁷. The commercial property market in Nillumbik seems to be constrained by low supply and commercial

¹³ Nillumbik Activity Centres: Land Use and Economic Capacity, Geografia, 2019

¹⁴ Nillumbik Activity Centres: Land Use and Economic Capacity, Geografia, 2019

¹⁵ Nillumbik Activity Centres: Land Use and Economic Capacity, Geografia, 2019

¹⁶ Journey to Work, Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016

¹⁷ Nillumbik Business Survey, Urban Enterprise, 2016

rents are reportedly high, indicated by the lower number of businesses in offices, retail and medical/consulting space relevant to the neighbouring suburbs¹⁸.

Respondents to the Nillumbik Business Survey who currently utilise their residence as their primary business premises generally support the establishment of a co-working space in the Shire¹⁹. As the Melbourne Innovation Centre in Greensborough is operating close to capacity, there is an opportunity for Council to investigate supporting a further facility in Nillumbik.

4. Understand and support the economic capacity of Nillumbik's local centres

While the Eltham and Diamond Creek major activity centres are the two most significant centres in Nillumbik in terms of business, employment and visitation, Council will investigate the business and employment potential of smaller centres such as Hurstbridge, St Andrews, Research and Panton Hill.

5. Develop and implement the Nillumbik Housing Strategy

Council will develop and implement a housing strategy designed to provide an outline of housing supply and demand challenges and opportunities, and a framework for decisions affecting housing and settlement.

6. Develop and implement the Shire Plan 2050

The proposed Local Government Bill 2019 will introduce a new requirement for all councils to have a long-term vision for the municipality, developed in consultation with the community. If this Bill is enacted, Council will fulfill its requirement by developing a Shire Plan 2050 based on current forecasts, future trends and community values.

Objective 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge

Nillumbik is one of Victoria's 12 green wedges around metropolitan Melbourne with 91 per cent of the Shire classified as green wedge²⁰. Its productivity is important to the Shire's economy and Council will encourage projects that fit with the values of the community to improve the economy and create local employment.

Economic opportunities for the green wedge exist in agribusiness, tourism, recreation and sustainability including renewable energy. Council will encourage innovation in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The Nillumbik *Green Wedge Management Plan 2019* provides a framework for its future management and pursuit of environmentally sustainable economic outcomes while respecting conservation values.

1. Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy

Council will investigate how Nillumbik can facilitate an environment for a strong and diverse collective of start-ups and businesses that will form the basis of a green economy. Characteristics of a green economy include:

- Business operations with zero emissions powered by renewable energy
- Water and waste water infrastructure based on long-term sustainability
- Sustainable land use management
- Preservation and protection of ecosystems and biological diversity.

A green economy seeks to reduce environmental impacts and aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment, while providing for a transition to a low-carbon economy that is resource efficient and socially inclusive.

2. Research, develop and pilot projects to increase sustainability as part of a green economy

Council will investigate opportunities for Nillumbik to establish pilot trials and a strong reputation in green niche markets for:

- Renewable energy through wind and solar
- Green building

¹⁸ Nillumbik Activity Centres: Land Use and Economic Capacity, Geografia, 2019

¹⁹ Nillumbik Business Survey, Urban Enterprise, 2016

²⁰ Green Wedge Management Plan , Nillumbik Shire Council, 2019

- Water management
- Waste management
- Land management.

3. Explore and facilitate agribusiness opportunities

A barrier to becoming a larger food producer in Nillumbik is the availability of appropriately sized holdings of fertile land. Council will assist, consider and utilise research to identify areas within the Shire that are suitable for agriculture and understand the viability of emerging demand for different crops. Additionally, given the impacts of climate change and a growing demand for food, it will encourage the assessment of new production methods such as permaculture, aquaponics and sustainable agriculture. A focus of this work will be how the Shire can more productively use land employing agritech while respecting conservation values associated with the green wedge.

Strengthening relationships with local education institutions, researchers, and northern Melbourne's independent food network will provide new opportunities for food and fibre production.

Based on the above finding, Council will develop an investment and advocacy plan that will highlight and promote the Shire's agricultural strengths including the quality of soils across the Shire and what agricultural activities can be conducted successfully, and with what technology.

Council will also provide educational opportunities, information and advice for land management and regenerative farming methods.

Objective 4: Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy

In addition to vast open spaces including recreational reserves that accommodate both organised and unstructured sports and recreation, Nillumbik has long been recognised as a creative and cultural Shire.

In the early 1900s, Heidelberg School-era artists Clara Southern and Walters Withers resided in the area. Australia's oldest artist commune, Montsalvat, was founded in the 1930s and attracted significant artists and intellectuals. Creative industries include a broad range of disciplines and includes activities that are commercially-driven and community-based and experimental.

The Shire has many features that naturally lend themselves to recreational activities. The bushland, heritage walks and scenic settings such as Sugarloaf Reservoir Park and, for example, the Panton Hill bushland reserves provide for picturesque exploration throughout the Shire. This is supported by facilities such as an extensive trail network that connect the townships. Additionally, the Shire is home to many sporting clubs with excellent facilities that support locals and visitors. Opportunities exist to host sporting tournaments at these facilities.

The Council will progress the proposal for a regional art gallery and provide support for local creatives through a range of community-based programs and initiatives. Additionally, it will work to increase both the awareness and visitability of Nillumbik, including the promotion of recreational and sporting activities such as the shared multi-use trails and sporting arenas. This will drive visitation and expenditure within the Shire. Council will explore opportunities to package arts and cultural events with other products such as dining experiences. The Council will continue to monitor visitor data to use for developing and enhancing attractions and experiences and advocating for complementary services such as accommodation.

1. Create and promote visitor attractions

The Shire's close proximity to Melbourne, and tourism strengths in nature-based assets, food and wine, equine and arts and culture makes it well-placed to attract an increase in visitors who are seeking a unique semi-rural, nature-based experience.

The Diamond Valley Miniature Railway is Nillumbik's most-visited paid attraction²¹. Council will explore how this attraction can be enhanced and maximise visitor dispersal.

Edendale Community Environment Farm is a key attraction for visitors and locals, particularly school groups looking for a unique educational experience. Council will continue to support the improvement of Edendale including new animal shelters, a permanent food premises and exploring new and improved events. There is also opportunity to package visiting Edendale with art and food experiences.

²¹ Nillumbik Destination Management Plan 2015

Council will continue to work with Yarra Ranges Tourism to promote Nillumbik as a destination. Additionally, it will collaborate with existing businesses to increase awareness of their products and facilitate the development of other opportunities related to nature and agriculture-based visitor attractions, wellness and recreation such as shared multi-use tracks and trails.

2. Promote Nillumbik as a visitor destination

Council will implement initiatives that develop and promote natural and built experiences which strengthen the local visitor offerings. Working in partnership with the local business associations and regional tourism board Yarra Ranges Tourism, Nillumbik will become a recognised destination for boutique food events, wine and semi-rural experiences on Melbourne's fringe. These initiatives will grow awareness of offerings within Nillumbik such as a quality dining experiences, farmers' markets, cellar doors, breweries and distilleries. The new visitors and the visiting friends and relatives market will be key to establishing and promoting these experiences.

3. Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik

Council will develop an advocacy document, *Equine in Nillumbik*, to support equine activity in the Shire and identify the strengths and opportunities for the sector moving forward. Riders in Nillumbik and neighbouring municipalities share a passion for equine, with whom Council can collaborate to improve facilities for locals and visitors who ride competitively or for recreation.

4. Enhance and promote recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors

Council will explore ways to enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire's open spaces. The Shire's vast open spaces and topography are well suited to these activities. Popular cycling routes will be checked for safety and improvement and digitally mapped including locations of en route cafes and attractions.

Additionally, the Shire has a suite of excellent facilities across a number of sports that are capable of hosting local and regional sporting tournaments such as basketball, netball, lacrosse and hockey that will bring visitors to the Shire.

5. Support artisan food and beverage producers

The manufacturing industry in Nillumbik includes small-scale food production. There is a growing number of artisan food and beverage producers in Nillumbik's green wedge and employment precincts.

Council will strengthen relationships with key festivals and restaurants, and leverage opportunities from events such as the Melbourne Food and Wine festival. Additionally, Council will partner with providers to investigate the development of new events such as farm gate and paddock to plate. Council will also explore destination development through venues such as wineries, distilleries and cideries. Opportunities in this space include food and beverage trails, meet the maker and packing experiences with the arts.

6. Deliver programs for the creative industries and promote cultural and heritage visitor attractions

Creative industries relate to a range of disciplines including visual arts, music, theatre, performance, literature, public art, design, fashion, filmmaking and craft.

Nillumbik has clear strengths in creative and cultural industries and Council will work with stakeholders to advocate for funding from the State Government to grow the sector.

Council will partner with stakeholders to facilitate:

- Festivals and events programs
- Indigenous cultural trails: celebrating and interpreting the region's indigenous heritage
- Sustainable business and living demonstrations and displays
- Leveraging Nillumbik's mud brick heritage.

7. Ecotourism within Nillumbik

Council will explore the opportunity to create ecotourism ventures within Nillumbik. As part of this process, the Shire will investigate Eco Destination certification from Ecotourism Australia because it will internationally recognise local product, assist in its marketing, and authenticate its development and management. Nillumbik has the natural assets to develop a reputation of ecologically based experiences. The Shire will explore the development of unique offerings that may centre on scenery, land management, native flora and fauna and cultural heritage day tours that incorporate the natural environment. Council will also explore the wellness sector that is often coupled with, and has synergies

to ecological settings. The ecotourism ventures will be encouraged to work with local businesses and the community to provide authentic experiences that are in harmony with the environment.

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Appendix A: Implementation principles

The principles below provide a framework to guide how the Strategy will be implemented.

1. Evidenced-based decision making

Decisions will be informed using research, data and information and will align with Council's and the State Government's existing strategies, plans and policies.

2. A “whole-of-Council” approach to facilitating economic development

Council will undertake a coordinated approach to the implementation of the initiatives within this Strategy to provide an efficient and effective service to customers including timely decisions within a framework of aligned strategies, plans and policies.

3. Collaborative approach

Council will form new and strengthen existing partnerships to deliver the Strategy. Collaborating with strategic partners including the community, local businesses, business associations, industry bodies and state and commonwealth government agencies to develop and implement initiatives.

4. Flexibility

Council recognises that strategic management is dynamic and a continuous process. It will remain flexible, making necessary adjustments as conditions change and opportunities emerge.

5. Balance economic, social and environmental needs

Council will deliver initiatives that balance these needs and provide harmony between economic growth, societal needs and the environment.

6. Monitor, evaluate and communicate progress

Council will monitor the progress of initiatives, report on these outcomes on an annual basis and update the action plan as necessary.

Appendix B: Summary of actions to implement the Strategy

Outlined below is a summary of the key actions required to implement the strategy and realise the economic vision for Nillumbik over the next 10 years.

Short term (S) - one to three years

Medium term (M) - four to seven years

Long term (L) - eight to 10 years

Ongoing – will occur over the life of the Strategy

Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
1. Improve economic development practices to assist local businesses.	Continue to engage with businesses to respond to opportunities and facilitate job creation and investment attraction.	S-Ongoing
	Council will implement the <i>Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2019-2022</i> and the State Government's <i>Better Approvals Project</i> . This will improve Council's interface with customers and the efficiency and effectiveness of administering local regulatory processes. It will improve customers experience in working with the Council.	M
	Modernise Council's method of business engagement to improve efficiency and effectiveness.	S
	Advocate to strategic partners for infrastructure projects and opportunities that will facilitate local business and jobs growth.	S-M
	Provide customers tools and guidance for regulatory processes.	S
	Facilitate the development of a business mentor program for specialised assistance to existing and emerging business owners.	M

	Continue to develop and deliver an annual education program for businesses.	S-Ongoing
	Facilitate the support of small to medium enterprises and home based businesses	S
	Implement a buy local campaign.	S
	Continue to facilitate networking events.	S-Ongoing
	Facilitate the creation of a women's business network.	S
	Explore the creation of a Disability Services Network and the creation of a document summarising the range of existing services that exist in the sector including links and contacts.	M
	Strengthen state, regional and local partnerships relating to economic development.	S
	Continue support for the training and employment of local youths.	S
2. Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek	Develop the vibrancy and viability of the Eltham and Diamond Creek activity centres including the implementation of strategies to secure anchor employer tenants.	M-L
	Collaborate with trader associations and local businesses to develop and implement a plan to address escape expenditure.	S-M
	Facilitate the growth of a night-time economy.	M
	Identify existing and potential employment land to accommodate future business and employment growth.	M
	Support the supply and diversity of housing stock in strategic areas to respond to changing market needs.	S

	Support the development of Nillumbik's local centres.	S-M
	Strengthen Nillumbik as both a place to live and play for locals and visitors.	S
	Develop a long-term <i>Shire Plan</i> based on current forecasts and community values.	S
3. Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.	Facilitate an environment for start-ups and businesses that will contribute to a green economy.	M
	Facilitate research and conduct pilots and trials for businesses to increase environmental sustainability.	M
	Facilitate an assessment of the quality of agricultural land.	M
	Encourage and facilitate a diversification of agricultural activities including the adoption of new technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, while respecting conservation values.	S
4. Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.	Work with locals businesses and Yarra Ranges Tourism to increase the awareness of Nillumbik and a visitor destination.	S
	Continue to assess the viability of a regional art gallery.	S-M
	Develop an <i>Equine in Nillumbik</i> statement highlighting the history and opportunities for this sector.	S
	Explore ways to enhance and increase awareness of recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors.	S-M
	Advocate to Vic Roads to improve the road shoulders on popular cycling routes to increase safety and enjoyment for riders.	S

	Prepare and publish information online that promotes cycling routes in Nillumbik, including characteristics such as GPS data and en route attractions and cafes.	S
	Complete the trails audit to assess that they are fit for purpose	S
	Collaborate with the State and nearby municipalities to develop the <i>Outer Eastern Regional Mountain Bike Strategy</i> that will guide planning and development of facilities in the region.	S
	Strengthen relationships with businesses and festivals to showcase the Shire's artisan food and beverage producers.	M
	Develop and implement a plan to grow creative and cultural industries through programs and festivals which also act as a support for local artists.	M
	Explore ecotourism opportunities.	S
	Explore health and wellbeing tourism opportunities	S

List of figures

- FIGURE 1: Map of Nillumbik Shire
FIGURE 2: Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework

DRAFT

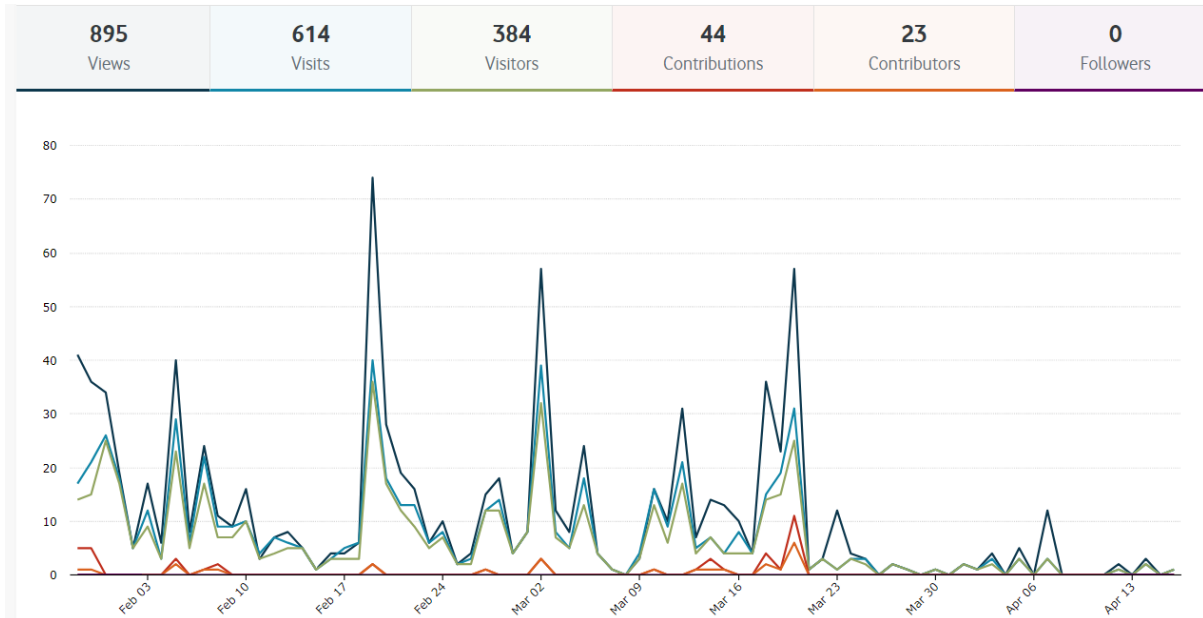
Draft Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Submissions summary

Consultation Period: 29-01-2020 - 20-03-2020

Participate Nillumbik – visitation statistics

- Draft Economic Development Strategy – 260 downloads



Economic Vision

We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, compatible with the Shire’s unique natural environment.

Question: Do you agree with the vision?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	73.68%	14
No	26.32%	5
Total	100.00%	19

Objective 1

Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses.

Do you support Objective 1?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	87.50%	7
No	12.50%	1
Total	100.00%	8

Do you have any comments about Objective 1?

	Response
1	The higher decision is "What do we want Nillumbik to look like in 10 years?" i.e. Revenue, expenditure, business activity, population, ambience. This objective is open ended and so I cannot support it in this form.
2	Local Strategy must change in accordance with state strategy otherwise the assistance can be blocked by the public
3	Not at the expense of the environment.
4	Within the Nillumbik Major Activity Centre Zones, do the current planning schemes, zoning, overlays, regulatory processes, guidelines and policies support the traders looking to operate in an Activity Centre, particularly a Night-Time Economy? If and where it doesn't, or there are onerous burdens and obstacles, we encourage Council to undertake the necessary steps to facilitate and enable the framework supporting a proposed trader within these Permitted Zones; and to offer effective support and resources for these businesses as they undertake these endeavours. Can't grow the Activity Centres if new traders have to navigate unreasonable, outdated or inconsistent rules and regulations within these permitted zones.

Action 1: Continue to engage with businesses to respond to opportunities and facilitate job creation and investment attraction.

Do you have any comments about Action 1?

	Response
1	Carbon neutral of course.
2	Business feels so 'up against it' when it comes to striving for growth. Nillumbik has lots of strange local policy to navigate it becomes a mine field of what you can and can't do. This needs to change
3	Yes, without impacting the environment.
4	All of the Retail Zones within Nillumbik could benefit from a shared consultant/analyst relating to the optimal mix of traders within each activity centre. Additionally a shared resource that reports results to stakeholders, eg: the Trader Associations, Council, and engages with Leasing Agents, Landlords and potential traders to advocate for the appropriate mix for each area. This would help to create a viable and vibrant hub that is not oversupplied with too many competing in the same category or missing a key interest that could stimulate more visitation to the area.

Action 2: Council will implement the Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2019-2022 and the State Government's Better Approvals Project. This will improve Council's interface with customers and the efficiency and effectiveness of administering local regulatory processes. It will improve customers experience in working with the Council.

Do you have any comments about Action 2?

	Response
1	business needs to feel supported otherwise applications simply won't be lodged for lack of faith in outcome. Usage zoning is key to be broadened up enough that business has some confidence in what they can apply for . The process otherwise is costly, stressful, deeply disappointing and ultimately something to be avoided. You start so hopeful and quickly end up cynical about doing business at all in the area. We must move with the times
2	We acknowledge the efficiencies and improvements that have been, and will be made by Council towards the planning and permit requirements for businesses and encourage a coordinated, efficient, progressive and proactive approach. In line with reducing the confusion, mistakes and burden on applicants we advocate Council employ a policy of a single point of contact, a 'case worker', to help manage the process with the applicant, start to finish.

Action 3: Modernise Council's method of business engagement to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Do you have any comments about Action 3?

	Response
1	Just so long as standards are not dropped and this turns out to be just a sweet cop for business

2	Yes it is still very paper driven and the general feeling of being an impersonal experience. Decisions come at snail pace and additional information requirements have us back and forth constantly
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Action 4: Advocate to strategic partners for infrastructure projects and opportunities that will facilitate local business and jobs growth.

Do you have any comments about Action 4?

	Response
1	Consistent with Nillumbik's green wedge status.
2	This is tricky. Outside investments can have a disconnected agenda and little sympathies with the character of our shire and environmental fragility. This would need to be extremely well aligned to work
3	Can there be a 'shop local' campaign for businesses, organisations, clubs, aged care, education providers, charities, these are all consumers, investigating effective strategies, benefits or incentives that encourage shopping local could offer many levels of significant economic benefits to the shire.

Action 5: Provide customers tools and guidance for regulatory processes.

Do you have any comments about Action 5?

	Response
1	Yes, tools and guidance to feel like we are working together. It feels very much like an officer must be careful with what they tell you. The process feels very much like a lottery game.

Action 6: Facilitate the development of a business mentor program for specialised assistance to existing and emerging business owners.

Do you have any comments about Action 6?

	Response
1	Provided it is hands on and from people who really understand specifically the business you are in
2	Focus on minimising costs to business owners that participate in the programs, provide for times available outside standard business hours. We feel this may be of more valuable if the Trader Associations manage some of these with funding and resource support from council.

Action 7: Continue to develop and deliver an annual education program for businesses.

Do you have any comments about Action 7?

No responses

Action 8: Facilitate the support of small to medium enterprises and home based businesses.

Do you have any comments about Action 8?

	Response
1	Well yes goes without saying. Also to identify those businesses who struggle with the process due to its grossly outdated guidelines. These businesses need help advocating for change. Our shire is in quicksand right now. It's going to go nowhere with the current restrictions placed on trade. It will only get worse if it doesn't change.

Action 9: Implement a buy local campaign.

Do you have any comments about Action 9?

	Response
1	Sure a good idea.
2	Yes, this would be beneficial and works well in other areas.
3	We support engaging a consultant / annalist to advise on the most effective and efficient delivery of this program. Then action the outcomes with sufficient resources to implement an engaging campaign with a high priority. This should also be done in full collaboration with the Trader Associations.

Action 10: Continue to facilitate networking events.

Do you have any comments about Action 10?

	Response
1	Don't find these are particularly beneficial
2	Assist Trader Associations with resources to create and run effective networking events.

Action 11: Facilitate the creation of a women's business network.

Do you have any comments about Action 11?

	Response
1	This is discriminatory.What's wrong with women getting involved in the way men do?
2	Don't find this particularly beneficial

Action 12: Explore the creation of a Disability Services Network and the creation of a document summarising the range of existing services that exist in the sector including links and contacts.

Do you have any comments about Action 12?

No responses

Action 13: Strengthen state, regional and local partnerships relating to economic development.

Do you have any comments about Action 13?

	Response
1	But retain control of decisions affecting our quality of environmnt.
2	Yes. If what we aim to achieve is as simple as saying state agrees with local then we end the Russian roulette involved with applications that satisfy state planning law but not local. How can you win?

Action 14: Continue support for the training and employment of local youths.

Do you have any comments about Action 14?

No responses

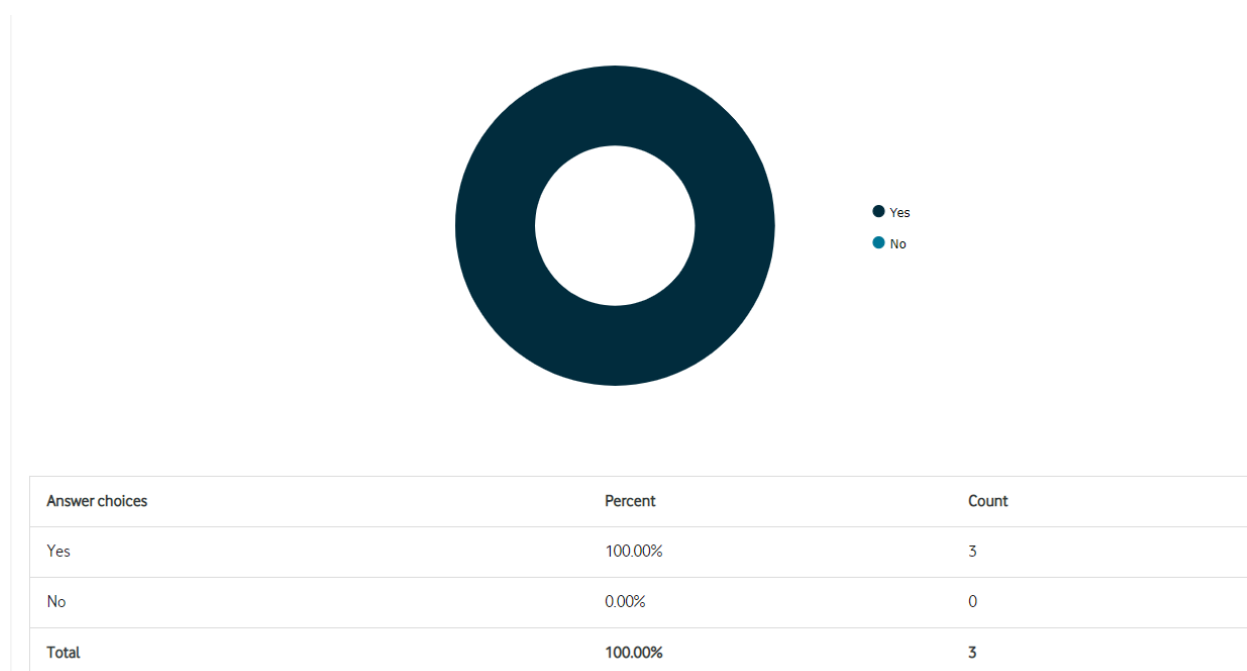
Do you have any other comments about Objective 1 or the associated actions?

No responses

Objective 2:

Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek

Do you support Objective 2?



Do you have any comments about Objective 2?

	Response
1	Select small footprint, low pollution industries.
2	<p>We endorse the strategy of attracting Anchor Employers to the Eltham Town precinct. We are in a weak retail environment around the country, consumer confidence is down, Trader confidence is also down. Many traders are not only struggling here but re-considering their tenure in Eltham (Some already have). These are businesses that have stood the test of time or businesses that in another location could be in a much stronger position.</p> <p>Anchor Employers should be situated in, or within an easy walk of the Eltham Town CBD to enable convenient access to hospitality, services and retail options, Eltham, being the largest activity centre can currently service most of the communities retail, hospitality and services needs, the Eltham Retail Precinct is also in need of tangible action. Anchor Employers will help to address some of the high escape spending, in-turn increasing opportunities for local employment & youth employment, Gross Regional product, work/life balance, supporting local business.</p> <p>Strong leadership and decisive action is needed to stimulate and support the local economy, statistics highlighted in this Draft Economic Development Strategy have proven the local economy to be severely lacking, innovative and efficient outcomes are necessary to turn around the disadvantage of being in business here.</p>

Action 1: Develop the vibrancy and viability of the Eltham and Diamond Creek activity centres including the implementation of strategies to secure anchor employer tenants.

Do you have any comments about Action 1?

	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Anchor Employer in Eltham is an obvious step to bolster the economy within Eltham Town CBD & should be prioritised higher than a Medium - Long Term (4-10 year strategy) • Currently this strategy appears to have stalled, not being pursued because both a Community Hospital (State Government) and Proposed Art Gallery (Funding from outside of Council) is out of the control of stakeholders. The relocation of Council Offices back to Eltham will likely require Private Sector funding to build the required premises. We ask for a more proactive approach that does not rely solely on these three possible options that may not even eventuate. • We do not have to settle at one Anchor Employer, there are a few State Government or privately owned sites that with redevelopment could accommodate an anchor employer in the Eltham Town CBD and multiple anchor employers could potentially occupy the same site, reducing the potential footprint requirements while increasing the associated benefits. • Trying to please 100% of the people all of the time leads largely to inaction & delays, anything business related is going to give some uncompromising and emotional members of the community cause to protest, Council needs to be considerate to the needs & values of the whole community and take action for the greater good of Eltham Town. <p>Strong leadership and decisive action is needed to stimulate and support the struggling local economy.</p>

Action 2: Collaborate with trader associations and local businesses to develop and implement a plan to address escape expenditure.

Do you have any comments about Action 2?

	Response
1	<p>There are many issues and policies need to be addressed in order to attract viable businesses & increase patronage to the Eltham Activity Centre and to support the traders already there. We ask that Council progress its objectives in collaboration with Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry - being a stakeholder and trader representative body, in order to gain relevant and real time feedback from those directly affected by any actions, inactions, determinations and outcomes. They can specifically attest to the tough environment and challenges for many retail small businesses within Nillumbik and constructively workshop the matters in question. It is widely known that across the country the retail environment is and has been weak for some time, however the local environment for traders is generally tenuous, even in the face of strong local socioeconomic figures.</p> <p>Vibrant: a glowing term with many positive connotations - that the Eltham Town CBD generally does not possess. If Council is going to participate constructively in actioning this strategy there is a broad range of issues that can contribute to the success of this objective.</p>

Action 3: Facilitate the growth of a night-time economy.

Do you have any comments about Action 3?

	Response
1	<p>We support and Cultivation of a viable, Vibrant Night-Time Economy as a constructive way to address some of Nillumbiks' excessive Escape Expenditure, increasing our Gross Regional Product, growing Local Business, Local Employment & Youth Employment Opportunities & improve the vibrancy and viability of the Activity Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the Nillumbik Major Activity Centre Zones, do the current planning schemes, zoning, overlays, regulatory processes, guidelines & policies support the traders looking to operate in a Night-Time Economy? If & where it doesn't, or there are onerous burdens & obstacles, we encourage Council to undertake the necessary steps to facilitate and enable the framework supporting a Night-Time Economy within these Permitted Zones; and to offer effective support and resources for these businesses as they undertake these endeavours. • We have concerns over insufficient/inadequate lighting around Eltham Town CBD streets and open spaces. Done well this could become an attractive and inviting feature as well as a practical and security / safety requirement. • The Town Square precinct is a centrepiece and asset within Eltham Town, whereas the surrounding streetscapes servicing the CBD need considered aesthetic improvements in order to facilitate a more vibrant, appealing and inviting Activity Hub. • Safe, Inviting and Convenient Pedestrian Movement between the sprawling, divided and steep nature of Eltham Retail Precinct needs strategic and effective improvements.

Action 4: Identify existing and potential employment land to accommodate future business and employment growth.

Do you have any comments about Action 4?

	Response
1	Just do not use this as a way to eat into the Green Wedge and get around the UGB
2	There are a few State Government or privately owned sites that with redevelopment could accommodate an anchor employer in the Eltham Town CBD and multiple anchor employers could potentially occupy the same site, reducing the potential footprint requirements while increasing the associated benefits. Obviously the large original council site is still vacant and with clever design is well positioned to link easily to the Eltham Town CBD, and is transport and conveniences. Lets not limit our thoughts to this one site, other sites within the Eltham Town CBD could also accommodate such tenancies and create a more cohesive and appealing precinct.

Action 5: Support the supply and diversity of housing stock in strategic areas to respond to changing market needs.

Do you have any comments about Action 5?

	Response
1	If this means changing the planning regs that protect the green wedge, there would need to be consultation with residents. Such decisions cannot be made by council without consultation and consideration of feedback.
2	We understand that the vacant residential land is limited and accept that there is a demand for higher density housing, we do support medium density development, particularly in closer proximity to the Activity Centres and in other areas within walking distance of a train station. We do not support high density, high-rise development in any areas within Nillumbik. We are comfortable with the 5 storey maximum within the Activity Centres however the design should be sympathetic to the surrounding desirable natural character, with a strong focus on minimising the visual bulk and impact. I would like to highlight the newly opened Canopy complex as a visually well considered and executed example of an acceptable multiple story medium density apartments. We also support underground garage & utility space to reduce footprint requirements for constructions and allowing for more opportunity for greenery to be incorporated in the ground level design.

Action 6: Support the development of Nillumbik’s local centres.

Do you have any comments about Action 6?

	Response
1	Like many, we are proud residents of Eltham, we value the abundance of green space, the wealth of recreation options and the sense of nature in a beautiful, semi-rural environment. We are Business Owners within Eltham Town CBD and a Committee Representative on the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI), we therefore have a direct and vested interest in the success of the Economic Development Strategy. We can also specifically attest to the tough environment that many retail small businesses face within Nillumbik. It is widely known that across the country the retail environment is and has been weak for some time, however the local environment for traders is generally tenuous, even with the strong local socioeconomic figures. Strong leadership and decisive action is needed to stimulate and support the local economy, statistics highlighted in this Draft Economic Development Strategy have proven the local economy to be severely lacking, innovative and efficient outcomes are necessary to turn around the disadvantage of being in business here.

Action 7: Strengthen Nillumbik as both a place to live and play for locals and visitors.

Do you have any comments about Action 7?

	Response
1	Not like City of Whittlesea.
2	• We propose that the Eltham Town Square garner a Social Activation Budget to be either managed by the Events Department of Council, or by ECCI, or in a joint

	<p>venture. A Free calendar of events, Public Service Activations such as outdoor movies, activities, community events, music, games, art, workshops, installations, showcases. (Activations that don't compete with or burden traders) More public entertainment & events would create a more vibrant & social atmosphere, raising community satisfaction of the precinct and encouraging longer & more regular visitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free WIFI, seen by many as a current day 'must have' for any Retail Centre to encourage the public, including the 'particular' youth demographic, to linger longer. Eltham Town CBD is predominantly a short term stop for supermarket shopping, WIFI being a public service/resource it offers benefits to the broader community & can also encourage longer stays enabling visitation to stretch further around the precinct. • We appeal for a review of waste management practices within Eltham Town CBD, current waste infrastructure is visibly prominent & unsightly & in need of improvement, continued focus & maintenance. This would benefit from a more holistic CBD approach. • The addition of a Bus Stop in Arthur, Circulatory Rd & Pryor St loop - eg: Eltham 582 & either 513 or 578/9. Enabling easier access for the public, including seniors and those with physical limitations, direct access into more of the Eltham Town CBD.
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Action 8: Develop a long-term Shire Plan based on current forecasts and community values.

Do you have any comments about Action 8?

	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the Activity Zones within Nillumbik could benefit from a shared consultant/analyst relating to the optimal mix of traders within each activity centre. Additionally a shared resource that reports results to stakeholders, eg: the Trader Associations, Council, and engages with Leasing Agents and Landlords and potential tenants to advocate for the appropriate mix for each area, this would help to create a vibrant hub that is not oversupplied with too many in the same category or missing a key interest that could stimulate more visitation to the area.

Do you have any other comments about Objective 2 or the associated actions?

	Response
1	<p>I am for it but must respond to the bigger picture. What do we want to look like in 10years. I feel this is important and has not been addressed, leaving us vulnerable to gross changes without any brakes.</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visual appeal of the Eltham Town CBD, as a whole, is generally looking tired, stale and underwhelming, not consistent with a Vibrant Hub of Economic Activity. The exception to the lack-lustre presentation, of Nillumbik's largest Activity Centre, is the Town Square. A well-considered enhancement to the streetscape in keeping with the largest Activity Centre in Nillumbik would go a long way towards creating a more vibrant and inviting area and disguise some of the difficult terrain & divided layout. Additionally a meandering pedestrian walkway linking the fragmented CBD areas along a clean, green, attractive and inviting journey could also encourage lingering longer and enabling visitation to stretch further. • Maintenance of the Eltham Town CBD public spaces overall currently seems lacking, and Main St (the entry to our beloved Eltham also appears to be very under

done and shows no sense of pride or cheer) We ask that Council take on responsibility and accountability for Main St presentation (including holdig VICRoads to account if necessary) and provide more attention and significance to the appearance of the whole CBD.

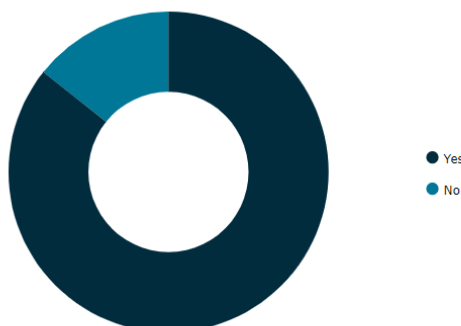
- Lighting though-out the town is inconsistent and, in many places, insufficient to the public safety and expectation, a thorough and consistent refurbishment to the Eltham Town CBD lighting would not only improve safety within the Activity Centre, but improve aesthetics and character within the Eltham Town CBD creating an inviting appeal.

- There has been a longstanding public and trader concern with parking in Eltham Town, the restructure of the trader carpark is one step in addressing public and trader concerns. Further improvements are required to address the lack of medium-term parking (3-4 hours), undulating and fragmented layout of the Eltham Town CBD and convenient parking access though-out the CBD for the general public and to cater for the aging demographic of the shire.

Objective 3:

Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.

Do you support Objective 3?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	85.71%	6
No	14.29%	1
Total	100.00%	7

Do you have any comments about Objective 3?

	Response
1	Subject to not using this to get around protecting the green wedge. No weasel policies please.
2	this requires a change to state legislation which will take it out of the ambit of local consultation and open to political, financial and business influence. Great care must be taken so an innocuous change does not expose us to unintended challenges in VCAT .
3	<p>Sounds ideal, but in practice are economic and environmental sustainability contradictory?</p> <p>There is a need for some environmental riders being added when considering equine use in the Green Wedge.</p> <p>Within the Green Wedge the Economic Strategy any promotion of equine activities should not be supported unless also mentioning any costs required for the prevention, mitigation and remediation of environmental damage caused by the horses being thus promoted.</p> <p>In the longer term economic tourism will be affected if visitors are faced with muddy paddocks in winter and bare earth in summer produced on properties without having proper equine land management. Another resultant cost to council.</p> <p>Remember there are no horses on a dead planet.</p>
4	<p>Initiative 1 – Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable land use management• Preservation and protection of ecosystems and biological diversity

	<p>Realistically, to achieve these we need to value, preserve and protect existing cleared, grazing land and pasture properties (both 'hobby' and broad acre farms) through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, in all zones.</p> <p>Existing grazing land and treed pastures are necessary and important for popular rural uses as the keeping of horses and other grazing animals, providing for compatible agriculture, the preservation of biodiversity, defensible fire breaks and the rural, scenic amenity, landscape character and vistas that locals and visitors value and seek out. The shire's natural environment isn't just the bush.</p> <p>I appreciate council's approach to provide educational opportunities, information, advice and support on land management and regenerative farming methods.</p>
5	<p>As a farmer in the shire, I would like the opportunity to sell my produce locally. Thus highlighting the organic, local, 'grown not flown' nature of my produce. Appropriate, sensitive farmgate and nearby roadside stalls can promote the agricultural and horticultural depth to be found in the shire.</p> <p>Supporting and encouraging the large number of small producers of specialised farm produce, is an important aspect in developing the individual nature of products available for sale in appropriate farm based ways.</p> <p>A permit system would ensure accountability and ensure that stalls reflect the local nature of produce.</p>

Action 1: Facilitate an environment for start-ups and businesses that will contribute to a green economy.

Do you have any comments about Action 1?

	Response
1	NSC has a reputation for obduracy. While there is work to be done, the simplistic "Cut the red tape" is appealing to applicants, the shire must be protected.
2	See above re Farmgate and roadside stalls.

Action 2: Facilitate research and conduct pilots and trials for businesses to increase environmental sustainability.

Do you have any comments about Action 2?

	Response
1	Meaning?

Action 3: Facilitate an assessment of the quality of agricultural land.

Do you have any comments about Action 3?

	Response
1	I imagine landholders have been doing this for years. It may move us to a different landscape , one without hooved animals!!

2	<p>We need to value, preserve and protect existing cleared, grazing land and pasture properties (both 'hobby' and broad acre farms) through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, in all zones.</p> <p>Existing grazing land and treed pastures are necessary and important for popular rural uses as the keeping of horses and other grazing animals, providing for compatible agriculture and the preservation of biodiversity by ensuring appropriate land is used for hobby and broad acre farming.</p>
3	<p>Promoting the shires use of farm rates and providing ongoing workshops in regenerative agriculture can support existing farm holdings.</p>

Action 4: Encourage and facilitate a diversification of agricultural activities including the adoption of new technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, while respecting conservation values.

Do you have any comments about Action 4?

	Response
1	Yes
2	<p>See above re regenerative farming principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil covererage - minimising soil distubance - diversity - having living plants all year round - intergration of livestock.

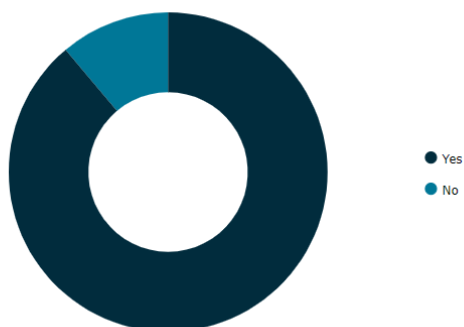
Do you have any other comments about Objective 3 or the associated actions?

	Response
1	<p>This the ground zero of our future environment. I don't align with the "deep greens" or PALS so hope we can debate the issues without animosity.</p>

Objective 4

Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.

Do you support Objective 4?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	88.89%	8
No	11.11%	1
Total	100.00%	9

Do you have any comments about Objective 4?

	Response
1	Yes but the attractions need to be increased and improved.
2	Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment on this plan. As a resident and horse rider in Nillumbik I feel this has been the first opportunity I have had to share my thoughts in a survey. Also thanks for the workshops at Hurstbridge re Equine in Nillumbik which I believe were very valuable for all attendees.
3	Encouraging the Tourist Economy is an valid long term strategy to generate more Economic Activity in the Local Economy, a bus that links all of Eltham's attractions, with a direct link to the Eltham Town CBD can encourage and enable visitors on public transport to easily get around to more of the nearby assets. Locating a bus route conveniently amongst the majority of the traders located behind the Main Street will introduce many to the hidden precinct not seen when simply passing through on Main Street alone. The bus could loop around and incorporate tourist/recreation destinations such as Lower Eltham Park, Alistair Knox Park & Library, Eltham North Playground, Edendale, Montsalvat, Susan St Sports & Industrial area. A dedicated bus service or adding to another existing route such as the Eltham/KG/Warrandyte 578/9 or the local 582.
4	I appreciate the need to support the creation of local business, emerging enterprises and job growth for residents in activity centres and compatible home-based businesses that do not significantly impact neighbourhood amenity, rural ambience and environmental values. • Kinglake National Park needs to be included as an important recreational and tourism asset in the spiel where mention is made of Sugarloaf Reservoir Park and the Panton Hill Bushland Reserves.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build visitation, Nillumbik needs to capitalize on its open spaces and unique experiences including things that enhance the ‘country’ feel like horse riding on trails. • The shared, off-road recreation trails network across Nillumbik Shire enables residents and visitors to truly immerse themselves in the natural landscape. • Establish Nillumbik as the ‘Shared Trail Capital’ of Vic - value and importance of safe and accessible, off-road trails for the whole community including horse riders, not just cyclists, walkers, hikers and campers (refer to Initiative 4). • Semi-rural, nature-based tourism is an untapped avenue to increase visitation. <p>Initiative 3: Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik</p> <p>Horse keeping and recreational horse riding have a long history in Nillumbik which has never been formally documented or recognized in strategic planning work to date. I support the development of a Nillumbik Equine Plan to deliver real outcomes for the local Equine community.</p>
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Action 1: Work with locals businesses and Yarra Ranges Tourism to increase the awareness of Nillumbik and a visitor destination.

Do you have any comments about Action 1?

	Response
1	Develop more and better attractions. Farmgate enterprises which are multifaceted businesses are superb in UK. Wineries with good restaurants like in Yarra Valley. Boutique foods, breweries, distilleries We have a market of 3.5 million people on our doorstep.
2	<p>“The Diamond Valley Miniature Railway is Nillumbik’s most-visited paid attraction. Council will explore how this attraction can be enhanced and maximise visitor dispersal.”</p> <p>Seems to me that given the miniature railway is “Nillumbik’s most-visited paid attraction” Lower Eltham Reserve may not be able to absorb “enhanced and maximise visitor dispersal” without losing its natural setting and its charm for visitors and for the neighbours who have to put up with the railway noises and visitor traffic to the miniature railway.</p> <p>Taking this approach to Eltham Lower Park, adjacent to the Yarra River, makes it seem that Council's Economic Policy is contradicting Council's support for the State Government's Yarra River Plan.</p> <p>I reckon Council should be suggesting to the operators that if they want a ‘bigger , better and longer’ railway’, then as well as keeping Eltham Miniature Railway going they should also develop part of the Council’s Yarrambat Park where they could set up more sheds and rail with longer journey’s and more visitor parking. Given this Council Reserve is on the Yan Yean Road thoroughfare it would not disturb neighbours and would be relatively easy access for visitors – many from outside of the shire.</p>
3	Agree

Action 2: Continue to assess the viability of a regional art gallery.

Do you have any comments about Action 2?

	Response
1	I support this and want to see some use made of the old council site
2	This would be wonderful to bring tourists into the shire. Open Studios are fabulous events twice a year but a gallery would also help support these artists. With so many talented artists in the shire, it would give local artists more opportunities to display, promote and sell their work.
3	Set some deliverable timelines, it is of no use to anyone if it wastes time and resources with no outcome, or drags out endlessly, potentially stifling or discouraging other potential opportunities that may present.

Action 3: Develop an Equine in Nillumbik statement highlighting the history and opportunities for this sector.

Do you have any comments about Action 3?

	Response
1	NO. Who the hell drafted this crap? What is an "equine"? Last I saw it was an adjective.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulations to the council on your commitment to develop an advocacy document, 'Equine in Nillumbik' to support equine activity in the shire and identify where support is needed, facilities required in this sector and the opportunities for growth and improvement. * Horse riding is an important recreational pursuit for women and girls incorporating healthy, active, outdoor lifestyles. Women are commonly under-represented in sporting pursuits. • Equine recreation in Nillumbik is strongly supported through local Adult Riding Clubs, Pony Clubs and Trail Riding Clubs which have historically received little direct financial support from council. This needs to be redressed in line with investments made in other sporting codes. • Horse rider access to shared, off-road trails on road verges and within parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and to access rural areas and neighbourhoods across the shire and to connect with neighbouring shires. • Horse ownership and riding are the most popular rural, recreational pursuits in Nillumbik. • Horse (and other livestock) keeping is a natural fit with the small land holdings in rural Nillumbik which suit 'hobby' farming. • Opportunities to support horse owners with information and assistance to encourage good land management practices would benefit rural residents, the environment and the Green Wedge generally. <p>There is a lot of employment linked to the horse industry.</p>
3	Thankyou for recognising the Equine industry. Horse ownership and riding provides a huge economic, recreational, health and social benefit to our community. In has

	<p>largely been self funded and independent of council but would grow and benefit from council support and initiatives. Horse riding is a female dominated sport and has not received the financial support that male dominated sports receive. This inequality needs to be addressed. Horse riders need safe spaces to ride and access to parks and trails. As a female I do not feel safe walking in a park alone but I do feel safe on horseback. Unfortunately many women do not exercise outside due to their personal safety concerns. Roadside riding has also become very dangerous with increased traffic and inconsiderate and uneducated drivers. Council could show support to local horse riders by applying on behalf of them for access to Plenty Gorge Park, which would provide some safe trails.</p> <p>Council needs to support horse owners with information and assistance to encourage good land management practices would benefit rural residents, the environment and the Green Wedge generally. They must also keep land ownership affordable by keeping rates on larger properties affordable otherwise owners will be unable afford the costs of good land management.</p>
4	<p>Firstly, well done to Council on their commitment to develop an advocacy document "Equine in Nillumbik" to support equine activity within the shire and identify where support and facilities are needed. Equine recreation in Nillumbik is strongly supported through local adult riding clubs, pony clubs and trail riding clubs. To date these clubs have received little direct financial support from council. This needs to be remedied and given the same support that other sporting codes receive. Horse ownership and horse riding is the most popular rural, recreational pursuit in Nillumbik. It is an important recreational activity for both males and females. It is particularly more popular though with women and girls. It incorporates healthy, active, outdoor lifestyles. I believe women are under-represented in sporting pursuits and particularly in equestrian pursuits.</p>
5	<p>This is the cart before the horse. Whilst the Council Plan talked of establishing an 'Equine Industry' is this "advocacy document, Equine in Nillumbik," as mentioned the same thing but with a different bridle?</p> <p>There is no scope in this Economic Strategy for an advocacy document, Equine in Nillumbik, to have activity in the Shire to identify the damage done by horses in bush blocks and to find ways to prevent this occurring now and in the future. It all comes with a cost.</p> <p>While the equine lobby may claim "Opportunities to support horse owners with information and assistance to encourage good land management practices" officers know there are examples where good land management practices in spite of the carrot approach.</p> <p>It is constructive to say the carrot approach of providing support horse owners with information and assistance to encourage good land management practices, but, there are plenty of examples of horse properties that have been reported to officers without any apparent enforcement happening. This enforcement is needed, because the owners of some horse properties either do not know, or refuse to adhere to the planning scheme and this cost (cost of more officer enforcement and damage to the environment caused by horses) are not appearing as a need in this Economic Strategy.</p>
6	<p>As a member of a local horse riding club our members would like to see an Equine plan which will deliver real outcomes for the horse riders</p> <p>The equine recreation in Nillumbik is strongly supported through local Adult Riding Clubs, Pony Clubs and Trail Riding Clubs which have historically received little direct financial support from council. This needs to be redressed in line with investments made in other sporting codes.</p> <p>Horse rider access to shared, off-road trails on road verges and within parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and to</p>

	<p>access rural areas and neighbourhoods across the shire and to connect with neighbouring shires.</p> <p>Horse riding is an important recreational pursuit for (particularly) women and girls incorporating healthy, active, outdoor lifestyles. Women are commonly under-represented in sporting pursuits.</p> <p>Horse ownership and riding are the most popular rural, recreational pursuits in Nillumbik.</p> <p>Horse (and other livestock) keeping is a natural fit with the small land holdings in rural Nillumbik which suit 'hobby' farming.</p> <p>Opportunities to support horse owners with information and assistance to encourage good land management practices would benefit rural residents, the environment and the Green Wedge generally.</p>
7	<p>Valid opportunity to explore, many equine enthusiasts will travel from other areas to engage in this interest, and will spend locally on service providers, primary producers, feed merchants and more. So we feel this is an opportunity to claw back some escape spending.</p>
8	<p>A Nillumbik Equine Plan is required that will identify needs and deliver tangible outcomes as Short-Term Actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local equine clubs in line with the investment made in other sporting codes in the shire. • Horse rider access to shared off-road trails, roadside verges and trails within local, regional and state parks and reserves is critical for safety, enjoyable and diverse trail riding experiences and connectivity between neighbourhoods, rural and remote areas across the shire and region. • Horse riding is an important recreational pursuit for (particularly) women and girls incorporating healthy, active, outdoor lifestyles and strong, multi-generational social benefit. • Horse keeping is a legitimate rural land use and is one of the largest on-property rural 'activity groups' in the shire. • Horse (and other livestock) keeping is a natural fit with the small land holdings in rural Nillumbik which suit 'hobby' farming; hobby farms underpin the Green Wedge. • Acknowledge the significant contribution to land management by landholders as fundamental to the existence and ongoing sustainability of the Nillumbik Green Wedge given that 80% of it is privately owned. • I appreciate council's support of horse owners and residents who graze animals, with information and assistance that encourage informed land management practices. • The local equine sector drives agricultural enterprise, related businesses, employs equine practitioners and visitation.

Action 4: Explore ways to enhance and increase awareness of recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors.

Do you have any comments about Action 4?

	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail horse riding should also be included when council is exploring ways to, "...enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire's open spaces". P.15

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail riding is the perfect recreational activity in the great outdoors to make the most of Nillumbik's vast open spaces and topography, as much as cycling and hiking. • Most of the trail network within Nillumbik and all of the Regional Trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration. • Nillumbik Shire is lacking an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to enhance club member's enjoyment and enable all-year round training and competition. This would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions. • Safety for all recreational users must also be a serious consideration for council, not just cyclists.
2	<p>Horse riding should also be included when council is exploring ways to maximise useage of councils open spaces.</p> <p>Trail riding should be considered as an activity for Nillumbik's vast open spaces and topography, as much as cycling and hiking.</p> <p>Most of the trail network within Nillumbik and all of the Regional Trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration.</p> <p>Nillumbik Shire would benefit from an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to enhance club member's enjoyment and enable all-year round training and competition. This would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions.</p> <p>Safety for all recreational users must also be a serious consideration for council, not just cyclists.</p>
3	<p>Trail horse riding must also be included when council is exploring ways to "Enhance and increase awareness of recreational and sporting opportunities. Trail riding is the perfect recreational activity in the great outdoors to make the most of Nillumbik's vast open spaces and topography. Most of the trail network within the shire and all of the regional trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration. Nillumbik Shire is lacking an indoor riding facility. If it had one, it could be shared by all local clubs. This would enhance all club member's enjoyment and enable all-year round training and competition. This would in turn attract visitors to the area through events that could be held at the indoor facility including competitions.</p>
4	<p>For some 'sports' the emphasis is recreational rather than competitive such as horse riding, BMX riding, walking and cycling. For these 'sports' Council's primary support is the trail maintenance of the local trail network within Nillumbik including the Regional Trails. Certainly most pony clubs are on Council land, but why should Council monies supported by the Council's Economic Strategy be provided when the other trail using 'sports' are not?</p> <p>The equine lobby are proposing that Nillumbik Shire get an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to enhance club member's enjoyment and enable all-year round training and competition. But, this is a multi-million dollar proposal that should not go into the Economic Strategy until Council decides that that they know where it is to be built and the approximate cost. It is the sort of proposal where Council must take the community with them and people first reading about it in an Economic Strategy will do nothing to get that sort of cooperation.</p> <p>This facility would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions. Perhaps the local community does not want a huge influx of large 4WDs with floats behind on our local roads, on competition day. It will be close residents most affected and we do not even know where this proposal is to be built.</p> <p>We all know what happened to the proposed Art Gallery, without these types of issues being resolved first. It is still in the folder with no site and no cents.</p>

5	<p>The Horse riding community has had very little support from council and govt. It would be great to increase awareness in this sport which is predominately attended by women and children.</p> <p>Trail horse riding should also be included when council is exploring ways to, “..enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire’s open spaces”.</p> <p>Trail riding is the perfect recreational activity in the great outdoors to make the most of Nillumbik’s vast open spaces and topography, as much as cycling and hiking. Most of the trail network within Nillumbik and all of the Regional Trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration.</p> <p>Nillumbik Shire is lacking an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to enhance club member's enjoyment and enable all-year round training and competition. This would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions. Safety for all recreational users must also be a serious consideration for council, not just cyclists.</p>
6	<p>Incorporate a reciprocal arrangement between the Trader Association marketing resources and the recreational and sporting bodies. Visitors may research their trip via a search on the Trader Association media and can easily navigate to the local activities available. The local activity providers can facilitate an information station or sign detailing the local Activity Centre address/proximity and overview of offerings. Eltham Town would benefit from a sign at local sports fields directing visitors to the retail precinct, the Eltham Town website and social media can direct visitors to the Lower Eltham Park activities: the Miniature Railway, 2 Play Grounds, Lacrosse Club, Cricket Club, Pony Club, off leash Dog area, River Track, lookout, trails. Enriching the visitor experience or enlightening a local that all this is available there.</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail horse riding should also be included when council is exploring ways to, “...enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire’s open spaces”. P.15 • Trail riding is the ideal recreational activity in the great outdoors to make the most of Nillumbik’s vast open spaces and topography, as much as (if not more than) cycling and hiking. • Almost all of the trail network within Nillumbik and certainly all of the Regional Trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration. • Nillumbik Shire is lacking an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to improve club member's safety and enjoyment and enable year-round training and competition. This would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions and enhance the club’s opportunities to raise funds. • Safety for all recreational users must also be a serious consideration for council, not just cyclists.

Action 5: Advocate to Vic Roads to improve the road shoulders on popular cycling routes to increase safety and enjoyment for riders.

Do you have any comments about Action 5?

	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to Vic Roads to improve driver awareness of horse riders to increase safety and enjoyment for riders as a priority.

2	<p>Vic roads needs to address the safety of horse riders as well as cyclists. Other road users need to be educated on the laws regarding sharing the roads with horse riders. They also need to be educated on how to safely share the road.</p> <p>Some roadside verges would provide a safer alternative to riding in the road but are not accessible due to embankments and shrubbery and could easily be modified to allow riders to move further away from the road.</p> <p>The existing horse crossing on Yan Yean road outside the pony club grounds need to be updated with the current and future roadworks.</p>
3	<p>Advocate to Vic Roads to educate drivers in an attempt to improve driver awareness of horse riders to increase safety and enjoyment for riders as a priority.</p>
4	<p>Safety of horses and riders on the road has been very challenging over the past years with increase in traffic along Yan Yean Road and back streets of Yarrambat. I am sure this issue is mirrored across the shire and motorists have very little knowledge how to drive around horses.</p> <p>An education campaign for motorists would increase safety and enjoyment for all horse riders</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to Vic Roads to improve driver awareness of horse riders to increase safety and enjoyment of riders as a priority • Implement a shire focused, driver awareness campaign for horse rider safety

Action 6: Prepare and publish information online that promotes cycling routes in Nillumbik, including characteristics such as GPS data and en route attractions and cafes.

Do you have any comments about Action 6?

	Response
1	<p>Council needs to publish maps and details on the existing and future horse trails in the shire. Including parking for horse floats.</p>
2	<p>I believe this should be extended to horse riders and a lot of shared trails in Nillumbik are accessible to horse riders</p>
3	<p>We feel this is a valid and worthy program and encourage this action to explore things like mystery bike tours, destination picnics or treasure hunts, a tour de Nillumbik, organised charity rides, youth rides and more. These organised rides should start and finish in Eltham because it has an experienced bike shop to service equipment needs or faults, a bike cage to secure bikes to allow a pre/post-ride coffee or supply run, links in place to off road trails in many directions. Public transport services available.</p>

Action 7: Complete the trails audit to assess that they are fit for purpose.

Do you have any comments about Action 7?

	Response
1	<p>Support this and get the Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge Trail done.</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the Trails Audit to assess that trails are fit for purpose is a critical Short-Term Action. • Horse rider access to shared trails on road verges and within parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and to access rural areas and neighbourhoods across the shire.

3	The Yarra Valley has the Rail Trail which is well used and a multi use trail. Nillumbik needs to plan for a similar long distance linked trail.
4	Horse rider access to shared trails on road verges and within parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and to access rural areas and neighbourhoods across the shire. Completing the trails audit to assess that they are fit for purpose is a critical short-term action.
5	Completing the trails audit to ensure they are safe is a very important action for safety of all riders Horse riders are screaming out for safe reserves and parks to ride horses to get them off the roads and road verges
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the Trails Audit to assess that trails are fit for purpose is a critical Short-Term Action. This will identify gaps and problems in the existing trail routes, maximise the interconnection with existing trails on adjoining public land, explore and develop alternative and new trails where necessary and ensure the safety and enjoyment of users. • Horse rider access to shared off-road trails, roadside verges and trails within local, regional and state parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and connectivity between neighbourhoods, rural and remote areas across the shire and neighbouring shires.

Action 8: Collaborate with the State and nearby municipalities to develop the Outer Eastern Regional Mountain Bike Strategy that will guide planning and development of facilities in the region.

Do you have any comments about Action 8?

	Response
1	YEP
2	I don't understand why the Mountain Bike Riders get so much support but the horse riders have been left out
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with State land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water) and nearby/neighbouring municipalities to ensure a seamless, safe, diverse, off-road trail experience for horse riders, walkers and cyclists that will guide planning and development of world-class trail infrastructure and facilities in the region. <p>Make Nillumbik the Shared-trail Capital of Victoria! What an opportunity to increase visitation with low-key, eco-friendly activities that sensitively capitalize on the shire's special natural assets.</p>

Action 9: Strengthen relationships with businesses and festivals to showcase the Shire's artisan food and beverage producers.

Do you have any comments about Action 9?

No responses

Action 10: Develop and implement a plan to grow creative and cultural industries through programs and festivals which also act as a support for local artists.

Do you have any comments about Action 10?

No responses

Action 11: Explore ecotourism opportunities.

Do you have any comments about Action 11?

	Response
1	As long as this does not involve a host of B&B and airB&B places dotted all around the Shire in fire prone areas
2	Seasonal camping could be offered in a few public spots in Nillumbik, this could go some way to offset the lack of accommodation businesses within the shire which might struggle to service a future tourist economy. Camping might be explored at the old Lenister Farm site at Lower Eltham Park, Montsalvat or Edendale might offer seasonal Glamping to offset their costs. This could offer an income stream for farmers, back to nature but not so far away, Pony Clubs could also offer camping and in turn upgrade some of their own facilities, equine tourism - camping trails throughout the clubs in the shire.
3	Nillumbik's shared trail network is a natural fit with this.

Action 12: Explore health and wellbeing tourism opportunities

Do you have any comments about Action 12?

	Response
1	Nillumbik's shared trail network is a natural fit with this.

Do you have any other comments about Objective 4 or the associated actions?

	Response
1	This is an exciting area for development. It will face headwinds. How good is the Great Ocean Road but would we be allowed to build it today?

Submission re 'Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-30'

From Nillumbik Greens

Contact Details: Betty Russell, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: 20 March 2020

Present to Council: No

Nillumbik Greens thanks you for the opportunity to contribute to this community consultation process through our submission.

COMMENTS

1. **Mobile phone coverage and internet access & speed** is fundamental to the efficiency, productivity, profitability and competitiveness of all businesses within the shire.
2. **"Working from home"** as a flexible work model (or part thereof), as a viable option for self-employed or employees, could be a focus within the Strategy (Economic Development Strategy). It can deliver significant economic benefits to:
 - the individual (flexibility and savings in terms of time and travel costs)
 - employers (flexibility and space)
 - commuters (less traffic equals savings in travel time)
 - council and state governments (road maintenance)
 - businesses within Nillumbik (more working people within the shire for more of the time is relevant to reducing the drift of spending outside the shire)
 - the community (indirectly) by reducing emissions which contribute to climate change.
3. **The environment** as a key driver to business and as a key sector within the economy should also be a focus throughout the Strategy. Emphasis on the protection and enhancement of the environment needs to be strengthened in order to align with the GWMP.
4. **Review of the 'Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016'**. The Strategy could benefit from being linked to a review of the performance criteria of the 2011 - 2016 Strategy.
5. **Monitoring, including 'Performance Criteria'** should be part of the Strategy open to comment. Without it, the document appears to be incomplete and somewhat lacking in professionalism. This section needs to be added before the document is accepted as final.
6. **More specific Actions** would facilitate the development of performance criteria
7. **'Actions' listed under Objectives** would be clearer to readers if they were labelled as such, instead of being given as dot points. Labelling would strengthen the structure of that part of the text and provide consistency with their listing in Appendix B "Summary of Actions to Implement the Strategy".

8. Under 'Background and Context' [p.5], it is stated that the Strategy "does not seek to **substantially** change the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, ..." This rings alarm bells. What changes does it seek to make? These should be upfront for feedback.

SUGGESTIONS

Comments and rationale are printed in italics.

Suggested additions or modifications are highlighted in yellow.

Executive Summary

Four Key Sectors within the economy needs to be five, adding as no 1:

- **Environmentally driven - green businesses, sustainable agriculture, activities which attract visitors, who then spend in the locality**
- Population driven - retail and hospitality.
- Knowledge-based - education, health care and professional services
- Creative and culture - arts, culture, recreation and tourism
- Primary industry and trade - construction, agribusiness and manufacturing

Economic Vision

To align the strategy with the GWMP, the following needs to be added:

"We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, **while ensuring compatibility with the protection and enhancement of** the Shire's unique natural environment."

Strategic Economic Drivers *need to recognize:*

- *the importance of the Green economy .*
- *the impact of poor mobile phone reception and the slowness and unreliability of internet access within parts of the shire on the competitiveness, efficiency, productivity and profitability of businesses and the practicality of working from home it is also relevant to listed drivers 1, 2 & 5..*

Add:

- **Need to maximize the advantages of our Green Wedge environment through protecting and enhancing the beauty and biodiversity of the natural environment** so as to showcase and expand Nillumbik's recreational, cultural and tourism assets,. to increase visitation and yield
- Nillumbik residents have a high level of expenditure outside of the Shire
- Low population forecasts
- Dwelling growth is low and there is a need for diverse housing options

- Need to create local businesses (including home-based) and jobs
- Need to better facilitate working from home.

Economic Objectives

A major barrier to Economic development appears to have been overlooked. The quality of internet access and mobile phone coverage is fundamental to business efficiency, productivity, viability and prosperity. The slow speed and unreliability of internet access and inadequacy of mobile phone coverage in parts of the shire impedes the competitiveness of businesses and makes working from home impractical in such areas. This needs to be recognized within the objectives and as an economic driver: Council needs to include active lobbying for improvements in this form of economic infrastructure.

Add:

Objective 1 Improve economic development infrastructure, practices and programs to assist local businesses

Infrastructure

A 1: Research the extent of the problem of poor mobile reception and poor/intermittent/slow internet and any other infrastructure issues.

A 2: Lobby for improved mobile phone reach and internet speeds and coverage

A 3: Facilitate setting up of work booths which:

- have good phone reception, reliable, fast internet access and downloads
- are equipped with soundproofing, a small desk, power points and a shelf, designed for one person use, or as required
- could be located in libraries, cafes, community centres, other workplaces, etc., with each centre listing the other locations and internet site for booking them.
- are available to be booked on-line for hire by the hour, day, week or longer
- are located in areas convenient to the needs identified in the research..

Practices

A 1: Continue to engage with local businesses to understand and respond to issues and opportunities

A 2: Facilitate workshops on 'Working from Home'

Objective 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge, while adhering to the NPS.

Action 3: "Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik: needs to add: "... identify the strengths, opportunities and issues for the sector". Also, "... Council can collaborate to improve facilities for locals and visitors who ride competitively for recreation. Council will at the same time ensure the protection of the interests of the general public and the environment in shared public spaces."

Comment: *One of the issues is the use of public trails and public spaces and the actions needed to reconcile the interests of horse-riders with the interests of other members of the public and the protection of the environment.*

For example, a few months ago in Koornong State Park, North Warrandyte, two teenagers rode their horses along the river track and down to the river's edge at a popular local swimming spot, where the embankment forms a small beach. The horses further damaged the existing erosion of the track down to the river. When they left, the small beach was covered with steaming manure. As they left, a young family arrived from the distant car park carrying a little one and with a toddler, picnic rug, picnic bag and towels, but there was nowhere they could sit. Dog owners have to clean up their mess, but horse-owners can't.

Horse-riders are generally committed to staying on the trails and not damaging the fragile eco-system through which the trails often meander. However, education on this needs to be strengthened through riding schools and clubs. Where horse riders have access to public spaces, any fragile sections within those spaces - such as the eroding track down to the river and the swimming/ picnic spot in Koornong State Park - could be identified and closed to horses, while leaving the longer track open to them. .

Objective 4: Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy **and the beautiful environment which underpins it.**

Summary of Actions to Implement the Strategy

*This is well set-out, with the proposed Actions and Timeframes mapped against each Objective (although the Actions are too vague). Could **initial priorities** also be included?*

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in feedback.

Eltham Community Action Group
Submission to
Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy

Many of the Objectives of this document are not areas that Eltham Community Action Group as a group has discussed, however members may have done so as individuals.

We have however discussed two of the Objectives.

Objective 3

Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.

As a Green Wedge shire Nillumbik should strengthen any objectives that recognise and enhance the environmental values of the Green Wedge. Nillumbik Council's actions should place the environmental value of the Green Wedge above the interests of landowners and always act as a custodian of a scarce resource for future generations.

We support the concept of a genuine 'green economy' and the acknowledgement of a need to transition to a low-carbon economy that is resource efficient and socially inclusive.

Objective 4

Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.

1. Create and promote visitor attractions

The Diamond Valley Railway does already attract many families to Eltham Lower Park to ride on the trains as part of a 'day out'. We are not aware that Council has itself ever surveyed the visitors to ascertain where the visitors come from and where they will go when leaving the Park.

Most DVR users/visitors appear to come prepared to spend the whole of their visit in the park nearby providing themselves with their own food and drink and contributing nothing to the economy of Nillumbik but their train tickets and rubbish.

Council by *Enhancing and maximising visitor dispersal* may in fact damage the total visitor experience which is also dependant on quiet enjoyment of the natural and environmental values of the park.

Other individuals and sporting groups use the park and appreciate different aspects of the park, be it sporting ovals and/or passive recreation along the Yarra River.

Maximising visitor dispersal may conflict with those who seek the peace and quiet along the river that is, in itself, an important asset denied to many who visit from other suburbs and who may actually contribute to the economy of Eltham by also visiting cafes, galleries and shops.

Edendale Farm is also enjoyed by families and individuals, residents and visitors alike.

It is a unique venue that should be supported and enhanced so that it can be available for future generations. It is an asset type that few other councils or organisation have to manage.

Being a unique asset means that it may not fit comfortably with general Council thinking more attuned to supporting sporting and traditional council properties. That means that thinking and recognition of its value to residents and people from other suburbs (like the Diamond Valley Railway) will always require creative thinking.

Its location to the Eltham North playground and the bike trail should be capitalised on with adequate explanatory signage.

If you have any questions about this submission please contact either

Carlota Quinlan

Sue Dyet

elthamcag@yahoo.com



Response to Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2030

The Nillumbik Business & Tourism Association represents several interested local artists, local wineries, and home-based and small businesses in the Nillumbik shire.

Nillumbik's 4 strategic objectives we see as absolute drivers for the continued economic development, growth and sustainability for all our members.

It is critical for both business and council to work more closely together to clearly understand and achieve its objectives. One message needs to be delivered and received from both parties.

Currently we have 4 business associations individually negotiating and dealing with council, which not only creates a situation of unnecessary duplication, but also competition between all parties.

If we are to have any chance of achieving any of the objectives this must be addressed.

One body to represent all businesses in Nillumbik is certainly something that I as President Of the NB&TA would strongly advocate.

In relation to addressing in detail the 4 clear objectives the following points I would like to highlight:

1. Local Youth employment needs to be created to ensure our talented young people can display their talents within our shire.
2. Our shire does not just evolve around the shire shopping precincts of Eltham & Diamond Creek; it is of great concern that we are not endeavouring to bridge the gap between the inner suburbs, and the rural areas of our shire.
3. Furthermore to the above point, not enough effort is being explored on how existing rural businesses such as wineries, hobby farms, artists and other large rural properties can provide part of the economic growth by providing the very things that can showcase Nillumbik's recreation & cultural economy.
4. The need to create a major drawcard that can attract people to stop within our shire, rather than use us as a drive by to the Yarra Valley is another critical component to economic success.
5. The fast tracking of the completion of the walking trail through to Hurstbridge can be the connection that can link all constituents of the shire, enable community activities that can link several the existing attractions with new innovative festivals.

In closing, on behalf of the board, we would like to fully endorse the shire's Economic Development Plan, and that you will consider the above points.



Richard Dovile – President NT&B



19th March 2020

To Nillumbik Shire Council

Re Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy Plan 2020-2030 – DRAFT

The Diamond Creek Committee have reviewed Council's draft Strategic Plan and would like to note the following responses;

- Council need to provide direction or their approach to tackle challenges with the Hurstbridge Train line and Diamond Creek Station for example whether we create underpass/ over pass and widening of the tracks
- Council need to prioritise additional parking and better infrastructure on Elizabeth Street. This has been brought to Council's attention on numerous occasions over many years.
- The idea of using offices above these factories is a great idea, but parking needs to be addressed first.
- A clear and detailed system of communication and engagement with Council, with designated key contact(s) within Council's structure
- Show case Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy
- Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within Shire's green wedge. These strategies will create jobs. These will in turn have a multiplier impact to attract supporting business and flow through to the supply chains .
- Affordable Housing - Based on the data on Page 7, average household earning (3 persons) is around \$84,000 per year . Yet the Median House Price is around \$944,000. This means an average household will have great difficulties in passing the "ability to repay "test in getting a loan to own a home and living in our Shire.
- Infrastructure Support - The railway line needs 2 tracks. Road to 4 lines.

We look forward to working closely and collaboratively with Council and other stakeholders in our local area to enhance the community we all share in and care about.

Diamond Creek Traders Association



Eltham Chamber of Commerce
 PO Box 3023, Eltham 3095
 info@elthamtown.com

To Nillumbik Shire Council

Thursday March 19, 2020

Re: Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy Plan 2020-2030 – DRAFT

The Executive Committee of the Eltham Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ECCI) thank the Nillumbik Shire Council for the opportunity to offer feedback on the draft of the Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy Plan 2020-2030.

Committee members have thoroughly reviewed the Strategy Plan and acknowledge the objectives and opportunities set out in the document.

In addition to organising current and ongoing activities in 3095, ECCI will begin work on a 5-year Business Plan, for completion by end of 2020. This is to address the opportunities, needs and objectives of our members in making Eltham a thriving and vibrant community for local residents, businesses and visitors alike end with a launch date being 1 July 2021. This Business Plan will inform ECCI's strategies and processes and will closely align with the objectives set out in the Strategy Plan and aims to facilitate collaboration with Council and other stakeholders in serving the Eltham community today with planning for the future.

- The present ECCI Executive Committee is dedicated to fostering and growing an already strong relationship with Council and to collaborate with all levels of government and stakeholders on many fronts (Obj. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)
- ECCI's activities are already responding to a number of objectives in the Strategy Plan. Our regular activations of Eltham Town Centre and surrounds showcase local talent and producers (Obj. 4.1, 4.4, 4.5) on a regular basis.
- A planned schedule of ongoing networking events (Obj. 1.5, 1.6) allows local business owners and/or managers to exchange knowledge and ideas in a dynamic environment.
- ECCI has been driving a strong Buy Local campaign (Obj. 1.9, 2.1) and continues to advocate for support from the community and stakeholders on behalf of its members.

ECCI commends Council on the Strategy Plan as a great step forward. We have identified a number of objectives in the Strategy that may benefit from more in-depth actions and strategies for Eltham and the Nillumbik Shire.

- A clear and detailed system of communication and engagement with Council, with designated key contact(s) within Council's structure (Obj.1)
- Dedicated support from Council to facilitate specific actions relating to Obj. 2.1, 2.2 & 2.6 and Obj. 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7.
- A town-wide streetscape management plan, including maintenance programs, improved signaged, pop-up shop activation plan, clear process and procedures, and effective collaboration with stakeholders (Obj.1.5, 1.9 & 1.10, Obj. 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3, Obj. 3.1 & 3.2, Obj. 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7)
- In-depth and detailed resources and actions to address Obj. 2.1 & 2.2, and overall Obj. 4.

- Clear and timely infrastructure planning aligned with the Strategy Plan, plus provide Eltham Town Centre strategic direction and focus for future planning and retail schemes.
- Ongoing assessment of car parking needs in Eltham Town.
- Provide further assistance with transportation needs especially the elderly. Providing regular bus services from aged care homes to Eltham Town.
- Provide and assist with dedication to the night time economy in Eltham Town

We look forward to working closely and collaboratively with Council and other stakeholders in our local area to enhance the community we all share in and care about.

ECCI Executive Committee

OBJECTIVE 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge

1. Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy

Transition to a Green Economy requires an integrated policy approach to ensure that Nillumbik has the social, environmental and technological innovations that will shape the collective future of the Shire.

Acting transparently, ethically and with strong political legitimisation from elected officials will maximise the positive impact of the Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NEDS 2020-2030)

There is a need to adopt a diverse and representative set of economic indicators that focus on sustainability, pace and progress rather than just growth, with the goal of positioning the local economy to compete in tomorrow's markets.

How these are embedded into town regeneration, urban developments and peri urban innovations is critical to ensure that the NEDS 2020-2030 is "swimming with the tide" on societal expectations.

Nillumbik Shire with 91% Green Wedge land must seek to lead as an example of "best practice" in fostering innovation as a driver for more sustainable business models.

Council's commitment to taking a "whole of Council" approach to facilitating economic development is encouraging. It is hoped that this co-ordinated approach extends to the implementation of the initiatives in the strategy and will include the establishment of an **Agribusiness Consultative Committee** with community representation including Local Food Connect.

Courageous leadership is what is needed now from Nillumbik Shire.

Leadership that seeks to work in equal partnership with community representative groups such as Local Food Connect in the spirit of the stated Shire of Nillumbik Economic Vision.

"We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, compatible with the Shire's unique natural environment" (p 6. Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020)

2. Research, develop and pilot projects to increase sustainability as part of a green economy

Economic Resilience in the Food System

Building and enabling a robust, sustainable food economy and food sovereignty for local communities in our region is paramount. The 2020 disease and bushfire events have made clear how much food and the enterprises it supports contribute to economies.

We strongly encourage undertaking a thorough analysis to determine the unique scale and make-up of the Nillumbik Shire local food and agriculture system, with the view to developing a Sustainable Agriculture Strategy.

A Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (SAS) is essential for guiding policy and underpinning implementation to ensure economic resilience in this sector is maximised.

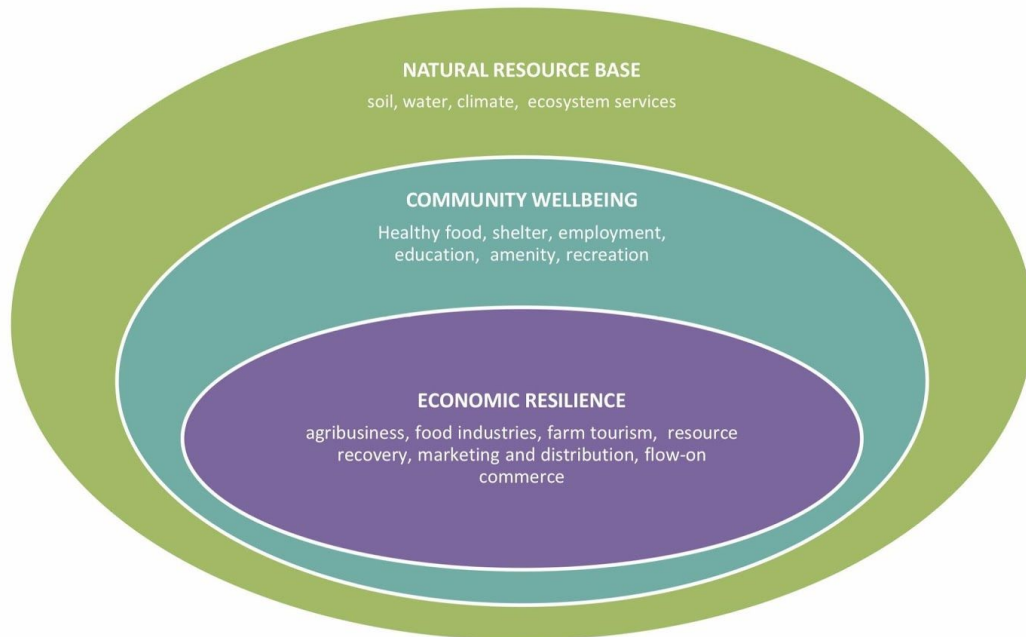


Figure 1: Sustainable Agriculture Framework (TSC 2011a)

A SAS will identify actions and delivery pathways that support a healthy natural resource base, a strong food production community and a resilient agricultural economy.

BUT Development of a SAS must not prevent early actions that bring quick "wins".

Without the guidance of a Sustainable Agricultural Strategy the development of agribusiness risks being driven by "green sheening", posturing and other competing demands, rather than the "deep dive" strategies required for long term economic resilience of this sector.

Demand

Viable and diverse enterprises throughout the food system are critical to resilience. Barriers to producing food for local consumption should be identified and, where possible, eliminated. A number of Green Wedge chefs and local Farmers' Markets source local sustainably produced food. Green Wedge producers are a preferred source, but the demand currently far outweighs supply. The Green Wedge can contribute to feeding and improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Nillumbik. Efforts need to be concentrated on building a local food system that supports the production of affordable local nutrient dense food. The cost of

food is reduced, the local economy benefits, and the market is more secure for local growers while giving food producers a fair return for their time and capital investments.

We urge Nillumbik Shire to build resilience into the local food system through food strategies that support growers and help to counter market forces driven by large supermarkets that put pressure on growers and in turn consumers

Land Access and Food Bowl Farms

One of the bedrocks of a strong local economy is food production and support is essential for small to medium scale farmers and peri urban producers to undertake a diverse range of sustainable practices.

Consideration should be given to developing a simple and cheap planning permit process for **artisan** and **small scale** agricultural projects that meet environmental, regenerative and maximum land size benchmarks.

An example is small enterprise “*Food Bowl Farms*” growing nutrient dense fresh produce primarily to feed the people of the Shire of Nillumbik but also selling into the suburbs of Melbourne. With these “*Food Bowl Farms*” practicing regenerative methods to grow food, the soil will be regenerated, and biodiversity protected and the nutritional quality of the food produced will be high.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of this approach it is suggested that several regenerative or sustainable “pilot plots” in the field are evaluated over a full year cycle to determine the feasibility of this approach. Council are encouraged to seek funding to undertake this project.

Land Leasing

The cost of purchasing land, tools etc is often the major roadblock for young and incubator farmers wanting to grow food. Land leasing is a common arrangement in the expanding urban farmer sector.

Lease arrangements on historically cleared private land provide opportunity for small scale artisan growers using best practice sustainable or preferably regenerative practices.

Another opportunity with the option of mentorship could be through a similar programme as “*Shadow Farming*” in the Macedon Ranges. Experienced landholders provide mentoring/ assistance to new or tree change farmers (www.thisfarmneedsafarmer.com.au)

Investigate the option of private landholders leasing cleared private land in the Green Wedge for incubator farmers to practice and develop their skills, and identify barriers that may exist in the current planning scheme

Scale

Scale is becoming an increasingly vexed planning issue for local government as new sustainable farming techniques challenge the long-standing orientation towards broadacre agriculture found in the planning scheme.

To require a 2 acre peri-urban small scale farm to meet the same agriculture planning compliance as a 40 acre broadacre farm is not appropriate and stifles the growth of a strong local food system.

To place a farmstand transaction of apples/pumpkins in the same category as a supermarket item imported from another country is not logical and doesn't recognise the diversity and complexity in the food system.

Unless Nillumbik Shire strongly lobby for change at State level this region will increasingly become a fresh food desert & be doomed to remain the poor cousin of the Yarra Valley.

3. Explore and facilitate agribusiness opportunities

Regenerative Agriculture

A number of Green Wedge towns on the urban and peri urban fringe have historically supported farms that contributed and still contribute to feeding Melbourne. The global trend for agriculture in the context of biodiversity and climate change is small scale (10 acres and under) with an emphasis on soil health/regeneration and biointensive growing.

Regenerative Agriculture with its agroecological, small scale approach can contribute not only to local economic growth but also to energy, water savings, biodiversity, soil health and reductions in land management costs.

Regenerative Agriculture is not so much about what farmers do but what they stop doing! It is a holistic approach requiring the farmer/grower to reimagine their role in the ecosystem. Farming becomes less of a day to day proposition, and more about ecosystem management for now and for the future.

By focusing on farming practices like rotational grazing, cover crops, biointensive growing and organic enrichment of soil, farms produce better quality food in higher yields. These practices also make the soil more drought-resistant, thus increasing profitability as well as improving land value.

Changes in the way farming and food production is interpreted by Nillumbik Shire is imperative. There must be a strong commitment to moving away from sweating the old broad acre farming paradigm of identifying large tracts of "fertile farmland" and squeezing as much out of the land as possible.

Regenerative Agriculture should be transitioned, supported and incentivised in Nillumbik Shire.

Farm to Table

In recent years there has been rapid expansion in initiatives exploring innovative methods for growing and distributing food. These provide alternative models that shift power back from large scale food systems to farmers and communities, in turn improving local economies, jobs growth, social cohesion and health.

“Farm to Table” is much more than a visitor attraction, it is a critical element of a resilient local food system. Direct “farm to table” systems include:

- farmers markets
- community food farms
- farm gates
- food stands
- community supported produce boxes
- artisan food producers

These more localised enterprises provide fresher, more nutritious food from regenerative and sustainable farms and keep the food \$’s circulating in the local community. They also enhance the reputation of the Shire as a food producing area, attracting investment and resources and adding value to the tourism product.

With a diverse range of accessible food sources there is a greater degree of regional self-sufficiency.

This in turn ensures that resilience alongside efficiency are the primary drivers for the systems we depend upon to feed ourselves every day.

Yet in the Shire of Nillumbik the biggest obstacle facing agri-business is not land, not desire, not know how, not money. It is the absence of “on the ground support” for these important economic contributors. The planning approval process is often fraught with barriers and red tape sometimes resulting in enterprises, out of frustration moving to other Council zones. Local Food Connect has experienced this first hand. We have been extremely impacted by the lack of continuity, low enthusiasm and avoidable delays that have dogged our community farm feasibility study. This has been the result of continuous turnover of staff in both the Economic Development and Planning Departments in the last 12 months.

Offering more support for innovation would stimulate an explosion of ecologically enhancing products and experiences and growth in the businesses that produce them.

Now is the time to move away from a micro-managing approach that extends it’s tentacles into the community, often strangling innovation in its infancy.

All the great ideas in the NEDS 2020-2030 will fall at the first hurdle unless Nillumbik Shire closes the noticeable gap between policy and implementation, particularly in the delivery of its promises to the community of supporting innovation and working collaboratively.

EDENDALE CENTRE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Aim to lead by creating a stewardship hub of sustainable and regenerative “best practice” at Edendale Farm.

Create an “EDENDALE CENTRE OF SUSTAINABILITY” that will provide educational opportunities, advice for land management and regenerative agriculture training for emerging, transitioning farmers and the community. It will ‘grow the growers’ that we need to protect the biodiversity of the Green Wedge. Partner with education institutions to provide pathways into Regenerative Agriculture, Biodiversity, Urban Farming, Biointensive Growing, Vertical Farming, Soil Free Farming (aeroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics) Controlled Environment Agriculture (mushroom production in shipping containers) Solar Innovations, Artisan Produce, Agribusiness Skills, Ecotourism etc.

Provision of educational and practical experiences from Diplomas through short courses, forums, research and field trips.

This programme at the Edendale Centre of Sustainability would complement the existing successful community and school education programme already in place at the farm.

Opportunities for funding should be explored through the State, partnerships and philanthropic support.

Disruption and the New Agriculture

Food production is a high growth industry. However, achieving secure, viable food production and consumption over the next 20 years will look very different from today's dominant model.

Climate impact, changing diets, health challenges and new food alternatives are all disrupting the food system. Yet there is opportunity to leverage this disruption by providing incentive and opportunity to enable enterprise growth and innovation to flourish.

An example of responding to opportunity is the emerging Alphington Food Hub which is an incubator for new ideas in the food system. A case study running out of the Alphington food hub is a start-up enterprise of non-soil growers experimenting with innovative sustainable growing methods in urban environments. The Alphington Hub which has partnerships with government and funders is an example that could inform ideas on future opportunities for Edendale Farm and the suggested Edendale Centre for Sustainability.

Providing a space for food production innovators to develop processes and products that respond to the challenges of climate change is just as important as providing a regional art gallery with space for artists to practice their craft. In this case the infrastructure already exists at Edendale Farm to support these emerging technologies. Examples include:

- *Regenerative Agriculture (urban farming, biointensive growing, scale)
- *Vertical Farming
- *Soil Free Farming (aeroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics)
- *Controlled Environment Agriculture (mushroom production in shipping containers)
- *Lab Grown Food (converting proteins from algae, insects, vegetables into products)
- *3D Printed Food

Opening minds to the new ways of farming and new forms of food have the potential to contribute to economic growth. It is this food wisdom that is powering new technologies and start-ups which Nillumbik is yet to demonstrate it has fully embraced.

ENDNOTE
(April 2nd 2020)

Local Food Connect has reviewed its submission in the context of the unprecedented changes that have occurred both globally and locally since the announcement of the Covid 2019 pandemic on March 12 2020.

It is clearly evident in Nillumbik Shire the impact the pandemic has had on our food system. Food security, the return to hyperlocalism & the demand for nutrient dense food are foremost in the minds of the community. The food system has been broken open & most people now understand how little control they have over the food they consume.

Nillumbik won't return to where it was pre- pandemic.

Expect to see Covid-weary urbanites seeking to quell their fearful minds, heal their isolation bodies and replenish their weary spirits in our bio diverse clean Green Wedge.

Expect to see the demand for truth and transparency around food, explosions in fresh local food, more peri urban farmgates and importantly more demand for transparent food provenance.

We'll talk about growers of food that are small, passionate and hyper local.

Our submission offers economic possibilities undergirded by critical health, well being and biodiversity indicators that post pandemic will benefit not only local but also the broader communities of Melbourne.



Friends of Nillumbik Inc.

P.O. Box 258 Eltham 3095

mail@friendsofnillumbik.org

Submission to Draft Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2030

20th March, 2020

We make the following comments on this draft strategy:

The Strategy's objectives (Exec summary, page 3)

4. Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy (page 3)

Since Nillumbik's most distinctive feature (over 90% of the Shire) is its Green Wedge, shouldn't this fourth objective of the Strategy include the rural environment as being worthy of showcasing too? It should read: "Showcase Nillumbik's rural environment and its recreation and cultural economy".

Background and context (page 5)

The inclusion of the reference to, "and does not seek to substantially change the Nillumbik Planning Scheme," (page 5) alerts us to council's controversial plan to try to weaken planning scheme environment protections. This idea attracted strong community protest when it became part of an amended Green Wedge Management Plan, and it remains retrograde and divisive. An economic strategy should be realistically based on the existing Planning Scheme, rather than anticipate and advocate for changes which don't yet exist.

5. Develop and implement the Nillumbik Housing Strategy (page 13)

This section includes a reference to, "a framework for decisions affecting housing and settlement" (page 13)

If the use of the term 'settlement' refers to council's ambition to work towards using land which is outside the Urban Growth Boundary, for housing growth, we ask that it be

removed. Nillumbik's Green Wedge must remain a rural non-urban space protected by its zone purpose. Housing must be confined to inside the UGB.

Objective 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge (page 13-14)

We support sustainable and regenerative agriculture, but claiming that the GWMP will enable, 'environmentally sustainable economic outcomes while respecting conservation values' (page 13) is disputed. Council's GWMP was overwhelmingly criticised because it threatened conservation values across the Green Wedge. The claim of respecting conservation values has no substance.

Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy (page 13)

A "Green Economy" is a desirable goal, however, in the context of planning for activities in our Green Wedge, the four characteristics on page 13 need to be re-arranged so that the fourth dot point: 'preservation and protection of ecosystems and biological diversity' is a priority characteristic rather than relegated to fourth place. The other three: Renewable energy, zero emissions and sustainable land and water use, could equally well relate to an urban environment. i.e. to any shire without a green wedge!

A low carbon economy is important for every municipality around Melb; but Nillumbik has a green wedge which needs sustainable management so that its key environmental assets - flora and fauna diversity - are not lost. The need for economic development must not threaten those natural assets. The strategy should've made that explicit, but it doesn't.

Objective 4. Showcase recreation and cultural economy, Page 14 – 16

1. Create and promote visitor attractions

The tourism strengths listed in this section ignores the obvious contradiction between "nature-based assets" and 'equine pursuits.' (page 14) The fact they're lumped together in the same sentence shows an inadequate grasp of the green wedge environment. The fact is, unregulated grazing by horses is degrading Nillumbik's nature-based assets, i.e. the habitat provided by native vegetation at both ground and middle storey level.

Grazing animals must be better regulated to avoid degrading green wedge ecosystems and biodiversity and hence the assets upon which ecotourism is based. Council's GWMP failed to recognise that and neither does this strategy.

3. Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik (page 15)

We question the significance of equine activities as a contributor to Nillumbik's economy. A justification for supporting equine activities as part of a municipal economic development strategy, is yet to be demonstrated. Also, this "Equine in Nillumbik" goal clashes with Objective 3 of the Strategy: i.e.

“Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire’s green wedge” (page 3)

Unless horse management can be improved, their continued unregulated grazing is simply not environmentally sustainable. Council’s own Biodiversity Strategy identifies grazing as a threat.

7. Ecotourism within Nillumbik (page 15)

Current GWMP fails to recommend the proper protection of native flora and fauna or habitat values on private land, so the aspiration for ecotourism in Nillumbik is, sadly, unlikely to fully develop and be sustained in the long term. Council would need to be much more serious about using its regulatory planning powers to protect and nurture habitat values.

Greg Johnson (President, FoN Inc)

17.3.2020

Group Submission to Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Concerning properties 175-199 Ironbark rd Diamond Creek 40 acres, 201-219 Ironbark rd Diamond Creek 5 acres, 40-60 Pioneer rd Yarrambat 14.5 acres

I or nominee, wish to be heard by the full Council on this Group Submission and an independent panel appointed by the Minister if our objections can-not be accommodated or catered for. We wish to expand on our Submission at these hearings.

Fundamental to all Nillumbik policies, plans and strategies past and currently in process including housing, Diamond Creek activity centre and economic development is the fact that the mapping/zoning mistake pertaining to the above lands has not been equitably corrected. This planning mistake/irregularity can no longer be ignored. Council's application of past policies and strategies can-not be applied in a selective way for some and then use new policies and strategies to aid and benefit others. This is especially so if the new is to the detriment of the former eg. New Diamond Creek Activity Centre Structure Plan which moves the town centre and creates a new Diamond Creek.

On the above basis, we object to any further release of land or development of land for whatever purpose in Nillumbik Shire that utilises urban infrastructure (eg. water, drainage, sewerage, telecommunications, electricity) if it means our properties are neglected to be included equitably as urban residential. Our lands have urban reticulated infrastructure to the total area of the acreages. It was paid for and established for the specific purpose of residential development. We remind Council that they acknowledged that the above properties had distinctive infrastructure when the New format Nillumbik Planning Scheme was adopted in year 2000.

Our lands must be included as part of any new strategy that provides for and supports residential development and land use.

At all times our urban reticulated infrastructure needs to be included in any and all future strategies, policies and plans. It was and is strategic to Diamond Creek, Plenty and Yarrambat.

Crucial to economic growth and development is increased population. New residents need houses. An economic strategy can-not afford to dismiss land like ours with established urban reticulated infrastructure.

Failure to include our properties in any new urban residential strategy also creates a significant Bushfire risk to these areas and indeed potentially North East Melbourne.

If there is ever a future council amalgamation or shire boundary change our lands must be included as urban within the Banyule City and not gerrymandered out to City of Whittlesea or elsewhere.

Gila Schnapp and on behalf of stakeholders/owners of above lands. I agree to the privacy policy provided. [REDACTED]

Response to Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

It is difficult to make any kind of detailed evaluation of this document because it says very little that is concrete. It is full of broad statements and conveys the kind of optimism that one expects with any general report put together by a consultant as this one definitely seems to be. The most common word used in the report is “will” and the most common tense is the future, which is partially understandable in a report which responsibly embraces a ten year time frame.

Here I include only a few comments on basic themes, which I believe define the substance of the report.

Growth

Running persistently through the report is the need for growth in the Shire. This need is never justified in any sense and one wonders why Nillumbik needs to be in state of continual growth. People have historically moved to Nillumbik because they enjoy the constancy of a Green Wedge Shire and the relaxed ambience that goes with it. Even if this requires higher rates comparable to other shire/councils, most people seem prepared to pay it and do not want the kinds of shopping centres such as Greensborough and Shoppingtown that bring in large rate revenues, and a huge amount of traffic..

I notice that this growth is specified in terms of dwellings (p.3, p.9), population (p.9) economic (p.10, 17) and activity centres (p.12). The final one of these is consistent with state government policy and makes sense in respect of the present mix of activities in Eltham and Diamond Creek. But no reason is given as to why we need a larger population unless it is for the implication that there is so much population pressure in other parts of Melbourne that Nillumbik should relieve this by enabling more growth. This in turn implicitly supports the argument that more housing is needed, both in quantity and diversity.

I can only assume one of the explicit arguments for more growth is to stop the leakage of financial resources from the Shire:

“Nillumbik residents spend approximately \$1billion per annum outside the Shire, predominantly in Melbourne, Greensborough and Doncaster³. This leakage from the Nillumbik economy impacts the sustainability and mix of local businesses and, combined with online retail, limits investment attraction and job creation within the Shire.” (p.8)

Yet apart from the argument that more money spent within the Shire would create more jobs, no other justification is given. The point is that Nillumbik functions perfectly effectively even with the leakage of money from the Shire. And the fact that mercantile and industrial activity is limited here is one of the principal reasons people choose to live in the Shire.

In sum, if there is a need for ongoing growth then it has to be argued for and not just mentioned in throw away lines such as ““Council will deliver initiatives that balance these needs and provide harmony between economic growth, societal

needs and the environment.” P.17. This bespeaks of a wish to deliver something to everyone, but the need for constant growth contradicts the establishment of harmony with the environment.

2. increased activity in Panton Hill, Smiths Gully, St Andrews and Wattle Glen,

Why does the council want increased activity in these centres? Many of the people who live there are professionals who work outside of the Shire and live in the lands surrounding these townships because they seek the quiet ambience and have a strong commitment to the protection of the local biosphere as it is, and not as it would become were there more commercial development and an unrestrained amount of tourism. Of course, there must be some tourism as the Green Wedges are the lungs of Melbourne and people from outside of the Shire are entitled to make use of them in a manner consistent with preserving the fundamental nature of the Green Wedge.

On p. 13 (and p.4) we read that “P.13 “Council will investigate the business and employment potential of smaller centres such as Hurstbridge, St Andrews, Research and Panton Hill.” Does this mean it seeks to expand the size of these towns in a manner that would eventually result in a progressive change to their present spatial arrangements and planning schedules? Whilst there will always be some scope for reasonable and carefully managed change, great care has to be taken to ensure the basis ambience of these townships and their surrounds is not irrevocably disturbed.

This is suggested by the following suggestion, stated mutely, but still stated:

“The lack of dedicated employment land is an ongoing challenge in supporting the provision of additional commercial office accommodation in the Shire. Future demand for additional floor space will need to to be accommodated through innovative reimaging of existing sites and/or improved zoning settings.” (p.12)

The crucial phrase here is “improved zoning settings.” For surely this implies a revision to the existing planning scheme in a manner that may compromise the existing integrity of the Green Wedge. If this is the intention then it should be stated explicitly.

3. How much can Council Really Effect the Economic Development in the Shire

Economic activity in a given area is primarily determined at a macro level by Federal and State government activities—the setting of taxes, large scale infrastructure provision, helping to develop export markets, determining relevant levels of wages, industrial relations legislation, etc. Usually councils really only help the economy by changes in their planning scheme and rating levels. It is the first of these that is probably the most significant as it determines

the value of land and establishes expectations about what kinds of activities can be undertaken on particular kinds of land.

Perhaps the council can be very active in encouraging cultural and environmental tourism, but even here much of the advertising seen on the electronic media seems to be undertaken at a state government level. This relates to p.15 pt.2 and collaborating with other local organizations may bring benefits in the long term. However, Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek and Eltham are already very well set up for night time activities in the sense of restaurants and bars. Do they need more of these?

“The most significant category for escape expenditure is dining and entertainment. Council will explore ways to develop a stronger night-time economy that will in turn enhance the vibrancy of activity centres.” (p.12)

4 Buying Locally

The wish to encourage residents to buy locally must be applauded as it creates demand which in turn can feed through to job creation. It is, however, going to be very difficult to overturn the habit of buying on-line which for many people is seen to be both cheaper and time-saving.

“Council will generate a campaign to encourage residents to support local businesses and promote the benefits of buying locally. Through collaboration with local business associations, the implementation of this campaign will raise awareness of businesses and their products, increase loyalty to local businesses and assist to decrease escape expenditure.” (p.11)

Conclusion

As difficult as it is to offer much that is meaningful about this report—because it offers so little that is practical and costed—a contradiction that appears throughout it must be signalled: it calls for increased commercial activity in Eltham and Diamond Creek—consistent with state government policy—and the exploration of increased activity in Panton Hill, Smiths Gully, St Andrews and Wattle Glen, areas lying in the heart of the Green Wedge. These are areas to which people move because they do not want excessive economic development. How is the desire for growth and the ratepayers desire to live in a Green Wedge ambience to be reconciled? Already the Green Wedge Management Plan of 2019 implies the need for further development in the Green Wedge. The Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy just extends on this and confirms the thrust of the other plan, which, if fully implemented, would drastically change the Green Wedge and therefore the Shire of Nillumbik.

Greg Bailey,



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to contribute to the draft economic strategy paper.

I am making explicit reference to animal agriculture within this strategy. Animal agriculture is a significant contributing factor to climate change and needs to be addressed now (as this is a 10 year strategy). There are a vast array of other economic opportunities that can be developed with a lower carbon foot print and I think the strategy should focus on those with the explicit goal of phasing out animal agriculture. There are a number of other good reasons to transition away from animal agriculture – see below:

Implications on Climate

- Animal agriculture is very resource inefficient. A kilogram of beef takes 5 times the amount of water to produce than a kilogram of vegetables – and water is scarce. The GWMP states that “Victoria is becoming hotter and drier, facing more periods of extreme heat and drought, reductions in annual rainfall” which is not conducive with the water required for animal farming.
- Across the world livestock takes up 83% of farmland but provides only 18% of calories.
- Livestock are responsible for 58% of greenhouse gas emissions, 57% water pollution and 56% air pollution.* Converting grass into meat is like converting coal into energy.
- Vast amounts of trees are cleared to grow crops to feed to livestock. Far more people could be fed with the crops grown for animal feed than the meat that is produced from the crops.
- Transportation – of both cattle and feed creates their own carbon footprint. Feed is often shipped from Brazil and animals are shipped around the country on big, dirty trucks.
- Processing – of both cattle and feed creates their own carbon footprints. Plant based agriculture does not require the same level of processing.
- Regenerative, plant based farming can increase carbon sequestration and improve poor Nillumbik soil. It avoids manmade chemicals, works with nature and is compatible with biodiversity and conservation.

Animal Welfare Considerations (farmed animals are sentient, they feel pain and emotions, like pet dogs)

- For the vast majority of farmed animals the welfare implications are grim. Each year approx. 32 million sheep and 8 million cattle are killed in slaughterhouses.
- Beef cattle will be killed at around 1.5 years old (they naturally live to 20 years old). Dairy mothers are killed at 7 years old, male dairy calves killed between 48 hours – 4 days old.
- Dairy cows will have ALL their babies taken away from them within hours of birth so they cannot consume their mother’s milk. All male and some female calves will be killed, either by blunt force or taken to a slaughterhouse, they are just babies.
- Beef cows are often sent to feedlots for the last few months of their lives to fatten them up where they are confined.
- The journey to the saleyard, feedlot and slaughter house is long and traumatic for a sensitive animals, they will have no food or water.
- In the slaughterhouse, in the killing line they know what is ahead. They are terrified, trembling, kicking and screaming. They foam at the mouth in the kill box as the slaughterman takes aim between their eyes. For footage see <https://www.dominionmovement.com/>
- There are welfare standards in slaughterhouse but if you have spoken to anyone who has worked there you will know employees become desensitised.
- We know there will be more extreme climate events in Nillumbik. Brining animals into that environment is not responsible, they face a slow and painful death if caught in a bushfire. This summer over 100,000 cattle died this slow and painful death. That could have been animals here.

Human Welfare Considerations


- Slaughterhouse work is tough emotionally, it is not something that comes naturally to people.

- We are familiar with the mental strain for animal farmers in Australia – they don't want their family or animals to suffer. Why we would we want this for our neighbours?
- The residents of Nillumbik deserve a healthy, cohesive food strategy and the opportunity to grow local businesses whilst reducing dependency on big, corporate organisations.
- A smart, local food strategy could support small scale farmers and business from the ever growing industrial manufactured food that is destroying our communities, farmers, the environment and health.

Thank you for taking these important factors into account and i look forward to hearing back from you.

Warm regards,
Helen

Helen Seta



To Whom it may concern.

I have submitted this online as well as emailing.

The below is presented by the Hurstbridge Traders Association regarding the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Nillumbik Shire should consider Hurstbridge Township has an integral role to play in the future of the economic development of Nillumbik.

We would ask you to include the below information in the Nillumbik Development Strategy.

We believe that Hurstbridge is the third major activity centre and should be noted as such and how the strategy focusses to make it become more vibrant profitable town centre. The link that the Historic Hurstbridge is the gateway to the green wedge and economic development within the rural sector should have links to Hurstbridge.

In considerations for the Nillumbik Shire Council economic Development Strategy we believe the below should be addressed by council:

1. Victrak owned land in the Hurstbridge area needs to be freed up for development. Council to set up a team to pursue the release of land for Business and residential developments. Increase in population creates potential growth of Business opportunities.
2. Replication of activities planned to promote Eltham and Diamond Creek Businesses should be also identified specifically for Hurstbridge
3. The old Hurstbridge High School site to be reviewed and developed for ecofriendly residential development on a small scale with some public open space incorporated. Potential to grow population and therefore potential increase in Business sales and opportunities.
In addition, local elderly owning large land holdings can sell their Properties and continue to live and enjoy the community of Hurstbridge.
4. Consider the establishment of a community owned fuel/petrol station. Great examples of this in Victoria. Possibly on some of the freed up Victrak land.
5. Establishment of a tourist centred site to encourage visitors and tourists to enjoy Hurstbridge and what it has to offer. Build a draw card for Hurstbridge, Large adventure playground/mini golf /water park etc. The site will be an attraction for families to visit, participate and enjoy.
6. The Council to work on promoting and enhancing the Historical aspects of Hurstbridge.

Ian Mason
President
Hurstbridge Traders Association

Kind Regards,

	Ian Mason Director		Email: imason@mwmhurstbridge.com.au Mobile: 04 18 597 176	
	Hurstbridge Office 764 Main Road, Hurstbridge 9718 2222	Diamond Creek Office 600 Main Hurstbridge Road, Diamond Creek 9438 5678	Kinglake Office Shop 1 Glenburn Road, Kinglake 5788 1199	Whittlesea Office 3941 Church Street, Whittlesea 9716 3300
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Name: J. Loftus-Hills

Qualifications. B. Ec Dip Ed

Experience: Research educational technology, Teaching secondary and tertiary. Faculty Management. Authoring Commerce and Business management text and producing related educational videos. Educational consulting. Owner and manager Loftus-Hills Consulting and Educational Television (ETV) and executive producer Warrantdyte.TV

March 20 2020

Dear Sir/madam

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the proposed Economic Development Strategy (EDS). I have lived and worked in Nillumbik the last 34 years. Economic and Business Management have an on going and professional interest of mine since undergraduate days at Monash University in the 1960s. While I take a critical lens to the draft, I do not mean this personally. I understand that a lot of hard working consultants, Council employees and business and education specialists have made contributions in good faith.

In 2003 Council adopted its first Economic Development Strategy. In 2011 it revised the framework a little, updated the data, and recommended Council create a standing committee to manage the development EDSs in the future A lot has changed in and around Nillumbik since those pioneering efforts.

By 2016 the EDS was overdue for a root and branch makeover, but Council has neglected this opportunity through 3 budgets and, judging by the proposed 20/21 budget, a fourth as well.. It is now obvious that the original economic model for the shire – low rating low service – is broken. The 2020 draft fails to acknowledge this upfront. Instead it attempts to rationalise a strategy already well advanced that put simply is to expand its rate base while lifting its service level.

It might seem reasonable in an election year for Council to prioritise political considerations over long-term economic strategic development, but in my opinion it is a costly mistake.

The cost lies both in the lost opportunity to re-conceptualise the Council's relationship with its revenue base and service provision, and in the faux programs it plans to invest in – for example those aimed at clawing back productive capacity and consumer spending from the CBD and neighbouring LGAs which even if successful, will only make Nillumbik households worse off in the long run. Open economies deliver better outcomes than closed ones as a general rule.

Rather than submitting a running criticism on the draft, I have constrained my submission to the following three issues:

1. Management and Process of development
2. Statutory Context
3. Misconceptions
4. Council Internal Resource Allocation Issues

MARCH 20 2020

Management and the Process of Development

I have no particular insight into the process used to develop the EDS, except that it dates back to early 2018 and involves the EDAC, consultants Urban Enterprise, Geographica and an individual (unnamed) who authored the draft.

I have read the Urban Enterprise Issues Opportunities paper and find it disappointing, given the general standard of their work. This maybe explained by the limited nature/interpretation of the brief and the limited extent of resources and confined nature of consultation (stakeholders). In particular I find the limited width and depth of the 6 focus areas to be an unnecessary constraint on a background paper for a SWOT analysis, reaching forward a decade.

I have read the pertinent EDAC minutes and interpret them to mean that EDAC provided feedback on occasion but did not manage the development or take a lead role in defining briefs or designing survey and consultations. I notice that's some of its input – on indicators and green wedge land use for example, has not manifest in the draft.

I submit the following schematic developed by the Victorian Auditor General in 2018. Although it is dated in light of the new Local Government Act, it illustrates the key stages in the process as previously understood. It would be helpful if ratepayers were informed of the composition of the management team, the nature and extent of involvement of the much vaunted partnerships referred to in the draft and the thinking behind the reorganisation that sees the demise of the Economic Management and Tourism Directorate.



For the record I note that no explicit strategy is stated in the draft, yet it can be derived from the content up to a point. I also note that the use of social science concepts, language and logic is poor and absent, especially those of Economics and Sociology. In this respect, and in the range of consultation and inputs, it compares poorly to other Council's EDS and Nillumbik's 2011 edition.

My impressions are that

- otherwise useful ideas related to workplace geography and escape expenditure are treated in an almost alarmist fashion, building a partially emotional case for MAC redevelopment and higher population densities.

- There is attempt to green wash economic development by overlaying imprecise concepts like the green economy and the undefined use of terms such as sustainable development.
- There are many elements of economic development that have not been addressed
- The document is retrospective in the sense that it justifies and strengthens decisions already made rather than providing a framework for the most efficient and effective distribution of limited resources for the benefit of residents of and visitors to Nillumbik.
- There has been a moderate amount of political intervention in the development and drafting of the document.

Statutory Context

The local government act section 88 requires that Council must

- *'maintain a vision that is developed with its municipal community in accordance with its municipal community in accordance with its deliberative practices.'*
- *'strategic planning must address the Community Vision'*
- *'strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation'*
- *must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress'*

The 'Economic Vision' on page 6 is devoid of contextual information. It is contrary in tone, content and aspiration to the community vision distilled into the book 'Picture Nillumbik', resourced by Council in 2011-12. The use of the word 'compatible' is a transparent attempt to avoid an analysis of the risks typically associated with boosting economic growth in interface Councils, especially those with aging infrastructure, and of provoking the more environmentally conscious residents only too aware of the damage that economic growth can do to the climate and the Green Wedge.

In 2017 Council undertook to Adopt a new Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy and create a set of indicators to measure success'. The implementation principles commit Council to 'monitor the progress of initiatives, report on these outcomes on an annual basis and update the action plan as necessary'. However none of the 33 planned actions has an 'indicator of success' associated with it. It is therefore incumbent upon Council to explain more clearly what achievement of each objective looks like, and how authentic monitoring of progress will take place.

Purpose of the EDS

In 2017 Pugalis & Tan published a study of economic development strategies produced by local Councils across Australia. While they found the content structure and purpose to be diverse, they were able to classify the strategies on a continuum that had those narrowly focused on economic growth at one extreme, and those taking a 'broader holistic' approach at the other. They reported that both extremes can act as constraining and enabling devices in terms of the role of local government in economic development. In order to assess the approach taken by Nillumbik I audited the language used.

I found the word GROWTH appears 23 times. Most frequently associated with businesses (7), population (4), houses (4) and the Nillumbik economy (3). Used 6 times in the wording of planned actions, relating to jobs (2) business (2) Nillumbik economy (1) creative and cultural industries (1). By contrast the word 'IMPACT' (as in the environmental/social impacts of economic growth) appears once while impacts (as in on the economy and/or on business activity) appears 5 times.

The audit reveals the diffuse nature of the stated aim and vision as well as the failure to deliver the promised 'indicators of success'. The kinds of statistics featured on page 7 indicate that Council will focus on growth at the level of the Shire. It commits on page 17 to 'report on these outcomes on an annual basis'. I take issue with this approach on two bases

1. Reliable shire level economic statistics rely on the Australian census which occurs five yearly. In any case the Bureau of Statistics (ABS) does not calculate Gross Regional Product which is currently listed at levels in variance with that in the draft on both the .ID public domain and the Regional Development Victoria data portal. Organisations such as .ID and Remplan publish data for the intervening years but these are based either on proprietary calculations or sample surveys, both of which are subject to wide margins of error.
2. Given the shire's patterns of employment and consumption, more appropriate measures of progress would manifest at the household level. These also have the advantage of being published more frequently than the census via the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ABS), albeit also sample based.

The audit indicates a narrow focus at the growth end of the continuum. Curiously the draft does not define what in particular is targeted to grow. This makes it difficult to interpret the meaning of the strategic objective and vision. The study found that extreme positions on the continuum can act as a constraining influence on the effectiveness of the EDS in three main ways.

Firstly it resources growth in confined areas of the economy while discouraging the allocation of resources for the '*overall well being*' of its residents. Council has on its desk a relatively clear description of what is not being considered in the draft EDS, as a result of its unrelenting focus on economic growth. (See appendix A)

Secondly too great a focus on economic growth can create a project driven culture in Council. This can lead to short cuts and bias in the development of the economic framework and analysis of an EDS. Combined with the retrospective orientation of the draft, this culture is evident where selective and misleading use of data is used to justify and rationalise resource allocation decisions that Council has already committed to and/or has an (economically) irrational preference for (See appendix B).

Thirdly it attracts attention away from Council's own resource management issues such as

Council Internal Resource Allocation Issues

Asset Renewal as percentage of depreciation (rated as 37.2% vs 59.5% in similar Councils and 86.8% in all). The failure of Council to maintain public infrastructure at or above depreciation is contrary to Council's obligations to future generations, and reasonable expectations of ratepayers.

Rates as percentage of revenue: Compares poorly with similar and all Councils. Council should canvas ways of increasing the non rate side of the ledger beyond the repetitive 'advocacy' commitments. The EDS could provide a forum and analytical/creative basis for that analysis.
Transparency: Council rates poorly and the opaque nature of management and development are also unfortunate symptoms of an excessively secretive organisation.

Staff turnover (26%) This is unacceptably high churn and re structure with no change in total cost.

APPENDIX A

Example of Trends and Issues not canvassed in the draft

Transport

- 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.
- The North East Link will impact commuting and other traffic levels through the shire as revealed in traffic forecasts and need to be managed including truck curfews.
- Hurstbridge rail duplication opens up opportunities to lift rate of public transport use, especially if inter-modal infrastructure and local bus routes (including community bus services) are improved

Health and Well Being

- 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.

Climate Change

- Increased number of hot days and nights
- Increased frequency and duration of heat-waves
- 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.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Mistaken and/or Misleading Generalisations

EDS: *‘Addressing this escape expenditure is key to growing the number of local businesses and jobs ... This leakage from the Nillumbik economy impacts the sustainability and mix of local businesses and, combined with online retail, limits investment attraction and job creation within the Shire:’*

RESPONSE: Escape expenditure is not a new issue in Nillumbik. It featured in the 2011 EDS. It is important for ratepayers to know what Council initiatives have been applied to managing the perceived threat and with what success.

It is also important to establish a more sophisticated way of treating. While in the EDS it is treated as an economic weakness, and a threat to the sustainability of the major Activity Centres (MACs) in particular, current MAC reports treat it as an opportunity. Eltham MAC predicts a catchment growth of 51,108 by 2036, against a shire wide population projection of about 5,500.

Economic geographers have been using the concept for some time, for example those at SGS Economics and Planning. They set out a 6 step by step assessment method:

1. Use existing and projected population, income and retail expenditure per capita by key commodity groups to calculate the amount of potential retail expenditure by these groups both now and in the future..
2. Calculate the number of retail jobs in the municipality by using journey-to-work (JTW) data.
3. Apply turnover per retail employee by the number of jobs in the area to estimate retail expenditure in the area.
4. Calculate escape expenditure by each key commodity group by comparing potential retail expenditure with estimated actual expenditure.
5. Apply standard values per sqm of expenditure (Retail Turnover Density (RTD) values) for similar areas to actual and potential retail expenditure by key commodity groups to calculate floorspace demand.
6. Make an assumption about the level of net escape expenditure that will be retained as the region matures.

(See Appendix C for worked sample)

EDS: *‘Low population growth may result in stagnant consumer demand.’*

RESPONSE: This is only partially true. Consumer demand is a function of several variables, most significantly household expenditure. In the 5 years to 2018/19, Nillumbik household expenditure increased by 9% while in the 5 years to 2016 population grew by 1.5%. The level of consumer demand is also influenced by non resident spending (see above) and tourism spending (\$50 million in 2018).

EDS :The Shire's proximity to Melbourne's centre and major transport infrastructure makes establishing and operating businesses efficient due to access to markets.

RESPONSE Highly contentious statement. There are many other Councils (see North-link Investment prospectus) that are better placed to compete on these bases now and into the foreseeable future.

EDS Business engagement and support is a core element of economic development at the local government level and an effective approach to promoting and facilitating local economic growth.

RESPONSE To the extent that this statement is being used to justify the creation and implementation of business management education that has an unproven effect on local economic growth and highly suspect. It is noteworthy that when surveyed only 31% of local businesses even knew Council had a Economic Development Unit, 25% showed interest in attending 'network and training events' but feedback on the value of the experience was equivocal at best. The most sought after topics were Financial Planning, Accounting and Business Planning. These are substantial topics, not best delivered via random 'events' but freely available via Business Victoria and most TAFES begging the question 'is Nillumbik Council best equipped to deliver them?'

APPENDIX C

Sample Calculation of Net Escape Expenditure

Activity Centre Hierarchy

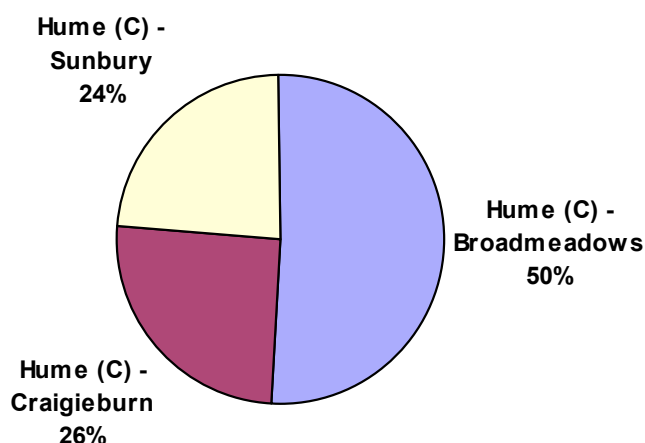
Table 6 - Retail Turnover within Hume in 2001

	Hume (C) - Broadmeadows	Hume (C) - Craigieburn	Hume (C) - Sunbury	Total
Supermarkets	\$188.5m	\$96.9m	\$103.7m	\$389.1m
Department Stores	\$55.9m	\$2.3m	\$23.6m	\$81.8m
Other Food	\$59.4m	\$25.6m	\$24.3m	\$109.2m
Clothing and Soft Goods	\$19.3m	\$7.0m	\$12.6m	\$38.8m
Household Goods	\$57.2m	\$9.7m	\$19.4m	\$86.4m
Other Retail	\$55.5m	\$37.5m	\$25.7m	\$118.7m
Hospitality and Services	\$60.2m	\$74.0m	\$25.1m	\$159.3m
Total	\$496.0m	\$253.0m	\$234.4m	\$983.3m

Source: SGS Estimate.

It can be seen that the Broadmeadows area is currently responsible for about half of the total spending capture within Hume. Note that retail turnover for the Hume region does **not** equate the retail expenditure from it, because there is a significant amount of retail trade leaving the region (ie. escape expenditure) as well as retail turnover flowing into the area from customers based outside Hume (ie. turnover capture).

Figure 26 - Retail Turnover within Hume in 2001



Net Escape Expenditure

The extent of escape expenditure and turnover capture by Hume is detailed in the following two tables, which show the destinations for retail expenditure generated from Hume residents and the sources of retail turnover captured by Hume traders.

Table 7 - Major Retail Expenditure Destinations for Hume Residents

Where Hume Residents Shop	Amount Spent	Percentage
Hume (C)	\$500.5m	44.1%
Melbourne (C)	\$108.8m	9.6%
Moonee Valley (C)	\$54.3m	4.8%
Brimbank (C)	\$41.1m	3.6%
Whittlesea (C)	\$38.8m	3.4%
Darebin (C)	\$37.9m	3.3%
Moreland (C)	\$36.6m	3.2%
Yarra (C)	\$33.1m	2.9%
Maribyrnong (C)	\$29.9m	2.6%
Stonnington (C)	\$24.1m	2.1%
Port Phillip (C)	\$23.6m	2.1%
Banyule (C)	\$20.9m	1.8%
Boroondara (C)	\$19.6m	1.7%
Hobsons Bay (C)	\$17.6m	1.6%
Monash (C)	\$16.0m	1.4%
Wyndham (C)	\$13.9m	1.2%
Whitehorse (C)	\$11.6m	1.0%
Kingston (C)	\$11.5m	1.0%
Yarra Ranges (S)	\$10.4m	0.9%
Knox (C)	\$9.7m	0.9%
Other	\$74.2m	6.5%
Total	\$1,134.2m	100.0%

Source: SGS estimate (2001\$).

As seen in the table above, Hume residents spend a large proportion of their spending at other LGAs, in particular at regions towards and in the Melbourne CBD.

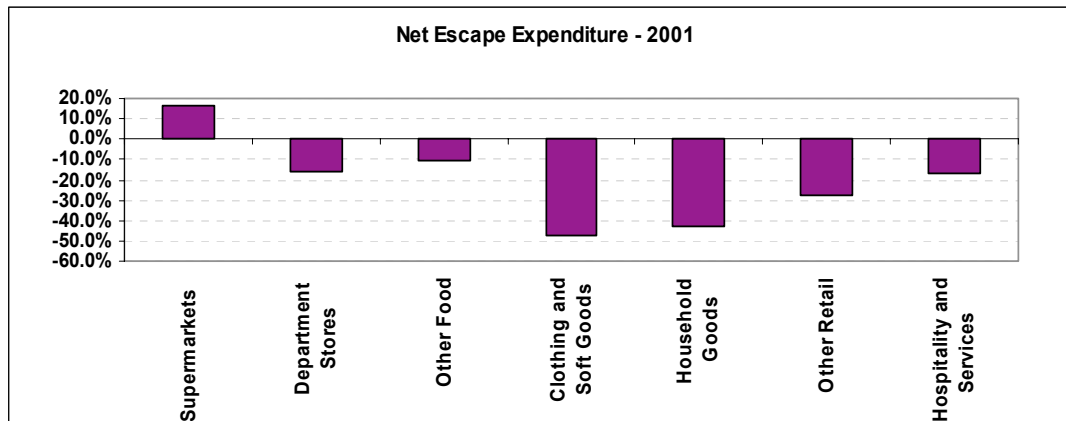
Table 8 - Major Retail Turnover Sources for Hume Traders

Origin of Residents Who Shop in Hume	Turnover Generated	Percentage
Hume (C)	\$500.5m	50.9%
Brimbank (C)	\$74.3m	7.6%
Moreland (C)	\$71.4m	7.3%
Whittlesea (C)	\$55.8m	5.7%
Moonee Valley (C)	\$50.6m	5.1%
Darebin (C)	\$37.4m	3.8%
Banyule (C)	\$23.9m	2.4%
Melton (S)	\$19.0m	1.9%
Wyndham (C)	\$16.0m	1.6%
Hobsons Bay (C)	\$15.8m	1.6%
Nillumbik (S)	\$14.0m	1.4%
Manningham (C)	\$9.3m	1.0%
Maribyrnong (C)	\$9.0m	0.9%
Yarra Ranges (S)	\$8.9m	0.9%
Boroondara (C)	\$7.4m	0.8%
Yarra (C)	\$7.2m	0.7%
Casey (C)	\$6.9m	0.7%
Knox (C)	\$5.5m	0.6%
Port Phillip (C)	\$5.4m	0.5%
Melbourne (C)	\$4.9m	0.5%
Other	\$39.9m	4.1%
Total	\$983.3m	100.0%

Source: SGS Estimate (2001\$).

As can be seen, Hume obtains the majority of its retail spending from within its own municipality, with a catchment that is naturally skewed to the south due to population densities.

Based on the analysis for 2001, the current pattern of net escape expenditure by retail group is set out in the next figure.

Figure 27 - Net Escape Expenditure by Commodity Group in 2001

Source: SGS Estimate.

Overall, net escape expenditure within Hume is low at -13.3%. However, this figure is deceiving due to Hume's over-representation in the Supermarket sector. When looking at commodities groups separately, Hume has rather high net escape in both the Clothing and Soft Goods and Household Goods sectors (47.3% and 42.5% respectively).

The absence of department stores and a large stock of bulky good retailers in part explains this leakage.

Table 9 - Net Escape Expenditure in 2001

Commodity Group	Expenditure Potential	Turnover	Net Escape Expenditure	
			\$	% by Community Group
Supermarkets	\$335.0m	\$389.1m	\$54.1m	16.1%
Department Stores & DDSs	\$97.1m	\$81.8m	-\$15.3m	-15.8%
Other Food	\$122.6m	\$109.2m	-\$13.4m	-10.9%
Clothing and Soft Goods	\$73.8m	\$38.8m	-\$34.9m	-47.3%
Household Goods	\$150.2m	\$86.4m	-\$63.9m	-42.5%
Other Retail	\$164.1m	\$118.7m	-\$45.4m	-27.7%
Hospitality and Services	\$191.4m	\$159.3m	-\$32.0m	-16.7%
Total	\$1,134.2m	\$983.3m	-\$151.0m	-13.3%

Source: SGS Estimate.

Jim Connor

20 March 2020

Mr. Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Nillumbik
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Carl

Feedback on the Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy from Jim Connor

I wish to provide feedback on the Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy.

Could you please consider my following comments:

Economic Vision

The Strategy aims to grow and sustain the Shire's economy over the next 10 years and beyond.

We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, compatible with the Shire's unique natural environment.

I support this vision and ask that effective community consultation' be part of the collaboration process.

Objectives

Overall I generally support the 4 listed objectives.

Objective 1. Improve economic development practices to assist local businesses.

3. Develop and implement a business education program focusing on priority needs

Under this action it says: '*continue to upskill and understand trends, identify opportunities and employ new and innovative ways of working and engaging with customers.*' I would encourage Council to include opportunities for businesses to recognise the economic benefits of effectively engaging with and responding to the needs of people with disabilities and the increasing numbers of older persons, within the region. This increase in understanding could be assisted by implementing an education program to effectively raise the awareness of business operators and staff.

I would also ask Council to encourage traders to recognise the benefits of providing services targeted at responding to the increasing numbers of cyclists riding the trails and roads in Nillumbik. This could include exploring the benefits for cyclist aware café and overnight accommodation operators, especially in anticipation of increased patronage once the Diamond Creek Trail is extended to Wattle Glen, then to Hurstbridge. Links to, and development of other trails within and beyond Nillumbik will also provide for increased trading opportunities.

With the recent increased popularity of power assisted eBikes many older cyclists and cyclist groups are regularly exploring trails within Nillumbik and so are therefore potential customers of cycle aware businesses. Responsive traders could be identified through the introduction of a 'Cyclist Aware Logo/decal' to be issued once a trader has undertaken an appropriate training/information session. Such identification is utilised in other municipalities, particularly in popular tourist regions.

Such awareness raising programs for business operators would also respond to the action identified under Point 6 of Objective 1, being:

6. Support businesses in emerging sectors

- *Council will facilitate tailored engagement that focuses on specific issues and opportunities for these businesses. These sectors include arts and culture, food and beverage, visitor attraction, sustainable agri-business and home-based businesses.*

Objective 2: Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek

Overall I support the points listed under Objective 2.

Any facilitation of commercial land and office accommodation within the activity centres should be subject to agreed requirements of the relevant structure plans.

5. Develop and implement the Nillumbik Housing Strategy

- *Council will develop and implement a housing strategy designed to provide an outline of housing supply and demand challenges and opportunities, and a framework for decisions affecting housing and settlement.*

I encourage Council, as well as 'Support the supply and diversity of housing stock in strategic areas to respond to changing market needs' to include an action to support "Ageing in Place' as a priority of the Nillumbik Housing Strategy.

Council could also implement a policy to prioritise the need to provide social housing as a requirement when considering the sale or disposal of any surplus Council owned land.

Objective 3. Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.

Overall I support the points listed under Objective 3.

1. Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy

I support 'A green economy seeks to reduce environmental impacts and aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment, while providing for a transition to a low-carbon economy that is resource efficient and socially inclusive.'

Objective 4: Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy

- *The Council will progress the proposal for a regional art gallery and provide support for local creatives through a range of community-based programs and initiatives.*

I encourage Council to consider establishment of a Municipal Art Gallery rather than a Regional Art Gallery. An option to establish this could be a sensitively designed extension of the Eltham Community and Reception Centre to incorporate a Municipal Gallery to display works from the Nillumbik Art Collection, as well as providing a sales outlet to support Nillumbik based creative and cultural industries. The existing Walter Withers Room could be part of an extended gallery space when not required for other purposes.

1. Create and promote visitor attractions

- *The Diamond Valley Miniature Railway is Nillumbik's most-visited paid attraction. Council will explore how this attraction can be enhanced and maximise visitor dispersal.*

Any consideration of any potential extension or increased use of Eltham Lower Park, by the Diamond Valley Miniature Railway, must consider the potential environmental impacts on existing creek and park areas, as well as the detrimental effects on the availability and amenity of the park environs for current groups and individuals regularly using this extensive public open space.

- *Edendale Community Environment Farm is a key attraction for visitors and locals, particularly school groups looking for a unique educational experience.*

I support the retention and continued improvement of Edendale Community Environment Farm, which is an important jewel in the Nillumbik crown, proving readily accessible experiences for people of all ages. Edendale is and can continue to be an important part of the environmental, artistic and cultural diversity on offer from Nillumbik assets.

Edendale could also lock into the opportunities to attract pedestrians and cyclists utilising the adjacent Diamond Creek Trail and Eltham North Adventure Park. Direct promotion to identified user groups of visits and tours of Edendale would potentially encourage increased awareness and patronage.

- *Council will continue to work with Yarra Ranges Tourism to promote Nillumbik as a destination. Additionally, it will collaborate with existing businesses to increase awareness of their products and facilitate the development of other opportunities related to nature and agriculture-based visitor attractions, wellness and recreation such as shared multi-use tracks and trails.*

Yarra Ranges Tourism could be effectively utilised as part of other promotional opportunities I have already mentioned for increasing visitation by specific user groups and individuals.

3. Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik

If there is consideration of any changes to current equine uses within Nillumbik I would expect Council to undertake a detailed analysis including use of an environmental effects statement to assess potential impacts of increased equine activity on broadacre farming, as well as existing or proposed trails and related infrastructure.

4. Enhance and promote recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors

- *Council will explore ways to enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire's open spaces.*

As well as enhancing and promoting these opportunities there is what I see as under-developed potential for local businesses to benefit by specifically catering for and capturing what are, or will be, passing customers.

I encourage Council to hold a well promoted Cycling Forum to help ascertain what is required to add to the visitor attractions so as to assist Council to develop responsive programs. This could explore the support needs of various forms of cycling including off road trails, on road riders and mountain bike users.

Experience indicates wayfinding signage is lacking on a number of the off-road trails regularly used by walkers and cyclists within Nillumbik. As a result, many people using these trails are not necessarily aware of local businesses (cafés, town centres, accommodation providers), community facilities (libraries, sports centres), infrastructure (railway stations) and supportive services (medical, toilets, rest areas), or artisan food and beverage producers, located close to these trails. In some instance users don't have clear indications how to find and continue on these trails due to the lack of clear signage. Again, potentially lost visitations. Such, often low cost improvements, would enhance the experience and awareness for locals and visitors.

I support actions to undertake audits of trails, prepare and publish related information for cyclists and develop cycling strategies across the northern region.

6. Deliver programs for the creative industries and promote cultural and heritage visitor attractions.

Nillumbik Shire has a wealth of local history that is often not well promoted or readily accessible. There are many historical groups within the region that could assist, with support, in improving experiences for local residents and visitors. Activities could include self-guided heritage trails, organised personal tours of heritage places, including local cemeteries, precincts and townships. On-line options could also be investigated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy. Please contact me if I can provide any further information.

regards



Jim Connor

Dear Council Team, please find my input to the Draft Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020 - 2030:

As this is a 10 year plan it would be good to see some measurable targets/metrics. For example how much do we want to grow the number of local jobs, the number of local businesses, gross regional product, etc. over the next 10 years. It would be much easier to measure successes on a year by year basis. The actions in this plan could be interpreted as BAU.

Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses.

SUPPORT

Create vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek.

DO NOT SUPPORT – please add an action that shows how we would support wildlife with increased traffic, both day and night time. Please add a reference to the housing studies previously done that show the preference of current residents for ageing at home and more aged care centres – rather than new builds.

Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge.

DO NOT SUPPORT

During the GWMP review there were a number of people asking that animal agriculture be reduced/eliminated in Nillumbik I think there were about 40 respondents from memory. My personal reasons for making this request are below. This strategy paper talks a lot about environmentally sustainable use of land but doesn't mention the amount of cattle we currently have and their impact on the environment. When I drive through the Green Wedge I feel as though I'm seeing more and more cattle. I would like to understand exactly what the Shire's position is with respect to animal agriculture and I think it should be stated explicitly in this document. I understand it is a thorny issue but it is a discussion we should start and if we're talking about a 10 year time frame we should definitely have a position on it. This also needs to be addressed in the Climate Action Plan to be re-written this year.

There are so many new, plant based opportunities arising for agriculture, we could be on the cutting edge if we can explore and support local people to think about these opportunities. For example using polycultures instead of

monocultures, using a variety of plants in the same area to coexist and work with each other. To use no-till practices as well as companion planting to maintain garden insect balance and avoid the need for pesticides.

I'm sick of seeing news articles about farmers in distress, suicidal, out of money and homes and business and yet we don't address the elephant in the room. Starting and continuing business that need lots of water, grass and have huge carbon footprints are not suitable in drought and bush fire prone Australia. Just because we "have always done it this way" doesn't mean we can't change and move forward.

If Nillumbik Council feel a duty of care to the residents of Nillumbik I think you should be exploring moving away from animal agriculture. I would like to see this issue specifically addressed in the 10 year Economic Strategy.

Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy.

DO NOT SUPPORT please add an action that shows how we would support wildlife with increased traffic. I would also add that "artisan food and beverage" opportunities will be focusing more and more on plant based options. Hungry Jacks, KFC, Grill'd, etc are making this main stream now.

Reasons for moving towards plant based agriculture in Nillumbik over the next 10 years:

Climate Implications

- Animal agriculture is very resource inefficient. A kilogram of beef takes 5 times the amount of water to produce than a kilogram of vegetables – and water is scarce. The GWMP states that "Victoria is becoming hotter and drier, facing more periods of extreme heat and drought, reductions in annual rainfall" which is not conducive with the water required for animal farming.
- Across the world livestock takes up 83% of farmland but provides only 18% of calories.
- Livestock are responsible for 58% of greenhouse gas emissions, 57% water pollution and 56% air pollution.* Converting grass into meat is like converting coal into energy.
- Vast amounts of trees are cleared to grow crops to feed to livestock. Far more people could be fed with the crops grown for animal feed than the meat that is produced from the crops.
- Transportation – of both cattle and feed creates their own carbon footprint. Feed is often shipped from Brazil and animals are shipped around the country on big, dirty trucks.
- Processing – of both cattle and feed creates their own carbon footprints. Plant based agriculture does not require the same level of processing.

- Regenerative, plant based farming can increase carbon sequestration and improve poor Nillumbik soil. It avoids manmade chemicals, works with nature and is compatible with biodiversity and conservation.

Animal Welfare Considerations (farmed animals are sentient, they feel pain and emotions, like pet dogs)

- For the vast majority of farmed animals the welfare implications are grim. Each year approx. 32 million sheep and 8 million cattle are killed in slaughterhouses.
- Beef cattle will be killed at around 1.5 years old (they naturally live to 20 years old). Dairy mothers are killed at 7 years old, male dairy calves killed between 48 hours – 4 days old.
- Dairy cows will have ALL their babies taken away from them within hours of birth so they cannot consume their mother's milk. All male and some female calves will be killed, either by blunt force or taken to a slaughterhouse.
- Beef cows are often sent to feedlots for the last few months of their lives to fatten them up where they are confined.
- The journey to the saleyard, feedlot and slaughter house is long and traumatic for a sensitive animals, they will have no food or water.
- In the slaughterhouse, in the killing line they know what is ahead. They are terrified, trembling, kicking and screaming. They foam at the mouth in the kill box as the slaughterman takes aim between their eyes. For footage see <https://www.dominionmovement.com/>
- There are welfare standards in slaughterhouse but if you have spoken to anyone who has worked there you will know employees become desensitised.
- The GWMP states we are expecting more extreme climate events in Nillumbik. Brining animals into that environment is not responsible, they face a slow and painful death if caught in a bushfire. (I wrote this for the GWMP – during the summer fires over 100,000 cattle died this slow and painful death).

Human Welfare Considerations

- Slaughterhouse work is tough emotionally, it is not something that comes naturally to people
- We are familiar with the mental strain for animal farmers in Australia – they don't want their family or animals to suffer. Why we would we want this for our neighbours?
- The residents of Nillumbik deserve a healthy, cohesive food strategy and the opportunity to grow local businesses whilst reducing dependency on big, corporate organisations.
- A smart, local food strategy could support small scale farmers and business from the ever growing industrial manufactured food that is destroying our farmers, environment and health.

*Source Poore and Nemecek, Science



Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council

Cath Giles

14 March, 2020

Dear Carl

Nillumbik Shire Council Draft Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Nillumbik Shire Council Draft Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030.

The Nillumbik Horse Action Group congratulates council on its commitment to develop an advocacy document, 'Equine in Nillumbik' to support equine activity in the shire and identify where support is needed, the facilities required in this sector and opportunities for growth and improvement. We remain optimistic that this important piece of work does not get lost in the broader focus of this Strategy.

The NHAG is a committed group of community minded residents, formed to support and advocate on behalf of horse owners and riders within the Shire of Nillumbik.

We work to preserve, maintain and improve the shire's shared trail network and the equine culture and character of rural Nillumbik, which we believe contribute significantly to the appeal, amenity, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the Nillumbik Green Wedge. We promote informed land management on all rural properties and value council's support to help achieve this.

Horse keeping occurs throughout the entire rural and semi-rural areas of the shire.

Equestrian activities in Nillumbik have more than double the State and National percentages of participation and trail riding is one of the top 5 non-organized recreational pursuits.

The rural, 'country' attributes, lifestyles and natural environment of Nillumbik attract both residents and visitors to our shire and need to be preserved and enjoyed. They are unique assets from which Nillumbik's recreation, visitation, culture and tourism sectors can be leveraged.

The preparedness to acknowledge in this strategy, the economic contribution of both Equine and Agricultural activity in the shire, is a bold vision which is captured for the first time in a strategic document. This will help to highlight the existence of a diverse and significant economic sector outside of the shire's urban areas along with broader community benefits of employment, recreation, health and wellbeing, community identity and visitation/tourism.

The NHAG agrees with the Draft Economic Development Strategy's Vision:

"We will capitalise on our strengths to grow the economy through advocacy, collaboration, partnerships and innovation, compatible with the Shire's unique natural environment." P6.

The NHAG agrees with the 4 Objectives of the Strategy, with particular interest in:

Objective 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge

“Economic opportunities for the green wedge exist in agribusiness, tourism, recreation and sustainability including renewable energy. Council will encourage innovation in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The Nillumbik Green Wedge Management Plan 2019 provides a framework for its future management and pursuit of environmentally sustainable economic outcomes while respecting conservation values” P13

Initiative 1 – Investigate and facilitate the creation of a green economy

- Sustainable land use management
- Preservation and protection of ecosystems and biological diversity

The NHAG suggests that to realistically achieve these, council includes in Objective 3 a statement such as:

“Council values and hence will preserve and protect existing cleared, grazing land and pasture properties (both ‘hobby’ and broad acre farms) through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, in all zones.”

Existing grazing land and treed pastures are necessary and important for popular rural uses as the keeping of horses and other grazing animals, providing for compatible agriculture, the preservation of biodiversity, defendable fire breaks and the rural, scenic amenity, landscape character and vistas that locals and visitors value and seek out. The shire's natural environment isn't just the bush.

The NHAG acknowledges and appreciates council's approach to provide educational opportunities, information, advice and support on land management and regenerative farming methods.

Objective 4: Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy

We appreciate the need to support the creation of local business, emerging enterprises and job growth for residents in activity centres and compatible home-based businesses that do not significantly impact neighbourhood amenity, rural ambience and environmental values.

- Kinglake National Park needs to be included as an important recreational and tourism asset in the spiel where mention is made of Sugarloaf Reservoir Park and the Panton Hill Bushland Reserves.
- To build visitation, Nillumbik needs to capitalize on its open spaces and unique experiences for local residents and visitors, including seeing horses being kept and ridden in our rural communities which enhances the ‘country’ feel.
- The shared, off-road recreation trails network across Nillumbik Shire enables residents and visitors to truly immerse themselves in the natural landscape.
- Establish Nillumbik as the ‘Shared Trail Capital’ of Victoria; we can all appreciate the far-reaching value and importance of safe and accessible trails for the whole community, both locals and visitors alike.
- Semi-rural, nature-based tourism is an untapped avenue to increase visitation.

Initiative 3: Document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine within Nillumbik

Horse keeping and recreational horse riding have a long history in Nillumbik which has never been formally documented or recognized in strategic planning work to date.

The NHAG support the development of an Equine in Nillumbik Plan by council, based on the results of the Nillumbik Equine Survey 2019.

The Nillumbik Equine Survey 2019 was completed by 426 respondents, representing approximately 906 riders from across the Shire of Nillumbik. This significant survey helps to quantify what we already understood anecdotally, that the equine community's contribution is significant and far reaching - strong, multi-generational social benefit, influencing community engagement and healthy lifestyles, pro-active land management, quality agricultural and rural infrastructure, significant spend in related businesses and visitation.

We believe that 'horse keeping' is one of the largest agri-businesses within the shire, not only in terms of the number of properties that are used for this purpose, but the broad reach of the dollar benefits through affiliated industries and activity.

Equine recreation in Nillumbik is strongly supported through local Adult Riding Clubs, Pony Clubs, Trail Riding and Riding for The Disabled Clubs which have historically been primarily self-resourced, having received little direct financial support from council.

- Support local equine clubs in line with the investment made in other sporting codes in the shire.
- Horse rider access to shared off-road trails, roadside verges and trails within local, regional and state parks and reserves is critical for safety, enjoyable and diverse trail riding experiences and connectivity between neighbourhoods, rural and remote areas across the shire and region. Our Green Wedge and Aqueduct Regional Shared Trails and the Yarra Valley and Bicentennial National Trails in Yarra Ranges Shire are perfect examples of such trail opportunities that need to be completed and connected.
- From an economic development perspective, the equine sector has driven local agricultural enterprise and related businesses through produce and property management, kept local, equine practitioners employed, seen the establishment of feed and equipment stores and local riding schools and clubs contribute to ongoing visitation.
- Horse ownership and riding are popular, rural recreational pursuits in Nillumbik.
- Horse riding is an important recreational pursuit for (particularly) women and girls incorporating healthy, active, outdoor lifestyles and strong, multi-generational social benefit.
- Horse keeping is a legitimate rural land use and is one of the largest on-property rural 'activity groups' in the shire.
- Horse (and other livestock) keeping is a natural fit with the small land holdings in rural Nillumbik which suit 'hobby' farming.
- Acknowledge the significant contribution to land management by landholders as fundamental to the existence and ongoing sustainability of the Nillumbik Green Wedge given that 80% of it is privately owned.
- Understand and appreciate the valuable role small landholdings (hobby farms) play in underpinning the very existence and viability of the Nillumbik Green Wedge.

- The NHAG encourages council's support of horse owners and residents who graze animals, with information and assistance that encourage informed land management practices. This benefits rural residents, their properties and animals, biodiversity, the environment and the Green Wedge generally.

Initiative 4: Enhance and promote recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors

- Trail horse riding should also be included when council is exploring ways to, "...enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits such as cycling, walking, hiking and camping within the Shire's open spaces". P.15
- Trail riding is the ideal recreational activity in the great outdoors to make the most of Nillumbik's vast open spaces and topography, as much as (if not more than) cycling and hiking.
- **Almost all of the trail network within Nillumbik and certainly all of the Regional Trails are shared trails that include horse riding, walking and cycling, so horse riding must be included in this consideration.**
- Nillumbik Shire is lacking an indoor riding facility that could be shared by all local clubs to improve club member's safety and enjoyment and enable year-round training and competition. This would attract visitors to the shire through events and competitions and enhance the club's opportunities to raise funds.
- Safety for all recreational users must also be a serious consideration for council, not just cyclists.

Appendix B: Summary of actions to implement the Strategy

Objective 3: Facilitate economically and environmentally sustainable use of land within the Shire's green wedge

Include a New Action:

Council values and hence will preserve and protect existing cleared, grazing land and treed pasture properties (both 'hobby' and broad acre farms) through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, in all zones (SHORT-TERM)

Include a New Action:

Council will continue to develop and provide information, educational opportunities and support for horse owners and residents who keep grazing animals on land management and regenerative farming methods (SHORT TERM)

Objective 4: 'Showcase Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy'

Action 3 (P.20): Develop an Equine in Nillumbik statement highlighting the history and opportunities for this sector (SHORT-TERM)

- We request an Equine in Nillumbik Plan that will identify needs and deliver tangible outcomes as Short-Term Actions, not simply feel good, motherhood statements
- **Refer Initiative 3 above to develop further Actions**

Action 4 (P.20): Explore ways to enhance and increase awareness of recreational and sporting opportunities and experiences for locals and visitors (SHORT-MEDIUM TERM)

- Refer Initiative 4 above to develop further Actions

Action 5 (P.20): Advocate to Vic Roads to improve the road shoulders on popular cycling routes to increase safety and enjoyment for riders (SHORT-TERM)

- Advocate to Vic Roads to improve driver awareness of horse riders to increase safety and enjoyment of riders as a priority
- Implement a shire focused, driver awareness campaign for horse rider safety

Action 7 (P.21): Complete the trails audit to assess that they are fit for purpose (SHORT-TERM)

- Completing the Trails Audit to assess that trails are fit for purpose is a critical Short-Term Action. This will identify gaps and problems in the existing trail routes, maximise the interconnection with existing trails on adjoining public land, explore and develop alternative and new trails where necessary and ensure the safety and enjoyment of users.
- Horse rider access to shared off-road trails, roadside verges and trails within local, regional and state parks and reserves is critical for safety, an enjoyable and diverse trail riding experience and connectivity between neighbourhoods, rural and remote areas across the shire and neighbouring shires.

Action 8 (P.21): Collaborate with the State and nearby municipalities to develop the Outer Eastern Regional Mountain Bike Strategy that will guide planning and development of facilities in the region.

- Collaborate with State land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water) and nearby/neighbouring municipalities to ensure a seamless, safe, diverse, off-road trail experience for horse riders, walkers and cyclists that will guide strategic planning and development of world-class trail infrastructure and facilities in the region.
- Make Nillumbik the Shared-trail Capital of Victoria.
What an opportunity to increase visitation with low-key, eco-friendly activities that sensitively capitalize on the shire's special natural assets.

Action 11 (P.21): Explore Ecotourism opportunities

- Nillumbik's shared trail network is a natural fit with this.

Action 12 (P.21): Explore health and wellbeing tourism opportunities

- Nillumbik's shared trail network is a natural fit with this.

A comprehensive Equine in Nillumbik Plan is now critical to ensure that the shire capitalizes on the opportunities that can be explored and achieved for our local Equine Community, benefiting the shire as a whole.

Kind regards



President, NHAG Inc.