

# Equine in Nillumbik







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# Executive Summary

Equine in Nillumbik (the “Plan”) is a plan that responds to the Nillumbik Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 that lists the development of an Equine Industry and Activity Plan as a priority action. It outlines the Shire’s long history in equine, and ongoing, strong participation in the sector, discusses the status of the sector, and recognises significant opportunities. These include; increasing support for local clubs, responding to infrastructure needs, and the importance of safe, off-road, shared trails, promoting support for equine economic development and encouraging informed land management and emergency preparedness through education and collaboration.

Horses feature prominently in the history and foundation of Nillumbik. Early settlers used horses for transport in addition to many industries including forestry, gold mining, agriculture and construction of infrastructure such as the railroad. Horse ownership remains a significant part of Nillumbik life today. Horses have transitioned from being part of the local workforce to a sporting and recreational pursuit.

Since this transition, horse riding has grown in popularity to be one of the most popular recreation activities in the Shire.<sup>1</sup>

Nillumbik is home to 12 trail, adult, pony and all-abilities clubs. Founded in 1953, the Eltham District Horse and Pony Club is one of the oldest pony clubs in Victoria. In 1992 The Shire of Eltham Horse Trails Committee was established, suggesting a shared trail from Eltham Lower Park to Kinglake Township, this became known as the Green Wedge Trail and is now part of our Recreational Trails Strategy.

Almost exclusively a rural pursuit, this differentiates horse ownership and riding from most other recreational activities in Nillumbik. Recreational riders share trail infrastructure with other users such as walkers, joggers and bike riders. Horse riding provides a healthy, social activity for residents and visitors who ride local trails, attend riding schools and/or participate at clubs, training events and competitions.

The mix of these equestrian facilities with the natural bush, rural land and trails within Nillumbik continue to make it an attractive region for enthusiasts and some residents have chosen to live in Nillumbik due to the availability of suitable land for the keeping of horses (in close proximity to Melbourne) and the accessibility to local trails and clubs.<sup>2</sup>

Sport and Recreation Victoria estimates there are about 55,000 participants in equestrian sports in Victoria, of which 79 per cent are female (1.4 per cent of the state’s female population). A 2016 study shows that the equestrian sector contributes \$1.143 billion to the Australian economy each year.<sup>3</sup> The equine sector has positive economic and social benefits for Nillumbik with the total economic impact of approximately \$16.9 million per annum.<sup>4</sup>

Equine activities encourage an active outdoor lifestyle, a connection with nature and social connectivity. These activities have been recognised as providing health benefits to all participants including people with mental and physical disabilities.<sup>5</sup> At present, the majority of riders in Nillumbik are female (89 per cent of survey respondents) – women and girls of various ages who are often under-represented in organised sport.

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1 Nillumbik Recreation Strategy 2011 – 2019 [https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/council-publications/strategies-etc/recreation\\_strategy\\_2011-2019.pdf](https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/council-publications/strategies-etc/recreation_strategy_2011-2019.pdf)

2 Consultation with Nillumbik Horse Action Group, 2019

3 <https://www.equestrian.org.au/news/equestrian-brings-more-1billion-economy>

4 p. iv AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

5 <https://elcr.org/horsesandhumanhealth/>

This plan is related to other Council plans, policies and strategies in facilitating health and wellbeing, inclusion, recreation, trails, tourism and economic development (see figure 1).

The development of this Plan included consultation undertaken with the equine and broader community. Outcomes from this consultation facilitated the development of a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to determine key focus areas and an Equine Action Plan.

The SWOT identified:

- A strong alignment between the rural characteristics of the Shire, such as open spaces and equine as a sporting and recreational pursuit
- Risk associated with riders sharing public roads with motorists
- An opportunity to investigate the sharing of infrastructure between clubs and the gaps in current facilities
- Opportunity for Council to work with the sector to deliver land, pest and emergency management information and support for the equine community

The Plan seeks to capitalise on opportunities to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes for the community. This will require the equine sector - inclusive of clubs, the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG), recreational riders and equine businesses to collaborate with Council and other stakeholders.

Based on the research, the Plan identifies five key focus areas for the equine sector in Nillumbik:

- Participation and sustainability, including volunteering
- Maximising existing club infrastructure and planning for identified future needs
- Supporting equine economic development
- Providing access to a safe shared trails network
- Informing and supporting land, pest and emergency management.

# Relationship to other Council strategies and plans

The Council Plan Living in the Landscape 2017-2021 lists the development of an Equine Industry and Activity Plan as a priority action. This Plan has been created to deliver this action by outlining the Shire's strong history of equine, status of the sector and opportunities to be explored to increase economic, social and environmental benefits through collaboration.

This Plan supports other actions of the Council Plan<sup>6</sup> in its vision for Nillumbik to become Australia's most livable Shire with:

- Engaged, connected communities
- Active and creative people
- Safe and healthy environments
- A prosperous economy
- Responsible leadership

Outcomes of the actions within this Plan facilitate the aspirations of the Council Plan Living in the Landscape 2017-2021 and existing Council strategies and plans such as the Green Wedge Management Plan, Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, and the Trails Strategy and Recreation Strategy. Working in harmony, these and other strategic initiatives will assist in the community and visitors realising greater benefits.

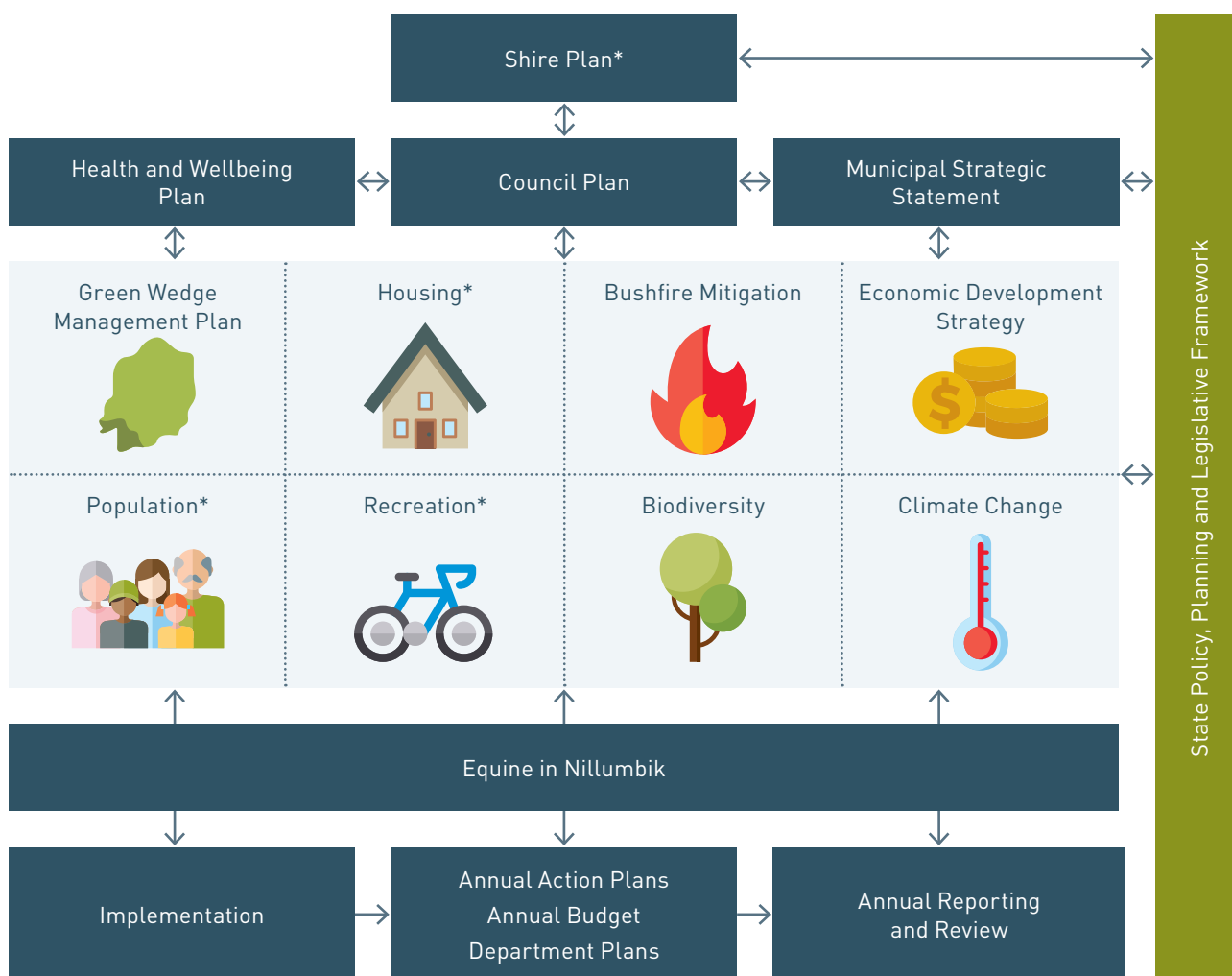


Figure 1. Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework

6 <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation>

# The equine community in Nillumbik



## Background

The methodology used for development of this Plan includes inputs from:

- A public workshop attended by approximately 70 participants
- Analysis of results stemming from an online survey completed by 426 respondents on behalf of their families, representing 906 horse riders in total.
- Research and analysis conducted by Council with equine industry bodies including Equestrian Australia (EA), Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), Australian Trail Riders Association (ATHRA), Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria (HRC AV) and Pony Clubs Association of Victoria (PCAV)
- A trails consultation session with the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG).

This was supplemented by one-on-one consultation with five local adult riding and pony club managers and the Australian Horse Industry Council.

A public workshop was facilitated to provide an opportunity to outline key findings from the survey results, and to better understand the equine landscape. This highlighted the infrastructure existing and required within the Shire including the potential for an indoor arena as part of a larger shared facility, the condition and capacity of existing arenas, extended trail connectivity and access, car parking and limited length of cross country courses. Safety concerns for horse and rider were also raised in relation to having to ride on roads, lack of driver awareness and poor driver behaviour.

The trails consultation explored the demographics of riders who use the shared trails, the attributes of existing trails, accessibility issues, rider safety and the request for trails to be digitally mapped.

The online survey covered various aspects of the equine community including:

- Participation
- Infrastructure gaps and opportunities
- Equine businesses including their type, income, employment and location
- Consumer expenditure on equine products
- Land, pest and emergency management.

The one-on-one consultation with club committees sought information on the operation and activities conducted by clubs including their infrastructure and current challenges.

An economic impact assessment was developed to understand the size and nature of the contribution of the sector to the Shire's economy.

The above methodology facilitated the collection and analysis of data and information which informed the development of a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT was used to develop focus areas and an Equine Action Plan.





## Summary of the equine consultation process

A summary of the consultation process<sup>7</sup> is outlined below and focuses on:

- Participation
- Club infrastructure, gaps and opportunities
- Economic contribution of equine to the Shire
- Access to safe shared trails network
- Land, pest, emergency management.

“Local riding clubs do not receive any significant funding on a regular basis unlike other sports”

– Survey respondent 2019

## Participation in equine activities

Equestrian Victoria’s State Equestrian Facilities Plan (2017) estimates that there are almost 55,000 participants in equestrian sports in Victoria, of which 79 per cent (about 43,000 people) are female (1.4 per cent of Victoria’s female population). The report highlights that most organisations have experienced growth in participation in recent years, with most growth occurring among women and youth, as well as in inter-school competitions.<sup>8</sup>

Equestrian activities in Nillumbik have more than double the state and national percentages of participation and trail riding, is one of the top five non-organised recreational pursuits and one of the top 10 most popular recreational activities in Nillumbik.<sup>9</sup>

Equine is almost an exclusively rural pursuit, which differentiates it from other recreational activities in Nillumbik. The majority of riders in Nillumbik are women and girls (89 per cent of survey respondents) who are often underrepresented in organised sport.

“Thank you for actually acknowledging that horses are an important part of Nillumbik. Our horses greatly contribute to our family’s health and wellbeing and makes our life enjoyable.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Primary elements of the equine sector in Nillumbik are the clubs, riding schools, recreational riders, events, visitors, shared recreational trails, agistment, equine-specific businesses and breeding. Five local equestrian facilities host at least two clubs each. St Andrews also hosts trail riding and Riding for the Disabled. Nillumbik equine clubs are affiliated with state governing bodies including the Pony Club Association of Victoria,<sup>10</sup> Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria and the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association.<sup>11</sup> Most facilities are leased from Council with Kangaroo Ground Pony Club being the only club that owns its property.

Clubs are of various membership sizes with most holding a mixture of weekend and mid-week rallies. Each club hosts an average of three competitions per year. In 2020, there were 550 horse riders who were regular members of the various riding clubs in Nillumbik.

Survey respondents who are riding club members highlighted a number of challenges for their clubs. The key issues mentioned were facility quality, cost, access, maintenance, infrastructure limitations and safety.

Participants mostly ride on local trails and roads, club grounds and home arenas. Respondents stated that sharing local roads with motorists is becoming increasingly unsafe for horse and rider. In addition to local participation, 33 per cent of survey respondents also train or ride outside of Nillumbik.

7 AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019

8 AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

9 Market Research for the Nillumbik Recreation Strategy 2010-2018

10 <http://www.ponyclubvic.org.au>

11 <https://hrcav.com.au/> and <http://www.athra.com.au/>



“Road safety is a big issue when there are very few areas to trail ride. A driver education program regarding responsibility and safety would help.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Nillumbik has a network of shared trails in some areas, however respondents believed there was real opportunity for improved linkages and connectivity of off-road trails both within the Shire and with neighbouring municipalities. An emphasis was put around road safety and the need for safe off-road trails that decrease the risk of accidents, not just for horse riders, but drivers, pedestrians and bike riders as well. Many riders have reported they feel unsafe riding on roads due to the increase in traffic. Other ideas to enhance the amenity, capacity and safety of trails were the provision of ample parking areas for unloading of horses, shaded areas with hitching rails and more informative signage.

Equine clubs are entirely self-funded and rely totally on volunteers for the management and maintenance of their facilities and grounds, as well as the running of rallies and competitions. Maintenance and upgrades of infrastructure are funded through fundraising and hosting events. Club membership fees generally cover the cost of insurance and instructors, however the upkeep of facilities requires further investment and most clubs are not able to raise the full funds required for improvements and maintenance.

The majority of Nillumbik horse riders are adult females (89 per cent). Riders fall into two age brackets: 31-50 years (39 per cent) and 51+ years (43 per cent). Young riders, aged 16-30, make up only 14 per cent of the overall group. Of the households with horse ownership, 86 per cent have one to three riders and the remaining 14 per cent have four or five family members who ride.<sup>12</sup>

HRCVA provides for a wide range of riders who enjoy the social aspect of club membership as well instruction and competition. The Pony Club movement is an international voluntary organisation for young people interested in horses and riding, it aims to provide education in rider safety and horse welfare.

“It is a wonderful community to belong to, so supportive. We love our horses and have spent many hours and dollars maintaining our property and keeping it in good condition for our horses. We have planted many trees for the benefit of our property. We love the land and care for it.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Participating in equestrian activities not only provides a positive impact on the physical health of riders, but also on their mental health by providing a fulfilling recreational outlet that can lead to a sense of personal purpose and belonging within the equine and rural communities.

Key equine disciplines practised in Nillumbik include dressage, trail riding, show jumping horsemanship and eventing. The highest forecast increase in demand is for trail riding, horsemanship, dressage and eventing.

Respondents expressed gaps in infrastructure within the Shire, particularly that there is no indoor arena and that Yarrambat is the only facility which contains a suitably sized cross-country course for evening competitions. Riders noted that an indoor arena would assist with participation during hot or wet weather and at night, in addition to attracting equine professionals, and providing all-weather venue for RDA Clubs. Improvements to existing club infrastructure, particularly riding surfaces, arena capacity and car parking were also mentioned.

Yarrambat and Hurstbridge Adult Riding Clubs have membership caps in place due to limitations in the size of their venues and capacity for car parking, this limits the potential for expansion of these clubs. The cost of participation is stated as high due to expenses related to horse maintenance, feed, equipment and transport.

Nillumbik is located within a green wedge with beautiful open rural spaces and natural environment, this compliments the creation of shared trails for riders, walkers and cyclists and makes it an ideal environment for equestrian activity in proximity to significant population.

“Nillumbik Shire needs an equestrian centre that all the nearby clubs can share. And more safe trail riding tracks.”

– Survey respondent 2019



# Equine clubs in Nillumbik



Figure 2. Location and participation of Nillumbik horse riding clubs and groups

## Economic contribution of equine

The Nillumbik equine community contributes significantly to the Shire's economy. Nillumbik's 34 equine businesses are predominantly located in Hurstbridge, Arthurs Creek and Kangaroo Ground, employing at least 74 people in 2017/18. The equine community is supported by a range of goods and services such as health professionals, breeding, farriers, feed, clothing and equipment, transportation, education and property infrastructure and equipment. Most equine businesses in Nillumbik are classified as Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These businesses' revenues vary significantly with 42 per cent earning less than \$20,000 in FY2017-18 and 13 per cent earning more than \$100,000.<sup>13</sup>

The total economic impact of the equine sector in Nillumbik is approximately \$16.9 million per annum, which is comprised of \$5.1 million in expenditure within the sector. A direct impact of that expenditure being \$8.9 million which supports 24 FTE jobs and an indirect impact of \$8 million from flow-on expenditure.<sup>14</sup> The industries that benefited the most from indirect expenditure include health care services, property and maintenance, building and construction and agriculture including feed and supplements.

Business confidence in the equine sector is positive with 47 per cent of survey respondents expecting growth and 40 per cent expecting stable revenues.<sup>15</sup> Equine escape expenditure from Nillumbik for 2019 was approximately \$1 million<sup>16</sup> and therefore an opportunity exists for local businesses to grow by providing in-demand goods and services. The most common items locals bought outside Nillumbik include property infrastructure and vet and health services.

Visitation to Nillumbik to riding schools, equine events and agistment properties contributes revenue to both equine and non-equine businesses.

<sup>13</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

<sup>14</sup> p. iv AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

<sup>15</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

<sup>16</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

## Types of businesses

### Training / Lessons



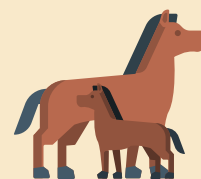
### Agistment



### Equipment



### Breeding



### Vet



Figure 2. Types of equine businesses in Nillumbik



## Land, pest and emergency management

The equine community and the local agricultural businesses which supports it are significant land use groups in the Shire. These groups share knowledge and an appetite for learning as demonstrated by attendance at specific equine-focused land management workshops offered by Nillumbik Shire Council, the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG) and the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group. Two thirds of respondents were interested in attending workshops in the future.<sup>17</sup>

Two thirds of respondents stated they do not have challenges in managing their property and the majority spend between six and fifteen hours on property maintenance per week and many over 15 hours per week.<sup>18</sup>

“We all love and value our green wedge. Our passion for our sport, our friends and the community keeps us engaged, volunteering for our clubs, and living here.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Respondents that are members of Landcare groups, mostly attend Arthurs Creek, Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare and Strathewen. The key challenges of respondents relate to pests, land and emergency management. These include dealing with:

- Weeds
- Pests (rabbits, deer and foxes)
- Blackberry
- Drought
- Bushfire preparedness.

There is a strong demand for information and support to help guide informed land management practices. The most requested topics are:

- Pasture management and improvement
- Weed control
- Horse health (equine worming)
- Bushfire and emergency planning.

Further to the above, respondents also noted a need for assistance with permits, rates and Council processes.

<sup>17</sup> Q26 AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019

<sup>18</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019



# Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The SWOT analysis below provides a snapshot of the current situation of the sector and acts as an input to the development of focus areas for the equine action plan.

## Strengths

- A strong and long history of equine as part of the Shire.<sup>19</sup>
- Established equine clubs that are linked to their state bodies.<sup>20</sup>
- Equine businesses forecasting stability and growth.<sup>21</sup>
- Existing shared trails network.
- Existing trail and recreation strategies, governed by Council's Recreation and Trails Advisory Committee<sup>22</sup> that support inclusive participation and safety.
- Close proximity to city residents looking to visit or move to the country.
- Proximity to Melbourne Polytechnic's education facility that provides courses in equine disciplines and conducts research and development projects for the sector.
- High female participation.
- Engaged equine sector and participants.
- Existing interest in land management.

## Weaknesses

- Age and limitation of club infrastructure.
- Cost of maintaining arena riding surfaces and cross country courses for clubs.
- Lack of adequate club car parking during peak times and inclement weather.
- Danger associated with a lack of signage regarding horses and riders on public roads and the need for community information and education to improve safety.<sup>23</sup>
- A lack of bushfire planning and communications for the protection of horses.
- Lack of linkage of off-road trails throughout the Shire and into neighbouring municipalities.
- Lack of horse-friendly visitor accommodation which impacts attracting equine visitation.

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19 Consultation with Nillumbik Horse Action Group, 2019

20 <https://hrcav.com.au/>

21 AECOM on-line survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

22 <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Committees>

23 AECOM on-line survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

24 <https://www.nhag.org.au/about-us>

25 <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/funding-programs/roadside-weeds-and-pest-management>

26 <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria/weeds-and-vertebrate-pests>

27 <http://www.athra.com.au/component/k2/item/92-horse-riding-and-road-safety.html>

28 Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

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

30 <https://www.melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/study/equine-studies/equine-studies>

31 AECOM Assessment of equine investment opportunities August 2019



## Opportunities

- Opportunity for Council to enhance its relationship with the equine sector and support both the recreational and economic contributions the sector makes to Nillumbik.
- To develop an equine infrastructure masterplan to identify ways to maximise the use of existing club infrastructure and collaborate with neighbouring municipalities.
- Opportunity for the equine sector to investigate and understand club infrastructure sharing opportunities.
- Opportunity to investigate viability of an indoor arena for shared club and RDA use as part of a larger equine facility.
- Work with land managers to access safe, shared trails and continue to progress the Shire's trail network with links to neighbouring municipalities, including to the Yarra Valley Loop Trail and Bicentennial National Trail.
- Opportunity for Council to support NHAG and other equine groups to work closely with the community to increase their visibility and co-ordination as representatives of the equine sector.<sup>24</sup>
- Equine clubs to grow participation to improve club revenues and volunteer workforce.
- Council to provide information and educational materials and explore extension of existing land and pest management programs to include equine specific topics. Additionally, Council may seek assistance through State Government grant programs.<sup>25</sup>
- Council, in collaboration with the State Government<sup>26</sup> and equine sector, to develop a diverse program of land and pest management education workshops.
- Council, in collaboration with the equine sector, to create an awareness campaign to increase the visibility and understanding of road safety issues relating to horse riders and motorists sharing public roads.<sup>27</sup>
- Council to engage with equine businesses to facilitate specific support initiatives.<sup>28</sup>
- The provision of improved service from Council in relation to providing clarity and support for permit applications and land management plans. This can be achieved through implementing the State Government's Better Approvals Project<sup>29</sup> and Council's Customer First Strategy 2019-2022.
- Leverage partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic to participate in research and development projects, address skills gaps and promote the transition between education and local employment.<sup>30</sup>
- Council to collaborate with the equine sector and community to develop emergency management plans, and improve emergency communications for horse owners.

## Threats

- Risk due to lack of clarity relating to infrastructure built by clubs on Council land. Council will need to work with state bodies and clubs to understand and support risk mitigation processes.
- Equine escape expenditure of approximately \$1 million per annum. This may impact on the viability of existing businesses.<sup>31</sup>
- Impact of drought and bushfire.

## Focus areas for equine

There are five focus areas for the equine sector in Nillumbik. These are:

- Participation and sustainability, including volunteering efforts.
- Maximising existing club infrastructure and planning for identified needs.
- Supporting equine economic development.
- Providing access to a safe shared trails network.
- Informing and supporting land, pest and emergency management.

Actions (Appendix A) have been created to respond to challenges and opportunities identified through the SWOT analysis and will address the identified focus areas.

These actions are designed to:

- Grow participation in the equine industry and improve club sustainability
- Explore infrastructure sharing opportunities and future planning
- Support economic development in relation to the equine sector
- Support the community with pest, land management and bushfire information and education opportunities



# Appendix A: Actions

Timeframe key:

- **SHORT** one to two years
- **MEDIUM** two to four years
- **LONG** four years plus

## Enhance participation, club sustainability and volunteer effort

Actions	Timeframe
1. Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities	MEDIUM
2. Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long-term viability.	SHORT
3. Council to support the equine sector to enhance communications across the sector such as the promotion of events, seminars and information to assist horse owners and businesses.	SHORT
4. Council to work with the equine sector to promote and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State Government grant programs.	SHORT
5. Council to support the equine sector to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of the equine community and supporting communications plan.	SHORT
6. Council to work with the equine clubs to grow participation and promote the Riders without Horses and Riding Develops Ability programs.	SHORT
7. Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities.	MEDIUM
8. Council to support Riding Develops Abilities activities in Nillumbik, through specific infrastructure analysis and linkage to client services.	SHORT

## Maximise the use of equine infrastructure

Actions	Timeframe
1. Council to work with the equine community to understand and promote shared infrastructure and resource opportunities between clubs to improve facilities and reduce cost for critical maintenance.	MEDIUM
2. Council, in collaboration with the equine community, to develop an Equine Infrastructure Plan to identify how the current sites can be improved to maximise their potential.	MEDIUM
3. Council to investigate potential of a larger shared equine facility for clubs, and viability of an indoor arena for competitions, training and RDA.	MEDIUM
4. Council to explore opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring municipalities that are planning equine infrastructure.	MEDIUM
5. Council to digitally map tracks and trails.	SHORT
6. Council to facilitate the equine community to collaborate with shared trail users, primarily cyclists and walkers, to understand and document synergies and common needs such as regularity of trail use and road sharing safety.	SHORT
7. Council and the equine community to work with relevant stakeholders and land managers to identify and formalise access to trails for horse riders, including linkages and connections.	SHORT
8. Council will continue to implement the Nillumbik Trails Strategy and Recreation Strategy.	ONGOING
9. Council will conduct its trails audit to ensure that existing and planned trails are fit for purpose.	SHORT
10. Council to develop a Nillumbik Horse Trail Riding Guide highlighting information about riding in Nillumbik, trail user protocol and safety information.	MEDIUM
11. Council to work with clubs and state bodies to understand and action any risks associated with club-built infrastructure on Council land.	SHORT

## Support equine economic development

Strategic actions	Timeframe
1. Council to collaborate with the equine community to understand reasons for escape expenditure and facilitate initiatives to support local businesses.	SHORT
2. Council to design and implement equine-specific business engagement activities to facilitate business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and business-to-government opportunities.	MEDIUM
3. Council to consider economic impact when undertaking improvements to equine infrastructure.	MEDIUM
4. Council to collaborate with the equine community to understand capability and opportunities for visitation through individual businesses and partnerships.	MEDIUM
5. Council to collaborate with the equine sector to consider the development of appropriate horse and rider-friendly accommodation and associated guidelines.	LONG
6. Council to work with the equine sector to develop a plan to promote Nillumbik's equine community and businesses in a regional context.	SHORT
7. The equine sector to understand skill and business gaps and work with Melbourne Polytechnic to address any skills shortages.	SHORT
8. Council to facilitate the equine sector to engage with Melbourne Polytechnic to understand opportunities for local clubs and business sector to understand and close skills gaps and participate in relevant research and development projects.	MEDIUM
9. 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.	SHORT

## Land, pest, emergency management and safety

Strategic actions	Timeframe
1. Council to develop emergency management information to assist horse owners during the fire season, including possible options for large animal evacuation.	SHORT
2. The equine sector, in collaboration with Council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers.	SHORT
3. Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads.	SHORT
4. Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.	SHORT
5. Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weeds</li> <li>• Rabbits</li> <li>• Deer</li> <li>• Foxes</li> <li>• Blackberry</li> </ul>	SHORT
6. Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.	SHORT

# List of figures

*FIGURE 1: Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework*

*FIGURE 2: Location and participation of Nillumbik horse riding clubs and groups*

*FIGURE 3: Types of equine businesses in Nillumbik*



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# Assessment of Equine Investment Opportunities

Nillumbik Shire Council



# Assessment of Equine Investment Opportunities

Nillumbik Shire Council

Client: Nillumbik Shire Council

ABN: N/A

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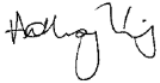
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## Abbreviations

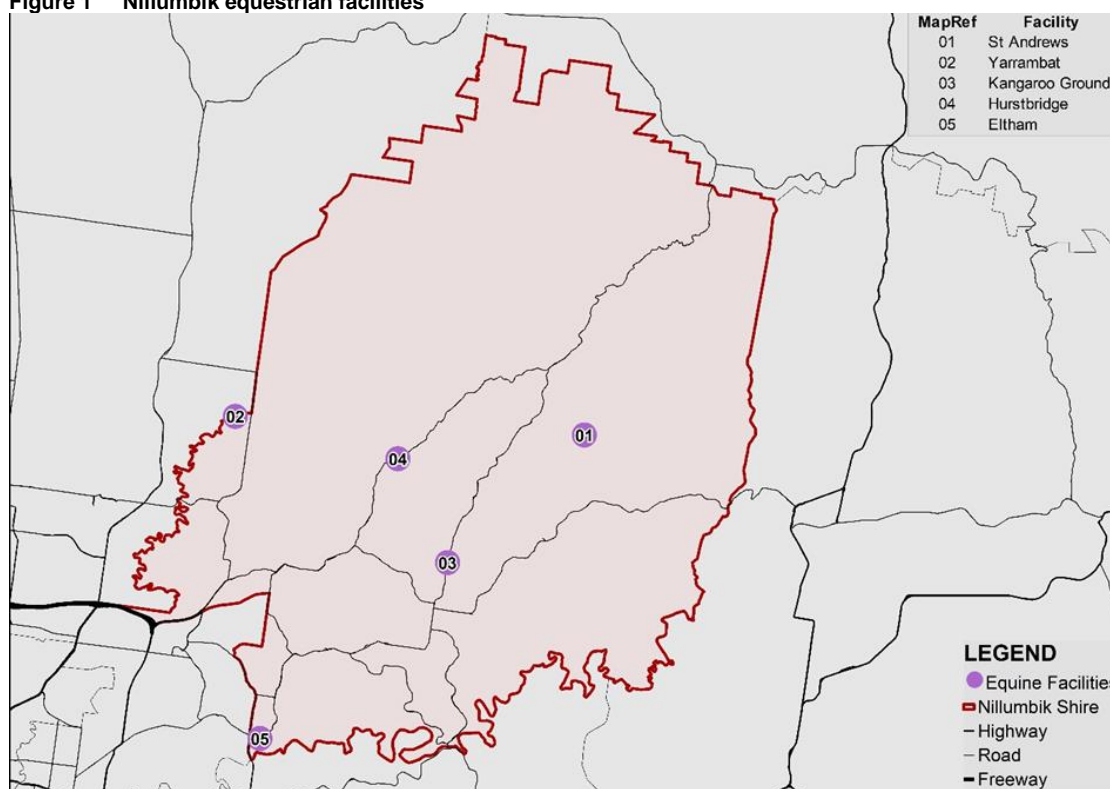
Abbreviation	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AWEC	Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre
EA	Equestrian Australia
EV	Equestrian Victoria
FEI	Fédération Equestre Internationale
HRCAV	Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria
I-O	Input-Output
LGA	Local Government Area
NHAG	Nillumbik Horse Action Group
PCV	Pony Club Victoria
PPP	Public – Private Partnership
RDA	Riding Develops Ability
TTT	Top Team Trophy
WPNEC	Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre

## Executive Summary

This report delivers an overview of equestrian infrastructure and events in Victoria and seeks to understand the nature of the equine sector within the Shire of Nillumbik (Nillumbik). It also describes the economic impact of the equestrian sector to Nillumbik and identifies potential equestrian market opportunities within Nillumbik. Involvement in equine activities usually requires substantial time and capital investment.

This report investigates the potential for additional equestrian facilities and builds on the already strong level of community involvement within the equine sector. Nillumbik has a long history of involvement in recreational horse riding and is home to ten adult riding and pony clubs at five different sites. The location of these sites can be seen in Figure 1. Currently, Nillumbik has a range of equestrian facilities including arenas, cross country courses and trials. The mix of these equestrian facilities with the natural bush, rural land and trails within Nillumbik continue to make it an attractive region for enthusiasts and fosters a multi-million-dollar equine industry.

**Figure 1 Nillumbik equestrian facilities**



## Project Context

Project context was developed through a combination of desktop studies and consultation with representatives from equestrian clubs in Nillumbik and the broader equestrian community.

The three largest equestrian organisations in Victoria by membership number are Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria (HRCAV), Pony Clubs Victoria (PCV) and Equestrian Victoria (EV). EV's State Facility Plan identifies 55 equestrian venues across Victoria.

In Nillumbik, there are five equestrian facilities; Yarrambat, Eltham, Kangaroo Grounds, Hurstbridge and St Andrews (Figure 1). There are also widespread trail networks. Clubs are of various membership sizes with most holding monthly rallies and around three events each year. Most of these sites are leased from the Shire of Nillumbik with Kangaroo Ground Pony Club being the only organisation to own its ground.

An important characteristic of the equine community within Nillumbik is its reliance on volunteers. All clubs require members to contribute volunteer hours towards the maintenance of their grounds and

the running of their events. In addition to volunteering, members must commit to maintaining and transporting their horses. Participating in equestrian activities can not only provide a positive impact on the physical health of riders, but also on their mental health by providing a fulfilling and recreational outlet that can lead to a sense of personal purpose and a sense of belonging within the equine community<sup>1</sup>. A study commissioned by Equestrian Australia (EA) also found that Equestrian (excluding all codes of horse racing, polo/ polocrosse, rodeo, western & tent pegging) contributed around \$12 million annually to physical and mental health<sup>2</sup>.

Membership fees generally only cover the cost of insurance and instructors. These facilities have significant upkeep and replacement costs, relying on external funding to sustain operations. Fund raising events are conducted in order to provide these resources with the help of volunteers and community engagement. Most clubs are not able to raise the amount needed to fully maintain and upkeep their facilities to the highest standard possible.

The public survey completed as part of stakeholder consultation highlighted that most equine businesses in Nillumbik were small businesses with 42 percent earning less than \$20,000 in FY2017-18 and only 13 percent earning more than \$100,000.

Key equine disciplines practiced in Nillumbik include dressage, show jumping, eventing and cross country. There are currently no indoor arenas in Nillumbik and current sites are lacking in facilities that are required to host more competitions and events, including those at the highest level of the sport. Currently, Yarrambat is the only facility within Nillumbik that contains a suitably sized cross-country course which is only available for use to Yarrambat members and their guests. Yarrambat and Hurstbridge clubs have put in place membership caps due to limitations in the size of their venues and capacity for car parking. This limits the amount that these clubs can grow and hinders the equine sector from reaching its full participation potential. With significant growth in inter-school and entry level competitions in Victoria, there is rising demand for events and competition level venues.

Nillumbik has a widespread network of trails however there is potential for further linkages and off-road trails. During consultation, an emphasis was put around road safety and the need for safer off-road trails that decrease the risk of accidents. As riders are unrestrained and horses can be difficult to predict, they can be hit by vehicles moving at high speeds and/or thrown into oncoming traffic. This jeopardises not only the horse rider's safety but also that of other road users. Due to recent urbanisation and the increase in traffic, many riders feel unsafe riding on roads. This lack of connectivity has led to a decrease in participation with riders having to transport their horses even a short distance. Some other barriers to the use of trails included lack of information, poor quality of the trails and lack of parking.

## Economic Impact

The economic value of the equestrian sector to Nillumbik's economy was assessed using Input-Output (I-O) analysis. I-O models capture the transactions that link industry sectors across the economy in a simplified form.

The Nillumbik equine industry contributes significantly to the regional economy and, more broadly, the state and national economies. Equestrian activities traditionally require significant time and capital investment as owning a horse necessitates a commitment to adequate care and retention of skills and education among the owners. There are significant responsibilities that go with the management and care of a horse(s). Money is spent on equipment and supplies such as feed, supplements, bedding, stabling, riding apparel. Costs can also include equine insurance, lessons and training, transport costs, veterinary services and facilities, property infrastructure and utilities applicable in keeping a horse(s).

For this report the types of impacts considered are initial spend as informed by consultation (actual value of goods and services purchased), the direct effect (value added and employment in the industry receiving initial impact) and the indirect effect (flow-on impacts that occur from secondary industries).

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<sup>1</sup> Stakeholder consultation

<sup>2</sup> Community Impact Study, Sports Business Partners and Street Ryan commissioned by EA

## Total economic impact = \$16.9m



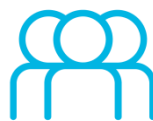
**\$5.1m**

**Initial  
spend**



**\$8.9m**

**Direct  
impact**



**24**

**FTE jobs  
supported**



**\$8.0m**

**Indirect  
impact**

From the survey initial spend was found to be \$5.1 million. Direct impacts total \$8.9 million and support 24 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Indirect impacts total \$8.0 million and contribute to a total economic impact of around \$16.9 million to Nillumbik each year. The industries that benefited the most include health care services, other agriculture (feed and supplements, property maintenance) and building/construction.

### Opportunity assessment

The opportunity assessment has been informed by stakeholder consultation and desktop research. These consultations included an online survey which was completed by 426 people on behalf of their families (representing 904 horse riders in total), a workshop that was attended by around 70 participants and interviews with club representatives. This approach ensured that the report was informed by and considered the needs of a wide sample of stakeholders and further shows the strong level of engagement within the equine community.

From survey findings and consultation (workshop and interviews) the following opportunities were identified as areas for consideration. They will be reliant on further analysis which may include feasibility, cost-benefit and community interest.

- **An indoor arena.** Currently there are no indoor arenas within Nillumbik and there is strong demand for a venue that could be used in all weather conditions and low light. This could also benefit riders with disabilities that may be more sensitive to light and weather conditions. An indoor arena will be able to host more events and competitions as there would be no weather or light limitations.
- **A larger venue.** Yarrambat is the only facility within Nillumbik that contains a suitably sized cross-country course. This is only available to Yarrambat members and their guests. There is an opportunity to develop a larger venue that could be used to hold a variety of competitions and attract visitors and equestrian talent to Nillumbik. This arena could also be utilised by Interschool Equestrian which is one of the fastest growing sports in Victoria. A larger arena would be a drawcard for events and competitions, which will support important visitor dollars flow into the Shire.
- **Access to and improved connectivity for trails on public land.** Horse, rider and driver safety were identified as a key issue in areas where trails and roads are in close proximity. Improving shared trails away from the road network and developing a horse safety campaign could deliver improved safety outcomes and will also benefit bike riders and walkers/hikers. More linkages and promotions of trails could increase utilisation and attract equine tourists from outside Nillumbik. Nillumbik Shire Council is currently investigating developing a mobile application that will provide information and promote trails in Nillumbik.



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project purpose and objective

The purpose of this report is to identify and assess equine industry opportunities for the Shire of Nillumbik (Nillumbik) that are supported by evidence and that align with the views and aspirations of industry stakeholders. More specifically, the key objectives of this report are to:

- Complete an industry assessment that outlines the principal features of the equine market in Victoria
- Document the existing equine facilities for events, activities and training within Nillumbik, their features, users and type of equestrian events for which they can cater
- Undertake an economic analysis of the Nillumbik equine industry
- Identify potential equestrian opportunities for Nillumbik.

### 1.2 Shire of Nillumbik overview

Nillumbik is located in Greater Melbourne's north east. It has a population of around 65,000 people and covers a land area of approximately 430 square kilometres, with an average population density of nearly 150 people per square kilometre<sup>3</sup>. The population is unevenly distributed, however, with higher population densities in the south western portion of Nillumbik and lower population densities in the central and northern portions. Nillumbik is bounded by Kinglake National Park to the north, the Yarra escarpment in the east, the Yarra River in the south and Plenty River and Yan Yean Road in the west.

Compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria, Nillumbik has an appreciably greater median age, proportion of couples with children, median weekly household income and labour participation rate, as well as a lower proportion of households renting (refer Table 1).

**Table 1 Nillumbik demographic context**

Demographic factor	Nillumbik	Greater Melbourne	Victoria
Median age	41	36	37
Couples with children	47%	33%	31%
Median weekly household income	\$2,093	\$1,539	\$1,416
Households renting	9%	29%	28%
Labour participation rate	69%	62%	60%
Population forecast growth estimate (2018-36)	9.14%	35.48%*	32.13%*

Source: .idcommunity community profile (2018); Shire of Nillumbik (2018); Victoria in Future (2016)

\*estimate based on Victoria in Future 2016 (DELWP)

### 1.3 Equestrian industry overview

Horses and humans have a deep shared history, with horses historically having significant influence on economic growth, the outcomes of war and the connection of communities across a range of countries and cultures. As countries have modernised over recent centuries, the relationship between horses and humans has evolved, however, horses still play a central role in many people's lives around the globe.

Founded in 1921 and headquartered in Switzerland, the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (*Fédération Équestre Internationale* – FEI) is the international governing body of equestrian sport. The FEI recognises seven equestrian disciplines (jumping, dressage and para-dressage, eventing, driving

<sup>3</sup> .idcommunity

and para-driving, endurance, vaulting and reining), which are governed by a FEI code of conduct that is designed to protect the welfare of athletes, both human and horse<sup>4</sup>. FEI states the following:

*Equestrianism is the only sport that involves two athletes, equine and human. It is the successful partnership between these two elements; the relationship of confidence and respect that is built up between them, that makes the sport so exceptional.*

Equestrian Australia (EA) is the national governing body of equestrian sports in Australia and has been affiliated with the FEI since 1951. EA has seven branches, one for each Australian state and territory, excluding Canberra. Although the Victorian branch of EA – Equestrian Victoria – recognises the same seven disciplines as the FEI, there are many other equestrian bodies operating in Victoria that offer other equine disciplines. Table 2 details the main equine disciplines on offer.

**Table 2 Equine disciplines**

Discipline	Description
Show jumping	This timed event involves show jumping obstacles (single vertical and elevated horizontal obstacles), usually with many turns and changes of direction.
Dressage and para-dressage	Dressage is the art of training and riding a horse in a manner that develops obedience, flexibility and balance.
Eventing	Eventing is an equestrian event where a single horse and rider combination compete against other combinations across the disciplines of dressage, cross-country and show jumping
Driving and para-driving	Carriage driving is a form of competitive horse driving in harness in which two or four wheeled carriages are pulled by a single horse, a pair, tandem or a four-in-hand team
Endurance riding	Endurance is a timed long-distance competition that tests the endurance of a horse and challenges the rider over their effective use of pace, knowledge of their horse's capabilities
Vaulting	Vaulting is most often described as gymnastics, acrobatics or dance on a horse. It is typically choreographed, with competitors competing in compulsory and freestyle categories.
Reining	Reining is a western riding competition for horses where the rider guides the horses through a precise pattern of circles, spins and stops. The horse should be willingly guided.
Cross-country	The objective of cross country is to prove the speed, endurance and jumping ability of the horse, as well as demonstrate the rider's knowledge of pace and confidence in horse control.
Trail riding	Trail riding is a generally relaxed discipline that involves riding outdoors on trails and paths.
Livestock/western disciplines	There are multiple livestock and western disciplines. The main ones include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting – whereby horse and rider demonstrate ability to handle cattle</li> <li>• Campdrafting – similar to cutting, but the rider must 'cut out' one cow from the heard and demonstrate control over it</li> <li>• Tent pegging – a cavalry sport comprising games with the use of ground targets</li> </ul>
Polo and polocrosse	Polo involves two teams on horseback with competitors using a long-handled mallet to drive a wooden ball through goalposts. Polocrosse is similar to polo, however, instead of a wooden mallet and ball, competitors use a lacrosse style racquet to handle the ball.
Mounted games	Mounted games is a branch of equestrian sport in which very fast games are played by people of all ages on ponies. It requires a high degree of athletic ability, riding skills and hand-eye coordination. Games involve individual, pair and team games.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fei.org/search>

## 2.0 Methodology

The methodology for this report was developed with an objective to maximise the evidence base upon which the project team and stakeholders could identify market gaps and opportunities. This approach seeks to ensure that the opportunities identified are feasible and align with government strategies and stakeholder knowledge and interests, rather than being based on the interest and knowledge of a small number of people. Key components of the methodology included the following:

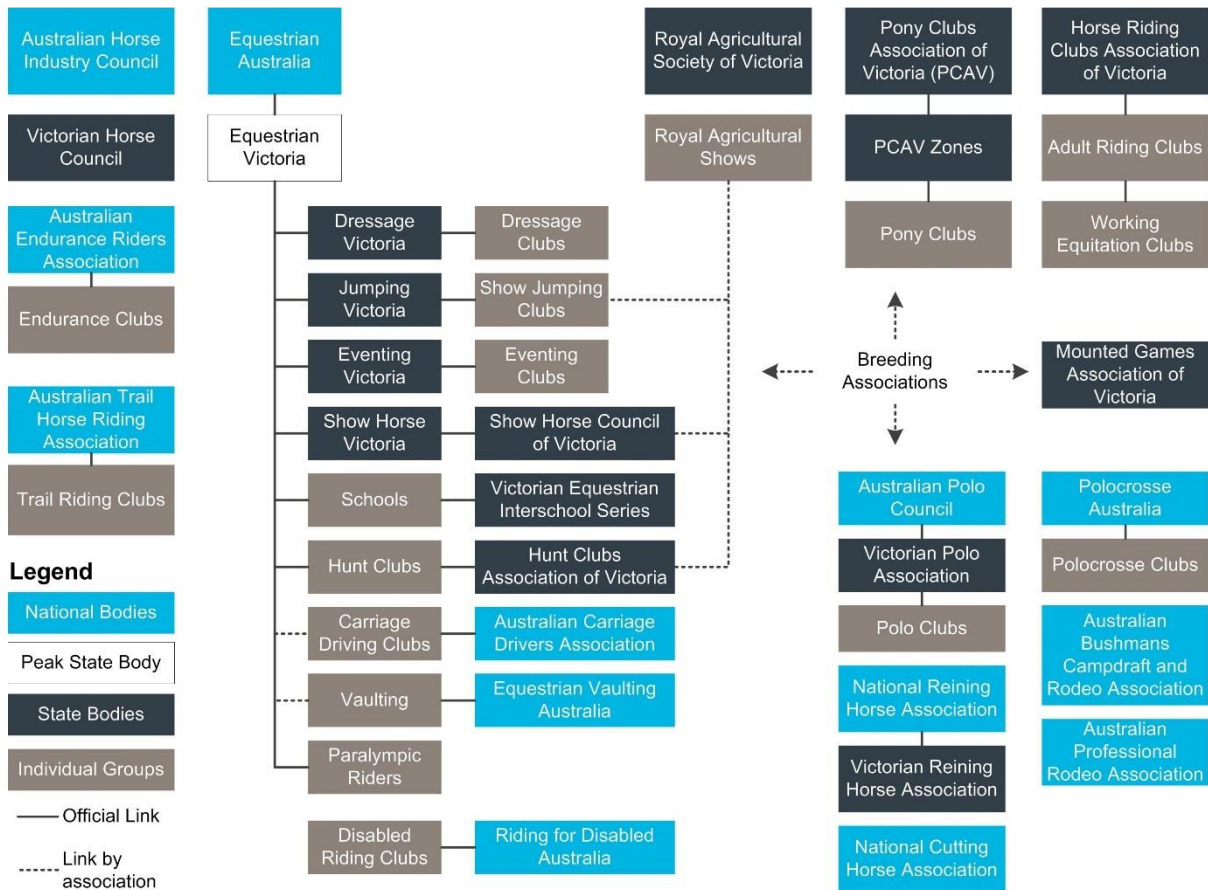
- **Data gathering and desktop research.** The purpose of this task is to understand the current context of the equine industry in Victoria, trends, events and existing infrastructure. Publicly available documents and data were sourced, including:
  - The *Equestrian State Facility Plan* (Volume 1: Final Report and Volume 2: Summary of Market Research and Consultation)
  - Various websites, including EV, HRC AV, PCV and other equestrian bodies and organisations that have an appreciable presence in Victoria or Nillumbik
  - ABS data
- **Stakeholder consultation.** Stakeholder consultation comprised three components that sought to validate the findings of tasks as well as identify gaps and opportunities within Nillumbik:
  - A local engagement session that was attended by around 70 participants
  - Structured one on one interviews with seven key stakeholders, including five representatives from Nillumbik's horse and pony clubs, one representative from Nillumbik Horse Action Group and a member of the Australian Horse Industry Council. These interviews were arranged by the Council and conducted by AECOM.
  - An online survey, which was completed by 426 people on behalf of their families (representing 904 horse riders in total).
- **Economic impact analysis.** Drawing upon outputs from the online survey and ABS Input-Output (I-O) multipliers, the economic impact of the equine industry within Nillumbik was analysed. Refer to section 4.0 for a detailed description of the economic impact analysis.

### 3.0 Project context

#### 3.1 Victorian equine context

EV's *State Facility Plan* (2017), which is supported by Sport and Recreation Victoria and is based on analysis of market data and consultation with stakeholders, estimates that there are nearly 55,000 participants in equestrian sports in Victoria, of which 79 percent (around 43,000 people) are female. This represents approximately 0.9 percent of the State's total population, or 1.4 percent of the female population and 0.4 percent of the male population. The report highlights that most organisations have experienced growth in participation in recent years, with most growth occurring among women and youth, as well as in inter-school competitions. As a result of growth in these segments, there is strong demand for participation in entry-level competitions. The structure of, and relationship between, equestrian bodies and groups in Victoria is complex (refer Figure 2).

**Figure 2 Equine industry structure – Victoria**

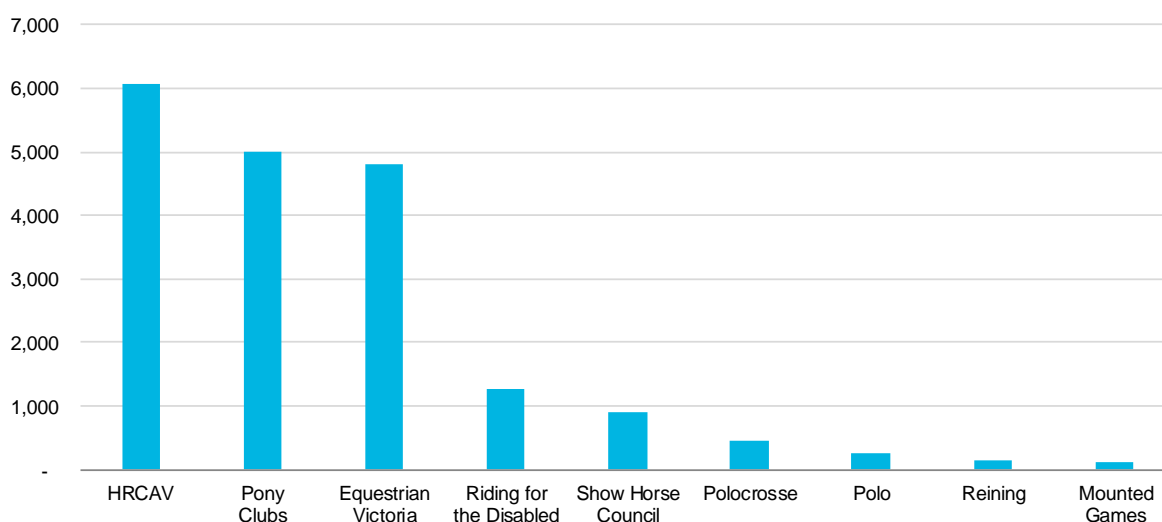


Source: Equestrian Victoria State Equestrian Facility Plan

While reports prepared and commissioned by EA and EV conclude that there is scope for growth of participation in equestrian events and activities, they also identify various strategic challenges. The most notable challenge is associated with the complexity of the governance hierarchy, which comprises over 50 State and National Committees and Boards. This limits the sport's ability to understand and market to its audience, attract commercial partners and formalise a holistic approach to develop athletes, coaches and officials.

The three largest equestrian organisations in Victoria by membership number are HRCAV with over 6,000 Victorian members, PCV with around 5,000 Victorian members and EV with nearly 5,000 Victorian members (refer Figure 3). EV is the peak equestrian body in Victoria for seven core disciplines (jumping, dressage and para-dressage, eventing, driving and para-driving, endurance, vaulting and reining), while HRCAV and Pony Clubs Victoria cater to slightly different markets. HRCAV provides for a wide range of riders who enjoy the social aspect of club membership as well as access to organised competitions. HRCAV caters for beginner riders right through to experienced competitors. The Pony Club movement is an international voluntary organisation for young people interested in horses and riding. One of the primary purposes of PCV is to provide children and young adults with the opportunity to build and develop character, responsibility and consideration for others through involvement with a living animal.

**Figure 3 Equestrian organisation membership numbers (2017)**



Source: Equestrian Victoria State Equestrian Facility Plan

### 3.1.1 Major facilities

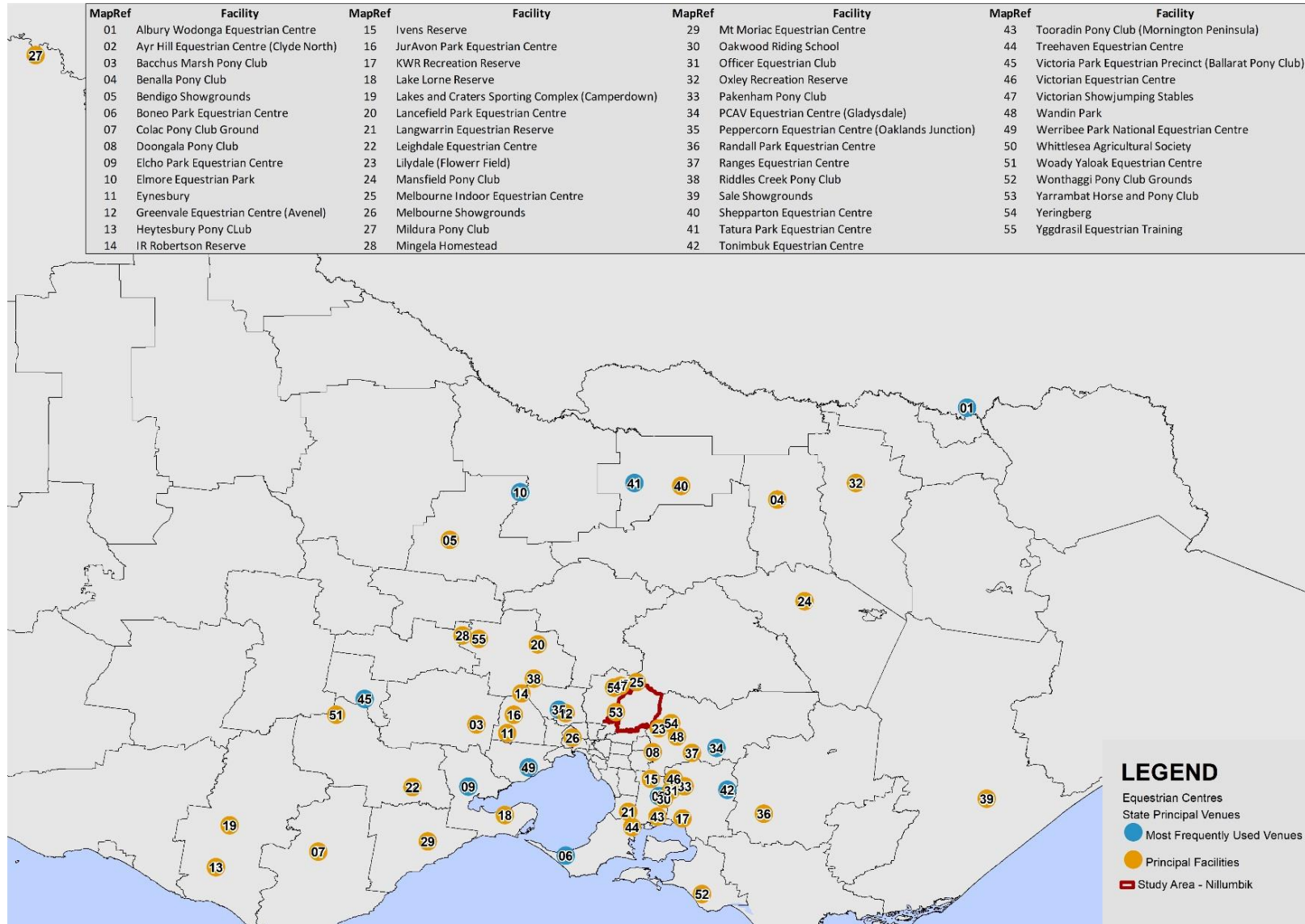
EV's *State Facility Plan* identifies 55 equestrian venues across Victoria; 11 of which are frequently used for events and are thus the most significant in terms of participation access. The 11 facilities identified in the *State Facility Plan* are Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre, Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre, Boneo Park Equestrian Centre, Elcho Park Equestrian Centre, Elmore Equestrian Centre, Peppercorn Equestrian Centre, Pony Club of Victoria Equestrian Centre – Gladysdale, Tatura Park Equestrian Centre, Tonimbuk Equestrian Centre, Victoria Park Equestrian Centre (Ballarat) and Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre. It should be noted that only four of these (Boneo, Tonimbuk, Victoria Park in Ballarat and Werribee) are common with the nine centres used for Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) events in 2018.

The 55 venues identified in EV's *State Facility Plan* are illustrated in Figure 4 while characteristics of the 11 most significant facilities including the type of events they hold are described in Table 3.

The main gaps in venue provision in the state identified by equestrian organisations are for dressage and reining in the east of Victoria and dressage facilities in the west of Victoria. There is a view that there is a need to upgrade and raise the standard of existing facilities generally. As part of its strategic direction EV seeks to address gaps in facility provision and ensure each region has a venue(s) of an appropriate standard to conduct events in the high participation disciplines.

Yarrambat Horse and Pony club is the only principle facility located in Nillumbik (Figure 4). In comparison, the adjoining City of Whittlesea contains three principle facilities and the Yarra Ranges Shire contains five.

Figure 4 Victorian equestrian facilities



Source: Equestrian Victoria State Equestrian Facility Plan

Table 3 State significant facilities

Facility	Design elements	Demand and attendance
<p><b>Albury Wodonga Equestrian Centre (AWEC)</b> Located in Albury, AWEC is a not-for-profit sporting organisation comprising a number of affiliated equestrian clubs and over 200 individual members (approx. 300 km from Nillumbik)</p>	<p>AWEC comprises 97 ha of land at Thurgoona in the northern part of Albury. Facilities include 40 covered yards, 40 stables, 200 day yards, concrete wash bays, a 70 x 110 metre sand arena with lighting, a grass arena, 5 turf polocrosse fields, a rodeo and camp draft arena with shed and yards, an international cross country course from level 3 to pony club level, club rooms, 54 powered camping sites and an amenities block (20 showers, 16 toilets, wash basins and storeroom) and a 30 x 10 metre catering and administration shed.</p>	<p>AWEC facilities are used regularly by its affiliated clubs. Events include horse trials, dressage, adult riding, pony club events, polocrosse, tent pegging, show jumping, camp drafting and cutting. The facilities are also used regularly by pleasure and individual riders. In 2017 AWEC hosted 56 events over 113 days (events included clinics, training, competition and non-equine related events such as school cross-country running).</p>
<p><b>Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre</b> A privately-owned facility in Clyde North that serves the needs of Hillcrest Christian College and Rivercrest Christian College, as well as regional colleges and the broader equestrian community (approx. 75 km from Nillumbik)</p>	<p>Ayr Hill Equestrian Centre is suited to facilitate small clinics and private hire for small to large events. Facilities include a 72 x 36 metre covered sand arena, 100 x 30 metre and 83 x 72 metre open sand arenas and sand warm up area, 4 hectares of grass polo field suitable for show jumping, dressage and mounted games, 10 stables with two wash bays, judges boxes, undercover and outdoor day yards, an amenities block with showers and toilets, a first aid facility and catering for more than 80 people.</p>	<p>Ayr Hill Equestrian Park regularly holds and attracts activities which include interschool equestrian competitions, show jumping competitions, dressage competitions, after school lessons, school holiday program for school children, showing clinics, show jumping training nights, dressage clinics, mounted games competitions, western and natural horsemanship days and pony club days.</p>
<p><b>Boneo Park Equestrian Centre</b> This privately owned Equestrian Centre on the Mornington Peninsula hires out its facilities for equestrian events and non-equine events such as weddings, conferences and other formal and informal gatherings (approx. 110 km from Nillumbik)</p>	<p>Boneo Park Equestrian Centre (BPEC) is 345 hectares with around 120 hectares having the potential to be developed. It contains an indoor arena (66 x 30 metres) and several outdoor arenas (the main outdoor arena is 75 x 85 metres). It has a temporary grandstand which can seat up to 500 people. The arena surface is imported from Belgium, and comprises fibre mixed with sand. BPEC also contains 159 stables for hire at events, plus an additional 20 private stables, as well as catering facilities and a café on site.</p>	<p>BPEC caters mainly for dressage and show jumping. It holds a mix of national, local and regional events. Many are generated by Boneo Park itself. Boneo Park is in direct competition with Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre.</p>
<p><b>Elcho Park Equestrian Centre</b> This Equestrian Centre in Lara is owned by the City of Greater Geelong (approx. 125 km from Nillumbik)</p>	<p>Elcho Park is a 30-hectare facility that contains eight permanent surfaced dressage arenas (20 x 60 metres), sand show jumping arenas (between 40 to 60 metres wide and 60 to 90 metres long), fenced riding areas, a level 5 to level 1 cross country course, over 200 horse yards, horse wash, round yard, toilet and shower blocks. Clubrooms include showers, a commercial kitchen and seating for approximately 100 people. Upstairs are club offices and a large viewing / scoring room with views overlooking the whole grounds.</p>	<p>In 2017 Elcho Park Equestrian Centre hosted 43 events (including clinics, training and competitions) over 84 days.</p>
<p><b>Elmore Equestrian Centre</b> Elmore Park is a registered not-for-profit organisation and is community owned and operated (approx. 175 km from Nillumbik)</p>	<p>Elmore Equestrian Park contains an indoor arena with a sand area of 44m x 88m as well as a stage area, offices and catering facilities; 6 outdoor sand arenas with 2 sand warm up arenas, an office, kitchen and catering facilities; 7 hectare grassed arena; under cover stabling for more than 100 horses and outdoor horse yards for more than 100 horses.</p>	<p>Elmore Equestrian Park has the capacity to cater for equestrian events of all sizes and disciplines, including dressage, barrel racing, polocrosse, interschool competition, carriage driving, show jumping, western, showing, cutting, training clinics.</p>

Facility	Design elements	Demand and attendance
<p><b>Peppercorn Equestrian Centre</b> The privately-owned Peppercorn Equestrian Centre is located at Oaklands Junction, 5 minutes from the Melbourne Airport (approx. 50 km from Nillumbik)</p>	Facilities include an indoor riding arena and three floodlit outdoor arenas, as well as show jumping and cross-country jumping equipment.	Peppercorn Equestrian Centre provides 1/2 hour and 1 hour long private lessons as well as group lessons for riders of all ages and skill levels. Lessons can be booked most days between 9:00am and 5:30pm. It also hosts Pony Club on Saturday mornings and school holiday programs.
<p><b>Pony Club of Victoria Equestrian Centre</b> Located in Gladysdale (approx. 60 km from Nillumbik)</p>	Pony Club of Victoria Equestrian Centre comprises an indoor facility, outdoor dressage sand arenas, multipurpose sand arenas, grass arenas and a cross country arena.	The facility handles State competitions as well as skill clinics and development weekends
<p><b>Tatura Park</b> Tatura's Equestrian Centre is owned and operated by the City of Greater Shepparton (approx. 175 km from Nillumbik)</p>	Tatura Park comprises a 75 x 35 metre indoor sand area which contains fixed seating for 300 people and a designated warm up arena that is adjacent to main arena. It also contains a 70 x 30 metre outdoor grass arena, a function centre for up to 350 people, 200 enclosed undercover stables, car and float parking, powered and unpowered caravan and camping sites and associated amenities (toilets and showers).	In addition to equestrian events Tatura Park also hosts a number of annual events, including International Dairy Week (the second largest dairy show in the world), the National Alpaca Show and Sale and many other successful livestock events.
<p><b>Tonimbuk Equestrian Centre</b> Located in the Shire of Cardinia (approx. 100 km from Nillumbik)</p>	Tonimbuk Equestrian Centre comprises two indoor arenas, two outdoor arenas and a cross country field. It also contains stables, under cover yards and camping facilities.	Tonimbuk hosted 70 events in 2017, 55 of which were show jumping lessons.
<p><b>Victoria Park Equestrian Centre</b> This facility is located approximately 5 kilometres from the Ballarat CBD and is owned by the City of Ballarat (approx. 150 km from Nillumbik)</p>	The 2018 International Horse Trial comprised facilities for three equestrian disciplines - dressage, show jumping and navigation of a 3-4 kilometre course with cross country obstacles.	Ballarat's Victoria Park Equestrian Precinct located on Winter Street, holds a small number of events each year, with one of them in 2018 being the International Horse Trials. The International Horse Trials hosted more than 400 riders from Australia and overseas, with spectators coming from as far as England to witness the event.
<p><b>Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre (WPNEC)</b> This is Victoria's designated State Centre for equestrian activity and has a focus for major equestrian events and elite training in Victoria (approx. 80 km from Nillumbik)</p>	WPNEC is situated on Crown Land and is leased to WPNEC – an incorporated body with a Board of Management comprising 50% EV and 50% Victorian Polo Association representation. EV is based at WPNEC. WPNEC comprises two indoor arenas, three polo fields, two show jumping areas, five sand dressage areas, a cross country course including obstacles, over 200 horse stables and a competition warm-up and holding area. It also has 147 powered camping sites and 170 unpowered camping sites which includes toilet and shower facilities.	As the premier equestrian facility in Victoria, WPNEC holds world class events across a range of equestrian disciplines and events. One-on-one stakeholder consultation highlighted that Werribee is an ageing facility that is often at capacity, with many equestrian events that are suited to WPNEC having to go elsewhere. WPNEC's facilities are also inadequate for carriage driving.



### 3.1.2 Major events

In 2018 Victoria hosted 17 FEI events. These events by location and discipline are shown in Table 4. Undertaken at 9 different equine centres, they encompass six eventing competitions, five dressage competitions, five show jumping competitions and one driving competition. 12 events are multi-day competitions, while the remaining five are single day competitions. Only two events are undertaken indoor, one at the Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre and the other at Melbourne Showgrounds for EQUITANA Melbourne. Most events are for senior riders only, with just six events having positions for other rider groups such as junior riders, under 25 riders and para-equestrian riders.

**Table 4 FEI events in Victoria in 2018**

Location	Discipline	Date	Rider categories	Environment
Ballarat	Eventing	12-13 May	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Boneo	Dressage	25-28 Jan	Senior riders; junior riders; under 25 riders; pony riders; young riders; senior para-equestrian riders	Outdoor
Boneo	Jumping	28 Jan	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Boneo	Dressage	14-17 Jun	Senior riders; junior riders; under 25 riders; pony riders; young riders	Outdoor
Boneo	Dressage	18-21 Oct	Senior riders; junior riders; under 25 riders; young riders	Outdoor
Camperdown	Eventing	19-22 Apr	Senior riders; junior riders; young riders	Outdoor
Greenvale	Driving	27-29 Apr	single driving (horse, pony); pair driving (horse, pony); four-in-hand driving (horse, pony)	Outdoor
Melbourne	Dressage	15-18 Nov	Senior riders only (EQUITANA)	Indoor
Melbourne	Jumping	25 Sep	Senior riders only (Melbourne Royal Show)	Outdoor
Sale	Jumping	4 Feb	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Sake	Jumping	25 Nov	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Tonimbuk	Jumping	21 Jan	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Tonimbuk	Eventing	10-11 Mar	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Wandin	Eventing	17-18 Mar	Senior riders only	Outdoor
Werribee	Dressage	22-25 Mar	Senior riders only	Indoor
Werribee	Eventing	7-11 Jun	Senior riders; junior riders	Outdoor
Werribee	Eventing	8-9 Sep	Senior riders only	Outdoor

### 3.1.3 Club and discipline trends

A survey conducted by EV assessed participation trends experienced by equestrian organisations practicing in Victoria. Table 5 details membership rates of the organisations surveyed along with comments made by stakeholders on trends in demand for the equine industry in Victoria.

**Table 5. Membership trends in key equestrian organisations**

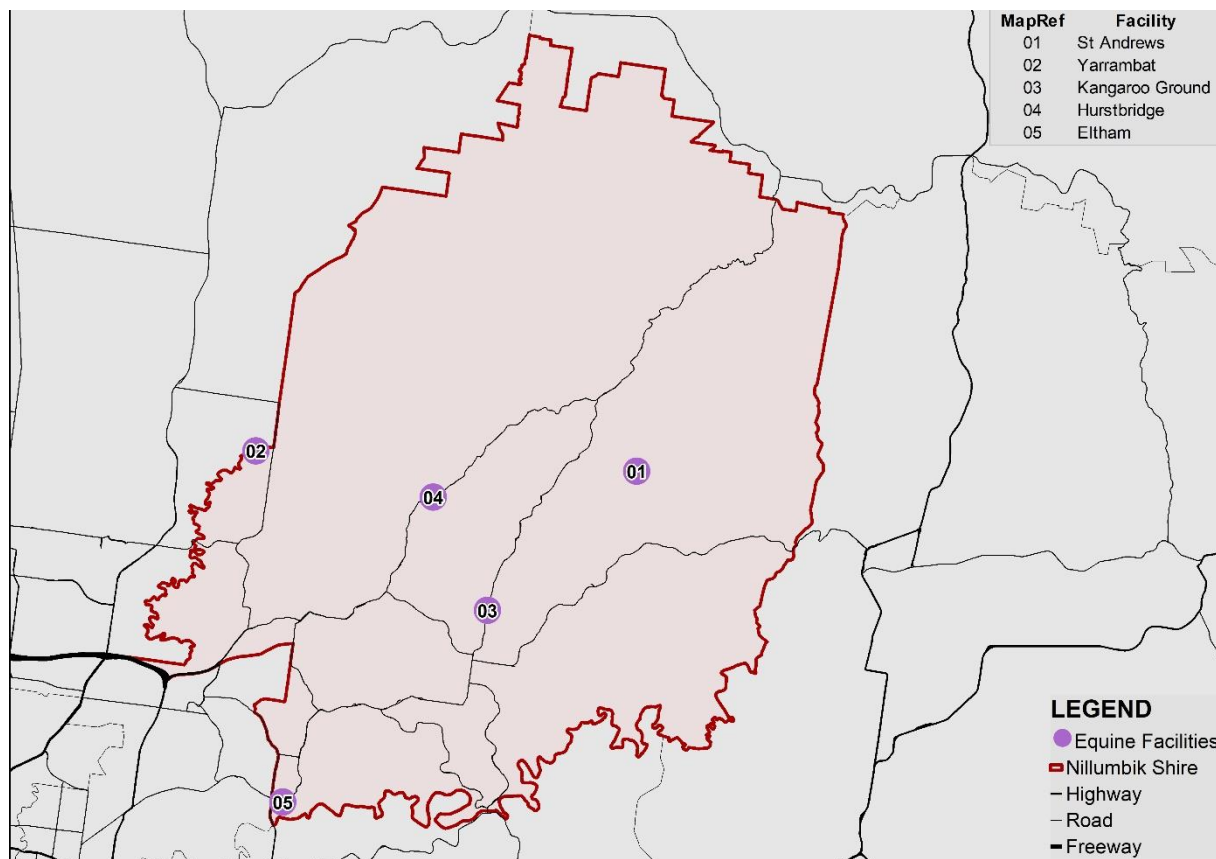
Organisation	Membership	Trends in participation
<b>Eventing Victoria</b>	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High growth in recent years</li> <li>Growth mainly in inter school competition</li> </ul>
<b>PCV</b>	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has declined in recent years</li> <li>Mostly under 16s</li> <li>Fewer numbers in high level competitions</li> <li>Equestrian organisations having to compete for the same market</li> </ul>
<b>HRCVA</b>	6,060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Averaging 10 percent growth per year.</li> <li>Mostly female.</li> <li>Members join because collegiate with rallies and clinics</li> <li>Major events are growing</li> </ul>
<b>Dressage Victoria</b>	2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Around 10 percent growth per year</li> <li>Only conducts major events</li> </ul>
<b>Australia Polo Federation/ Vic Polo Federation</b>	250(Vic) 800 (Aust)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women are the fastest growing demographic especially 18-30 age group</li> </ul>
<b>Show Horse Council of Victoria</b>	900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 percent growth in the last 12 months</li> <li>Want to develop entry level category as the main focus is currently on elite</li> </ul>
<b>Victoria Reining Horse Association</b>	130 including 30 non active members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An upward trend in entry level and youth while adult membership has declined</li> </ul>
<b>Riding for Disabled Victoria</b>	1,252	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 percent growth in membership over the last three years</li> <li>300 people are currently on a waiting list</li> <li>Demand from riders with an acquired disability who can no longer join mainstream organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Riding for Disabled Australia</b>	6,624	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active riding membership has grown 9 percent over the last three years while non active membership has decreased</li> <li>Increase in riders with autism</li> </ul>
<b>Mounted Games Victoria</b>	80-100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership varies but is reasonably stable</li> <li>Looking to grow</li> <li>Strong participation from pony club members</li> <li>Mostly in the East of Melbourne</li> </ul>
<b>Victorian Horse Council</b>	Advocacy group for all equine sports and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camp drafting is growing</li> <li>80 percent of brood mares are in QLD, NSW and VIC</li> </ul>
<b>Australian Stock Horse Society</b>	Over 9,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>n/a</li> </ul>
<b>Polocrosse Association of Australia (PAA)</b>	Numbers are relatively steady though do fluctuate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of members are in QLD, NSW followed by WA and then VIC</li> </ul>

Source: Equestrian Victoria State Equestrian Facility Plan

### 3.2 Regional equine context

Nillumbik contains five equestrian facilities and an extensive network of recreational trails. The five equestrian facilities are located in Eltham, Hurstbridge, St Andrews, Yarrambat and Kangaroo Grounds. The location of these facilities is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Nillumbik equestrian facilities



Source: Desktop research and consultation

Each facility shown in Figure 5 hosts at least two clubs, an adult riding club and a pony club. St Andrews also hosts a Riding Develops Ability (RDA) club. Each of these clubs are governed by their own committees, however, at each facility the clubs work together to make decisions relating to maintenance works, facility upgrades and equipment needs. Annuals fees for clubs are typically between \$300 to \$400 a year. This fee includes the cost of insurance, membership of parent association (i.e. HRCV or PCV) and a club fee that contributes towards the cost of instructors and maintenance. From consultation it was found that:

*'Membership fees are not enough to cover the cost of maintaining and upgrading the grounds. As clubs are fully responsible for the maintenance for their grounds as well as any upgrades that may be required, fund raising events are held during the year with the help of volunteers.'*

Most club facilities are leased from Council, with Kangaroo Ground Pony Club being the only club that owns its grounds. The Yarrambat adult riding and pony clubs have a three-year co-lease and are planning on applying for a five-year lease at the next renewal. The Hurstbridge grounds are leased from council by the Hurstbridge Pony Club on a five-year lease. St Andrews Pony Club leases 35 acres of land from the council on a 99-year lease and pays a fee each year for the rest of the land on a separate lease.

### 3.2.1 Major facilities

#### St Andrews

Located on Clinton's Road, Smiths Gully, the St Andrews site is used by the St Andrews Adult Riding Club and the St Andrews Pony Club.

The St Andrews Adult Riding Club has 20 members in 2019 and holds rallies on the first Sunday and third Saturday of each month. The club also held one event in 2019, a dressage day that attracted around 200 visitors including 90 competitors.

The St Andrews Pony club has around 40 members. It holds rallies on the second Sunday of each month and two events a year, one for dressage and the other for show jumping. The existing infrastructure and limitations of the St Andrews facility are described in Table 6.

**Table 6 St Andrews Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<p><b>Parking and Access Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are grass and stone parking areas. Grass area is 4WD only. Most of the parking is on a hill with a small flat area that can hold four cars. This is suitable for RDA</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toilets (one disabled, one male and one female)</li> <li>• Club house which is always open to the public and contains a locked store room, small kitchen, open area and locked office.</li> <li>• Shed for storage to keep freezer, flags, rope, equipment etc</li> </ul> <p><b>Arenas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One 75 m by 75 m Olympic size show jumping arena. This arena is used for dressage, show jumping, galloping, etc and can be divided it into three arenas. Two dressage and one show jumping per rally</li> <li>• Three 20 m by 40 m arenas</li> <li>• A Riding for Disabled arena that is fully fenced</li> <li>• A cross country course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More space required as the club rooms are very full</li> <li>• An area out the back will be useful where people can line up for events, registration etc</li> <li>• Cost of maintenance and getting enough volunteer hours can be a challenge</li> <li>• Parking on the side of hill is not easy</li> <li>• The shed sometimes has issues with rain</li> <li>• Undulating land which can be challenging and is not suitable for galloping</li> <li>• Parking capacity is capped at 90</li> <li>• Arena corners are sometimes flooded in winter</li> </ul>

#### Yarrambat

Located in Yarrambat Park, Yan Yean Rd, the Yarrambat site is used by the Yarrambat Adult Riding Club and the Yarrambat Pony Club. Both clubs have 80 members. This membership is capped at 80 the size of the venue, capacity for car parking and the cost of instructors for each rally.

The Adult Riding Club holds a rally each month of the year excluding January. The club held a two-day dressage competition in April and a one day show jumping event.

The Pony Club also holds a rally day 11 months of the year excluding January, however, this is on a different day to the Adult Riding Club. Annual horse trail rides are also held which are attended by around 200 to 250 riders over a weekend. The pony club holds an annual show jumping competition in July and around two mounted games each year. A mid-week dressage competition is organised in partnership with the Hurstbridge and Whittlesea clubs. Each club hosts a mid-week competition over a three-month period. The existing infrastructure and limitations of the Yarrambat facility are outlined in Table 7.

**Table 7 Yarrambat Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<p><b>Parking and Access Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A main float car park holds around 20 to 30 cars and floats. This is a secure car park</li> <li>• For competitions and larger events, a trotting track that surrounds the arenas (is no longer in use for trotting due to its poor condition) is used. The trotting track is suitable as a warm up area and can hold around 150 cars and floats</li> <li>• An external car park that can hold around 100 cars and floats and can also accommodate people that wish to camp overnight during multiple day events</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two female toilets and two male toilets connected to a septic tank. On a big event day around six portable toilets are bought in to accommodate extra people.</li> <li>• 64 yards that are bare and are rented out on event/competition days.</li> <li>• Three sheds. One has fully functional canteen/kitchen and the other two are equipment sheds that are each around 15 m by 15 m</li> </ul> <p><b>Arenas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One 60 m by 20 m permanent arena</li> <li>• Two large sand arenas. One is around 100 m by 80 m and is used primarily for dressage. The other is around 80 m by 80 m and is used primarily for show jumping. There are permanent jumps on this arena</li> <li>• A 40 to 50 acre cross-country course with multiple jumps. This is the largest cross-country course within a 50 km radius</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One shed is less than 20 years old, but all other infrastructure has been in place for over 20 years</li> <li>• There is no undercover stabling</li> <li>• There are no DDA compliant toilets</li> <li>• The main car park is bare earth so can be difficult to access in the rain</li> <li>• There are no lights. The facility would be used more frequently if there was good lighting</li> <li>• Fencing is an issue that is currently being addressed. There have been issues in the past with people breaking through fencing and driving onto arenas to do burnouts/skids. This damages the arenas. Every five years they top up the sand at a cost of approximately \$10,000 per large sand arena.</li> <li>• Access to the site. It's easy to enter the site but hard to exit</li> <li>• The Club membership is capped at 80. This due to the size of the venue, capacity for car parking and the cost of instructors for each rally</li> <li>• In 2018, Yarrambat hosted three mid-week dressage competitions one month apart. In 2019 Hurstbridge, Whittlesea and Yarrambat will each host a Wednesday event as there were challenges attracting volunteers to assist</li> </ul>

## Hurstbridge

The Hurstbridge Facility is located at the rear of St Peter's Church, Heidelberg-Kinglake Road, Hurstbridge and hosts the Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club as well as the Hurstbridge Pony Club.

Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club is one of the largest clubs in Nillumbik with 115 members in 2019. Membership is capped at 120 members. The Pony Club has 40 to 50 members as at 2019. The Adult Riding Club aims to host three events each year. These events are generally timed to provide lead-up training for Top Team Trophy (TTT) events. TTT events are popular inter-club competitions hosted by HRCav clubs. In 2019, Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club is hosting two dressage events and one show jumping event. Over 80 people are expected to attend each event. A mid-week dressage competition is also held that is organised in partnership with Yarrambat and Whittlesea clubs. Each club will host a mid-week competition over a three-month period. The club also holds a rally every Wednesday and the first and third Saturdays of each month. Most are attended by at ten to 20 riders with at least two instructors.

The Hurstbridge Pony Club holds rallies once a month and events throughout the year which attract a high level of attendance. The existing infrastructure and limitations of the Hurstbridge facility are outlined in Table 8

**Table 8 Hurstbridge Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<p><b>Parking and Access Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paddocks next door (owned by Bridges Hotel Restaurant) are used for parking during events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A club house containing a kitchen, three toilets, a storage room and an open space to hold meetings.</li> <li>Two equipment storage sheds. An old shed that is around 6 m by 6 m, and a relatively new shed that is around 15 m by 7 m.</li> </ul> <p><b>Arenas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 65 m by 70 m arena and can fit two dressage arenas. New sand was added around five years ago and is still in relatively good condition</li> <li>A 60 m by 70 m arena that is primarily used for show jumping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A TTT event organised by Hurstbridge was held at the Greenvale Equestrian Centre, a venue that is a considerable distance away from Hurstbridge. This was due to Hurstbridge not having the required infrastructure at their grounds or within the Shire to host the ~250 riders over the course of the weekend.</li> <li>The Pony Club would like to host horse trials as a way of generating funds for the club, but there is no facility locally for them to hold this.</li> <li>There is a demand for a cross country training facility for all clubs to have access to. Currently the club regularly hires facilities at Wandin and Yarra Glen to hold cross country training sessions for their riders.</li> <li>The 60 m by 70 m arena has been flooded twice and a considerable amount of sand was washed away.</li> </ul>

### Kangaroo Ground

Located on Kangaroo Ground and Panton Hill Road, Kangaroo Ground, the site is used by the Adult Riding and Pony Club. The Adult Riding Club has 35 members. Rallies are held every Thursday and first Saturday and Sunday of the month. Events are held three times a year. The most recent event drew 55 entries for a midweek Show Jumping competition. A dressage day will be held in October and showing day in August. The Pony Club holds a rally once a month and runs around two to three events a year. Table 9 below describes existing infrastructure and limitations of the Kangaroo Ground equine facility.

**Table 9 Kangaroo Grounds Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<p><b>Parking and Access Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity is around 60 cars; the arena closest to the road is used for extra parking space</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club house</li> <li>Three sheds for storage</li> <li>New toilet block.</li> </ul> <p><b>Arenas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are six arenas, each approximately 30 m by 70 m</li> <li>The biggest arena is the only one that allows show jumping.</li> <li>Two arenas these are used for warmups and training, occasionally for parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main challenge is maintaining the surfaces as this is very expensive, to do properly it can cost millions of dollars. The focus from fundraising has been to keep them in good order</li> <li>Arenas that are oval are difficult to use because dressage is done in a rectangular arena and therefore there is wasted space and corners that are not big enough.</li> <li>Need more storage space as some equipment is kept outside</li> </ul>

### Eltham

Located in Eltham Lower Park, the site is used by the Adult Riding Club and The Pony Club. The Adult Riding Club has ten members with rallies being held every Tuesday and one Saturday a month. The Pony Club holds a rally once per month. Current facilities and limitations are described in Table 10 below.

**Table 10 Eltham Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<p><b>Parking and Access Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ample parking nearby</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three tin sheds. Two sheds are used for equipment storage and one as a club room</li> <li>• There is a mound in the middle of the sand arena that acts as a good spectator area</li> <li>• 20 horse yards</li> <li>• A portable toilet</li> </ul> <p><b>Arenas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 60 m by 20 m arena with telegraph poles.</li> <li>• A large sand arena. This can be set up as three to four dressage arenas</li> <li>• A cross-country course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main challenge is maintaining the surfaces</li> <li>• Arenas that are oval are difficult to use because dressage is done in a rectangular arena and therefore there is wasted space and corners that are not big enough</li> <li>• Need more storage space as some equipment is kept outside</li> <li>• Club Room is currently damaged and needs to be replaced.</li> <li>• Cannot run a proper one-day event cross country event due to capacity constraints</li> </ul>

### Trails

Nillumbik has an extensive network of trails. Currently, there are three core trails, Green Wedge Trail, Diamond Creek Trail and Aqueduct Trail. There is also Kinglake Way Trail and smaller local trails that link to these regional trails.

**Table 11 Eltham Existing Infrastructure and Limitations**

Existing Infrastructure	Limitation of Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Wedge Trail runs from Wattle Glen to Kinglake via Kinglake National Park and is around 25 km in length.</li> <li>• Diamond Creek Trail runs from Eltham South at the Yarra to Hurstbridge and will be around 18 km in length once completed. This trail is currently being extended from Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge. This trail will be linked with the Green Wedge Trail.</li> <li>• Aqueduct Trail runs from Greensborough to Yarra Glen and is around 30 km in length. This is an important trail that will link to the Yarra Valley Loop Trail. Yarra Ranges Shire is currently working on a 40 km loop trail. There is potential to extend the Aqueduct Trail so that it links through to the Yarra Valley Trail, enabling trail users to hike, cycle or horse ride to this trail via the Aqueduct Trail.</li> <li>• Kinglake Way Trail which is mainly on roads from Nutfield up to Kinglake National Park</li> <li>• There are also local trails that link the Regional Trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety concerns for on road trails due to increased traffic and drivers that are uneducated about horse safety</li> <li>• Trails are not maintained by council</li> <li>• Regional trails could be better linked with local and other regional trails</li> </ul>

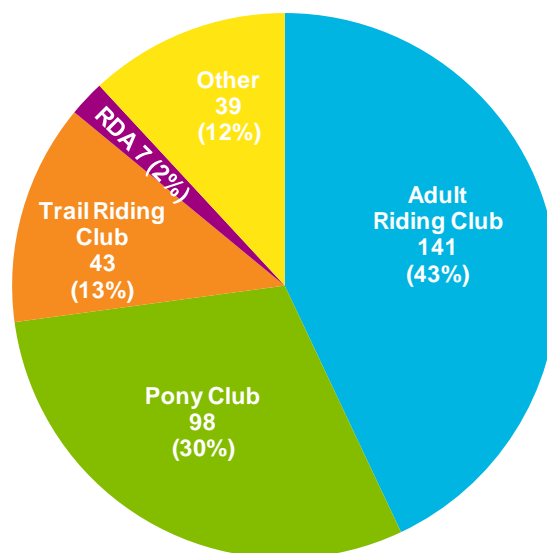
### 3.2.2 Survey Results

Working with Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG) and Nillumbik Shire Council, an online survey targeting equine business owners and operators as well as horse riders was developed in order to gain an understanding of the regional context, identify opportunities and inform the economic analysis. The survey included questions about the characteristics of equine related businesses, including business size (turnover and number of employees), expenses, business location, customer base etc. It also asked horse riders about different disciplines they attend and location. There were also questions targeting gaps and opportunities. Survey participants were asked about their initial expenditure within and outside of Nillumbik. Initial expenditure data from within Nillumbik was then used to inform the economic analysis below.

89 percent of survey respondents were female with most being above 31 years of age. Most respondents did not own an equine related business. Of the respondents that did own an equine related business, 28 percent had businesses that offered horse riding/training lessons with the next most common being agistment and equine services. Other business types included equipment, veterinary services, equine therapy and breeding services. Most were small businesses with 42 percent earning less than \$20,000 in FY2017-18 and only 13 percent earning more than \$100,000. Of this revenue, 46 percent stated that 81 to 100 percent was related to the equine sector. Business confidence in the equine sector seems positive with 47 percent of survey respondents saying they are expecting a growth in revenue, 40 percent expecting revenue to stay stable and only 13 percent expecting revenue to decline.

93 percent of survey respondents kept less than five horses on their property with only three percent keeping over 20 horses. As seen in Figure 6, 60 percent of respondents are part of an adult riding club with the next most common being pony clubs.

**Figure 6 Percentage membership in clubs or associations**



The survey asked questions around sentiment and whether respondents believed demand for different disciplines was increasing, steady or declining. Most believed that the demand for equine sectors was growing (55 percent) with only 10 percent believing the sector was in decline. Of the disciplines, confidence was highest in horsemanship and trail riding with 78 percent believing there will be an increase in demand for horsemanship and 67 percent believing there will be an increase in demand for trail riding. The lowest confidence was in endurance and showing with only 19 and 18 percent believing there will be growth respectively.



Figure 7 shows the sentiment towards demand of the other disciplines.

**Figure 7 Demand by discipline**

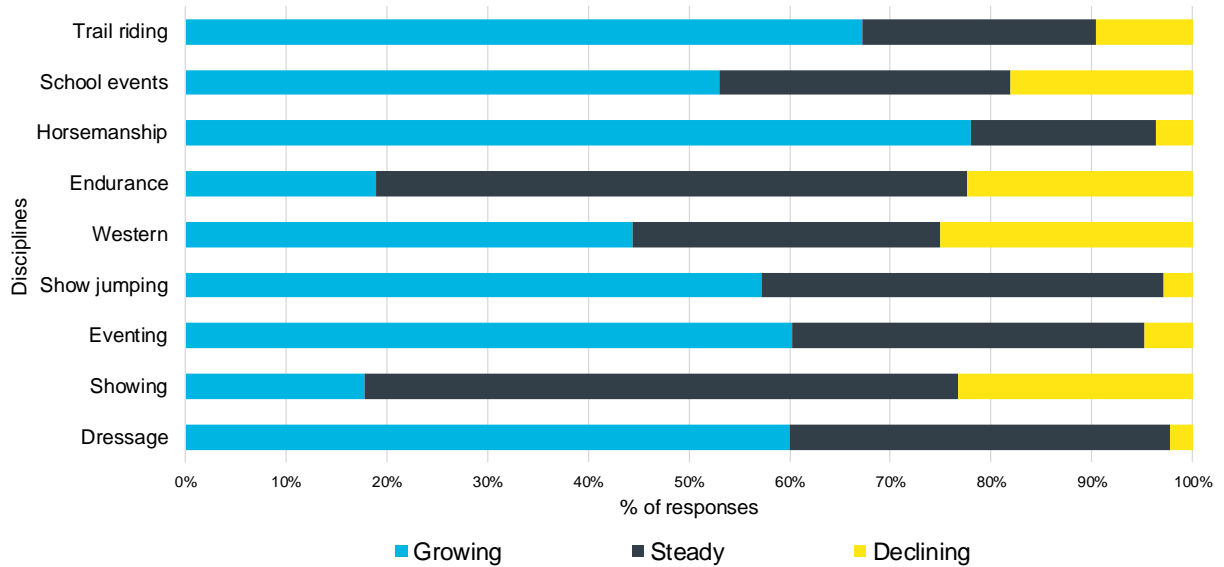
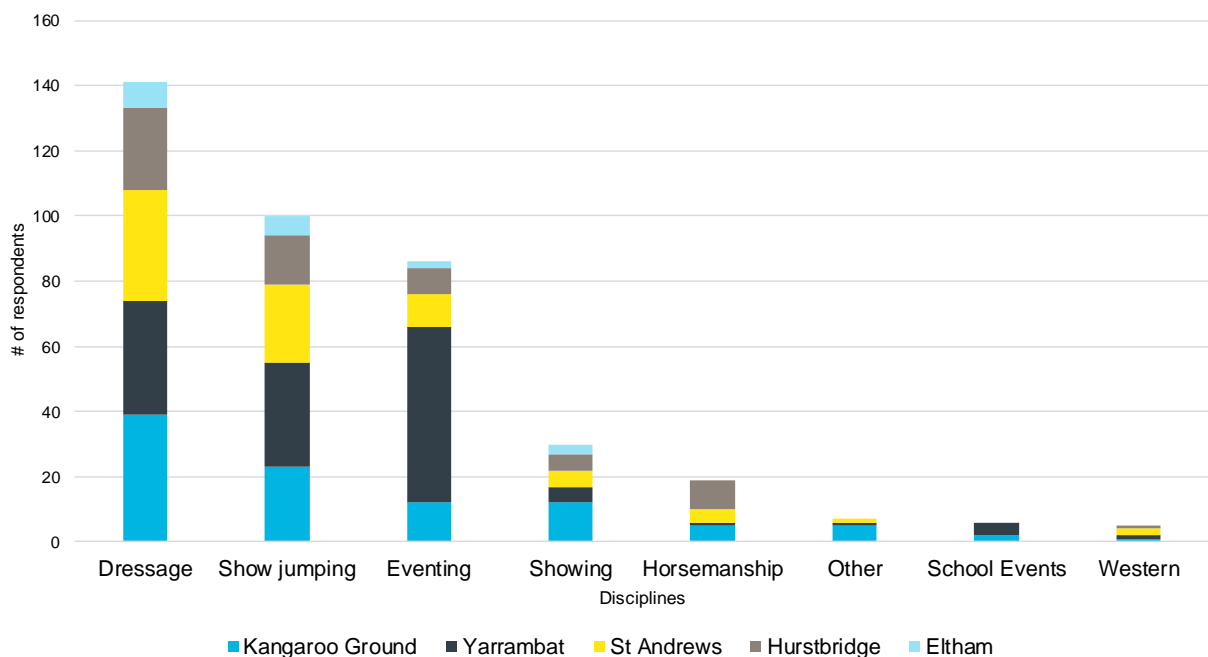


Figure 8 shows the most popular disciplines and where they are attended in Nillumbik. The most popular discipline was dressage with 209 responses with the next most popular being trail riding and eventing with 179 and 140 responses respectively. Hurstbridge was the most popular location for dressage with the next most popular grounds being Kangaroo Grounds and Yarrambat. Trail Riding is done in a wide variety of different locations with the majority using local trails. A summary of Nillumbik’s position on the different disciplines and the survey results can be seen in Table 12.

**Figure 8 Discipline attendance in Nillumbik**



**Table 12 Nillumbik's position**

Discipline	Nillumbik's position
Show jumping	<p>Show jumping facilities in Nillumbik are small and not suitable for large-scale or high-level competition. Horse and pony clubs in Eltham, Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Yarrambat have one or two dedicated or multipurpose show jumping rings. According to survey findings, the most popular facilities for show jumping are Yarrambat, St Andrews and Hurstbridge.</p> <p>Arenas at regional agricultural shows and Boneo Park, Gladysdale and Shepparton Equestrian Centres are commonly used for state and national events.</p>
Dressage	<p>Nearly all horse and pony clubs in Nillumbik offer dressage. Kangaroo Ground Pony Club (which owns its facilities) has 6 multi-use outdoor arenas, Hurstbridge Pony Club has 5, while most clubs have at least two.</p> <p>Classical Riding Lessons in Panton Hill specialises in dressage lessons. Whittlesea Plenty Valley Dressage Club (based at Yarrambat) also runs lessons and dressage competitions, such as Spring Dressage Day and Winter Series. National and state-level championships are generally held at Boneo Park and Werribee Park NEC. The survey found that the most popular facilities used are Hurstbridge, Kangaroo Grounds and Yarrambat.</p>
Eventing	<p>Though most pony clubs have facilities for the three eventing disciplines, St Andrews Pony Club is the only club in Nillumbik which officially states it can facilitate one-day eventing however the survey found that the most popular facility used was Yarrambat.</p> <p>Events in Victoria are usually held by pony clubs and eventing associations. FEI events are generally held at Werribee Park NEC. There is growth in interschool and grassroots-level competitions.</p>
Endurance riding	<p>Endurance riding is based on controlled long-distance races. The races are often conducted in rural areas. Survey respondents use Yarra Valley, Kangaroo Grounds, Lancefield and Kilmore for this discipline.</p>
Cross-country	<p>Most horse and pony clubs in Nillumbik offer cross country riding, however the quality of infrastructure varies. Yarrambat is the only facility that has a cross-country course that is suitable for events. Outside competitions, however, access to Yarrambat cross-country course is limited to its members and their guests</p>
Trail riding	<p>Trail riding is offered by horse and pony clubs in St Andrews and Kangaroo Ground, however trails are limited to the club's property. St Andrews Trail Riding Group offers recreational trail riding for all ages around the Yan Yean Reservoir.</p> <p>Warrandyte State Park (bordering Nillumbik, in Manningham Council) has several horse trails which are owned and managed by Parks Victoria.</p> <p>Council acknowledges that east-west trail links across Nillumbik are poor, however there is opportunity to extend into areas such as Hurstbridge, Whittlesea and Plenty Gorge Parklands. Trail expansion may attract more equine recreation users.</p> <p>The survey found that the most popular location for trail riding were Local trails with 47 users, the next most popular were St Andrews and Panton Hill with 19 users each.</p>
Riding for the disabled	<p>Riding Develops Abilities (RDA) is a volunteer-run organisation that partners with centres and has specialised instructors to encourage riders with disability. In Nillumbik, RDA has partnerships with St Andrews Pony Club. Eltham also provides support for riders with disabilities. Nearby RDA centres include RDA Bundoora Park, Viewbank and Warrandyte. Waiting lists lengths vary, but typically range from 1 to 3 years.</p>

## 4.0 Economic impact analysis

Equestrian activities traditionally require significant time and capital investment from owners, due to the effort and costs associated with upholding and training a horse, the challenge of transporting the animal to and from events, and event registration fees. A 2016 study commissioned by EA found that the equestrian sector (excluding all codes of horse racing, polo/polocrosse, rodeo, western and tent pegging) contributes around \$1.143 billion to the Australian economy each year<sup>5</sup>. Apportioning this benefit to Nillumbik based on relative population implies that the equestrian sector contributes nearly \$3 million to the region each year. However, Nillumbik's position as a green wedge municipality provides a supply of equestrian infrastructure and open space in close proximity to a significant population, which suggests potential that the equestrian sector contributes appreciably more than this amount to the Nillumbik region year. As such, economic impact analysis was undertaken to evaluate the Nillumbik's unique equine sector.

### 4.1 Methodology

The value of impacts on Nillumbik's economy has been assessed using Input-Output (I-O) analysis, which is based on national output and employment multipliers calculated from the 2012/13 System of National Accounts Input-Output Multipliers released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2013). 2012/13 is the most recent year for which output and employment data were published by the ABS.

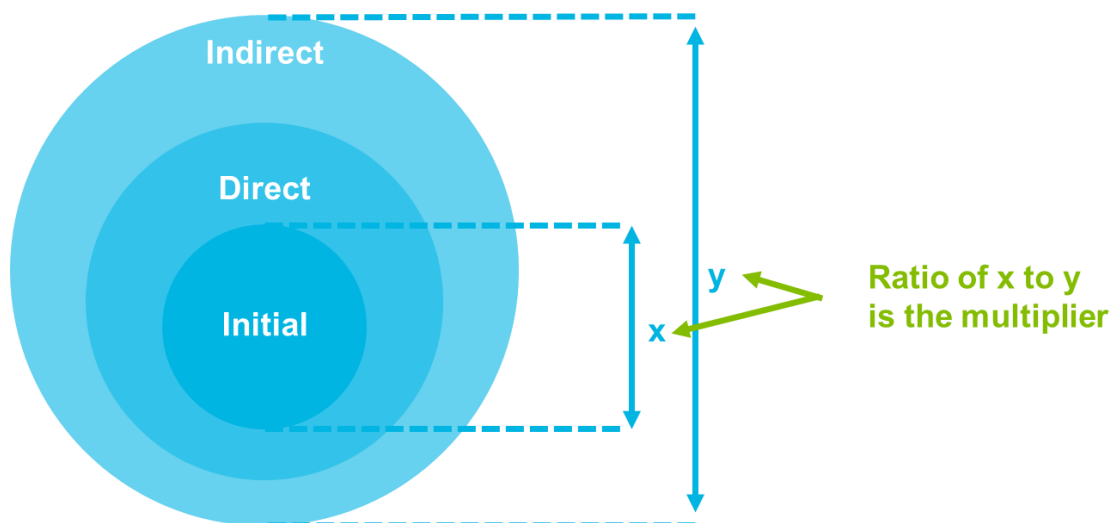
I-O models capture the transactions that link industry sectors across the economy in a simplified form. The impact of the project can be measured in several different ways. For the purpose of this assessment, the following types of impacts are considered:

- **Initial** spend, which is the actual value of goods and services purchased
- The **direct** multiplier effect represents the increase in economic activity (value added) and employment which is directly generated in the industry or sector receiving the initial impact. The direct effect includes initial spend
- The **indirect** multiplier effects represent the flow-on impacts that occur from all secondary industries in the economy to support the direct impact and changes in consumption by the household sector in response to income changes resulting from the direct and indirect impacts.

The total multiplier effect is the sum of the direct and indirect multiplier effects outlined above.

A high-level overview of I-O analysis is provided in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Overview of I-O analysis



<sup>5</sup> <http://www.equestrian.org.au/news/equestrian-brings-more-1billion-economy>

Initial expenditure data was captured through a public survey, which was promoted by Council and Nillumbik equine organisations and completed by 426 participants on behalf of themselves and/or their families. Initial expenditure data from the survey was considered to encapsulate all spending within Nillumbik. That is, expenditure data was not scaled up to a broader population.

Expenditure within Nillumbik and the corresponding industry multipliers used in the economic analysis are outlined in Table 13.

**Table 13 Industry multipliers used in economic impact analysis**

Category	Initial expenditure	Industry multiplier(s) used	Direct multiplier	Indirect multiplier
Agistment	\$134,020	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
Hoof care	\$452,346	Health Care Services	1.40	3.91
Vet & health services	\$382,420	Health Care Services	1.40	3.91
Feed & supplements	\$1,401,110	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
Bedding	\$50,306	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
Utilities applicable to keeping the horse(s)	\$161,925	Electricity Transmission, Distribution, On Selling and Electricity Market Operation; Gas Supply; Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Services	2.01	3.10
Lessons & training	\$389,950	Other Services	1.21	3.93
Equine insurance	\$39,079	Auxiliary Finance and Insurance Services	1.82	4.24
Association & events registration fees	\$161,485	Other Services	1.21	3.93
Transport costs & maintenance	\$282,630	Motor Vehicles and Parts; Petroleum and Coal Product Manufacturing	1.71	2.71
Riding apparel	\$116,595	Retail trade	1.71	3.73
Stabling	\$15,100	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
Property infrastructure	\$592,650	Residential Building Construction	2.53	4.10
Property maintenance	\$499,700	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
Horse equipment / tack	\$270,580	Retail trade	1.71	3.73
Other	\$117,250	Other Agriculture	1.72	2.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,067,146</b>			

#### 4.1.1 Limitations and exclusions of I-O models

I-O models are a simple representation of the economy. Limitations and exclusions that apply to the I-O model developed for this project are outlined below:

- **Application of framework to local government areas (LGA).** I-O multipliers calculated from ABS tables are based upon nationwide analysis. This means that structural differences in sectors across Australia are not captured in the multipliers as they are averaged out. Unique characteristics of Nillumbik's economy, such as relative economies of scale, may generate different I-O multipliers. As such, application of ABS I-O multipliers to a single LGA is an exercise in approximation.
- **Impact of time.** 2012/13 is the most recent year that ABS has provided corresponding employment data. Structural changes to the economy since this time, such as changes to the proportion or value of imports and exports, the price of goods and efficiencies in production, are not captured within the analysis.

- **Location of impact.** The study assumes that the economic impact occurs within the Nillumbik, when in reality a lot of the impacts may occur in adjoining LGAs or other parts of Victoria and Australia.
- **Population captured within modelling.** The study only assesses costs of horse owners and riders that completed the survey. It excludes horse owners and riders that did not complete the survey, as well as spending from non-horse owners and riders that may be indirectly involved in the sector through training, coaching or attending equestrian events.
- **Focus on monetary impacts only.** The economic impact analysis focussed on quantifiable monetary impacts only, and does not consider other impacts, such as social opportunities and outcomes that include potential for lifelong participation and development of valued personal qualities such as demonstrated responsibility that is associated with taking care of the horse/s.
- **Exclusion of volunteering.** A unique and important characteristic of the equine sector is volunteering to maintain facilities and run events. Any economic impact associated with these volunteer hours have been excluded from the analysis.
- **Labour substitution.** Indirect impacts are based on the notion that household expenditure is supported by employment within the equine sector. It is likely, however, that jobs are transferrable from the equine industry to other sectors, and as such the indirect impact would likely occur, even if jobs within the equine sector reduced.

The combination of assumptions used and the excluded interdependence within I-O models means that I-O multipliers tend to overstate the impact of final demand.

## 4.2 Findings

The economic impact analysis identifies that the Nillumbik equine industry contributes significant direct and indirect economic impacts for the regional economy and, more broadly, the state and national economies.

### Total economic impact = \$16.9m



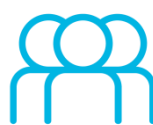
**\$5.1m**

**Initial  
spend**



**\$8.9m**

**Direct  
impact**



**24**

**FTE jobs  
supported**



**\$8.0m**

**Indirect  
impact**

The 426 survey respondents reported initial total spending of around \$5.1 million for themselves and their families. This equates to spending of nearly \$12,000 per respondent/family each year on final outputs.

The demand for final outputs depends on inputs from other industries and is considered to be a driving cause of production of these inputs. That is, final outputs have 'backwards linkages' to the industries supplying its inputs. These backwards linkages generate an additional \$3.8 million of benefit to derive a total direct impact of around \$8.9 million.

The flow-on impacts or indirect impacts are 'forwards linkages' within the economy. These benefits provide an additional \$8.0 million in benefits each year to generate a total economic benefit of \$16.9 million per annum to the Nillumbik region each year.

The industry also supports 24 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs. These jobs are likely to be in industries that benefit the most (refer Table 13), which includes health care services, other agriculture (feed and supplements, property maintenance) and building/construction.

## 5.0 Opportunity assessment

Building on desktop research and stakeholder consultations (workshop, interviews and survey), this section describes key characteristics of the opportunities identified and assesses the key strengths, risks and constraints associated with each option.

The research, survey and consultations concluded that there are various gaps in facility provision, which may be addressed to take advantage of market opportunities. These are:

- Indoor arena
- Larger arena
- Improved access to trails and improved connectivity between trails

Stakeholder consultation undertaken to inform development of the *Equestrian State Facility Plan* found that the equine infrastructure gaps in east Victoria are dressage and reining facilities. The priorities of stakeholders were:

- More venues with six good quality sand arenas
- Better quality of sand arenas within existing venues
- Improved access to well-built cross-country courses
- More venues with large number of stables (300+)
- Better disability access
- Improved shade and accommodation facilities

### 5.1 Indoor arena

Construction of a mixed-use indoor arena in Nillumbik would increase participation in equine activities. Currently, there are no indoor arenas in Nillumbik with most stakeholders believing there is strong demand and opportunity for a multipurpose venue that could be fully utilised by various groups within the local community as well as for larger events that attract competitors from around Victoria and Australia. This facility would increase participation from local riders as well as those from outside Nillumbik, as it would allow clinics and events to run during inclement weather as well as throughout the evening and night time due to better lighting conditions. The surface would also be easier to maintain as it would be protected from outside conditions. Additionally, the facility would be beneficial for riders with disability who may be more sensitive to weather and lighting conditions. An indoor arena aligns with the *Equestrian State Facility Plan* priorities of better disability access and improved shade.

Discussions with stakeholders and research conducted has determined that, ideally, a facility should be multiuse and cater for various disciplines such as show jumping, dressage, eventing and cross country, to enable a horse-riding club to offer the diversity of experience expected of members and participants. Some possible sites identified for this arena were Kangaroo Ground old tip site and tip site on Yan Yean Road that is due to close. Ease of access for horse trucks and floats has been raised as important when selecting a site, as access constraints have previously limited growth of equestrian clubs within Nillumbik. The following facility components and areas are considered necessary for a standard facility to cater for the desired equestrian activities:

- Ample parking for cars and floats
- Multiuse arena measuring at least 60 m by 25 m that is suitable for different disciplines
- Infrastructure supporting riders with disabilities
- Spectator seats
- Toilets (showers and change rooms are not considered necessary, but would be ideal)
- Yards, wash bays and facilities for horses to stay overnight

- Catering facilities

It is important that this arena would be planned as a long term and permanent venue, noting concerns that the site could be sold if solely privately owned. The arena should be available for hire to all clubs within and outside Nillumbik. There is an option to place a roof over an existing facility, however, choosing a facility and negotiating a way for usage so that all clubs can benefit equally may be an issue.

## 5.2 Larger arena

Another opportunity identified was the need for a larger arena and cross-country course. Most horse and pony clubs in Nillumbik offer cross-country riding, however, the quality of infrastructure varies. This arena has the potential to be multiuse and used by riders with disabilities. Having a larger equestrian facility in Nillumbik would increase participation and attract more equestrian interest from around Victoria.

There is desire for a large cross-country course to be developed that all clubs could hire. Yarrambat is the only facility within Nillumbik that contains a suitably sized cross-country course, but this is only available to Yarrambat members and their guests. The Hurstbridge and Kangaroo Grounds facilities have smaller courses. Currently, Hurstbridge hires facilities at Wandin and Yarra Glen to hold its cross country training. Stakeholder consultation findings suggest that local clubs could make good use of the facilities, as well as schools for inter-school equestrian events as well as other outdoor events.

A larger arena could be utilised by most disciplines and used to hold more competitions in Nillumbik. Interschool Equestrian is one of the fastest growing sports in Victoria with competitors, supporters, coaches, officials, judges and volunteers estimated in the thousands<sup>6</sup>. A large arena could be used to conduct a series of dressage, show jumping, and combined training events run by these schools. Due to the increase in visitor numbers, local businesses may also benefit.

The following facility components and areas are considered necessary for a large arena to cater for the desired equestrian activities:

- Ample parking and access
- Multiuse surface that can be used for various disciplines
- Competition standard arena and cross-country course
- The ability for the arena to be hired by any club
- Disability access.

There is potential to co-locate a larger outdoor arena and cross-country course on a site with the indoor arena discussed in section 5.1. This may enable either or both facilities to be used by a broader range of equestrian disciplines and event sizes, enhancing overall utilisation of the facilities.

## 5.3 Access to and improved connectivity for trails on public land

Nillumbik has an extensive network of trails with some core regional trails and various local trails. As trail riding does not require specific activity areas like some other equestrian disciplines, facility requirements of recreational, trail and endurance riders include:

- Safe and ready access to trails and shared paths also used by walkers and bikers
- Ample secure and readily accessible parking areas for unloading horses and for leaving horse floats (ideally located at the start and/or end of trails, potentially also located near local cafes and amenities)
- Shaded tie-up rails and watering areas that are secure and safe for horses (ideally located close to parking areas)
- Cautionary signage to motorists along roads where appropriate.

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<sup>6</sup> Equestrian Victoria

The following issues were raised as needing to be addressed to enhance the amenity, capacity and safety of trails within Nillumbik.

### **Rider, horse and road users' safety**

A concern raised in stakeholder consultation was about on-road trails and road safety. Unlike passengers in vehicles, riders are unrestrained. They can be hit by vehicles moving at high speeds, and/or thrown into oncoming traffic, jeopardising their own safety and that of other road users. The sudden or close passing of a vehicle may trigger a horse's dangerous flight response, causing it to bolt blindly forward or veer into traffic. This was the main cause of 17 horse accidents in the United Kingdom in 2011<sup>7</sup>. Other contributing factors include vehicle speed, low visibility and mutual misunderstanding. Due to urbanisation, traffic around the area has increased significantly with more drivers being unaware of horse safety. This was consistently highlighted in consultation with some trail riders giving anecdotes of safety related incidents. In particular, urban sprawl and increased traffic volumes coupled with deterioration of road side verges was highlighted as key concerns that may dissuade some participation in trail riding. More off-road and better-connected trails would increase participation and make trails safer for not just horse riders but drivers, pedestrians and bike riders as well. The trail riding community stated a willingness to contribute to the maintenance of trails and share them with pedestrians and bike riders.

A horse safety campaign conducted through various media outlets and better road signage could raise awareness and make roads safer for both riders and drivers. The British Horse Society has launched safety campaigns in Great Britain and Ireland and have a three-part road riding awareness course which is taken by about 4,000 people each year<sup>8</sup>. The British Horse Society's *Dead or Dead Slow?* campaign has made road safety education videos and other materials to inform drivers of their responsibilities on the road and how to pass horses safely. A similar approach could be used in Nillumbik with educational horse safety announcements and videos being shared on media channels such as television, radio and social media.

Signage in Australia with respect to horse riders is limited. Usually signs contain a simple black horse and rider silhouette with a yellow background. Making this current signage for horses on roads more informative for drivers could be a positive step forward for horse, rider and driver safety. This can be done by providing instructions on how the horse needs to be treated when approaching and passing. One simple addition to the signage could be the phrase "pass wide and slow"<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, a diagram showing a buffer zone around the horse for passing drivers should help drivers react more appropriately when passing a horse. The location of these signs may also be reviewed with more signs being placed on roads frequented by horse riders.

### **Connectivity and promotion**

Stakeholder consultation suggested that Nillumbik Shire Council has not been effectively promoting its shared trails to wider networks, possibly due to trails being incomplete and not consistently maintained. The trails have historically not had a maintenance program and there are no trail inspections. There is an opportunity to increase visitation numbers once trails are fully mapped and graded in terms of the experience, distance, location, degree of difficulty etc. The more that trails are linked to one another, the more they will be utilised. Nillumbik Shire Council is currently investigating development of a mobile application that will provide information on trails within Nillumbik. This will help grow visitation numbers and keep locals updated. The quote below from a survey respondent shows why connectivity is important and the way it could benefit horse riders, bike riders and walkers.

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*'Many years ago, members would ride to club grounds but with the development in the area and a lack of connecting trails mean members have to transport their horses even a short distance. Connective trails would be very much appreciated by horse riders, walkers and bike riders.'*

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<sup>7</sup> Inroads into Equestrian Safety: Rider-Reported Factors Contributing to Horse-Related Accidents and Near Misses on Australian Roads, Kirrilly Thompson and Chelsea Matthews 2015

<sup>8</sup> British Horse Society

<sup>9</sup> Inroads into Equestrian Safety: Rider-Reported Factors Contributing to Horse-Related Accidents and Near Misses on Australian Roads, Kirrilly Thompson and Chelsea Matthews 2015



Better connected trails will allow more long-distance riding and may attract events like endurance riding. This means participants and family members will need to stay over a weekend which could be leveraged with homestays and B&Bs accommodating visitors overnight and adding to the local economy. The Diamond Creek Trial is currently being extended from Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge. This trail will be linked to the Green Wedge Trail. This is an important feature as linkages between regional and local trails will increase the way in which the trail can be utilised and attract more experienced riders.

## 6.0 Conclusion

This report has been undertaken to conduct an economic analysis of and determine existing opportunities in the equine industry within the Nillumbik.

Nillumbik is located within a green wedge with beautiful open spaces and natural environment. This compliments the creation of trails and makes it an ideal environment for equestrian activity in close proximity to significant population. There are five equestrian clubs within Nillumbik varying in size and facilities. Through I-O analysis and stakeholder engagement it has been identified that the equine sector contributes \$16.9 million per annum to Nillumbik's economy and supports 24 fulltime equivalent jobs.

Opportunities identified included the building of an indoor or larger arena and improving and connecting established trails. Investing in an indoor arena will provide many benefits by allowing events and rallies to be run in all weather conditions and supporting riders with disabilities that may be more sensitive to light and weather conditions. This will increase participation and may attract more visitors from outside of Nillumbik. A larger arena will be able to support a variety of competitions and take advantage of the growth in inter school competitions. These arenas will be able to be hired by all clubs within and outside of Nillumbik. Improving and connecting trails would be beneficial for not just horse riders but also bikers and walkers as well. Through consultation it was found that most trails riders do not feel safe riding on roads due to the increase in traffic and drivers uneducated about horse safety. More off-road and better-connected trials would reduce the need to ride on the road and reduce the likelihood of accidents.

# **Attachment 3**

## **Equine in Nillumbik**

Submissions received

18 June 2020

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**From:** Cathy Giles

**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 June 2020 8:41 AM

**To:** Carl Cowie <Carl.Cowie@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Karen Egan <Karen.Egan@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Peter Clarke <Peter.Clarke@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Jane Ashton <Jane.Ashton@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Grant Brooker <Grant.Brooker@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; John Dumaresq <John.Dumaresq@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Peter Perkins <Peter.Perkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>; Bruce Ranken <Bruce.Ranken@nillumbik.vic.gov.au>

**Subject:** Equine in Nillumbik - NHAG Submission of Support

Dear Carl, Mayor and Councillors,

In light of the additional time allocated for submissions to be made with regard to Equine in Nillumbik, please find attached the Nillumbik Horse Action Group's submission which draws on the themes I presented to you last week at the Future Nillumbik Committee.

The NHAG fully endorses Equine in Nillumbik as the first sport / recreation plan for our horse riding community and we thank Council for instigating and progressing its development.

Given that the only contention at the FNC last Tuesday night was around the consultation process and not the plan itself, we hope that all councillors will get behind this important and well supported plan for our sport and rural recreation.

We have advised local clubs and horse owners in the shire to engage in the process by making comment or uploading their submissions to Participate Nillumbik and that in this instance, it is not necessary for them to email you directly.

However, if you would like to hear personally from individuals or clubs in the equine community seeking further information or insight from them, please let me know ASAP and I will pass that on.

Feel free to contact me if there are any matters which you would like to discuss prior to next weeks' council meeting.

Kind regards

Cath Giles  
President Nillumbik Horse Action Group





Carl Cowie  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nillumbik Shire Council

Cath Giles

14 June, 2020

Dear Carl

### **Equine in Nillumbik Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.

The Nillumbik Horse Action Group congratulates council and staff on the development of this advocacy plan and **supports Equine in Nillumbik** as an important strategic document for equine sport and rural recreation in the shire.

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 us 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 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.

Equine in Nillumbik is a good news story, demonstrating:

- A long history of strong participation in the sport/recreation
- Residents living healthy, active, outdoor lives
- A grass-roots, rural sporting and recreational pursuit including 12 local clubs and several riding schools
- Well run, largely self-sufficient clubs affiliated with their state and national bodies
- 89% of participants are women and girls who are often under-represented in other sport
- Multi-generational social benefit and connected engagement from 5 to 85-year-olds
- Family oriented participation
- Huge volunteer contribution
- \$16.9M economic input to the shire with 34 businesses directly relating to equine, providing employment for 74 people and expected growth in income in the next 5 years
- A diverse and significant economic driver outside the shire's urban areas

- Horse keeping is one of the largest rural activity sectors underpinning our Green Wedge
- A majority of land owners who consciously and actively manage their properties and who seek information and programs to assist them in this:  
33% spending between 6-10 hours weekly on property maintenance and  
36% spending 11 or more hours per week  
*So, almost 70% of horse-owning landowners are spending a minimum of one day per week managing their land*
- The critical importance of access to safe, off-road, shared trails with connected linkages for horse riders and other trail users which is highly valued

67% of survey respondents said that demand for participation in equine sport is growing, particularly in trail riding, dressage, eventing, show jumping and interschool competitions.

The key issues identified by riding club members were facility quality, cost of membership, maintenance challenges, infrastructure age and limitations and safety. However, we do not see this plan as a 'money-grab' opportunity, but rather it identifies areas where a collaborative effort between council and the sector would pave the way for constructive dialogue, focussed activity and targeted improvements going forward.

Local riding clubs have not historically enjoyed funding from council for big ticket infrastructure, unlike many other sporting codes in the shire. While there has been and remains a lack of equity in investment between equine and other sports (which warrants review), this plan will at least enable clubs, groups and council to jointly access external funding and grant opportunities for facility assessment and improvement and shared trail development and maintenance for the benefit of all trail users – horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists.

The plan's Actions will be the key to the success in implementing this plan, identifying where council support is needed, addressing infrastructure deficiencies and trail and road safety issues.

### **Actions:**

#### **Enhance participation, club sustainability and volunteer effort**

- Ensure our well governed club committees that are run by an army of volunteers are resourced
- Clubs are largely self-funded and self-sufficient to date, working to keep memberships affordable
- Club support to improve and maintain facilities and grounds
- Review the historical lack of investment in equine sports in comparison to other sporting codes in the shire
- Assurance on leases
- Enhanced communications between clubs and promotion of events
- Assistance with grant applications for facility and equipment funding
- Grow club participation, identify barriers and support volunteers
- Support for RDA

#### **Maximise the use of equine infrastructure**

- Shared infrastructure and resource opportunities wherever practicable
- Equine Infrastructure Plan to evaluate current sites and realistically maximise their use
- Investigation of a larger shared facility including an indoor arena that could be shared by all local clubs is warranted. This would be more a regional facility rather than a state-level facility, available for year-round training, rallies, clinics, competition and RDA  
Such a venue would enhance the clubs' opportunities to raise funds to contribute to the facility cost, invest in their home grounds and keep club memberships affordable
- Synergies with neighbouring councils around equine infrastructure
- Identify the common needs of shared trail user groups and any shared road safety issues

- Horse rider access to safe, shared off-road trails 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
- Collaborate with State land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water) and 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 'destination' trail infrastructure and facilities in the region
- 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 alternative trails and improved connections where necessary and ensure the safety and enjoyment of all shared trail users
- Many horse riders would like to trail ride but don't because the roads are too dangerous. Some would like to ride to their club rally days if it was safe to do so

### **Support equine economic development**

- 'Horse keeping' is one of the largest rural activity sectors 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
- 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
- We appreciate the benefit in supporting the creation of local business 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
- The ongoing development of a shared, off-road recreation trails network across Nillumbik Shire enables residents and visitors to enjoy local neighbourhoods, townships and rural hamlets and to truly immerse themselves in the natural landscape

### **Land, pest, emergency management and safety**

- An identified 'large animal' evacuation location in Nillumbik would be welcomed by land owners who keep horses and farm animals that they may wish to protect in the event of bushfire
- Implementation of a shire focused, driver awareness campaign for horse rider safety and improved signage would be welcomed. This could be extended to include on-road cyclists as well
- 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 for preserving the rural, scenic amenity and landscape character of the shire. The shire's natural environment isn't just the bush
- The NHAG acknowledges and appreciates council's willingness to partner with us and the equine community generally in providing diverse and responsive educational opportunities, information, advice and support to facilitate informed land management and its practicable application. This benefits rural residents, their properties and animals, biodiversity, the environment of the Green Wedge and the shire generally
- Targeted pest management programs would be well received

'Equine in Nillumbik' is an important acknowledgement of a core sector of our shire's rural communities. It identifies opportunities to support equine sport and rural recreation while also recognizing the significant economic benefits of horse keeping to the shire. This plan is worthy of council's support.

Kind regards

*Cath Giles*

President, NHAG Inc.

Shan Shnookal and John Jenkins

14/6/20

Dear Councillors,

As Nillumbik ratepayers and horse riders, we want to record our **support** for Council adopting the **Equine in Nillumbik Plan**. We support ALL the recommendations, and commend the work that has gone into framing them.

We are aware that many hours and much consultation have already gone into this Plan, and think it appalling that it wasn't adopted at the first opportunity.

Horse riders and owners are a significant part of our community in terms of **managing the land**, participating in **sport and recreation** activities, and make extremely important contributions to the local **economy**. We use and support many diverse local businesses, such as feed merchants, saddleries, instructors, float manufacturing and maintenance, farriers, vets, property maintenance services, horse massage therapists, and many others.

We moved to Nillumbik expressly to have horses on our own property. We are very aware that managing our land well, and conserving and enhancing local biodiversity, will go hand in hand with maximizing the health of our horses. We strongly support a Council program of **land management** workshops and education for horse owners.

We have been members of two **Adult Riding Clubs** in the Shire (Eastern Region and Kangaroo Ground) and active in these Clubs for more than 30 years. We have spent countless hours volunteering to maintain the facilities, on the Committees, and running competitions.

We take part in both the sport and recreation aspects of riding. Thus we support maximizing the use of **Equine Infrastructure, and development** of further facilities where we can have training days, clinics, competitions and RDA activities.

And as regular trail riders (and walkers) we support the extension of the shared **trail network of recreation trails** where we can ride safely. In the 22 years we have lived in the Shire, we have seen a marked decrease in safe roads to ride on (partly due to the road sealing program, and partly due to rapidly increasing amounts of traffic and drivers who are ignorant of the needs of horses for slow and wide passing).

Again, we urge this well-considered Plan to be adopted by Council as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Shan Shnookal and John Jenkins



## **Community Feedback Submission: Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030.**

As the vice-president of the St Andrews Adult Riding Club and a horse enthusiast for over fifteen years within Nillumbik, I am writing this submission in strong support of the implementation of the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Nillumbik council for providing residents the opportunity to express their support, feedback, criticism, or concerns regarding the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030.

Horse ownership and horse related activities are a key element which forms a large section of the social cohesion within the Nillumbik community. If you are not a horse owner, you likely know someone in Nillumbik who is or was a horse owner, which is one of the attractions to the semi-rural lifestyle living in Nillumbik provides.

At the age of ten I became a member of the St Andrews Pony Club. Through this membership I became part of a friendly, social, likeminded community in which positively influenced and shaped my childhood for the better. At the age of twenty, I transitioned to the St Andrews Adult Riders or more affectionately known as STAAR. Five years later and I am now the vice-president of a community of volunteers who are hardworking, friendly, and supportive. The memories, friendships and experiences I have gained in these fifteen years of membership with my local clubs is priceless.

In this submission I intend to comment on the actions as set out in the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030 in which I feel require comments. Please see note that these comments are my own and are not an official statement on behalf from the St Andrews Adult Riders.

### **Enhance participation, club sustainability and volunteer effort:**

#### **Action 1:**

As an office bearing member of the St Andrews Adult Riders I am acutely aware of the many hard and long hours which are required to maintain the facilities of our club. Our grounds are very steep in areas which contribute to the frequent degradation of the driveway and parking areas. After consistent rain deep ruts form in the driveway and wash away the gravel. Our cross-country course is regularly overrun by Blackberries and Cape weed which are both a constant source of many long volunteer hours on a weekend to keep on top of. As a member of STAAR I would certainly be open to discussion with the council around what assistance may be able to be provided or sourced.

#### **Action 2:**

It is important for the long-term future of our club that our lease can endure.

#### **Action 4:**

Having travelled all over the Victorian state to many different other riding clubs I have witnessed the benefits of access to suitable grants. Benalla Adult Riders are a fantastic example of this who have been able to build a very impressive club grounds complete with a

newly built indoor arena, well maintained riding arenas and other desirable facilities through a combination of grants and fundraising. The upskilling and support of our clubs to achieve similar outcomes would go a long way in improving not only our current members experiences but also future members in the years to come.

**Action 7:**

Would council be able to extend driveway grading to clubs in Nillumbik? The blackberry spraying program? If done in consultation with the club this would be a welcome addition.

**Maximise the use of equine infrastructure:**

**Action 1:**

The current set up of the various riding clubs in Nillumbik is that you may only use their grounds if you are a paying member. It would be in the best interests of all the clubs in Nillumbik if the grounds between the different clubs were to become more easily accessible to members of various clubs. For example, Yarrambat Adult riders have an excellent cross-country course. If other club members were able to access this more readily this would vastly change the dynamic of the clubs in Nillumbik. Additionally, Hurstbridge adult riders have particularly good sand riding arenas which appeal to Dressage and Show jumping members. Inter-usability of the different club's grounds would be a positive step forward for riding clubs in the area.

**Action 2:**

STAAR grounds feature five sand riding arenas and a sloped cross-country course as well as many trails leading from the grounds. The upkeep of the sand arenas is at significant expense, there are no lights on any of the arenas which prohibits riding early morning or after dark.

**Action 3:**

Having travelled extensively over Victoria to some of the largest equestrian facilities in the state such as Werribee Park and Boneo Park I am aware that there is not to my knowledge any site in Nillumbik which could accommodate an equestrian facility of this size. Further to this, I do not believe that an equestrian park of a similar size is required in the Nillumbik area. Particularly, when there are plans for a similar sized equestrian park planned to be built in the Yarra Valley in the future. However, there is currently no indoor or small sized equestrian facility of this type available to the clubs in Nillumbik. To my knowledge some of the nearest indoor facilities are in the Yarra Valley or in Werribee. A small local facility which could host local clubs, competitions and clinics would be a significant asset to the Nillumbik equine community. To be clear I am only supportive of a smaller equine facility which would be able to accommodate at least an indoor arena. I have no expectations that a large equestrian park would ever or should ever be built in Nillumbik.

**Action 5-10:**

Trails are an integral part of owning horses in Nillumbik and the privilege to ride horses on the many trails which are available in Nillumbik must be respected and protected. Ever since the trails have upgraded in the Smiths Gully area there are now large hordes of mountain bike riders flocking to Smiths Gully on the weekends and public holidays. Many of these riders are very respectful of horse riders also using these trails. However, my experience has found that there are enough bike riders who are not respectful of horse riders which have rendered the trails dangerous to all but the quietest of horses. I have now resorted to containing my riding to within the safe boundaries of the STAAR grounds. I am not willing to endanger not only mine and my horse's life but also motorists lives if my horse were to escape my control and get onto the road. While education of the shared users may provide a decrease in this behaviour, unfortunately there are always a few who will not alter their behaviour. If it were ever possible to have at least one trail that was enclosed with fences with only walkers and horse riders allowed that would provide a safe opportunity for individuals such as myself to access the beautiful trails in Nillumbik which have unfortunately become dangerous.

**Support equine economic development:****Action 1-9:**

As a horse owner I have spent considerable resources caring for my horses over the years and supporting local business. This includes but is not limited to, the agistment property where I keep my horse, local club membership, animal stockfeed, local equine services and more. At a minimum I would spend roughly \$3,000 - \$4,000 a year on the basic upkeep of my horse. This does not include competition fees, purchasing of tack, equipment, clothing etc.

**Land, pest, emergency management and safety:****Action 1:**

It is deeply concerning to me as not only a Nillumbik resident, horse owner and Black Saturday survivor that there is no allocated large animal evacuation site. Over the recent fire season, it was a constant worry to myself on where I would be able to evacuate my horse to in the event of high fire risk days or in a bushfire. In my opinion this should urgently be reviewed and implemented with consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I am grateful for the opportunity to make my feedback known to council and look forward to the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030 being adopted in full at the conclusion of the feedback period.

Kind regards,

Madeleine Emery

Nillumbik 2020-2030 Equine in Nillumbik Plan

I would like to thank Nillumbik Council for giving the community a chance to comment on the **Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030**.

My name is Suzette Kabaila. I am [REDACTED] years old. I have lived in Eltham for 32 years. I do not own my own property, so I have agisted my horses in Eltham and Kangaroo Ground for this length of time.

I am a member of 2 Adult Riding Clubs: Kangaroo Ground (for about 18 years) and Eastern Region (for 2 years). I trail ride throughout the Nillumbik Shire and I volunteer for St Andrews Riding for the Disabled (when it is able to run).

The plan, as presented, is very clear and well-researched on the benefits of Nillumbik Council supporting the further development of equestrian facilities. There is a large number of businesses which rely on horse owners for their employment. This includes riding instructors, agistment, stockfeeds sellers, horsegear shops, farriers, vets, horse dentists, horse chiropractors to mention a few businesses.

Along with the Pony Clubs, our Adult Riding Clubs provide a wonderful opportunity for young and old to enjoy the wonders of horse riding and the local area. However, these clubs currently have to rely heavily on fees, fundraising activities, donations, working bees and volunteers. It is difficult to keep maintaining the facilities without further support. Any support that the Council could offer would be welcomed.

Nillumbik is one of the few Shires to yet establish an Equestrian Centre with indoor riding facilities. Such a centre would be a wonderful opportunity for local clubs to run more competitions and clinics to bring riders from outside the Shire and to bring more business into the region.

I commend the Council on the excellent riding trails that have already been developed. These are so important for the safety of horse and rider and enjoyment of a variety of tracks safe from traffic. I would like to encourage the Council to continue developing these trails which are often shared with bush walkers and mountain bike riders.

I strongly urge all Councillors to support this plan, so that Nillumbik can be a proud leader in support of Equestrian activities and facilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Suzette Kabaila

## St Andrews Adult Riding Club.



13 June 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Nillumbik Equine Plan.

As club President of St Andrews Adult Riders – (STAAR) I am submitting my comments on behalf of the club and its members.

I commend the Council for this plan and the acknowledgment it provides for our equestrian sport.

The club also appreciates as stakeholders the opportunity given to us to provide input into the plan.

**St Andrews Adult riding club support the Nillumbik Equine Plan and look forward to seeing it adopted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June.**

My name is Peter van Sonsbeek.

I have been the STAAR club president for the last 5 years and a member of the club for more than 10 years.

The St Andrews Adult Riding Club is governed by the Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria (HRCVA) who have strict rules in place for rider safety, horse safety, member etiquette expectations and environmental appreciation.

Our grounds are shared with the St Andrews Pony Club and are located at Clintons Road Smiths Gully. We were established over 40 years ago.

We currently have around 30 permanent members. Our club aims to cater for riders from all walks of life without discrimination.

We are a friendly club and have riders who join for the social aspect, riders who enjoy trail riding in the wonderful Nillumbik environment, and riders who train hard to participate in competition environments.

Our members must be over the age of 16 however the majority of our riders aged between 40 and 60. We also have a number of parent/children combinations where the child has enjoyed the fun of many years in the Pony club and has now graduated to the Adult riding Club.

Family is a wonderful aspect to Equine activities in general.

The love of horses and horse riding is shared by a large percentage of the local community.

It is also a sport that requires immense dedication and teaches the children respect and commitment.

Providing facilities for the future generations is paramount.

Our St Andrews shared grounds are also extremely proud to provide facilities for the wonderful riding for the disabled program. This is something that the Nillumbik council and the general equine community should address far more attention to.

Please consider and accept the comments below in support of this plan and its actions as provided by club members.

### **Enhance participation Club sustainability and volunteer effort.**

#### **Action 1 - Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities**

STAAR supports the action to investigate how Council could support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities. Our club membership and rally fee's does not always cover the clubs running costs. It is a difficult balance to find the fee amount, that will not be so costly, it will prohibit people joining. Several years ago, we change our membership format so it became a 'pay as you ride' and not an upfront annual all-inclusive membership as we felt they way it was structured was affecting membership numbers. The change has been helpful in maintaining numbers but we still need to fund raise during the year to cover the shortfall and to put towards maintenance and improvements. Any assistance with any maintenance would be welcome perhaps in the areas that Council already have services such as mowing, grading of club driveways and blackberry spraying so it is a add on and not a start up cost.

#### **Action 2 -Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long term viability**

St Andrews Pony Club is the lease holders of our club grounds however, STAAR contributes to the lease fee of the grounds. The St Andrews Club grounds also host RDA and the St Andrews Trail Riding Club, so all these club would be affected by any lease issues. Lease security is as relevant to STAAR as it is too all sporting clubs.

#### **Action 4 - Council to work with the equine sector to promote and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State Government grant programs.**

STAAR has applied for sponsorship and have been successful in small amounts from Bendigo Bank and are thankful for that. Larger grants we have been less successful. The adoption of this plan would mean we would have more opportunity and a greater chance of being awarded grants. STARR would also be grateful for support from council in identifying grant opportunities and receiving advice on how to write a successful grant application.

#### **Action 6 – Council to work with the equine clubs to grow participation and promote the Riders without Horses and Riding Develops Ability programs.**

Clubs can only be maintained with viable membership numbers. As previously stated above we were required to look at our membership format to maintain membership numbers. We are responsive to the need for change and always looking at ways of increasing participation. Hence the introduction of a Friday rally to accommodate those busy on the weekends with family activities.

Membership numbers at STAAR not as high as some other clubs and this is possibly due to lack of infrastructure. However, we are a friendly social club that make all members welcome and we are known for being encouraging and accepting of all rider and horse combinations. We particularly attract riders starting out or returning to riding after a long break as we foster confidence building and we are proud of this.

### **Action 7 - Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities.**

STAAR is run by members for its members, like most sporting groups it requires an active committee and members to keep it functioning. Any support Council could offer would be greatly appreciated. Most of our members have families and work full time, along with owning properties in Nillumbik, so are busy people but still give graciously of their precious time.

### **Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure**

**Action 1 Council to work with the equine community to understand and promote shared infrastructure and resource opportunities between clubs to improve facilities and reduce cost for critical maintenance.**

**Action 2 Council, in collaboration with the equine community, to develop an Equine Infrastructure Plan to identify how the current sites can be improved to maximise their potential.**

STAAR would welcome the development of activities the support action 1 and 2. STAAR grounds has several arena's that support regular rallies, individual training and some small competitions. Due to its topography the site is limited. However, we have linkage to trails that could be shared with other clubs that would offer them the opportunity to have ride and dine days. Were they could ride out and lunch as one of Nillumbik wineries or pubs. Some of those trails could have better linkages developed.

STAAR would also welcome the opportunity to improve facilities and reduce costs through collaboration between clubs.

The grounds at St Andrews share the facilities with 4 clubs Pony, Adult trail riders and RDA.

**3. Council to investigate potential of a larger shared equine facility for clubs, and viability of an indoor arena for competitions, training and RDA.**

STAAR would welcome Council investigating the potential of a share equine facility with an indoor arena. Understanding this facility would not be a state size facility like Werribee so would not accommodate hundreds of riders it would still be appreciated and use by local clubs and individual alike. With over 500 club members in the shire it this facility would be in high demand.

### **Actions 5-10**

These actions are concerned more with trail users but they do affect our members, as many ride to club or trail ride as down time for their horses and to maintain fitness. STAAR members are lucky to have a wonderful network or shared trails that they have access to and any funds spent on trails benefits many users. Member and their family ride horse, bikes and walk their dog on the local trails.

It is noted and appreciated that whilst the Council has ben championing trails, Vic Parks and Melb Water have locked horse users out of trails, that they had historically used. This has meant some of the linkages have been broken that provided safe travel and now roads must be used. It would be appreciated if Council could work with these department to investigate the reopening of these trails.

### **Support equine economic development**

STAAR appreciates the support they receive from local equine and non-equine businesses and services, as many provide sponsorship and prizes to aid fund raising event. We would find it difficult to run event and be limited and less successful in our fund-raising events if we did not have their support.

In turn our club members support these services and business. The rural equine landholders are a major contributor to the economic sector of Nillumbik as pointed out in the report.

## **Land, pest, emergency management and safety**

**Action 1 Council to develop emergency management information to assist horse owners during the fire season, including possible options for large animal evacuation.**

STAAR would support any activity that provide a safe refuge for members and their horses during the fire season. The Black Saturday fires highlighted the desperate need for a safe refuge. An emergency plan would be welcome by the club and could be incorporated into the club's emergency plan for high risk fire days.

**Action 2. The equine sector, in collaboration with Council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers.**

**Action 3. Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads.**

STAAR would support any road safety initiatives that has the potential to keep their members safe while riding and floating horses.

**Action 4. Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.**

**Action 5. Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: • Weeds • Rabbits • Deer • Foxes • Blackberry**

**Action 6. Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.**

STAAR understand that health land management provides for health horses and so would be happy to promote any workshop offered by council to members that would support and aid members to achieve this.

STAAR would also welcome the opportunity to having access to pest programs that would see improvement in the management of the club grounds

Thank you for taking to time to read this submission in support of the Equine in Nillumbik plan

**Peter Van Sonsbeek**

**President - St Andrews Adult Riders Club.**





16th June, 2020

Nillumbik Shire Council

Future Nillumbik Committee

Dear Mayor Egan and Councillors,

**Re: EQUINE IN NILLUMBIK PLAN**

My name is Melissa Dawson and I am the President of the Hurstbridge & District Adult Riding Club (HDARC), a role I have held for the last 4 years and also as our Wednesday Rally Co-ordinator for 11 years. From a personal perspective, with my husband and family of four boys, we have been Nillumbik residents for 30 years. Both my husband and I have consistently supported the Nillumbik community throughout our 30 years by volunteering for many organisations including local kindergartens, schools, church music ministry, basketball clubs and for the last 12 years, with the Hurstbridge and District Adult Riding Club (HDARC) and Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club (HHPC).

Our club (HDARC) has been in existence for 36 years and we are affiliated with the Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria (HRCV). In fact we are the largest club in the HRCV with a membership of 120 members (4 men and 116 women, ranging in age from 18 through to 70 years). We hold rallies every Wednesday and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of the month. We are a very vibrant, active club and we host a minimum of 3 events per year at our grounds in Hurstbridge. Competitors come from far and wide to attend our events as they are well run, and because they enjoy riding at our lovely, well maintained grounds.

We share our grounds with the Hurstbridge Pony Club. The President of the pony club will no doubt comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan, I will address the plan from HDARC's perspective and that of a volunteer.

Firstly, I would like to thank Council for allowing the consultative process that has been delivered by AECOM and the resulting report "Equine in Nillumbik". It is a fantastic document that enlightens anyone reading it about the equine community in Nillumbik. We are a substantial group of Nillumbik residents and welcome the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan, of which we are very supportive.

I understand that our sport is one of many competing for support of the community and governments. I believe that Council adopting the Equine in Nillumbik Plan gives our sport some recognition within the community just as lots of other sports already have this recognition (basketball, netball, football, cricket, soccer to name a few).

We are lucky that our club is vibrant and financially viable, however the club relies on volunteers fundraising, event running and donations from local businesses (normally equine in nature) to operate. Membership fees collected only cover minimal costs such as insurance and instructors' fees. The many other costs, including ground and clubhouse maintenance and repairs, capital works and asset purchases (such as dressage arenas, showjumping equipment, sheds, etc.) are paid for via fundraising and event running proceeds all achieved by volunteer efforts. Grounds maintenance is the highest outgoing after insurance and instructors and represents 25% of our total outgoings. Although we have looked at applying for various government grants, we don't appear to meet the criteria and would welcome advice in this area.

Our current facilities are a wonderful shared resource which also cater for riders with disability, however we are restricted in terms of a cross country facility (only training jumps are available) and car/float parking. Arena dust is also a significant factor during the drier months for both the members and adjoining properties.

Current car and float parking is supplemented though the use of the adjoining private property (Bridges) who very kindly allow us access to enable parking when we hold our events. This property is currently for sale. This is our single biggest issue when running an event, where we have had up to 120 competitors. Please note that I have been in discussions with Council regarding the potential reallocation of the "old skate ramp" facilities adjacent to our club which would be useful for additional horse grounds or even car parking.

Although the club is member based, we do endeavour to share our facilities with members from other HRCAV affiliated surrounding clubs (through events, clinics and guest riders at our rallies). Due to the lack of cross country facilities it is common for our club to organise rallies for cross country training at other clubs. This normally occurs outside the Shire (Yarra Glen and Wandin commonly) or at other private facilities as other closer facilities are closed to members only. Clubs normally close their facilities to “members only” as the pressure of more riders on club grounds creates more expense for the club, much like a golf course. Further, clubs preserve their grounds for the running of events (which in turn raises funds) for the club. I believe better planning and co-ordination of our Shire’s facilities could improve this process.

The issue of dust has been considered a number of times by our committee however the permanent solutions are currently beyond our financial capability. On occasion, we have addressed this issue by using a local water carting company which in the main is impractical and can be expensive.

We would welcome discussions with the Council on how they could assist our volunteers, simply supplying some material for driveways and parking areas, mowing and spraying, water reticulation systems would be much appreciated.

As a local resident who also keeps their horses at home, our biggest concern is that of fire. During the Black Saturday and other fires we were faced with the situation of leaving our precious animals at home. I would welcome more thought and effort on the establishment of an emergency management plan that includes possible options for large animal evacuation. Simply having somewhere safe to place animals in these situations is paramount.

Finally, as a member of Melbourne Water’s Stream Frontage Management Program, I would also welcome the Council’s leadership in terms of educating equine families on land management including that of pests, weeds, blackberries and the like.

Once again I sincerely thank the Council for supporting the equine community within Nillumbik via the work undertaken to date (consultative process and report) and now look forward to implementing the resulting “Equine in Nillumbik Plan” with you and the wider community.

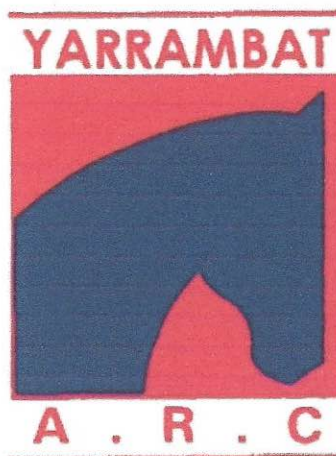
If it wasn’t for our wonderful volunteers our equine clubs would simply not exist!

Kindest regards,

**MELISSA DAWSON**

**HURSTBRIDGE & DISRICT ADULT RIDING CLUB PRESIDENT**





Wayne Spence  
C/- Yarrambat Adult Riding Club  
Yan Yean Road Yarrambat

15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

The Mayor and Councillors  
Nillumbik Shire Council

### Equine In Nillumbik Plan – Yarrambat Adult Riding Club Submission

I, with the members of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club, congratulate and thank the Nillumbik Shire Council for undertaking the to research the equine needs within the Shire and have the Equine in Nillumbik Plan prepared. This plan has been wanted by the equine community for some time, providing us the opportunity to raise awareness of our needs and issues of concern.

The Equine in Nillumbik Plan now provides opportunity for further conversations with Nillumbik Council and your equine partners to further develop and potentially expand equine sport and recreation. This will provide increased economic benefit for businesses within Nillumbik with low environmental impact.

### Yarrambat Adult Riders Club

I am the President of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club and have been so for the past two years. My wife, Sharon, is also a member of the club regularly riding her horse, which we agist on a property in Diamond Creek. Our club has 80 members which is predominately women. There are only five men in the membership list. Our club consistently has a waiting list of prospective members, with the cap being established due to limitations on rally day

instructors and vehicle / float parking. As a club we are keen to see our membership list increase and we hope that the impending conversations that the Equine in Nillumbik Plan will generate may lead us to improving the parking facilities and identifying a greater pool of rally day instructors.

### The Yarrambat Grounds

The Yarrambat grounds we lease from Nillumbik Council are co-leased with the Yarrambat Horse and Pony Club. Both clubs have been established at the grounds for over 40 years. Our clubs have invested heavily in time and money to maintain and improved the grounds to provide the best conditions for our members. Regularly the grounds are used by other clubs to hold competitions or for rallies if their grounds are unavailable.

Annually both clubs invest \$6000 to improve the Cross Country course alone. These funds are for materials only, with the work completed by members volunteering time. General maintenance is completed through two working bees during Autumn and Spring, with some members volunteering extra time throughout the year to slash the arena and cross country course. Both clubs jointly meet throughout the year to determine the priority of works to be undertaken and equipment purchases. Both clubs have invested considerable funds to purchase equipment ( tractor, slasher, mowers, jumps & jumps storage trailers etc) to provide high quality grounds and arena equipment for competitions.

### Rallies & Competitions

Both clubs hold rallies each month except for January. These rallies are well attended by club members and are a highlight each month, allowing equine instruction and social gathering. Each year both clubs host a number of competitions covering all disciplines such as dressage, horse trials, show jumping, and pony club games.

The grounds are constantly in use by members throughout the week for general training, instruction or just the enjoyment of the facilities and grounds in a safe environment.

### Equine in Nillumbik Plan

As I mentioned I, with our club members support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and we recommend and hope that this plan is adopted at the Council meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020.

The plan contains a number of actions the majority of which, Nillumbik Council facilitates discussions within the Equine Community to expand and share the current equine assets. Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is keen to be a part of these conversations and to partner with Council on a range of matters listed in the plan.

In particular :-

Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.

*Action 1 – Council to investigate how to support clubs and improve and maintain their facilities* - Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is aware that Nillumbik Council has limited capacity and funding that can be channelled into assisting clubs with maintaining grounds and courses. We would be keen to have discussions with Nillumbik Council and other clubs to identify common activities that Council engages which the clubs could leverage off to obtain services at a reduced cost. Activities such as weed and pest control, fencing, tree services etc.

*Action 2 – Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long term viability* – Yarrambat Adult Riders Club has been advised that our lease is a three year lease which has currently expired. In June 2019, we wrote to Nillumbik Council seeking a review of the term of the lease to a minimum 5 years, with a preference for 10 years. The reason this is required is to allow the clubs to secure sponsorship funds from equine businesses. In the past we have found it difficult to secure sponsorship funds owing to the limited length of the lease. Business owners need some security on the club's viability and longevity to predict and secure a return on their sponsorship investment. We would be keen to engage with Nillumbik Council and other clubs on this issue.

*Action 6 – Council to work with equine clubs to grow participation and promote riders without horses and riding develops ability programs.* - Yarrambat Adult Riders is keen to examine the potential to grow participation in equine activities within Nillumbik. One of our members is involved with the Riding Develops Ability program and as a club we would seek to be able to assist and promote this program.

*Action 7 – Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities* - As with all clubs Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is managed by a volunteer committee that deals with a variety of issues through out the year. These include funds management, member management and conflict resolution, setting fees, grounds management, pest and weed control etc. Council can assist these committees by providing workshops targeted at some of these issues they face. We would be keen to engage with Council to identify the topics these workshops can be focussed on.

Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure

*Cross Country* - A number of the actions in this section relate to trails. Each club has appropriate areas for dressage and show jumping activities. There is a variance in access to a cross- country course with our club having the most extensive course. The costs and man-hours associated with

maintaining the cross country course is substantial, and as clubs Yarrambat Adult Riders and Yarrambat Horse and Pony Club are proud of what we have developed over the years. We welcome a discussion on how the equine infra-structure can be better utilised and maintained across Nillumbik.

*Linked Trails* - Linked trails is a desire of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Disappointingly horse riding is often excluded from the planning of these trails. Understandably in the urban area horse riding is not an obvious consideration, however, now that these trails are moving into the rural hamlets of Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge, horse riding must be included in the user group.

The surveys conducted by Council and by our club, overwhelmingly call for safe off-road areas for trail riding. The local roads today are too dangerous to permit horse riding along the road itself or the grass verge. These trails also need to link to permit a circuit to be completed wherever possible.

Yarrambat Adult Riders Club are keen to engage with Council to assist with identification of trail routes, and the needs of horses, whilst at the same time ensuring the impact to the environment is minimised.

*Education of trail users / motorists* - Yarrambat Adult Riders are also keen to engage with Council to assist with the development of an education program for all shared trail users (walkers, cyclists & horse riders) and motorists on how to approach and move around horses. This will promote safe use of the limited space along these trails, and country roads.

#### Support equine economic development

All our club members utilise the services of our local stock feed stores, farriers, and horse product retailers. Any increase in the use and ownership of horses within Nillumbik will enhance the development of the current operators, and may see an increase in the number of businesses.

Council can consider the access to cafes etc from the linked trails when developing the routes and plan to provide yards at points nearby to these businesses to allow riders to safely hold horses to stop for lunch / coffee etc.

Clubs will be able to provide labour and fund raise for the construction of these yards if considered appropriate.

#### Land, Pest, Emergency Management and Safety

Annually the Nillumbik community are provided with education and information regarding emergency management and planning for the bushfire season. Not all owners of horses reside in the rural section of Nillumbik. Many agist their horses on properties in Nillumbik, but they live in nearby urban estates. I am an emergency services worker, and I have witnessed

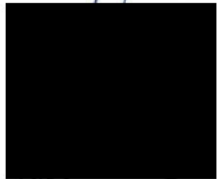
during the Black Saturday fires and many other times, owners of horses attempting to enter locations that are about to be impacted by bushfire, to get their animals out of danger.

There is certainly a need for an education program targeted at horse owners to understand weather, bushfire behaviour and how to plan and respond to these emergencies.

I, with Yarrambat Adult Riders are keen to be involved with Council, CFA, vets and other clubs to identify the needs of the equine community and to develop workshops to provide the education needed.

We are also keen to be involved in the development of pest & weed control programs and be a conduit to provide this information to land owners within our membership.

Finally on behalf of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club, I congratulate Nillumbik Council for engaging with the community and developing this Equine in Nillumbik Plan. This provides for conversation and inclusion of the Equine Community to partner with Council and other sectors of the community. These partnerships will manage the limited resources of Council and Clubs, will ensure minimal impact to the land and environment of all recreational activities including horses, to ensure a vibrant and cohesive community.



Wayne Spence  
President  
Yarrambat Adult Riders Club.

*Tori Mitton*

June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## **Nillumbik Equine Strategy 2020 Feedback Submission**

To begin – thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback.

I've lived in Smiths Gully 10 years and Nillumbik shire for over 25 years.

I have a business - [REDACTED] - which retails petfood, stockfeed, and associated supplies, hay, and basic garden mulch supplies, I have been servicing clients in the Nillumbik shire and surrounds for 17 years – not only just horses, but dogs, chickens, cats, sheep, cows etc etc. The horse community within Nillumbik are a large percentage of my clientele and with out them my business would not exist.

I ride horses recreationally and I am a regular amateur competitor in HRCav and EA (eventing, showjumping and dressage) and mounted games with the Mounted Games Association of Victoria. I travel statewide and interstate to events throughout the year.

Since I was a very young, I have always ridden and had horses in my life. Growing up in country Western Victoria I went right through pony club and participated in many other equine pursuits along the way.

I moved to Melbourne in my early 20's. I was *drawn* to the Nillumbik area to continue my horsey passions. What attracted me was the accessibility to the city – I was working in the city at the time. It's natural beauty – with a great balance of rural pasture space and blend of bushland, and the horse opportunities it provided. I joined a local club. Then I discovered how strong and supportive the horse community here is. So in the mid 90's I bought property and moved in. I have been here ever since.

I began instructing at local pony clubs, adult riding clubs and privately. I have been doing that for 25 years now.



My son, Ben, is 17. He joined pony club locally when he was 4 and found his love for mounted games. He is undertaking VCE at present, and although has put horse riding on pause, he is now enjoying our surrounds on foot with regular 'walk' outings with his local friends as part of his 'well-being' regime.

In my time here, this is the first report I have seen of its kind. I commend it and support it.

I am very encouraged with the references to safe trails in the area and the prospect of a shared Equine facility/indoor arena. I trust council will recognise the value in adopting and actioning this plan. It is a solid launching point to bring participants of all horse activities to this area. Short and long term.

With my experience in travelling with my horses in Victoria and interstate, I believe there would be positive for economic growth for local businesses.

I am confident that in supporting the existing equine participants within Nillumbik that it will only build on the popularity of this rural sport/recreation and strengthen the communities involved.

Yours sincerely

*Tori Mitton*

First, I would like to thank Nillumbik Council for the excellent work in putting this plan together. I definitely support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. The Equine Strategy is about my sport and horse riding is my chosen sport.

My name is Joanne Jamieson and I have lived in Yarrambat for the past 20 years.

I am also the Secretary of the Yarrambat Adult Riding Club (YARC) which I have been for the past 16 years and a life member.

YARC have 80 members which we run at capacity every year and having to turn people away regularly and in October of each year open the waiting list for new members. Our club and grounds are very sort after due the facilities and disciplines we can offer including dressage, show jumping & cross country.

The work it takes to keep our grounds in a presentable manner requires loads of women/man power. Our club is made up of 98 % of women and all our working bees which include maintenance of fences, clubrooms, mowing, slashing, whipper snipping, poisoning and the like are all completed by our members. This is a mandatory requirement as without their help we could not keep up with all the works that are required. On average every member must devote a minimum of 10 hrs each year and then we have our executive members who devote up to 50 hrs per year. We get no assistance from council or by any other means.

I was very impressed to read about the prospect of safe off road connect trails. This is an area that desperately needs some investigations particular in the Yarrambat / Plenty area. Prior to being able to float my horse to club the only way I could ride was on our roads in Nillumbik. Due to the increase of traffic in our area and the lack of respect motorists have for horse and riders, it has now become too dangerous to ride on the roads, this also includes the dirt back roads as more and more motorists are avoiding Yan Yean Road. Motorist don't understand the fly/flight reaction of horses when they are startled or when a vehicle goes flying past, or when the passenger yells out the window at the rider or when they decide to sound their horn just as they are going past you. Totally unexpected but happens all the time.

These safe off road trails would be shared with walkers, bike riders, families enjoying the outdoors. The trail network has been in decline

over the years as horse riders have been shut out from Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water areas that they previously had access too.

Money spent on shared trails does not only benefit horse riders, but walkers and cyclists too.

As an emergency service worker, I see the carnage and serious accidents on the road all the time so as horse riders we have to avoid the roads for our safety and the safety of our precious horses. If only the motorist new what the traffic law is whilst around horses.

I believe an education program is paramount but not only to the Nillumbik residents but to all road users as a lot of the traffic coming through Nillumbik don't actually live in our shire. I would love for the education to start with Learner Drivers when studying for their licence.

At the workshop conducted at the Hurstbridge Community hub there was also an overwhelming request for an indoor area. I support this regional facility. We are not looking at a State Park like Werribee Park where major competitions are held but a local indoor arena that can be hired to small groups for lessons, private lessons or even club rallies over the wetter months. Nillumbik does not have an indoor Equine arena anywhere in the shire so this would be an additional bonus for all five Adult Riding Clubs and Pony Clubs in Nillumbik to have access too. Further, it can be used by all riders with abilities and disabilities (RDA). The indoor arena would be able to be used in all weather with utmost safety of riders particular the riders and horses who can not venue out yet.

The survey results in the Equine in Nillumbik Plan were very interesting as YARC conducted an independent survey in 2019 with very similar results to the Equine Plan.

Replies to our survey were returned from over 200 horse riders detailing the following:

95 % were females

31.5 % were in the age group 45 – 54

86 % were a member of an Adult Riding Club or Pony Club

65 % kept their horses in Nillumbik Shire

58 % trail ride at least once a week

64 % currently trail ride on roadside and roadways

99 % stated they would feel safer trail riding on shared off road trails

76 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network for safety

76 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network as they enjoy the bushland environment

72 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network as they would be away from vehicle traffic

60 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network for the peaceful setting

The Equine Industry is predominately a female sport along with young children who attend Pony Club too. We are among a minority group who are always overlooked. It would be very disappointing if Council did not support this plan considering Council support every male dominated sport like Football, Soccer, Cricket and Basketball within the shire.

Again, I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and hope the Nillumbik Council sees fit to do so also.

*I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan.*

*I have been a member of Yarrambat Adult Riders and Hurstbridge and District Adult Riding Club for over 20 years each. I have been a member of St. Andrews Trail riders for short period of times over the years when my health allowed. I am a Nationally Accredited Riding for Disabled Coach and have volunteered at St. Andrews Riding for Disabled and many other RDA centre. During my youth I was a member of Eltham Pony Club and Yarrambat pony club. Spending my weekends and holidays riding around the area with my pony club friends. We would often leave early morning and arrive home just before dark. My family always was confident we would be safe riding on the roads.*

*I have known I have had Multiple Sclerosis for 24 years. Horse riding is my absolute passion and what gives me a wonderful quality of life. The support and friendships made through these riding clubs is what has got me through some difficult and isolating times due to my health. Always welcome at rallies for a cuppa and chat even if I cannot ride for a period. Being part of a team, a community and contributing in every changing capacity, in any way I can, to the running of rallies and events gives me a great sense of belonging and self-worth.*

*Road & Trail Riding- Just this Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> of June I headed out for a short 5km road ride on what use to be a quiet dirt road. I had 13 cars pass me and 2 dirt bikes twice. This is crazy! I have a lovely quiet horse that is sensational with traffic. I always wear a high Vis vest with please slow down and pass wide on it and I have added an L plate to encourage people to SLOW DOWN. The L plate also gives the drivers a good smile. Sadly I had one P plater only 100 meters from home fly past me, I was signalling with my hand to SLOW DOWN, I had the horse standing still and off the road as much as I could but she just flew past me and did not make any attempt to slow down or move over.*

*This is a regular occurrence. We desperately need access to safe trails, a road education campaign educating drivers and continued support of riding clubs especially for riders with disabilities and health conditions so they can continue to participate in an inclusive supportive environment.*

*The last submission I made regarding the trails years ago met with locals asking “why can’t they just walk on foot on the trails?” Well my balance and endurance at times isn’t good enough on foot but riding a horse I have access to our beautiful trails.*

*There are several members of my riding community that have other physical limitations for example strokes, cancer or arthritis that are in the same boat as me. I’m not the only one and they have the same rights and needs as I do.*

*Riding for Disabled motto “when riding a horse we borrow freedom”*

*I would like you to consider our youth as well. For those who are not from the equine community this poem is lovely and helps explain what owning and riding a horse can offer a child. Please take the time to read it and consider the benefits ☺*

## **Because My Daughter Grew Up With Horses** by Tracy Meisenbach

My daughter turned sixteen years old today; which is a milestone for most people. Besides looking at baby photos and childhood trinkets with her, I took time to reflect on the young woman my daughter had become and the choices she would face in the future. As I looked at her I could see the athlete she was, and determined woman she would soon be.

I started thinking about some the girls we knew in our town who were already pregnant, pierced in several places, hair every colour under the sun, drop outs, drug addicts and on the fast track to nowhere, seeking surface identities because they had no inner self esteem. The parents of these same girls have asked me why I “waste” the money on horses so my daughter can ride. I’m told she will grow out of it, lose interest, discover boys and all kinds of things that try to pin the current generation’s “slacker” label on my child. I don’t think it will happen, I think she will love and have horses all her life.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has compassion.** She knows that we must take special care of the very young and the very old. We must make sure those without voices to speak of their pain are still cared for.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned responsibility for others than herself.** She learned that regardless of the weather you must still care for those you have the stewardship of. There are no “days off” just because you don’t feel like being a horse owner that day. She learned that for every hour of fun you have there are days of hard slogging work you must do first.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned not to be afraid of getting dirty and that appearances don’t matter to most of the breathing things in the world we live in.** Horses do not care about designer clothes, jewellery, pretty hairdos or anything else we put on our bodies to try to impress others. What a horse cares about are your abilities to work within his natural world, he doesn’t care if you’re wearing \$80.00 jeans while you do it.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she learned about sex and how it can both enrich and complicate lives.** She learned that it only takes one time to produce a baby, and the only way to ensure babies aren’t produced is not to breed. She learned how babies are planned, made, born and, sadly, sometimes die before reaching their potential. She learned how sleepless nights and trying to outsmart a crafty old broodmare could result in getting to see, as non-horse owning people rarely do, the birth of a true miracle.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she understands the value of money.** Every dollar can be translated into bales of hay, bags of feed or farrier visits. Purchasing non-necessities during lean times can mean the difference between feed and good care, or neglect and starvation. She has learned to judge the level of her care against the care she sees provided by others and to make sure her standards never lower, and only increase as her knowledge grows.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned to learn on her own.** She has had teachers that cannot speak, nor write, nor communicate beyond body language and reactions. She has had to learn to “read” her surroundings for both safe and unsafe objects, to look for hazards where others might only see a pretty meadow. She has learned to judge people as she judges horses. She looks beyond appearances and trappings to see what is within.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned sportsmanship to a high degree.** Everyone that competes fairly is a winner. Trophies and ribbons may prove someone a

winner, but they do not prove someone is a horseman. She has also learned that some people will do anything to win, regardless of who it hurts. She knows that those who will cheat in the show ring will also cheat in every other aspect of their life and are not to be trusted.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has self-esteem and an engaging personality.** She can talk to anyone she meets with confidence, because she has to express herself to her horse with more than words. She knows the satisfaction of controlling and teaching a 1000 pound animal that will yield willingly to her gentle touch and ignore the more forceful and inept handling of those stronger than she is. She holds herself with poise and professionalism in the company of those far older than herself.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned to plan ahead.** She knows that choices made today can effect what happens five years down the road. She knows that you cannot care for and protect your investments without savings to fall back on. She knows the value of land and buildings. And that caring for your vehicle can mean the difference between easy travel or being stranded on the side of the road with a four horse trailer on a hot day.

**Because my daughter grew up with horses she has learned that colour, sex, and age do not establish a horse's, or a person's, intelligence, ability or value.** She has learned that only personal actions can tell you the merit of each individual, all other labels are put on things because of snobbery or fear by narrow minded people. A good horse has no set colour, or age, or sex, neither does a good person.

When I look at what she has learned and what it will help her become, I can honestly say that I haven't "wasted" a penny on providing her with horses. I only wish that all children had the same opportunities to learn these lessons from horses before setting out on the road to adulthood.

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*I know I am the person I am today with the values and qualities list above from owning a horse.*

*I know my riding for disabled skills have been developed from owning a horse, particularly in coaching non-verbal children with Autism.*

*I hope my submission has provided you with an in site in to the equine community and our needs.*

*You don't need to be brave to be **inclusive** just a decent human being.*

*Live well*

*Louise Barry.*

My name is Tony Brocksopp  
Position President Yarrambat Pony Club  
Vice President North Metro Zone of PCAV

North Metro Zone is one of the biggest Zones in Victoria which incorporates 4 Pony Clubs in our Shire of Nillumbik

Presently Yarrambat Pony Club has 60+ Riding members ,80 Club Supporters and 20+ Life Members who work diligently to keep the club operating at the very high standard .

Membership fees are kept to a minimum and do not cover the current running costs so we run a minimum of 3 Events plus a couple clinics that are open to outside riders , some of who are members of PCAV and some that are not .These events & clinics allow us to provide quality instruction and excellent equipment to our members .( ie Dressage arenas, Show Jumping equipment and XC Jumps ) We do this with the assistance of Yarrambat Adult Riders .

If the Equine Plan can assist our clubs survival that would be a great outcome as Pony Club is a very female oriented sport.

With the sale of land at a premium it is getting more difficult to attract members as agistment is often difficult or expensive .

It is only through the consistent hard work of our past & current members that we are able to attract the members we provide grounds excellent.

I strongly believe if offering such a facility to our members helps to keep a young person busy and dedicated to their horse and “off the streets “ then it is well worth the effort .

If we could have a horse facility for all the horse riders in the area , that would be a valuable acquisition to the equine industry in our shire. ie Graham Rd Tip site would be a fabulous



**Personal submission in support of the Equine in Nillumbik Plan**

I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and thank council for this important strategic document that is a first for our equine community and our equine sport / rural recreation in this shire.

I have kept horses in Nillumbik for 45 years and started my riding journey at Eltham Pony Club in the 1970's. My first horse (a big pet) was a significant part of our family life in Eltham and not only my sport/recreation, but also my transport until I could drive. I would traverse the length and breadth of the shire which developed my passion for both trail riding and the rural areas of Nillumbik, which continues to this day.

As areas have been built out and roads become busier, safe, off-road shared trails have become ever more important to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all trail users - horse riders, walkers and cyclists. And this will be increasingly so in the future as people will not want to tangle with traffic as they seek to enjoy a peaceful ride, walk or cycle around our beautiful shire or to connect through to neighbouring shires.

There is also a need for a driver awareness campaign for horse and rider safety, including improved roadside 'warning' signage.

Moving from Eltham to Kangaroo Ground, I joined Kangaroo Ground Adult Riding Club for many years. Eventually moving to Hurstbridge, I became a member of Hurstbridge District Adult Riding Club 25 years ago. Two of our children have been members of Kangaroo Ground and Hurstbridge Pony Clubs and myself and my daughter are members of the St Andrews Trail Riding Group based at Smiths Gully.

We have 12 local clubs, including pony clubs, adult riding clubs, a trail riding group and RDA in Nillumbik shire. All clubs are well run by an army of conscientious and generous volunteers who donate their time to running rallies, trail rides, competitions, training days, clinics and events to raise funds to maintain their grounds and keep equipment safe, well maintained and up to standard.

The clubs work hard to remain self-sufficient, but it is a juggling act to cover costs while meeting maintenance obligations and upgrading infrastructure and equipment while trying to keep membership fees affordable.

We value the fact that the clubs offer such a supportive sporting and family-oriented environment for their many members, most of whom are women and girls of all ages.

Local riding clubs would really benefit from an investigation into a shared indoor arena to cater for year-round, all-weather training, rallies and competitions, just as many other sports have had purpose-built facilities to cater for their specific needs.

Such a venue would enhance the clubs' opportunities to raise funds to contribute to the facility cost, invest in their home grounds, keep club memberships affordable and grow memberships.

The Equine in Nillumbik Plan will facilitate grant applications, sourcing external funding at state and federal levels to address some of this expenditure.

Horse ownership and riding continue to be hugely popular in Nillumbik. The 'hobby farm' properties with grazing land are suitable for the keeping of animals and horse keeping is one of the largest rural activity sectors supporting our Green Wedge.

Horse owners make a significant contribution to the rural economy of Nillumbik of \$16.9M, supporting a broad range of local businesses and providing employment for residents.

Much time and money are spent on the maintenance of our rural properties, with most landowners acknowledging that good land management is important. Many have participated or are interested in participating in information workshops and would appreciate advice on and support from council with controlling pest plants and animals.

Assistance with emergency management such as a designated 'large animal' evacuation location in Nillumbik is advisable with the risk of bushfire each Summer.

Overall, Equine in Nillumbik is a considered and comprehensive plan, highlighting the important contribution across many elements, that the equine community and our sport / recreation make to Nillumbik Shire.

This is a well-supported plan that should be adopted.

Cath Giles

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to show my support for the Equine in Nillumbik plan.

This plan is a positive step forward for the equine community of Nillumbik, it provides the evidence that the equine community was aware of, but until now, has not had any hard data for, and that is, that the equine sector plays a significant role in supporting the existence of the Green Wedge, financially and within land management and that this can be enhanced, by council providing greater support to the community and it's sport.

Some will ask why does the equine community deserve a plan? isn't it special treatment? and is it only on the agenda because there are councillors in office, that ride horses. This is true, some do ride horses but they also represent rural wards to which horse-riding is a common sport and which attracts businesses to support that activity

Some previous councillors and their supporters would not have the ability to see what the equine community brings to the security of the Green Wedge. They lost that ability, when their children grew up and stopped riding ponies or indeed, they stopped riding themselves.

As the report states. 'The equine sector, has positive economic and social benefits for Nillumbik, with the total economic impact, of approximately \$16.9 million per annum"

As part of the community consultation for the plan, a survey was administered to gain base line data on the sector, that has not been captured before. There was a massive response with over 426 survey complete by business and equine landholders. 330 land holders provide information on their properties.

59%, of equine properties in Nillumbik, are less than 20 acres.

55%, of all equine properties in Nillumbik, home 3 or less horses and 93% five or less.

And 76%, of all equine properties, are either full pasture or mostly pastured properties, with only 3% of horses on bush blocks.

These statistics indicate that the majority of equine properties, have appropriate horse numbers, on land suitable for grazing. Not the horror story, some members of the community would like you to believe.

I have lived and ridden horses in Nillumbik for over 50 decades, been a member of the St Andrews riding club for 20 years. We are the only sport that has things take away from us.

As a child I rode my pony in Boomers, One Tree Hill, Rob Roy, and Peter Franke all these reserves and other trails, we no longer have access too. We had to fight harder than we should have needed too, just to keep riding in the Panton Hill Bushland reserves.

When I was a kid and rode in these reserves, you never saw a mountain bike or even a walker. It was kids on horses, whose fathers would come and chainsaw any

trees that fell and blocked the trail and that trail was made by kids on horses with help from kangaroos and parents.

Why did we need to fight so hard when the ecological value of a reserve in Cottles bridge that hadn't had horses on, had the same value as one that had had horse's on for over 100 decades. Not for any logical, scientifically proven, well-reasoned argument but because of politics and ideologue.

This plan should be adopted as recommended, as it contains nothing contentious, it simply provides evidence to why a level of support from council should be focussed in this area. The plan is not suggesting the council spend millions but it is acknowledging the importance of the equine community and the sport and would like to work with that sector to help improve safety and land management and support businesses and sports clubs. Nothing scary here just the chance to acknowledge and positively support a rural community that has until now had little focussed applied.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Kay Cruse

To Whom it May Concern

>

>Thank you for extending the time in which the community may submit on the  
>Equine in Nillumbik Plan. Though the time is short it is better than  
>nothing. I remind you that the Mayor did promise at the July 2019 OCM  
>that the public would receive the draft plan for consultation as soon as  
>it was available. This is the time honoured way at Nillumbik Shire. Why  
>was it changed for this occasion? Transparent it was not!

>

>As a community stakeholder in this Plan I believe I have a right to be  
>consulted. I am a community stakeholder with legitimate environmental  
>concerns about the damage being done to our precious biodiversity on  
>Council and private land alike by some, not all, horse owners who do not  
>act responsibly. I note this vital issue has not been effectively dealt  
>with in this Plan and I believe it should be a priority.

>

>Nillumbik Council runs an excellent land management assistance program  
>and I would like to know the take up rate by horse owners of this  
>assistance. Are they even aware of its existence? It should be widely  
>advertised. In view of Nillumbik's loss of biodiversity I would also like  
>to see Council assist horse owners to fence off sensitive bushland areas  
>and access to creeks and stream systems to prevent environmental damage,  
>erosion and pollution of waterways. There are horse riders who want to do  
>the right thing by the environment. Council should enforce the rules  
>relating to overstocking of recreational animals as such overstocking  
>contributes to the erosion and pollution mentioned above.

>

>Whilst I do not believe horse riding is a sport it is a legitimate, if  
>elitist, recreational activity in our Shire. Considering that only a  
>small minority of Nillumbik people can afford to keep and ride a horse,  
>it is surprising that this activity has received an enormous amount of  
>support by successive Councils.

>

>I believe the contribution of the horse industry to the Economic  
>Development of our Shire has been vastly over inflated and nothing was  
>offered by participants of last Tuesday night's Future Nillumbik meeting  
>that would make me think differently. I did notice that many of the  
>speakers to whom Councillor Ashton's Dorothy Dixier questions were  
>directed had various pecuniary interests.

>

>I do not wish to see any additional horse trails in Nillumbik bushland.  
>Horse riders are certainly well catered for in Nillumbik and will  
>eventually also be able to use the proposed Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge  
>shared Trail.

>

>The proposal to build an enormous shed (somewhere in the Green Wedge, yet  
>to be determined) will introduce traffic and parking considerations with  
>people on social media already expressing anxiety about the considerable  
>slowing of the traffic as people float their horses to the shed. Not that  
>slowing of the traffic is a bad thing per se but increased driver  
>irritation is not good.

>

>If it is to be built it must go in an already cleared area and should not  
>be paid for by the ratepayer. The Graham Road site has been mentioned by  
>many but it is totally unsuitable. Who is to pay for the extensive  
>rehabilitation of this old tip site?

>

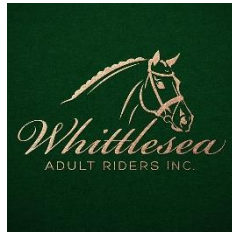
>The proposed shed should not be placed near a Green Wedge township with  
>accompanying loss of amenity for residents. With a predictable increase  
>in traffic it would be dangerous to place it near a school.

>

>Please do not make a decision with indecent haste but make sure that the  
>Mayor's promise of appropriate community consultation follows the Council  
>meeting of 23/6/2020.

>

>Yours sincerely,  
>Colleen Hackett



17<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Nillumbik Council  
Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030

To Whom It May Concern

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan and our club supports this plan.

Whittlesea Adult Riding Club (WAR) is located in the neighbouring shire of the City of Whittlesea and we also have a large equine community within our shire.

Our club has been affiliated with the HRCVA (Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria) since 1992, previously known as Findon Adult Riders. In 2004, the club moved to the township of Whittlesea and changed its name to Whittlesea Adult Riders Inc.

The club moved to their current grounds located on private land owned by the Whittlesea Agricultural Society in 2005. We share our grounds with Whittlesea Pony Club and both clubs share the ongoing grounds maintenance costs and all equipment required to run these equestrian clubs.

WAR currently has a cap of 60 members, 95% are female riding members aged 17yo and older. We hold regular monthly rallies with professional coaches.

**Action 1 - Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities:-**

Our club hosts 4 x Events each year to help fundraise for ongoing running costs and equipment purchases. This also helps cover the cost of our monthly coaching fees, which are not entirely covered by our annual membership fees.

We also have regular working bees to ensure our club grounds remain in top condition and assist with the preparation of the annual Whittlesea Agricultural show held in November each year. Grass slashing is a huge cost to our club/s as we use a private contractor to slash the grounds.

The cost of improving the club grounds infrastructure is extremely expensive, i.e. new sand arenas, fencing and Cross-Country jumps. It takes years of fundraising to enable projects to be planned and

implemented. We rely heavily on volunteer helpers to run our external and internal events as well as donations from the equine retail community to ensure our events are successful and profitable.

We believe if Council could offer club's assistance with grounds slashing/mowing/poison for weed control etc... this would significantly assist many equine clubs each year to then spend the extra money saved on infrastructure or club equipment that is on their wish lists.

Thank you again for allowing our club to comment on part of the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030.

We look forward to hearing about the outcome of the proposed plan in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

*Diana Earp*

Diana Earp  
President  
Whittlesea Adult Riders Inc.





**From:** Narelle Campbell [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 16 June 2020 8:37 AM

**To:** Peter Clarke <[Peter.Clarke@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Clarke@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Peter Perkins <[Peter.Perkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Perkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Karen Egan <[Karen.Egan@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Karen.Egan@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Jane Ashton <[Jane.Ashton@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Jane.Ashton@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Bruce Ranken <[Bruce.Ranken@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Bruce.Ranken@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; Grant Brooker <[Grant.Brooker@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Grant.Brooker@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>; John Dumaresq <[John.Dumaresq@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:John.Dumaresq@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Equine Plan Support

### Morning Councillors

As requested by Councillor Clarke, here is my email of support unreservedly for the above plan. I have also completed the on line comments, spoke at council a week or so ago, and participated in the original survey that was open for the whole of the Nillumbik community.

I support the first ever Nillumbik Equine Plan and its outstanding engagement program. I am pleased all councillors have likewise agreed that the plan is acceptable to you all. The plan demonstrates the benefits to health, wellbeing and outdoor physical activity, land management and local economic activity of the Shire's equestrian participants. It shows equestrian endeavour is embraced predominantly by mature rural women, our children, and in some cases grandchildren. It supports a healthy culture of fun, of sharing, caring for others and for animals, and volunteerism in the rural community.

I am not surprised at the attitude of the two alternate views to council in the Future Nillumbik Committee Meeting. Discrimination in this Shire as evidenced in their behaviour is so entrenched it appears designed to suck all collegiality, joy, wellbeing and value from rural landowning and hobby farming communities, whilst still bleeding every dollar it can from us. Welcome to Nillumbik, the green wedge shire, where you pay for the privilege of being vilified, slandered, undermined, abused and denigrated at every available opportunity by extremist zealots. It is disgusting. This plan can't change it, only council resolve and time can do this.

So the plan that recognises our recreational pursuit and interest, that is the reason we live here, that is why we (begrudgingly) pay exorbitant rates, the plan which costs council next to nothing to implement and brings recognition and satisfaction to many rural landholding families in the rural part of the shire, is on hold for ... "process" and "more engagement". Is it to give the haters, the ideologues, the zealots and the toxin their "say" in a plan that does not impact them, they have no interest in and has no effect on them?

In anticipation of this I have 4 things for council to consider:

- 1. I am becoming increasingly sceptical of the "pristine and fragile" biodiversity these groups expouse** – Our Shire holds major infrastructure, a water catchment, a water and gas pipeline, decommissioned gold mines and high voltage power lines – it has been settled and farmed for over 150 years – anything that may once have been pristine and fragile that was not disturbed by gold mining and not cultivated by farming was finally erased by government appointed infrastructure contractors in the 1980's. We do have swathes of public land that is poorly maintained, some of this land is accessible by trails. At this time of year the area is beautiful – in summer it is terrifying. I am convinced we have some quality biodiversity but am increasingly sceptical of the quality and quantity of it – these groups protest so much that I no longer hear them and are so vitriolic I believe nothing they say .....isn't that sad?
- 2. Activism is not Action - Land improvement and management require effort and**

**costs money – and the problem with activists is they don't spend it and many don't own or manage land** – they want someone else to, often government. Land Management does not occur through activism, it occurs through action. One of the equine plans terrific data findings is the time and effort equine communities, hobby farmers and farmers take in the form of ongoing management action and the investment of their own money to improve and manage the land in Nillumbik that they own.

**3. Nillumbik environmental ideology appears stuck in a 1980's time-warp – science changes and evolves to consider the world holistically.** This is not unusual in Australia where much environmental science has traditionally had a very simplistic and narrow scope, is paid to produce to scope, and is outdated. Environmental Science as a discipline is constantly changing and evolving. There are many examples, but here are three relevant to us:

a. Leadbeater Possum – Nillumbik environmental ideologues still claim logging and rural land managers are the biggest threats to this species (and others). The 2009 Black Saturday bushfires are estimated to have killed more than 55 per cent of the massed species populations in Victoria and moved them from an endangered to a critically endangered species. Science says (Melbourne University Science and Research in 2017, 2018 and this month in 2020) the biggest threat to this and other species is bushfire (followed by climate change). So the ideologues are wrong according to science.

b. Bushfire Risk – Nillumbik environmental ideologues still claim bushfire risk is low and managed under the existing planning scheme and council plans. This is not supported by evidence, management, maintenance, fuel load, residual risk models or climate modelling. Recent research says individual location- based approaches to conservation (like theirs) are doomed to fail in fire-prone landscapes in a warming climate. For conservation planning to be successful, we need co-ordinated forest, fire and conservation management that accounts for these dynamics across the whole landscape, not just in individual locations. So the ideologues are wrong and this is a threat to everything and everyone in our Shire.

c. Horses – Nillumbik environmental ideologues claim horses damage environments and should not be here. In Europe, horses are now recognised as green assets when planning for sustainability to address environmental issues, demonstrating environmental advantages in areas of grazing, biodiversity, land use, tourism and employment. In the Netherlands, Poland, France, England, Spain, Sweden and Iceland, horses are used by governments, farmers and land managers to improve landscapes and are found to provide for greater prevalence of wildlife and improve soil biodiversity and pasture quality. So the ideologies are about 40 years behind the times ....again.

4. Equity in plan preparation should be a feature of local community in Nillumbik and it still isn't - Football, Netball, Basketball, Cricket, Tennis, Golf, Hockey, Soccer, Swimming, are predominantly urban activities at urban facilities. They have plans, investment and infrastructure support by council. Environmental activists involved in Friends of and Landcare as a social and volunteer activity receive special appreciation events, grants opportunities, invitations to participate in free personal development and other acknowledgements from council not afforded to other volunteers. Arts advocates have a plan, a fund, events, and council provide publicity and support of local arts in festivals, events, investments and communications. Equine pursuits are rural. They receive little funding or recognition from council. They have no plan. Volunteers receive no acknowledgement. This is council's opportunity to include us, like they include every other community group – **equity requires council does not discriminate** and supports all recreational activities participated in widely across the shire (crikey there are about 1,000 horse riders - that's more than were playing soccer in Nillumbik when they got their

plan) - I wonder if you will include our activity?

Thanks again - it's a great plan and with the exception of the Future Nillumbik Committee Outcome - has been an engaging and positive experience to be a part of.  
Cheers

Narelle

[We modelled the future of Leadbeater's possum habitat and found bushfires, not logging, pose the greatest threat](#) (2020)

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/1/106/htm> **Green Assets of Equines in the European Context of the Ecological Transition of Agriculture (2020)**

[https://www.ccb.se/Evidence2017/IAF\\_nonconv/Horse\\_sheep\\_goat/Equestriane%20farms.pdf](https://www.ccb.se/Evidence2017/IAF_nonconv/Horse_sheep_goat/Equestriane%20farms.pdf)  
Equine sector comparison between the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland (2017)

The Equine Plan for Nillumbik is great and I fully support it. I would like to thank council for the chance to comment on the plan and support it. We have lived in the Nillumbik community for 24 years as a family, and I grew up in it for nearly 30 years prior to that- an incredible blessing. We are currently members of the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club and we participate in trail riding as a family also. We have attended numerous land management courses run both by the Nillumbik and Whittlesea Councils and gained much knowledge and best practise on caring for our incredible land and the corridors surrounding it. We would love further advise/knowledge on how best to control fox/deer particularly as these are even more of a problem than 20 yrs ago. The Deer are in huge numbers, damaging much bush and private land around us. Very keen to be involved in programs helping manage these to protect the habitat. Increased member bases in land management programs and supporting each other and our efforts are greatly valued.

Action 1 – our club does an incredible amount of work all through volunteers in maintaining and improving the grounds we use, including weeding, blackberry control, mowing, running local family based activities and competitions. But any assistance, particularly in the lead up to bushfire season with grass management etc would be much valued with bigger machinery etc when council is nearby mowing/slashing etc.

Action 6- our club would love to be involved in RDA programs or Riders without horses, but don't currently have the volunteer base to run these properly.

We used to ride to the pony club grounds, but the speed of vehicles and the drivers lack of understanding/awareness of zooming past riders has made this more difficult and much more dangerous. Increased signage could help as it may often be 'tourists' coming for a drive through our area who are unaware of native animals, and horse behaviour and their closeness to roads.

Shared trails are greatly valued by our immediate family and neighbours. There are many of us who use the few developed ones around for walking the dogs, cycling, jogging and horse riding. They can be very effectively and safely shared and are a great asset to our area. We love them and would love more of them linking various trails together so we can enjoy being outdoors as a family, and exploring our amazing little streets, reserves and 'jewels' of our amazing local area. We particularly noticed this during this "Covid time" as we spent more times in the outdoors together on various modes- bikes, horses and jogging together.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment on the Equine plan. I fully support it and look forward to working with council to enjoy and protect our land and parks together in the future.

To Whom It May Concern,

Firstly, on behalf of all horse riders in our Shire, I personally would like to thank the Nillumbik Council for allowing us the opportunity to provide feedback in the hope that we can adopt an equine plan within our Shire. I strongly support this great initiative.

This is an important strategy for our sport/recreation and I'm really pleased that finally our sport is getting some recognition other than the sports that are already well funded.

My name is Shevaun Sly and I'm a local horse rider who has lived in the Nillumbik Shire for 29 years.

I've always been a member at our local pony club and adult rider clubs (specifically Kangaroo Ground and Hurstbridge) since the age of 5. I'm also a current member on the Hurstbridge Adult Riders Committee Group.

As an active equine member in the Shire, I attend weekly club lessons, I represent Hurstbridge at competitions and I also trail ride with local family and friends around our beautiful Nillumbik trails.

In regard to the Equine in Nillumbik plan, please see my thoughts and comments below.

***Appendix A:***

***Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.***

**Action 1:** At Hurstbridge Adult Riders, we have a fantastic bunch of volunteers amongst our members who generously donate their time to our club to assist in fundraising, hosting competitions and maintaining our beautiful grounds through working bees. Membership is mainly made up of women and girls in a supportive, encouraging environment.

Fundraising is a crucial part of our club, otherwise we would simply not be able to maintain our grounds and facilities provided to members, as sadly membership fees do not cover the day-to-day running costs of the club.

**Action 6:** We are fortunate enough that low membership numbers are not an issue at Hurstbridge Adult Riders. Each year we have a waiting list of local horse riders wishing to become either a full or associate member.

Hurstbridge has a wait list as our facilities are at capacity both in terms of parking and arena space.

### ***Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure***

**Action 3:** The plan would enable seeking grant funding for clubs and for the potential development of an indoor arena - State and Federal Govt funding.

While there is no need for a State-level facility, it would be fantastic to see a shared indoor facility that would not only offer all weather riding and training for clubs and local riders, it would also be a fantastic opportunity to co-host competitions amongst local pony clubs and adult riding clubs as well as casual arena hire.

**Actions 5-10:** As previously mentioned, I utilise the local trials around Nillumbik weekly with family and friends. Not only is it a great way to exercise our horses, it's also a great way to meet other locals sharing similar interests.

Unfortunately due to poor driver behaviour, it's simply too dangerous to ride along the main roads, so I try to opt for local off-road shared trials with other horse riders, local residents walking their dogs and runners where I can.

Off-road trails let me safely enjoy our local neighbourhood, connect with family and friends and appreciate the natural environment.

It would be great to see more safe off-road trails available to share.

### ***Land, pest, emergency management and safety***

**Action 1:** The fire season is daunting for anyone who lives in a bushfire prone area, however, as an equine owner I always worry about the safety of my horses during the bushfire season.

We have a plan in place for our property, however, there is no specific fire refuge area for large animals within our Shire. It would be great to see this issue addressed.

**Actions 2 & 3:** Sadly there is a lack of driver awareness when it comes to horses within our Shire. Unfortunately some non-horse people don't know how to act when driving past or around local horse riders when on the roads. Most of the time this is no fault of their own, it comes down to a lack of education/awareness that there is local residents riding horses on the roads and what the proper etiquette should be.

From personal experience many drivers panic when they see horses standing on the side of the road waiting to cross or when following a horse float, often driving past too quickly and beeping. More education around driver awareness would be warmly welcomed to ensure everyone gets home safely. It would also be great to see more signage indicating to be aware of horse riders within the area around our local roads.

I have had so many drivers pull over, fascinated and excited to see us out riding our horses on the weekend, often asking if their children can pat the horses and asking general questions regarding what the right and wrong way is to act around horses. More education may eliminate this issue.

**Actions 4, 5 & 6:** I am very property proud, spending a lot of time and money managing our property and paddocks to ensure they're well maintained by managing weeds, pastures to ensure good grazing coverage for our horses, and during the summer months ensuring our property has been cleaned up prior to the fire season.

One thing we do struggle with is pest management, more specifically rabbits, foxes and deer. It would be fantastic to have more resources available to us in managing this issue. In most cases, a healthy and well-maintained property reflects a healthy and happy horse.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I absolutely support and agree with the Nillumbik equine plan and it's an area that needs to be protected and developed for future residents and visitors to enjoy safely.

I have lived and ridden in Nillumbik for approximately 35 years. I have always been a member of a pony club/adult riding club in the municipality as well as riding the local roads and supporting local businesses in the equine industry plus cafes/wineries and shops that we ride to. Our area is so unique and one of the last pockets of decent riding in Melbourne as land is snapped up for development. To have the opportunity for funding to improve what we have, including all weather stadiums, safe places to ride, drivers with horse awareness is a basic need and right. I would love to see more programs regarding road safety and more funding towards off road tracks so that we can enjoy nature and all that Nillumbik stands for.

Thank you

Kayleen Chatfield-Jones  
Resident



My Name is Peter Bell. I have lived in the Eltham then Nillumbik Shire for over 55 years.

I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan which I fully Support.

My wife Jan and I have lived on our current property in St Andrews for over 35 years. Over that time our family has been involved in the local equine community and I have seen the significant contribution equine activities make to the rural Nillumbik community.

We are both life members of the St Andrews Horse and Pony Club as well as the St Andrews Trail riding Club.

Our Family joined the St Andrews Pony club when it was a small club on leased grounds in Olives Lane St Andrews. The club had never had permanent grounds from when it was formed in 1979. In 1992 Melbourne Water were preparing to sell land in Clintons Rd. Smiths Gully. With the support of our local councilor, the club put a proposal to the Shire of Eltham to purchase Lot 6 Clintons Rd for permanent grounds for the St Andrews Horse and Pony Club. The Club agreed to contribute \$30,000, over a number of years, and our proposal was successful.

In early 1993 the Shire of Eltham purchased the land; the club having contributed an initial \$8,000. On 24/11/93 the club received a letter from John McDonough, Manager. Administration, acknowledging the agreement between Council and the Horse and Pony Club and "I would also like to confirm that the Horse and Pony Club can now take control of the Grounds."

Six Families guaranteed a \$10,000 bank loan and with the support of local businesses, tradespeople, club members and the community, we built the club house, ménages, and cross-country course all with voluntary labor.

The club grew from 29 riding members to peak at over 90 riding members plus families. The grounds and club house are a much-valued community asset hosting weddings, celebrations, meetings and other special events.

This is an example of the dedication and commitment of not only the equine community but our local community as a whole and the way that equine associated activities draw the community together and the role they play in rural communities.

I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.

NB. On the 13<sup>th</sup> 1994 a \$22,000 debt was transferred from the Shire of Eltham to the Shire of Nillumbik and was paid by the Club in accordance with agreed terms.

# **Equine In Nillumbik**

## **Submission to Council**

### ***Jeremy Loftus-Hills***



#### **CONTEXT**

Equine in Nillumbik (hereinafter 'EIM') is said to be consistent with the Council Plan, Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 20130 (draft) and the Green Wedge Management Plan, amongst others.

#### **COUNCIL PLAN**

Council flags its intention to develop an Equine Industry and Activity Strategy as a priority action 4.1.5 in its Council Plan. It is one of 6 priority actions meant to 'Encourage investment and development within the Shire to increase economic development and local employment, and broaden the rate base.' The intention is clearly focused on economic growth. References 4, 8 and 14 indicate that Council commissioned AECOM consulting to undertake that work, and that it was completed in July 2019. For the purposes of the following I assume that it is identical with 'Assessment of Equestrian Investment Opportunities' currently available on Nillumbik's website.

EIM is a statement of intentions giving rise to 34 actions. Outcomes for about 6 of these are quantifiable. The intention is evidently to grow community participation and improve club and related infrastructure. It relies on a false economic model and if implemented will amount to a breach of Council's responsibilities to make efficient and effective use of resources.

#### **GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This plan defines the use of horses in the green wedge as 'primarily for recreation'. Horse users are required to keep and ride horses in a manner 'consistent with environmental protection'. However the document makes no reference to environmental protections. Keeping and riding of hooved animals on Australian soils is known to risk the sustainability of associated ecological cycles and the health of flora and fauna. Protections would typically include:

- Mapping of land suitable for horses considering slope, fence length to paddock area ratio, stoniness, soil structure, sandiness, tree cover and access to natural water courses.
- Horse management issues and aims including stocking rates, worming, manure management, use of fertilisers, rotation through paddocks, weed control, supplementary feed specifications, pasture growth control (versus bushfire fuel control), pasture repair, Holding infrastructure, grazing behaviour and mixed / cross grazing.
- Stocking rates based on carrying capacity calculated using rating of livestock (DELWP specifications) and rainfall. On land that meets the above criteria I submit no more than 1 horse per hectare.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (Draft)**

Council is yet to adopt this strategy which states as an objective '*document the presence, contribution and opportunity of equine in Nillumbik*' which is listed as 1 of 7 means of '*Showcasing Nillumbik's visitor, recreation and cultural economy*'. There is no rationale underpinning the use of equine for this purpose, except to pre-empt the intended investment in the improvement of facilities for locals and visitors who ride competitively or for recreation.

I note in this context that the document does not include an analysis of the market for 'equine', the level of demand internal and external to the LGA, segmentation into distinct users such as riders, owners, owner riders or user preferences for example trail rides or competition. It does define the green wedge as Nillumbik's key competitive advantage, while restating 4 times the absence of an indoor arena as a weakness in provision of Nillumbik equine infrastructure.

### **CONTEXT SUMMARY**

Council's plan, draft EDS and adopted GWMP do not speak with one voice on equine in Nillumbik. Together they reveal an intention to use an alleged equine industry as a means of growing the local economy, but for different purposes, scales and in different regulatory contexts. They highlight certain faults and missing sections in the EIM, including:

**Lack of clarity:** The Australian and New Zealand Industry Classification System does not recognise Equine as an industry. Instead there are 42 horse related industries. Only 5 of these form part of AECOM's economic analysis.

**Obscurity of Purpose:** If the purpose is to grow recreational riding, there is no reliable analysis that subsidising recreational horse-riding best deliver that outcome. If the purpose is to encourage environmentally sustainable horse use in the green wedge, there is no analytical or strategic basis provided. If the intention is to build equine's commercial potential there is no business case, and no valid performance indicators established.

**Abuse of process:** Council should know that AECOM's economic case is based on a discredited and widely abused approach to economic modelling. Abused to such an extent that the ABS stopped publishing multipliers in 2001/02 because:

*'There was considerable debate in the user community as to their suitability for the purposes to which they were most commonly applied, that is, to produce measures of the size and impact of a particular project to support bids for industry assistance of various forms.'* (Productivity Commission 2013)

Council should also be aware that AECOM was the consulting firm providing economic and policy advice to the Macedon Ranges Council in 2012-16. It is a matter of public record that the modelling underpinning that work was faulty, leading to the abandonment of a \$40 indoor arena project, and a waste of hundreds of thousands of tax and rate payer funds spent on a feasibility study, planning and public consultation.

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Methodology:** The desktop research is heavily reliant on information provided by Equestrian Victoria. EV is an affiliate of Equestrian Australia which earlier this month went into voluntary liquidation. While the cause is not yet definitive, it appears related to board overreach, mismanagement of member funds and over reliance on taxpayer funding.

The information in EIM is highly selected for effect. It fails to mention the characterization of equine as fragmented with the previously well resourced Equestrian Victoria oversees 8 disciplines while another 10 disciplines have no coordinating body. Club members are relatively dissatisfied with club management and resource allocation decisions, as clubs compete for public funds.

The reliance on ABS data sounds impressive but is misleading. The data AECOM relies upon most are the industry multipliers. Industry multipliers form the basis of input output analysis but, as AECOM itself acknowledges on pages 20-21, they are not designed for this purpose. In the inflation of equine's economic impact in the EIM is a prime example of the sort of abuse the productivity commission assessed in its 2013 report.

The EIM contains no information about stakeholder consultation, only that they happened, and input was not adequately balanced with views wider community.

## **ECONOMIC MODELLING AND ACCOUNTING**

Pages 19 and 20 of the 'assessment of Investment opportunities' set out the data for the input output model. Here are the flaws in the conceptual approach:

### *Accounting failures*

The list of 15 categories of household/business expenditure includes assets such as private infrastructure and equipment. These have not been annualized yet are totalled with itemized expenses to calculate annual outlays. At current discount rates this builds in an overstatement of about 11%.

The survey reports 100% of consumer/business outlays as contributions to the Nillumbik economy. It fails to account for the cost intermediate goods. For example if an owner were to buy a horse blanket, made in China, for \$500, it would be entered into Initial Expenditure as an economic contribution to the Shire's economy, regardless of the fact that arguably \$150 flows back to the suppliers in China. It is surprising that AECOM makes this error, as input/output analyses typically use formulae that attempt to account for intermediate goods. There is no easy way to adjust the accounts for this error.

In the same way it fails to account for the cost of intermediate goods, the model fails to account for the cost of goods sold. For example it may cost the local blanket retailer \$10 to sell each blanket.

### **Misconceptions**

Multipliers are prepared for national accounts and cannot be applied in this way. The particular multipliers used by AECOM are apparently selected as best fit without explanation. ABS does not recognize an 'equine industry', and therefore has never developed specific multipliers for this purpose, even at the national level.

The multipliers have the effect of tripling the economic contribution, meaning that for every dollar spent on a categorized item, there is a threefold public benefit. This is so unlikely as to be preposterous.

AECOM itself summarises some of the reasons why the model cannot be trusted in subsequent pages. For more background, and an impartial view, I refer Council to the 2013 Productivity Commission Research Note: *On Input-Output Tables – Uses and Abuses*.

Finally it is important to note that the initial expenditures are costs to the participants. Public subsidies are justified if there is public benefit. The EIM quotes participants who report health benefits:

*‘equestrian activities not only provide a positive impact on the physical health of riders, but also on their mental health’ (EIM P.9)*

Equestrian Victoria has measured the national contribution of equestrian sport to these health outcomes at \$12.7m. On a population basis, the 426 households reporting expenses for AECOM’s survey experienced health benefits (mental and physical) on average to the value of \$78.25. Council is elected to weigh the allocation of public funds to subsidise a small health benefit for 0.8% of the population against subsidising these health outcomes in more cost effective ways.

## **Conclusion**

To the extent that Council has been seduced by AECOM’s inflated conclusions around financial benefits. This submission is meant to sound a warning. In terms of basic accounting and economic principles, there is no valid evidence that subsidising this particular activity will deliver a net public benefit better than any other use of the same funds.

There is reason to believe that the expansion of the activity deeper into the green wedge, without suitable educational and regulatory programs and protections, could end up costing more in land reclamation costs than even AECOM’s inflated economic benefits could possibly recover. The community would be better served by a Council that takes a more transparent, inclusive and professional approach to local recreation policy. It would also be helpful if public consultation processes were not so tightly scheduled.

## **Recommendations**

1. Conduct an economic cost benefit analysis based on valid economic modelling and accounting practices.
2. Conduct a detailed demand analysis including segmentation of users and consideration of equestrian disciplines and consumer preferences
3. Include a section on particular environmental protections flagged in the green wedge management plan and detailed above.
4. Assess the public benefits accruing from the proposed investment in advocacy and support activities against comparable investments using a professional and transparent process.
5. Include a schedule in land designated for horse use that limits stocking rates based on best practice but permits no more than 1 horse per hectare.

## SUBMISSION

### EQUINE IN NILLUMBIK PLAN

I am the owner of an agistment business in Kangaroo Ground [REDACTED] catering for approximately 25-30 horses and their owners. My agistees are involved in various equine activities from dressage and eventing, natural horsemanship, clicker training and trail riding. Many attend the various clubs in the vicinity, others trail ride on the local roads and we have a number of instructors who also visit and conduct clinics.

I also had a long association with the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club over approx. 15 years in various roles from Secretary to District Commissioner. My granddaughter is hopefully going to become a member there also next year.

ON BEHALF OF MYSELF, ALL MY AGISTEES AND FUTURE MEMBERS OF LOCAL CLUBS THANK YOU FOR GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON AND OFFER OUR SUPPORT FOR THIS PLAN. I ENCOURAGE COUNCIL TO ADOPT IT.

#### **Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.**

From my many years of association with local Clubs and no doubt more to come, I support all these Actions to assist the Clubs whose members and supporters work so hard to provide a great facility and opportunity for both the young pony club members but also the many adults who enjoy riding activities also. The Pony Club experience is invaluable for the younger members of our community particularly engaging them in healthy outdoor activities, developing a sense of community, teamship and responsibility for the health and well being of their horses.

Riders without Horses, Riding Develops Ability programs and Riding for the Disabled are all very worthwhile organisations which should be supported by council.

A lot of these clubs are run by volunteers so any support offered by Council would be greatly appreciated.

#### **Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure**

All these actions are also very worthwhile particularly Action 3 where Council could investigate the potential of a larger shared equine facility for local clubs to share and also offering a venue for private businesses to hire to conduct clinics etc without the need to travel large distances to more remote facilities. I am sure a business plan would support such a venture.

Actions 5-10

A number of my agistees trail ride in the area but a lot are discouraged because of the lack of suitable, safe trails. There are some close by but no safe means of getting to them without negotiating dangerous roads or transporting their horse.

These trails could also be used by families for walking, bicycling etc which was particularly necessary during the recent lockdown. Most horse riders are very respectful of riding in environmentally sensitive areas so should not be shut out of Parks Victoria or Melbourne Water areas.

### **Support Equine Economic Development**

My business supports a number of local equine and non-equine businesses and services who in return support the local clubs through sponsorship, lectures, clinics etc. We have visiting farriers, equine dentists, vets, saddle fitters, massage therapists, instructors and of course also require assistance with fencing, weed management, pest control, driveway and track maintenance, arena maintenance, fertiliser spreading, farm management, vehicle servicing etc.

### **Land, pest, emergency management and safety**

#### **Action 1**

Assistance with the preparation of emergency management information and property bushfire plans for horse and property owners including possible option for large animal evacuation.

#### **Action 2-3**

A driver education program would assist people to be more aware of driving responsibly and safely near horses, even targeted at cyclists also who aren't aware that a silent bike coming up behind a horse can cause a horse to shy and dislodge its rider. Improved road signage would assist.

#### **Action 4-6**

Whilst we have been conducting our business and caring for our 140 acre property for over 25 years and have a policy of two paddocks/horse/group of horses thereby allowing the opportunity to properly maintain the paddocks through regular rotation allowing fertilising, weed spraying etc. a number of newer property owners in the area have little experience.

These actions would assist new owners to correctly manage their properties and control vermin etc.

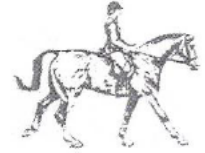
Financial assistance with the control of noxious weeds, blackberries, rabbits and deer would also assist enormously as these costs are prohibitive for a number of landowners.

Thank you,  
Jan Sharpe





## Eastern Region Adult Riding Club Inc.



17<sup>th</sup> June 2020

The Nillumbik Councillors  
Nillumbik Council  
Civic Drive  
Greensborough Vic 3088

Dear Councillors,

Re: Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030

My name is Julie Norris and I am the President of Eastern Region Adult Riding Club (E.R.A.R.C) based in Eltham Lower Park. On behalf of all of our Members I am submitting our definite and unequivocal support for the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.

Firstly we wish to congratulate and thank the Councillors who have initiated and supported the development of this eagerly awaited plan on behalf of the varied Equine groups throughout Nillumbik. Many of us have participated in the various surveys and workshops to assist with information gathering along the way. We wish to sincerely thank you, and also acknowledge all of the hard working equine groups and individuals who have worked tirelessly to produce this impressive and well-structured Plan.

Eastern Region Adult Riding Club Inc. (E.R.A.R.C.) is based in Eltham Lower Park along with the Eltham Pony Club where we co-share the leased land at the rear section of Eltham Lower Park. The Pony Club is one of the earliest Clubs to be formed in Victoria founded in 1953, and Eastern Region was one of the foundation Clubs formed in Victoria upon the initiation of the Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria (HRC AV) in 1982. We were formed that year and have co-shared the Club grounds since

We feel very blessed to be situated at our grounds in Eltham Lower Park amongst the natural environment of towering Gum trees, an abundance of beautiful wild birds, well-manicured sports ovals, and have boundaries that support bike and pedestrian paths and a large off-lead dog oval. We love that we have such a varied array of sports and lifestyle activities around us. We have many walkers, bike riders and dog owners stop and watch our Equestrian activities each week, and we feel that we add an extra layer of activity and unique interest within the park that cannot be seen normally at other outer suburban sporting complexes and walking/bike paths.

We often laugh about reversal of fortune for modern horse owners nowadays Up until the invention of the motor car – Horses worked tirelessly to provide a means for their owners to make a living – providing the back breaking work within agriculture, mining, or transportation industries. In this modern world - we the owners are now the ones who are working tirelessly in order to keep our horses in a lifestyle they can enjoy!

But in amongst the humour of that scenario we also appreciate how fortunate we are to live in Nillumbik, its easy commuting distance into the CBD for work, yet we all still have the opportunity to reside within such a diverse and nature rich environment. We also appreciate and hope that the sport of Equitation can be acknowledged amongst the other multitude of sports on offer in our Shire. To have this Plan accepted means that our Equine sporting pursuits can be taken seriously and may provide future opportunities to obtain Government funding and grants. This will assist in enhancing our facilities and ensuring we can have safer areas to ride whether it be at Club grounds or out trail-riding- this will hopefully benefit both ourselves and many future generations.



Whilst we benefit enormously from living in the Green wedge and having the opportunity to live and/or agist our horses on small rural properties, we also feel we contribute back in many ways to Businesses and enterprising individuals who run businesses within Nillumbik. Horse ownership means that we are constantly requiring an array of good and services which we mainly obtain from local business owners. Items ranging from rural fencing, electric and solar fencing, water troughs, seeding and pasture improvement, weed management - all these items are in constant demand. We also utilise services from local Saddleries and Feed stores, Vets, Farriers, Equine Dentists, Natural Equine Therapists, Saddle fitters, Horse Rug manufacturers and repairers, Horse Float building and repairs – all these businesses can be found within Nillumbik..

The list could continue – and I now understand why I may never have the chance to retire!

Whilst reviewing the Plan we have noted some items we would like to comment on, add to some of the ideas and support many of the concepts

### **1. Assistance from Council with maintenance of the grounds**

In a perfect world we would love to have a collaborative relationship with the Council in dealing with the many land maintenance tasks that come with larger plots of land – such as mowing, slashing and weed management. We often see the Council maintenance staff working with their machinery on our neighbouring sporting ovals and open spaces (used by the public) surrounding our grounds and wish that our grounds could also **be included** in these necessary maintenance tasks.

Apart from the sheer efficiency of having these tasks performed by experts using the right equipment - it would ensure our grounds are kept in a fire safe manner leading up to the summer months. Whilst we do our best to try and keep on top of this – we don't really have the right equipment, nor at times, the expertise to complete these tasks efficiently and safely in comparison to the Council maintenance team.

From an environmental perspective it would make sense to have all of the weeds controlled by the Council Team to ensure they are treated at the same time – with the correct and appropriately approved weed spray to stop the subsequent seeding cycle. This would also ensure proper environmental concerns are maintained for the entire park.

### **2. Restrictions with facilities in being able to run Competitions for fund-raising purposes**

As it states in the Plan the maintenance of the grounds and sand arenas monopolise most of our fund raising efforts – Eltham Pony Club and ourselves have invested many of our hard-earned funds over the years into enhancing the sand arenas within our grounds, and improving the fencing around the boundaries. In the past this has been achieved by running large Competitions at the Club grounds. We are finding that the ability to run large competitions nowadays is becoming difficult – with many of the safety and public health rules hard to implement. Items such as:

- We do not have a toilet block, only one Portaloo. In the past we were told that a toilet block could not be provided due to the closeness of the creek running nearby. So if running large competitions we have to hire extra Portaloo's which can be costly. It also means we are not able to cater for people with disabilities. However recently a new Public Toilet block has been built in a new Car park area about 400 metres outside the boundary of our grounds – so we are now wondering if we could perhaps now apply to have proper toilet facilities added?
- Car and Float parking can be an issue for running competitions – We have a small car park near the sand arenas which works fine for internal Club activities – as we can fit up to 20 vehicles there. But for hosting large competitions – competitors must park vehicles a fair distance away at a carpark towards the rear of the grounds - quite a distance away the Club rooms, Canteen, Arenas and toilet. If we have a reasonable amount of rain - the paths used to cross the small waterway between the Car park and the rest of the facilities can flood – resulting in people having to wade through water to gain access to the rest of Club grounds – not ideal.
- We have many other items that we would need to invest in to get our grounds up to a good safety standard in order to host Competitions – extra yards to ensure horses can be kept safely contained, extra access to running water, updating our Club room/Canteen facilities, etc.. all outside the scope of what we can afford currently.

- This is where a large Equestrian complex within Nillumbik would be ideal – so that facilities for running competitions could be set up permanently and MANY local Clubs could hire/use these top notch facilities to run fabulous competitions. The grounds at Yarrambat Park would be ideal for this sort of Complex given they already have the following facilities:
  - An excellent cross country course,
  - multiple day yards for horses,
  - large grass and sand areas for arenas.
  - Canteen facilities
  - Equipment sheds,
  - easy access from the Ring road

It would make sense to have one venue that could host an array of competitions – and would certainly attract MANY competitors from all around Melbourne and surrounding regions to travel to Competitions held there. This would then have a flow effect for local businesses too – with people requiring food and drinks, the possibility for local Sponsors to provide Trade stands at Competitions, as well as the requirement for food vans, trips to local cafes/restaurants/pubs/bottle shops, accommodation, fuel, farriers and saddlery /horse feed supplies.

**This would also become a much needed safe haven for horse owners to seek shelter for their horses and themselves during the threat of bushfires.**

The grand vision of having an Indoor arena amongst all these facilities would be a suburb bonus. We currently do not have access to an Indoor arena within Nillumbik and it would be a true jewel in the crown for all of the local Equestrian Clubs It would also be a terrific venue for RDA groups offering a safer environment for the riders and hardworking RDA volunteers - ensuring their programs can continue to run without being impacted by the colder and hotter times of the year.

### **3. Pursuit of safe trail riding paths**

The continued development of safe trails would be terrific and very much appreciated. It is getting very difficult to find safe places to trail ride away from the ever increasing traffic hazards. It would give horse, bike and hikers the opportunity to truly enjoy the many diverse areas of our Shire – whilst staying on defined tracks so that our environment is preserved. Reading through some of the Plans that are in development makes for a very exciting future for many outdoor activities and the Council is to be truly congratulated in having the forward vision on ensuring these can be developed and enjoyed by many in our Community – and would no doubt serve as an attraction for many people outside our Shire to come and enjoy what we are privileged to have.

Having our Equine activities acknowledged within Nillumbik is something we have all hoped for and we are truly grateful that you have provided us with this opportunity – it will have far reaching effects for ourselves and many generations ahead of us - and that is a legacy to be truly proud of.

Many thanks again for this opportunity.

Kindest Regards,

*Julie Norris*

Julie Norris  
President ERARC Inc.

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Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club Inc.



Registered Association: A0005542H

12/06/2020

Dear Nillumbik Council,

RE: Submission of support for the 'Equine in Nillumbik Plan" from Hurstbridge Horse and pony Club members

I thank the Nillumbik council for the opportunity to comment and support the 'Equine in Nillumbik Plan'. I have been the President of the Hurstbridge horse and pony Club for 3 years, and am the parent of 2 children who ride at the club. I have grown up in the area and am a member of the Hurstbridge adult riders club and enjoy trail riding around the many trails in the Hurstbridge area also.

Hurstbridge Horse and pony Club currently have 42 members ranging in ages from 4 years to 20 years. Our grounds are shared by the Hurstbridge Adult riders Club and are leased from the Nillumbik council. Our pony club hold monthly rallies and regular competitions. The aims of pony club are the safety of the rider, the comfort of the horse, and the enjoyment of the rider and the progress of the rider. The Pony Club aim is not to produce individual riders of exceptional ability, rather to help ALL members improve their riding skills and to enjoy the experience. Our club is very social and has seen a growth and enhancement in participation of members over the last 12 months. Our club relies heavily on volunteers and has a strong level of commitment from members, parents/carers to maintain our grounds, run our canteen and fundraise through 2-3 competitions annually.

Our club gives the 'Equine In Nillumbik Plan' our full support. Equine activity encourages a healthy outdoor lifestyle, a connection with nature and social connectivity. All of our members chose to live in

Nillumbik due to the availability of suitable land for keeping horses. Horse ownership is a significant part of Nillumbik today.

As a club we agree with everything in the 'Equine in Nillumbik Plan' as it promotes what our club is aiming to achieve and supports horses and riders in our local area.

Kind regards,

Neen Tatnall

Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club President





Dear council members,

Thank you for opportunity to comment on **Equine in Nillumbik Plan**.

My name is Steven Grayden. I write to you representing the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club, of which I am the president. I write to let you know that we whole-heartedly **support the plan**.

Our Club began in 1967 and has been a central art of the community. Membership is currently approximately 60 families, which translates as an activity for approximately 250 local residents.

We meet for rallies once a month, but our grounds are used on a daily basis for social riding, training and lessons. We enjoy sharing our ground with the Kangaroo Ground Adult Riders club. We also host competitions a few times a year and also camps every school holidays, where children from all over Victoria enjoy a wonderful social time and expert riding tuition. Last year we hosted a contingent of touring Chinese riders at our summer camp. We also host riding clinics a few times of the year with attendance of up to 100 riders.

There in total approximately 3000 people enjoy the use of our grounds for equestrian activities throughout the year.

Please consider and accept the comments below in support of this plan and its actions as provided by club members.

**Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.**

**Action 1 - Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities**

Our club membership fees cover the mandatory Pony Club Victoria fee and insurance, as well as a portion of the running costs of the property. The cost of running rallies, which includes \$1500 per month for instructors, and the cost for any maintenance or upgrades to the grounds need to come from our fund raising efforts. As much as possible is done by volunteer labour. The donations of time from our club members is amazing. Members and friends of the club are so generour with their donations of time, goods and services. It does take its toll though and the enjoyment of the club can be overshadowed by the constant work to keep it going. We would love as a club to have

discussions on how Council could help with this challenge, not necessarily just through financial help but with expert assistance and strategy for running things smoothly and efficiently.

**Action 2 - Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long term viability**

We consider our club to be very fortunate to own our own grounds, and the care of this land is paramount to our activities as a club. We enjoy sharing our grounds with the wider equestrian community, and see our club as having great potential for wider community support and enjoyment. We are willing to explore further possibilities of how our club and its grounds can be an asset to the wider equestrian community in Nillumbik.

**Action 4 - Council to work with the equine sector to promote and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State Government grant programs.**

The club has applied for and received small grants over the years, but since we own our property we do not qualify for a lot of the programs. We would like the opportunity to demonstrate how we can be of use to the wider community and therefore how our grounds can benefit the shire as a whole. We welcome any help and education on how to identify suitable grants and how to write successful grant applications.

**Action 6 - Council to work with the equine clubs to grow participation and promote the Riders without Horses and Riding Develops Ability programs.**

The club is a lovely family oriented club so we always have young riders wishing to join the club. We do have difficulty though in retaining older riders as our facilities are not the standard of more advanced riders, particularly the cross country course. We would love to discuss with council how we might be able to upgrade our grounds for older riders to maintain contact with our club, which helps with the running of the club as the more experienced riders remain with us.

**Action 7 - Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities.**

As the clubs are run on volunteers, any support from council to support these volunteers would be welcome. We believe that council could use our club to gather those who would like training in land care and property management. That way our knowledge base would increase as a community as well as our work getting done, and hopefully this would be of benefit across the shire for the health of equine properties and the general environment.

We would also love to find out if any of council's assets might be available for borrowing, for example grading for our carpark, spraying equipment for weed

management, large mowers for keeping the grass down in summer months. This would save us a lot of time and money, hopefully without too much expense for council.

### **Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure**

These actions are about looking at what is out there and if we can work smarter as clubs and support each other to remain viable instead of working in the silos we often do. It is looking at securing the future of all clubs and the different disciplines and how best we can achieve this.

#### **Action 1 - Council to work with the equine community to understand and promote shared infrastructure and resource opportunities between clubs to improve facilities and reduce cost for critical maintenance.**

We welcome this idea and think we could be a great asset in this, and would appreciate any efficiencies that could be introduced, like equipment hire/borrowing as stated above.

#### **Action 2 - Council, in collaboration with the equine community to develop an Equine Infrastructure Plan to identify how the current sites can be improved to maximise their potential.**

Our grounds are a great example of the natural environment blending with and being cared for in harmony with equine activities. We would welcome any more ideas or opportunities, for example the development of more riding trails, where ours and other riding clubs could be hubs between the trails.

#### **Action 3 - Council to investigate potential of a larger shared equine facility for clubs and viability of an indoor arena for competitions, training and RDA.**

We do not believe that a large shared facility is required or appropriate in the shire, but the development of smaller shared hubs could be worth investigating. A smaller facility that can be shared would be great. There is especially need for good cross country facilities, as well as an indoor facility for all weather riding so that smaller facilities can be of more use throughout the year in all weather.

### **Actions 5-10**

These actions are mainly around shared trails. Our club does on occasion have trail rides in the area for member participation, as do our friends in KG Adult Riders Club.

A lot of our club members and their family, as well as non-club riders do trail ride in the area. Some riders, including my own children, ride on trails to the pony club for rallies and practice. We therefore support safe shared trails for horse riders to use.

Families and the community can share good trails for horse riding, cycling, walking. Multi-use trails are safer and more enjoyable for all trail users. Money spent on shared trails does not only benefit horse riders, but walkers and cyclists too.

### **Support Equine economic development**

Our club is supported by local local equine and non-equine business through their services and also through sponsorships in the form of event funding and prizes for competitions.

We enjoy supporting these local businesses in return and see the increased presence of any economic activity that supports horse owners as a positive development in our community.

### **Land, pest, emergency management and safety**

These Actions apply to all horse property owners in Nillumbik, those that keep their horses at home and those who offer Agistment services.

#### **Action 1 - Council to develop emergency management information to assist horse owners during the fire season, including possible options for large animal evacuation.**

There is an urgent need for a fire safe refuge options for large animals in our area. We encourage the development of a working party with CFA, vets and equine owners and clubs to develop emergency management plans and information.

#### **Action 2 - The equine sector, in collaboration with Council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers.**

Many of our members have experiences dangerous encounters with careless or uneducated drivers. We believe that this would e improved with greater driver awareness of horses and horse floats. We would welcome the opportunity to have input on types and placement of signage on road ways to assist with this aim

#### **Action 3 - Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads.**

We would welcome the opportunity to have input on types and placement of signage on road ways to assist with this aim

Some drivers appear to consciously drive aggressively past horse riders. Education efforts would be much appreciated by our community.

#### **Action 4 - Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.**



Any education opportunities would be welcomed by our club, and we welcome the use of our grounds for any workshops or gatherings to that end. Club families have individually attended council sponsored and run events, and have seen great results in the health of their properties. We welcome the development of these initiatives in the local equine community to ensure our activities continue to blend with the environment and improve the care of this land.

**Action 5 - Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: • Weeds • Rabbits • Deer • Foxes • Blackberry**

We are keen to be part of any programs in any way possible. As landholders and land managers, we would welcome being able to access pest management programs and also to be made aware of any other management programs we may be eligible for, as families and as a club.

**Action 6 - Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.**

KG Pony Club understand that health land management provides for health horses and so would be happy to promote any workshop offered by council to members that would support and aid members to achieve this.

Thank you for taking to time to read this submission in support of the Equine in Nillumbik plan. We look forward to its positive implementation and welcome any involvement we may have in the process.

## Nillumbik Equine

To be clear, I agree that horse riding in Nillumbik is a wonderful activity to have access to. It allows the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, socialise with other horse enthusiasts and exercise for the benefit of mind and body.

After reading the 'Equine in Nillumbik' report, the main goals appear to be:

1. Improve funding for the equine sector including link trails, more parking facilities, signage, hitching rails, improved safety, an indoor arena.
2. Equine economic development.

The wish list is long and expensive. While no costs were hinted at, it is clear an indoor equine area in itself would cost a huge sum. The request for more, better, longer trails, may have some potential. It seems the current trails are a success and if feasible and cost effective sounds sensible to link up trails, create electronic maps, increase car/float parking, signage and hitch rails. These aims seem sensible if done in an environmentally sensitive manner to retain the natural beauty and biodiversity of the area for which horse riders and all other residents enjoy.

I agree that safety is an important consideration. Unfortunately this is not an issue only impacting horse riders. The lack of traffic enforcement results in cars/trucks/motorbikes far exceeding legal and safe speeds. Dangerous overtaking on blind corners and the regular race car drivers several nights per week mean our roads are a very unsafe place to be even within the safety of a vehicle.

After much consideration, I cannot rationalise in my mind any reason to build a indoor arena. It seems inequitable to spend so much money on land, infrastructure and resources using ratepayer and tax funds so one sport pursuit can have the privilege of keeping out of the heat, wet and ride of an evening. Netball, soccer, tennis, football, cricket, etc etc manage to navigate the elements. I would expect riders would also ride to conditions and consider their horses abilities and needs alike human needs (eg on a 40 degree day likely no-one would be playing/riding).

The report itself identifies that the equine industry in Nillumbik is \$16.9 million per annum and participation is high cost. This would suggest to me that those who can afford to participate have the funds to do so. It is not an inclusive sport as many people do not have the resources. Therefore it would be inequitable to publicly fund an industry that can not be inclusive and does not really NEED an indoor arena.

It seems the big focus of this document is economic. I can only wonder who is driving this plan, who will benefit most and if there is a conflict of interest? In the ratepayer/taxpayer funding the development of the sector, private residents are then going to capitalise on 'house-friendly visitor accommodation to attract equine visitation'.

It troubles me to see so much land clearing for paddocks, ménage's and horse infrastructure without permits. Current council are turning a blind eye to these changes as individuals capitalise on the 'Green Wedge' to benefit a few.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Leanne Backman

To Whom it May Concern  
Nillumbik Shire Council

## Re: Proposed Plan of Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030

Response from Andrew Hosier, President Eltham District Horse & Pony Club Inc .

Contact: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Firstly, I would like to thank the council for the opportunity to comment on this plan and that Eltham Pony Club supports the plan.

As the President on behalf of the members of the Eltham District Horse & Pony Club Inc [EPC] I respectfully submit the following points for consideration:

Eltham Pony Club was founded in 1953 and is one of the oldest pony clubs in Victoria. Its original members were founding members of Pony Club Victoria, and Pony Club Australia. Located at the rear of Eltham Lower Park, EPC has been part of Eltham's rich history. Gymkhana's were held on the park's grounds each Eltham festival; Hunts from Eltham through Heidelberg were often held. On one occasion there were in excess of 200 riders.

Eltham Pony Club is:

- A Club that has assisted in forming the huge organisation known today as the Pony Club Association of Victoria.
- A Club that is today one of 22 clubs which represent the Northern Metropolitan Zone of the PCAV. Over the years our riders have constantly associated and competed in all types of riding competitions with these Clubs, many times successfully in both individual and team events.
- A Club that has produced riders and 'horsey' men and women who have continued to seek perfection in their equine pursuits and have continued to contribute by way of riding and horse-mastership instruction, dressage, show-jumping and eventing competition, breeding or veterinarian careers. Former members from Eltham Pony Club are EA Eventing Technical Delegates who have attended Olympic Games.
- Many others have given freely of their time and efforts in keeping the pony club movement alive in the roles of District Commissioners and other office bearing capacities – all labour intensive.
- A Club that has received amazing support from riders' parents over the years, support that has meant the very being of the Club will continue to be so.
- A Club that has in the last two decades seen an increasing awareness of our appreciation for the environment and the need for respect and harmony with our flora and fauna. With this emphasis we can continue our equine pursuits to everyone's satisfaction.

EPC has always strived for excellence within the equine sport. Two achievements stand out. The first in 1966 when John White took his horse to Europe and won Dublin Horse Puissance Show-jumping competition. The second is more recently is our senior rider is National Pony Club Champion – Eventing for the last four Nationals [held bi-annually] and is currently in the Hi-Performance squad with Equestrian Victoria.

Our current membership is around 30-35 riders and supporters. 90% of the riders are female. Ages range from 6 years to 25. Rallies are held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, with optional rally of the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of required. Our grounds and amenities are shared with Eastern Region Adult Riding Club.

**Comments re: The Plan:**

## **Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.**

### **Action 1 - Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities**

Our club currently supports/maintains the club with fundraising activities, working bees and membership fees, donations of time, goods and services. Improved facilities are a challenge with limited funds. Membership fees do not cover the running costs so fundraising is essential. The club would welcome discussions on how Council could help the clubs directly or with assistance to apply for government grants.

### **Action 2 - Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long-term viability**

The current lease agreement for both clubs is a 3x3 lease with two terms to complete.

### **Action 4 - Council to work with the equine sector to promote and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State Government grant programs.**

Grants have been applied for with limited success. EPC would welcome any help and education on how to identify suitable grants and how to write a successful grant application.

### **Action 6 – Council to work with the equine clubs to grow participation and promote the Riders without Horses and Riding Develops Ability programs.**

Clubs can only be maintained with viable membership numbers. Eltham Pony Club is low in numbers due to urban sprawl as well as we do not have the infrastructure other clubs do, however the surface of our dressage and show-jumping grounds are considered better than other clubs in the municipality.

### **Action 7 - Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities.**

As the clubs are run on volunteers, any support from council to support these volunteers would be welcome. I've often thought how we might involve the Men's Shed to assist with the club activities such as mowing of cross-country courses, building cross country jumps, spraying blackberries, grading driveways etc.

## **Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure**

These actions are about looking at what is out there and if we can work smarter as clubs and support each other to remain viable instead of working in the silos we often do. It is looking at securing the future of all clubs and the different disciplines and how best we can achieve this.

### **Action 1 - Council to work with the equine community to understand and promote shared infrastructure and resource opportunities between clubs to improve facilities and reduce cost for critical maintenance.**

### **Action 2 - Council, in collaboration with the equine community to develop an Equine Infrastructure Plan to identify how the current sites can be improved to maximise their potential.**

The 'jewel' in our club facilities is the Dressage/Show-jumping arenas. A large amount of money was spent to provide an all-weather surface many years ago and this has proven to be successful. Unfortunately, the

ground being a public park means the arenas can be used by anyone for practice at any time. We would like to see the area developed for all riders to use and would welcome suggestions from the council.

**Action 3 - Council to investigate potential of a larger shared equine facility for clubs and viability of an indoor arena for competitions, training and RDA.**

EPC has thought that given our location, the arena surface and close proximity to transport and parking could benefit all riders in Nillumbik of an indoor – all weather riding and training, safety, appeal for different types of competition, arena hire for a variety of disciplines including the RDA.

**Actions 5-10**

These actions are mainly around shared trails.

Though they do not particularly relate to club activities, a lot of club members and non-club riders will trail ride; some members may ride to club. Some horse owners used to trail ride and are now just too fearful being on dangerous roads but would trail ride again with better access to safe, off-road trails.

These trails also being used by the family for riding horses, bikes and walking the dog, so are multi use. Shared trails are safer and more enjoyable for all trail users.

Increased traffic, poor driver behaviour (and the need for education) and also the trail network that has been in decline over the years as horse riders have been shut out from Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water areas that they previously had access too. Most riders are conscious of the impact of equine on parkland are respectful of vegetation and conservation.

Money spent on shared trails does not only benefit horse riders, but walkers and cyclists too.

**Support Equine economic development**

While these actions do not directly concern clubs, it does their members and horse owning residents who are not necessarily members of clubs.

Our members support local equine and non-equine business and services, from Horseland to Bunnings, Automotive outlets to local trades. Many of these businesses in return support clubs with sponsorship for event and prizes for event and fundraising.

We greatly value and support your local business and services.

**Land, pest, emergency management and safety**

These Actions apply to all horse property owners in Nillumbik, those that keep their horses at home and those who offer Agistment services.

**Action 1 - Council to develop emergency management information to assist horse owners during the fire season, including possible options for large animal evacuation.**

As a horse owner, I am fortunate in that in the vent of evacuation I can move to the river or re-locate to Eltham Lower Park. However, not everyone has these options. I would recommend the council investigate the development of an emergency management plan to assist all horse owners with the Nillumbik shire.

**Action 2 - The equine sector, in collaboration with Council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers.**

It is my experience that drivers within Nillumbik do not respect a vehicle towing a horse-float or horse trucks for that matter. I have seen such vehicles being overtaken on blind corners - impatience, or having a car pull in front of them reducing the braking distance and almost causing an accident. A fully loaded tandem horse float can weigh in at 3-4 tonnes which places a great strain on a normal vehicles' braking systems.

**Action 3 - Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads.**

Agreed. Many drivers are not horse aware and that some drivers consciously drive aggressively past riders. EPC would welcome and support signage and provide any ideas on road safety.

**Action 4 - Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.**

**Action 5 - Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: • Weeds • Rabbits • Deer • Foxes • Blackberry**

**Action 6 - Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.**

I have attended a few of these workshops at Panton Hill community centre and have found them to be highly informative. However, it was up to the individual to action the advice rather than a combined exercise with council to eradicate noxious weeds and imported pests. I welcome more workshops on different topics.

Having lived in Nillumbik for 20 years I fully understand healthy land and healthy horses go hand in hand and would support any programs and support that help me achieve that.

As a landholder and land manager, I would welcome being able to access pest management programs and to be made aware of any other management programs I may be eligible for.

**From:** Marianne Sawyer  
**Sent:** Thursday, 18 June 2020 9:08 PM  
**To:** Business <[Business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:Business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Submission - Equine in Nillumbik Plan

Hi,

Firstly, thank you to Nillumbik Council for the opportunity to comment on this plan which has my full support.

I am the Vice President of the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare group and would like to present the following submission in response to the Equine Nillumbik Plan.

Our group is wholly focused on engaging with the equestrian community around land best practise land management where it relates to horse properties, of which there are many across the Nillumbik landscape.

It was pleasing to see that one of the key focus areas of the Plan is *Land, pest, emergency management and safety*.

The Action table for this topic dedicates three short term actions to land management;

**Action 4 - Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.**

**Action 5 - Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: • Weeds • Rabbits • Deer • Foxes • Blackberry**

**Action 6 - Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.**

A key theme with everything our group stands for is '*Healthy Land, Healthy Horses*', which is reflected throughout our strategic plan.

The Actions 4-6 above are paramount to provide better engagement with equine property owners, and achieve better environmental outcomes on private land.

Networking with educational providers and researching resources that already exist through land management agencies and groups such as the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare group, would greatly assist Nillumbik council staff to develop an land management engagement/education plan in a coordinated and joint manner. This would enable an annual educational and outreach program to take shape, with opportunities for leveraging funding between stakeholders and access to equine best practise demonstration properties. This program needs to consider the topics of interest of the equine community, which will go a long way to support them to achieve better quality soil, pasture and water on their horse properties, and add to the protection of the Nillimbik natural environment and landscape.

Council also needs to become conversant with the various state and federal government incentive grants available for landholders, or for funding for council to run events.

Of special note - the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group was mentioned twice in the Plan. We thank you for identifying that our group has an important role to play in this space, as does Council. We hope to continue to build a strong and lasting relationship with the environment staff at Nillumbik, to foster environmental stewardship amongst equine property owners.

Apologies for not responding prior to COB today, please accept this late submission.



i would be more than happy to discuss any points made about in more detail with the relevant staff at council.

Kind regards,

Marianne Sawyer  
Vice President  
Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare

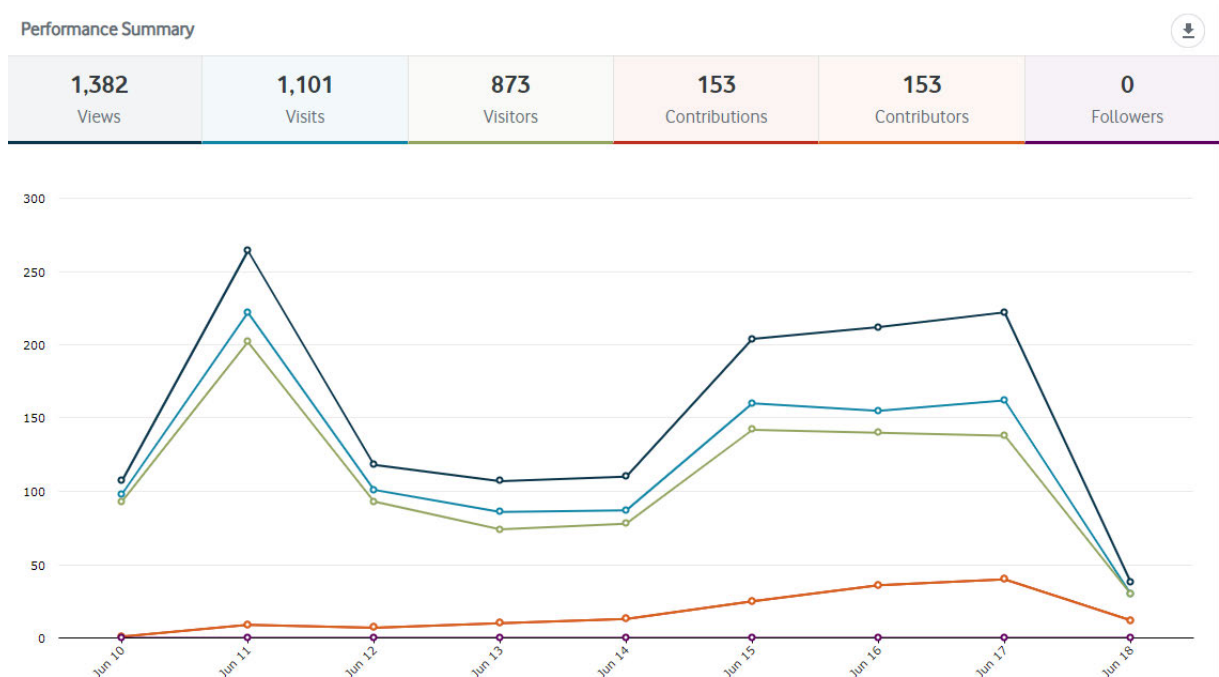
## Equine in Nillumbik

### Submissions summary

Consultation Period: 10-06-2020 - 18-06-2020

#### Participate Nillumbik – visitation statistics

- Equine in Nillumbik



#### 1. Do you have any feedback on Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030?

	Response
<b>1</b>	I am in full support of the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and express my commitment as a club member of Yarrambat Adult Riding Club to land management. As a mature aged member with some health issues, I support the safety of an all weather riding arena and safety on dedicated horse trails. Our club has a membership who work hard on the upkeep of the grounds to ensure a healthy and safe working area for our equines and members as well as spectators of the sport.
<b>2</b>	<p>I commend the Council on developing this plan. I am no longer able to ride but have enjoyed many wonderful years of horse ownership and riding around Nillumbik. This activity contributed to my health and wellbeing, both physical and mental, through the activities and meeting with many people who remain as friends. As an older community member I am grateful for that experience and the way it continues to help me age well even though I am no longer able to ride.</p> <p>In this context I am delighted to see the moves Council is planning in this current Plan. I was a member of KG Adult riders since 1984 to 2019, a member of the Committee and President for some of those years. The creation of riding trails improved the safety of riding but this Plan goes even further and has my full support.</p>

	<p>Congratulations and best wishes for a safe and happy sporting activity in this beautiful area, that provides many, especially women, with lifelong pleasure.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I would like to express my support for the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. I am a long-term resident and horse rider in Nillumbik, my wife and two daughters also ride. This is our primary organised sporting activity. It is critical to why we choose to live in Nillumbik.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p>This would be fantastic opportunity for all of the equestrian's within Nillumbik. I'm an instructor at the local pony clubs and HRCAV clubs. We have no major facilities within Nillumbik and this would be a fantastic opportunity for every one that is involved in horses, plus others that are not and want to get involved. It would promote all the disiplines within our sport and can Nillumbik can only benefit from it.</p> <p>This would also promote health and fitness in the community. More residents can enjoy better equine facilities.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p>I am a member of Kangaroo Ground Adult Riders, and my son is a member of Kangaroo Ground Pony club. We suppot 'the equine in Nillumbik plan'</p>
<b>6</b>	<p>I support the equine plan 100%. There is currently no commitment to equine at all and this needs to change</p>
<b>7</b>	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I write to request that the Equine in Nillumbik Plan be accepted and implemented. I have lived in Nillumbik for 20 years. During this time, I have experienced severe restrictions imposed upon my riding as a result of population growth without thought of equine pursuits. 20 years ago I could ride from my property down Yan Yean Rd to the General Store and back home again, as well as to riding clubs. In the present day I have to float my horse out of my home area in order to ride which has severely depleted my time and increased my costs, in order to maintain my safety. There is nowhere safe to ride in my area, and the sheer volume of people who have taken up residence are unaware and uneducated with regard to horses, what the laws are governing road use, and, in fact, to do not appear to care what happens to a horse and rider as a direct result of their actions.</p> <p>There is far too many people and too much traffic for out current infrastructure to support everyone safely including walkers and cyclists.</p> <p>I support the motion for bridle paths and shared areas to be provided to enable a return to safe activity for horse riders (and others) which has been neglected for far too long in the name of population growth.</p> <p>The sheer volume of large trucks and cars in the area today make it impossible to even contemplate riding in my local area. I beg council to provide safe areas to enable the resumption of equine activities for the enjoyment of people who moved into the area specifically to participate as such. My young son is now at the point where he can ride out from our property but is unable to do so safely resulting in boredom and the threat of not wanting to ride and becoming inactive. This is our present and future state unless we are heard.</p> <p>I see many donations to other sporting groups and wonder why equine sport is simply being crowded out and left in a severely restricted and unsafe state of being.</p> <p>My family are ever hopeful of a return to freedom and safety in our beautiful green wedge.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p>I write in support of the Equine in Nillumbik plan as a landowner and horse rider as well as a member of Kangaroo Ground Horse and Pony Club. Horse riders are a significant part of the Nillumbik community and always have been. We have lived here for nearly 30 years and have been a member of KGPC for the past 10 years. We have spent many hours riding the</p>

	<p>beautiful trails around the valley and it is vital for safety purposes to have access to safe, off-road, shared trails in the area. We love seeing walkers out on the trails with us. There has been a huge increase in traffic over this time and less access to safe trails. When my children ride out off the property for their safety they need to be away from roads. The Pony Club has been a great place for my children to develop friendships and safe riding skills and the support provided from council is essential to the club continuing for future generations. Healthy land and healthy horses go hand in hand and I would support any programs that help us achieve that, especially along the lines of managing deers, foxes, rabbits and weeds.</p> <p>I would like to thank the council for allowing me the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p>I am for responsible and safeway horsemanship in nillumbik shire. With Parks Victoria reducing where people can have a leisurely trail ride we are running out of space to ride safely.</p> <p>an arena would be beneficial for all concerned. The idea that clubs could host horse events not only will bring people to the area, create jobs, but also give us something to look forward to. i am from south morang... there is nothing here. and find myself travelling far and wide to attend things.</p> <p>RDA could use this space. i assisted at bundoorra RDA and even with an undercover arena, they still have to cancel seasons if too windy. it is very sad and these kids need the consistency to make headway with their learning.</p> <p>also to allow the shire to make some money.. perhaps have a plan on people being able to hire out the arena? annual membership small fee to include two free hours a year (to ensure only people who are a member use it) and a booking system to allow people to book it? as well as all wquine clubs gaving ability to use it.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>There appears to be a lot of positives in this plan. The items I would like to stress as critical for short term action include: increased awareness and safety of horse riders on the roads; bushfire evacuation area for horses and other livestock; better shared equine facilities; more off road trails, including opening up some of the existing fire roads that are currently only able to be used by cyclists and walkers especially around the Smiths Gully / St Andrews / Panton Hill areas (a number of these trails are wide enough to accommodate horse riding as well and if we stick to the fire roads we are not damaging the environment); more education around pasture and weed management - the Nillumbik area is so rocky and hilly making it really susceptible to losing topsoil and growing weeds. There are so many good pasture management systems available (such as equicentral, paddock paradise, etc) that are so much better for the environment and provide better results than traditional paddock rotation and weed spraying.</p> <p>If we could improve the equine facilities and trails we would spend more money in the community by not having to travel to other areas, and would increase the reasons for other equine participants to come to Nillumbik.</p> <p>A lot of ideas in the assessment and the actions in the strategy sound really good, I hope we don't spend another five years talking about it, creating reports on it, but not actually taking any action or doing anything tangible. Good luck!</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan</p>

12	I am a member of yarrambat adult riders club and would love to see more support for or club and horse riding in general
13	<p>Thank you for the extended opportunity to have input into this plan. I registered to speak at the Future Nillumbik meeting last week and prepared a speech but was missed from the speakers list so it is good to be able to give feedback now.</p> <p>It is clear that horse riding is of particular interest to a significant portion of the community in Nillubmik so I think it's reasonable to have an equine plan. I hope to see this plan pave a way forward to help horse riders enjoy the Green Wedge long into the future while setting standards for everyone in the community to ensure that horse riding can be done with the least possible impact on the local environment.</p> <p>I am pleased to see that the plan focuses on road safety and from hearing others speak at the meeting last week, I can see that this is a serious issue for horse riders. I'd like to acknowledge, though, that this is an issue that needs to be tackled across the board, as it has a bearing on not just horse riders but pedestrians, drivers, riders and all other road users. We need to address road safety strongly both locally and in wider Victoria. The incident in Kangaroo Ground on Friday 5 June was a sobering reminder of this. My thoughts are with the family of the person who was killed.</p> <p>The plan speaks of an indoor equestrian centre. We need to acknowledge the difficulty in finding a location for a centre of this nature where it can be developed without creating a large impact on local vegetation but in principle, I do support the idea of this centre. It will create a space where riders can ride in safety during all weathers and times of day. This is a positive for both horses and their riders.</p> <p>The construction of an indoor equine centre also presents an opportunity for us to create a shared space where members of the horse community can work together to create their own set of standards and values. I've heard awful stories of people beating their horses and I'm sure the vast majority of the Nillumbik riding community would be just as appalled at this as I am. Having people in a shared space of this nature can help foster a culture of 'see something, say something' and this way, horse riders can be comfortable knowing that their peers are treating their horses the way they would treat their own. This is important and the plan should focus more on how the indoor equine centre can help achieve this. Horse welfare is something that needs to be given more consideration throughout the plan.</p> <p>I support the idea of digitally mapped trails and a trail user protocol. It is important that we create a culture where all are welcome on our trails. As a cyclist, I'm well aware of this and I know I wouldn't want to be told where I can and can't ride. This is the strength of a trail user protocol. Instead of banning horses from trails, it creates an opportunity to regulate how horses are ridden on trails to minimise the impact. Principles which should be focussed on in this protocol include not going off track into environmentally sensitive areas and encouraging horse riders to scoop their horse's poop.</p> <p>I'm glad to see that the plan considers the economic impact of horse riding. It is clear from listening to speakers last week that horse riding provides a lot of benefit to the local economy. Given horse riders make up less than 1% of Nillumbik's population, it is very important that this plan includes careful consideration of how ratepayers' money is used. I'm not saying that we shouldn't use ratepayers' money on this but spending needs to be limited so as to be fair to other ratepayers and when money is spent, Council ought to consider how it can be best targeted to help the wider area at the same time as fulfilling the goals of the plan.</p>

	<p>To supplement ratepayers' money, the plan needs to focus on winning grants from State and Federal Government to fulfil its more expensive elements. For example, I do not support ratepayers' money going towards projects such as an undercover equestrian centre but if this could be funded through other sources, I would very much support it.</p> <p>If possible, I would appreciate another opportunity to speak to this plan at a Future Nillumbik Meeting given I was unable to do so last week.</p>
<b>14</b>	<p>I support the Nillumbik equine plan. I believe it will benefit the community with keeping kids and families active. Equestrian facilities bring tourism when events are held supporting our local Growth</p>
<b>15</b>	<p>I I'm 62 just got back into riding about 6 years ago, we live in Plenty on 5 acres with no where to ride, apart from clubs. I am in three clubs Eltham, kangaroo ground and Yarrambat my husband and my company north west Drilling donate \$1500, to KGARC every year we also help out as much as we can. Eg: taking our little tractor to the clubs. We also use all local for feed, fencing, vet and everything we need. Please give us somewhere safe to keep riding our horses all we need is a bit grass space next to a bike track. Walkers love to see us out there with them. Cheers Arty Brennan</p>
<b>16</b>	<p>I'm all for equines in Nillumbik</p>
<b>17</b>	<p>I have been part of the Equine World all my life, this is part of the reason why I chose to live within Nillumbik. The Equine network supports many local business and services ..re: fencing contractors , weed spraying, farriers the list goes on. I have ridden within our area for 30 years plus. I have watched the decline in our trail networks over the years , being shut out of Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water areas, that horse riders in the past had access too and shared these trails with bike riders and walkers. I have become fearful of riding on our roads due to the increase of traffic , speed and uneducated drivers that should be educated in this area. I would be a huge supporter of safe shared trails, that wouldn't just only benefit the horse rider but walkers and cyclists and the many family that would use them.</p>
<b>18</b>	<p>I moved to this area purely for 'horse reasons'. I'm looking forward to more safe places in the are to enjoy my horses and horsey pals. Call me silly, but all my spare money is spent at horse related businesses within the shire of Nillubik. Vet, horse feed, lessons, horse massage, apparel, fencing, weed spraying, farrier, pilates so I can be a stronger and more flexible horse rider. Horse riding keeps me healthy both physically and mentally. I love the open spaces of the Green Wedge. I will do whatever I can to keep the green wedge protected from over development. I believe other horse riders live in Nillumbik because of their horse hobby and have the same passion about protected the green wedge. I would have chosen to live elsewhere if I couldn't have my horse on my property with me. I imagine that if there were more connected trails in the green wedge ... that were within the bushland reserves or ran parallel to existing roads that more families from the more densely populated parts of Nillumbik would enjoy driving up to the green wedge for walks and connected family time. A variety 2, 5, 8 to 10km loops would be perfect. I can also imagine runners, dog walkers and cyclists commuting to use these facilities. Perhaps people from all over Melbourne would be attracted to enjoy these trails. The current trails are disjointed and require time on main roads. This is very unsafe for everyone. I believe this prevents many from using them.</p>

	<p>Promotion of the trails would also be very useful.</p> <p>I believe local business within the green wedge would thrive if more people came to the green wedge to use the trails. Particularly local cafes/eateries/general stores. Maybe there would be the potential for the area to support more small locally owned business?</p> <p>I believe it would be a great investment in Nillumbik to have a purpose built Indoor arena with other equestrian facilities on site. I have seen first and how many people other equestrian centres mentioned in the Plan attract. People bring their horses and families from all over Victoria (and sometimes even interstate) to attend the larger competitions. The centre at Boneo is part of a very popular walking route. Many regular walkers incorporate a coffee, breakfast or lunch into their walk. There is also a lovely reception centre / restaurant onsite that I have been to on it's own with out my horse. It truly showcases the Australian Landscape with the lovely bushland that can be seen from the large picture windows of the restaurant. I know I have been back to these areas to explore other attractions that I have noticed when attending these competitions.</p> <p>In essence, I strongly believe that adopting the Equine in Nillumbik plan would benefit all residents of Nillumbik.</p>
<b>19</b>	<p>We support the equine industry in Nillumbik. The fact that it is largely female is a plus because it gets women of all ages outside participating in exercise when they might not otherwise manage this. The recreational and competition aspects are both valuable. Nillumbik has a long history of riding clubs for adults and children with five currently existing. New trails have been completed and these make riding safer and more enjoyable. Please continue to support these activities. Thank you.</p>
<b>20</b>	<p>I Support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan</p> <p>I have been Part of The Kangaroo Ground Pony Club, and now now the Adult Riding Club for over 29 years. Our club facilities are shared by many families in Nillumbik. Our club facilities could be improved and shared with surrounding clubs and equine people. For example, our cross country course, trails out from the club ground, show jumps or dressage arenas that could be shared to benifit all of us.</p>
<b>21</b>	<p>Hve read through the report and question the viability of an indoor arena, This needs to be examined.</p> <p>Nillumbik is well served with trails for walkers, horse riders, cyclists. Maintenenance is more an issue than more trails.</p> <p>Appreciate this activity has very high female participation and this needs supporting.</p>
<b>22</b>	<p>I would love to see more trails for everyone including horse riders.</p> <p>An indoor arena at the local Yarrambat horse and pony club would be an amazing addition that could allow for programs encouraging non-horsey families to try horse riding. It would expand and integrate the community.</p>
<b>23</b>	<p>Hello,</p> <p>As a horse rider and land owner in Yarrambat my live revolves around my equine family. I do have a few concerns and items I would love considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roadside tracks that can be shared with pushbikes and walkers as trees, shrubs block them. Traffic is increasingly getting faster and drivers are not considerate of people on</li> </ul>

	<p>horseback or bike riders. The roads I would love considered and updated is Bannons Lane - so we can have easy access to Hurstbridge township, schools, cafes and Pony club grounds. There is a track on the Cherrytree road is a great example of what can work and service the community.</p> <p>Creighton way - this is a dirt road with huge road side space. It is however over run with fallen trees and there is no clear track. My neighbour fell off her horse and broke her back when riding here due to fast cars. If the track was cleared there would be no concern as there is a lot of room. This road is a great track to get to more trails, at the same time it's a huge fire hazzard. I beg for this to be reviewed.</p> <p>- The pony club is a great institution for the area and our culture here. I have been a member all my life and we have 3 generations involved. It's healthy, open air, community building and a great way to spend your time.</p> <p>- Traffic light at the end of Bannons lane to Yan Yean road as turning right with a horse float is near impossible as there are no breaks in traffic.</p> <p>- Adding an indoor arena and more parking to Yarrambat park would be outstanding, so it could be a larger facility and all weather. There is plenty of room on the other side of the racetrack (behind the BBQ area) to accommodate this and it could open up the park for more events including interschools and hiring for clinics or personal use. This could turn Yarrambat Park into a huge equestrian complex for the area. Events could then be held on parts of the park almost every week, still allowing for the Pony Club and Adult riders to have sections but gaining extra use on land that is currently not used.</p> <p>I live in the area so I can have a wonderful lifestyle with my horses and family. I love the area, and have lived here most of my life, I am a volunteer and committee member of Yarrambat Pony Club and hope to be living this lifestyle for many years to come. I would really appreciate roadside tracks to share with others so we can continue to enjoy it and an equestrian centre that provides more safe opportunities would be incredible. I believe this would also attract more people to want to move here with this interest as it would improve the services the council offer.</p> <p>Would love the chance to work through it as part of a working group.</p>
<b>24</b>	I support the equine plan in its entirety as it currently stands
<b>25</b>	I have made a submission previously. I support this plan in its current form and in its entirety. I expect my previous submission to be included by council in lieu of having to provide another one.
<b>26</b>	I would welcome any strategy that improves road safety in Nillumbik's rural areas. I regularly see horse riders on rural roads with the ridiculous speed limit of 100kph. I would prefer to see horse riders on and alongside roads than speeding motorbikes and cars and packs of cyclists. I would be concerned about opening up any more bushland tracks due to the potential for weed and fungal spread. An all weather arena would be a great addition to the Shire. I remain concerned about the suitability of some local properties to run horses, due to unsuitable paddocks, proximity to waterways and overstocking.
<b>27</b>	I'm excited that Nillumbik recognises the importance of the equestrian community and look forward to the implementation of the Equestrian Plan. I personally feel that road safety and



	<p>providing off road trails should be a priority. The Yarra Valley has the "'Rail Trail' which is a successful multi user safe trail for horse riders. Nillumbik requires something similar.</p>
<b>28</b>	<p>I am so excited to hear Equine offerings in Nillumbik might be expanded.</p> <p>I moved to Eltham for the Green Wedge and the proximity to nature. I want to explore tracks and I would love an opportunity to ride horses. I am an adult who never had access to "horse lifestyle," but as an animal and nature lover, I know it would be just up my alley. Before reading this Participate Nillumbik I had researched adult horse-riding and not really found anything that I felt I could join. I am not part of the horse-riding community, but would love to be. Please make horse riding more accessible to nature loving adults who don't have horses. Everyone is looking for a community to belong too, and I suspect you'd find a few animal lovers in the Green Wedge. Oh and if you could make horse led winery tours... well that would make the most of everything : )</p>
<b>29</b>	<p>Please increase riding clubs trails etc in the area do not allow them to be decreased We need this outdoor healthy activity to b there for our children's children It's such a community sport we have been involved in pony club for years retired now but the benefits and friendships we gained Were very important to growing g up in the area</p>
<b>30</b>	<p>As a horse owner in the area, I think this plan is fantastic! Myself and my 2 children all ride, and the kids attend KGPC.</p> <p>Personally, the aspect of the plan I like the most is the idea of better shared trails and access to more areas on horseback. We often like to go trail riding however, from where we live on Cottles Bridge-Strathewen Rd, there are few safe options. With speeding traffic and peoples apparent lack of consideration for horse riders, I feel unsafe taking the children out where we have to ride on or too near the road.</p> <p>When I moved to my current address I was actually dissapointed to realise there were no real tracks available for horse riding, as I assumed there would be given the number of horses and riders in the area.</p> <p>It would also be great to see some of the clubs developed further.</p>
<b>31</b>	<p>It would be great to cater for safe horse riding. Safe tracks where young riders can enjoy riding their horses.</p>
<b>32</b>	<p>Horse riding</p>
<b>33</b>	<p>Would open up much needed access to beautiful country. With correct care to the environment we can all co-exist together and appreciate what we hve</p>
<b>34</b>	<p>I have lived in Smiths Gully for 23 years. Our family have always enjoyed the beautiful trail riding in the area. Sadly over the years we have lost more and more of the area we were able to enjoy due to being closed off to horses. I would like to see trail riding embraced as part of being in this community and not keep taking it away.</p> <p>Since living here we have always been members of the local pony club and Adult riding club. I would like the council to help us develop these facilities into better usable spaces for not only the families that utilise them but for all the riders that attend our events. Upgrading these ground will attract more members to these clubs. Things such as grants to fix or add to the facilities or even help with the weed control will save the club money that can be used else where to make improvements. Our area has a big equine history, it would be such a shame to loose it</p>

35	<p>I am wanting to start a very small riding school for children in our area who are beginners- mainly families in suburbia diamond creeks day surrounds, and those that do not own their own ponies or are just starting out. I am a primary school teacher with many qualifications in teaching children with autism and Aspergers( spectrum disorders). I am also a qualified accredited PCAV coach/instructor. I currently teach at Kangaroo Ground Pony Club once a month. As a child growing up in Kangaroo aground, I attended Kangaroo aground and was part of the initial group purchasing our land for the club. I have also sent my own daughter through the club. I have been on the KGPC committee forging strong relationships with other clubs and committees in our community running events together. I have been the president , membership secretary and District Commissioner of KGPC. I want to continue to help riders in our area in a safe manner. I have been informed by Amanda Cox that? And I I feel it is unfair to charge a \$1300 application fee to start this small business. For what? It is so challenging to ride on our trails from the Lorimer Road side, as I have to ride over Wattle Glen Road and it becomes an 80 zone just before the road- ridiculous. Why would you not put that zone after the small road. Like wise for cars travelling on it, I have to slow down to turn up there coming from Diamond Creek , just as cars are about to speed up to 80. The paths for us to ride on are not maintained regularly. It is so important to have safe areas to ride. The bush trails need to be left open for riders, as this is currently safer than riding in our verges, since the erection at metal barricades, rendering it unsafe for riders. Having an indoor arena would be fabulous for our community. Basketball players have indoor facilities and look how well that is patronised. With the sale of pony club areas such as Gladisdale park- which was used for camps etc and now the liquidation of EA- it is looking grim. My business is at grass roots level and important for our community. There has been a lot of interest and would get lots of visitors to our community, buying horse products at our shops in Eltham, coffee and lunches in our cafes and more membership st our pony clubs.</p>
36	<p>What a terrific idea. Having a specific facility to encourage horse riding activities for a range of horse riding disciplines and for all abilities in a safe environment is a terrific initiative for Nillumbik.</p>
37	<p>G'day, I live at [REDACTED] We have horse trails all around us which is great due to owning horses ourselves. My concern is the fences on our road and also the trail that leads down past the end of our court between the two houses. They are in a terrible and dangerous state due to the kangaroos destroying them. Star pickets out of the ground , fencing wire that has come loose just lying on the trail for horses to trip on. Sure they keep in mowed but the fences are atrocious. Thank you. Regards Rod Wainwright.</p> <p>The equine nillumbik program is fantastic as I know many people from other areas have enjoyed exploring the great shire we live in Through riding horses</p> <p>And it also supports many local cafes and pubs with meals</p> <p>With support from council it could be so much better</p>
38	<p>Nillumbik has a longstanding equine history and continues to host a substantial community of equine enthusiasts. Nillumbik offers a rural environment within convenient reach of urban amenities making this shire an attractive area to enjoy equine pursuits. With or without inclusion in Nillumbik Councils Future Nillumbik Planning, equine activities will continue within the shire. The fact of the matter is that the Green Wedge will not succumb to urban sprawl, the rural environment will remain and the horse is here to stay.</p>

	<p>Having an interest in horses does not mean that horse owners are environmental vandals, most have the awareness of the importance of land health, especially as it does provide for their horses well-being &amp; needs to be respected. In my experience the majority of horse owners have an empathy for nature and are more environmentally aware than most suburban populations. Yet some habitual agitators will stand and declare that horses will cause the catastrophic end to all things and should be eliminated from the shire.</p> <p>I have agisted horses in Nillumbik for twenty odd years, I'm a horse rider from a young age and can attest to the many personal benefits, strength and growth gained from equestrian pursuits. A collaborative plan, that focuses on safety, education, health, appropriate &amp; effective public infrastructure, local economy and the environment, to engage and support the equine sector is a positive and justified step for the Nillumbik Shire and I support the plan.</p>
39	<p>I live in Hurstbridge and have my whole life because I have horses. I ride locally and live on a small parcel of land. If the ability to have and ride locally was gone I would move out further. Hurstbridge and my ability to ride there allows me to work In The city but come home to my life purpose - horses. I am a member of the Hurstbridge adult riding club and the 120 members are my nearest and dearest friends and local support people. Without riding the area would not appeal and horses are the character of the town. Locally there are amazing riding trails and locals who appreciate having horses around. We are a village not a town. We don't want to lose that innocents and unique appeal.</p>
40	<p>The 'Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030' is vitally necessary and we state that Nillumbik Shire Council proceed with its approval and instigate all content.</p> <p>The horse fraternity of Nillumbik is interlinked with all other Shires and Councils, by participants at ALL levels, plus stock feed suppliers.</p> <p>Do not ignore these people as they have contributed to making the Shire what it is today.</p>
41	<p>I believe that an indoor arena at Yarrambat Park would be invaluable to the area. It would provide a safe place for people to ride their horses, opportunities for events including interschool competitions and employment.</p> <p>More riding trails are required throughout Nillumbik, these can also be used as shared footpaths for pedestrians and bike riders. Having grown up in Nillumbik, I rode my horse on the roads every week and even to pony club. I would not feel confident sending my children out on the roads to ride to pony club as the roads are too busy and the cars drive too fast. There needs to be areas specifically for this activity.</p>
42	<p>Agree for all the Horse Riding Clubs in the agree it would be great to have a facility similar to Werribee - room, indoor arena, great cross country course.</p> <p>But the easiest and cheapest option to make ALL horse riders happy in the area would be to open up all the existing trails to horse riders. There is absolutely NO reason why horses are not permitted to ride the trails in Boomers Reserve, Rob Roy, One Tree Hill (Kinglake Warrandyte Reserve) etc. There are existing trails in these areas and there is also a fully maintained dirt road (HAPPY VALLEY) which we should be able to ride on. Look at the damage on the trails from the mountain bikes - horses do not do this type of damage. Open up the trails that are already in existence in the shire and keep our horse riders safe! And at the start of the shared trails how about some signage asking mountain bike people to please be aware and slow down or stop when approaching horses.</p>

<p><b>43</b></p>	<p>Dear Nillumbik Councillors,</p> <p>As a member of two local adult riding clubs, a paying client of a Nillumbik agistment, and regular customer of local saddlery and stock-feed stores, I wholly support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. The Plan will enable a strategic, safe, and sustainable planning framework and future for the equestrian and supporting/related communities.</p>
<p><b>44</b></p>	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030 plan. I moved to Nillumbik more than 20 years ago. I have enjoyed membership in Kangaroo Ground Pony Club as a child, and now, Yarrambat Adult Riding Club. I am out on trails in Nillumbik most weekends and often head out with friends. I would love to see investment in creating more linking trails, as I have noticed traffic has heavily increased in the area, particularly on weekends. I take great care to prepare and train my horse for any situation, but they can be spooked, especially by tourists driving past who are not accustomed to horses. Drivers who do not know better do not slow down for horses, and some even honk in greeting as they pass by. It would be great to have more linking trails where we can ride safely.</p> <p>One area I use to train and ride is at the Yarrambat horse and pony club grounds. These are amazing facilities with a famous cross country course, large and well surfaced arenas, and great club facilities. I would love to see council engage with the clubs on improving and maintaining these facilities.</p> <p>I support the Nillumbik Equine 2020-2030 plan.</p> <p>Thanks again for the opportunity to engage!</p>
<p><b>45</b></p>	<p>I am an active member of both Kangaroo Ground and Hurstbridge Adult Riding Clubs and the Treasurer of the HRCV to which both clubs are affiliated. I support the Equine Plan, in particular the focus on linking up shared safe trails, which have become increasingly difficult to navigate with recent additions of roadside barriers. I also support investigating how clubs both within Nillumbik and in other municipalities can work more efficiently by sharing facilities and potentially all support the construction of an indoor facility serving a wider area.</p>
<p><b>46</b></p>	<p>Horses have played an integral part of my life. I started riding at an early age and have been lucky enough to continue riding into my adulthood in the Nilumbik area. Growing up some of my fondest memories were formed at Kangaroo ground pony club. No matter what the weather conditions were on the first Saturday of every month Mum and Dad would take my brother and I to club and we loved it. I remember dressing up in the scorching heat for the Christmas Gymkana, doing my C certificate and learning about the anatomy of a horse in the club rooms, and participating in the games team and representing our club at Geelong state games competition.</p> <p>As I have grown older my involvement with horses in the community has expanded. I studied psychology at university and was interested in helping children with disabilities. My passion for horses and psychology came together when I joined Riding Develops Abilities (RDA) as a volunteer. Riding develops abilities is a non-for-profit organization which operates across Victoria and out of the Nillumbik shire. RDA gives children and adolescence with varying disabilities the opportunity to learn and develop skills and independence through horseback riding. RDA provides a safe environment whereby riders can enjoy the freedom, movement, sensory feedback and exhilaration of riding a horse. I have seen first</p>

	<p>hand the effect a horse can have on a child who has learning difficulties, who is non-verbal, or who is overly sensitive to environmental stimuli. I have seen children learn new words, I have seen children learn empathy towards the horse, I have seen children’s grip strength and core strength improve, I have seen children grow in confidence, and I have seen children laugh and smile and play.</p> <p>The effort that goes into RDA by the volunteers and coaches to make it happen is phenomenal and a testament to the Nillumbik community.</p> <p>The demand for RDA is reflected by the waitlist which centers currently have in place. I have worked at both St Andrews and Bundoora RDA and can see the benefit of having an indoor arena for the program. An indoor arena means that we are not dependent on fine weather and is also a lot safer for children who are overly sensitive to environmental stimuli (e.g., wind, lightening, rain).</p> <p>In my adulthood I have joined Hursbridge adult riders and enjoy my Saturday rallies. Horse riding for me is both a great physical and psychological outlet where I can truly be happy and carefree. Being a part of a club brings a sense of community and belonging and I believe it is should be recognized the same way as any other sporting club (e.g., football , basket ball, netball).</p> <p>Horse riders not only love the enjoyment of riding as a sport/ recreational activity but we also love the land we live on and our animals. I can say my family and I work hard on our property and research and implement horticulture practices to ensure re-vegetation and avoid erosion. Horse riding is a huge part of my life and so many others I know and I hope it can be recognized and celebrated within the Nillumbik community. I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p>
<b>47</b>	I support the plan and look forward to a great driver awareness program.
<b>48</b>	I am a horse riding enthusiast and belong to the St Andres Trail riding club. The organized rides are a highlight when meandering through these beautiful horse trails Exercise, recreation and connecting to the bush is such a pivotal part of enhancing a persons wellbeing These trails are so important to the many Victorians who are abel to use them and need to preserved for future horse riding enthusiasts like me.
<b>49</b>	Hello, I would like to Thank the Council for this opportunity. I wish to offer my support to have the Equine Plan for Nillumbik approved so that our sport can be acknowledged and supported by the Council.
<b>50</b>	I am a member of Yarrambat adult riders club and support the Equine nillumbik plan.
<b>51</b>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this fantastic plan that I wholeheartedly support. I'm very involved in the horse community in Nillumbik Council, both as an instructor and horse rider.</p> <p>I support every action action point mentioned in the plan and in particular the action points re Equine Infrastructure. I see enormous potential and demand for a regional indoor facility shared by the Nillumbik horse community. I've been part of the horse community in Nillumbik since 2012 and every year my business slows down from the beginning of June until the end of September, because riders are unable to ride due to the weather / lack of an indoor facility in the area. The equine community in Nillumbik is thriving, but growth is</p>

	<p>essential and not implementing the proposed Equine Plan would be a missed opportunity everyone.</p>
	<p>Nillumbik is the jewel in the crown. We are so lucky to have such versatility in outdoor leisure activities, leading to a healthier happier community physically and mentally. Think of Nilumbik and you think horses.</p> <p>We need to support local clubs to grow this sport for future generations.</p> <p>An indoor venue would attract a wide range of talent to compete and spend locally. Riding for the disabled and those with PTSD would benefit greatly. Sheltered from the elements with a cafe and educational areas the benefits are endless.</p> <p>Please support this fabulous partnership between horse and rider.</p>
<b>52</b>	<p>I have read with interest both Equine reports. The consultation that has informed both reports is extremely biased, focusing only on those associated with the equine industry. Most notably this is the only opportunity for the broader community to provide any feedback about the reports, and only after community pressure at the last Council meeting.</p> <p>There is no way that Councillors are in the position to make informed decisions about community infrastructure and services without completing a strategic review of all community infrastructure across the Shire. It is difficult to understand how equine infrastructure can be prioritised without understanding broader population needs, and gaps in infrastructure provision.</p> <p>Discrepancies in membership numbers between the two reports make it difficult to develop a complete picture. What I do know is that if there are 550 regular members of clubs across the Shire, this makes up just 0.8% of the whole population. I am very concerned that further equine infrastructure development, particularly an arena, will be available to only a few members of the Nillumbik community.</p> <p>Additionally, the reports reference the need for more off road trails. The environmental impacts and locations of these trails requires further exploration.</p> <p>Finally, I am unsure how Council plans to fund the implementation plan, particularly trails and an arena, as there are no cost estimates included.</p> <p>I implore Councillors to reconsider adopting these reports due to flawed consultation, lack of detail about funding models, and the potential to create exclusive infrastructure available to a small number of community members.</p>
<b>53</b>	<p>I am a member of the Yarrambat Adult riders and I support the Nillumbik equine plan. I believe there needs to be some more support for our sport.</p>
<b>54</b>	<p>My main concern is safety when riding off my property. There are not enough safe trails to exercise my horse on, especially my young horse that needs a safe place to become accustomed to life off the property. From my understanding there used to be a number of safe trails in the area which have subsequently been closed off for unknown reasons.</p> <p>Horses and their riders need the mental stimulation off trail riding but these days it's not safe, with ignorant drivers speeding past showing no respect, this is dangerous on our many gravel roads, my horse used to be good in traffic until he was sprayed with gravel from a speeding ignorant driver, we need to be able to get off the roads into a safer environment.</p>

	Thanks
<b>55</b>	<p>I am a member of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club.</p> <p>First of all I would like to thank Council for the opportunity to be able to comment on the plan and also to let you know that I support the plan.</p> <p>I have lived in Yarrambat for the past 20 years and Previous to owning my own property had agisted in Nillumbik shire since 1981.</p> <p>In that time the places to ride safely and the attitude of the drives towards horse riders has declined rapidly. Even the back roads have become dangerous to ride around, which is disheartening. I am hoping that the proposed plan could alleviate the dangers horse riders are currently experiencing and I feel as though it would be a great asset to the community as a whole.</p>
<b>56</b>	<p>As a member of both Yarrambat Horse and Pony Club and Hurstbridge &amp; District Adult Riding Club, and as a user of horse riding trails throughout Wattle Glen and Kangaroo Ground I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan. I think club support and facilities development, as well as further development of safe shared trails (bikes, walkers, horse riders etc) should be of high importance in the plan for equine activities going forward to ensure safe riding environments for both horse riders and the general public.</p>
<b>57</b>	<p>I can not believe that any body in their right mind could or would try to stop horses from living breathing and enjoying there right to an existence, in this area, being an animal of the earth they have a right to live with their owners and not be under threat. Blood people!! (you green's are just like the women librettist and Labour party - can never meet in the middle always so far one way) Pull your heads in and get a life. F... wits!!</p> <p>I am for horses in Nillumbik :)</p>
<b>58</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan. I grew up in Diamond Creek and lived most of my life in this shire. ( I'm now 61)</p> <p>I've been involved with horses most of life and attended Diamond Valley Pony Club in my youth. I'm currently a member of 3 Adult riding clubs including Kangaroo Ground, Yarrambat and Iv'e been granted a life membership at Eltham.</p> <p>Horse riding drives me to keep fit and healthy and volunteering at each club gives a sense of community spirit. Great and life-long friendships have grown from being a part of this caring and inclusive community.</p> <p>Some say that horse riding is only for the rich but I have been able to maintain my horse and attend lessons and competitions as a single parent on a low wage. By careful budgeting, going without some luxuries ( fancy nails and hair do's and brand name clothes) and bartering for some services I have happily managed to keep and compete with my wonderful horse. Any assistance the council can provide to local riding clubs to help maintain club rooms and riding surfaces will be appreciated by many. An indoor or covered arena would also make year long riding an option, give clubs an exciting all weather competition venue and give RDA a safe space to do their wonderful work.</p> <p>Safe riding trails is also an important area that needs looking into. Most local roads are now too busy to be safe to ride on which means we need to look at a safe way to share and connect existing trails.</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p>
<b>59</b>	<p>I think more money should be allocated to horse riding clubs.</p> <p>I think horse riding trails should be opened and maintained.</p>

60	I totally agree with all the submissions in the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030. I would like to see trails maintained and extended and pony club/adult rider club grounds remain. The biggest issue in our Shire is safety. The roads are getting busier and more traffic using them. We need to be able to get the horse riders, and particularly children on horses, off the roads. If a car hits a horse not only will the rider and horse be killed or severely injured, but the horse will probably go through the car windscreen and injure or kill the driver and passenger.
61	I live in Cottles Bridge. We have 4 horses. I love having horses at home to compete in eventing and showjumping and trail ride with friends. I compete in inter schools equestrian competitions during the year, representing my school, CLC where I'm the equestrian team captain. It is very important for the students at our school to be able to trail ride and ride on the roads and feel safe. We hold a clinic every year at Hurstbridge pony club and it is a highlight for many of our members. I need to have areas to train and compete and I am glad that the council sees my sport important and worth supporting. I would like the council to have more road signs to tell drivers to slow down when I'm riding.
62	<p>I am Tarli and I live in St. Andrews, we have 4 horses. I love riding, I do games and trail rides most of the time. I go to inter school clinics and I go to St. Andrews pony club. I have to have a arena to ride and train my horse.</p> <p>I think there should be more signs for drivers about horses on trails.</p>
63	<p>I support the equine plan.</p> <p>Places to ride where safe are disappearing fast and we need to acknowledge that and ensure paths off the sides of roads are maintained so we can ride out safely. :)</p>
64	I support the Equine Plan that Nillumbik has proposed.
65	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for considering the Equine Nillumbik plan. I wish to offer my support to have the Equine Plan for Nillumbik approved so that our sport can be acknowledged and supported by the Council. I have been actively involved in riding horses for most of my life and have never found a better location to keep and ride my horse than Kangaroo Ground. It has a wonderful Adult Riding Club for which I am a member, they carry out fantastic riding events and competitions which I have enjoyed enormously. Great consideration and planning is given to all aspects relating to the participation and riding of horses at the club and great respect is shown to all residents in the area. I have made some wonderful friends over recent years as a result of the connections made with the many horse owners in the area and this sport and interest is pivotal to my happiness, health and wellbeing. There are not many sports around to cater to the over 50 age group that provide for wonderful friendships, connections and pure enjoyment which I strongly believe the equine sport area provides.</p> <p>I strongly believe the area would benefit greatly in adopting the equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030 plan and I hope this plan is adopted by Council for the benefit of all.</p>
66	<p>It would be good to have cross country facilities that are open to all to train at.</p> <p>I was a past member at Yarrambat, which is run by a couple of firm minded police officers. These committee members do not allow other riders outside of their club to use the grounds. I am a past member of the club yet found it too stressful to be a part of. Past and current clubs are much more welcoming such as Kangaroo Ground and Hurstbridge, but we just do not have grounds to train cross country at. We need to float to Wandin park or Yarra</p>



	Glen hunt club to do so. Also lacking indoor arenas, would be ideal having one at Hurstbridge grounds
<b>67</b>	I would very much like to see more off road trails for riding. In years past horses had the right of way on the roads. Few drivers today are aware of who has right of way. Many are unaware of how to safely pass a horse on the road and some are very dangerous either because they are uneducated or because they don't care or perhaps they like to see the horses react! What ever the reason, when horses are being ridden on the roads it is VERY dangerous for us as riders, we are extremely vulnerable and the reality is, for many of us we just don't do it as it's too risky. Off road trails are the way of the future and we desperately need more of them, in particular more links between what we do have, bearing in mind that a 5 to 10 kilometre ride is a normal amount to ride. So 1klm here and there isn't that much use to us.
<b>68</b>	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. I am a landowner, member of Kangaroo Ground Pony Club and have children who ride horses regularly on the trails in the area. I write in support of the Equine In Nillumbik Plan. Thankyou
<b>69</b>	Hi, my name is Lynda Harraway and I love trail riding in my area's of Panton Hill, Watson's Creek, Christmas Hills. I am a current member of the Hurstbridge District Adult Riders Club and have previously been a member of Athra. I find it very therapeutic to go Trail Riding and it is good for everyone's health and well being. I have lived in the area Since 1964 when my parents bought land in Smiths Gully
<b>70</b>	First, I would like to thank Nillumbik Council for the excellent work in putting this plan together. I definitely support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. The Equine Strategy is about my sport and horse riding is my chosen sport. My name is Joanne Jamieson and I have lived in Yarrambat for the past 20 years. I am also the Secretary of the Yarrambat Adult Riding Club (YARC) which I have been for the past 16 years and a life member. YARC have 80 members which we run at capacity every year and having to turn people away regularly and in October of each year open the waiting list for new members. Our club and grounds are very sort after due the facilities and disciplines we can offer including dressage, show jumping & cross country. The work it takes to keep our grounds in a presentable manner requires loads of women/man power. Our club is made up of 98 % of women and all our working bees which include maintenance of fences, clubrooms, mowing, slashing, whipper snipping, poisoning and the like are all completed by our members. This is a mandatory requirement as without their help we could not keep up with all the works that are required. On average every member must devote a minimum of 10 hrs each year and then we have our executive members who devote up to 50 hrs per year. We get no assistance from council or by any other means. I was very impressed to read about the prospect of safe off road connect trails. This is an area that desperately needs some investigations particular in the Yarrambat / Plenty area. Prior to being able to float my horse to club the only way I could ride was on our roads in Nillumbik. Due to the increase of traffic in our area and the lack of respect motorists have for horse and riders, it has now become too dangerous to ride on the roads, this also includes the dirt back roads as more and more motorists are avoiding Yan Yean Road. Motorist don't understand the fly/flight reaction of horses when they are startled or when a vehicle goes flying past, or when the passenger yells out the window at the rider or when they decide to sound their horn just as they are going past you. Totally unexpected but happens all the time.

	<p>These safe off road trails would be shared with walkers, bike riders, families enjoying the outdoors. The trail network has been in decline over the years as horse riders have been shut out from Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water areas that they previously had access too.</p> <p>Money spent on shared trails does not only benefit horse riders, but walkers and cyclists too.</p> <p>As an emergency service worker, I see the carnage and serious accidents on the road all the time so as horse riders we have to avoid the roads for our safety and the safety of our precious horses. If only the motorist new what the traffic law is whilst around horses. I believe an education program is paramount but not only to the Nillumbik residents but to all road users as a lot of the traffic coming through Nillumbik don't actually live in our shire. I would love for the education to start with Learner Drivers when studying for their licence. At the workshop conducted at the Hurstbridge Community hub there was also an overwhelming request for an indoor area. I support this regional facility. We are not looking at a State Park like Werribee Park where major competitions are held but a local indoor arena that can be hired to small groups for lessons, private lessons or even club rallies over the wetter months. Nillumbik does not have an indoor Equine arena anywhere in the shire so this would be an additional bonus for all five Adult Riding Clubs and Pony Clubs in Nillumbik to have access too. Further, it can be used by all riders with abilities and disabilities (RDA). The indoor arena would be able to be used in all weather with utmost safety of riders particular the riders and horses who can not venue out yet. The survey results in the Equine in Nillumbik Plan were very interesting as YARC conducted an independent survey in 2019 with very similar results to the Equine Plan. Replies to our survey were returned from over 200 horse riders detailing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95 % were females</li> <li>31.5 % were in the age group 45 – 54</li> <li>86 % were a member of an Adult Riding Club or Pony Club</li> <li>65 % kept their horses in Nillumbik Shire</li> <li>58 % trail ride at least once a week</li> <li>64 % currently trail ride on roadside and roadways</li> <li>99 % stated they would feel safer trail riding on shared off road trails</li> <li>76 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network for safety</li> <li>76 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network as they enjoy the bushland environment</li> <li>72 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network as they would be away from vehicle traffic</li> <li>60 % would choose to ride a shared off road trail network for the peaceful setting</li> </ul> <p>The Equine Industry is predominately a female sport along with young children who attend Pony Club too. We are among a minority group who are always overlooked. It would be very disappointing if Council did not support this plan considering Council support every male dominated sport like Football, Soccer, Cricket and Basketball within the shire. Again, I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and hope the Nillumbik Council sees fit to do so also.</p>
71	<p>It is imperative that the equine industry is promoted within the Shire. The sole reason for moving to the area for us was to facilitate a lifestyle around horses and the equine industry. It imparts a huge range of economic benefits to the Shire ranging from business to tourism and sport. Horses and horse riding promote emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing and physical wellbeing. In particular it has helped with reducing stress associated with high paced corporate employment whilst still being within driving distance to the city on a daily basis. It is essential that facilities are planned and incorporated into the area which facilitate the</p>

	<p>extremely large range of equestrian sports that a significant sector of the Shire participated in actively.</p> <p>Horse husbandry also facilitates the maintenance of large areas of rural land in the Shire and ensures higher standards of land management practices. This is in high contrast to vegetation overgrown properties which are weed and pest infected in an attempt to “maintain the environment” by green extremists who have no compelling reason to maintain their properties responsibly.</p>
<b>72</b>	<p>I agree with the overall objectives of the strategy, to improve equine outcomes in Nillumbik. However, P15 of the Assessment document lists as existing infrastructure trails that are incomplete, and the status of these trails should be updated to reflect ‘as-is’ rather than an aspirational ‘to-be’ status.</p> <p>Living in Smiths Gully for the last 15 years, there has been a steady increase in road traffic and its also become a mecca for road and mountain biking. The sealing of Buttermans Track has also led to increased traffic due to ‘rat running’, this has also affected the feeder roads. Riding on the roads to access trails is becoming increasing hazardous, and recently there has also been an increase in motorcycle trail riding on the local dirt roads.</p> <p>We have some terrific trails in the area, which can be accessed off local roads but these are not interconnected and often result in ‘there and back trips’, rather than loop rides. Loop rides would reduce riding in traffic, which can be hazardous due to the marked increase in 4WD’s travelling at speeds not suited to encountering horses on the road as well as the general increase in a variety of other traffic. Is the lack of loop rides due in part to self-off of land parcels incorporating roads or adverse possession, where thru roads are no longer thru. If so, this needs to be acknowledged and addressed. A variety of the trails that are open to walkers and mountain bikers are closed to horses, even through they are disused 4WD or fire access trails, more lobbying is needed to address this imbalance in use. Trail riding is the 2nd most popular discipline, with 78% believing that there would be an increase in demand.</p> <p>Long distance riding opens economic opportunities in a broader context, as families/friends can come to the area to horse ride, mountain bike, tour the wineries or enjoy walking etc. Not necessarily all group members want the same experience. But with more on offer in terms of activities, diversity within groups can be accommodated.</p> <p>Whilst I’m a member of a local ARC, I see that the arenas largely stand idle.</p> <p>If you look at another Green Wedge, the Mornington Peninsula. For example, Boneo Park the equestrian centre, also has a restaurant and offers guided walking thru woodland and grassland trails. On the Peninsula trail riding, winery tours on horseback etc. are all on offer, in addition to Adult riding and Pony Club. The scale of the equine industry on the Mornington Peninsula would be an interesting reference point as to what the true potential of the investment opportunities are for Nillumbik.</p>
<b>73</b>	<p>I support Equine in Nillumbik. From a member a Hurstbridge Pony Club</p>
<b>74</b>	<p>Improving the equine outcomes in Nillumbik is important to the local community, from an amenity perspective, as well as the economic opportunity.</p> <p>However, the strategy documents seem to focus too heavily on development of club based infrastructure, which inevitably will compete for limited use with other similar venues, rather than considering the unique opportunities that Nillumbik and its environs can offer to grow equine activity and value in the area. This is not to say that clubs will not benefit from an undercover arena or more appropriately sized cross country course, but that practical participation rates and economic benefit of other areas of investment that only Council or state bodies can deliver (access to crown land, road safety etc.) should be considered perhaps as the more important focus of Council. In an environment of urban</p>

encroachment and adverse and irreversible planning decisions, there are other actions other than capital building works, that only Council can deliver with a higher priority and focus.

The AECOM study doesn't reflect the potential of private endeavours to provide equine facilities in addition to key public facilities. In consideration of the (not unexpected lack of) scale of equine in the metro and peri-metro area, the arenas and grounds of various private equine facilities are (or should be) considered an integral and important part of the available infrastructure for both participation rates and economic impact, and better inform Council's investment decisions.

Trail riding (either privately, or as a business/tourism opportunity) is almost un-catered for in Nillumbik. The AECOM study is aspirational as to its description of equine trails. They mostly don't exist to any meaningful extent and whilst listed as "existing trails" most are only planned, and are otherwise so poorly marked and promoted that they are invisible to most. Council would be well served to reconcile the actual equine accessible trail network "as is" as a starting point for further work.

The AECOM study ignores trail riding (also Navigation Rides) as one of the "key equine disciplines (sic)" in Nillumbik, whilst it does later acknowledge that it is one of the areas of most interest.

The economic and participation opportunity presented by trail riding (with sufficient supporting infrastructure) is not reflected in the strategy. Mornington Peninsula Council's 2013 review of equine activity identified that just two private operators attracted 30,000 people rides per year, in addition to other operators now offering winery tours to over 10,000 participants. The potential benefit to accommodation and F&B business in the Nillumbik area should be self-evident, but is contingent upon Council delivering first and foremost a suitable network of trails and associated infrastructure.

It is unclear where and how the cohort for this analysis was selected, but a significant portion of equine activity is not linked to local clubs (despite 15 years of equine activity, I have only been a club member for 1). Many other local community members who participate in equine pursuits also have no affiliations to the cited clubs.

There is an urgent need to secure and create a linked network of off-road trails.

The equine accessible trail network in Nillumbik can only be described as poor.

- Local and main roads are increasingly dangerous as traffic volumes and speeds rise, as Nillumbik becomes a thorough-fare for through traffic yet they currently are fundamental to being able to complete "trail" rides in the area. Council needs to address this urgently.
- Equine usage would benefit more greatly from interconnected trails that allow circular routes to be navigated and greater distances to be covered. The 2011 Nillumbik plan provides an aspirational plan for several linear paths and non-connected paths, but they largely still don't exist for equine activity.
- The planned Diamond Creek trail is somewhat interesting, but also of limited value for trail riding (there and back ride, poorly disciplined dogs (off leads) and high speed cyclists do not make an appropriate environment for equine activity), even if "separated" on its own trail this can't be enforced.
- Equine activity is largely banned from the extensive network of management and fire tracks in the Kinglake reserve areas in the vicinity of Smiths Gully. This represents one of the greatest opportunities to create an interesting and safe network of trails that would attract both local interest and present a draw for tourism (similar to how the bike network attracts significant patronage to the benefit of local cafes and shops). These tracks are maintained

	<p>for vehicular access already. Similarly certain trails allow mountain bikes but arbitrarily exclude equine use but are key connecting links.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Significant loss of trail opportunities due to historic subdivision or adverse possession rights/assumptions by landowners. Care needs to be taken to ensure public roads and tracks are maintained for public use, particularly on the King Lake fringe.</li> <li>- The impending disposal of Melbourne Water lands needs to be factored into the realisation of an inter-connected equine trail network before the opportunity is lost.</li> </ul>
<b>75</b>	<p>Yes we need safer open spaces to ride our horses. The area is getting overrun with fast cars and thoughtless people. Open tracks, stock routes and connecting lanes and roads marked as safe riding trails would allow our children to ride safely. This is a rural area and needs to be protected for residents to enjoy. We are members of HHPC and adult riders.</p>
<b>76</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. My children are members of the Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club. We have been involved with the club since 2017. I have been a member of the committee for the past 12 months and will continue in this role in the coming year. We have owned horses for many years and moved to the area, with our horses, in 2015 from Queensland.</p> <p>I would love to see the Council partner more with pony clubs to help with sourcing grants and finding other ways to maintain and improve facilities-our membership is at capacity yet this does not cover our running costs and fundraising activities are necessary to cover the essentials - improvements are difficult. This will prove even more difficult in the next 12 months with fundraising opportunities severely reduced.</p> <p>I would also love to see horse trails improved in the municipality so that we can enjoy riding as a family, on connected, safe trails.</p> <p>I look forward to seeing the Council support the Equine in Nillumbik plan, recognising equestrian sport alongside other sports that receive support. Thank you.</p>
<b>77</b>	<p>I support this plan, The equine community contributes significantly to the Nillumbik region and to have a plan that accounts for the future of the Equine industry is fantastic.</p>
<b>78</b>	<p>Equines in Nillumbik is part of our history &amp; should be a part of our future. It provides not only sport for many children who attend pony clubs but also adults at adult riding clubs. Equines provides employment, such as farriers, dentist, vets, stock feed shops, float maintenance &amp; much more.</p> <p>It builds friendships &amp; brings the community together. An equine plan for Nillumbik would be very beneficial for the shire &amp; a step forward for 2020-2030.</p>
<b>79</b>	<p>I am happy to support the Council's Equine Strategy.</p> <p>It is very welcoming to see recognition of the people like myself who have lived in Nillumbik for many years(32) and never seen the main reason we moved here- that being to own horses, ever acknowledged or promoted. At last, there is to be some recognition of the input to the economic well being, social harmony and community connectedness that having a horse and being part of the associated equine community, bring to the residents who live or agist horses here.</p> <p>As a coordinator of Interschool competition for teenage girls, I am a front and centre witness to the sorts of stresses that teenage life brings. Those that ride in competition and around local trails have the opportunity to disengage from social media and they recognise the benefit this brings. Their hobby requires a great deal of time and commitment and this</p>

	<p>stands them in good stead for developing personal resilience as they grow. The recognition by Council of the diversity of reasons that bring people to Nillumbik is to be welcomed and encouraged. Horse owners have long since called this area home and are keen to see this aspect of interest and recreation encouraged on a Local Council level.</p>
<b>80</b>	<p>I am a recreational and competitive horse rider, and hold memberships with Hurstbridge &amp; Districts Adult Riding Club and Yarrambat Adult Riding Club. I wholeheartedly support this plan.</p>
<b>81</b>	<p>I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan 2020-2030. I am a member of Kangaroo Ground Adult Riding Club</p> <p>There is a strong history of working horses in Nillumbik and horse riding now is a popular recreational activity which has both physical and mental health benefits.</p> <p>Over the years the traffic has increased and many roads have been sealed which makes it too dangerous to ride on the roads, so there needs to be more safe shared off road trails for horses, cyclists and walkers.</p> <p>The horse industry has many benefits for the local community including supporting many small businesses such as feed stores, farriers, saddlery stores and veterinary practices.</p>
<b>82</b>	<p>Please consider prioritising upgrading and creating trails for horse riding (trail riding). Unlike some other facilities which may be more discipline specific, horse riders from all different disciplines can use trails for fun and fitness, even if their primary discipline may be in another area. Trails can also be used for other purposes (e.g. walking, hiking, dog-walking) so would appear to have benefits extending beyond the horse riding community.</p>
<b>83</b>	<p>Hello and thank you for the opportunity to participate.</p> <p>I originally moved into the Nillumbik Shire as it seemed to offer my family the opportunities to pursue the outdoor lifestyle that we desired. In particular, our equine pursuits of trail riding, showing and dressage led us to join Hurstbridge Clubs which has involved us as a family and helped guide my children through the years. With the challenges we all face, it has never been more important to maintain the continuity of outdoor pursuits which engages children, teenagers and adults alike. The provision of safe and secure trails and facilities in our Shire is paramount to ensuring healthy growth and stability in our community.</p> <p>In anticipation of a favourable outcome for the people of the Nillumbik Shire community.</p>
<b>84</b>	<p>I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2021 plan recently put forth, and thank the Shire Council for investigating and proposing improvements for equine activities within the shire and inviting us to comment on these proposals.</p> <p>I am a member of the Hurstbridge District Adult Riding Club and have lived and ridden horses in Nillumbik since 1975. We share our grounds with the Hurstbridge Pony Club and whilst our two arenas are of great quality, it is a small ground used by a lot of horses each week. Mid-week Rallies are held every Wednesday, and weekend rallies and competitions are shared between pony club and the adult riders club. Many club members and instructors use the grounds for private lessons and clinics and can access the grounds for private use when nobody else has booked it.</p> <p>I'm unsure if our lease arrangement for our Hurstbridge club grounds and therefore the</p>

	<p>continuity of our local riding clubs, so any assistance from council to support equestrian sports and to promote riding as a viable and accessible option to other Nillumbik residents, especially young girls and women who might chose riding over team or contact sports, would help to secure and continue the tradition of horse riding within the shire.</p> <p>I especially support the move to increase and improve shared trails throughout the district to encompass horse riding as well as walkers and cyclists as many riders are not affiliated with particular clubs and are therefore limited for places they can ride. The proposal of an indoor facility to permit all weather and evening equine activities would be a great asset to the shire, although a large “State Level” facility like the one in Werribee may not be the ideal scenario for Nillumbik, considering our country roads and the impact such a large centre may have on our delicate environment here. I would much rather see a smaller all weather arena and amenities with a well developed cross country course, that could be shared by all of the neighbouring clubs and host smaller equine events and clinics. Such a space would be a great business venture for the Shire and a welcome venue for the local and neighbouring equine enthusiasts.</p> <p>I look very forward to fire / emergency evacuation procedures and a possible “large animal fire refuge” being put into place as fire is a terrifying hurdle for horse owners to address on their own.</p> <p>Whilst driver awareness and behaviour programs would be very welcome, safe trails well off main arterials would be a preferred option as horse riding on the even the quietest of backroads has become very dangerous over the years.</p> <p>Unfortunately my property is not large enough to maintain my horse so I agist up the road from my home and actively maintain the property alongside the land owners. I would therefore very much benefit from workshops on land management, pest control (deer, rabbits, foxes, weeds), ways to improve soil health and biodiversity on horse properties all whilst maintaining a healthy ecosystem where native species of flora and fauna so abundant in Nillumbik, can also thrive.</p> <p>I once again thank Council for allowing me to comment and put forth my thoughts on this plan.</p> <p>I sincerely hope that our sport which is practiced by so many women and girls, giving them a mental and physical outlet, may be considered just as important as other activities that have been supported and promoted in past years, and that the proposed plan will be supported by many other Nillumbik residents and adopted.</p>
<b>85</b>	As both a rider and a parent of pony club members I support the Equine plan. Providing ongoing services for youth is vital in our community and horse riding is a life long pursuit.
<b>86</b>	I support this plan. I have two horses and ride twice a week locally. I engage a farrier, an equine vet, an equine Physio, a float maintenance mechanic, a car mechanic, feed stores and an equine dentist multiple times a year- always supporting local businesses. I belong to a local trail riding club and a local adult riders club.
<b>87</b>	I support this plan. Equine activity in Nillumbik is a vital part of what makes our community great, unique and strong. Thank you Nillumbik council for supporting this plan.
<b>88</b>	Our Hurstbridge Pony Club has grown in recent years offering a safe, educational place for young people to learn about the joys of horses. We have produced State and National riders and this should be recognised in our community
<b>89</b>	My name is Stephanie and I live in Yarrambat. I would fully support the plan to expand the Equine services in Nillumbik. I ride two horses currently and am often leaving the area and

	<p>travelling to other areas across the state to train and compete as there are no facilities to use in Nillumbik. If Yarrambat had a good venue for training and competing I am extremely confident many people across the state would come to the shire. Nillumbik is well placed in Victoria for equestrians, as it is a middle place for people living in the west and east and easily accessible.</p>
<b>90</b>	<p>Hello</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to pen my thoughts on the equine in Nillumbik Plan and how important I think it is.</p> <p>My family have had a business in the Nillumbik shire now for 40 years manufacturing / servicing horse floats and I myself am also a very keen and active horse rider. I have met a wide variety of people and families over this time that have shared their stories and they are all unique in some way but here are a few examples.</p> <p>Parents wanting their kids to have the childhood memories they had when they were growing up being involved in horses.</p> <p>Young mums that haven't ridden since they were teens and finally having some time for themselves now the kids are at school.</p> <p>As this shire has many rural properties parents are wanting their children to be involved with horses as there are so many positive aspects to caring for and being involved with horse riding.</p> <p>I am in favor of the equine in Nillumbik plan because if done right could extend to not just horse riding but new programs for all Nillumbik residents struggling, not coping or just need to have time out to touch and perhaps groom a horse for the first time in their lives if they themselves aren't in a position to make this happen. There are so many non riding programs that I think could really benefit adults and children/teenagers.</p> <p>There is so much more to talk about another time but I feel this could be the start of great opportunities for the wider community.</p>
<b>91</b>	<p>We need good safe riding trails for horse riders. We also need driver education in slowing down and waiting for horses so that accidents don't occur. We need additional funding to horse riding clubs so that they can make riding lessons affordable for members</p>
<b>92</b>	<p>I agree with the Nillumbik Equine plan and in particular that relating to infrastructure and trail riding. I am a rider and live on a 20 acre property in Wattle Glen. I am often confronted with vehicles that do not display proper behaviour when I'm required to ride on sections of road. This places me and my horse at great risk of injury. Further, I don't have a float at this time so am unable to get to my local pony clubs unless I ride on the road so at this stage have not sought membership. As a resident with a horse specific property I believe that I should be able to ride from my property and enjoy our beautiful area in the safest possible manner. I also believe that most locals behave appropriately on the roads because they know horses will be out and about but visitors to the area who come out here for weekend drives tend to have little regard for road sharing and in fact see these back roads as an opportunity to open the throttle so to speak. It's not an over reaction to say that on occasion I have been terrified as they approach at speed.</p>
<b>93</b>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan which we support</p>



	<p>.</p> <p>My family are members of the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club and we support the Equine in Nillumbik plan.</p> <p>We are excited for the plan to be implemented.</p> <p>If you consider the Warby trail well used by riders in the Yarra Valley by horse riders. Small businesses / eateries have been able to set up temporary yards to allow for riders to stop and share a meal during their ride.</p> <p>Pony Club Victoria has recently placed their Gladysdale property on the market – this leaves an opening for another similar facility that can be leased out for events and clinics within the community.</p>
<b>94</b>	<p>Feedback would be;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assisting owners of horse properties to improve pasture and reduce weeds - this would be extremely helpful as we are currently involved in weed management &amp; pasture improvement through reestablishment of native flora.</li> <li>2. Assisting clubs to maintain club facilities and grounds - as this is always a huge economic and time investment for clubs.</li> <li>3. Improvement of shared tracks and ridden access to clubs - many tracks need upgrades for safety reasons to allow riders to stay off the roads.</li> </ol>
<b>95</b>	<p>I ride horses. My wife rides horses and our 2 children ride horses. In fact, my daughter has a world ranking in Dressage. I am often dismayed at the paucity of equine services offered locally. I know equine employs plenty of locals and generates significant local revenue, but elite athletes and their horses have to travel elsewhere, sometimes for basic services. For instance, we travel to Woodend to get shoes fitted, to Wallan and Lancefield for training and to Boneo and Werribee for weekend comps (when the lockdown ends).</p> <p>There is significant enough equine activity in Nillumbik to justify an Equine Hub which has a decent indoor arena, hospitality and meeting facilities and potentially some retail space. At such a facility, trainers could come in and do whole day sessions so that locals wouldn't have to travel so far. Competitions would bring people from across the state if the facilities were good enough.</p> <p>We need to make equine activities more accessible to locals, locally.</p>
<b>96</b>	<p>I support equine activities in Nillumbik - I specifically moved to the area to keep my horses on the property with me - I am a member of Hurstbridge ARC and Yarrambat ARC - I love the friendships I have formed in these clubs - all horse riders have been supportive and helpful and care for the environment - we need safer trails as young P platers are proving troublesome to horses while out on the roads - thanks for being interested in Equine pursuits it is much appreciated</p>
<b>97</b>	<p>My daughter and I both enjoy the simple pleasure of horse riding. It is a large part of maintaining my connection to my teenage daughter, keeping her connected to nature and outdoors in a largely influenced technology driven world. I believe that horse riding, particularly at this age helps to grow courageous, authentic young women. She is a member of St Andrews Pony Club (Official) and we are both members of St Andrews Trail Riding Group (Official). I am a member of the Kangaroo Ground Trail Riding (Community Facebook</p>

	<p>group) also.</p> <p>Our family of 6 are all in support of the Equine Nillumbik Plan.</p>
<p><b>98</b></p>	<p>TO: NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL</p> <p>I firstly would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment and show my support for this plan.</p> <p>My name is Leanne Lake and I reside in [REDACTED]. I have lived in Nillumbik for 30 years and have kept my horses in the shire for 36 years. I am a life member of St Andrews Adult Riding Club, St Andrews Trail Riding (ATHRA) Club, a regular instructor at St Andrews Horse &amp; Pony Club, an occasional instructor for Eltham Horse and Pony Club and Hurstbridge Horse &amp; Pony Club. My horses are currently kept at a friends property in Smiths Gully and previously I agisted in Panton Hill for many years.</p> <p>Our clubs have always been self funded with assistance from local community businesses in regards to Sponsorship and donations towards fundraising activities we hold to keep our clubs afloat and viable. Every event we have is run purely by volunteers. We share grounds with the Pony Club who are the leasee's of the Pony Club grounds. Both clubs work together holding working bees to maintain our club grounds with Council assistance. As a club we would welcome discussions on how the Council could help us even a little with our ongoing costs as local riding clubs do not receive any significant funding on a regular basis like these other sporting clubs. Pony Clubs, Adult Riding Club and even our Trail Riding Club are very much apart of the Nillumbik community and should be recognized as such, in the same as Football, Netball, Basketball and other sporting activities.</p> <p>Our clubs offer an outlet for all involved in equine learning, management and enjoyment. They offer a safe area especially for children to ride. Trail riding is a big part of our community and I have done so in Nillumbik now for over 36 years. Trails that we often used many years ago have now been cut off to trail riders but are still being used by Bike Riders who in my opinion do far more damaged than horses. Nowadays you cannot ride down some track because of bike tyre ruts which make it dangerous for horses and walkers alike. Trails such as theses that are cut off are pushing horses &amp; rider back onto the roads which is not a safe option as the traffic is fast and many do not slow done to pass riders. A driver education program regarding responsibility and safety would definitely be a benefit to all. Share trails are the way to go to benefit all in the community to make riding, walking safer and enjoyable for all.</p> <p>Nillumbik Shire would be an ideal place for an equestrian centre that all the nearby clubs can share with an Indoor arena and trails around Yarrambat Park would be ideal. This would allow equestrians to be able to ride during hot or wet weather. Currently the Yarra Valley offer the closest indoor which is not very close and entails driving the Yarra Glen Hill with a float which is not very enjoyable.</p> <p>Nillumbik Equine Community is supportive to green wedge management and providing safe trails to ride. Support towards each other within the equine is very big too. As a single older women on my own in Nillumbik I feel safe and I love my community. Keeping my horses here greatly contributes to my health and well being. My horses and dog make my life enjoyable and complete and I appreciate Nillumbik Council for acknowledging that horses are an important part of the Shire and community.</p> <p>Thank you &amp; Best Regards,</p>
<p><b>99</b></p>	<p>I fully support the Nillumbik Equine plan. Tourism is vital for our shire council. Please approve this plan as it supports many people especially young girls and women. It is in keeping with our green wedge to have outdoor leisure activities.</p>

100	Please approve the Equine in Nillumbik plan. It is important to our council to have facilities for riders of horses.
101	I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik plan. Nillumbik is to be shared by people with all types of leisure activities and horse riding is a healthy outdoor activity that is important for many residents.
102	I support this plan and opening up more opportunities with the equine and local community.
103	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p> <p>I am writing on behalf of the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG) to say that we SUPPORT the plan.</p> <p>The NHAG congratulates council and staff on the development of this advocacy plan and endorses Equine in Nillumbik as an important strategic document for equine sport and rural recreation in the shire.</p> <p>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 us achieve this.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Equine in Nillumbik is a good news story, demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A long history of strong participation in the sport/recreation</li> <li>• Residents living healthy, active, outdoor lives</li> <li>• A grass-roots, rural sporting and recreational pursuit including 12 local clubs and several riding schools</li> <li>• Well run, largely self-sufficient clubs affiliated with their state and national bodies</li> <li>• 89% of participants are women and girls who are often under-represented in other sport</li> <li>• Multi-generational social benefit and connected engagement from 5 to 85-year-olds</li> <li>• Family oriented participation</li> <li>• Huge volunteer contribution</li> <li>• \$16.9M economic input to the shire with 34 businesses directly relating to equine, providing employment for 74 people and expected growth in income in the next 5 years</li> <li>• A diverse and significant economic driver outside the shire's urban areas</li> <li>• Horse keeping is one of the largest rural activity sectors underpinning our Green Wedge</li> </ul>

• A majority of land owners who consciously and actively manage their properties and who seek information and

programs to assist them in this:

33% spending between 6-10 hours weekly on property maintenance and

36% spending 11 or more hours per week

So, almost 70% of horse-owning landowners are spending a minimum of one day per week managing their land

• The critical importance of access to safe, off-road, shared trails with connected linkages for horse riders and other

trail users which is highly valued

67% of survey respondents said that demand for participation in equine sport is growing, particularly in trail riding, dressage, eventing, show jumping and interschool competitions.

The key issues identified by riding club members were facility quality, cost of membership, maintenance challenges, infrastructure age and limitations and safety. However, we do not see this plan as a 'money-grab' opportunity, but rather it identifies areas where a collaborative effort between council and the sector would pave the way for constructive dialogue, focussed activity and targeted improvements going forward.

Local riding clubs have not historically enjoyed funding from council for big ticket infrastructure, unlike many other sporting codes in the shire. While there has been and remains a lack of equity in investment between equine and other sports (which warrants review), this plan will at least enable clubs, groups and council to jointly access external funding and grant opportunities for facility assessment and improvement and shared trail development and maintenance for the benefit of all trail users – horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists.

The plan's Actions will be the key to the success in implementing this plan, identifying where council support is needed, addressing infrastructure deficiencies and trail and road safety issues.

Actions:

Enhance participation, club sustainability and volunteer effort

- Ensure our well governed club committees that are run by an army of volunteers are resourced
- Clubs are largely self-funded and self-sufficient to date, working to keep memberships affordable
- Club support to improve and maintain facilities and grounds
- Review the historical lack of investment in equine sports in comparison to other sporting codes in the shire
- Assurance on leases
- Enhanced communications between clubs and promotion of events
- Assistance with grant applications for facility and equipment funding
- Grow club participation, identify barriers and support volunteers
- Support for RDA

Maximise the use of equine infrastructure

- Shared infrastructure and resource opportunities wherever practicable
- Equine Infrastructure Plan to evaluate current sites and realistically maximise their use
- Investigation of a larger shared facility including an indoor arena that could be shared by all local clubs is

warranted. This would be more a regional facility rather than a state-level facility,

available for year-round training, rallies, clinics, competition and RDA

Such a venue would enhance the clubs' opportunities to raise funds to contribute to the facility cost, invest in their home grounds and keep club memberships affordable

- Synergies with neighbouring councils around equine infrastructure
- Identify the common needs of shared trail user groups and any shared road safety issues
- Horse rider access to safe, shared off-road trails 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

- Collaborate with State land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Melbourne Water) and 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 'destination' trail infrastructure and facilities in the region
- 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 alternative trails and improved connections where necessary and ensure the safety and enjoyment of all shared trail users
- Many horse riders would like to trail ride but don't because the roads are too dangerous. Some would like to ride to their club rally days if it was safe to do so

Support equine economic development

- 'Horse keeping' is one of the largest rural activity sectors 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
- 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
- We appreciate the benefit in supporting the creation of local business 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
- The ongoing development of a shared, off-road recreation trails network across Nillumbik Shire enables residents and visitors to enjoy local neighbourhoods, townships and rural hamlets and to truly immerse themselves in the

	<p>natural landscape</p> <p>Land, pest, emergency management and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An identified 'large animal' evacuation location in Nillumbik would be welcomed by land owners who keep horses and farm animals that they may wish to protect in the event of bushfire</li> <li>• Implementation of a shire focused, driver awareness campaign for horse rider safety and improved signage would be welcomed. This could be extended to include on-road cyclists as well</li> <li>• 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 for preserving the rural, scenic amenity and landscape character of the shire. The shire's natural environment isn't just the bush</li> <li>• The NHAG acknowledges and appreciates council's willingness to partner with us and the equine community generally in providing diverse and responsive educational opportunities, information, advice and support to facilitate informed land management and its practicable application. This benefits rural residents, their properties and animals, biodiversity, the environment of the Green Wedge and the shire generally</li> <li>• Targeted pest management programs would be well received</li> </ul> <p>'Equine in Nillumbik' is an important acknowledgement of a core sector of our shire's rural communities. It identifies opportunities to support equine sport and rural recreation while also recognizing the significant economic benefits of horse keeping to the shire. This plan is worthy of council's support.</p>
104	<p>I think the pony club in Kangaroo Ground is a great and valuable resource. I would love more paths where people are permitted to ride horses.</p>
105	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan! We are also members of the local pony and adult rider club and the preservation of the environment by creating safe trails so riders and wildlife are equally protected is important to us.</p>
106	<p>My only feedback is this. We live in the 21st century. Horses are no longer a standard form of transport. They have specific uses on farms and stations as well as recreational. Horses should not be allowed on the streets, footpaths and Nillumbik Trail.</p> <p>There is a law which is normally followed whereby dog owners must clean up after their dogs. There is no similar law for horse riders. When they ride on the paths, the horses leave multiple large piles of feces. This is a health hazard. The feces are never cleaned up by anyone so they remain on the paths for a long time until the bugs and insects get rid of them or people ride bikes through them or walk through them. Footpaths and the Nillumbik Trail are designed for human beings. Please keep horses off of them so we can safely walk or ride bikes on the paths.</p>
107	<p>I support this plan</p>

	I think horses should still be able to be kept/ridden in the Nillumbik area
108	<p>Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on this plan and I fully support the proposed "Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030" plan.</p> <p>My name is Jan Bell &amp; I have lived &amp; ridden my horses in the Nillumbik Shire for over the last 50 years .</p> <p>Over this time I have belonged to numerous horse groups including Eltham Pony Club, St Andrews Horse &amp; Pony Club, Kangaroo Ground Adult Riders , St Andrews Adult Riders. I am currently a member of St Andrews Trail Riders .</p> <p>The pursuit of equine activities offers up a healthy lifestyle, a sense of well being and the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors and participate in the things we love doing.</p> <p>Horse disciplines cater for a broad spectrum of activities for all age groups. It is a sport/ activity that families can enjoy together or for people to enjoy independently. This plan offers the acknowledgement and support from Council as a legitimate outdoor activity that is given to other mainstream sports .</p> <p>At present I ride the local trails on a weekly basis &amp; my experience has only been a positive one between horse riders , mountain bikers &amp; walkers , who I have found enjoy interacting with horse riders.</p> <p>For me, safe shared trails work &amp; with ongoing education of trail etiquette through the different network of users, it will only get better.</p> <p>Riding on roads has never been a save option &amp; I applaud the Council's initiative to recognize that trails are the best way to keep horse riders safe &amp; off the roads.</p> <p>As our roads become even busier and less safe , moving forward, we need ongoing access to a network of safe shared trails, including car parking which will accommodate floats. After a recent personal experience with a driver on a quiet back dirt road, who refused to slow down, frightening a horse, once again reinforces the need for ongoing driver education in regard to everyone's safety .</p> <p>Over the years we have been locked out of Parks Victoria tracks / maintained fire access roads ( without any community consultation) and Melbourne Water Tracks leaving fewer and fewer trails to ride on .</p> <p>I also support the initiative to explore the possibility of an indoor equestrian centre. This would give the Nillumbik Equine Community a home base providing year round undercover access for all equine activities including show jumping, dressage as well as providing an enclosed arena for Riders Disables Association , inter School Comps, educational clinics covering all things related to horsemanship , land management etc. An indoor arena would also allow for the utilization of external competitions to be held , which in turn would generate more income dollars being brought in from outside sources.</p> <p>The economic contributions our equine community brings to our local businesses cannot be underestimated.</p> <p>The range of economic flow on includes, feed stores, riding instructors , agistment , property maintenance, vets &amp; allied associated horse health professions, farriers, retail, cafes, wineries &amp; agriculture maintenance.</p> <p>Although equine clubs are mainly run by voluntary input, fund raising, time &amp; commitment , the recognition by Council of our sport /recreation would make it a more attractive proposition in securing sponsorship through grants at all levels of government.</p> <p>The Nillumbik Equine Community and it's history is intricately woven into the fabric of the</p>

	<p>Nillumbik Shire tapestry &amp; I would welcome the recognition by this council of our equine community and the enrichment it brings to many lives in the Nillumbik Shire.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely,</p>
<b>109</b>	<p>I am pleased to see that there is a move to maintain the trail riding paths that are already in the area including those in Kangaroo ground and surrounds. For safety it is so important that we do this - safety for riders and horses of course but also for motorists so they are not hit by a loose horse - that can happen if the horse gets a fright on the road. The shared trails with walkers and bike riders are fine, but signage to stop dirt bike motorbike riders would be great. Any further trail or council assistance to support sections where the trail has breaks ( on dangerous corners) would be great. The aqueduct in Kangaroo ground is also a great riding trail that needs to be sustained. Thank you for your efforts!</p>
<b>110</b>	<p>I love the riding trails in kangaroo ground- they just need vegetation cut back at times to keep horses on the trails not the roads. Flat rock rd has a lot of riders, cyclists, walkers and wildlife and cars speed constantly. Speed control measures would be great</p> <p>Thank you</p>
<b>111</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p> <p>I have been riding in Nillumbik since I was 5 years old and was a member of the Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club. I have recently joined the Hurstbridge District Adult Riding Club and cannot wait to ride with them and make a contribution to the club.</p> <p>I also love trail riding around our neighbourhood and beautiful shire. I am a member of St Andrews Trail Riding Group; trail riding makes up a large portion of the time I spend riding. However, in order to do so I need safe off-road trails to get away from cars and motorbikes. My horse can sometimes be reactive to cars when we have to ride directly on the roads, which has resulted in some very scary situations.</p> <p>Most drivers don't realise how dangerous driving past a horse at speed can be and most people do not have any regard for my (or my horses') safety and barely slow down as they drive by a meter away from us. Even when asked to do so and there are signs warning of horse riders on local roads, many people do not stop or slow enough for everyone to stay safe.</p> <p>By supporting safe, off-road trails, Council is able to ensure that there is increased safety for everyone involved when out trail riding and that includes walkers and cyclists. Without safe trails (ones that get us off the roads) and club grounds, I wouldn't be able to ride. We rely on shared facilities to enjoy our sport and participate.</p> <p>That is why the council support for clubs, trails and safety in this plan is so important so that I am able to enjoy my hobby and sport for the years to come.</p>
<b>112</b>	<p>My daughter and I are horse riders. I ride for pleasure and find it relaxes me. My child is a competitive eventer and has competed to national level. Nillumbik has the potential to promote the equine industry in their 2020-2030 plan, noting that this is a sport that most of the participants are female. The potential to access trails through Nillumbik national parks would be beneficial to the sport and all riders. Please let this go ahead.</p>
<b>113</b>	<p>Its an important part of living in Nillumbik. It provides children and adults to partake in a hobby which is outdoors and is a community minded activity</p>
<b>114</b>	<p>I support the equine plan cheers Graham</p>



115	<p>I'm really happy that the Council acknowledges the horse community in Nillumbik and that this strategy offers support to that community. I have ridden my horse on the existing trails and look forward to new trails in the future. I also think it would be great if Nillumbik had an indoor equestrian facility. I support the equine strategy. Cheers govner</p>
116	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>Firstly, on behalf of all horse riders in our Shire, I personally would like to thank the Nillumbik Council for allowing us the opportunity to provide feedback in the hope that we can adopt an equine plan within our Shire. I strongly support this great initiative.</p> <p>This is an important strategy for our sport/recreation and I'm really pleased that finally our sport is getting some recognition other than the sports that are already well funded.</p> <p>My name is Sharlene Wright and I'm a local horse rider who has lived in the Nillumbik Shire for 20 years.</p> <p>I'm also a current member on the Hurstbridge Adult Riders Committee.</p> <p>As an active equine member in the Shire, I attend weekly club lessons, I represent Hurstbridge at competitions and I also trail ride with local family and friends around our beautiful Nillumbik trails.</p> <p>In regard to the Equine in Nillumbik plan, please see my thoughts and comments below.</p> <p>Appendix A: Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.</p> <p>Action 1: At Hurstbridge Adult Riders, we have a fantastic bunch of volunteers amongst our members who generously donate their time to our club to assist in fundraising, hosting competitions and maintaining our beautiful grounds through working bees. Membership is mainly made up of women and girls in a supportive, encouraging environment.</p> <p>Fundraising is a crucial part of our club, otherwise we would simply not be able to maintain our grounds and facilities provided to members, as sadly membership fees do not cover the day-to-day running costs of the club.</p> <p>Action 6: We are fortunate enough that low membership numbers are not an issue at Hurstbridge Adult Riders. Each year we have a waiting list of local horse riders wishing to become either a full or associate member.</p> <p>Hurstbridge has a wait list as our facilities are at capacity both in terms of parking and arena space.</p> <p>2</p> <p>Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure</p> <p>Action 3: The plan would enable seeking grant funding for clubs and for the potential development of an indoor arena - State and Federal Govt funding.</p> <p>While there is no need for a State-level facility, it would be fantastic to see a shared indoor facility that would not only offer all weather riding and training for clubs and local riders, it would also be a fantastic opportunity to co-host competitions among local pony clubs and adult riding clubs as well as casual arena hire.</p> <p>Actions 5-10: As previously mentioned, I utilize the local trials around Nillumbik weekly with family and friends. Not only is it a great way to exercise our horses, it's also a great way to meet other locals sharing similar interests.</p> <p>Unfortunately due to poor driver behavior, it's simply too dangerous to ride along the main roads, so I try to opt for local off-road shared trails with other horse riders, local residents walking their dogs and runners where I can.</p> <p>Off-road trails let me safely enjoy our local neighborhood, connect with family and friends and appreciate the natural environment.</p>

	<p>It would be great to see more safe off-road trails available to share.</p> <p>Land, pest, emergency management and safety</p> <p>Action 1: The fire season is daunting for anyone who lives in a bush fire prone area, however, as an equine owner I always worry about the safety of my horses during the bush fire season.</p> <p>We have a plan in place for our property, however, there is no specific fire refuge area for large animals within our Shire. It would be great to see this issue addressed.</p> <p>Actions 2 &amp; 3: Sadly there is a lack of driver awareness when it comes to horses within our Shire. Unfortunately some non-horse people don't know how to act when driving past or around local horse riders when on the roads. Most of the time this is no fault of their own, it comes down to a lack of education/awareness that there is local residents riding horses on the roads and what the proper etiquette should be.</p> <p>From personal experience many drivers panic when they see horses standing on the side of the road waiting to cross or when following a horse float, often driving past too quickly and beeping. More education around driver awareness would be warmly welcomed to ensure everyone gets home safely. It would also be great to see more signage indicating to be aware of horse riders within the area around our local roads.</p> <p>3</p> <p>I have had so many drivers pull over, fascinated and excited to see us out riding our horses on the weekend, often asking if their children can pat the horses and asking general questions regarding what the right and wrong way is to act around horses. More education may eliminate this issue.</p> <p>Actions 4, 5 &amp; 6: I am very property proud, spending a lot of time and money managing our property and paddocks to ensure they're well maintained by managing weeds, pastures to ensure good grazing coverage for our horses, and during the summer months ensuring our property has been cleaned up prior to the fire season.</p> <p>One thing we do struggle with is pest management, more specifically rabbits, foxes and deer. It would be fantastic to have more resources available to us in managing this issue. In most cases, a healthy and well-maintained property reflects a healthy and happy horse.</p>
<p><b>117</b></p>	<p>I fully support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and thank council for this important strategic document that is a first for the equine community, equine sport and rural recreation in this shire.</p> <p>I have kept horses in Nillumbik for 33 years and started riding at Kangaroo Ground Adult Riders in the late 1980s. Several members of my family enjoy participating in equine sport and horses have been a significant part of our family life in Kangaroo Ground and Hurstbridge.</p> <p>As a horse rider and a cyclist, I understand the critical importance of safe, off-road shared trails to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all trail users - horse riders, cyclists and walkers. I am happy to share trails with fellow trail users and enjoy the camaraderie that comes with enjoying our natural spaces, respectfully alongside one another.</p> <p>There is also a need for a driver awareness campaign for horse rider safety, including improved roadside 'warning' signage. The education campaign could include on-ride cyclists as well.</p> <p>I am no longer a member of a local riding club, but appreciate the important role clubs play</p>

	<p>in making riding and training accessible to a broad range of riders in the community, plus the health and social connection aspects. Having helped to raise funds to maintain club grounds and purchase equipment, I understand the dedication of volunteers and know how many hours are involved to make things happen.</p> <p>As an active participant in the management of our property, I am acutely aware of the resources and effort that go into responsible property management and observe that many other landholders maintain a similar level of commitment, thus making a significant contribution to the landscape and local amenity.</p> <p>I look forward to the successful passage of this Plan.</p>
<b>118</b>	<p>Equine in Nillumbik 2020-2030 Submission to Nillumbik Shire</p> <p>Thank you for giving me this opportunity to comment on this wonderful plan for the current and future residents in the Shire. The Council is to be commended as being the first Council to have made such a thoughtful contribution to the wellbeing and care of the horse owners for whom Nilumbik is the place to live.</p> <p>For nearly 30 years I have been an active member of the horse riding community which educates and instructs riders, young and old, about the welfare of horses and good agricultural practices to maintain a healthy property. This in turn creates an environment for our native flora and fauna on our properties.</p> <p>The community also provides ongoing friendships and group support for people of all ages. While it is open to all riders, it is true most of our riders are women. This is important because it provides a healthy outdoor pursuit for women of all ages. I myself am over 70 and still riding and teaching in adult and pony club sessions. There are many riders my age and and of course many younger as well.</p> <p>The opportunity to keep on learning is another contribution to mental health and well being that this sport provides, along with making friends and being part of the community.</p> <p>This plan would enable Council to work with all in the community coordinating resources, developing infrastructure, land management plans, weed control, access to trails for walkers and riders to enjoy our natural reserves.</p> <p>Safety is also an issue with busier roads and the Plan's support for riding and walking trails takes on greater importance.</p> <p>Finally I believe implementation of the Plan will allow common resources to be used for the benefit of the greater community.</p> <p>I support this Plan wholeheartedly and commend it to the council without reservation.</p>
<b>119</b>	<p>I'm in support of improving equine facilities and having safe passage for riders. Trail safety is of the utmost importance, through my own educating of drivers when approaching a horse on the road.</p> <p>Parks Vic and Melbourne water closed some of our options for safe passage, though cyclists and walkers still have access.</p> <p>We need tracks, so we can get off roads or limit usage ... for the safety of the rider and car users.</p> <p>Horse riders should have access to tracks to enjoy local areas.</p>
<b>120</b>	<p>The Mayor and Councillors Nillumbik Shire Council Equine In Nillumbik Plan – Yarrambat Adult Riding Club Submission</p>

I, with the members of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club, congratulate and thank the Nillumbik Shire Council for undertaking the to research the equine needs within the Shire and have the Equine in Nillumbik Plan prepared. This plan has been wanted by the equine community for some time, providing us the opportunity to raise awareness of our needs and issues of concern.

The Equine in Nillumbik Plan now provides opportunity for further conversations with Nillumbik Council and your equine partners to further develop and potentially expand equine sport and recreation. This will provide increased economic benefit for businesses within Nillumbik with low environmental impact.

Yarrambat Adult Riders Club

I am the President of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club and have been so for the past two years. My wife, Sharon, is also a member of the club regularly riding her horse, which we agist on a property in Diamond Creek. Our club has 80 members which is predominately women. There are only five men in the membership list. Our club consistently has a waiting list of prospective members, with the cap being established due to limitations on rally day instructors and vehicle / float parking. As a club we are keen to see our membership list increase and we hope that the impending conversations that the Equine in Nillumbik Plan will generate may lead us to improving the parking facilities and identifying a greater pool of rally day instructors.

The Yarrambat Grounds

The Yarrambat grounds we lease from Nillumbik Council are co-leased with the Yarrambat Horse and Pony Club. Both clubs have been established at the grounds for over 40 years. Our clubs have invested heavily in time and money to maintain and improved the grounds to provide the best conditions for our members. Regularly the grounds are used by other clubs to hold competitions or for rallies if their grounds are unavailable.

Annually both clubs invest \$6000 to improve the Cross Country course alone. These funds are for materials only, with the work completed by members volunteering time. General maintenance is completed through two working bees during Autumn and Spring, with some members volunteering extra time throughout the year to slash the arena and cross country course. Both clubs jointly meet throughout the year to determine the priority of works to be undertaken and equipment purchases. Both clubs have invested considerable funds to purchase equipment ( tractor, slasher, mowers, jumps & jumps storage trailers etc) to provide high quality grounds and arena equipment for competitions.

Rallies & Competitions

Both clubs hold rallies each month except for January. These rallies are well attended by club members and are a highlight each month, allowing equine instruction and social gathering. Each year both clubs host a number of competitions covering all disciplines such as dressage, horse trials, show jumping, and pony club games.

The grounds are constantly in use by members throughout the week for general training, instruction or just the enjoyment of the facilities and grounds in a safe environment.

Equine in Nillumbik Plan

As I mentioned I, with our club members support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan and we

recommend and hope that this plan is adopted at the Council meeting on the 23rd June, 2020.

The plan contains a number of actions the majority of which, Nillumbik Council facilitates discussions within the Equine Community to expand and share the current equine assets. Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is keen to be a part of these conversations and to partner with Council on a range of matters listed in the plan.

In particular :-

Enhance participation, Club sustainability and volunteer effort.

Action 1 – Council to investigate how to support clubs and improve and maintain their facilities - Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is aware that Nillumbik Council has limited capacity and funding that can be channelled into assisting clubs with maintaining grounds and courses. We would be keen to have discussions with Nillumbik Council and other clubs to identify common activities that Council engages which the clubs could leverage off to obtain services at a reduced cost. Activities such as weed and pest control, fencing, tree services etc.

Action 2 – Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long term viability – Yarrambat Adult Riders Club has been advised that our lease is a three year lease which has currently expired. In June 2019, we wrote to Nillumbik Council seeking a review of the term of the lease to a minimum 5 years, with a preference for 10 years. The reason this is required is to allow the clubs to secure sponsorship funds from equine businesses. In the past we have found it difficult to secure sponsorship funds owing to the limited length of the lease. Business owners need some security on the club's viability and longevity to predict and secure a return on their sponsorship investment. We would be keen to engage with Nillumbik Council and other clubs on this issue.

Action 6 – Council to work with equine clubs to grow participation and promote riders without horses and riding develops ability programs. - Yarrambat Adult Riders is keen to examine the potential to grow participation in equine activities within Nillumbik. One of our members is involved with the Riding Develops Ability program and as a club we would seek to be able to assist and promote this program.

Action 7 – Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities - As with all clubs Yarrambat Adult Riders Club is managed by a volunteer committee that deals with a variety of issues through out the year. These include funds management, member management and conflict resolution, setting fees, grounds management, pest and weed control etc. Council can assist these committees by providing workshops targeted at some of these issues they face. We would be keen to engage with Council to identify the topics these workshops can be focussed on.

Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure

Cross Country - A number of the actions in this section relate to trails. Each club has appropriate areas for dressage and show jumping activities. There is a variance in access to a cross- country course with our club having the most extensive course. The costs and man-hours associated with maintaining the cross country course is substantial, and as clubs Yarrambat Adult Riders and Yarrambat Horse and Pony Club are proud of what we have developed over the years. We welcome a discussion on how the equine infra-structure can be better utilised and maintained across Nillumbik.

Linked Trails - Linked trails is a desire of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Disappointingly horse riding is often excluded from the planning of these trails. Understandably in the urban area horse riding is not an obvious consideration, however, now that these trails are moving into the rural hamlets of Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge, horse riding must be included in the user group.

The surveys conducted by Council and by our club, overwhelmingly call for safe off-road areas for trail riding. The local roads today are too dangerous to permit horse riding along the road itself or the grass verge. These trails also need to link to permit a circuit to be completed wherever possible.

Yarrambat Adult Riders Club are keen to engage with Council to assist with identification of trail routes, and the needs of horses, whilst at the same time ensuring the impact to the environment is minimised.

Education of trail users / motorists - Yarrambat Adult Riders are also keen to engage with Council to assist with the development of an education program for all shared trail users (walkers, cyclists & horse riders) and motorists on how to approach and move around horses. This will promote safe use of the limited space along these trails, and country roads.

Support equine economic development

All our club members utilise the services of our local stock feed stores, farriers, and horse product retailers. Any increase in the use and ownership of horses within Nillumbik will enhance the development of the current operators, and may see an increase in the number of businesses.

Council can consider the access to cafes etc from the linked trails when developing the routes and plan to provide yards at points nearby to these businesses to allow riders to safely hold horses to stop for lunch / coffee etc.

Clubs will be able to provide labour and fund raise for the construction of these yards if considered appropriate.

Land, Pest, Emergency Management and Safety

Annually the Nillumbik community are provided with education and information regarding emergency management and planning for the bushfire season. Not all owners of horses reside in the rural section of Nillumbik. Many agist their horses on properties in Nillumbik, but they live in nearby urban estates. I am an emergency services worker, and I have witnessed during the Black Saturday fires and many other times, owners of horses attempting to enter locations that are about to be impacted by bushfire, to get their animals out of danger.

There is certainly a need for an education program targeted at horse owners to understand weather, bushfire behaviour and how to plan and respond to these emergencies.

I, with Yarrambat Adult Riders are keen to be involved with Council, CFA, vets and other clubs to identify the needs of the equine community and to develop workshops to provide the education needed.

We are also keen to be involved in the development of pest & weed control programs and be a conduit to provide this information to land owners within our membership.

	<p>Finally on behalf of the Yarrambat Adult Riders Club, I congratulate Nillumbik Council for engaging with the community and developing this Equine in Nillumbik Plan. This provides for conversation and inclusion of the Equine Community to partner with Council and other sectors of the community. These partnerships will manage the limited resources of Council and Clubs, will ensure minimal impact to the land and environment of all recreational activities including horses, to ensure a vibrant and cohesive community.</p>
<b>121</b>	<p>I support the interest in the equine sports in Nillumbik 2020-2030. We need to have safe space for both adults and children to participate in their equine sports.</p>
<b>122</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan</p>
<b>123</b>	<p>Hi there, I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan. I ride in the area and am part of a riding club too. I ride competitively and would love to see the equine community continue to grow.</p>
<b>124</b>	<p>I would firstly like to thank the Council for considering horse owners and implementing this plan. My name is Sukala Page and I have been living in the shire for 10 years. I am a horse rider and member of the Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club and also the owner of a stud. We are not a large enterprise but we do support the local economy with the use of local vets, farriers and feed merchants.</p> <p>Action 1 - As a member Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club we would live support to improve and maintain our facilities. We are a great club that does fundraising through the year to be able to maintain our grounds. This is all done by members who put volunteer their time however we do struggle with limited funds as membership fees do not cover the running costs so fundraising is essential.</p> <p>Maximise the use of Equine Infrastructure -</p> <p>Action 3 - The potential of a large shared equine facility would be beneficial to all horse riders in the area especially in winter months when people are often after a safe place to ride. Not all horse owners are lucky enough to have their own arena but to have a shared facility that they could utilise during the winter months would be a safe alternative. This would also generate support for local trainers and coaches and add the possibility of having shared local events during the winter months.</p> <p>Action 5-10</p> <p>I regularly trail ride my horses however in this day and age it is not safe to ride on the road due to poor driver behaviour. I would completely support shared trails. Unfortunately there has been a decline over the years in the trail network as horse riders have been shut out from Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water areas.</p> <p>Shared trails would not only benefit horse riders but also walkers and cyclists.</p> <p>Unfortunately drivers require education to know to slow down when passing horses. I no longer ride on the road where possible as drivers are unaware of the danger there place not only myself and my horse in but also themselves when they pass at high speed. More education needs to be provided to keep everyone safe.</p>

	<p>Land, pest, emergency management and safety -</p> <p>Action 1 - As previously mentioned we are a breeding stud so have a large number of horses on our property including a stallion. Every fire session we have additional stress as there are no safe facilities in the area for mares, foals and a stallion should we have to evacuate. A possibility for a large animal evacuation facility would reduce this stress especially if it had the option to house mares with foals and a stallion.</p> <p>Action 2 - As previously mentioned driver awareness would be greatly appreciated however safe trails off road would also assist. I live in an area where the sides of the roads are heavily treed which means you are unable to actually get off the road safely. I also see this with people walking on our roads. There is no grass verge for walkers or horse riders to get safely out of the way. Roads are narrow and then the edge of the road is either a bank or heavily treed and now metal barriers are also being put in making it nearly impossible to pass or stay safe and get off the road in areas should a car come let alone to cars coming in opposite directions.</p> <p>Action 4-6 - As mentioned we are a stud and land management is extremely high on our agenda. Healthy land and soil means healthy horses. Support in this area would always be appreciated. While we maintain our property well we do struggle with pest management especially foxes and rabbits.</p> <p>I would again like to thank you again for this plan.</p>
<p><b>125</b></p>	<p>My equestrian business would benefit immensely from the opportunity to ride at an indoor location close to home. Currently, to travel to a private indoor is at least an hour away. I do not know of an indoor in Melbourne (besides WPNEC) that is not privately owned, and therefore open to the public. To continue to grow our grounds will provide a huge asset to the equestrian community. Given the number of clubs within the area, there is little chance of the grounds being under utilised. This could be our opportunity to hold high level clinics and coaching with international riders/coaches, which will continue to upskill our community of riders.</p>
<p><b>126</b></p>	<p>While it costs the shire biodiversity grants to cull hard-hoofed deer and keep them out of Green Wedge bushland areas, Equine Nillumbik fails to recognise the environmental damage caused by horses if allowed to graze on areas of bush - whether they be Council Reserves or privately-owned bush blocks.</p> <p>Very much like the '2012 - 2016' Macedon Ranges Equine Strategy, Equine Nillumbik has a "Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats" (or "SWOT") analysis. However, there is no acknowledgement or strategy to deal with the SWOT threats to the Green Wedge environment if a horse industry were to be established there.</p> <p>A section addressing these threats should be included along with an Actions Strategy, with enforcement provisions, should it not be adhered to.</p> <p>I also question the veracity of Equine Nillumbik, given all its data just comes from stakeholders - often those with a pecuniary interest. Like the Council Plan and the GWMP, this blinkered Equine Nillumbik needs to be opened up for proper community consultation.</p> <p>It also seems inappropriate to be agreeing to this Equine Nillumbik, as Councillors will be</p>



	<p>committing Council to pursuing an Equestrian Centre with no idea about: where the Centre would be located; about its implications on the Conservation Zone; about the manifold traffic and bushfire risks; or about the potentially significant impositions on nearby residents.</p> <p>Summary: Therefore I submit that before Equine Nillumbik is approved a section needs to be inserted concerning the environmental threat of horses in bush blocks, that a proper impartial (without COI) assessment of the real financial worth of the Equine Industry be done and any reference to an Equine Centre be removed from Equine Nillumbik until a location be found that does not present an issue in terms of the Planning Scheme, the natural environment and traffic safety.</p>
<b>127</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan I would love to continue to have access to the fantastic equine facility. Also have grants provided to be able to maintain and continually improve the space</p>
<b>128</b>	<p>My daughter is a member of Hurstbridge Horse and Pony Club, I am the Treasurer of the club. We both wholeheartedly support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p>
<b>129</b>	<p>My name is Robyn Stephens and am a member of Yarrambat Adult Riding Club. I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan because it is important that horse riders have a safe place to ride away from traffic on the roads. Nillumbik is a growing area which will make roads busier and more dangerous for horse riders.</p>
<b>130</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan</p>
<b>131</b>	<p>I support the Nillumbik equine plan as a member of the Hurstbridge pony club. I support equine activity and business in the shire</p>
<b>132</b>	<p>I am the Secretary of Eastern Region Adult Riding Club in Eltham. I wish to register my support for the Equine Plan. I strongly believe that the pursuit of equine sporting activities in Nillumbik should be promoted and supported by Council &amp; the community. If we fail to do so, a valuable, historic &amp; vibrant aspect of our area will be lost forever. Equine pursuits benefit many young people (my 2 daughters participated in 2 local pony clubs for nearly 15 years) and many women (a vocal, voting &amp; important part of Nillumbik). There is significant upside to Council supporting the Equine Plan, namely further supporting a sport with a strong following, but also the opportunity to further enhance the operation of the sport &amp; potentially attracting more followers from within &amp; outside the Shire (increasing the financial upside to our community).</p> <p>I also strongly support development of the Green Wedge Trail from Eltham Lower Park to Kinglake.</p> <p>Here is a prime opportunity for Council to take a lead in promoting this beautiful sport, thus gaining the ongoing support of this valuable community, and maximising the financial benefits to the Shire. Supporting the Equine Plan would further add to the uniqueness of Nillumbik. A no brainer I'd say.</p> <p>PLEASE, it is vital that this Plan is passed by Council.</p>

<b>133</b>	<p>Michael Dunning I agist in Yarrambat and support the Nillumbik Equine plan</p>
<b>134</b>	<p>I support the equine in Nilumbik plan. I am a member and coach with Hurstbridge Pony Club, and also a member of Yarrambat Pony Club.</p>
<b>135</b>	<p>"I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan"</p> <p>I am an active member of Yarrambat Adult Riding Club and have been for over 20 years.</p> <p>I believe the council has a duty to provide ongoing amenity and leisure access to horse riders in the area and encourage the pursuit of this very healthy lifestyle and sport.</p>
<b>136</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan.</p> <p>I value the upkeep of local trails, which I use for horse-riding, running and walking. I value driver education about appropriate safety and etiquette around horse riders.</p> <p>I would appreciate council-run courses on healthy property maintenance, such as are regularly offered by the Yarra Ranges Shire.</p> <p>I have ridden, instructed and volunteered at the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club, and would greatly value the introduction of a Riding for the Disabled program at this club.</p>
<b>137</b>	<p>I support the Equine in Nillumbik plan. I am a member of the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club, and ride lots in the area on the trails. I used to ride to pony club but the traffic on the weekends make it dangerous, so more horse awareness signs would be great. More trails and up keep of trails would be beneficial. I also use the trails for running and walking dogs regularly. I have attended multiple council land care workshops, and would be interested to do more, to learn about how to care for our property and the pony club grounds.</p>
<b>138</b>	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am a male 17 year old horse rider and athlete (tetrathlon) living in Kangaroo Ground. I am a member of the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club; I used to compete widely in showjumping and mounted games. KG pony club is all run by volunteers from the people of the pony club, so we would appreciate council support in any form! (monetary, grounds maintenance, people power for events.) Most of my riding recently (and for a while) has been along the trails near my house (on Kings Rd); I also run along these trails regularly. I find there is a fairly good variation in the trails, which are mostly well kept (clear enough to ride through) although sometimes we have to move branches or cross creeks or dangerous roads (and ride next to busy roads). I would love to see more shared trails so I can run and ride in new places, with fresh terrain to work with and have more variety depending on what sort of exercise me and my horses need. I would love to be able to ride all day in a massive circuit!</p> <p>As a family we have attended council workshops on pest/weed/property control and maintenance, and we would love to do more of these to improve our property's quality, safety, environmental cooperation and most of all grass output.</p> <p>Thank you for the chance to give feedback on my experience with horses, horse riding and property maintenance in Nillumbik. I support the Equine in Nillumbik Plan!</p>
<b>139</b>	<p>Riding my horse through the bushlands in Nillumbik is truly one of a kind and so special. It takes the stress out of my work life and provides a diverse and content life for my horse.</p>

<b>140</b>	I support the Nillumbik Equine plan, because this is such a great area for the equine community. A lot of members of our community not only ride and care for their own horses, but they also know or have connections with other people who do. It is an important and large passion a lot of us share.
<b>141</b>	I am the founding President and a life member of the Yarrambat Adult Riding Group. I have owned horses in Nillumbik for 35 years. I support the Equine in Nillumbik proposal.
<b>142</b>	<p>I am very reticent to comment in this submission as from past experience I feel that my thoughts will fall on stony ground. Nevertheless as a long term resident and horse rider in this shire, it is my duty to enter a plea for the recognition of what have been the most wonderful years due to the ability to ride through the wonderful bushland reserves. Although my riding life is slowly winding down, I am hoping that the upcoming young riders will have the opportunity to enjoy being able to safely ride in this shire and hence appreciate the flora/fauna that surrounds us.</p> <p>There truly needs to be more recognition of what the equine industry provides. It is so diversified with various equine disciplines that in the end unite both riders and parents of young riders through Pony Clubs etc. Many small businesses affiliated with horses have blossomed and become part of the local district. Vets, farriers, equine masseurs, dentists, float businesses, to name only a few plus many enduring friendships have been made.</p> <p>Properties have been bought from advertising boards professing "Perfect property for horse owner". Nillumbik should stand proud that it has the reputation of offering shared trails for bikers, walkers and horse riders - and it all works perfectly.</p> <p>Money spent on improving and extending the recreational trails will benefit everyone. An input of \$\$\$ into assisting the local riding clubs and RDA centres would pay huge returns benefiting not just young future horsemen and women but allowing the continuity of a sport/activity that provides immense mental therapy.</p> <p>Hopefully not all this will fall on stony ground. Nillumbik has provided some wonderful help and acknowledgement in the past. I hope this continues.</p>
<b>143</b>	<p>There is no reason why Nillumbik should support this Equine plan. The community interested in this plan consists of a small minority - why should tax payer pay for something that approximately 700 community members of Nillumbik are interested in?</p> <p>Horses are well known to destroy native vegetation, and nothing has been said in this plan about this problem. There is an economic assessment, but how much it actually costs to have the horses in the area has not been provided. Horse facilities should be located in areas that are already cleared, like in Yarra Glen, not in Nillumbik council. Horse trailers block the roads and the majority of the community in Nillumbik is not interested in having any more horses than there are already.</p> <p>This equestrian plan has not been advertised appropriately, the time to prepare a submission has been less than one week. There was no time to inform the community about this absurd idea of having our council supporting Equine Investment Opportunities. This should be advertised properly, so that the community can have their say.</p>

	<p>I would like to Thank the Council for this opportunity. I wish to offer my support to have the Equine Plan for Nillumbik approved so that our sport can be acknowledged and supported by the Council.</p>
<b>144</b>	<p>As a former Pony Club member of Kangaroo Ground Pony Club for many years I support all areas and actions of the Equine in Nillumbik Plan. I plan to send my own daughter to KG Pony club next year and I also live on a large property in Kangaroo Ground owning various horses.</p>
<b>145</b>	<p>As a resident, horse industry professional and someone that has worked in other volunteer and contract roles in environmental initiatives within nillumbik and on youth projects. I support the opening up and greater linking of trails from a community minded point of view.</p> <p>Locking up a lot of these areas have had some effect, but efforts are often undermined by other invasive species, and a lack of clarity and cooperation between objectives and stakeholders working on overlapping projects.</p> <p>I do not downplay the importance of environmental objectives within the green wedge, I am just noting what I have seen.</p> <p>In contrast, the equestrian community is a cohesive proactive population within Nillumbik shire and continues to provide many benefits for those with the means to get involved. One way to increase that ability to feel connected and get involved would be to improve the feasibility of the trail riding clubs by linking back the trails.</p> <p>Benefits Of this would be to give our youth safer ways to improve thier horsemanship and appreciation of the areas they ride through along with reducing associated costs with mental health and community needs for this particular sector of the community.</p> <p>A more active and growing equine population who feel they can get involved o. Any level without needing a float and horse capable of competing will also add to the volunteer pool and capacity to fundraise in the future which again would have a flow on effect to adding and maintained facilities, events and greater community resilience.</p> <p>I support the trails being opened and greater linkages between areas that require still to be protected.</p>
<b>146</b>	<p>Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide a submission on the Equine Plan.</p> <p>As a long term committee member of the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group, I know that there are many landowners and horse owners that are interested in learning and implementing best practices on their properties and for their horses. As our group is a unique type of Landcare Group, our biggest issue has been gaining funds to provide educational workshops to members and like minded people. We are very fortunate to have the support of Melbourne Water, Nillumbik Shire, Yarra Ranges Shire and Port Phillip Western Port Catchment Management Authority who have funded many of our events.</p> <p>As you may be aware, engaging knowledgeable speakers that are experts in their field are very expensive and we often have difficulty sourcing venues to hold these events.</p> <p>Pest and weed management and soil health is always a topic of interest for our members and we think it's of major benefit to work with the Environment Department of our local Shires to share resources, experience and knowledge. We'd love to offer financial support to our members to assist in improving their horse properties which in turn, makes for a better community and environment. Working together with such stakeholders is much more efficient and effective than working by ourselves.</p> <p>The horse industry is worth a lot of money in many different ways and can only be of</p>

	<p>benefit to local, and non local business and service providers such as equine workers and land management services (weed sprayers, fencers, farriers, vets, etc)</p> <p>A big issue that is also raised with us often is the lack of safe shared trails to ride on given the huge increase in traffic and lack of education of the said drivers. It would be so beneficial to have an education program that offers guidance on sharing trails and roads.</p> <p>We're also asked what to do or where to go should we experience a day like Black Saturday again. We work with the CFA to hold information workshops every year, and those are discussions that are had every time without resolve. An emergency management plan specific to horse owners would help alleviate concerns.</p> <p>I feel that having an designated equine community and/or plan can only be of benefit to the Shire and its residents. I also feel it would help pave the way for other Shires which would be great.</p> <p>Thank you again.</p>
<p><b>147</b></p>	<p>I believe that it is important that horse riding is recognised as a mainstream sport just like footy and soccer. It is important that horse riders have the opportunity to ride safely within Nillumbik, through well maintained clubs and facilities, safe trail riding options where riders don't have to worry about inconsiderate drivers and through the education of such drivers and how they can impact horses making it incredibly dangerous to ride on roads.</p> <p>We need safe places to do the sport we love.</p>
<p><b>148</b></p>	<p>I came to know of this matter by local referral. I am not a Horse owner or rider but as a road-user by vehicle and pedestrian I have a relatively frequent passing with horse-riders. Thus I noted with interest that in the course of the reviews and comments in this document there were - perhaps unsurprisingly - references to drivers and road safety. For example at page 6, "Safety concerns for horse and rider were also raised in relation to having to ride on roads, lack of driver awareness and poor driver behaviour." Later at page 7, "Respondents stated that sharing local roads with motorists is becoming increasingly unsafe for horse and rider." At page 20, two points are noted. Of these, "#2 The equine sector, in collaboration with council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers." and finally "#3 Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads." It is notable that in each of these references the thrust is directed toward vehicle drivers. Regrettably, I am not surprised at some of the poor driver behaviour, after all, as a pedestrian, comment has been shared in the neighbourhood at poor driver performance. In fact, probably the worst and one to be most concerned about is a 'Horse owner/rider, who when in a car has no regard for anyone or anything. But more to the point, these issues are 'shared' issues. Not for the first occasion, but on or about 1 June of this year, when the designated time of sunset was 5:08pm and close of twilight for the date being 5:38pm, I was on an unlit, unsealed road at 5:45pm and lo and behold came upon two horse riders, both in dark colours and one on a dark coloured horse out on the road. There were no 'lights', no 'high-viz' and should I have collided with one or both, I bet I know who the finger would have been pointed at! As noted, this is not the first occasion horse riders have been out in such conditions. Perhaps as part of the 'shared' responsibility, no rider should be on the roads in the period one hour before sunset. Equally, especially as a pedestrian, generally with a dog, I have on several occasions come upon riders who both appear to lack control of their horse in this setting and on more than one occasion have had riders comment to such effect. Truly, one could very reasonably ask about the sensibilities of some folk taking their horse on the road. In</p>

<p>general, I view many of the proposals in the document to be sound. But there is another element where Council 'shares' a responsibility to road safety and that is in actual maintenance of roads. The condition of roads is a significant contributor to the safety of all and increasingly this matter is more and more neglected. Sticking up signs everywhere is not necessarily 'road safety' either!</p>
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**FN.015/20 Equine in Nillumbik**

1. Debbie Smith on behalf of Hurstbridge Saddlery Stockfeed (CEO to read)

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide a submission on “Equine in Nillumbik”.

My name is Debbie Smith and I own and run the Hurstbridge Saddlery and Stock Feed Business located in Hurstbridge. I started out making and repairing rugs (horse coats) in Yarrambat nearly 40 years ago and moved my business to its present location 10 years ago. I was able to extend the floor space of this business a few years ago.

I design and make rugs, which sell very well, despite a lot of competition from cheap overseas imports. This is a traditional skill which thanks to a dedicated group of local customers I am still able to make my living from.

I now sell a whole range of products; such as horse feed, rugs, saddle blankets and a wide range of medicinal and natural remedies. Many of my customers keep other animals, such as alpacas, sheep and goats, as well as dogs. So I also sell a whole range of other pet and companion animal products. Many locals enjoy living sustainably by growing their own food and keeping chickens, this is another part of my business. We are always happy to help people and cater for all tastes and budgets, while concentrating mainly on practical everyday products.

I employ two full time and four-part time staff, who are all locals, and I have also been able to teach others how to make and repair rugs. During Covid, I was able to retain all my staff and the business really thrived with locals spending more time with their animals or on their properties.

Families coming out from the suburbs to either go to local riding schools or agistment centres also help support my business, by picking up feed and other supplies while out in Nillumbik.

I have been able to invest in an embroidery machine and produce many of the local riding club uniforms as well as work for other local businesses and clubs. I also provide prizes for local horse competitions and sponsor local clubs. In return the equine community supports my business.

Horse riding is very family orientated, with parents and kids all being involved and I get to see this both in my businesses and also out and about at the various clubs.

I live locally, and have over the years belonged to Yarrambat, Hurstbridge and St Andrews Riding Clubs, my daughter attended Pony Club at St Andrews. We are lucky to have good off road trails right outside our gate, and get to ride out safely on quiet tracks and trails. We are also lucky to have five clubs in a very small area, which means there is a good opportunity to compete and also to attend rallies and clinics.

From a business perspective Nillumbik has been an ideal place for me to run a family businesses and it is great that the role of horse riding as a recreational activity and as a contributor economically to Nillumbik is now being recognized. Thank you again for this opportunity.

2. Cath Giles on behalf of Nillumbik Horse Action Group (via Zoom)

3. Pam Stuart on behalf of St Andrews Pony Club (via Zoom)
4. Kay Cruse (via Zoom)
5. Ingrid Crichton (via Zoom)
6. ~~Wayne Spence on behalf of Yarrambat Adult Riding Club (via Zoom)~~
7. Joanne Jamieson (via Zoom)
8. Peter Stuart on behalf of St Andrews Trail Riding Group (via Zoom)
9. Tori Mitton (via Zoom)
10. Narelle Campbell (via Zoom)

**CEO to read the below only in the event of technical difficulties**

I disclose a perceived potential conflict of interest. I am employed by the Department of Health and Human Services. I am currently working on COVID-19 Emergency Response. Prior to this I was working on bushfire Emergency Response. I typically work in a role where amongst other things I prepare funding submissions for consideration by government. My professional employment and role are not relevant to this submission.

I speak on behalf of my daughter and myself in support of the tabled Nillumbik Council Equine Plan.

We moved to acreage in Nillumbik 15 years ago to have horses, pretend to be farmers, and bring up our children on the land with animals.

At that time it represented a significant investment and sacrifice for us. In many ways it still does. Work, travel and land management commitments involved in our choice are significant and always have been. On reflection my view is it was the right decision, made for the right reasons and we have been able to bring up our children on the land with animals, particularly horses. We are fortunate.

My daughter and I do not belong to an equestrian club. We ride local trail networks around our home and immediate local area. Our local area is never so peaceful so accessible and explorable as it is from the back of a horse. We have been exploring for the best part of 15 years. We share some trails with increasing numbers of mountain bike riders annually, the occasional walker and other horse riders.

In that 15 years, council has never demonstrated an interest in our needs and wants as rural landowner families, or what motivates our occupancy and use of our land. Council has not asked what council might do to support us as landowners, residents,



participants in recreation or recognised our contribution to land improvement, the local community and economy. There has not been an interest in rural economic data, social and maintenance data – until now, and until the Nillumbik Council Equine Plan.

I support this plan.

It represents the differing recreational interests of equestrian communities in Nillumbik.

It recognises our economic, land management, environmental and social activity, effort and contribution.

It recognises the private land management and maintenance undertaken by people engaged in equine activities.

It recognises the historical context of horse ownership and how this applies in a modern context in Nillumbik.

It supports participation of (predominantly) rural women of all ages in their chosen recreational activities.

It recognises the contribution of volunteers to rural pursuits like equestrian recreation

It supports ongoing development and use of shared trails networks through Nillumbik.

It promotes the safety and equity for participants of equestrian pursuits in Nillumbik, as council has always supported participation of other recreational interests.

The survey that informed the plan was comprehensive, thorough and specific. I congratulate Cath Giles and Nillumbik Horse Action Group because I assume they had input to the composition of the survey questions. The questions are informed, the participation and response rate is high and the data it provides is rich. It is a tribute to the last 20 odd years of advocacy for recognition of the contribution equine recreation to participants in the Shire.

I commend the plan for my (and my daughter's) chosen recreational activity to Council and request its acceptance and implementation.

11. Jan Bell (via Zoom)

12. **Carolyn Johnston (CEO to read)**

Submission:

I am writing in support of this plan, its research and its intentions.

I have lived in Kangaroo Ground for over 28 years and during that time have experienced a fluctuation of Councils attitudes and strategy's impacting on the equestrian and animal keeping communities of the Shire.

My interest in horses is the reason I live in the Shire of Nillumbik.

Over the years I have been part of the equestrian community involved in encouraging subdivision planners and Council to provide off-road tracts of land for shared use Trails for horse and pony riding. These mostly rural Trails also enable the same off-road safety for cyclists and walkers. Existing Trail routes could be improved with more connectivity.

Early on I researched property layout configurations and attended workshops on management of acreage for the purposes of horse keeping. I still attend courses regarding land management and the information available today is much more detailed and accessible.

The local Riding Clubs are invaluable and I have been a member of Kangaroo Ground Adult Riding Club. I attended working bees, Rallys and also competition at HRCAV events. Later, my young daughter joined St Andrews Pony Club and we enjoyed a number of years there. In both Clubs, like many others in Nillumbik's equestrian community, I was active as a volunteer and Committee Member.

Caring for and competing with horses requires much help. From property infrastructure, on-going maintenance, hay harvesting, feeds, veterinary, equine massage, farriery, horse gear, float and vehicle maintenance, horse training, my on-going education and riding apparel – the number of small businesses this supports is exponential. There is no doubt that horse keeping adds significantly to Nillumbik's local economy as, like myself, most people source these requirements locally.

Many Western competitions are held in Indoor arenas and use venues at Tatura, Elmore, Benalla, Tonimbuk, Werribee Park and AELEC at Tamworth. These venues have stabling and powered camp sites to facilitate Show competition over a number of days. I also regularly travel out of the Shire to attend riding lessons at privately owned indoor arenas.

Nillumbik is lacking an indoor equestrian facility available to the community. A venue with outdoor arenas AND an indoor arena would be in demand and the economic benefits felt across the Shire as a whole.

I thank this current Council and its officers for truly recognising equestrian activity in all its aspects and I hope that the acceptance of the AECOM Report and Equine in

Nillumbik Plan will lead to Nillumbik not only supporting a vital part of its community but also reaping the benefits of the financial and social well-being associated with it.

13. **Rachel Morrison (CEO to read)**

Submission:

Firstly I must thank Nillumbik Sire Council for listening to the horse owners and riders of Nillumbik and the subsequent development of this Equine Plan, the first ever in the Shire.

I am thrilled to to present a story to you, mine, as a life long Nillumbik resident and passionate member of the local equine community.

It began in 1975 at 8 years old, when my parents bought a ramshackle cottage, built upon termite ridden tree stumps in Flat Rock Road in Kangaroo Ground. Once we moved there a relative asked if she could bring her horse to our place because he was being kept on a vacant house block in Glenroy.

I pleaded to have him and before long, Knight, the most important being in my young life, arrived.

Knight taught me about adventure, responsibility, respect, friendship, and animal husbandry. He allowed me to explore neighbouring roads, properties and trails throughout the district, making discoveries and experiencing nature along the way. I would leave at dawn before anyone else was awake, and I'd come home at lunchtime, hungry, exhausted, but elated.

I would spend entire days "down the paddock" making jumps, pretending to be National Velvet and exploring the bush, all whilst observing this land so particular to Nillumbik.

Knight made me fearless, strong, adventurous, and independent.

He made me laugh, cry, live, fly.

He gave me wings.

I was wholly responsible for this creature. He was my friend and my confidante. How many times did I cry into his neck when the world was so unfair?

I will forever thank him for the lessons he taught me.

He also gave my parents leverage!

I did chores to pay for feed or the farrier, giving me an introduction to budgeting. My parents would only need to mention “or the horse will go” to pull me back into line and reestablish my boundaries.

I joined the Hurstbridge Pony Club which was held in Fergusons paddock at the time, and I had to ride 5.5 kms along trails and main roads to get there and back, which in these days would have been seen as pure madness. I had no choice. We were poor, my parents weren't “horsey” and they certainly couldn't afford a float.

After that I joined the newly formed Hurstbridge Adult Riders Club of which I am still a member today 30 years later.

I didn't need any boyfriends, fast cars or drugs, I had Knight who kept me out of harms way - right up until his passing at 25 years old.

Fast forward over 40 years and here I am sharing what was the most important time in my life.

Horse riding in Nillumbik counts more than twice the state average of participation and this is most highly represented by young girls and women. Equitation is a sport, passion and lifestyle offering such an important outlet for this particular demographic, allowing a healthy alternative to keeping fit and active, when often other sports are less appealing.

This plan will not only facilitate pleasure riding in the Shire but will also assist land owners to better manage their horse properties, to balance diversity, and improve pastures.

Most importantly, this plan will open a conversation and offer solutions regarding bushfire management and evacuation of horses and other large companion animals in the shire.

A suggestion of an all weather indoor arena which could accommodate men and women who hope to continue their equine pursuits into middle and older age, as well as offering a safe, all weather option to the disabled for their riding pursuits.

I haven't hereby touched upon statistics nor facts, but rather hope to have offered a personal view of how one young woman's path changed into a life long passion because of the opportunity to own and ride a horse in Nillumbik so long ago, a privilege that will now be open to so many more because of this plan.

I thank you all for listening to my story which is representative of an era and which is what many young girls still dream of today. I hope to have conveyed how much this

equine plan means to me, one single rate payer yes, but someone who has made this unique place my home forever, partially because of the horse.

14. **Bill Lord (CEO to read)**

Submission:

While it costs the shire biodiversity grants to cull hard-hoofed deer and keep them out of Green Wedge bushland areas, Equine Nillumbik fails to recognise the environmental damage caused by horses if allowed to graze on areas of bush - whether they be Council Reserves or privately-owned bush blocks.

Very much like the 2012-2016 Macedon Ranges Equine Strategy, Equine Nillumbik has a "Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats" (or "SWOT") analysis. However, there is no acknowledgement or strategy to deal with the SWOT threats to the Green Wedge environment if a horse industry were to be established.

A section addressing these threats should be included along with an Actions Strategy, *with* Council enforcement provisions, should it not be adhered to.

I also question the veracity of Equine Nillumbik, given all its data just comes from stakeholders - often those with a pecuniary interest. Like the Council Plan and the Green Wedge Management Plan, this blinkered Equine Nillumbik needs to be opened up for proper community consultation.

It also seems inappropriate to be agreeing to this Equine Nillumbik tonight, as Councillors will be committing Council to pursuing an Equestrian Centre with no idea about: where the Centre would be located; about its implications on the Conservation Zone; about the manifold traffic and bushfire risks; or about the potentially significant impositions on nearby rural residents.

15. **Greg Johnson on behalf of Friends of Nillumbik (CEO to read)**

Submission:

Going by previous council agendas which introduce new plans or strategies, we have come to expect an initial “draft” to go on public exhibition so community submissions can be received by council. A draft document would be posted on the ‘Participate Nillumbik” page with a deadline for public input.

This is not happening with FN.015/20. Why not?

“Equine in Nillumbik” is presented with a recommended motion that excludes public input. Councillors are called to adopt it and authorise its immediate implementation.

So, what happened to Mayor Egan’s promise of 30<sup>th</sup> July last year? In answer to a question, the mayor indicated that a plan for the equine industry, when ready, **will be made available for public feedback “once a draft is available”**. (Minutes, OCM 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2019) Her promise reflected what had been standard council procedure - a matter of good governance.

And, how does tonight’s recommended motion sit with council’s ‘Community Engagement Policy’ (Nov, 2018) which has as one of its guiding principles (page 6):

“Council will demonstrate that all community contributions and relevant data have been considered, prior to making any decisions that affect the local community”.

In addition, the Council Plan 2017-2021 has as Strategy 1.1: “Improve community trust through better communications and genuine engagement.”

We believe good governance requires councillors to amend the recommendation for this item so that “Equine in Nillumbik” can go on public exhibition and community submissions received.

16. **Heather Wilson (CEO to read)**

Submission:

I wish to wholeheartedly support the adoption of this plan by Nillumbik Shire Council.

I am both a member of Hurstbridge Adult Riding Club, and an Equine Coach at several of the Pony Clubs and Adult Riding Clubs in the area.

I see the important role that horse riding has in our community, and the many benefits it offers.

Both children and adults benefit both physically and socially from the opportunities offered by these supportive clubs.

An indoor facility would greatly enhance opportunities for safe equine activities in all weathers.

I am a PCAV State Level Assessor, assessing prospective PC Coaches, and am also involved in assessing PC candidates wishing to gain their Certificate qualifications.

These activities would also be greatly facilitated by an indoor venue.

I have lived at Cottles Bridge for forty years, and know personally how the safety of riding on the roads has declined in more recent times. We need a network of safe riding trails and access areas to allow horse riders to access the natural beauty of our shire.

To conclude, I reiterate my total support for the implementation of the Equine Plan in Nillumbik.

17. Geraldine Sanderson (CEO to read) **late submission**

**CEO to read the below only if it is admitted by the Chairperson**

Submission:

A number of school age students who live and are educated in the Shire of Nillumbik are keen Interschool Equestrian competitors.

This Equestrian Australia (EA) supported competition encourages students from both Primary and Secondary schools to compete in a variety of disciplines. Various facilities within the Shire are used and riders can ultimately represent their school at National level.

This competition has grown considerably and the ability for families on the peri-urban fringe to train and compete in Interschool Competition is an important factor in choosing to live or agist their horses in Nillumbik.

For many families with horseriders, the capacity to train and compete on appropriate facilities is as important to them as is the need for netball and football families to have facilities that cater for their chosen sport.

An Equine Strategy that recognizes and promotes these aspects of Interschool Sport is an inducement to school enrolments in the Shire.

18. Colleen Hackett (CEO to read) late submission

**CEO to read the below only if it is admitted by the Chairperson**

I submit that this Plan breaches the Council Plan adopted in 2017. You had grand plans to rebuild community trust with proper community consultation. You have failed to do so. You had grand plans to be inclusive and transparent in your governance of the Shire. You have failed in this vision. You have “listened” selectively.

Like the process of the Green Wedge Management Plan before it, this process is deeply flawed. A lack of consultation, which has dogged this Council from the beginning, is continued here. Proper community consultation has not occurred.

An original survey was addressed to horse owners exclusively and barely half of them responded. You have glibly assumed they were the only stakeholders. You have ignored stakeholders in the community who have environmental concerns about the damage being done to our precious biodiversity on Council and private land alike by some, not all, horse owners who do not act responsibly.

At the last Future Nillumbik meeting questions were put by Councillors to the representative of the main horse lobby in Nillumbik requesting a response to concerns expressed by environmentalists of environmental damage done by horses in sensitive bushland.

The answer given was that such people are haters and they hate horses. This simplistic answer failed the tenets of Clear Thinking 101, mastered by all year eleven students, which says, “attack the argument, not the person”.

No, they do not hate horses. Rather they are disturbed by evidence in many places around the shire of environmental damage, erosion and pollution of waterways caused by some horse owners. They are concerned about the continuing loss of biodiversity in Nillumbik.

The proposal to build an enormous shed (somewhere in the Green Wedge, yet to be determined) introduces traffic and parking considerations which will affect the amenity of many in the community who cannot afford to partake of this luxury, minority past-time.

In the name of democracy, this process ought to be taken back to the drawing board and public submissions should be invited.