

SHIRE PLAN 2040 – PROJECT APPROACH

PHASE ONE FOUNDATION WORK



STAGE ONE

DELIVERED
December 2019

STAGE TWO

DELIVERED
February 2020

STAGE THREE

ADOPTION
June 2020

PHASE TWO ENGAGEMENT



Shire Plan 2040

Towards a Community Vision for Nillumbik

Background Paper

Acknowledgement of traditional owners

Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of Land known today as Nillumbik. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Introduction

Background

This document, Shire Plan 2040 – Towards a Community Vision for Nillumbik Background Paper, builds on previous work undertaken by Council as part of the broader Shire Plan project.

Identified as a key priority action in the Council Plan 2017-2020, the Shire Plan project represents a staged approach with key outputs designed to support the broader community visioning process in line with the new *Local Government Act 2020*.

In August 2019 Council endorsed the project approach and agreed on the following outputs:

Research Paper (December 2019) – The Paper provides a high-level overview of the forecasts and future trends likely to impact Nillumbik as we move towards 2050.

Councillor and Officer Workshops (February 2020) – Facilitated by futurist Steve Sammartino the workshops provided an opportunity for Councillors and officers to explore the rate and scale of change anticipated over the next 20 years.

Background Paper (May 2020) – Building on the data and feedback gathered through the research and workshop processes, the Background Paper explores the key challenges and opportunities for Nillumbik and the potential roles that Council can play in supporting residents to address these challenges and maximise the opportunities.

It should be noted that a significant proportion of the research contained within this document was conducted prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. While basic population data was accurate at the time of writing, demographic and economic forecasts may have been impacted the spread of COVID-19 and consequences of the pandemic.

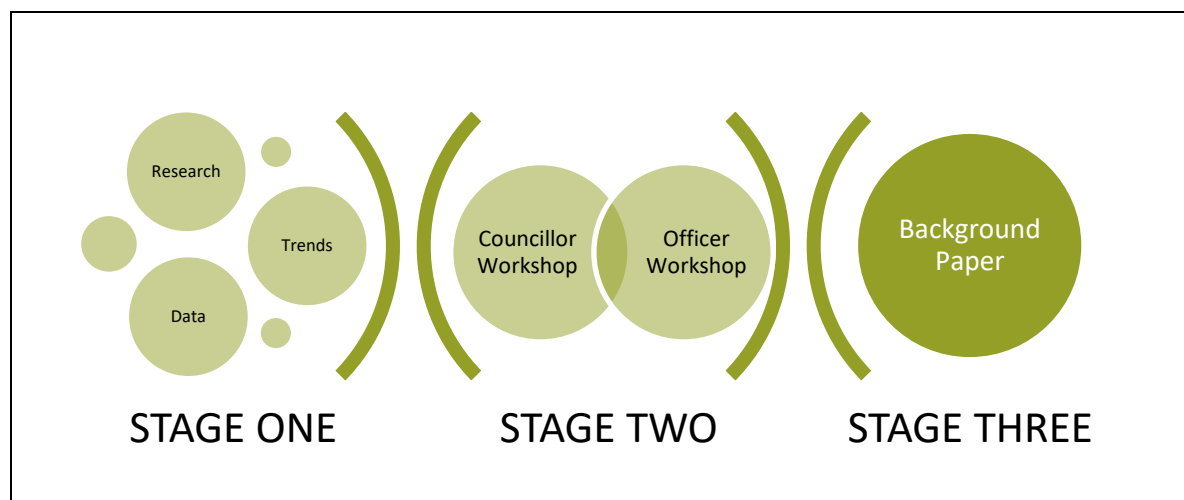


FIGURE 1: Project Phases

Once adopted by Council the Background Paper can be used as a foundation to guide and inform the broader community visioning process.

Structure of the Background Paper

As detailed above, the Background Paper represents a combination of technical research, demographic analysis, specialist advice and discussions with Councillors and officers. The paper advances the Research Paper (Stage one) with additional material gathered through Councillor and officer workshops (Stage two). Its aim is to be an accessible and comprehensive overview of Nillumbik now and into the future, on which to base future community visioning work.

Part one – suggests ways that the vision may be framed through key aspects of liveability given the Council’s vision for Nillumbik to be ‘Australia’s most liveable Shire’.

Part two – focuses on Nillumbik as a community. It describes Nillumbik now and into the future with a focus on what the Nillumbik community values.

Part three – provides an overview of the key issues, challenges and opportunities that are likely to affect Nillumbik as we move towards 2040.

The Paper forms only a part of the broader community visioning process for Nillumbik. It is anticipated that the issues, challenges and opportunities addressed in the Paper will form the basis for discussions with the Nillumbik community. It is anticipated that a formal community engagement process will be undertaken in early 2021.

Part one

Community visioning for Nillumbik

This project is being undertaken in line with the introduction of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). The Act introduces the requirement for all councils to have a long-term community vision. The vision needs to be developed in consultation with the local community and should articulate a vision for the municipality.

A community vision will be expected to have a 10-plus year horizon and should describe the community’s long-term vision and aspirations. Developing a community vision is a practical way of involving the community in long-term strategic planning that will inform plans and other medium-term Council strategies and plans.

Developing a long-term community vision is considered best practice and is consistent with the objective of restoring community engagement as a core role for Council. The community vision complements the Council Plan by including the actions required to meet

the vision, not only from Council but from other government and non-government partners. ¹

A rigorous community planning process seeks the views of, and provides ample and accessible opportunities for every member of the community to participate. This Paper is designed to elicit a range of diverse views from its readers. Council will also be seeking the many and varied views of a combination of traditional and innovative approaches to community engagement based on local knowledge and the needs of communities.

The relative success of community visioning and planning can be measured in the benefits and outcomes delivered to communities, in particular community connectedness and improving social wellbeing. Importantly, the Act requires Council to conduct a community engagement process to inform its community vision and plans whereby community interests and expectations are reflected in their outcomes.

Council's role in the community visioning process is to ensure that the vision for Nillumbik sets a clear program of the work of Council that is consistent with community values and responds effectively to community needs.

In preparation for the development of the Background Paper two workshops were developed and delivered by leading futurist Steve Sammartino.

Attended by Councillors and officers, the workshops provided an opportunity to discuss and engage with future scenarios centred on the role of Council, along with gathering valuable information and feedback from subject matter experts across all areas of Council.

“The future is inevitable, what's not inevitable is how we move towards it. That's up to us”– Steve Sammartino.

“Regardless of what the future holds, we need to ensure that we are responding to our community's needs in the best way possible” – Workshop participant.

An important learning from the workshop was the rate at which technology is changing. Each generation of technology improves over the last, the rate of progress from version to version speeds up. Further, as technology becomes more effective, it attracts more attention. The result is a flood of new investment and resources. Quantifiably, the overall rate of progress is doubling each decade. ²

“We won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century—it will be more like 20,000 years of progress (at today's rate)” - Ray Kurzweil. ³

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

² Berman, A. & Dorrier, J. (2015) Technology feels like its accelerating because it actually is (online) <https://singularityhub.com/2016/03/22/technology-feels-like-its-accelerating-because-it-actually-is/>

³ *ibid.*

Based on this the timeframe for the Paper, the recommended timeframe for the Community Vision has been revised from 2050 to 2040.

Liveability

When looking at what makes an area 'liveable' the discussion regularly focuses on the topic of affordability and house prices. However, there is more to an area than a dollar amount. There are a number of issues that affect residents' quality of life and therefore can influence the liveability of an area. For some, a leafy suburb with access to public open space and recreation opportunities will be desirable, while families may be seeking a range of quality primary and high school options for their children and/or ease of access to Universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers. For others, proximity to community and health services may be a priority, and for most safety is always a concern. Nillumbik is fortunate in that all of these aspects are represented along with many other aspects that can enhance our resident's quality of life.

The Council Plan 2017-2021 vision is for Nillumbik to be 'Australia's most liveable shire'. Liveability reflects the wellbeing of the community and comprises the many characteristics that make a location where people want to live now and into the future.⁴ Liveable communities can be defined as those that are healthy, safe, harmonious, attractive and affordable, that have high amenity, provide good accessibility and are environmentally sustainable.⁵

Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods and services are socially cohesive. Appropriate housing, adequate transport infrastructure and a mix of land use encourage recreation and social interaction to increase social capital and improve social connectedness. Many of the social, economic and environmental features that enhance liveability in Nillumbik and make it a desirable place to live, work and play are also the determinants of good public health and wellbeing.

In this way, liveable places can be defined as **“safe, attractive, socially cohesive and inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse housing linked to employment, education, public open space, local shops, health and community services and leisure and cultural opportunities; via convenient public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.”**⁶

This definition provides a useful framework for Nillumbik to measure aspects of liveability throughout the Shire. It responds well to the goals of both the Council Plan 2017-2020 and the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, along with other current and future Council strategies, policies and plans, including a Community Vision.

⁴ Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (2008) A State of Liveability: An Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability (online) <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/enhancing-victorias-liveability-inquiry.pdf>

⁵ Lowe, M., Whitzman, C., Badland, H., Davern, M., Aye, L., Hes, D., Butterworth, I. and Giles-Corti B. (2015) Planning Healthy, Liveable and Sustainable Cities: How Can Indicators Inform Policy? *Urban Policy and Research*, 33:2, 131 – 144.

⁶ Lowe, M., Whitzman, C., Badland, H., Davern, M., Aye L., Hes, D., Butterworth, I. and Giles-Corti, B. (2013) Liveable, Healthy, Sustainable: What are the Key Indicators for Melbourne Neighbourhoods? University of Melbourne.

Measuring liveability through the development of liveability indicators can provide a framework to ascertain community values, needs and concerns. This information can then be used to shape policy and strategic directions at a local level, assist the alignment of services to match the changing needs of the community and to highlight issues of local concern to other tiers of government and to the wider community.⁷

Domains of liveability

The Centre for Urban Research has developed a Pilot Victorian Urban Liveability Index for use in policy.⁸ The index conceptualises the social determinants of health through seven domains of liveability using a socio-ecological framework. The intent of the index is to allow integrated urban planning policies for liveable neighbourhoods to be evaluated in terms of how well they are being delivered across the Melbourne metropolitan region, the health impact of the integration of those policies and to whom.



FIGURE 2: Domains of Liveability
Source: Centre for Urban Research (2017)

Measuring liveability

Monitoring and measuring effectiveness and satisfaction in community services and the provision and utilisation of infrastructure through the domains of liveability can make explicit the links between employment, education, housing and social policies, and how access to these underlying determinants of health can be provided in an integrated and effective manner.⁹

⁷ LG Pro (2008) Embedding Community Principles into Council Planning, the State Government of Victoria (online) <http://www.chs.ubc.ca/archives/files/Embedding-Community-Values-Council-Planning.pdf>

⁸ Centre for Urban Research (2017) Developing a Pilot Victorian Urban Liveability Index, (online) <http://cur.org.au/project/developing-pilot-victorian-urban-liveability-index/>

⁹ ibid.

Nillumbik currently measures aspects of liveability through the Council and Health and Wellbeing plans, however whilst each data set may be informative, this has not been consistent due to varying approaches to setting and measuring priorities. As a result, it is often difficult to measure liveability and compare Nillumbik with municipalities across Victoria. Nillumbik's Community Profile 2016 provides useful data on aspects of Nillumbik's liveability including walkability, food security and transport.

Adding to Council's data capability is the Knowing your Place Walks Project. Following from the Know Your Neighbour Campaign and Council's Place Shapers Community Audits the project aims to work with the community to activate newly identified places and spaces that are special to each township. The development of a series of bicycle routes and walks resulting from the project will link to the trails and to destinations and services within the townships. This creates a number of neighbourhood walks within the townships whether it be for indigenous and historical context, health and wellbeing advantages (walking and cycling), public art appreciation and youth incentives to create a sense of pride in our place.

A continued and enhanced focus on the development of long-term liveability indicators for Nillumbik would strengthen Council's position in being able to identify and highlight community priorities, better inform service delivery and advocacy and improve integration with broader Council planning processes now and into the future. For this reason, key changes, challenges and opportunities identified throughout the project stages are explored throughout this document through the lens of liveability.

Part two

Nillumbik – now, then and in the future

Our history

The area now comprising as the Shire of Nillumbik was inhabited for centuries by the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people. The Woi wurrung people belonged to the confederacy known as the Kulin who inhabited areas around Melbourne. Nillumbik Shire is located within the clan boundary of the Wurundjeri-willam ('white gum tree dwellers'). Wurundjeri is the clan name, willam refers to a subsection of the clan associated with a specific land area recorded as the Yarra and Plenty. The Wurundjeri people called our region 'nillumbik', meaning shallow earth – a name later used by the Europeans who settled here.

Our environment

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

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

The fertile soils of an old volcano at Kangaroo Ground offer rich farming land. The Arthurs Creek and Strathewen areas have seen a long history of orchards and quality cattle farming, yet still retain many stands of ancient eucalypts and a wide variety of fauna and flora. The Shire has 1,000 indigenous flora species, including terrestrial orchids, some not found anywhere else.¹⁰

There are more than 340 indigenous fauna species in the Shire of Nillumbik, 70 of which are listed as rare or threatened. This includes brush-tailed phascogales, lace monitors, powerful owls and Eltham copper butterflies. Kangaroos are a relatively common resident, and many types of birds frequent urban backyards.¹¹

Despite clearing by European settlers, Nillumbik retains large areas of native vegetation on public and private land, and sites of national, state and regional significance for their fauna. This remnant Indigenous vegetation of various classes and conservation status covers a large proportion of Nillumbik.¹²

Nillumbik's green wedge is host to a number of state and national parks and Council also manages a number of important environmental reserves. Nillumbik's green wedge covers approximately 39,600 hectares and is home to 12,639 residents in a range of diverse communities. The Nillumbik green wedge is highly valued locally and regionally because of its biodiversity, natural beauty, rolling hills, landscapes, visitor experiences, steep escarpments, water courses, agriculture, rural living and open space.

Our neighbourhoods

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

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

Nillumbik's townships offer residents and visitors distinctive village-style shopping, access to professional services and public transport and places to meet and socialise. Striking mud-brick

¹⁰ Nillumbik Shire Council 2012, Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy p. 2

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Nillumbik Shire Council (2018a) Green Wedge Management Plan: Community Panel Background Report (online) https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.nil-participate.files/4615/4871/5162/GWMP_Background_report.pdf

buildings and award-winning wineries complement the Shire's unique and diverse landscape.

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

Nillumbik extends beyond its neighbourhoods with connections forged into the northern and eastern regions. While Council has strong and established links with the northern region of Melbourne, the importance of developing relationships with other councils should not be understated. Opportunities can be sought in instances where Nillumbik shares common geographic borders, such as Banyule, Whittlesea, Manningham and the Yarra Ranges and/or where regional interests are shared.

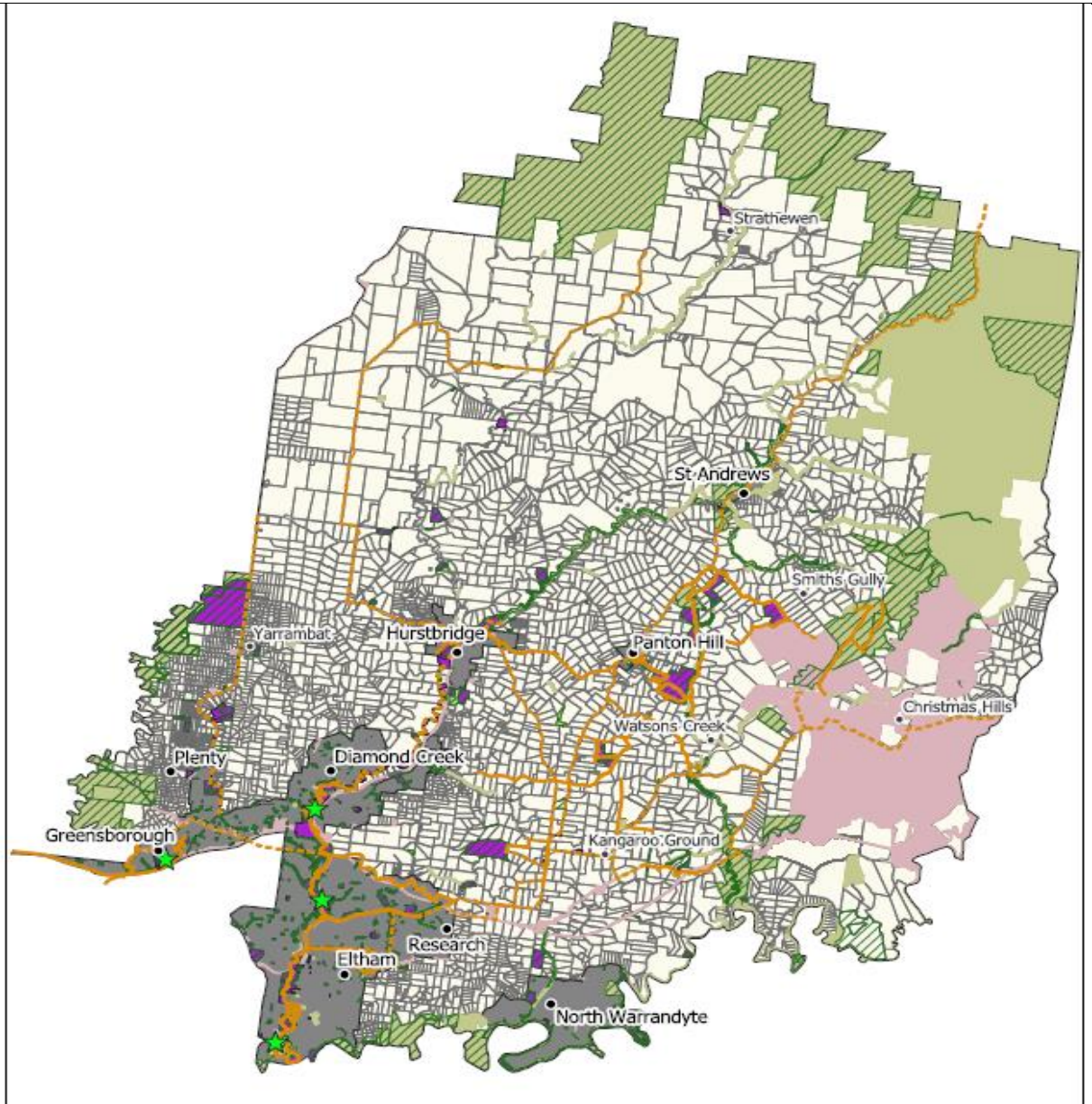


FIGURE 3: Map of Nillumbik Shire

Our community

Nillumbik has a population of approximately 64,940 people who enjoy a healthy, safe, family-friendly lifestyle within close-knit communities.

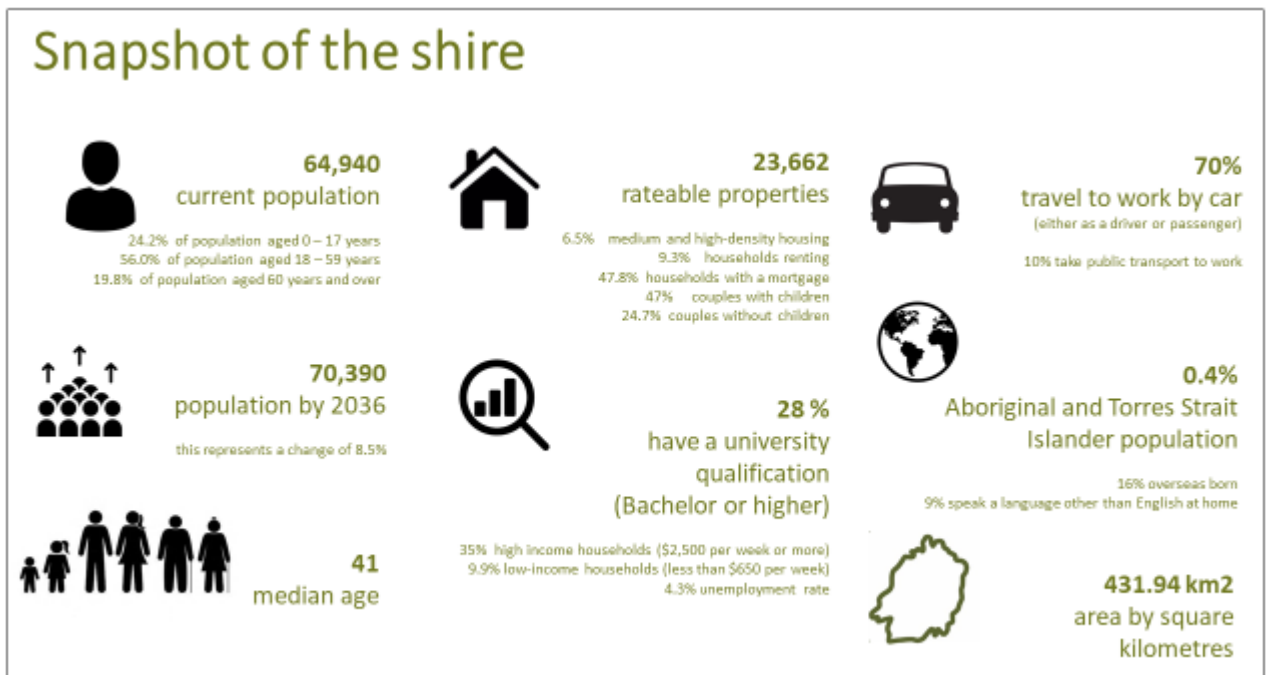


FIGURE 4: Snapshot of the Shire
Source: .id Consulting (2019)

Over the period of 2011 to 2017, Nillumbik’s population has increased by an annual average of 0.5 per cent. This is significantly lower than Greater Melbourne’s annual average population growth rate of 2.6 per cent for the same period. **Based on current estimates, Nillumbik’s population is forecast to grow to 70,310 by 2036, representing a change of 8.5 per cent.**

In 2016, Nillumbik housed a higher proportion of couple families with children and a lower proportion of one-parent families compared with Greater Melbourne. Overall, 47 per cent of total families in Nillumbik were couple families with children compared with 33.5 per cent for Greater Melbourne, and 9.2 per cent were one-parent families compared with 10.1 per cent for Greater Melbourne. Additionally, there was a lower proportion of one-person households at 13.8 per cent for Nillumbik compared with 22 per cent for Greater Melbourne and a slightly higher proportion of couples with children, 24.7 per cent in Nillumbik compared with 22.9 per cent for Greater Melbourne.

Currently, approximately 25 per cent of Nillumbik’s residents are aged between 0 and 17 years and almost 20 per cent of residents are aged 60 years and over. In the future, Nillumbik is projected to have more people aged 55 years and older. By 2036, one in three residents will be in this age group compared with one in four recorded in 2015. This trend suggests that Nillumbik will transition from primarily housing mature families to instead housing empty nesters and retirees.

Nillumbik is at the higher end of the socio-economic gradient in Victoria, indicating that in many aspects, residents enjoy better than average health and wellbeing. In 2016, Nillumbik recorded a Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) of 1099, representing the economic and social conditions of people and households in Nillumbik being well above the national average.

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

Nillumbik is an arts-rich environment. The creative life of the community is highly valued and large numbers of artists live and work here. Nillumbik's existing artist communities such as Butterfly Studios, Dunmoochin, Baldessin Studios and Monsalvat, and the strength of artistic traditions commencing from the early Australian impressionist painters through to current practice in contemporary arts is showcased at local, regional and artistic forums.

Our households

Demographic changes have implications for the types of housing that may be needed for Nillumbik in the future. Victorian Government projections indicate that approximately 4,200 additional dwellings will be needed in Nillumbik between 2016 and 2036.

In 2016, there were 20,235 separate houses in the area, 1,400 medium density-dwellings, and 25 high-density dwellings. Analysis of the types of dwellings in Nillumbik in 2016 shows that 93 per cent of all dwellings were separate houses; 6.4 per cent were medium-density dwellings, and 0.1 per cent were high-density dwellings, compared with 66.1 per cent, 22.9 per cent, and 10.1 per cent in the Greater Melbourne respectively.

Household types catering to couples with children households are currently the dominant housing type in Nillumbik. While this trend is set to continue, forecasts indicate that the number of couple and one-person households will increase substantially by 2036, with minimal change in the other household types. Only 114 additional households will be couples with children, whereas 2199 additional households will be couples without children, and there will be 1609 additional one-person households.

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

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

cent in Greater Melbourne respectively. Given demographic changes there will be increased demand for one and two-bedroom dwellings that are accessible and adaptable.¹³

A mix of housing types increases residential density and promotes population growth which can support and grow the local economy. Additionally, by providing greater housing choice, Nillumbik would be better placed to meet the needs of its residents across their life course by providing appropriate options for young people, families, older residents and residents with a disability.¹⁴

However, there are some significant limitations as to where new housing can go, as most land within Nillumbik is located within the green wedge and the vacant residential land within the Metropolitan Urban Growth Boundary is almost wholly developed. If we want housing choices that are close to transport and services, then new development will need to focus areas in and around our activity centres.

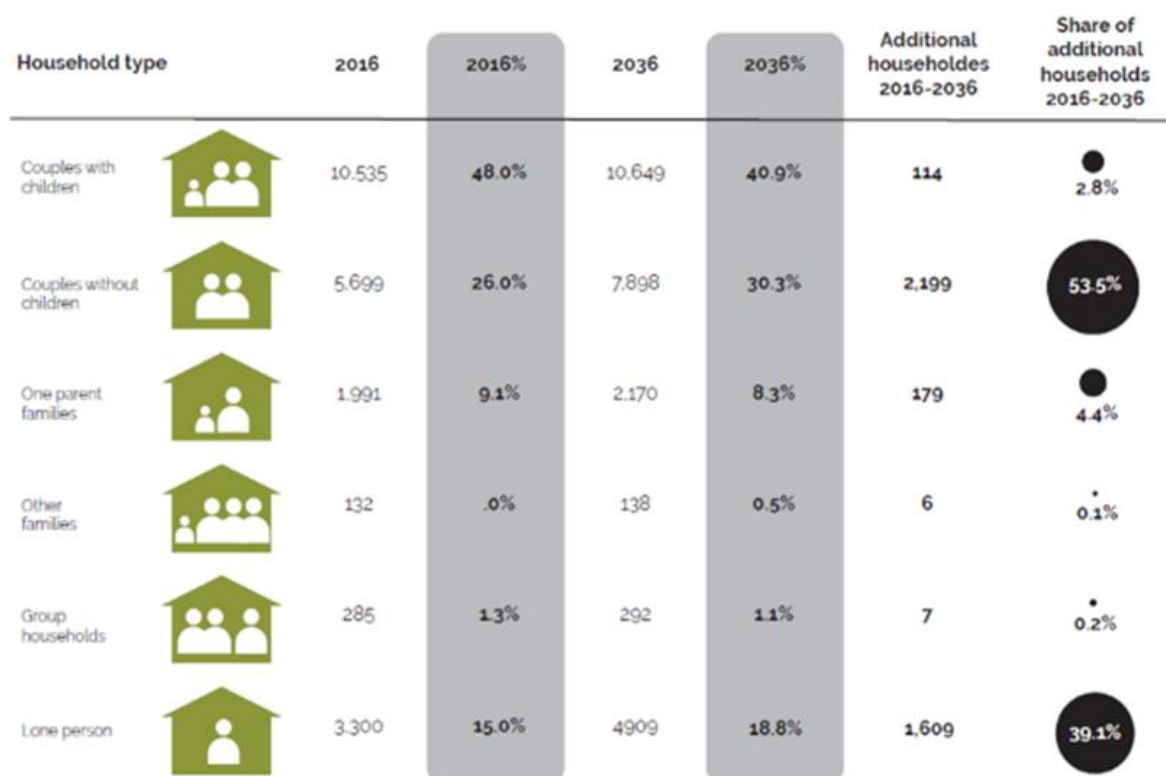


FIGURE 5: Nillumbik Households
Source: id. Consulting (2019)

Our economy

A consequence of Nillumbik’s distance from the CBD, a low population density and a lack of commercial development, is fewer local opportunities for increased economic sustainability relative to more rapidly urbanising neighbouring councils.

¹³ SGS Economics and Planning (2014) Housing Analysis (online)
<http://sonic/teams/sep/Programs/Nillumbik%20Housing%20Analysis%20Draft.pdf>

¹⁴ .id Consulting (2016) Housing Implications for Nillumbik’s Ageing Population: Final Report, Melbourne.

With minimal local employment opportunities, more than 70 per cent of employed residents currently travel outside the Shire to work.¹⁵ A higher level of escape employment may indicate a mismatch between jobs available locally, and the skill set of resident workers. For example, the high proportion of professionals in Nillumbik and the low level of job containment highlights that local employment opportunities are not available for these workers. A higher proportion of residents working outside the Shire can exacerbate issues such as escape spending, traffic congestion, environmental concerns and negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

What the Nillumbik community values

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

Natural environment

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

Community connectedness

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

Urban and rural lifestyles

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

¹⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2018a) op. cit.

townships. Key concerns related to lack of public and community transport and access to services for residents in rural areas.

Artistic and cultural identity

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

Limits to residential and economic development

The community generally appreciates the limits and controls placed on residential and economic development, particularly in the green wedge area of the Shire. They cite over-development of the green wedge as a concern, however appropriate housing and business development in line with green wedge values could address additional concerns regarding access to job opportunities and affordable housing now and in the future.

Part three

Future thinking

COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic presents many aspects for all levels of government to consider. Changes in the way we live, work, learn and play will be impacted significantly in the short-term and in the future.

Population

Clearly in the short-term there is very limited migration owing to the closure of Australia's borders. In the longer-term it is unclear how the situation will play out, other than to say that the net migration figures in the coming year will be very different from previous years. Provisional estimates of overseas travel statistics released recently by the ABS, outlining the drop in arrivals and departures are stark. There were just 7,000 arrivals from non-Australian citizens in April 2020, a 99 per cent drop on the same month last year.¹⁶

There is a strong likelihood that overseas migration rates will remain depressed over a much longer period than that of the current crisis. Once restrictions internally are relaxed, it remains to be seen how quickly Australia and other countries will re-open borders to international travel; there may be a long period before this happens given the different rates of infection in other countries. The only safe time to allow this may be when (and if) a vaccine is available, in which case borders may remain closed for several years.¹⁷

¹⁶ .id Consulting (2020) COVID-19 Planning and Strategy Implications (online) <https://blog.id.com.au/>

¹⁷ *ibid.*

Economy and employment

COVID19 will obviously have a substantial negative impact on economic activity in 2020, with the recovery effort lasting for many years. This is because the recovery depends on the development of a vaccine and the effectiveness of economic policy. The economy is in uncharted territory – nobody knows for sure how the economic measures will work.¹⁸

Based on the preliminary forecasts from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), which incorporate the policies announced to date, the estimate is that National Gross Product in the June quarter will fall by around 16.6 per cent. The fall in employment is forecast to fall by around 1.5 million if we assume job keeper recipients are employed but working zero hours. However, if we assume job keeper recipients are unemployed the fall is much greater, at around 2.9 million.¹⁹

Modelling by NIEIR shows that COVID-19 will impact some sectors more than others with several factors at play. The falls in economic activity in relation to trading partners, which will be on average around 5 per cent for the 2020 calendar year, will heavily impact Australian exports over the next nine (or more) months. Additionally, the social distancing measures will see economic activity related to accommodation, entertainment, arts and restaurants fall significantly. These sectors represent a large share of tourism values for many regions in Australia. The decline in foot traffic has induced many establishments to close as well. Many business inputs will also not happen or be postponed, with the business services sector very sensitive to uncertainty and confidence levels. However spending on food retailing, health and telecommunications is expected to increase.²⁰

One of the key questions facing local government is what they can do to help their economies rebound from the economic shock. The answer to this question depends largely on the drivers, risks and weaknesses of the economy that COVID-19 brings along with the broader challenges and opportunities that are forecast to exist.

Nationwide challenges

While Australia has enjoyed close to three decades of uninterrupted economic growth and has historically enjoyed strong social cohesion; there is no guarantee that this will continue into the future, especially given the current pandemic.

The CSIRO created the Australian National Outlook 2019 Report utilising integrated modelling and research with inputs from leaders, organisations, industry, not-for-profits and education sectors to provide a view of Australia's future. The report was created to help Australians continue to enjoy the best quality of life available, and for future generations to have access to even better opportunities.²¹

The report identifies six key challenges that Australia must acknowledge and adapt to if its prosperity is to continue.

¹⁸ .id Consulting (2020) The Regional Economic Impacts of COVID-19 (online) *ibid.* <https://blog.id.com.au/2020/economic-analysis/webinar-recap-the-regional-economic-impacts-of-covid-19/>

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ CSIRO (2019) Australian National Outlook (online) <https://www.csiro.au/en/Showcase/ANO>

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

The Victorian Government's current metropolitan planning strategy, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is a long-term transformational plan designed to respond to the state-wide, regional and local challenges and opportunities Victoria faces between now and 2050. It revises the 2014 version of Plan Melbourne to reflect current policies and priorities—creating continuity, clarity and certainty for communities, businesses and governments.²²

Maintaining Melbourne's liveability

To remain as one of the world's most liveable cities Melbourne must address challenges and create opportunities –

- Melbourne's population is projected to grow from 4.5 million to almost 8 million—with Victoria's total population set to exceed 10 million by 2051. Population and housing growth will be kept within the existing urban growth boundary by the careful development of growth areas and the selective redevelopment of underutilised areas within existing communities.

²² The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2017a) Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 (online) https://planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/377206/Plan_Melbourne_2017-2050_Strategy_.pdf

- The economy will need to adapt and grow, creating another 1.5 million jobs for a changing workforce. There will be more jobs close to where people live; which is more important than ever in a changing economy. Opportunities for new industries will be created through the redevelopment of strategic sites close to central Melbourne, through the creation of national employment and innovation clusters, and through the strengthening of existing precincts for sectors such as health, education, large manufacturing and freight and logistics.
- The city will need to build another 1.6 million homes in places where people want to live. In doing so there will be more affordability and choice, as more of the housing needed is delivered in the right places.
- The city's transport network will need to cater for around 10 million more trips a day – an increase of more than 80 per cent. Investment in the transport network will continue facilitating the building of the Metro Tunnel and major road projects across the city and suburbs.
- The city will have to cope with more extreme heat and longer droughts, as well as increased risks of extreme bushfires, storms and floods. Victoria will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The city and state will also grow a cleaner economy while preparing for higher temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events.
- As it grows, Melbourne needs to protect its liveability and sense of community. Melbourne will become a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods. Residents will still commute out of their area for work, but most of their daily needs will be a short walk, bike ride or public transport trip away.

Nillumbik towards 2040

Future advances mean that accessibility from Nillumbik to key employment, transport and education destinations across the metropolitan area will be improved. This, combined with the lifestyle advantages of Nillumbik's environment and expected low growth, will strengthen the desirability (and therefore the cost and exclusivity) of Nillumbik as a place to live in and commute from.

As our population and economy changes between now and 2040, Nillumbik's ability to maintain and/or improve its liveability will be shaped by how we meet challenges and optimise opportunities.

For Nillumbik, the impact on liveability and the value of liveability aspects are likely to become amplified as growth in other parts of Melbourne continues to increase pressure on urban environments.

Community health and wellbeing

Overall, the population of Nillumbik is at the higher end of the socio-economic gradient in Melbourne. This means that in many aspects, the population of Nillumbik enjoys better than average health and wellbeing. Community health can be measured in a variety of ways, which can include rating social capital, examining social determinants of health and monitoring community resilience.

Social capital

Nillumbik has a healthy rate of social capital. **Social capital is the effective functioning of social groups through interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared values, trust and cooperation.** It can be measured through both the tangible (places and spaces) and intangible (human capital), and the impact that these resources have on the common good.

The Nillumbik community has a high level of engagement with green space and the arts, which is a protective factor for both physical and mental health. The Green Wedge Management Plan highlights the importance of utilising Nillumbik's green wedge for health and wellbeing services and industries and the opportunities provided by the environment to improve health and wellbeing. Additionally, a focus on community building to leverage the community strengths and work with existing groups to develop a shared understanding of living in the green wedge.

Nillumbik's Health and Wellbeing Profile identifies a strong sense of cohesiveness and trust within neighbourhoods.²³ In maintaining a healthy rate of social capital, it is important that networks are continually built and maintained. Networks that cross between groups are the most valuable, and will become more important in the future as the municipality becomes more diverse.²⁴

Community resilience

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

Resilience is a term that emerged from the field of ecology in the 1970s, to describe the capacity of a system to maintain or recover functionality in the event of disruption or disturbance. It is applicable to cities because they are complex systems that are constantly adapting to changing circumstances. The notion of a resilient city becomes conceptually relevant when chronic stresses or sudden shocks threaten widespread disruption or the collapse of physical or social systems.²⁵

Resilient Nillumbik

Over time, Nillumbik has demonstrated strong community resilience, not least during and after the 2009 bushfires which led to a tragic loss of life and far-reaching damage to Nillumbik's communities. The bushfires caused major disruptions in the everyday lives of those living in or near the affected communities.

With the recent onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nillumbik's resilience will again be tested. Council has an important role in active management of the COVID-19 situation as well as important relief and recovery functions. Key outcomes of these functions are to assist –

- Individuals, families, and the community in being physically and mentally healthy, safe and able to participate in their recovery.

²³ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Profile (online) <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/people-and-family/nillumbik-community-health-and-wellbeing-profile-2016.pdf>

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Resilient Cities (2015) (online) <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/City-Resilience-Framework-2015.pdf>

- Individuals, families, organisations and businesses are informed and involved in the relief and recovery services.
- Existing networks and services are enhanced and connected.
- Individuals and communities have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings in a sensitive manner.

Nillumbik is currently developing a responses to assist Council's understand the current state of relief and recovery services available in Nillumbik. This work will continue as the community responds and adapts to the impacts of COVID-19.

Social determinants of health

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

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

FIGURE 6: Social Determinants of Health
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

Councils play an important role in facilitating good planning to activate diverse housing, community infrastructure, access to transport and economic opportunities. Strategies need to be found to encourage and support active and engaged communities. These strategies should be flexible, innovative and allow for the interests and aspirations of the affected communities. Additionally, the

opportunity for direct engagement and development of community driven initiatives should be strongly represented. Work such as this not only builds connections, it also provides an opportunity to address people's concerns about change and focuses engagement on the opportunities that the future brings. These aspects are integral to an appreciation of diversity, the importance of collaboration and the building of resilience.

Community health and wellbeing trends

Nillumbik's relatively healthy population demonstrates that it provides an environment that fosters good health. However, certain widespread health inequalities persist within the municipality, affecting different population groups in different ways. In general, Nillumbik rates better on average than Greater Melbourne on a range of social determinants. However, this does not mean that health inequalities do not exist. Housing diversity is low in Nillumbik, with a shortage of smaller homes for older people and younger people leaving the family home. Walking and transport is less viable in Nillumbik compared with neighbouring areas. Nillumbik's ageing population means that there will be a greater percentage of the community who will be vulnerable to social, economic and environmental impacts, particularly the impacts of climate change.²⁶

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

²⁶ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) op. cit.

Trends in chronic diseases

TREND	OVERVIEW								
<p>Fair or poor health</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>16%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>13%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	16%	2011	13%	2014	13%	<p>Self-reported health status is a good indicator of health. The proportion of population reporting poor health declined from 16% in 2008 to 13% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	16%								
2011	13%								
2014	13%								
<p>Heart disease</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>5.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>6.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>7.4%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	5.7%	2011	6.8%	2014	7.4%	<p>The proportion of population reporting heart disease increased from 5.7% in 2008 to 7.4% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	5.7%								
2011	6.8%								
2014	7.4%								
<p>Cancer</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>7.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>7.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>7.9%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	7.1%	2011	7.5%	2014	7.9%	<p>The proportion of population reporting cancer increased from 7.1% in 2008 to 7.9% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	7.1%								
2011	7.5%								
2014	7.9%								
<p>Stroke</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>2.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>2.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>3.3%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	2.5%	2011	2.5%	2014	3.3%	<p>The proportion of population who reported stroke increased from 2.5% in 2008 to 3.3% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	2.5%								
2011	2.5%								
2014	3.3%								
<p>Diabetes type 2</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>1.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>2.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>2.8%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	1.8%	2011	2.0%	2014	2.8%	<p>The prevalence of reported diabetes type 2 is relatively low in Nillumbik but increased from 1.8% in 2008 to 2.8% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	1.8%								
2011	2.0%								
2014	2.8%								
<p>Depression/Anxiety</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>20%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>20%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>24%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	20%	2011	20%	2014	24%	<p>Self-reported diagnoses of depression or anxiety [during lifetime] increased from 20% in 2008 to 24% in 2014. This may be due to reduced stigma in seeking treatment.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	20%								
2011	20%								
2014	24%								
<p>Overweight</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>41.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>41.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>52.1%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	41.3%	2011	41.3%	2014	52.1%	<p>The proportion of population who are overweight or obese is increasing. The rate increased from 41.3% in 2008 to 52.1% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	41.3%								
2011	41.3%								
2014	52.1%								
<p>Chlamydia</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>10%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>12%</td></tr> </table>	Year	Percentage	2013	10%	2014	12%	<p>The rate of chlamydia in Nillumbik is higher than for other Victorian populations.* Most diagnoses are in young people under 25 years.</p>		
Year	Percentage								
2013	10%								
2014	12%								

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

FIGURE 7: Trends in Chronic Disease
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

Trends in modifiable factors that are risks to health and wellbeing

TREND	OVERVIEW
<p>Smoking status</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The self-reported smoking rate decreased from 15% in 2008 to 11% in 2014.</p> <p>The rate among school students is about the same as the adult rate.</p>
<p>Physical inactivity</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>45% of adults do not meet the physical activity guidelines. This grew from 26% in 2008.</p>
<p>Inadequate vegetable intake</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>9 out of 10 adults do not eat the recommended serves of vegetables each day.</p> <p>The rate is about the same for teenagers.</p>
<p>Psychological distress</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The proportion of people experiencing high or very high distress is decreasing. The rate was 9% in 2008 and 4% in 2014.</p> <p>The rate is much higher for teens (13.6%).</p>
<p>Family violence</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>The rate of family violence reported to police is increasing.* In 2012, the rate was 397 per 100,000 population, compared to 618 per 100,000 in 2016.</p>
<p>Alcohol risk</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>Self-reported drinking at risk for short-term harm is increasing (from 51% in 2008 to 56% in 2014).</p> <p>Risky drinking is higher in Nillumbik than on average for Melbourne.</p>
<p>Pokies expenditure</p> <p>2008 2011 2014</p>	<p>Expenditure on gaming machines increased from \$7.76 million in 2013 to \$8.3 million in 2017.†</p> <p>The number of gaming machines increased from 80 to 90.</p>

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

FIGURE 8: Trends in Modifiable Factors that are Risks to Health and Wellbeing
 Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

Trends in social factors that are protective of health and wellbeing

TREND	OVERVIEW								
<p>Housing diversity</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Housing diversity data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2011	5%	2016	6%	<p>In the 5 years between 2011 and 2016, medium or high-density housing increased from 5% to 6%.*</p> <p>Diverse housing allows older and younger people to remain in Nillumbik through life transitions.</p>		
Year	Percentage								
2011	5%								
2016	6%								
<p>Perception of safety</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Perception of safety data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>81%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>72%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	81%	2011	76%	2014	72%	<p>The proportion of people who feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night decreased from 81% in 2008 to 72% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	81%								
2011	76%								
2014	72%								
<p>Able to get help from neighbours</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Able to get help from neighbours data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	76%	2011	65%	2014	51%	<p>The proportion of people who feel they can definitely get help from their neighbours declined from 76% in 2008 to 51% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	76%								
2011	65%								
2014	51%								
<p>Belong to sports group</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Belong to sports group data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	32%	2011	35%	2014	39%	<p>The proportion of people who belong to a sports group increased from 32% in 2008 to 39% in 2014. However, across Victoria, membership is much higher among men and young people than women and older people.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	32%								
2011	35%								
2014	39%								
<p>Volunteering</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Volunteering data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	39%	2011	30%	2014	23%	<p>Volunteering declined from 39% in 2008 to 23% in 2014, but is stronger in Nillumbik compared to other areas.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	39%								
2011	30%								
2014	23%								
<p>Attend local events</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Attend local events data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	68%	2011	69%	2014	70%	<p>Attendance at local events remains strong in Nillumbik, at 68% in 2008 and 70% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	68%								
2011	69%								
2014	70%								
<p>Multiculturalism</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Multiculturalism data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>49%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2008	76%	2011	65%	2014	49%	<p>The proportion of people in Nillumbik who think multiculturalism makes life better declined from 76% in 2008 to 49% in 2014.</p>
Year	Percentage								
2008	76%								
2011	65%								
2014	49%								

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

FIGURE 9: Trends in Social Factors that are Protective of Health and Wellbeing
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

These indicator trends show that the prevalence of chronic disease is increasing, consistent with trends in Victoria and at a global level. The prevalence in chronic disease in Nillumbik is lower than average Victoria, and self-reported health is improving.²⁷ The modifiable risk factors for health and wellbeing show corresponding trends on several indicators. While smoking and psychological distress show improvements, the rate of overweight, physical inactivity, vegetable intake and alcohol intake areas all trend towards higher risk for chronic ill-health.

The Nillumbik 2020 Annual Community Survey²⁸ report reveals that the perception of safety in the public areas of Nillumbik Shire have remained very high, despite a small decline in 2020 in the perception of safety in and around the two main activity centres. None of the respondents raised “safety, policing and crime” related issues as one of the top three issues to address in the Nillumbik at the current time. Consistent with the results recorded in previous years, respondents in Nillumbik on average felt measurably and significantly safer than both the metropolitan Melbourne and northern region councils’ averages, as recorded in the 2019 *Governing Melbourne* research conducted independently by Metropolis Research.

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

Food security

Supporting a thriving food system is fundamental to supporting a thriving community. As such, the development of the food economy requires an open and coordinated approach where all aspects are considered. Food security ‘exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary need and food preference for an active and healthy life’.²⁹

A 2017 report undertaken by SUSTAIN – The Australian Food Network and supported by the Victorian Local Governance Association (VGLA) estimates that at least 60 per cent more food will be needed to feed Melbourne by 2050 and yet less water and land will be available.³⁰

While historically cities were located close to secure supplies for fresh food, this nexus was broken in post-World War II urban planning strategies in Australian cities. With the emergence of global food systems, there appeared to be little need for planners to incorporate issues relating to food security into planning schemes; the rationale for which appears to be aligned to the perspective that Australia’s food system is secure because we produce 60 per cent more food than we consume.³¹

²⁷ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) op. cit.

²⁸ Metropolis Research (2020) Nillumbik Shire Council 2020 Annual Community Survey

²⁹ Thomson, D. (2018) Nillumbik Food Environment Research Project Outcome Report, Monash University, p. 3.

³⁰ Rose, N. and Hearn A.H. (2017) Food systems and the Role of Local Government, Melbourne: SUSTAIN, p.9.

³¹ *ibid*, p.20.

However, a more critical assessment, taking climate change into account, suggests that such a situation cannot be taken for granted.

Melbourne's foodbowl currently produces enough vegetables to meet 82 percent of Greater Melbourne's needs, but by 2050, urban sprawl could reduce the capacity of the foodbowl, so that it can only produce enough food to meet 18 percent of the city's food needs.³² Easy access to land for growing food is critical for improving access to nutritious food. Many Victorian local government food policies already exist, particularly in urban and peri-urban municipalities. **These policies frame food security in terms of low-carbon production, efficient water use, and reduction on the 'food miles' required to transport agricultural produce to customers.**³³

If Melbourne is able to accommodate the predicted population increase in a way that contains urban sprawl and retains the city's capacity for peri-urban food production, Melbourne's foodbowl could contribute to a more resilient city food supply despite the increasing climate pressures on food production.³⁴ Nillumbik will need to consider its position in relation to its own needs as well as its broader contribution to Melbourne.

Council is working to identify areas within the Shire that may be suitable for agriculture and to better understand the viability of the emerging demand for varied crops. Additionally, given the impacts of climate change and a growing demand for locally farmed food, the assessment of new production and methods such as permaculture, regenerative and sustainable agriculture will also become a focus. Through this, Council can work with the community to better utilise the land while also respecting the conservation values associated with the green wedge. Strengthening relationships with local education institutions, research bodies and Melbourne's independent food networks, will provide new opportunities for food and fibre production. In partnering with such organisations, Council's ability to provide educational opportunities, information and advice regarding land management and regenerative farming methods is also strengthened.³⁵

Food production also opens innovative pathways to improving community health and wellbeing. Food growing, preparation and sharing are all ways to engage diverse groups and reduce social exclusion; which in itself is a determinate of health. Community food practices offer a way to build social cohesion and community resilience. Council is also committed to working with existing businesses to increase awareness of their products and to facilitate the development of other opportunities related to agriculture-based visitor attractions.³⁶

³² Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015) Melbourne's Foodbowl – Now and at Seven Mission (online) <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/112596/Melbournes%20Foodbowl%20Now%20and%20at%20seven%20million%20higher%20res.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015), *op .cit.*

³⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2020) Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2030 (DRAFT) (online) https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.nil-participate.files/4415/8025/6635/Draft_Nillumbik_Economic_Development_Strategy_2020-2030.pdf

³⁶ *ibid.*

Community health and wellbeing in the future

Community health and wellbeing in the future: what we can expect

Proactive steps need to be taken in order for Nillumbik to continue to experience a high level of advantage; this however does not negate the need to address areas of disadvantage.

The prevalence in chronic disease in Nillumbik is lower than average Victoria, and self-reported health is improving.

By 2050, at least 60 per cent more food will be required to feed Melbourne's growing population.

Community health and wellbeing in the future: what can we do?

Improve the collection and development of quality health and liveability data.

Further develop our existing programs and frameworks to promote health and wellbeing within the community.

Explore innovative pathways to incorporate food and food production into local community activities that can improve health and wellbeing.

Social infrastructure

Council needs to ensure that Nillumbik has the right social infrastructure in the right locations at the right times so that service providers can respond to community needs proactively and flexibly, taking into account evolving demographic profiles, consumer preferences, technologies and service delivery models.

The role of social infrastructure

Social infrastructure refers to facilities that accommodate community support services programs and activities. Social infrastructure is mix of facilities, spaces, places, projects, programs, services and networks that aim to –

- **Encourage and enable social inclusion** – for example, open spaces and facilities provide places and opportunities for interaction, participation and engagement.
- **Support diverse communities** – for example, by catering to a mix of ages, cultures, interests and skills.

- **Enhance health and wellbeing** – for example, by living in proximity to parks or sports facilities increases the likelihood of using them; and having access to services, programs and events leads to increased social interaction, cultural appreciation and community cohesion.
- **Support a growing population** – for example, by attracting new residents while also supporting the needs of existing residents.
- **Assist with economic development** – for example, by increasing the capacity to attract further investment.

The provision of social infrastructure

Councils should provide infrastructure that the community values. In addition to adequately providing for the community's needs through meeting standardised social infrastructure service standards, councils should also facilitate maximising the infrastructure's usage to ensure that maximum value is gained from its capital works expenditure. For example, a lack of disabled access, unsafe footpaths or inadequate lighting leading to fears of safety, could hinder utilisation of community infrastructure. A viable asset that is underused provides minimal value to the community for the investment made.

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

Considering Nillumbik's low population growth it is unlikely that new primary and secondary school will be built in the Shire. However, Nillumbik's ageing population will increase the demand for health and disability support services as the population ages. These demographic changes will influence planning decisions and service offerings now and into the future. For example, the requirement for Aged Care and Allied Health Services (supported by the proposed Eltham Community Hospital) will become increasingly important for Nillumbik's ageing demographic. While the structure and composition of Nillumbik's Early Years services may require amendments in line with changes to government policy such as the introduction of subsidised three year old Kindergarten Services.

Integrating infrastructure planning with land use is a critical factor, but striking a balance between major new builds and initiatives that reduce demand and get the most of out of Nillumbik's existing infrastructure is just as important. Achieving this balance will require open conversations with residents and ratepayers about the level of infrastructure that is expected, and the extent to which they are willing to pay for access to improved infrastructure and the trade-offs between the two. Crucial to these discussions will be evidence-led polices, robust data and careful analysis to support investment proposals and to base decisions on.³⁷

³⁷ Infrastructure Victoria (2019) Growing Victoria's Potential: The Opportunities and Challenges of Victoria's Population Growth (online) <http://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Growing-Victorias-Potential-April-2019.pdf>

To ensure Council realises full value from its assets, Council will need to effectively plan for, manage, and effectively utilise existing assets. Effective management of these assets requires the collection of appropriate information, including their value, cost to maintain and operate, condition, performance, risk and utilisation. Adequate planning for established areas such as Nillumbik requires an appreciation of the existing services and facilities, including capacity, condition and the potential to increase, decrease or modify the services that are offered here.³⁸

With the introduction of a rate cap in 2016, many councils implemented efficiency reforms to reduce costs including organisation restructures, asset sales, collaborative purchasing, reviews of discretionary services and fleet vehicle reductions. However, evidence is emerging of an under investment in capital infrastructure by financially-constrained smaller councils.³⁹ Over time, the under-investment in social infrastructure renewal by councils will have long-term negative impacts on the quality and safety of local roads, and the availability of community facilities across Victoria.⁴⁰

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

One of Council's biggest challenges in relation to the provision of infrastructure is the ability to adequately address the funding gap for renewal and maintenance of existing infrastructure assets. Underspending on renewal is not a saving, as higher costs will eventually be borne by future ratepayers.

Social infrastructure in the future

Social infrastructure in the future: what we can expect

Changing demographics will impact on the provision of social infrastructure.

The funding gap for social infrastructure renewal and maintenance will widen as less traditional funding is available.

Partnerships, colocation and innovative delivery solutions to the provision of social infrastructure will become more important in the future.

Undersupply of services and infrastructure will mean the broader community will have lower quality of life and economic opportunities.

³⁸ SGS Economics and Planning (2018) Whittlesea 2040: Background Paper (online) <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/3736/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf> p

³⁹ Infrastructure Victoria (2019) (online) op. cit.

⁴⁰ SGS Economics and Planning (2018) op. cit.

Social infrastructure in the future: what can we do?

Continue to deliver mixed-use places and spaces where people can access a range of services and facilities.

Increase funding from less traditional sources (including private-sector partnerships).

Continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to share facilities and deliver improved services.

The economy and employment

Victoria's economy is impacted by global and local trends, including geopolitical developments, environmental pressures, demographic changes, information and capital flows and technological developments. **The need for sustainable economic development, particularly in relation to climate change, is also a global trend that will have implications for Victoria's economy.**⁴¹

Historically, Victoria has been described as the manufacturing belt of Australia. While it is true that manufacturing is a bigger share of Victoria's economy compared to its share in other state economies, Victoria has increasingly been making a transition from an industrial economy based on manufacturing to a tertiary economy based on services.⁴²

Over the next 25 years, the strongest rates of employment growth are expected to be seen in health care, social assistance, education and training, professional, scientific and technical services, financial and insurance services and construction. Those industries are expected to decline include agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and manufacturing.⁴³

As older industries decline, new industries will emerge. A range of macro-forces are expected to influence Victoria's economy into the future, including –

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

⁴¹ Deloitte Access Economics (2016) The Current and Future State of Victoria: A Macro Perspective (online) <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/Economics/deloitte-au-economics-current-future-state-victoria-infrastructure-150216.pdf>

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

- Technological advancements and the growing popularity of the ‘gig’ economy.

Knowledge Economy

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

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

FIGURE 10: Nillumbik Shire Council Highest Qualification Achieved
Source: .id Consulting (2019)

Continued support for education and training options will be an important consideration in the future as jobs continue to change, particularly in mitigating job losses in industries within the Shire that are deemed to be less viable. This support should extend to a continued advocacy program that supports improved transport options from Nillumbik to universities and TAFE and other education providers.

Activity Centre revitalisation

Nillumbik’s core employment areas are focused around the Eltham and Diamond Creek Activity Centres. These commercial areas support a range of employment activities including retail and hospitality, professional services and health care and education. Employment statistics show that the Activity Centres support approximately 5,470 jobs combined and have experienced an increase of 900 jobs between 2011 and 2016.⁴⁴

The economic role of Nillumbik’s Activity Centres is changing due to a range of macro-economic conditions. The changing nature of retail and the increasing popularity of online retail, as well as the consolidation of higher-order retailers across the metropolitan area is placing greater importance on convenience-based retail, retail services and hospitality/entertainment activities in Nillumbik’s Activity Centres.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Urban Enterprise (2019) Nillumbik Shire Economic Development Strategy: Issues and Options Paper (DRAFT – WORKING DOCUMENT)

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

A priority for Nillumbik's Activity Centres could be to focus on convenience-based retail and retail services but also to develop the hospitality and entertainment products to meet the needs of residents and to encourage the visitor economy. Careful planning of the retail and hospitality sector provides an opportunity to develop a mix of uses in activity centres, and to create a diversity of spaces, places and experiences. Holding special events in centres which reflect and celebrate the unique identity of the local population will draw both residents and visitors to key economic centre within the Shire. Activity centres also play a key role in supporting housing outcomes. Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 supports new and diverse housing in activity centres that offer good access to jobs, services and public transport.⁴⁶

Support growth in home-based and micro businesses

There are a number of home-based businesses and micro businesses in Nillumbik. Given the increasingly popularity of the 'gig economy' and the ability to work remotely, the proportion of these businesses are expected to increase in the future. The increase in supply and growing popularity of co-working spaces are providing critical support infrastructure and services to assist businesses in their infancy to grow and mature. The benefits of the co-working model area associated with creating spaces and places which support collaboration, openness, knowledge sharing and innovation.⁴⁷ Additionally, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 is likely to increase the number of residents working from home.

In keeping businesses, start-ups and individuals connected the importance of phone and internet connectivity cannot be understated. Ensuring reliable mobile phone reception is paramount, both from a business point-of-view and from an emergency management perspective. In recognition of this Council continues to advocate for assistance in the identification and removal of mobile blackspots across the Shire.

Increasing economic opportunities through showcasing Nillumbik's recreation, cultural and visitor assets

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

The productivity of Nillumbik's green wedge is important to the Shire's economy and Council will continue to support and advocate for projects that fit with the values of the community to improve the economy and to enhance local employment.⁴⁸

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

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

⁴⁶ The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2017a) op. cit.

⁴⁷ Urban Enterprise (2019) op. cit

⁴⁸ Nillumbik Shire Council (2020) op. cit.

alternate energy sources, crop types, reduced food miles, reduced waste and the implementation of sustainable agricultural techniques. Council will continue to investigate how Nillumbik can leverage these opportunities facilitate an environment that could support a diverse range of business that can form the basis of a green economy. A green economy seeks to reduce environmental impacts and aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment.⁴⁹

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

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

Council will continue to implement initiatives that develop and promote natural and built experiences which strengthen local visitor offerings. Working in partnership with local and regional business and tourism associations, Nillumbik can strengthen its reputation as a recognised destination for cultural experiences, boutique food events, and semi-rural regional experiences on Melbourne's fringe. Additionally, Nillumbik will continue to explore ways to enhance the experience and awareness of recreational pursuits within the Shire, including the development of an advocacy document, Equine in Nillumbik, to support equine activity in the Shire and to identify the strengths and opportunities for this sector moving forward.⁵⁰

The manufacturing industry in Nillumbik includes small-scale food production. There is a growing number of artisan food and beverages producers across Nillumbik, including in the green wedge. Council is committed to strengthening relationships with key festivals and restaurants and develop partnerships with producers to develop new events and opportunities such as farm gate initiatives and paddock to plate experiences and food and beverage trails.⁵¹

The economy and employment in the future

The economy and employment in the future: what we can expect

Technology, local and global trends will continue to transform the types of available work, replacing routine-type jobs with higher-skilled work in 'high knowledge' industries.

The population will need new skills for the new economy, particularly people whose employment is affected by automation.

While work is likely to become more flexible, the future distribution of jobs will most likely result in residents still needing to travel outside of Nillumbik for work, requiring improved transport options.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *ibid.*

The economy and employment in the future: what can we do?

Improve economic development practices and programs to assist local businesses.

Enhance Nillumbik's reputation as a desirable place to establish a business, live, work and play.

Grow our vibrant activity centres and employment precincts in Eltham and Diamond Creek.

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

Climate change

The Shire of Nillumbik recognises that climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing the world today and into the future. Council understands the importance of preserving the green wedge, contributing to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors, conserving natural resources and to promoting a healthy, safe and resilient community.

Effects of climate change

Over the past 50 years, growing greenhouse gas concentrations have contributed to warming of Australian air and sea surface temperatures, and this trend is set to continue. The expected weather impacts on the Shire of Nillumbik include –

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

The anticipated impacts of climate change in the coming decades are such that these types of events will have a substantially negative impact on food production and therefore food security.⁵² Further, the patterns of warming and a volatile and drying climate will place considerable strains on Australia's and Victoria's primary foodbowl production regions. This reinforces the importance of protecting valuable farmland closer to major population centres with secure access to water.

⁵² SGS Economics and Planning (2018) op. cit.

Conversely climate change has potential to increase flood risk within Nillumbik Shire with increasing incidents of heavy rainfall, wind, surge and storm events. While the latest predictions are for a long-term reduction in storage yield (for example a reduction in runoff volumes) it is likely that the intensity of extreme rainfall events will increase. The change in rainfall patterns is likely to lead to less frequent, but potentially larger riverine floods, more frequent flash flooding and overland flow events associated with localised storm activity.⁵³

Many of the flooding related issues that have occurred within Nillumbik Shire are due to the steep terrain and large number of open waterways and a lack of formalised drainage infrastructure in certain areas. Nillumbik’s Flood Management Plan identifies approximately 750 are at risk of flooding. Increased rainfall intensity will significantly impact on the drainage system, including underground pipe drains, open channels, retarding basins, flood ways waterway improvements and environment protection initiatives. As Council is responsible for the provision, operation, maintenance and management drainage systems in catchments under 60 hectares, increased development, and improvement and maintenance costs will be borne by Council.⁵⁴

Future changes to the climate will depend upon the rate at which society emits greenhouse gases; the higher the emission levels, the greater the effect on the climate.⁵⁵

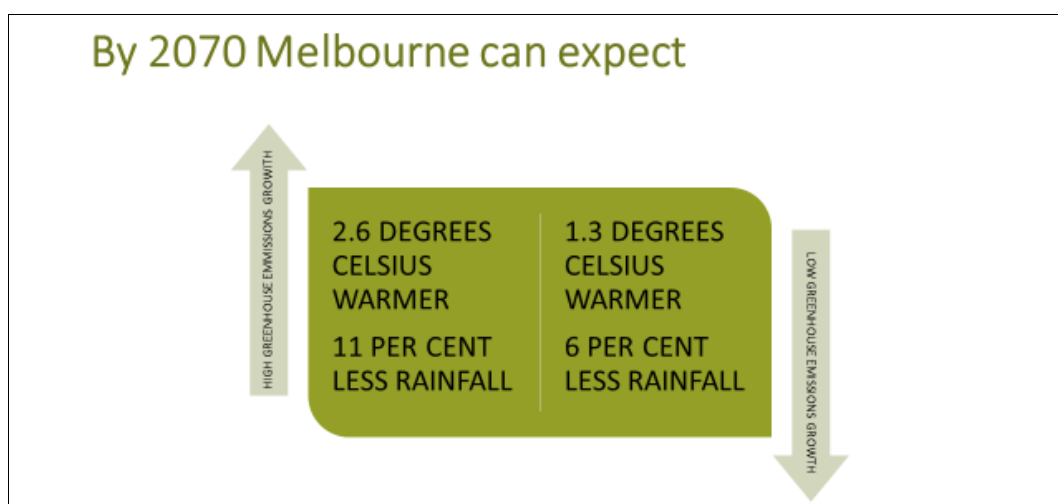


FIGURE 11: Melbourne 2070 Climate Outcomes
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016a)

The Victorian Government has committed to legislating a long-term target for Victoria of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.⁵⁶ To achieve net zero emissions, Victoria will need to transition to renewable energy, and significantly reduce waste outputs.

⁵³ Nillumbik Shire Council (2013) Flood Management Plan.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016a) Climate Change Action Plan (online) <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation#C>

⁵⁶ The State Government of Victoria (2016) Victoria’s Net Zero by 2050 Emissions Reduction Target (online) <https://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/media-releases/victorias-net-zero-by-2050-emissions-reduction-target>

Four pillars of emissions reduction

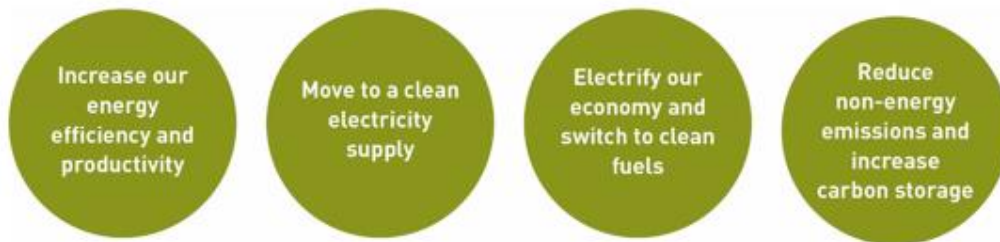


FIGURE 12: Four Pillars of Emissions Reduction
Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2016a)

Nillumbik's Climate Change Action Plan

In line with Nillumbik's Climate Change Action Plan, Council is committed to –

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

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

“Nillumbik Shire Council is leading the charge on climate action with a proposal to develop a solar farm on the former Plenty landfill site. The solar farm could provide up to 5MW of green electricity, capable of supplying all of Council’s annual electrical power consumption requirements. It would be the largest of its type on a landfill site in the greater Melbourne metropolitan area; capable of offsetting 8,200 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per annum, which is the equivalent to taking approximately 2,000 cars off the road.”

In addition to working towards mitigation goals, the Plan recognises that the climate has already begun to change and therefore an additional focus on adaptation is required for further and future work. The overarching adaptation goal of the Plan is to ensure that Council and the community have identified risks and vulnerabilities related to climate change and have considered pathways to implement appropriate measures to reduce potential impacts.

Adaptation considerations –

- Managing stormwater drainage to cope with an increase in heavy precipitation events and flash flooding.
- Considering the frequency and cost associated with road maintenance given an increase in extreme weather events.
- Determining the appropriateness of location, construction and maintenance of new and existing infrastructure as it pertains to climate change risk.
- Planning for business continuity in the event of an extreme weather event.

The effects of climate change will be disproportionately felt by those in society who are vulnerable, such as those with lower socio-economic and health status. Many climate change risks to health and safety will arise indirectly from a variety of non-health sectors such as agriculture, water, disaster management and planning. An understanding of approaches to reduce vulnerability to the health and social risks of climate change must incorporate an understanding of equity issues, as well as a focus on multi-sectoral activities. Community-based and social service organisations will play a vital role in responding to climate change risks, given the need for these responses to be delivered at a local level.⁵⁷

Climate change in the future

Climate change the future: what we can expect

By 2050, Victoria will be hotter, will experience more extreme weather events including drought, severe storms, extreme flooding events and an increased risk of bushfire; subsequently increasing risks to human health, property and infrastructure.

A collaborative approach is required across a number of key policy areas to ensure that Nillumbik remains liveable, safe, resilient, economically viable and capable of meeting the needs of climate change.

Climate change will have a substantially negative impact on food production and therefore food security.

The transition to renewables has the potential to create new opportunities in Nillumbik.

Climate change in the future: what can we do?

Strengthen investment in renewables and encourage households to become renewable adopters.

⁵⁷ Bowen, K. & Friel, S. (2015) *Health and social impacts of Climate Change*, in *Climate Change Adaptation for health and Social Services*, p. 3.

Electrify our economy and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Increase our energy efficiency and productivity.

Continue works to ensure our natural environment is protected.

Transport

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, forecasts indicated that by 2050 Melbourne's transport network would need to cater for almost 24 million trips a day – up from 13.4 million today.⁵⁸ Given the likely impact of COVID-19 on international migration these forecasts will most likely need to be revisited once the pandemic is over. Nonetheless, transport infrastructure will undergo significant change over the next 20 years.

Plans for additional transport infrastructure

Current land use and transport plans for Melbourne will see an increase in travel demand to and from Nillumbik, particularly for work, business, and tourism and higher education purposes. Plan Melbourne identifies an integrated transport system including –

- The completion of the Metro Tunnel project.
- Significant improvements to arterial road connections across Melbourne, and improved efficiency of the freeway network.
- Creation of a metro-style rail system with 'turn up and go' frequency and reliability.
- The removal of level crossings across Melbourne.
- Better transport infrastructure and services in growth suburbs—including new bus services and, expansion of the rail network.
- Significant investments to create pedestrian and cyclist-friendly neighbourhoods.
- Ensuring Melbourne's air transport remains efficient for passengers and freight, with the potential to establish another airport in Melbourne's south-east.
- Enhancing the efficiency of Melbourne's freight network by upgrading road and rail freight infrastructure, creating new intermodal freight terminals in Melbourne's north and west, and increasing the volume of interstate freight transported by rail.

⁵⁸ The State Government of Victoria (2018a) Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 (online) <https://transport.vic.gov.au/-/media/tfv-documents/walking-and-cycling/victorian-cycling-strategy-2018-28.pdf?la=en&hash=43D83D737757683450CF4A7E329B85DB&hash=43D83D737757683450CF4A7E329B85DB>

- Enhancing Melbourne’s freight network through the Port Capacity project, the Western Distributor project and the possible establishment of a second container port.⁵⁹

A key example of a significant transport infrastructure project affecting Nillumbik includes the **North East Link** provides a new freeway standard connection between the M80 Ring Road and an upgraded Eastern Freeway. It is planned to be built between 2020 and 2027. Accessibility improvements for businesses due to North East Link are expected increase productivity across Melbourne, with flow-on benefits for the wider Victorian economy.⁶⁰ From 2016-2036, Nillumbik is projected to gain an additional 5 per cent growth in employment (1090 people) as a result of improved access to employment opportunities.⁶¹ Additionally, a range of complimentary projects have been identified by the Victorian Government including the Greensborough Bypass/Diamond Creek Road intersection upgrade and the widening of Diamond Creek Road.

The Annual Community Survey, is designed to measure community satisfaction with a range of Council services and facilities and to measure community sentiment on a range of additional issues and concerns in the community. **Traffic management has been recorded as the top issue for Council to address in both 2019 and 2020** with 29.2 per cent and 22 per cent of respondents identifying traffic management as the key issue of concern.

Diamond Creek Road is a key route between Yan Yean Road and the Greensborough Bypass. The road is over capacity and traffic volumes are likely to increase. Diamond Creek Road needs to be upgraded in conjunction with the removal of the roundabout at Civic Drive. This intersection is also the site of a significant number of crashes, and intersection upgrades will significantly improve safety. Additionally, grade separating the intersection would significantly improve traffic flow on Diamond Creek Road, reduce congestion on local arterials and provide better access to the future North East Link.

Plan Melbourne 2050 identifies that the municipality has good road linkages to the north and west of Melbourne. However, the arterial road network within the Shire is experiencing pressure for improvements to allow for better access to and from non-urban and urban areas. While North East Link has been designed to largely avoid Nillumbik, the project will address some of the transport and accessibility objectives by improving road links to the wider region.⁶² Additionally, the completion of the **Melbourne Metro Tunnel** will increase accessibility to inner Melbourne.

The upgrade of **the Hurstbridge Line** commenced with the duplication of track between Heidelberg and Rosanna stations in 2018. The second stage of the upgrade is due to finish by 2022 and will include –

- A new railway station at Greensborough.
- Duplication of three kilometres of track between Greensborough and Montmorency.

⁵⁹ The State Government of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2017a) op.cit

⁶⁰ Victorian Government, *North East Link Environment Effects Statement, Summary Report*, 2019.

⁶¹ Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b) Op. cit.

⁶² Victorian Government, *North East Link Environment Effects Statement, Chapter 13 Land Use Planning* 2019.

- Duplication of 1.5 kilometres of track between Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen.

These improvements will allow more train services to run during the morning peak. At Greensborough, trains will run every six-and-a-half minutes, every 10 minutes at Eltham and Montmorency, and every 20 minutes at Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen. Two extra express services will also be added to the Hurstbridge line.⁶³ These additional services will increase passenger capacity from the 2019 timetable by approximately 21 per cent at Eltham and 28 per cent at Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge.

As part of the upgrade to the Hurstbridge Line, Council is advocating to the State Government to plan and deliver the full redevelopment of the Eltham and Diamond Creek railway station precincts. This includes –

- Increased car parking capacity.
- Improved bus interchange.
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)* compliant Railway station access.
- The removal of the level crossing at Diamond Creek.
- Development of a pedestrian underpass at Diamond Creek.
- Improved connections to Nillumbik’s Trail Network.

Public transport

Good access to public transport is an important feature of a sustainable community. Council recognises this and advocates for improved public transport. Public transport reduces the need to travel by car, and improves the mobility of the vulnerable segments of the population such as disabled people, older persons, children, young people and those who may be unable to afford buy and/or run a car. Public transport access is a tool to improve social inclusion and community wellbeing. **Better public transport access is also associated with reduced car travel, which can in turn help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support public health through increased walking and physical activity.**

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

TRANSPORT INDICATOR	NILLUMBIK	METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE
% of workers who commute more than two hours daily	16.5%	12.6%
% of population near to public transport	50.0%	84.5%

⁶³ The State Government of Victoria (2019) Metro Tunnel – Metropolitan Lines (online) https://metrotunnel.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/313410/MT-Line-Benefits-Brochure-Metropolitan-Lines.pdf

% of worker journeys that are by public transport	8.7%	14.0%
% of people who used public transport to travel to work	1.5%	4.2%

FIGURE 13: Public Transport Indicators
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

Expanding the Bus Network to Nillumbik’s rural townships has been a key focus for Council’s public transport advocacy. In 2012 it was identified that locational disadvantage is a major issue for Nillumbik, with at least 30 per cent of all properties in the Shire having no direct access to public transport. The south-western part of the Shire is serviced by one single-track train line with four stations (Eltham, Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen, and Hurstbridge) and 13 public bus routes. Nillumbik’s more remote townships such as Arthurs Creek, Christmas Hills, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully, St Andrews and Strathewen have no bus services. This results in higher levels of car dependency and creates additional parking demands at surrounding train stations. Nillumbik continues to advocate for improved public transport options to service the Shire, particularly the north-eastern region. Identified as a 2020/2021 Advocacy Priority a Local Area Bus Review is being sought by Council across the Northern Metropolitan Partnership Region. The objective of the Review is to –

- Increase the frequency and hours of operation of public transport services
- To identify opportunities to make bus routes more efficient.
- Better coordinate bus and rail timetables.

Transport and accessibility in the green wedge

Nillumbik’s rural community experiences challenges of access and mobility, particularly for isolated children, young and elderly people. Accessibility can have a range of health and wellbeing impacts, including access to employment or how socially connected people are. Surveys that supported the development of Council’s Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 and the community engagement that informed the development of the Green Wedge Management Plan revealed relatively low resident satisfaction with public transport in the green wedge.⁶⁴

Walkability

Safe, accessible, desirable and interesting walking routes for people of all abilities is an enabler and an indicator of communities that want to be known as liveable. Walkability needs to be planned for and maintained. Accessibility is a fundamental part of the transport system so needs infrastructure that enables people to go to where they need to go with reasonable comfort. Walking is fundamental to human health so needs to be built into everyday life as well as recreation.

Accessibility is fundamental to social interaction so infrastructure needs to enable places of rest, congregation and conviviality. **The planning and design of local neighbourhoods is an important influence on physical activity, health outcomes, social connectedness and**

⁶⁴ Nillumbik Shire Council (2019) Green Wedge Management Plan (online) https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.nill-participate.files/7615/7603/1531/Green_Wedge_Management_Plan_November_2019_-_web.pdf

sustainability. Considerations of connectivity is particularly important as the below examples demonstrate.

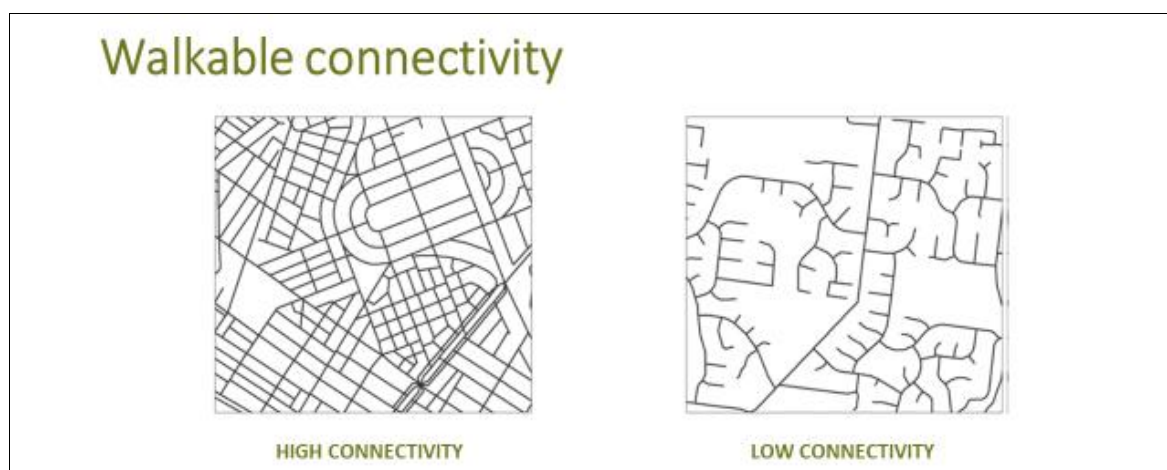


FIGURE 14: Walking Connectivity
Source: Nillumbik Shire Council (2016b)

Research has identified three key factors in determining ‘walkability for transport’ they are –

- Land use mix – for example, something to walk to.
- Road connectivity – for example, a way to get there.
- Housing density – for example, more housing supply in walkable areas.

These three factors have been used to calculate a measure of walkability for transport for all metropolitan Local Government areas. A 2012 assessment of Nillumbik’s walkability for transport was ranked among the lowest in metropolitan Melbourne; only 24 per cent of residents walked for transport compared with 37 per cent for Greater Melbourne.⁶⁵ Walkability for schools in Nillumbik also ranks low, recording a score of 0.9 compared to the average score for school walkability in Greater Melbourne of 1.2 (scores are scaled between 0 and 2).

Trail and bike path network

Nillumbik’s trail and bike path network suffers from a significant lack of connectivity, with numerous paths requiring infill sections. Connecting these pathways and trail is a key community priority and will provide increased usage (including tourists), safer passage, decrease vehicle dependency, improved community connectivity and health and wellbeing outcomes.

⁶⁵ Giles-Corti, et. al. (2014) How Walkable is Melbourne? The Development of a Transport Walkability Index for Metropolitan Melbourne.

Transport in the future

Transport in the future: what we can expect

Changing population, living and working conditions will mean more trips; more people moving around accessing jobs and services.

Reducing reliance on cars and increasing public transport options will have a positive impact on air quality and climate change.

Transport in the future: what can we do?

Continue to facilitate the development mixed-use spaces where people are able to access a range of facilities, services and jobs within walking and cycling distances.

Continue to advocate for improved public transport.

Prioritise the missing links in Nillumbik's continuous footpath network (which would be inclusive of transport hubs).

Complete the Aqueduct Trail to provide a viable route for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the Shire to improve connectivity across the Shire.

The role of local government

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) recently acknowledged the challenges facing local government into the future at a recent Future of Local Government Conference and a set of principles to inform future practice.⁶⁶

In order for councils to play a valued and effective role into the future they should –

- Have the courage to embrace the future and take informed risks to bring about necessary change.
- Learn how to be community led, making space for communities to take action themselves, and responding positively to local initiatives.
- Deepen their understanding of communities, listening to all their people and engaging with them in new and different ways that reflect community diversity.
- Empower citizens through participatory and deliberative democracy, including community boards, precinct committees, cooperatives, citizen's juries and others.

⁶⁶ Municipal Association of Victoria (2018) Future of Local Government Network Commitment (online) <http://www.mav.asn.au/what-we-do/sector-development/future-of-local-government>

- Embrace new ways of working to ensure that local needs are met through joined-up planning and services.
- Forge more local and regional partnerships that address issues and drive change at community, state and federal levels.
- Promote local networks, co-production of goods and services.

Nillumbik Shire Council demonstrates many of these capabilities, and recent changes to the organisation will ensure that these capabilities will be developed and enhanced. As Nillumbik continues to embrace its agenda for best-value services delivered in an innovative way, it will move closer to generating the greatest outcomes for its community. This, however, is not without its challenges. The volume of services Council delivers, combined with the breadth of issues it is required to address greatly increases the complexity in determining appropriate responses, both now and into the future. The emergence of COVID-19 has compounded this issue.

Northern Melbourne Smart Cities Network

The Northern Melbourne Smart Cities Network, enabling data to drive change project will provide an Internet of Things (IoT) based Smart Cities network to drive the initial steps towards a Smart Cities transformation for Nillumbik Shire Council and its partners, the City of Whittlesea, Moreland City Council, Banyule City Council and Mitchell Shire. The project will develop and implement a Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) network that will enable the integration of five different types of sensors that will collect data on a wide variety of aspects of everyday life in each of the Council areas to improve the efficiency of services provided and to support potential delivery of new services.⁶⁷

The project will enable the introduction of five sensor types to each of the Council regions. Initially, the sensors deployed will include people counting, air quality, environmental factors monitoring, water level monitoring, waste management collection and asset tracking. The network of sensors will allow the five Councils to collect and share data to determine how this data can best inform Council processes and service improvement. The nature of the shared network promotes collaboration and sharing of resources, risks and opportunities between local government areas.⁶⁸

The real time data produced through the implementation of the project will enable Council's to –

- Increase community engagement by providing real-time information on Council performance and provide a platform for community feedback and comment.

⁶⁷ Infrastructure Victoria (2019) Northern Melbourne Smart Cities Network – Enabling data to drive change (online) <http://infrastructure.gov.au/cities/smart-cities/collaboration-platform/northern-melbourne-smart-cities-network.aspx>

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

- Involve the community in service design and delivery.
- Empower Council and customers to make decisions through greater access to information.
- Improve access to Council services.
- Support real-time availability of Council information and data.

Once the network is implemented, it will then have the capacity to expand allowing community members to create and integrate their own network sensors into the network. This will increase data collection allowing more opportunities to improve service delivery. The project commenced in February 2019 and is scheduled to be completed by June 2020.⁶⁹

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The role of Nillumbik Shire Council



FIGURE 15: The Role of Nillumbik Shire Council

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

Regardless of the role Council performs, public trust is a key enabler for effective governance. **With the trust and support of the community Council can go further to deliver fundamental services and innovative programs to facilitate the best possible outcomes.**

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

Local government reform

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

In 2015, the Victorian Government embarked on a local government reform agenda with the aim of developing a new principle Act for local government to improve the democracy, accountability and service delivery of Victoria's Councils. This reform agenda culminated in the development and delivery of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The new Act has been informed by five key reform themes –

1. Improved Service Delivery – thorough engagement and principles to support councils in delivering effective essential services.
2. Strong Local Democracy – by making councillors directly accountable to their community.
3. Improved Conduct – by providing clear standards of behaviour in regulations and stronger mechanisms for conduct breaches, including requiring councillors to complete training and providing arbiter's powers to address misconduct.
4. Community Confidence – improved community confidence through reforms to electoral processes, electoral structures and candidate requirements. A balanced legislative framework will be provided that gives power back to the local community and makes councils and councillors directly accountable.
5. A New Relationship – to support a new relationship between state and local government and the community by removing unnecessary ministerial approvals and arbitrary powers. Autonomy is afforded to councils to develop and adopt their own policies and procedures in accordance with principles of transparency, accountability and sound financial management.

The new Local Government Act 2020 is aimed at improving the democracy, accountability and service delivery of Victoria's councils now and into the future.

Responding to future challenges

The 2013-14 Audit of Local Government⁷¹, conducted by the Victorian Auditor General's Office, makes specific mention of some councils facing significant challenges in maintaining existing assets and developing new infrastructure. The report also notes challenges faced by councils in delivering high-quality services to their local communities. Rate capping will exacerbate this problem, making it more difficult for local government to meet the needs of their communities. As a result, Local Governments will have the responsibility to adequately represent their community, without the financial resources to do so under all circumstances.

Councils have limited means to raise funds, and currently have their rates capped under State Government policies. Research and modelling shows that Councils will find it challenging to be able to meet increasing demands on them by continuing to implement the status quo nor will they meet these demands through implementing efficiency measures alone.⁷² **Councils will need to adopt new ways of working to create opportunities.**

Council's financial sustainability continues to require active management year-on-year. The challenge remains to source alternative funding streams to meet the needs of the community and to maintain Council's infrastructure portfolio. In 2017-2018 there was no rate rise in Nillumbik. In the 2018-2019, Council was 0.3 per cent below the rate cap. **In 2018-2019, Council continued to honour its commitment to keep rates low.** In the 2019-2020 budget, a rate rise of only 2.25 per cent was adopted by Council, 0.25 per cent less than the official rate cap set by the Victorian Government.

Due to the lack of diversity in its rate-base, Nillumbik faces significant challenges in meeting the needs of the community, maintaining existing assets and developing new infrastructure. Compared to other municipalities, the revenue growth obtained from residential and non-residential sources is limited, as is the ability to grow these rate-bases.

⁷¹ VAGO - Local Government: Results of the 2013–14 Audits

[http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports and publications/latest reports/2014-15/20150226-localgovernment.aspx](http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_and_publications/latest_reports/2014-15/20150226-localgovernment.aspx)

⁷² SGS Economics and Planning (2016) op. cit.

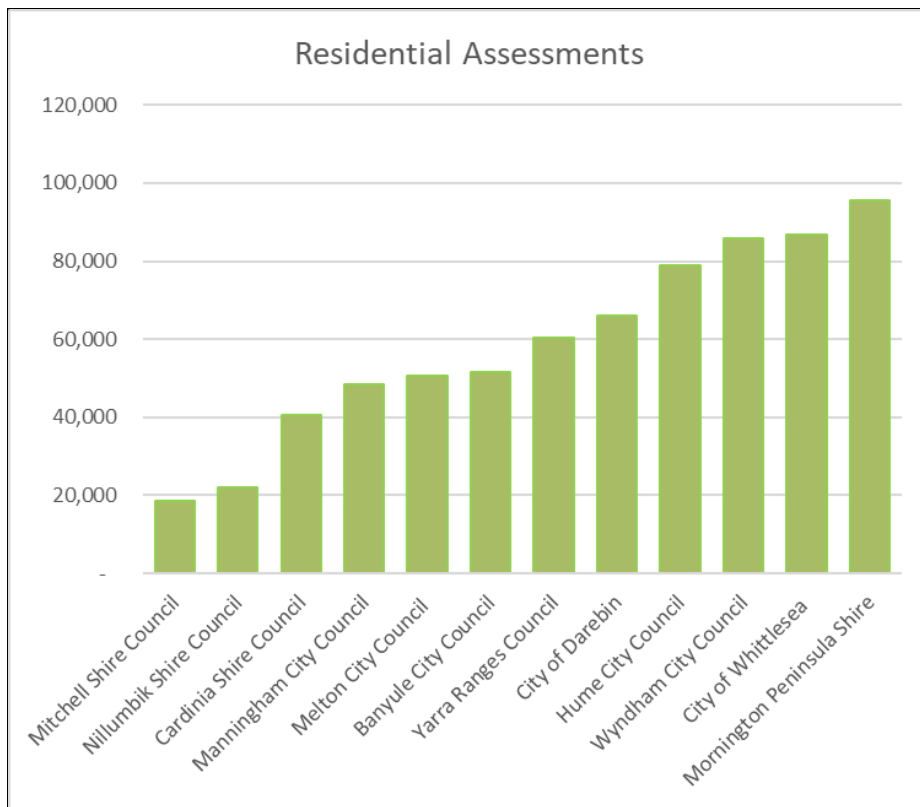


FIGURE 16: Residential Assessments
Source: Council Budgets 2019/2020

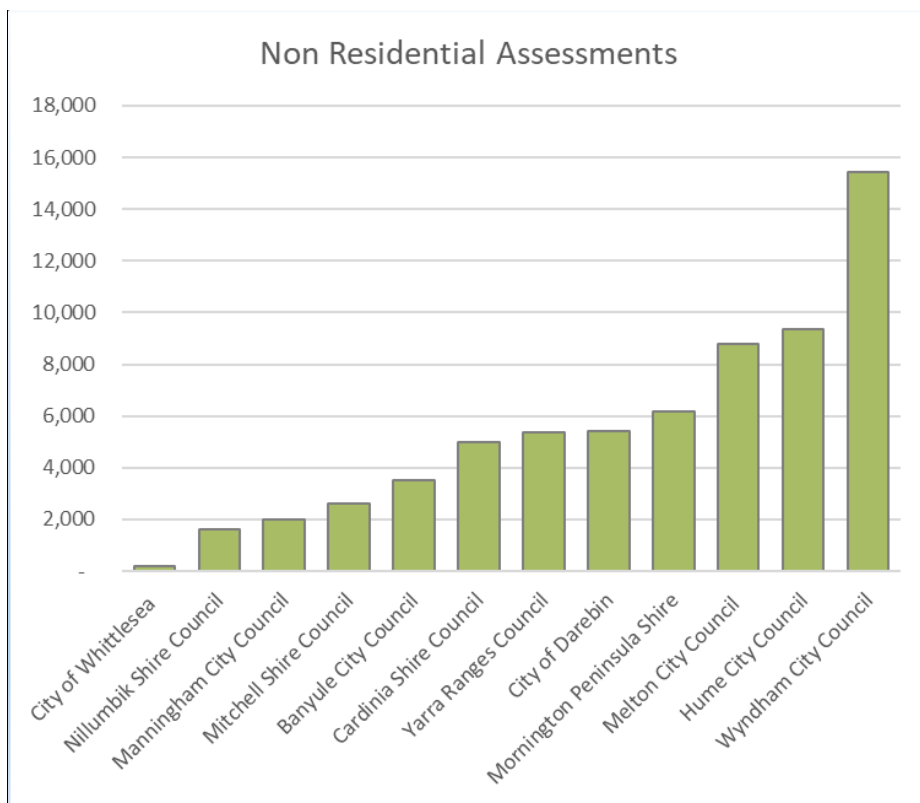


FIGURE 17: Non-residential Assessments
Source: Council Budgets 2019/2020

In the past Nillumbik has financially benefited from receiving funding through the Growing Suburbs Fund. Additionally, being comprised of 'marginal seats' has also been advantageous in securing new initiatives and supporting existing infrastructure. While this has been a welcome addition to Nillumbik's resources, it cannot be relied upon as a stable or certain funding source into the future.

Local government in the future

Local government in the future: what we can expect

Governments at all levels are under increasing pressure to decrease their spending despite increasing demand for varying services.

Council will need new forms of governance if it is to address challenges and realise emerging opportunities.

Growth and change will bring significant opportunities for Nillumbik, the manner in which these are embraced will determine future outcomes for the community.

Local government in the future: what can we do?

Embrace the future and take informed risks supported by technological advancements to improve outcomes for the community.

Enhance community led development, support local initiatives and create opportunities for broad community participation.

Continue to support community groups to identify important concerns and issues, and plan and implement strategies to mitigate their concerns and solve their issues.

Empower residents through participatory and deliberative democracy, including community boards, precinct committees and cooperatives.

Next steps

As detailed above, the Background Paper represents a combination of technical research, demographic analysis, specialist advice and discussions with Councillors and officers. The Paper advances the initial Research Paper and combines this with additional material gathered through Councillor and officer workshops.

Building on the data and feedback gathered through these processes the Paper explores the key challenges and opportunities for Nillumbik and the potential roles that Council can play in supporting residents to address these challenges and maximise the opportunities. In this instance, the issues, opportunities and challenges have centred on –

- Community health and wellbeing.

- Social infrastructure.
- The economy and employment.
- Climate change.
- Transport.
- The role of local government.

It is anticipated that these topics will form the basis for discussions with the Nillumbik community in late 2020 or early 2021.

As Nillumbik moves closer to developing its community vision, a continued and enhanced focus on the development of long-term liveability indicators for Nillumbik would strengthen Council's position in being able to identify and highlight community priorities, better inform service delivery and advocacy and improve integration with broader Council planning processes now and into the future.

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