

Future Nillumbik Committee

to be held at the Civic Centre, Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Tuesday 9 February 2021 commencing at 7:00pm.

Agenda

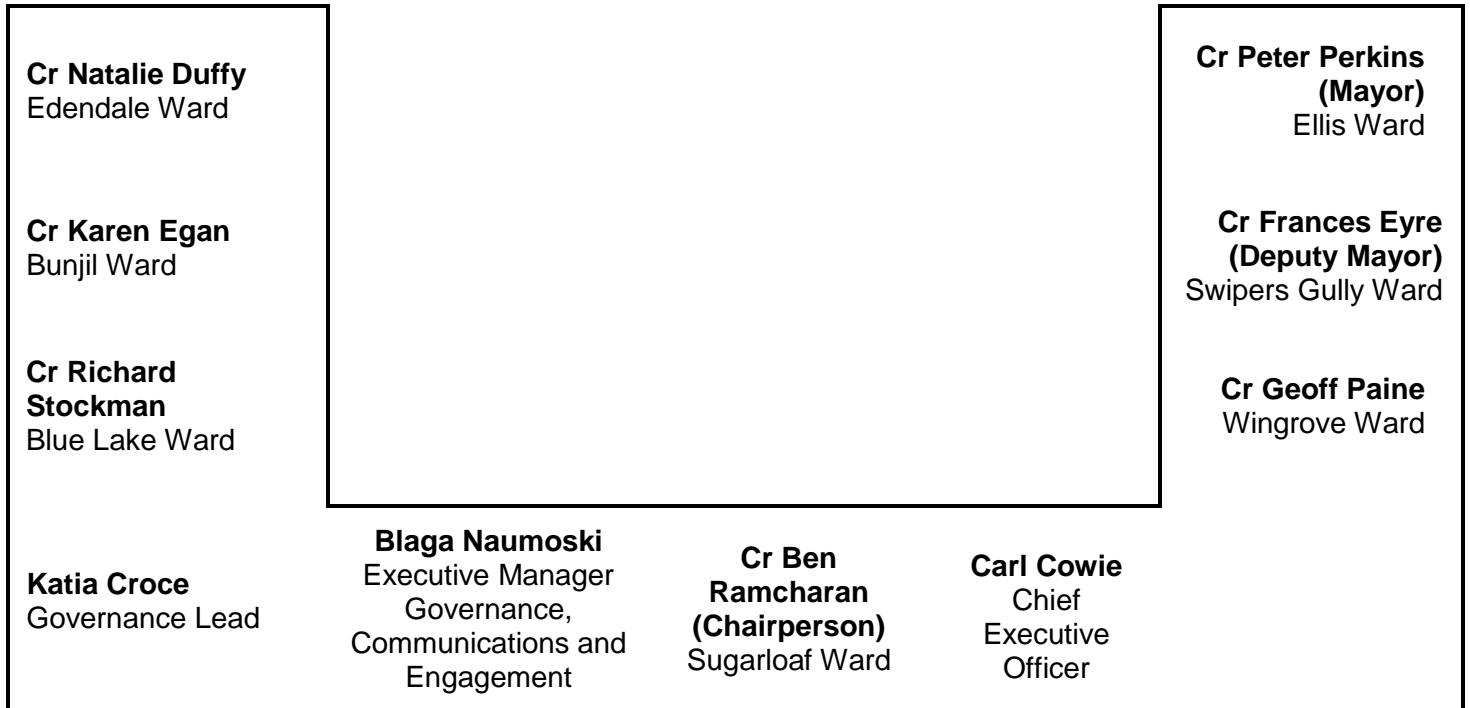
Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Friday 5 February 2021

Distribution: Public

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Future Nillumbik Committee seating plan



Nillumbik Shire Council

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Nillumbik Shire Council

**Agenda of the Future Nillumbik Committee Meeting to be held
Tuesday 9 February 2021 commencing at 7:00pm.**

1. Welcome by the Chair

Members of the public are advised the meeting will be recorded and an audio recording of the meeting will be made publicly available on Council's website.

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country to be read by the Chairperson

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

3. Apologies

Recommendation

That the apologies be noted.

4. Confirmation of minutes

Confirmation of minutes of the Future Nillumbik Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 2020.

Recommendation

That the minutes of the Future Nillumbik Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 2020 be confirmed.

5. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

Committee members should note that any conflicts of interest should also be disclosed immediately before the relevant item.

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6. Officers' reports

FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection

Portfolio: **Community Services**

Distribution: **Public**

Manager: **Corrienne Nichols, Executive Manager Communities**

Author: **Bianca Lord, Coordinator Events and Grants**

Katie Camilleri, Team Leader Youth Development

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a status update on Triennial Event Funding and to inform on the proposed re-allocation of surplus funds to implement the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Endorses the redirection of surplus Triennial Event Funding for the 2020/21 financial year to support the implementation of the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 as follows:
 - a. \$97,352 for Council initiatives as identified within the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan; and
 - b. \$90,000 for Community Recovery Funding to support community groups and businesses to support recovery and community resilience initiatives associated with the Pandemic.

Attachments

- [1.](#) Together in Nillumbik COVID-19 Community Survey Findings

Discussion

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a. Seek Council's support to re-allocate surplus operational funds (as highlighted below) to assist with implementing the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021
 - b. Present the Together in Nillumbik COVID-19 Community Survey Findings
 - c. Inform Council on the development of the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan
2. Council resolved on the 11 February 2020 that:

"All existing event organisers are awarded funding for 2020/2021 as previously provided in 2019/2020 for a three year term and CPI increase be added in year 2 (being 2021/2022) and year 3 (being 2022/2023)."

6. Officers' Report**FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection**

Following this resolution, Triennial Funded Events for 2020/21 have since been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, to ensure that awarded funding was allocated and aligned to the original purpose to support the delivery of events for the community, Officers consulted with all event committees and provided these groups with a choice of one of two options:

- **Option 1** – A portion of their allocated funding to vary and deliver their event in alternate way based on a revised event plan and budget for consideration and approval.
 - **Option 2** – Up to 15% of allocated funding as an incentive for those that were not able to deliver an event and did not expend funds in full to re-invest into areas such as marketing, training, equipment, small infrastructure projects for consideration and approval.
4. A total of \$291,173 was allocated for the nine events in 2020/21 to triannual funding recipients.
 5. Based on each event option chosen by each group, the maximum surplus funds remaining was \$207,352.
 6. COVID-19 has had a direct impact on people's lives within the municipality. In August 2020, Council in partnership healthAbility launched the Together in Nillumbik Survey to gain an understanding of how COVID-19 was impacting the Nillumbik community.
 7. A total of 380 responses were received and the data was analysed. A report (**Attachment 1**) outlines the key social and economic themes and recommendations.
 8. Four themes were identified for future prioritisation and a series of recommendations developed relating to the following key themes:
 - Inclusion.
 - Healthy Environments.
 - Healthy Behaviours.
 - Economic and Education.
 9. The results and recommendations will be shared with internal and external stakeholders, who will be encouraged to respond to identified impacts through their recovery efforts.
 10. The recommendations will be used to inform future planning including the next iteration of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, other key strategies and the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan which is currently being developed.

Related Council decisions

11. Future Nillumbik Committee Meeting on 11 February 2020 endorsed
"All existing event organisers are awarded funding for 2020/2021 as previously provided in 2019/2020 for a three year term and CPI increase be added in year 2 (being 2021/2022) and year 3 (being 2022/2023)."

6. Officers' Report**FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection**

Options

12. Local government has a legislated role in Municipal Emergency Management under the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and Nillumbik over the years has played an active role in establishing emergency mitigation, operations and relief and recovery arrangements within the disaster space, in particular fire and floods.
13. Nillumbik has a Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020 – 2023, a Relief and Recovery Plan 2019 – 2022 and a Pandemic Influenza Plan 2020 (sub-plan's of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan) which were activated as part of the Pandemic response.
14. Nillumbik Council, like many other Local Governments, have found ourselves navigating new territory in relation to responding and recovering from a pandemic based emergency of these proportions. This provides strong impetus for the development of a Pandemic Recovery Plan which is now considered best practice across the sector.
15. In the interim, Council Officers have put in place a number of organisational, operational and program interventions that have allowed for ongoing essential service provision and a trajectory to new initiatives which adapted to the changing environment.
16. Now, with further information including State Government response and recovery directions, broader research on the longer term impacts to wellbeing and economy and the results of the Together in Nillumbik Survey and other organisational data, Council is better placed to plan for a more integrated social and economic response to COVID-19 recovery to support our community over the coming years.
17. The Plan will require additional funding to deliver an adequate COVID-19 recovery. It is recommended that the unexpended Triennial Event Funding be used to implement the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021.
18. Under the delegation of the Executive Manager Communities, \$20,000 has been allocated to the development of the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan through the engagement of an external provider who will work closely with the Pandemic Recovery Taskforce to develop the Plan. The Taskforce has been recently established. The Taskforce is a cross-organisational internal working group with a key focus on driving an integrated and strategic approach to recovery.
19. It is recommended that the surplus from the Triennial Event Funds (minus the \$20,000) be allocated as follows:
 - a. \$97,352 for Council initiatives as identified within the Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan and;
 - b. \$90,000 for Community Recovery Funding to support community groups and businesses to support recovery and community resilience associated with Pandemic.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection**

20. A report presenting the Nillumbik Recovery Plan will be provided to the 27 April 2021 Council Meeting. It is envisaged that this will be followed by the opening of the Community Recovery Fund (item b. above) which will be delivered through a grants program to open May 2021 and that successful recipients will be allocated funds June 2021. Recipients will have 12 months to expend funds from the time the funding is allocated.
21. The Nillumbik Recovery Fund grant guidelines will encourage recovery initiatives that either benefit the broader Nillumbik community or initiatives that invest in the ongoing resilience & sustainability of individual community groups.
22. Two Recovery Projects Officers have been approved under the Working for Victoria program to assist with the implementation of initiatives across Council. An Arts Recovery Officer, Volunteer Recovery Officer along with a Youth Outreach and Engagement Officer have also been approved. These roles will be integral in supporting the recovery initiatives associated with the Plan.

Council plans and policies

23. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - a) Ensure that community services, programs and facilities are inclusive and respond to current and emerging needs.
 - b) Build community resilience to and awareness of vulnerability to natural hazards and disasters.
 - c) Develop policies, strategies, projects and partnerships that enhance the health and wellbeing of the community.
 - d) Meet Council's responsibilities for emergency management.
24. The report also meets Council's objectives under the Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2020-2023:
 - a) Implement measures to prevent or reduce the causes or effects of emergencies.
 - b) Assist the affected community to recover following an emergency.
25. The report also directly supports the achievement of the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021:
 - a) Continue building a resilient community.
 - b) Support equitable access to economic resources.

Sustainability implications

26. By enhancing Council's strategic approach to recovery through the development of the Plan, Council will assist to address the negative social and economic impacts as a result of COVID-19.
27. The Plan will take a partnership approach with community organisations, businesses and internal stakeholders to create a more sustainable approach to addressing the impacts.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection

- 28. The budget will allow for partner organisations to deliver targeted new initiatives and programs that meet communities recovery needs.
- 29. A proportion of the budget will also go towards building community resilience to ensure the community can bounce back should a pandemic or disaster occur again.

Community engagement

- 30. The Together in Nillumbik Survey (TINS) was broadly promoted across community using a mixture of Participate Nillumbik, Focus Groups and targeted conversations with community.
- 31. The survey was originally developed in partnership with healthAbility and the team consulted with the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and internal stakeholders from Community Partnerships, Community Support, Economic Development, Recreation & Leisure, and Communications on the design.
- 32. Over 380 responses were received. (**Attachment 1**) outlines the demographics of participants, and responses have been sorted across gender, age and location.
- 33. The feedback from the TINS has been shared across Council Officers, healthAbility, the Together in Nillumbik Local Services Network, the Banyule Nillumbik Youth Services Network and the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee. These groups are keen to play an active role in recovery.
- 34. The Economic Development Unit has been engaging and working with the Traders Associations and local businesses to identify local impacts and to implement a number of new initiatives that will support a sustainable economy and local employment.
- 35. All Council Officers have played an active with engaging community across the COVID-19 restrictions and continue to do so as these ease to ensure business continuity in a safe way. For many community groups this has been a challenging and impactful time.

Innovation and continuous improvement

- 36. COVID-19 has required Council to be agile and plan for an unanticipated pandemic and its impact on community.
- 37. Council to date has been proactive in its response, and has delivered the TINS, the Together in Nillumbik Local Services Network, Business and Community Quick Response Grants along with a suite of other programs and projects.
- 38. The Pandemic Recovery Plan, is the first for Nillumbik, and in its development, will ensure an integrated approach to economic and social recovery. It will break down the silos across Council, and show the important role community play in leading recovery and in turn, resilience for future pandemics.

Collaboration

- 39. The Pandemic Recovery Plan will be developed with a collaborative lens, taking into account that sustainable recovery should be a partnership across Council and Community.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.001/21 Nillumbik Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021 - Triennial Event Funding Redirection

- 40. By resourcing the Plan and offering funding opportunities, the community and local businesses can take ownership, and deliver community led initiatives that are appropriate to local communities.
- 41. The grant programs will also encourage partnerships to address service gaps. The funding will encourage service providers to collaborate with other stakeholders to better meet the needs of Nillumbik residents.

Budget implications

- 42. A surplus of up to \$207,352 from the Triennial Event Funding has been made available due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the delivery of community events.
- 43. These funds will be expended in the 2020/21 operational budget and expended by 30 June 2021.

Relevant law

- 44. Local Government is required under the "Health and Wellbeing Act 2008" to deliver a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan that responds to local needs based on evidence and consultation.
- 45. Local Government is also required to address prevention, response and recovery from emergencies under the "*Emergency Management Act 1986*".
- 46. The proposed approach, would meet both of the local government requirements under these Acts.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

- 47. Each Australian state and territory has emergency and disaster response legislation. Nationally, a whole of government arrangement was developed in the COVID-19 crisis and was guided by the "National emergency and disaster response arrangements in Australia Framework" which provided the overarching structure designed to manage crisis events of all kinds.
- 48. Across the State, the following plans and policies are guiding community wellbeing and emergency response and recovery:
 - a. The Department of Health and Human Service have provided the "*Roadmap to Reopening*" which has guided Nillumbik operations through this state of emergency. The restrictions have been used to guide organisational decision making and service delivery.
 - b. The "*Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019 – 2023*" states that all Victorians should be free of avoidable burden of disease and injury to enjoy the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing and participation. Improving mental wellbeing is one of the priorities along with reducing injury in the community.
- 49. The "Victorian State Emergency Management Plan" states the need to reduce the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies on communities, ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach and promoting community resilience in relation to emergencies.

Conflicts of interest

- 50. No conflicts of interest exist by Officers preparing this report.



Together in Nillumbik

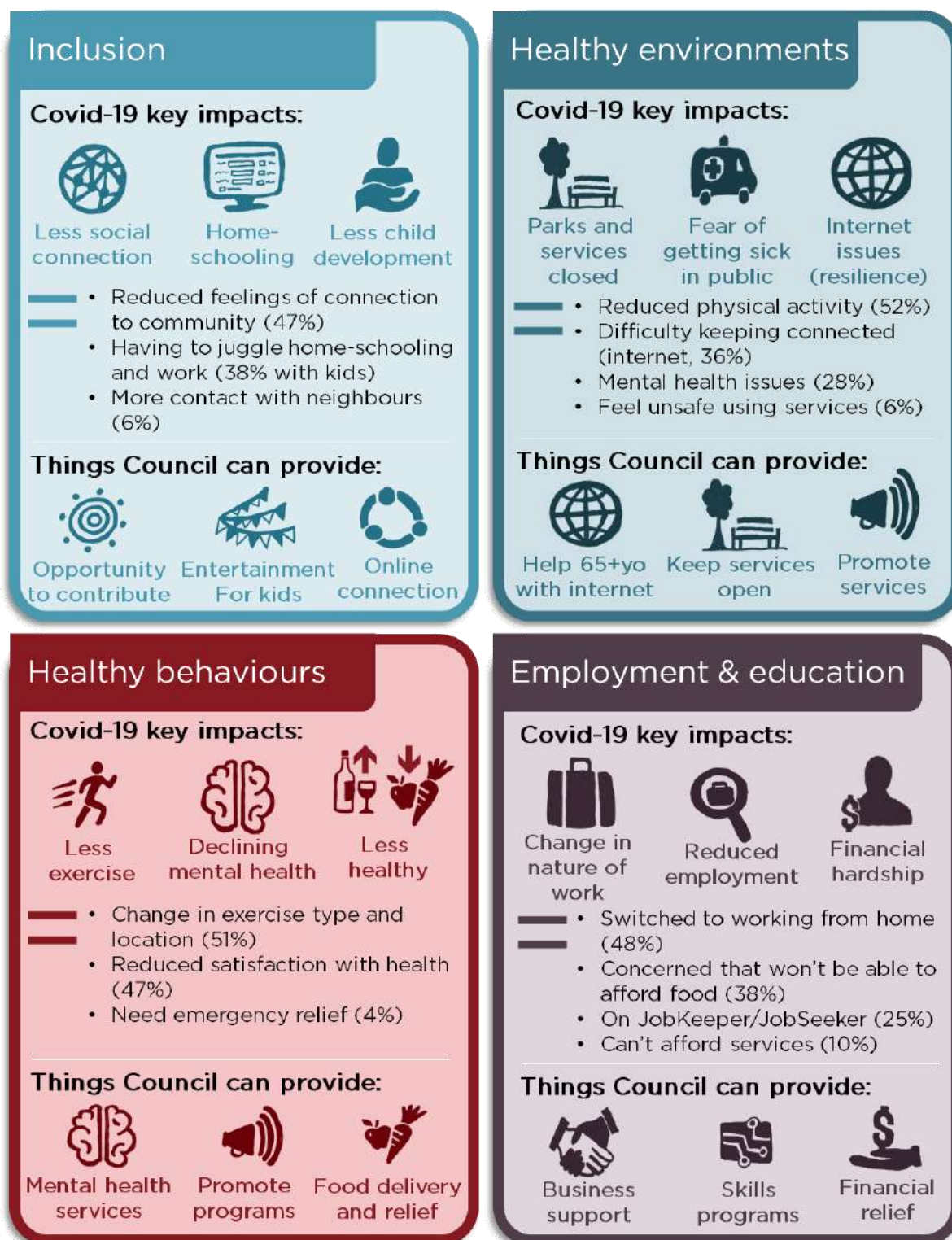
COVID-19 Community Survey findings



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Overview



Recommendation summary

The Together in Nillumbik Survey has been analysed and a suite of recommendations for consideration for Council and community have been developed.

These recommendations are based on feedback to responses provided by respondents. In future planning, these recommendations, should be coupled with evidence informed practice to ensure effectiveness and impact on community wellbeing.

Four key themes have been identified for Nillumbik to inform future pandemic planning and recovery. These have centred on the social and economic impacts during the pandemic period and include:

- Inclusion
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Behaviours
- Employment and Education.

As the restrictions ease, it is anticipated that some identified impacts may ease, such as home schooling, whilst others will have longer term effects such as job loss and mental health. Broader research has already predicted some of these longer term concerns will take over 18 months to return to a level of regular life.

The recommendations are as follows:

Inclusion

- Provide supports for community cohesion (including opportunities to contribute to the community), and ensure these are well promoted.
- Consider a recovery grants program to encourage community members to take action.
- Target the central region (Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen) with programs to enhance community connections.
- Develop programs and assistance to support females, especially if there is another lockdown requiring children to be home-schooled. This support can include mental health services as well as programs for children.

Healthy environments

- Promote parks and services that are available to return to healthy lifestyles and socialising.
- Undertake a focussed communication campaign in the central region (Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen) to inform residents about availability of local services and how to access them.
- Develop programs to support older people to use digital technology (demand 35% 65+ year olds).
- Ensure family violence support resources are accessible to the CALD community.
- Enhance the message that social distancing and wearing a mask reduces chances of getting sick, to help reduce anxiety regarding use of public

spaces and services. This could extend to promoting cleaning processes for public spaces and services.

Healthy behaviours

- Provide the community with information about exercise opportunities. This could be coupled with the promotion of local fitness businesses and therefore also contribute to economic recovery.
- Plan for provision of in-home high-intensity exercise suggestions and advice on 'safety when exercising at home' should there be lock-downs in the future. This may also be coupled with exploring the provision of in-home exercise equipment for vulnerable members of the community.
- Encourage and promote free or low-cost exercise opportunities for those facing financial difficulties.
- Promote mental health resources available to the community (including guides on navigating the GP referral system for those who haven't had to use them before).
- Help facilitate / advocate for more affordable mental health support, particularly for females, young people, those with children, CALD, and those living in the Central region.
- The food delivery service is well received, and the most vulnerable members of the community will need continued support with food provision. Whilst demand may not be large at the moment, many feel they are at risk of food insecurity, so future decreases in JobKeeper and jobseeker may result in an increased need for this service.
- Consider social marketing to promote the long term risks of excess alcohol consumption; perhaps by offering people alternative methods to manage boredom, stress and anxiety.

Employment and Learning

- Explore financial support packages for those hardest hit by employment loss or reduction. In particular hardship grants and essential item vouchers.
- Continue to provide food support, with more comprehensive promotion of this offering.
- Closely monitor welfare offering in line with employment levels to identify risk of increased hardship.
- Make sure financial relief packages for low income earners are appropriate for CALD households.
- When designing business support programs, consider that many of those who would utilise programs have children, and therefore they will need to be structured in an appropriate way.

Please note the above recommendations have also been included under each section in the research findings.

Background

Context

Nillumbik Shire Council, in partnership with healthAbility, conducted a 'Together in Nillumbik' survey to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on community wellbeing.

The results of this survey will create an evidence base to inform the work of the COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce. The emerging trends will be integral in informing the priorities for recovery activities across the Shire.

The survey was conducted online through the Participate Nillumbik portal, and was promoted through a number of channels including social media, E-News, Nillumbik News and network meetings. It was open from 21 August through to 1 October 2020 and achieved 380 responses. Council also underwent a number of targeted focus groups with the community including the Community Network, Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and the Chinese Seniors. These are not included in this analysis.

During this period Melbourne was under stage 4 restrictions with the following directives:

- Only leave home for 4 reasons (work, essential health, care or safety).
- If you can work from home you must work from home.
- Must wear a face mask when outside of the home.
- No visitors to the home.
- No social gatherings or public gatherings.
- Curfew 9am-5pm.
- Schools and childcare closed except for families of permitted workers.
- Only 1 person per household per day can go shopping.
- Outdoor recreation must be within 5km of home and up to 2 hours.
- All sport and recreation facilities closed.
- No travel from metropolitan Melbourne to regional Victoria (or anywhere else in the Country) without permission.

How to read this document

Summary tables

Each section shows a summary table presenting the key findings in the following format:

% or mean

Measure / indicator
Questionnaire reference number
Question type
Notable statistically significant variations in results

Question type explanations:

Mean	Mean score out of 5 – applied for rating questions.
Unprompted	This means that respondents were asked to write in an answer, which was later grouped into themes for ease of analysis. These figures do not show incidence , but rather the % of people who thought to mention it.
Multiple response	Respondents were shown a list of answer options and they could choose more than one. Can represent incidence.
Single response	Respondents were shown a list of answer options and they were only able to provide a single answer. Can represent incidence.
Other specify	This was a code generated from the comments written in the “other (specify)” box. It represents the % of people who thought to add their own answer to the list. It doesn't represent the percentage of people who would have selected it if it were included in the original list (likely significantly higher).
NET	This is a generated variable to show the percentage of respondents who provided an answer that aligns with multiple answer or question variables.

Statistical significance was analysed for the following categories:

- Region (See appendix 1).
- Gender.
- Age.
- CALD (born overseas, speak a language other than English or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander).
- Vulnerable communities (those with a disability or health care card).
- Households with or without children.

Demographic coverage

2 respondents were removed from the analysis file as they were under 14 and had no guardian consent recorded.

When compared to 2016 Census population distribution, males and young people were under-represented in the data file. Weighting of age and gender to bring it in line with the Census proportions didn't result in any notable changes in findings, therefore the data wasn't weighted for this analysis.

		Count	%	2016 Census %
Gender	Male	122	33%	49%
	Female	236	65%	51%
	Non-binary	1	0%	-
	Prefer not to say / identify	5	1%	-
Age	15-34	34	9%	29%
	35-44	103	28%	16%
	45-54	83	23%	20%
	55-64	71	20%	18%
	65+	72	20%	16%
Region (see appendix 1)	South	130	40%	42%
	West	66	20%	16%
	Central	56	17%	22%
	East	74	23%	20%
Country of birth	Australia	295	80%	77%
	Outside Australia	72	20%	23%
LOE	No	311	89%	90%
	Yes	39	11%	10%
Disability, health condition or injury	No	272	75%	-
	Yes	87	24%	-
	Prefer not to say / not sure	6	2%	-
Health care card or pensioner concession	No	276	76%	-
	Yes	83	23%	-
	Prefer not to say / not sure	5	2%	-
Household	Single person household	37	10%	14%
	Couple living alone	83	22%	25%
	Couple with child / children	214	57%	47%
	One parent family with child / children, co-parenting with other parent living elsewhere	24	6%	9%
	Adults sharing house / apartment / flat	15	4%	1%
	Other	3	1%	4%

Research findings

Comparison to VicHealth data

Some of the questions in this survey were the same as, or suitably similar, to the VicHealth Covid-19 survey. In addition, there were a few questions that were modelled on the VicHealth survey, but were modified to consider local interests and as such cannot be compared (e.g. Q5 used a different rating scale).

It should be noted that the VicHealth survey was undertaken in May-June 2020, a period when the restrictions had been relaxed (allowing for gatherings of 20 people), whereas the Nillumbik survey was undertaken in October 2020 (a period of stage 4 lockdowns where people weren't allowed to socialise with people outside their household and could only travel within 5km of their home). The differences in restriction levels during the two surveys would have contributed to variations in results. Therefore, these comparisons can't illustrate 'Nillumbik compared to state-wide' but instead show '**Stage 4 lockdown compared to minimal restrictions**'.

The data is telling us that tighter restrictions are likely resulting in:

- More people working from home with greater flexibility in hours.
- More people finding it difficult to stay connected.
- Increased use of video conferencing and walking with others to stay connected.
- More sharing with neighbours.
- Less physical activity.
- A reduction in alcohol consumption at short-term harm levels. This is supported by the ASDF Research COVID-19 survey which shows that drinking more was more common at the start of the pandemic, and has been declining since.

Measure	Nillumbik		VicHealth		Notes
	Q#	Result	Q#	Result	
Worked mainly from another location with standard hours	Q25	15%	G7	32%	Re-run Nillumbik figure filtered by just those who had a job pre-COVID for comparability to how VicHealth was analysed. This filter has not been applied to the full analysis data.
Worked mainly from home with standard hours	Q25	21%	G7	29%	
Worked mainly from home with flexible start and finish times	Q25	32%	G7	20%	
Short Term Harm alcohol consumption	Q13 & 15	5%	E1	11%	More than 4 standard drinks a session at least weekly.
Relationships in household more strained	Q22	26%	C5w	21%	
Hard to stay connected	Q17	60%	C4w	35%	

Measure	Nillumbik		VicHealth		Notes
	Q#	Result	Q#	Result	
Videoconferencing	Q18	84%	C3	41%	
Walking with others	Q18	41%	C3	19%	
Sharing items with neighbours	Q18	26%	C3	11%	
Sharing chores with neighbours	Q18	11%	C3	12%	
Doing less physical activity	Q9	51%	B1	37%	
Women spending most time caring for school age children	Q31	70%	G11	72%	
Asked for financial help from friends or family	Q37	6%	G12	12%	
Couldn't pay utility bills on time	Q37	4%	G12	11%	
Couldn't pay the rent or mortgage on time	Q37	7%	G12	7%	

Segment insights

Regional variations

In most cases the results were similar across the four geographic regions. Some of the variations that have been highlighted by statistical analysis are as follows:

- Those in the central suburbs are finding the impacts of COVID-19 more challenging, driven by a reducing sense of community.
- Those in the East region are faring better, especially in terms of feeling part of the community. This may be due to those in the East having to switch to exercising in locations more local to their home (due to the 5km lockdown) and therefore interacting more with their neighbours.

Age variations

In most cases the results were similar across all ages, however there were a number of issues that results suggest vary between ages.

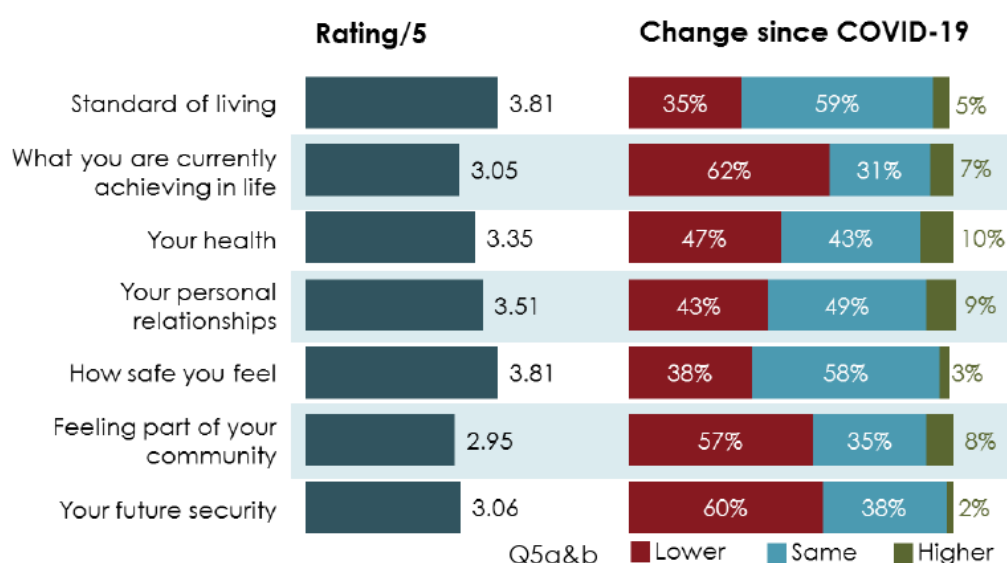
- Concern for getting sick from COVID-19 **increases with age**.
- The desire for counselling and mental health support is highest amongst **young people**, and then decreases with age. This could be because younger people show lower levels of feeling secure about their future and connection to the community, higher instances of experiencing a decreased income during COVID, and higher levels of nervousness, anxiety and difficulty getting going on things.
- Services for **young people** need to be affordable (many think they are too expensive). Service cost is generally not an issue for older adults.
- **Older adults** (65+ year olds in particular) are generally more satisfied with where they are in life, perhaps due to a stronger sense of ties to their community, lower rates of anxiety and nervousness, no changes to their quality of relationships, and a lack of issues with motivation. They also more commonly have had no changes in their satisfaction with their health since COVID-19 (perhaps due to fewer of their exercise activities being interrupted) and are more confident about their future security.
- **35-54 year olds** are particularly struggling with managing children's education from home, their health, quality of household relationships, connecting with friends and family outside their household, and not feeling like they are achieving something in life. They are also drinking more alcohol and show higher instances of being on JobKeeper.
- Families with **younger parents** have less equitable sharing of child care responsibilities. This improves a little amongst families with older parents.

Wellbeing overview

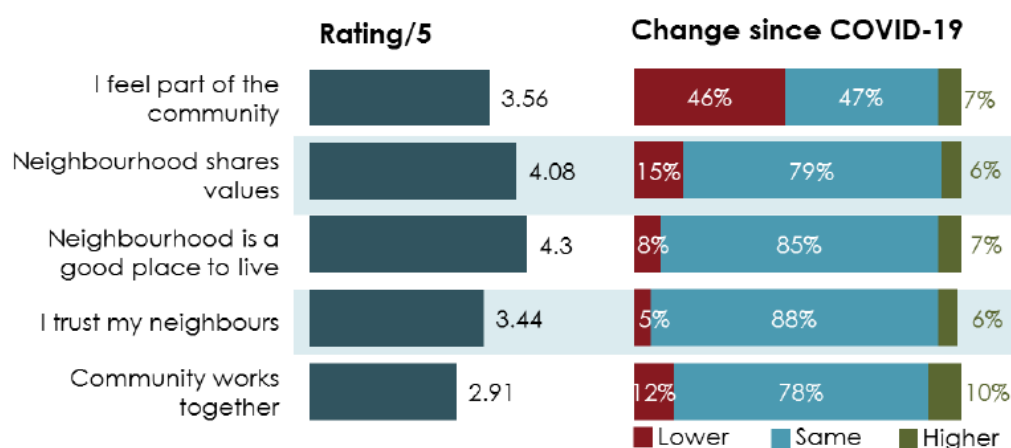
The components of wellbeing experiencing the greatest negative impact from COVID-19 are:

- What you are currently achieving in life.
- Feeling part of your community.
- Your future security.

For some, the restrictions have provided an opportunity to improve their health and personal relationships, although this experience is quite rare.



The rating scale presented for the following question (Q16) (On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not at all and 5 being extremely how satisfied are you with...?) doesn't match the response codes, therefore there is no meaningful findings to be drawn from this analysis beyond that which was observed above – that being a decline in connection to the community.



When asked to write in the positive and negative impacts of the pandemic, most were related to social connections.

Top 4 Positive	Top 4 negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More time with the kids / family (25%). 2. More time for self / hobbies / chores / study (12%). 3. More exercise / better fitness (8%). 4. Slower pace (8%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can't visit friends or family (26%). 2. Financial stress due to change in employment (15%). 3. Lack of sports / social activities (13%). 4. Loneliness / social isolation (13%).

Inclusion

Inclusion is closely linked to the Council Plan 'Engaged, Connected Communities' theme.

The main impacts of COVID-19 on inclusion are:

- **Lack of social connection** due to stage 4 restrictions preventing people from visiting and socialising with friends and family. For most, the sense of community connection has reduced, however some are becoming more connected to their immediate community than before, through talking to neighbours. There are also concerns that social isolation may have a negative impact on child development.
- **The need to home school children is placing pressure on parents**, with this disproportionately effecting mothers, who are more often carrying the majority of the work with home-schooling.
- There are some that are enjoying spending **more time with their family**.
- **Those with children** are struggling more during COVID in terms of financial stability and mental health.

When asked what supports Council could provide, the key recommendations relating to inclusion were:

33% 31% 40% 19% 7%

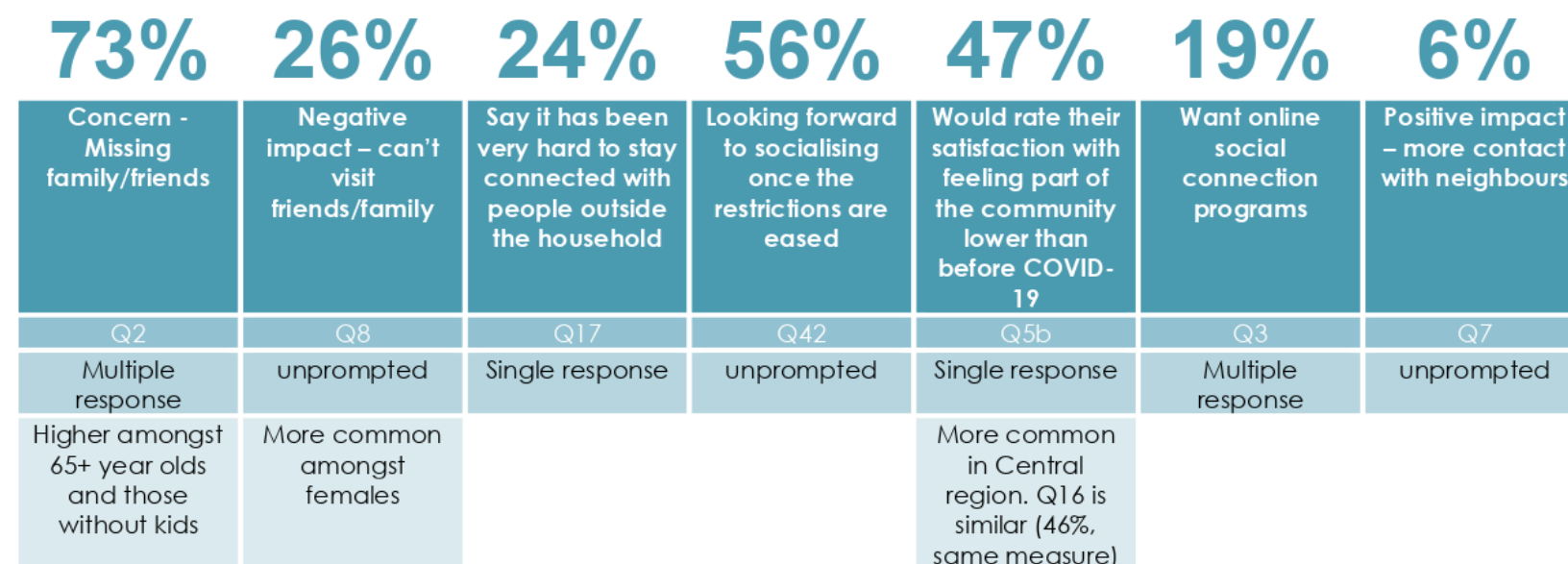
Support local communities to assist each other	Provide opportunities to contribute to the community	Entertainment programs for children and young people (% of those with kids)	Online social connection programs	Thought to mention community connections as a way Council can help manage impacts
Q3	Q3	Q3	Q3	Q40
Multiple response	Multiple response	Multiple response	Multiple response	unprompted

Recommendations for recovery planning:

- Provide supports for community cohesion (including opportunities to contribute to the community), and ensure these are well promoted.
- Consider a recovery grants program to encourage community members to take action.
- Target the central region (Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen) with programs to enhance community connections.
- Develop programs and assistance to support females, especially if there is another lockdown requiring children to be home-schooled. This support can include mental health services as well as programs for children.

Community connections

A reduction in opportunities to socialise is the most significant challenge being faced by the community. This is having a negative impact on the sense of community.



People are connecting via:

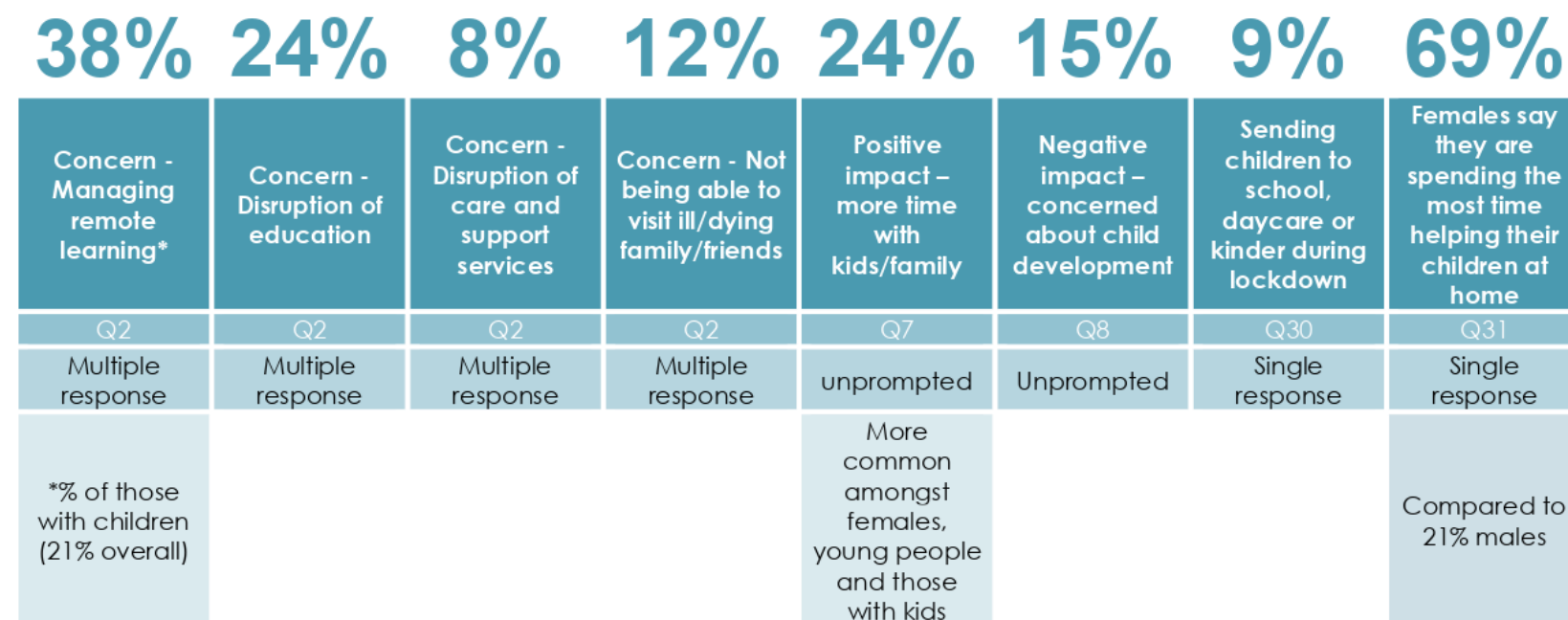
- Telephone (88%).
- Video calls (84%) (most common amongst 35-44 year olds).
- Walking with others whilst social distancing (41%).
- Sharing items with neighbours (26%).
- Sharing chores with neighbours (11%).

Things for Council to consider:

- The Central region is experiencing greater loss of sense of community than other areas of the municipality.
- Whilst the majority are missing their friends, and being unable to catch up with friends and family is the main negative impact being experienced, there is limited interest in online social connection programs.

Carer responsibilities

In most family households, females are undertaking the majority of the work helping children at home. This can provide a strain on some, and raise concerns about child development, however around a quarter like having more time with their family and kids.



The main things that would help support parents in caring for their children are:

- Tutoring (27%).
- Mental health support and outreach (18%).
- Virtual playgroups and story time (16%) (30% amongst people with kids aged 0-4).
- Careers support (4%) (27% amongst parents of 18+ year olds).

Carers say that main COVID-19 impacts on the person they care for are isolation and anxiety.

Of those who said they were primary carers (8%), the main supports that would assist them were:

- Social support for the person they care for (33%).
- Financial (13%).

Gender lens

In most cases the results were similar for men and women, however there were a number of issues that results suggest vary between males and females.

Males

- This sample has a higher proportion of retired people (23%) which may be impacting on their responses.
- Less commonly say they could use mental health support. This may be due to them not feeling as anxious or nervous, nor down and depressed as often.
- Are more commonly heavier drinkers.
- Are less commonly sharing the responsibility for looking after children at home.

Females

- More commonly taking on the majority of the work managing children in the household. Around half of the time their partner recognises this, however the data suggests there are likely many instances where the male parent thinks they are sharing the load, but the female parent feels they are doing most of it themselves. As such, females are more commonly facing challenges juggling looking after children (including home schooling).
- Females more commonly want entertainment options for children and programs to support children in crisis. There were similar proportions of males and females from households with children (51% males, 60% females) so it is unlikely that sample composition is having an effect on this.
- Some of the mental health challenges more commonly being experienced by females are being nervous and anxious, and difficulty getting going on things.

Target segments

In most cases the results were similar for CALD and people with a disability/health care card, however there were a number of issues that results suggest vary between these groups.

CALD is defined as those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, those born overseas, and/or those who speak a language other than English at home.

CALD

- Duality of experiences with neighbours, with some finding out their neighbours are more trustworthy, whilst a similar proportion find their neighbours less trustworthy.

Disability / health care card

- Whilst this segment is experiencing a range of challenges, COVID has provided the opportunity for some to feel more part of their community.

Households with children

- Business support needs to take into account that most of those who want this support have kids.
- Those with kids are less satisfied with life during COVID-19.
- A higher proportion of those with kids have increased alcohol consumption.
- Those with children more often want financial and community support.
- Those without children are less commonly experiencing changes impacting on their finances, so they are coping better with the situation, however they are finding missing their friends a big concern.

Healthy environments

Healthy environments is closely linked to the Council Plan 'Engaged, Connected Communities' theme.

The main impacts of COVID-19 on healthy environments are:

- **Social and exercise infrastructure being closed.** This has flow-on impacts on physical and mental health as well as social cohesion.
- **Fear of getting sick from Covid-19 when in public spaces.** This results in general increases in anxiety and people feeling unsafe when accessing services.
- **Family violence concerns,** driven by an increase in difficult relationships in households.
- **Community resilience,** in particular access and ability with regards to use of the internet to cover work, education and social interaction needs at times of lock-down.

When asked what supports Council could provide, the key recommendations relating to healthy environments were:

37%

17%

23%

65+ year olds want programs to help older people use digital technology	Thought to mention that they want parks and services to open to help them manage COVID-19 impacts	Said services being closed was a major barrier
Q3	Q40	Q4
Multiple response	unprompted	Multiple response

Recommendations for recovery planning:

- Promote parks and services that are available to return to healthy lifestyles and socialising.
- Undertake a focussed communication campaign in the central region (Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen) to inform residents about availability of local services and how to access them.
- Develop programs to support older people to use digital technology (demand 35% 65+ year olds).
- Ensure family violence support resources are accessible to the CALD community.
- Enhance the message that social distancing and wearing a mask reduces chances of getting sick, to help reduce anxiety regarding use of public spaces and services. This could extend to promoting cleaning processes for public spaces and services.

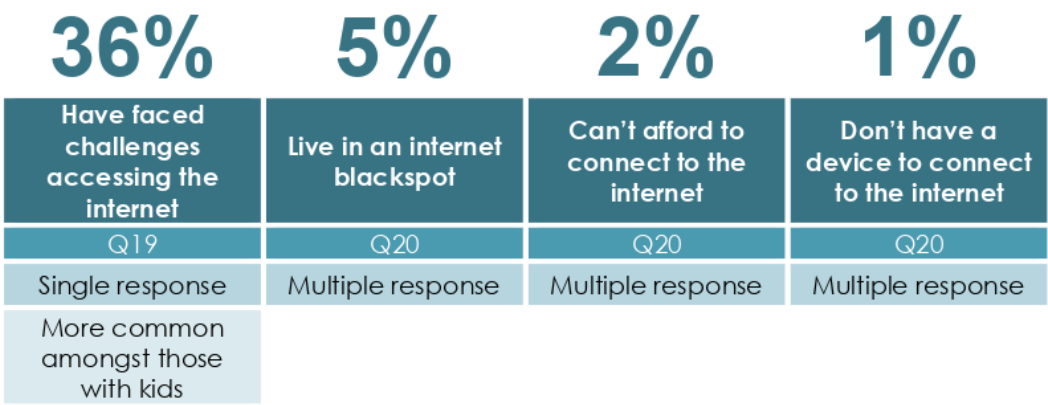
Safety

Around a third of the community is feeling less safe during COVID times, partially due to the fear of getting sick from COVID-19.

43%	2%	6%	38%	60%	26%
Concern - Fear of contracting COVID-19	Concern - Increase in family violence	Barrier - Don't feel safe accessing services	Would rate their satisfaction with how safe they feel lower than before COVID-19	Would rate their satisfaction with their future security lower than before COVID-19	Are having more difficult / strained relationships with people in their household
Q2	Q2	Q4	Q5b	Q5b	Q22
Multiple response	Multiple response	Multiple response	Single response	Single response	Single response
				More common amongst those with kids	More common amongst households with kids

Resilience (Internet)

Just over a third of the community encounters internet challenges, primarily through poor/interrupted connections (85% of those encountering internet challenges). Analysis by region suggests there are internet blackspots in every area of the municipality.



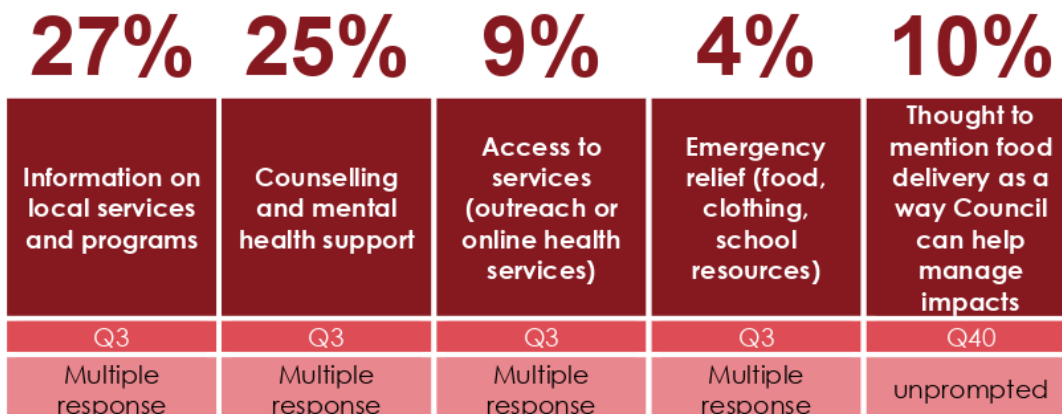
Health behaviours

Health behaviours are closely linked to the Council Plan 'Active and Creative People' theme.

The main impacts of COVID-19 on health behaviours are:

- **Reduced ability to undertake physical exercise** – due to exercise venues being closed and 5km travel limits, during the lockdown many switched to walking instead of more high-intensity exercise activities. This can impact on obesity rates and a range of health risks which rely on high intensity exercise to mitigate (such as cardiovascular health). Physical exercise is also recognised as contributing to improved mental wellbeing¹.
- **Declining mental health** – This stems primarily from isolation and anxiety (linked to fear of getting ill and financial challenges).
- **Ability to afford food** – Many community members are concerned about this happening in the future, however relatively few stated a need for emergency food relief at the time of the survey.
- **Increased alcohol consumption** – Almost half have increased their alcohol consumption. This can have a wide range of both short-term and long-term impacts on health, including reduced mental health, personal injury, and increase in risk of cancer, cardiovascular and brain related diseases².

When asked what supports Council could provide, the key recommendations relating to health behaviours were:



The greatest barrier to accessing services is not knowing what is available.

¹

https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~/_media/programsandprojects/physicalactivity/attachments/physical_act_fact.ashx

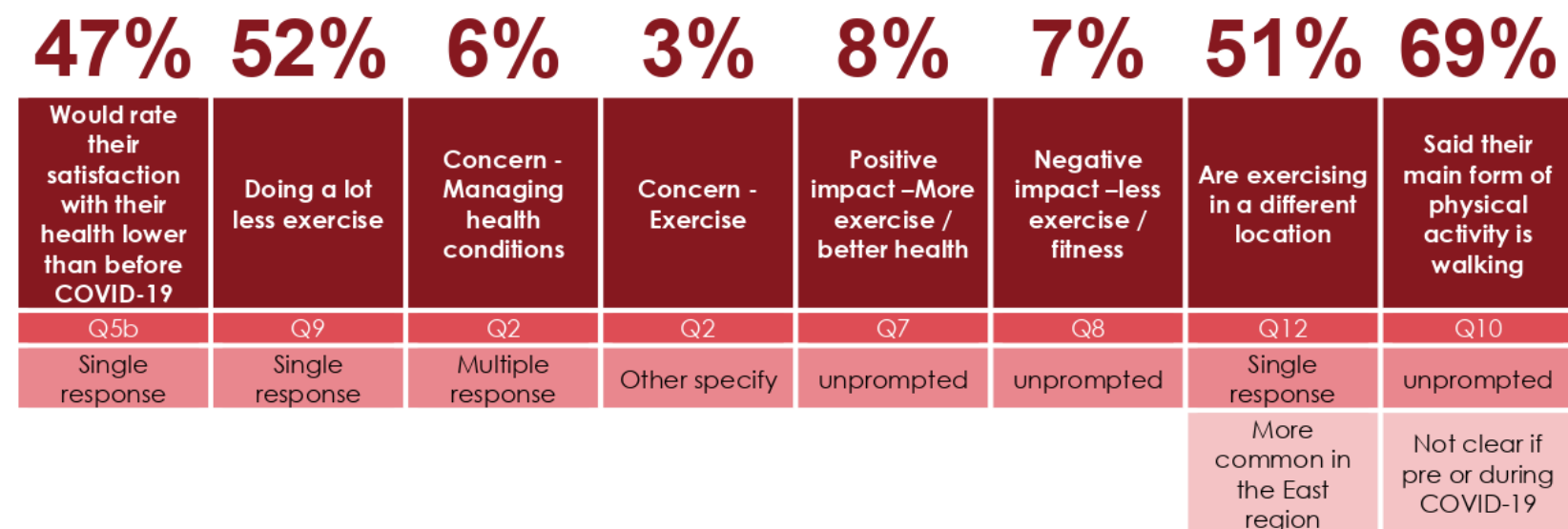
² <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/alcohol/about-alcohol/what-are-the-effects-of-alcohol>

Recommendations for recovery planning:

- Provide the community with information about exercise opportunities. This could be coupled with the promotion of local fitness businesses and therefore also contribute to economic recovery.
- Plan for provision of in-home high-intensity exercise suggestions and advice on 'safety when exercising at home' should there be lock-downs in the future. This may also be coupled with exploring the provision of in-home exercise equipment for vulnerable members of the community.
- Encourage and promote free or low-cost exercise opportunities for those facing financial difficulties.
- Promote mental health resources available to the community (including guides on navigating the GP referral system for those who haven't had to use them before).
- Help facilitate / advocate for more affordable mental health support, particularly for females, young people, those with children, CALD, and those living in the Central region.
- The food delivery service is well received, and the most vulnerable members of the community will need continued support with food provision. Whilst demand may not be large at the moment, many feel they are at risk of food insecurity, so future decreases in JobKeeper and jobseeker may result in an increased need for this service.
- Consider social marketing to promote the long term risks of excess alcohol consumption; perhaps by offering people alternative methods to manage boredom, stress and anxiety.

Physical health

The stage 4 restrictions have resulted in around half the population decreasing their exercise and having lower levels of satisfaction with their health. For many their exercise habits have changed away from more cardio-vascular opportunities to walking.



The main places where people would normally exercise, but aren't during COVID-19 5km restrictions were:

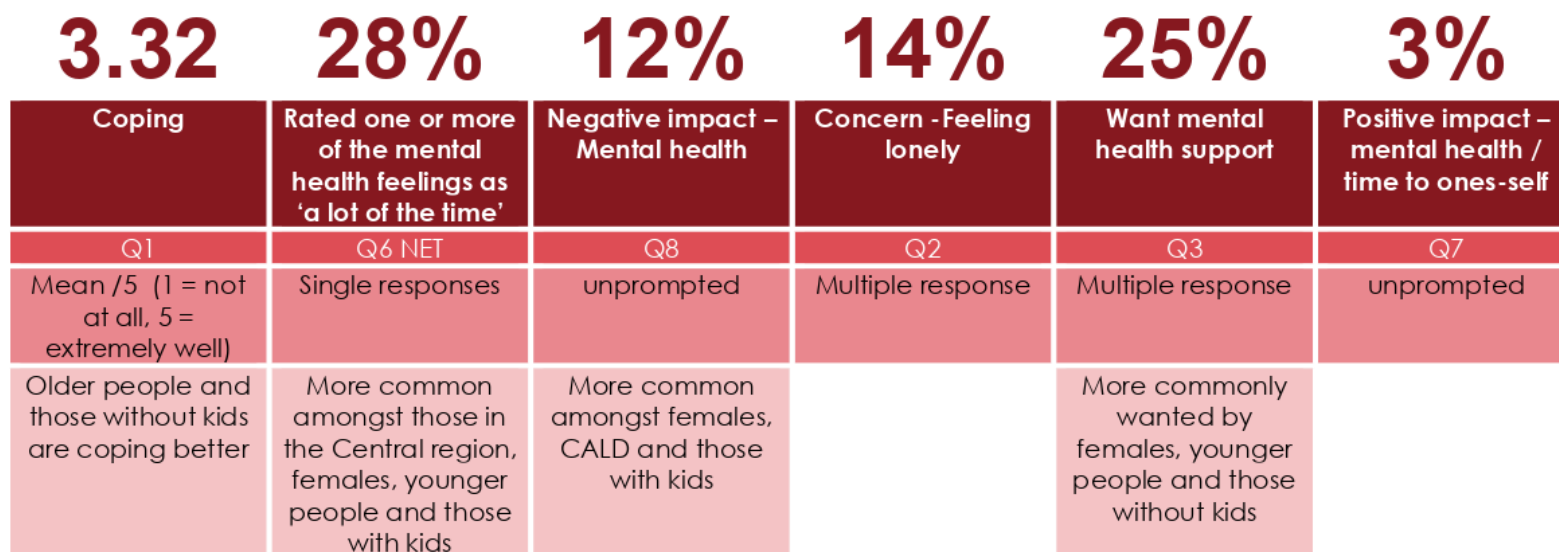
- Gym (26%)
- Different outdoor locations (21%)
- Courts and fields (organised sport) (10%)
- Pool (8%)
- Yoga / Pilates (8%)

Those in the East were more often having to make changes to their exercise location, whereas in the Central region fewer were exercising in different locations.

	South region	West region	Central region	East region
The most popular exercise locations with a 5km radius of their home are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local roads (26%) • Diamond Creek (21%) • Aqueduct (20%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local roads (32%) • Plenty River Gorge (25%) • Diamond Creek (17%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Creek (57%) • Local road (18%) • Aqueduct (20%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local roads (29%) • Bushland, river, parks and trails (16%) • Hurstbridge (15%)
Different to where usually exercise	47%	52%	36%	63%

Mental health

Over a quarter of the community are experiencing high amounts of psychological distress and are wanting support. Key segments requiring assistance are residents in the Central region, females, young people and those with kids.



The most common mental health issue being experienced a lot of the time is feeling nervous and anxious (17%).

Food

There is widespread concern about having enough money to buy food, however few of these were at the point where they required emergency relief at the time of surveying.

38%

Concern – Not being able to buy food

Q2

Multiple response

23%

Worried about having enough money to buy food

Q37

Multiple response

4%

Want emergency relief (including food)

Q3

Multiple response

Higher amongst those with children and those with a disability or health care card

Alcohol

Almost half the population have increased their alcohol consumption during COVID-19.

27%

Drinking more than 3 days a week in the last month

Q13

Multiple response

27%

Are drinking 3 or more standard drinks a day that they consume alcohol

Q15

Multiple response

More common amongst males

43%

Are drinking more than before COVID-19

Q14

Multiple response

More common amongst those with kids

Employment and learning

Employment and learning is closely linked to the Council Plan 'A Prosperous Economy' theme.

The main impacts of COVID-19 on employment and learning are:

- **Change in the nature of work.** In particular, almost half of the workforce has switched to working from home. This has flow-on impacts for household relationships (both positive and negative) as well as positively impact on financial position (saving money from commuting). Although some prefer working from home, many miss the social interaction and escape of working on-location.
- **Loss of employment or reduced employment.** Whilst many are on JobKeeper and/or JobSeeker, there is some anxiety about the future, particularly with planned reduction in benefits which don't align to the reality of work opportunities and could leave people struggling financially.
- **Financial vulnerability.** Loss of work, or a reduction in workload is having a severe negative impact on some members of the community. There is also a fear that this will worsen as Covid-19 continues. This leads to a reduction in the standard of living and not being able to afford much needed mental health and leisure services.

When asked what supports Council could provide, the key recommendations relating to employment and learning were:

16% 15% 12% 14% 10%

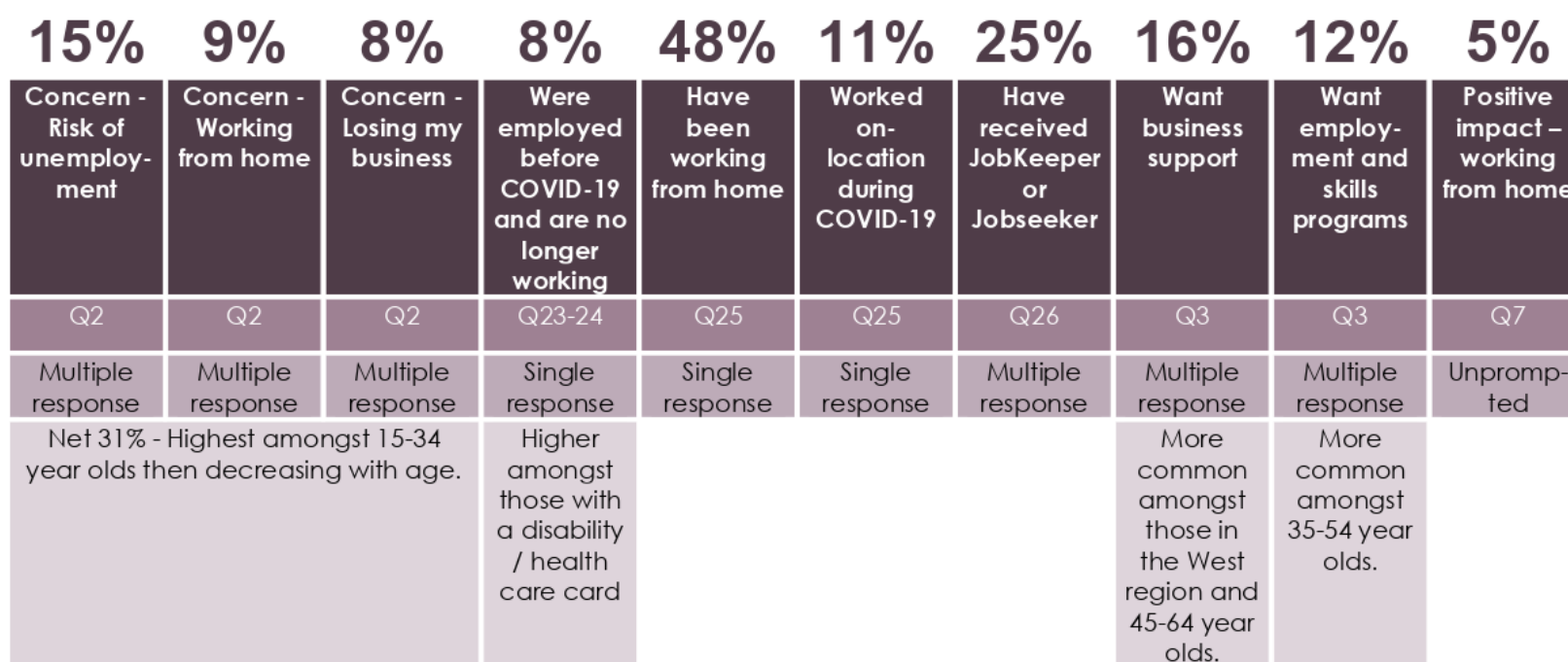
Want support for businesses	Want financial relief packages for low income earners	Want employment and vocational skills programs	Thought to mention rate relief as something that would help people manage the impacts of COVID-19	Said services being too expensive was a barrier to use
Q3	Q3	Q3	Q40	Q4
Multiple response	Multiple response	Multiple response	unprompted	Multiple response

Recommendations for recovery planning:

- Explore financial support packages for those hardest hit by employment loss or reduction. In particular hardship grants and essential item vouchers.
- Continue to provide food support, with more comprehensive promotion of this offering.
- Closely monitor welfare offering in line with employment levels to identify risk of increased hardship.
- Make sure financial relief packages for low income earners are appropriate for CALD households.
- When designing business support programs, consider that many of those who would utilise programs have children, and therefore they will need to be structured in an appropriate way.

Employment

Almost a third (31%) selected an employment related item as one of their top 3 concerns. Most of the changes to work have been location-based, with almost half switching to working from home (which for some is a positive thing). Around a quarter of the community are on JobKeeper or jobseeker.



Financial vulnerability

Whilst a few said their financial situation had improved since COVID-19 (through saving money), over two in five have experienced a decrease in income. This has a flow-on effect on standard of living, financial hardship and ability to afford services. A notable segment of the community would benefit from financial support.

20%	43%	35%	23%	4%	15%	10%	15%	30%
Concern - Financial instability	Said their income is less during COVID-19 than before COVID-19	Say their standard of living has decreased	Specified encountering financial hardship during COVID-19	Positive impact – saving money	Negative impact – financial stress	Barrier – Services too expensive	Want financial relief packages for low income earners	Specified a financial support that would help them
Q2	Q39	Q5b	Q37	Q7	Q8	Q4	Q3	Q38
Multiple response	Single response	Single response	Multiple response	Unprompted		Multiple response	Multiple response	Multiple response
More common amongst CALD	CALD more commonly say a lot less	More common amongst CALD	More common amongst those with a disability / healthcare card and those with children		More common amongst younger people and those with kids	Higher amongst 15-34 year olds and those with a disability or health care card	More commonly wanted by CALD and those with a disability/ healthcare card	

The main financial hardships were (selected from list in Q37):

- Couldn't pay utilities (9%).
- Worried about having enough money for food (9%).
- Asked for financial help from friends or family (9%).
- Withdrew from superannuation (7%).
- Unable to pay rent or mortgage on time (7%).

The most popular financial support potential offerings were (selected from list in Q38):

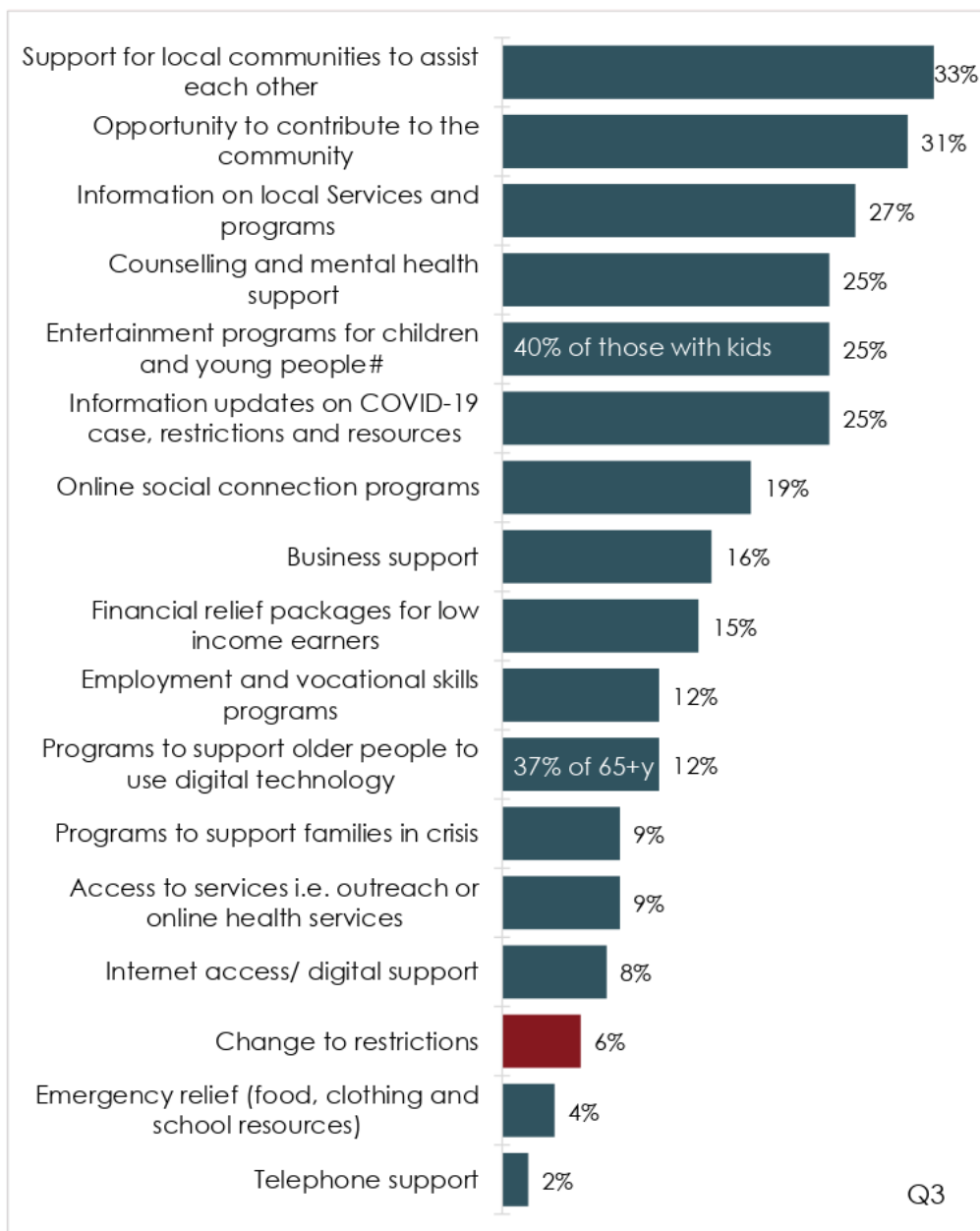
- One-off financial hardship grants (16%).
- Essential item vouchers (11%).
- Support to connect to State and Federal Government financial relief (9%).
- Delivery of food packages (5%).

What Council can do

In the charts below, the red bars show codes generated in the analysis process, based on comments written in text boxes. They do not represent incidence (percentages may have been higher if all respondents had seen the option).

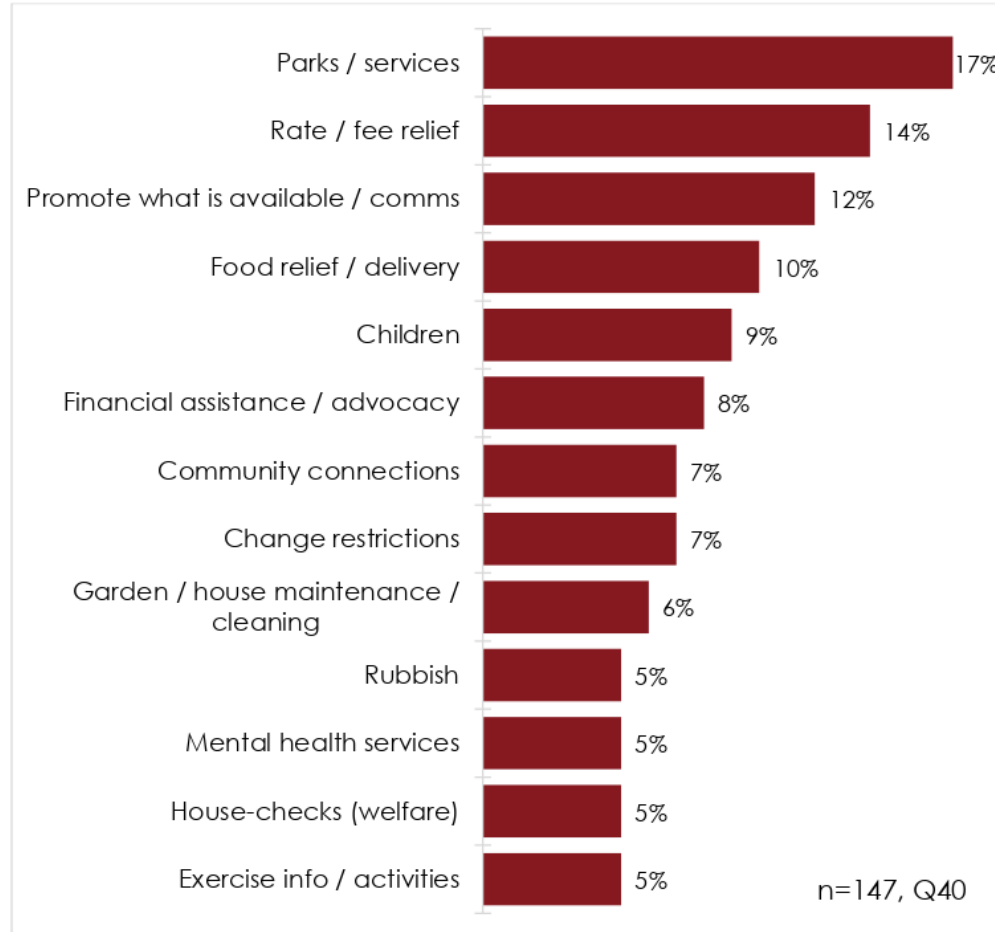
To help support wellbeing

The community wants Council to provide supports for community cohesion, with opportunities to contribute and information on what is available.



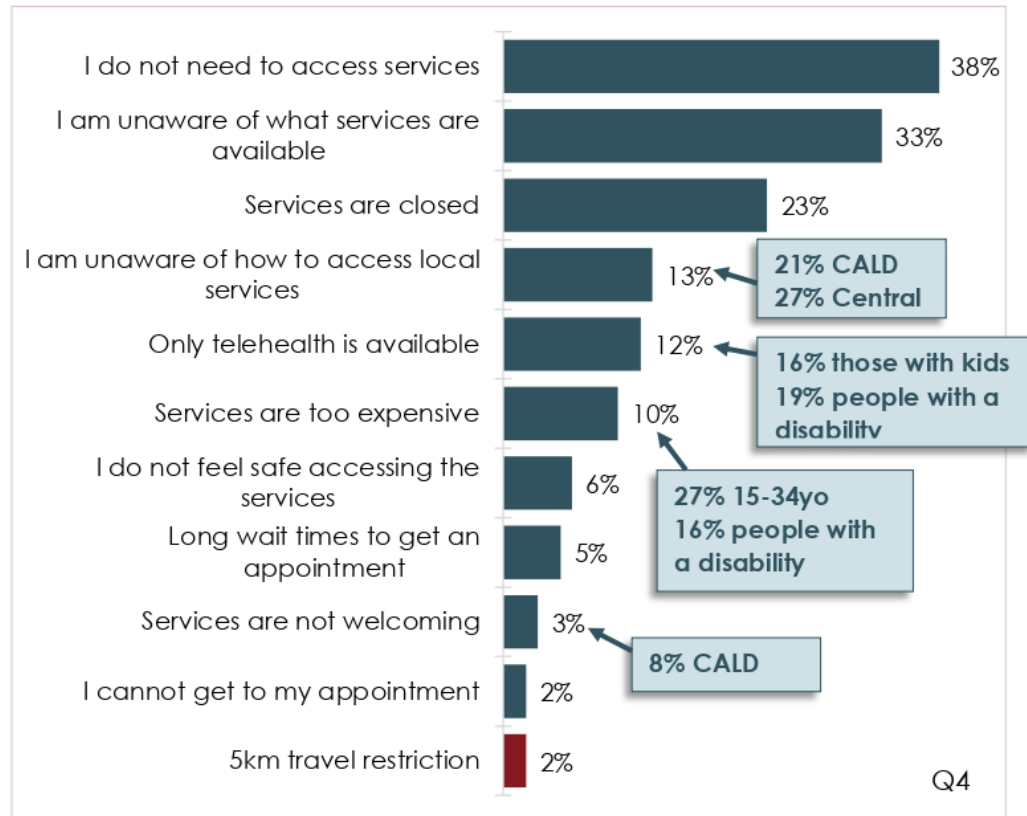
To help people manage the impacts of COVID-19

In addition to fee and rate relief for those who are struggling financially, the community wants Council to open parks and services and promote what is available. The most common specific service mentioned was food delivery (including praising the current service).



To address barriers to accessing services

Raising awareness of current services is key to helping the community access those services. In particular, letting people know when the services are open again (if they were closed during COVID-19) and advocating for services to stay open during lockdowns.



Appendices

1. Note on Localities

Given the respondents locality was collected as a postcode, not all township profiles could be covered by this survey.

Postcode	% in Nillumbik	Nillumbik locality	Matching township	Valid	Sample
3088	19%	Greensborough	Greensborough	Yes	n=37
3089	100%	Diamond Creek	Diamond Creek	Yes	n=49
3090	100%	Plenty	Plenty	Yes	n=10
3091	100%	Yarrambat	Yarrambat	Yes	n=8
3095	100%	Eltham	Eltham	No	n=130
		Eltham North	Eltham North		
		Research	Research		
3096	100%	Wattle Glen	Wattle Glen	Yes	n=7
3097	100%	Kangaroo Ground	Kangaroo Ground		n=10
		Watsons Creek	Rural East		
		Bend of Islands	Rural East		
3099	100%	Hurstbridge	Hurstbridge	No	n=41
		Nutfield	Rural North West		
		Strathewen	Rural East		
		Cottles Bridge	Rural North West		
		Arthurs Creek	Rural North West		
3113	100%	North Warrandyte	North Warrandyte	Yes	n=9
3754	100%	Doreen	Doreen	Yes	n=11
3755	8%	Yan Yean	Rural East	No	n=0
3759	100%	Panton Hill	Panton Hill	Yes	n=6
3760	100%	Smiths Gully	Rural East	No	n=1
3761	100%	St Andrews	St Andrews	Yes	n=5
3775	9%	Christmas Hills	Rural North West	No	n=2

Given these discrepancies in categories, and small sample sizes for some postcodes, the data has been distributed into four regions for analysis:

Region	N=	Scope	
South	n=130	Eltham	3095
		Eltham North	
		Research	
West	n=66	Greensborough	3088
		Plenty	3090
		Yarrambat	3091
		Doreen	3754
Central	n=56	Diamond Creek	3089
		Wattle Glen	3096
East	n=74	St Andrews	3761
		Panton Hill	3759
		Smiths Gully	3760
		Christmas Hills	3775
		Kangaroo Ground	3097
		Watsons Creek	
		Bend of Islands	
		North Warrandyte	3113
		Hurstbridge	3099
		Nutfield	
		Strathewen	
		Cottles Bridge	
		Arthurs Creek	

2. Supporting data for segment Insights

The following data has been used to support the segment insights.

Regional variations

South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean of 3.59 out of 5 for people in their neighbourhood sharing the same values (3.18 West). • Mean of 4.45 out of 5 for their neighbourhood being a good place to live (4.46 West). • Mean of 3.69 out of 5 for people work to get things done for this community (3.23 West).
West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% of those who are employed worked on-location (8% South, 6% East).
Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26% unaware of how to access local services (10% South and 8% East). • 72% rated feeling part of your community lower since COVID-19 (47% East). • 30% said they are nervous or anxious most of the time (7% East). • 16% said they feel hopeless or worthless a lot of the time (3% East). • 65% said their rating of feeling part of the community was lower during COVID-19 (43% South and 41% East). • 72% say it has been hard / very hard to stay connected with family and friends outside the household (59% West). • 29% said they couldn't pay an electricity, gas or telephone bill on time (4% South).
East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63% started exercising in locations other than their normal locations (likely due to the 5km radius directive from the health department) (36% central). • Mean of 3.24 out of 5 for feeling part of the community (2.63 West, 2.69 Central). • Mean of 4.46 out of 5 for their neighbourhood being a good place to live (4.02 West). • Mean of 3.83 out of 5 for people work to get things done for this community (3.23 West).

Gender lens

Males	Females
49% say one of their main concerns is self, family or friend contracting COVID (38% females).	25% say one of their main concerns is managing remote learning for children at home (13% males).
32% said they are not getting down or depressed (18%).	37% want support for local communities to assist each other (23% males)
39% of those who drink (29% all males) will have 3-6 standard drinks when drinking (19% females who drink, 14% all females).	31% want counselling and mental health support (12% males).
43% report no change in the quality of their relationships with people in their household (24% females).	29% want entertainment programs for children and young people (14% males).
36% of those in households with children say their partner is spending the most time helping the children.	11% want programs to support families in crisis (4% males)
	67% are nervous or anxious a lot/some of the time (46% males).
	19% say they are unable to get themselves going a lot of the time (9% males).
	42% of those who drink (32% of all females) will have only 1 standard drink when drinking (24% males who drink, 18% all males).
	46% were staying connected by going for walks with others (29% males).
	69% of those in households with children are taking on most of the responsibility for helping the children (21% males).
	38% want financial support for essential items (20% males).

Age variations

		Young 15-34	Middle-aged 35-44 45-54		Older adults 55-64 65+	
Concerns	Missing family and friends	88%	64%	67%	72%	87%
	Me or my family/friend contracting COVID-19	12%	33%	41%	61%	55%
	Missing key life events such as weddings, funerals and birthdays	38%	13%	19%	32%	45%
	Disruption of education	21%	32%	33%	11%	8%
	Managing remote learning for children at home	15%	39%	28%	6%	4%
Support	Counselling and mental health support	36%	30%	27%	25%	6%
	Entertainment programs for children and young people	33%	48%	18%	2%	8%
	Business support	15%	25%	16%	13%	2%
	Programs to support older people to use digital technology	9%	6%	1%	8%	35%
	Services too expensive	27%	10%	10%	9%	3%
Relationships	Satisfaction with personal relationships (mean/5)	3.41	3.2	3.56	3.6	3.89
	Satisfaction with personal relationships lower than pre-COVID	5%	52%	46%	36%	31%
	No change to quality of relationships with people in since the COVID-19 restrictions started	26%	19%	30%	32%	46%
	More strained/difficult quality of relationships with people in since the COVID-19 restrictions started	35%	39%	24%	16%	15%
	Equally sharing helping children at home during COVID (% of households with children and couple parents)	17%	18%	36%	27%	NA
Health	Satisfaction with health the same during COVID as before	38%	26%	41%	53%	67%
	Exercising somewhere different during COVID	65%	56%	52%	45%	39%

		Young 15-34	Middle-aged 35-44	45-54	Older adults 55-64	65+
Community connections	Satisfaction with feeling part of your community (mean/5)	2.56	2.68	3.07	3.25	3.20
	I feel part of the community (mean/5)	2.47	2.63	2.93	3.19	3.28
	I trust my neighbours (mean/5)	3.55	4.02	3.91	4.23	4.39
	People work to get things done for this community (mean/5)	3.33	3.31	3.61	3.83	3.79
	My neighbours are helping each other get through the COVID-19 restrictions (mean/5)	2.9	3.19	3.16	3.7	3.68
	Since COVID it has been very easy+easy to stay connected with friends and family outside the household	21%	15%	7%	19%	25%
Mental health	Satisfaction with what achieving in life (mean/5)	2.84	2.85	3.15	3.11	3.37
	Your future security (mean/5)	2.59	2.76	3.11	2.39	3.48
	Nervous or anxious a lot of the time	24%	25%	21%	8%	4%
	Hopeless or worthless a lot of the time	9%	15%	7%	6%	1%
	Unable to get yourself going a little or not at all	27%	40%	40%	45%	61%
Alcohol	Drinking less alcohol in the last month than before COVID-19	39%	14%	6%	4%	12%
	Drinking more alcohol in the last month than before COVID-19	22%	54%	52%	34%	31%
Employment	Working from home during COVID (% of those employed)	59%	62%	63%	38%	20%
	Working at a location away from home (% of those employed)	12%	13%	21%	25%	1%
	Received JobKeeper (% of those employed)	18%	24%	28%	14%	4%
	Received JobSeeker (% of those employed)	9%	1%	6%	15%	0%
	Income decreased during COVID	61%	45%	45%	41%	29%

Target segments	
CALD	Disability / Health Care Card
27% said they are concerned about financial instability (17% not CALD)	52% said they are concerned about themselves or their family contracting COVID (39% not vulnerable)
5% said they are concerned about an increase in family violence at home (0% not CALD)	15% said they are concerned about managing chronic health conditions (1% not vulnerable)
22% want Financial relief packages for low income earners (12% not CALD)	23% want financial relief packages for low income earners (10% not vulnerable)
20% unaware of how to access local services (11% not CALD)	18% want programs to support older people to use digital technology (8% not vulnerable)
Lower mean standard of living (3.42, 3.96 not CALD)	7% want Emergency relief (food, clothing and school resources) (2% not vulnerable)
46% report a decrease in their standard of living (31% not CALD)	18% unaware of how to access local services (10% not vulnerable)
Lower mean personal relationships (3.3, 3.59 not CALD)	18% say telehealth only is a barrier (8% not vulnerable)
10% report an increase in the level of trust for their neighbours (5% not CALD) and 10% report a lower level of trust (4% not CALD). Not CALD mostly report no change (92%, 79% CALD)	16% say services are too expensive (7% not vulnerable)
	15% say they feel down or depressed a lot of the time (7% not vulnerable)
	12% said their rating of feeling part of the community has increased (4% not vulnerable)
	26% say their neighbours are helping each other get through COVID more (17% not vulnerable)
	17% receiving JobKeeper/jobseeker (2% not vulnerable)

Households with children

Children	No children
42% disruption of education is a main concern (5% no kids)	3.63 mean out of 5 coping (3.01 with kids)
39% managing remote learning for children at home (3% no kids)	80% missing friends is a main concern (65% with kids)
30% want counselling and mental health support (20% no kids)	55% getting COVID-19 is a main concern (31% with kids)
40% want entertainment programs for children and young people (8% no kids)	39% missing key life events (15% with kids)
23% want business support (8% no kids)	39% want an opportunity to contribute to the community (25% with kids)
24% feel anxious or nervous a lot of the time (9% no kids)	33% want information on local services and programs (22% with kids)
36% are under psychological distress (19% no kids)	45% don't need to access services (32% with kids)
20% named financial stress as a negative impact (10% no kids)	3.22 mean out of 5 satisfaction with what they are achieving in life (2.92 with kids)
17% named mental health as a negative impact (7% no kids)	3.58 mean out of 5 satisfaction with health (3.38 no kids)
50% say their alcohol consumption has increased (35% no kids)	3.15 mean out of 5 satisfaction with feeling part of your community (2.78 with kids)
34% having more strained relationships with people in their household (18% no kids)	3.34 mean out of 5 satisfaction with future security (2.82 with kids)
34% worked flexible hours from home (18% no kids)	54% say their alcohol consumption hasn't changed (37% with kids)
24% want one-off financial hardship grants (9% no kids)	79% don't need any financial supports (60% with kids)
17% want essential item vouchers (4% no kids)	60% has had no change in income (46% with kids)
22% named want parks services as something council and community organisations could provide (9% no kids)	18% looking forward to travelling / going on holiday once COVID-19 is over (10% with kids)

3. Questionnaire

Labels in dark red show codes / variables created during the analysis process.

Q1. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is not at all to 5 extremely well) how are you currently coping with the COVID-19 restrictions?

Q2. What are your three main concerns during COVID-19?

- Me or my family/friend contracting COVID-19
- Missing family and friends
- Risk of losing my job or unemployment
- Increased family violence at home
- Not being able to buy food or essential items
- I am on a temporary visa and uncertain about my future.
- Not being able to visit dying or seriously ill family/friends
- Missing key life events such as weddings, funerals and birthdays
- Disruption of education
- Disruption of care and support services
- Losing my business
- Managing remote learning for children at home
- Working from home
- Increased caring roles
- Financial instability
- Feeling lonely
- Managing chronic health conditions
- Other (specify) **comments coded into:**
 - Exercise**
 - Local community**
 - Mental health**
 - Restrictions**
 - Recreation**

Q3. What assistance, services or programs could help support your wellbeing at this time?

- Counselling and mental health support
- Emergency relief (food, clothing and school resources)
- Information on local Services and programs
- Entertainment programs for children and young people
- Employment and vocational skills programs
- Online social connection programs
- Programs to support older people to use digital technology
- Information updates on COVID-19 case, restrictions and resources
- Support for local communities to assist each other
- Programs to support families in crisis (family violence, relationship breakdowns etc.)
- Business support
- Financial relief packages for low income earners
- Internet access/ digital support
- Access to services i.e. outreach or online health services
- Telephone support

Opportunity to contribute to the community

Other (specify) **comments coded into:**

Change to restrictions

Q4. Are there any barriers stopping you from accessing services you need during COVID-19?

I am unaware of what services are available

I am unaware of how to access local services

Services are closed

I cannot get to my appointment

Long wait times to get an appointment

Services are too expensive

I do not feel safe accessing the services

Services are not welcoming

Only telehealth is available

I do not need to access services

Other (specify) **comments coded into:**

5km travel restrictions

Q5a. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being not at all and 5 being extremely) how satisfied are you with...?

Your standard of living

What you are currently achieving in life

Your health

Your personal relationships

How safe you feel

Feeling part of your community

Your future security

Q5b. Is this rating higher, lower or the same as before COVID-19? [Answer options: Higher, Lower, Same]

Your standard of living

What you are currently achieving in life

Your health

Your personal relationships

How safe you feel

Feeling part of your community

Your future security

Q6. In the last month how often did you feel...? [Answer options: A lot more now, A little more now, About the same, A little less now, A lot less now]

Nervous or anxious

Hopeless or worthless

Unable to get yourself going

Down or depressed

Distressed to the point of seeking support

New variable was generated for analysis. NET of all people who rated one or more of Q6 as "A lot more now". Shows proportion experiencing mental health distress.

Q7. Have you experienced any positive changes in your life as a result of COVID-19?

[Open ended] comments coded into:

More time (including for chores , hobbies, study etc.)
 Helping others
 Community cohesion / more contact with neighbours
 More contact with friends / extended family
 More time with kids / family
 Saving Money
 New hobbies / skills
 Less driving / traffic / commuting
 Good for environment
 More exercise / better fitness
 Working from home
 Slower pace
 Mental health/ self time
 Exploring local area
 Jobseeker / JobKeeper
 None/NA
 Other

Q8. Have you experienced any negative changes in your life as a result of COVID-

19? [Open ended] comments coded into:

Loneliness / social Isolation
 Boredom
 Cannot visit friends/ family
 Mental Health
 Worsened relationships
 Concerned about child development / education
 Concerned about health of others
 Financial stress / Lost job / business / income
 Difficulty shopping
 Lack of sports / social activities
 Unable to attend health appointments / in person
 Unhappy with government (state & federal) / lockdown rules
 Unhappy with people not following rules
 Worried about economy / businesses
 Unable to travel / cancelled holiday plans
 More to juggle (home schooling, carer work etc.)
 Less exercise / fitness
 Unable to attend wedding / funeral
 Just answered "yes"
 Unable to care for others
 Increased alcohol consumption
 Loss of relative to COVID-19
 None / N/A
 Other

Q9. Overall, do you feel you are doing more, less or about the same level of physical activity during COVID -19 restrictions, compared to before COVID-19?

- A lot more now
- A little more now
- About the same
- A little less now
- A lot less now

Q10. What is your main form of physical activity? [Open ended] comments coded into:

! Answers suggest that some people mentioned a pre-COVID physical activity. Need to clarify in future if you mean 'usual' or 'present'.

- Walking
- Running / jogging
- Exercise at home
- Gardening
- Bike riding
- Gym
- House work / maintenance
- Yoga / Pilates
- Dog walking
- Swimming
- Organised sport
- Work
- Horse riding
- Other

Q11. Within your 5km radius what reserve, space or location do you use if exercising outside? [Open ended] comments coded into:

- Local roads
- Diamond Creek (DC)
- Bushland / parks / trails / river
- Aqueduct / Research
- Can't / none
- Plenty river/gorge
- Oval
- Lower Eltham Park
- On property
- Hurstbridge
- Bike track
- Eltham (Various locations)
- Anthony Beale
- Warrandyte
- Bunjil
- Other
- Not enough information

Q12. Is this different to where you would normally exercise?

- Yes
- No

Q12a. [IF YES] Where would you normally exercise? [OPEN ENDED] comments coded into:

Gym
Different locations (walk / ride / park / river)
Courts / fields / ovals / clubs
Named a park
Yoga / Pilates studio
Pool
Diamond Creek trail
Leisure centre
Bike paths
Near work
Eltham lower park
River
Other

Q13. In the last month how often have you had an alcoholic drink of any kind?

Every day
4-6 days a week
1-3 days a week
2-3 days a month
Once a month
Less often
Never

Q14. Is this level of consumption higher or lower or the same as before COVID-19?

Higher
Same
Lower

Q15. On a day that you have an alcoholic drink, how many standard drinks do you usually have?

1 standard drink
2 standard drinks
3-4 standard drinks
5-6 standard drinks
7 or more

Q16a. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being not at all and 5 being extremely) how satisfied are you with...? ! This rating scale is not appropriate for the statements.

I feel part of the community
People in my neighbourhood share the same values
My neighbourhood is a good place to live
I trust my neighbours
People work to get things done for this community
My neighbours are helping each other get through the COVID-19 restrictions

Q16b. Is this rating higher, lower or the same as before COVID-19? [Answer options: Higher, Same, Lower]

- I feel part of the community
- People in my neighbourhood share the same values
- My neighbourhood is a good place to live
- I trust my neighbours
- People work to get things done for this community
- My neighbours are helping each other get through the COVID-19 restrictions
- ! Higher / lower rating for this item is not valid / doesn't make sense.

Q17. Since the COVID-19 restrictions started, how easy has it been to stay connected with family and friends outside your household?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor hard
- Hard
- Very hard
- Not sure

Q18. Excluding work or education did you connect with others in the following ways?

! In future this will need a 'none of these' option. 8 respondents provided no answer, but we don't know if that is because it was none, or because they missed the question.

- Telephone (voice only)
- Video calls e.g. FaceTime, Zoom, Houseparty
- Walking with one other while social distancing
- Sharing items with neighbours such as food, toys, books etc.
- Sharing chores with neighbours e.g. bringing in bins, grocery shopping, mow lawns

Q19. Are you facing challenges accessing the internet?

! this scale is not clear. Combined 'Yes' and 'Sometimes' for reported measure.

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q20. What are the challenges you face when trying to access the internet?

- Poor or interrupted internet connection
- I live in an internet blackspot
- I don't have a device to connect to the internet (e.g. computer)
- I cannot afford to connect to the internet
- I do not want to connect to the internet
- Other

Q21. Which of these best describes your household?

- Single person household
- Couple living alone
- Couple with child / children
- One parent family with child / children, co-parenting with other parent living elsewhere
- One parent family with child / children
- Adults sharing house /apartment / flat
- Other

Q22. How has the quality of your relationships with people in your household changed since the COVID-19 restrictions started?

- A lot closer/stronger
- A little closer/stronger
- No change
- A little more difficult/strained
- A lot more difficult/strained
- Not applicable – single person household
- Not sure
- Prefer not to say

Q23. Which of these best describes your main activity before COVID-19? Were you...?

- Self employed
- Employed for wages, salary or payment in kind
- Engaged in home duties
- A student
- Retired
- Unable to work
- Volunteer
- Other

Q24. Which of these best describes your main activity during COVID-19? Are you...?

- Self employed
- Employed for wages, salary or payment in kind
- Engaged in home duties
- A student
- Retired
- Unable to work
- Volunteer
- On JobSeeker
- On JobKeeper
- Other

New variable was generated for analysis to show how employment had changed from Q23 to Q24:

- No longer working
- On JobKeeper/Seeker
- Work mode changed
- Unchanged

Q25. Since the COVID-19 restrictions started, have you...?

- Worked mainly from home with standard hours
- Worked mainly from home with flexible hours
- Worked mainly from another location with standard hour (l.e. office, retail outlet, work site)
- Work mainly from another location with flexible start and finish times
- Prefer not to say
- Unsure
- None of the above

Q26. Since COVID-19 restrictions started...? [MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

- None of these
- Received, or have been notified that you will receive job keeper
- Received, or have been notified that you will receive job seeker
- Received, or have been notified that you will receive government rent assistance
- Prefer not to say
- Other
- Not sure

Q27. Do you have any children aged 18 or younger living in your house (full-time or part-time)?

- Yes
- No

Q28. How many children are living in your house?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

Q29. What are their ages? [OPEN ENDED] comments coded into:

! Ask as a multiple response question in future to save time coding.

- Aged 0-4
- Aged 5-11
- Aged 12-17
- Aged 18+

Q30. Have you sent your children to school, daycare or kindergarten in the past week?

- Yes - most of the time
- Yes - some of the time
- I have discontinued my child/children going to childcare or kindergarten
- No - I have kept them home
- It is more complicated than that. [SPECIFY]

Q31. Who is spending the most time helping your child/ren at home during COVID-19?

- I am
- My partner or other parent
- Shared equally between my partner / the other parent and myself
- Other person outside of the household
- Other

Q32. What would support you to better care for them at this time?

! Collected as single response, should have been multiple

- Tutoring
- Virtual play groups and story time
- Careers related support for young people (resume writing, interview etc.)
- Parenting programs
- Mental health support and outreach
- Behavioural support
- Other

Q33. Are you the primary carer of an older adult and /or person with a disability?

- Yes
- No

Q34. How has COVID-19 impacted your role as a carer? [Open ended]

Q35. How has COVID-19 affected the person that you care for? [Open ended]

Q36. What support would further assist you in your role as a carer?

! Collected as single response, should have been multiple

- Information of services
- Financial supports
- Mental health support
- Peer support e.g. carer support group
- Social support for the person you care for
- Transport
- Other

Q37. Since COVID-19 do any of the following apply to you?

! Needs a 'none of these' option. Not sure if the blank responses were those who hadn't experienced any or missed/skipped the question? Blanks treated as "none of these" one in the data file.

- Could not pay electricity, gas or telephone bill on time
- Unable to pay rent or mortgage on time
- Worried about eviction/or repossession of your home
- Asked for financial help from friends or family
- Accessed support from community services/ organisations
- Attended a food relief agency, food bank or food pantry (or similar) to access food relief
- Worried about having enough money to buy food
- Skipped a meal in order to feed your household
- Withdrew from superannuation
- Other
- None of these**

Q38. What financial supports would assist you during this period?

! Needs a 'none of these' option. Not sure if the blank responses were those who hadn't experienced any or missed/skipped the question? Blanks treated as "None of these" in the data file.

- Essential item vouchers (e.g. supermarket supplies, fuel, utility bill support etc.)
- Delivery of food packages/ ready-made meals
- Support to connect to Federal and State Government financial relief
- One-off financial hardship grants
- Business support
- Other
- None of these

Q39. Is your income more, less or the same now – during COVID-19 restrictions, compared to before COVID-19?

- A lot more now
- A little more now
- About the same
- A little less now
- A lot less now

Q40. What other services do you think Council or other community organisations could provide to help people manage the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in Nillumbik? [Open ended] comments coded into:

- Parks / services
- Rate / fee relief
- Promote what is available / comms
- Food relief / delivery
- Children
- Financial assistance / advocacy
- Community connections
- Change restrictions
- Garden / house maintenance / cleaning
- Rubbish
- Mental health services
- House-checks (welfare)
- Exercise info / activities
- Specific shops
- Volunteering
- Single people socialising apps
- Encourage shop local
- Arts and culture
- Other

Q41. What other comments do you have about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it is impacting your life and/or the community that you would like to share with us?

[Open ended] comments coded into:

- None
- Personal negative
- Community negative
- Community positive
- Request for council / services/ activities
- Government negative
- Personal positive
- General negative
- Concern about future
- We are in this together
- Government positive
- General positive
- Other

Q42. What are you most looking forward to once COVID-19 restrictions are eased?

[Open ended] comments coded into:

- Socialising / friends
- See family
- Freedom (travel, visit)
- Travel / Holiday
- Eat out
- Exercising / sport
- Recreation
- Back to work
- Kids back to school / childcare
- Using services / shops
- Back to normal
- Church
- Other

Q43. Gender

! Prefer not to identify could be confused with prefer not to say. The correct term is 'Prefer to self-describe'

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to identify
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

Q44. Age

! Need guardian consent to interview people under the age of 14. 2 respondents removed from analysis due to being under the age of 14.

Under 9
10-14
15-19
20-24
25-29
30-34
35-39
40-44
45-49
50-54
55-59
60-64
65-69
70-74
75-79
80-84
85 and over

Q45. Postcode

! Not possible to align this with townships. In future ask them to select a locality from a drop-down list of all suburbs / towns.

Q46. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Yes, Aboriginal
Yes, Torres Strait Islander
Yes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
No
Not sure
I'd prefer not to say

Q47. Were you born in Australia?

! Needs a prefer not to say option

Yes
No (Specify) Where were you born?

Q48. Do you speak a language other than English at home ?

! Needs a prefer not to say option

Yes
No

Q49. Do you have a disability, health condition or injury that has lasted, or is likely to last, 6 months or more ?

Yes
No
Not sure
Prefer not to say

Q50. Other than a Medicare card, are you the holder of a health care card or a pensioner concession card?

Yes

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

Q51. How did you find out about this survey?

Social media (e.g. Facebook)

Local Paper

Plenty FM

Nillumbik News

healthAbility

Other

! Ask for tenure (owner or renter) as this can have an impact on challenges faced.

6. Officers' reports**FNC.002/21 Special Rate Renewal for Eltham Town - Hearing of Submissions**

Portfolio: Economic Development and Marketing**Distribution: Public****Manager: Rosa Zouzoulas, Executive Manager Planning and Community Safety****Author: Danielle Phyland, Economic Development and Tourism Lead
Rania Mullins, Economic Development and Tourism Officer****Summary**

This report outlines the consideration of submissions received from the public regarding the renewal and declaration of the special rate for Eltham Town.

The current special rate for Eltham Town expires on 30 June 2021. Following the receipt of written request from the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (Chamber) to renew the special rate to fund the marketing and promotion of Eltham Town, Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 15 December 2020, commenced the statutory process and gave notice of its intention to declare a special rate for that purpose.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* formal notification of the proposed special rate was undertaken, with a public notice published in the Herald Sun on Monday 21 December 2020 and also written notification being sent via mail to owners of properties upon which the special rate would be levied (**Attachment 1**).

Notice has also been provided to the Chamber with a copy of the public notice to be forwarded on to occupiers/businesses (relevant in cases where the owner obliges the tenant pay the special rate) and available on Council's website.

In response to the public notice, Council received 6 submissions (**Attachment 3**) of a total of 178 properties liable to pay the special rate. 6 in support of the special rate and 0 opposing its renewal.

Given the important role that the special rate plays in supporting local businesses through marketing and promotion, it is recommended that Council hear any submissions on the Special Rate. Based on this information Council shall then resolve to declare, modify or abandon the special rate at the 23 March 2021 Council Meeting.

This report recommends that the Future Nillumbik Committee receives and notes the contents of the submissions and hears from submitters.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Receives and notes the contents of submissions received in response to Council's formal notification of its intention to declare a special rate for marketing and promotion of Eltham Town.
2. In accordance with section 223(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, refer the matter for declaring, modifying or abandoning the special rate to the 23 March 2021 Council Meeting.
3. Notifies the submitters accordingly.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.002/21 Special Rate Renewal for Eltham Town - Hearing of Submissions

Attachments

- [↓](#) 1. Eltham Town Special Rate Renewal Public Notice
- [↓](#) 2. Intention to Declare - letter to property owners - Eltham Town
- [↓](#) 3. Notice of Intention to declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town - submissions

Discussion

1. A Special Rate Levy proposal involves a proportional or fixed rate levied on properties included in the Special Rate area. The Special Rate enables the implementation of an ongoing program and it will fund the ongoing engagement of a centre marketing officer.
2. The current Special Rate for Eltham commenced on 1 July 2016 for a period of five years and is due to expire on 30 June 2021. The special rate has been successful in funding a range of promotional and business development activities over the past five years.
3. The Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry have formally requested Council to renew the Special Rate for another five years, commencing 1 July 2021. The businesses affected by this Special Rate will reflect the existing special rate.
4. For Eltham Town this special rate would raise an amount of \$143,000 in year one of the agreement based on the total of the levies collected. This charge is calculated based on the contribution of each property depending on the capital improved value (CIV) of the property increased by CPI each year.

What has happened so far?

5. At the Council Meeting on 15 December 2020, officers recommended that Council give notice of intention to declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town.
6. Public Notice of Council's intention to declare the Special Rate advertised publicly for a minimum of 28 days as required by section 163 *Local Government Act 1989* (**Attachment 1**).
7. Individual letters with a copy of the public notice were sent within five working days of the Public Notice to all property owners and property occupiers who will be made liable for the Special Rate (**Attachment 2**).
8. Any persons affected by the Special Rate were able to provide a written submission (which may include in it a request to be heard at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting) to the Council within 28 days of the publication of this notice. These will be considered in accordance with section 223 *Local Government Act 1989* (**Attachment 3**).

Current and next steps

9. Council hears and considers submissions at this Future Nillumbik Committee meeting following which, Council would resolve to declare, modify or abandon the special rate at its next Council meeting to be held in March 2021.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.002/21 Special Rate Renewal for Eltham Town - Hearing of Submissions

10. If the Special Rate is renewed, notice of the Special Rate will be sent to affected businesses and property owners after this date. Property owners and businesses have 30 days to appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) from the date of this notice.
11. If there are no valid appeals or any appeals are dismissed by VCAT, Council will finalise the Special Rate Agreement with Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry and will commence collection of the Special Rate in 2021-22 financial year for the following 5 years.
12. Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry will enter into a formal agreement with Council that confirms its role in expending the Special Rate funds in an administrative nature only and at all times under the direction of, and for Council. Payment of the Special Rate funds to the Chamber is conditional on entering into such an agreement.

Related Council decisions

13. Special Rates have been declared in the past for Nillumbik precincts. For Eltham the declaration was made at the Ordinary Council Meeting 21 June 2016.
14. Most recently, Council resolved at its meeting on 15 December 2020 to give notice of its intention to declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town.

Options

15. Special Rates for marketing, promotion and business development are an important strategy for retail centres such as Eltham Town to revitalise and maintain marketing activities.
16. Without a Special Rate, traders groups must seek funding from external bodies and/or Council. Alternatively, they could resort to a 'pay to play' model for marketing and promotion activities for the precinct.
17. As part of a renewed Special Rate Agreement clear key performance indicators will be stated and templates created for reporting to ensure the annual reporting is timely, simple and effective.
18. As part of considering the submissions and objections received, Council at the next Council Meeting will be presented an officer recommendation. This recommendation may consider (but is not limited to) the following options:
 - a) Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town.
 - b) Modify the declaration of a Special Rate for Eltham Town.
 - c) Abandon the declaration of a Special Rate for Eltham Town.

Council plans and policies

19. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - Identify new economic development opportunities and improve amenity for our villages in conjunction with key stakeholders including residents.

Sustainability implications

20. Without a Special Rate the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry would be required to generate their own funds for marketing activities.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.002/21 Special Rate Renewal for Eltham Town - Hearing of Submissions

21. Without the Special Rate in place Traders may look to Council to fund marketing and promotional campaigns on their behalf. No funding is currently allocated or available for such activities.

Community engagement

22. Engagement with the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry was undertaken as part of this process.
23. Affected owners and occupiers have been provided the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed special rate following the public notice advertised in the Herald Sun on 21 December 2020.
24. Copies of the proposed declaration of the Special Rate and a detailed plan of the proposed area were available for inspection during normal office hours at the Council offices in Greensborough for a period of 28 days after the date of the public notice, until 29 January 2021.
25. Owners and occupiers were also provided with an alternative option to inspect detailed plan of the proposed special rate and make online submissions for a period of 28 days after the date of the public notice via Council's website.
26. The Council report with all attachments was also available on the Council website.

Innovation and continuous improvement

27. An alternative submission option was made available to affected owners and occupiers on Council's website via a simple online form.
28. The Special Rate intention to declare was shared via Council's Business in Nillumbik enewsletter and through the Business in Nillumbik Facebook group to raise awareness of the process and inviting submissions from affected parties.

Collaboration

29. The Special Rate encourages collaboration between Trader groups and Council and provides opportunities for partnerships.
30. Weekly reminder emails have been sent to the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry with important information to support them when engaging with businesses and simple submission templates have been provided.

Budget implications

31. There will be no impact on Council's budget. The funds collected through the Special Rate are levied by Council and then used to fund the Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry for its expenditure on marketing and promotion for the Eltham Town.
32. There is significant officer time dedicated to managing the special rate and supporting the Chamber to administer the levy.

Relevant law

33. A special rate may be declared by Council under section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. In declaring a Special Rate, Council must consider:
- a. That the proposal relates to the performance of a function authorised by the Act.
 - b. That there will be a special benefit to the persons liable to pay the Special Rate.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.002/21 Special Rate Renewal for Eltham Town - Hearing of Submissions

- c. That there is a proportional distribution of the rate amongst those persons liable to pay the Special Rate.
 - d. The total cost of the Special Rate including the annual amount, which the Chamber has budgeted to spend on various marketing and other activities.
34. The Act requires Council to give public notice of a proposed declaration of the special charge and write to all people who will be liable to contribute. The proposed declaration for this special charge has been prepared in accordance with the Act.
35. Owners (or occupiers who would pay the charge as a condition of their lease) may object to the proposal within 28 days. If objections are received from more than fifty percent of persons liable, Council will be prevented from making the declaration and the special rate cannot proceed.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

36. Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

37. Officers preparing this report have no conflict of interest in relation to its subject, content and recommendations.

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020

heraldsun.com.au

CLASSIFIEDS 39

Notices

Public Notices

NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DECLARE A SPECIAL RATE FOR ELTHAM TOWN BUSINESS CENTRE (Precinct)



Eltham Special Rate Properties

Legend

Eltham Special Rate Properties



Under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Act), Nillumbik Shire Council (Council), as resolved at its meeting on **15 December 2020**, gives notice of its intention to declare a special rate.

The special rate is to defray expenses of Council in providing funds to Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. for funding a centre coordinator, promotions, advertising, marketing, business development and related incidental expenses to encourage commerce, retail and professional activity and employment in the Eltham Town commercial business centre (Precinct).

The area of the special rate will be based on geographic criteria: the location and the capital improved value of those rateable properties within the Precinct that are used, or reasonably capable of being used, for commercial, retail or professional purposes.

Council considers that each rateable property included in the area that will be required to pay the special rate will receive a special benefit through increased economic activity.

Council intends to levy and spend an amount of **\$143,000** for the first year; raising in total an estimated amount of **\$715,000**, subject to Capital Improved Value (CIV) over the five year period for which the special rate is intended to remain in force. The special rate is to be levied from **1 July 2021** and remain in force for the period ending **30 June 2026**. The land to which the special rate is to be declared: properties located in the retail and commercial business precinct comprising properties on Main Road, Dudley Street, Arthur Street, Pryor Street and Luck Street in Eltham as shown on the map.

The special rate will be assessed on the ownership of rateable land used or zoned for commercial, retail or professional purposes located within the Precinct. The special rate is calculated by reference to the Capital Improved Value (CIV) of each property liable to pay the special rate in a similar manner to the calculation of the general rate and will be levied by Council sending quarterly notices each year to the persons liable to pay the special rate. It is payable by the due date fixed by Council in the notice. Council will consider cases of hardship and may reconsider other payment options for the special rate. There will be no incentives given for payment of the special rate before the due dates for payment.

For the total amount of the special rate to be levied, under section 163 (2)(a), (2A) and (2B) of the Act Council determines the estimated proportion of the total benefits of the special rate to which the performance of the function and the exercise of the power relates, including all special benefits and community benefits, that will accrue to the persons who are liable to pay the special rate, is in a ratio of 1:1 (or 100%).

In the opinion of Council, all of the services and activities to be provided from the proceeds of the expenditure of the special rate are marketing, promotion and advertising related and will accordingly only benefit those properties and businesses subject to the special rate that are used, or reasonably capable of being used, for retail, commercial or professional purposes.

Copies of the proposed declaration and a detailed plan of the area including a list of all properties to be liable to pay the special rate, with the estimated amounts payable by each property based on the 2020 CIV valuation, are available for inspection during office hours at Council offices in Greensborough and on Council's website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au for a period of at least 28 days after the date of the publication of this notice.

Under section 163A of the Act any person may make a written submission to Council under 223 in relation to Council's proposal to make a declaration under section 163 of the Act.

Any person required to pay the special rate imposed by the proposed declaration, whether an owner or an occupier of a property, has a right to object to the proposed declaration. In addition to the right to make a submission given under section 163A, the person may make a written objection to Council under section 163B of the Act. An occupier is entitled to exercise the right of objection if they submit documentary evidence with the objection showing that it is a condition of the lease under which the person is an occupier that the occupier is to pay any special rate.

Written submissions to Council under section 223 of the Act and/or written objections to be lodged with Council under section 163B of the Act must be received by Council addressed to the Economic Development and Tourism Officer, Nillumbik Shire Council, PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088 by **5 pm on Friday 29 January 2021**.

Any person who has made a written submission under section 223 of the Act and has requested to be heard in support of their submission is entitled to appear in person or to be represented by a person specified in the submission before a Delegated Committee appointed by the Council to hear submissions under section 223 of the Act. Submitters will be advised in writing of the date and time of the meeting. Council will consider any written submissions and take into account any objections in accordance with sections 163A, 163B, and 223 of the Act.

Council proposes to make the declaration on 23 March 2021. Further information on the special rate may be obtained from the Economic Development and Tourism unit on 9433 3111 or business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

CARL COWIE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL



Mum, I'm boored Find games, movies and more at Buy Search Sell.

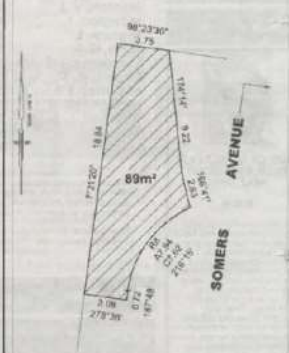
buy search sell

V1 - 19/02/2021/HA



City of STONNINGTON STONNINGTON CITY COUNCIL NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DISCONTINUE ROAD AND SELL LAND PUBLIC NOTICE INVITING SUBMISSIONS UNDER SECTION 223

Stonnington City Council (Council), acting under clause 3 of Schedule 10 to the *Local Government Act 1989* (Act), proposes to discontinue part of the road abutting 15-17 Somers Avenue, Malvern, being part of land contained in certificate of title volume 5931 folio 127 and shown as hatched on the plan below (Road), and sell the land comprising the Road to the adjoining owner for market value.



In accordance with section 223 of the Act, any person wishing to make a submission on the proposal must do so in writing by 18th January 2021. Please note that any submissions received may be made available on the public record. Submissions should be sent to:

Mr Tze-Sian Hor
Stonnington City Council
P O Box 58
MALVERN VIC 3144

Written submissions will be considered in accordance with section 223 of the Act.

Any person requesting to be heard in support of his or her submission is entitled to be heard before Council (or a Committee established by Council for this purpose) or be represented by a person acting on his or her behalf and will be notified of the time and date of the hearing.

Following consideration of submissions, Council may resolve:

1. not to discontinue the Road; or
2. to discontinue the Road and sell the land comprising the Road to the adjoining owner.

Further information regarding the proposal may be obtained from Council's Property Coordinator, Tze-Sian Hor on (03) 8290 1333.

Jacqui Weatherill
Chief Executive Officer
Stonnington City Council

BUSINESS REGISTRATION

Advanced Emergency Solutions Pty Ltd of 5/9 Cornhill Ct Mulgrave 3170 has made an application to the Licensing and Regulation Division for a Private Security Business License and Business Registration to provide the service of Body Guarding, Guarding services crowd control, Security Advice and Security Installation. Any person wishing to object to the granting of the license has 24 days from the date of this advertisement to lodge an objection in writing to Licensing and Regulation Division, GPO Box 802, Melbourne VIC 3001.

General Notices

BUSINESS LICENCE

*See the Plan Pty Ltd of 72 Mariner Street, Warragul, VIC 3920 has made an application to the Licensing and Regulation Division for a Private Security Business License and Business Registration to provide the service of Body Guarding, Guarding services crowd control, Security Advice and Security Installation. Any person wishing to object to the granting of the license has 24 days from the date of this advertisement to lodge an objection in writing to Licensing and Regulation Division, GPO Box 802, Melbourne VIC 3001.

Celebrations

Birthdays

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY
ERIKA JEFFS
40 Years ago!!!
God gave us a beautiful gift.
She has been shining ever since.

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21 December 2020

Property Owner Name
Property Owner address
Suburb State Postcode

Dear [Property Owner name],

Proposed Special Rate – Eltham Town Business Precinct
PROPERTY ADDRESS

A special rate for the purposes of marketing, promotion and development of the Eltham Town Business Precinct has been in place for the past 5 years. The current special rate expires on 30 June 2021.

The funds collected from a special rate assist in marketing and promoting the businesses within the precinct, and are also used to market the precinct as a whole to attract new visitors and shoppers. The Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry has requested that Council seek to reintroduce the charge for a further five years.

This process is in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*. A public notice of Council's intention to declare the special rate has been published in a newspaper and a copy together with a map is enclosed. Please take the time to review these documents.

If the new special rate proceeds, the expected contribution payable will be calculated proportionately based on Capital Improved Value (CIV) for rateable properties within the Eltham Special Rate Scheme area.

If you would like to make a written submission or objection to this proposal, it must be received by 5pm, Friday 29 January 2021. Submissions and objections are to be sent to Rania Mullins, Economic Development and Tourism Officer, Nillumbik Shire Council, PO Box 476, Greensborough VIC 3088 or emailed to business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

If you provide a written submission, you will be invited to speak to Council to support your submission. This hearing of submissions is scheduled to be held at a Delegated Committee meeting.

If you have any questions about the renewal, please contact me on 9433 3111.

Yours sincerely,

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer



Civic Drive (PO Box 476) Greensborough Victoria 3088
03 9433 3111 | nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

nillumbik.vic.gov.au



28/1/21

Dear Rania

Re: Eltham Town Business Centre Special Rate

We support the continuation of a Special Rate.
It provides necessary funding for the marketing of Eltham Town.

Kind regards





10 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Rania

Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town Business Centre

I wish to indicate my support for the Eltham marketing program funded by the special rate.


I support the levy because every business contributes to the marketing and promotion of Eltham Town Centre.

The special rate is good for the commercial centre.

Yours sincerely,



Submissions – Eltham Town
Special Rate



Submission date:28 January 2021, 10:35AM

Receipt number:2

Related form version:4

Your submission

Please provide your written submission below

I indicate my support for the renewal of Eltham town
centre marketing program
funded by the special rate.

Name of person making submission

Contact telephone number

Email address

Residential address

Business name

Business address



10 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Rania

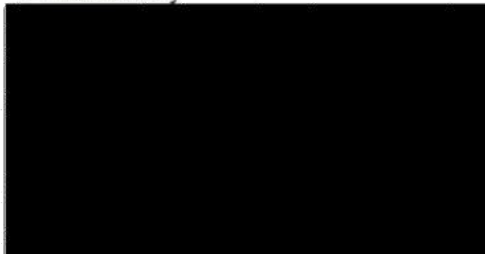
Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town Business Centre

I wish to indicate my support for the Eltham marketing program funded by the special rate.

I support the levy because every business contributes to the marketing and promotion of Eltham Town Centre.

The special rate is good for the commercial centre.

Yours sincerely





19 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088



Dear Rania

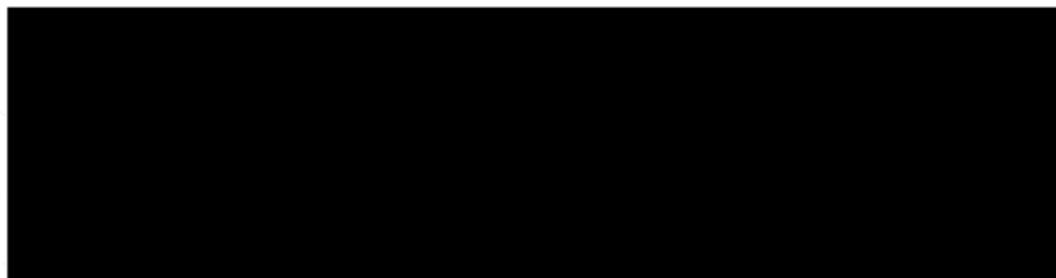
Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town Business Centre

I note your letter in December 2020, and indicate my support for the Eltham marketing special rate.

The cost to me is minimal compared to the benefits I see flowing to the whole town centre.

It has my support.





19 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Rania

Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town Business Centre

I wish to indicate my support for the Eltham marketing program funded by the special rate.

I support the levy because every business contributes to the marketing and promotion of Eltham Town Centre.

The special rate is good for the commercial centre.

Yours sincerely





18 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Rania

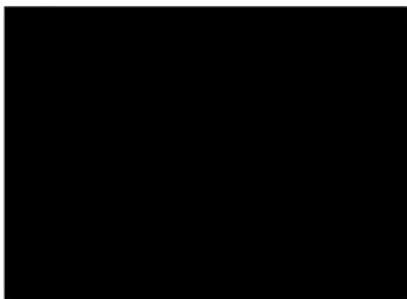
Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Eltham Town Business Centre

I wish to indicate my support for the renewal of the Eltham marketing program.

Businesses in this town need to work together and with the local community. The levy program is critical for the marketing of the whole town centre because it involves all the businesses in the town, not just a few. The marketing has important spin-off effects in promoting the Eltham town centre as a whole and is also good in strengthening our connections with the local community.

I think the marketing program funded by this special rate already has made great strides in achieving this, and I think it is important that the levy continues.

Yours sincerely



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6. Officers' reports**FNC.003/21 Special Rate Renewal for Hurstbridge Village - Hearing of Submissions**

Portfolio: Economic Development and Marketing**Distribution: Public****Manager: Rosa Zouzoulas, Executive Manager Planning and Community Safety****Author: Danielle Phyland, Economic Development and Tourism Lead
Rania Mullins, Economic Development and Tourism Officer****Summary**

This report outlines the consideration of submissions received from the public regarding the renewal and declaration of the special rate for Hurstbridge Village.

The current special rate for Hurstbridge Village expires on 30 June 2021. Following the receipt of written request from the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association to renew the special rate to fund the marketing and promotion of Hurstbridge Village, Council at its Council Meeting on 15 December 2020, commenced the statutory process and gave notice of its intention to declare a special rate for that purpose.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* formal notification of the proposed special rate was undertaken, with a public notice published in the Herald Sun on Monday 21 December 2020 and also written notification being sent via mail to owners or properties upon which the special rate would be levied (**Attachments 1 and 2**).

Notice has also been provided to the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association with a copy of the public notice to be forwarded on to occupiers/businesses (relevant in cases where the owner obliges the tenant pay the special rate) and available on website.

In response to the public notice, Council received 6 submissions (**Attachments 3 and 4**) of a total of 66 properties liable to pay the special rate. 5 in support of the special rate and 1 petition received with 25 signatures requesting that the special rate renewal be waived for 12 months.

Given the important role that the special rate plays in supporting local businesses through marketing and promotion, it is recommended that Council hear any submissions on Special Rate. Based on this information Council shall then resolve to declare, modify or abandon the special rate the Council Meeting on 23 March 2021.

This report recommends that the Future Nillumbik Committee receives and notes the contents of the submissions and hears from submitters.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Receives and notes the contents of submissions received in response to Council's formal notification of its intention to declare a special rate for marketing and promotion of Hurstbridge Village.
2. In accordance with section 223(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, refer the matter for declaring, modifying or abandoning the special rate to the Council Meeting on 23 March 2021.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.003/21 Special Rate Renewal for Hurstbridge Village - Hearing of Submissions

3. Notifies the submitters accordingly.

Attachments

- [1.](#) Intention to Declare - letter to property owners - Hurstbridge Village
- [2.](#) Hurstbridge Village Special Rate Renewal Public Notice
- [3.](#) Notice of Intention to declare a Special Rate for Hurstbridge Village - submissions
- [4.](#) Notice of Intention to declare a Special Rate for Hurstbridge Village - submission - request for waiver

Discussion

1. A Special Rate Levy proposal involves a proportional or fixed rate levied on properties included in the Special Rate area. The Special Rate enables the implementation of an ongoing program and it will fund the ongoing engagement of a centre marketing officer.
2. The current Special Rate for Hurstbridge commenced on 1 July 2016 for a period of five years and is due to expire on 30 June 2021. The Special Rate has been successful in funding a range of promotional and business development activities over the past five years.
3. The Hurstbridge Village Traders Association have formally requested Council to renew the Special Rate for a further five years, commencing 1 July 2021.
4. This would raise an amount of \$33,600 in year one of the agreement based on the total of the levies collected. This charge is calculated based on the flat rate contribution of each property set at \$480 per annum increased by CPI each year.

What has happened so far?

5. At the Council Meeting on 15 December 2020, officers recommended that Council give notice of intention to declare a Special Rate for Hurstbridge Village.
6. Public Notice of Council's intention to declare the Special Rate advertised publicly for a minimum of 28 days as required by section 163 *Local Government Act 1989* (**Attachment 2**).
7. Individual letters with a copy of the public notice were sent within five working days of the Public Notice to all property owners and property occupiers who will be made liable for the Special Rate (**Attachment 1**).
8. A person affected by the Special Rate were able to provide a written submission (which may include in it a request to be heard at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting) to the Council within 28 days of the publication of this notice. This will be considered in accordance with section 223 *Local Government Act 1989* (**Attachments 3 and 4**).

Current and next steps

9. Council hears and considers submissions at this Future Nillumbik Committee meeting following which, Council would resolve to declare, modify or abandon the Special Rate at its next Council meeting to be held in March 2021.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.003/21 Special Rate Renewal for Hurstbridge Village - Hearing of Submissions**

10. If the Special Rate is renewed, notice of the Special Rate will be sent to affected businesses and property owners after this date. Property owners and businesses have 30 days to appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) from the date of this notice.
11. If there are no valid appeals or any appeals are dismissed by VCAT, Council will finalise the Special Rate Agreement with Hurstbridge Village Traders Association and commence collection of the Special Rate in 2021-22 financial year.
12. Hurstbridge Village Traders Association will enter into a formal agreement with Council that confirms its role in expending the Special Rate funds in an administrative nature only and at all times under the direction of, and for Council. Payment of the Special Rate funds to the Traders Association is conditional on entering into such an agreement.

Related Council decisions

13. Special Rates have been declared in the past for Nillumbik precincts. For Hurstbridge the declaration was made at the Ordinary Council Meeting 21 June 2016.
14. Most recently, Council resolved at its meeting on 15 December 2020 to give notice of its intention to declare a Special Rate for Hurstbridge Village.

Options

15. Special Rates for marketing, promotion and business development are an important strategy for retail centres such as Hurstbridge Village to revitalise and maintain marketing activities.
16. Without a Special Rate, traders groups must seek funding from external bodies and/or Council. Alternatively, they could resort to a 'pay to play' model for marketing and promotion activities for the precinct.
17. As part of a renewed Special Rate agreement clear key performance indicators will be stated and templates created for reporting to ensure the annual reporting is timely, simple and effective.
18. As part of considering the submissions and objections received, Council at the next Council Meeting will be presented an officers recommendation. This recommendation may consider (but is not limited to) the following options:
 - a) Declare a special rate for Hurstbridge Village.
 - b) Modify the declaration of a special rate for Hurstbridge Village.
 - c) Abandon the declaration of a special rate for Hurstbridge Village.

Council plans and policies

19. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - Identify new economic development opportunities and improve amenity for our villages in conjunction with key stakeholders including residents.

Sustainability implications

20. Without a Special Rate the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association would be required to generate their own funds for marketing activities.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.003/21 Special Rate Renewal for Hurstbridge Village - Hearing of Submissions

21. Without the Special Rate in place Traders may look to Council to fund marketing and promotional campaigns on their behalf. No dedicated funding is currently allocated or available for such activities.

Community engagement

22. Engagement with the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association was undertaken as part of this process.
23. Affected owners and occupiers have been provided the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed special rate following the public notice advertised in the Herald Sun on 21 December 2020.
24. Copies of the proposed declaration of the Special Rate and a detailed plan of the proposed area were available for inspection during normal office hours at the Council offices in Greensborough for a period of 28 days after the date of the public notice, being until 29 January 2021.
25. Owners and occupiers were also provided with an alternative option to inspect detailed plan of the proposed special rate and make online submissions for a period of 28 days after the date of the public notice via Council's website.
26. The Council report with all attachments was also available on the Council website.

Innovation and continuous improvement

27. An alternative submission option was made available to affected owners and occupiers on Council's website via a simple online form.
28. The Special Rate intention to declare was shared via Council's Business in Nillumbik enewsletter and through the Business in Nillumbik Facebook group to raise awareness of the process and inviting submissions from affected parties.

Collaboration

29. The Special Rate encourages collaboration between Trader groups and Council and provide opportunities for partnerships.
30. Weekly reminder emails send to the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association and simple submission templates have been provided with important information to better support them when engaging with businesses.

Budget implications

31. There will be no impact on Council's budget. The funds collected through the Special Rate are levied by Council and then used to fund the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association for its expenditure on marketing and promotion for the Hurstbridge Village.
32. There is significant officer time dedicated to managing the special rate and supporting the Association to administer the levy.

Relevant law

33. A special rate may be declared by Council under section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. In declaring a Special Rate, Council must consider:
- a. That the proposal relates to the performance of a function authorised by the Act.
 - b. That there will be a special benefit to the persons liable to pay the Special Rate.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.003/21 Special Rate Renewal for Hurstbridge Village - Hearing of Submissions

- c. That there is a proportional distribution of the rate amongst those persons liable to pay the Special Rate.
 - d. The total cost of the Special Rate including the annual amount, which the Chamber has budgeted to spend on various marketing and other activities.
34. The Act requires Council to give public notice of a proposed declaration of the special charge and write to all people who will be liable to contribute. The proposed declaration for this special charge has been prepared in accordance with the Act.
35. Owners (or occupiers who would pay the charge as a condition of their lease) may object to the proposal within 28 days. If objections are received from more than fifty percent of persons liable, Council will be prevented from making the declaration and the special rate cannot proceed.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

36. Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

37. Officers preparing this report have no conflict of interest in relation to its subject, content and recommendations.

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21 December 2020



Property Owner Name
Property Owner address
Suburb State Postcode

Dear [Property Owner name],

Proposed Special Rate – Hurstbridge Village Business Precinct
PROPERTY ADDRESS

A special rate for the purposes of marketing, promotion and development of the Hurstbridge Village Business Precinct has been in place for the past 5 years. The current special rate expires on 30 June 2021.

The funds collected from a special rate assist in marketing and promoting the businesses within the precinct, and are also used to market the precinct as a whole to attract new visitors and shoppers. The Hurstbridge Traders Association has requested that Council seek to reintroduce the charge for a further five years.

This process is in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*. A public notice of Council's intention to declare the special rate has been published in a newspaper and a copy together with a map is enclosed. Please take the time to review these documents.

If the new special rate proceeds, the expected contribution payable in the first year would be \$480.00

If you would like to make a written submission or objection to this proposal, it must be received by 5pm, Friday 29 January 2021. Submissions and objections are to be sent to Economic Development and Tourism unit Nillumbik Shire Council, PO Box 476, Greensborough VIC 3088 or emailed to business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

If you provide a written submission, you will be invited to speak to Council to support your submission. This hearing of submissions is scheduled to be held at a Delegated Committee meeting.

If you have any questions about the renewal, please contact me on 9433 3111.

Yours sincerely,

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer

Civic Drive (PO Box 476) Greensborough Victoria 3088
03 9433 3111 | nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

nillumbik.vic.gov.au



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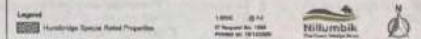
Notices

Public Notices

**NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DECLARE A SPECIAL RATE
FOR HURSTBRIDGE VILLAGE BUSINESS CENTRE (Precinct)**



Hurstbridge Special Rate Properties



Under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Act), Nillumbik Shire Council (Council), as resolved at its meeting on **15 December 2020**, gives notice of its intention to declare a special rate.

The special rate is to defray expenses of Council in providing funds to Hurstbridge Village Traders Association for funding a centre coordinator, promotions, advertising, marketing, business development and related incidental expenses to encourage commerce, retail and professional activity and employment in the Hurstbridge Village commercial business centre (Precinct).

Council considers that each rateable property included in the area that will be required to pay the special rate will receive a special benefit through increased economic activity.

Council intends to levy and spend an amount of **\$31,680** for the first year; raising in total an estimated amount of **\$158,400** at a fixed rate over the five year period for which the special rate is intended to remain in force.

The special rate is to be levied from **1 July 2021** and remain in force for the period ending **30 June 2026**. The land on which the special rate is to be declared: properties located in the retail and commercial business precinct comprising properties on Main Road, Heidelberg-Kinglake Road and Greyshears Road in Hurstbridge as shown on the map.

The special rate is a flat rate requested by the Hurstbridge Village Traders Association. The special rate is calculated based on the flat rate contribution of each property, set at \$480 per annum and increased by CPI each year, and will be levied by Council sending quarterly notices each year to the persons liable to pay the special rate. It is payable by the due date fixed by

Council in the notice. Council will consider cases of hardship and may reconsider other payment options for the special rate. There will be no incentives given for payment of the special rate before the due dates for payment.

For the total amount of the special rate to be levied, under section 163 (2)(a), (2A) and (2B) of the Act Council determines the estimated proportion of the total benefits of the special rate to which the performance of the function and the exercise of the power relates, including all special benefits and community benefits, that will accrue to the persons who are liable to pay the special rate, is in a ratio of 1:1 for 100%.

In the opinion of Council, all of the services and activities to be provided from the proceeds of the expenditure of the special rate are marketing, promotion and advertising related and will accordingly only benefit those properties and businesses subject to the special rate that are used, or reasonably capable of being used, for retail, commercial or professional purposes.

Copies of the proposed declaration and a detailed plan of the area including a list of all properties to be liable to pay the special rate, with the estimated amounts payable by each property based on the 2020 CPI valuation, are available for inspection during office hours at Council offices in Greensborough and on Council's website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au for a period of at least 28 days after the date of the publication of this notice.

Under section 163A of the Act any person may make a written submission to Council under 223 in relation to Council's proposal to make a declaration under section 163 of the Act.

Any person required to pay the special rate imposed by the proposed declaration, whether an owner or an occupier of a property, has a right to object to the proposed declaration. In addition to the right to make a submission given under section 163A, the person may make a written objection to Council under section 163B of the Act. An occupier is entitled to exercise the right of objection if they submit documentary evidence with the objection showing that it is a condition of the lease under which the person is an occupier that the occupier is to pay any special rate.

Written submissions to Council under section 223 of the Act and/or written objections to be lodged with Council under section 163B of the Act must be received by Council addressed to the Economic Development and Tourism Officer, Nillumbik Shire Council, PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088 by **5 pm on Friday 29 January 2021**.

Any person who has made a written submission under section 223 of the Act and has requested to be heard in support of their submission is entitled to appear in person or to be represented by a person specified in the submission before a Delegated Committee appointed by the Council to hear submissions under section 223 of the Act. Submitters will be advised in writing of the date and time of the meeting. Council will consider any written submissions and take into account any objections in accordance with sections 163A, 163B, and 223 of the Act.

Council proposes to make the declaration on 23 March 2021. Further information on the special rate may be obtained from the Economic Development and Tourism unit on 9433 3111 or business@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

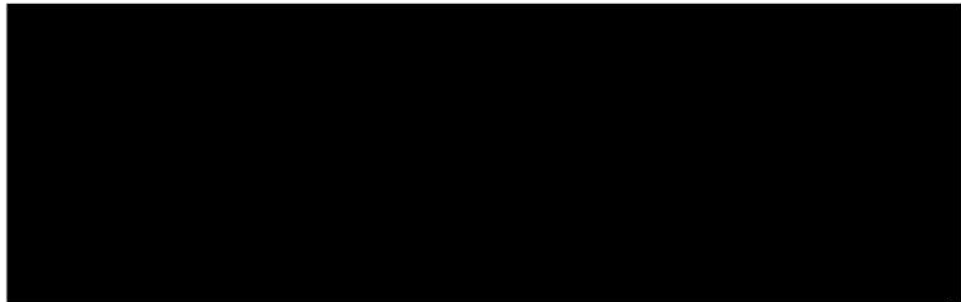
CARL COWIE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL



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10 January 2021

Rania Mullins
Economic Development and Tourism Officer
Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough 3088

Dear Rania,

Notice of Intention to Declare a Special Rate for Hurstbridge Village

We wish to indicate our support for the Hurstbridge marketing program funded by the special rate.

We support the levy because every business contributes to the marketing and promotion of Hurstbridge. Post COVID, a consolidated and collaborative approach is important to rebuild tourism and local shopping. It also enables us to better take advantage of grants, funding and asset opportunities to benefit the town.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.



Rania & Danielle,

It appears that the submission in regard to the 12 month suspension of the Special Rates Notice may be different to the notice originally issued.

I am writing a letter to the person I was told created the application for the 12 month suspension of the Special Rates Levy.

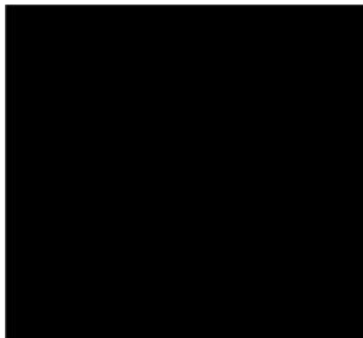
I want to make it clear I do not support any suspension of the Special Rates Levy.

Nillumbik Council need to agree to the continuation of the Special Rates Levy for Hurstbridge Traders. It is critical to the ongoing support and potential growth for Hurstbridge Businesses.

Given the Covid-19 impact on our community in 2020 the Hurstbridge Traders' Association (HTA) were limited in undertaking activities to promote Hurstbridge Village. Having said that there were still many positives.

If the Special Rates is discontinued then Council are specifically closing down the Hurstbridge Traders' Association. I seriously urge Council not to agree to terminating the Special Rates Levy and the Hurstbridge Traders' Association.

Kind Regards,



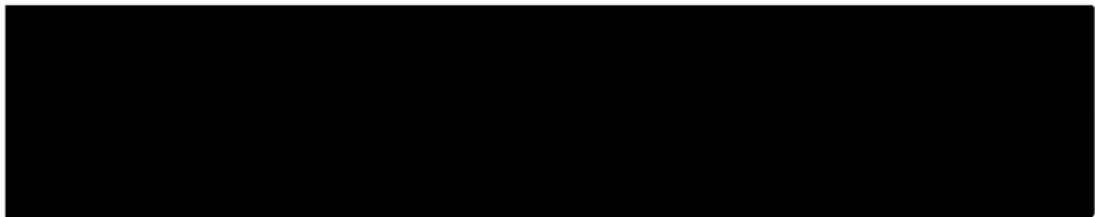


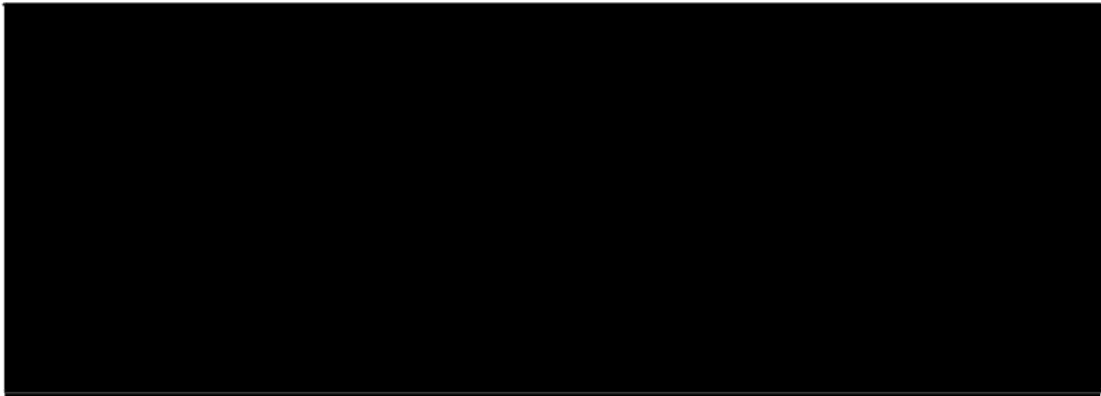
Hi Danielle and Rania

As a trader in Hurstbridge I would like to let you know that my firm and myself are fully supportive of the proposed special rates levy for marketing.

The achievements that have accomplished by the Hurstbridge traders association can be seen as you walk the streets of our village.

I would like to thank Nillumbik for their support with working with the traders.





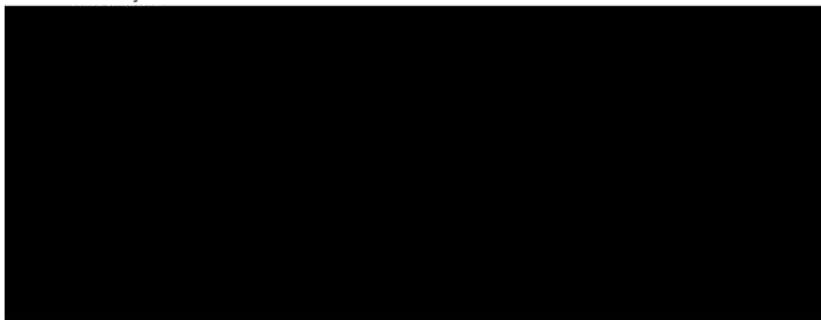
To whom it may concern,
I would like to show my support of behalf of Hurstbridge and District Community Bank for the Hurstbridge Trader Association.
As I understand, we have been long time members and I can commit our ongoing support to what is a vital part of the community and local businesses/traders.

We will continue to pay the fee, currently \$400, and feel this is a reasonable contribution amount.

I am more than happy to discuss this with any council representative or the association member.
I look forward to the next HTA meeting.

If you wish to discuss any of the above please feel free to call me at any time.

Thank you





Dear Rainia and the council members,

I am part of 2 traders associations and feel the need to let you know my concern for the Hurstbridge traders continuing without a break.

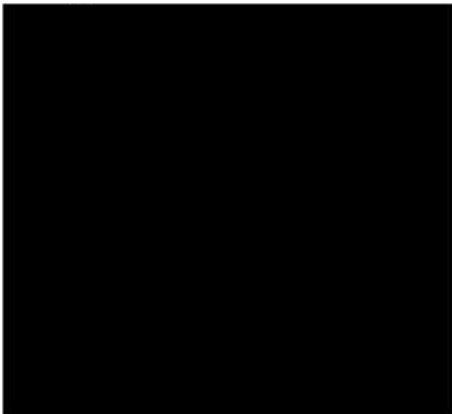
If there was ever a time when community is important it is now after a year where certainty and futures have challenged us all. Traders underpin a small village like Hurstbridge and even though not fully understood the depths in which a trading team work is exponential to a how people see our Village. Wattle Festival, Christmas, street scape, keeping the integrity of the town, We listen, we care and we are there to support the local people.

To not pay the rates for a year would basically stop the group which has supported us all and made Hurst what it is! I would like to take the time to let you know that the letter that has been submitted was not clear for us as traders in fact I thought Nilumbik shire would be giving the gift of a years worth of Marketing rates as a Covid 19 initiative, this is not clear and many have signed it thinking this was the way.

I am in favour of keeping the many years of reputation and stable marketing going. I am happy to pay the rate.. at a time when we need to explore new ways for our village, for Melbourne, for Australia it is crucial..

Covid has made us turn to our locals. Please we must not let them down now.

kind regards



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27 January 2021

Nillumbik Council

Attn: Rania Mullins

Economic Development/Tourism Officer

Civic Drive

GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088

Dear Ms Mullins and Council,

RE Proposed Special Rate-Hurstbridge

I write to you in response to the letter dated 21/12/20 that was sent to all the Business Owners in Hurstbridge.

After some discussion with as many Traders as possible (who were still open during the Christmas period), we request the following:

A waiver of ONE YEAR due to Extreme COVID-19 pressures on ALL business's in the Hurstbridge Special Rate Precinct. A review of this charge then needs to take place with every Traders input.

Every Business is trying to cope with the long closures and lockdowns, which affected our community both mentally and financially. Put simply, we cannot afford this fee.

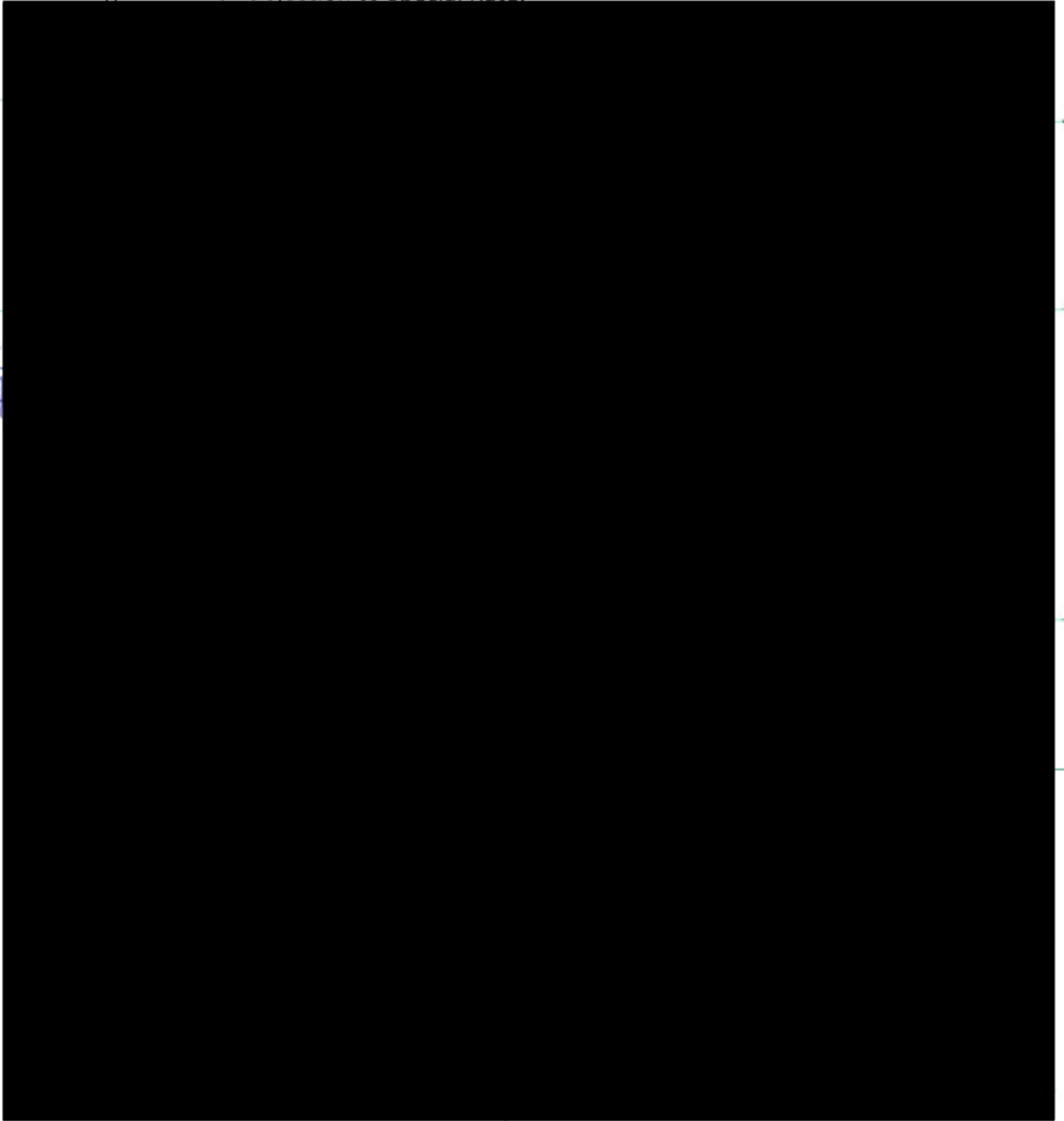
Also, there is still a lot of uncertainty in regards to COVID-19 for the next year, if not longer.

The following signatures are the Traders who are making this joint request.

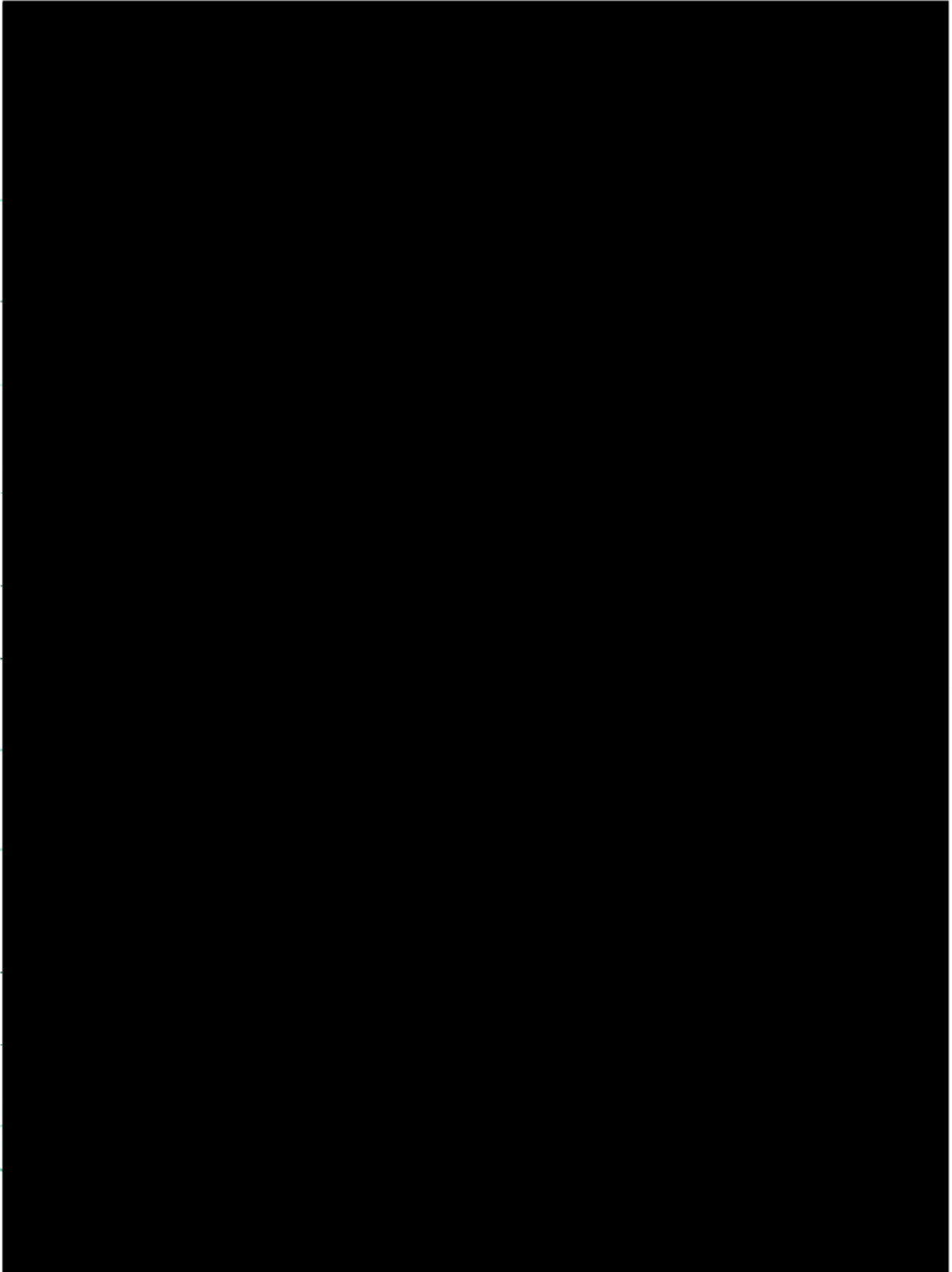
Yours Sincerely,



Signatures for Objection to Special Rate.



Signatures for Objection to Special Rate.



Signatures for Objection to Special Rate

13



6. Officers' reports

FNC.004/21 John Street and Bridge Street Proposed Road Discontinuance

Portfolio: Infrastructure

Distribution: Public

Manager: Hjalmar Philipp, Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Joseph Emmanuel, Manager Infrastructure

Summary

This report presents the submissions and objections made to Council as part of its proposal to discontinue two road reserves located at the eastern end of Bridge Street in Eltham and the eastern end of John Street in Eltham.

Having identified that these sections of road reserve were no longer required for the purpose of vehicular use, Council has proposed to discontinue these two road reserves pursuant to the statutory process under the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and retain the resultant land for public park and recreation, including pedestrian access.

A separate planning scheme amendment process, known as Amendment C126nill is being undertaken to rezone these sites from Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule (NRZ1) to Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes the 12 submissions including three objections made with respect to the proposal to discontinue two road reserves located at the eastern end of Bridge Street in Eltham and the eastern end of John Street in Eltham.
2. Considers a further report at the next available Council Meeting to resolve a position on the proposed road discontinuance relating to the eastern ends of John Street and Bridge Street in Eltham.

Attachments

- [1.](#) Council Resolution February 2020
- [2.](#) Public Notice - The Age 26 October 2020
- [3.](#) Letter to residents
- [4.](#) Summary of Submissions and Objections

Discussion

1. Officers have commenced procedures to remove the road reserve status at the non-trafficable eastern end of John Street Eltham and the non-trafficable eastern end of Bridge Street, Eltham (**Roads**) while retaining the footpath currently used as an access way.
2. Planning Scheme Amendment C126nill is being performed to rezone the land to PPRZ to formalise its open space use.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.004/21 John Street and Bridge Street Proposed Road Discontinuance**

Related Council decisions

3. At Council's Meeting on 25 February 2020, Council resolved to commence the statutory procedure to remove these Roads.
4. A copy of the Council resolution can be seen in **Attachment 1**.

Options

5. As part of considering the submissions and objections received, Council at the next Council Meeting will be presented an officers recommendation. This recommendation may consider (but not be limited to) the following options:
 - a) Resolve to abandon the road discontinuance.
 - b) Resolve to discontinue the road as per the advertised plans.
 - c) Resolve to reduce the discontinuance area, and must contain the new boundaries within the area advertised as part of the proposed discontinuance.
 - d) In addition to b) or c) above, resolve to start the process to include a new area of road to be discontinued.
6. Any decision to increase the area associated with the current discontinuance proposal would require this new proposal (including any existing area(s) of the proposal currently being considered) to go through a further round of s.223 of the *Local Government Act* public notice periods.

Council plans and policies

7. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - a) Improve the appearance of public spaces.

Sustainability implications

8. Alongside the proposed road discontinuance it is proposed that the area be planted and beautified to provide improved amenity and environmental outcomes.

Community engagement

9. In accordance with s.223 of the Act, public notice of Council's intention to discontinue the road was published in The Age on 26 October 2020. A copy of the Public Notice was also placed on notice boards, directly adjacent to both ends of the proposed discontinuance areas and letters were sent to residents within the directly surrounding area.
10. A copy of the public notice can be seen in **Attachment 2**.
11. A copy of the letter sent to residents can be seen in **Attachment 3**.
12. Written submissions were required to be submitted to Council on or before 22 November 2020.
13. A total of 12 written submissions were received, including three objections to the proposal.
14. A summary of the submissions and objections received can be seen in **Attachment 4**.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.004/21 John Street and Bridge Street Proposed Road Discontinuance

15. A separate planning scheme amendment process, known as Amendment C126nill is being undertaken to rezone these sites from Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 1 (NRZ1) to Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).
16. Public Exhibition of C126nill is scheduled to start 7 January 2021 and end 18 February 2021. Submissions and recommendation to go to a Panel Hearing will go to the 23 March 2021 Council Meeting.

Innovation and continuous improvement

17. Where roads are no longer considered to be reasonably required for public use, the discontinuation of those roads provides an opportunity to utilise the land for other public purposes, providing a tangible community benefit.

Collaboration

18. Given that this report concerns the status of two road reserves located within the municipality, collaboration with other Council was not considered to be necessary.
19. Separate inquiries were received by the Honourable Shaun Leane, Minister for Local Government and the Honourable Ben Carroll Minister for Road and Road Safety in August 2020, relating to the temporary bollards Council installed at the John Street end on 25 July 2020.
20. Council has responded to the Department of Transport who have worked on a response to the inquiry on behalf of the Minister for Road and Road Safety
21. Council is yet to hear from the Minister for Local Government on the matter.

Budget implications

22. Costs associated with the proposed discontinuance can be accommodated in the current operating budget.

Relevant law

23. Council's powers over roads are outlined in section 206 and Schedule 10 of the Act.
24. Pursuant to clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the Act, a Council may discontinue a road or part of a road by a notice published in the Government Gazette.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

25. Given that this report concerns the status of two road reserves located within the municipality, there are no applicable regional, state or national plans or policies which apply.

Conflicts of interest

26. All staff involved in the preparation of this report, have declared in writing that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

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THE MOTION WAS PUT TO THE VOTE AND CARRIED AND BECAME THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Clarke

SECONDED: Cr John Dumaresq

That Council:

1. Commences procedures to remove the road reserve status at the non-trafficable eastern end of John Street Eltham and proceeds to rezone the land to Public Park and Recreation Zone linking it to the adjoining linear reserve.
2. Commences procedures to remove the road reserve status at the non-trafficable eastern end of Bridge Street Eltham and proceeds to rezone the land to Public Park and Recreation Zone retaining the footpath currently used as an access way link.
3. Installs bollards at the end of the John Street kerb and channel to prevent vehicles from parking on the reserve and Council-owned land whilst retaining existing constructed driveway access to abutting residential properties.
4. Commences the procedure to create a Friends of John Street Reserve group to assist in the care and maintenance of this small pocket reserve.

21

Ordinary Meeting of Council Minutes

25 February 2020

13. Notices of Motion

NOM.002/20 – John Street Reserve and John Street and Bridge Street Eltham Road Closure

-
5. Immediately calls a meeting of abutting residents to discuss a proposed design and planting schedule for the pocket reserve.

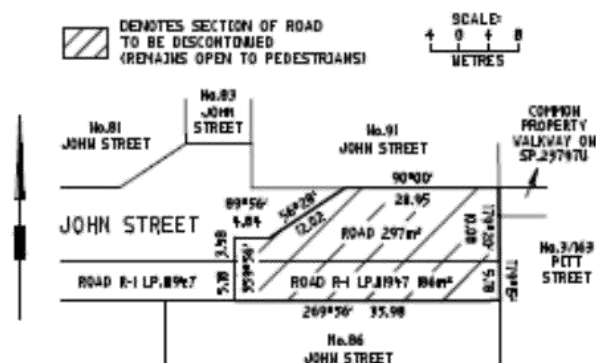
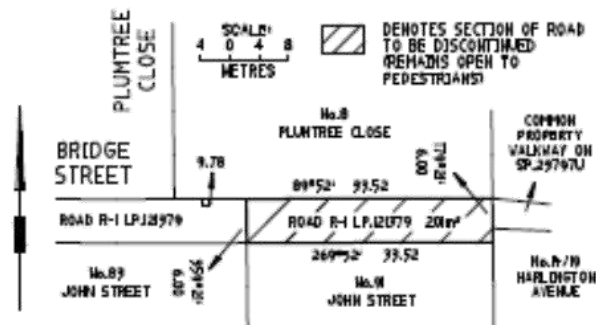
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Attachment 2 – Public Advert in The Age on 26 October 2020

Nillumbik Shire Council

Nillumbik Shire Council is proposing under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to discontinue the portions of roads shown hatched on the plans below, and take ownership of the resultant land. Despite any discontinuance, Council will retain pedestrian access.



Any person may make a submission under section 223 of the Act regarding the proposal and additionally request in the submission that the person wishes to appear in person, or to be represented by a person specified in the submission, at a meeting to be heard in support of the submission.

Submissions should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and must be received by 24 November 2020 either by email to nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or by post to PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088.

Subsidiary



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Enquiries: Joseph Emmanuel
Telephone: 9433 3200

26 October 2020

«Owner_Details_1»
«Owner_Details_2»
«Owner_Details_3»
«Owner_Details_4»
«Owner_Details_5»

Dear «Owner_Details_1»

Re: Road reservation discontinuance proposal

I am writing to you as a resident of John Street and Bridge Street and/or of the surrounding area to advise of Council's proposal to remove the road reserve status of sections of John Street and Bridge Street in Eltham.

Council at its Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 February 2020 resolved, amongst other things to:

1. Commence procedures to remove the road reserve status at the non-trafficable eastern end of John Street Eltham and proceed to rezone the land to Public Park and Recreation Zone linking it to the adjoining reserve.
2. Commence procedures to remove the road reserve status at the non-trafficable eastern end of Bridge Street Eltham and proceed to rezone the land to Public Park and Recreation Zone retaining the footpath currently used as an access way link.

A copy of the full minutes and resolution is available on the Nillumbik website at www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

To commence this process Council has formally declared its intention to discontinue these roads as part of a public notice, placed on both Council's website and The Age.

A copy of this notice is enclosed for your information.

The notice shows the areas proposed to be discontinued and of importance is noting Council's intention for both these areas to remain open for pedestrians, should the discontinuance proceed.



As part of the proposal Council is inviting submissions under section 223 of the Act and additionally you may request in the submission that you wish to appear in person, or to be represented by a person specified in the submission, at a meeting to be heard in support of the submission. Please note, that with current COVID-19 restrictions all Council meetings are being conducted virtually.

At this stage, a date for submissions to be heard has not been scheduled, however those expressing an interest to be heard by Council will be contacted and advised in advance of the proposed date.

Submissions should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and must be received by 24 November 2020 either by email to nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or by post to PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088.

Should you require further information with respect to this letter please contact Joseph Emmanuel, Manager Infrastructure on 9433 3200.

Yours sincerely

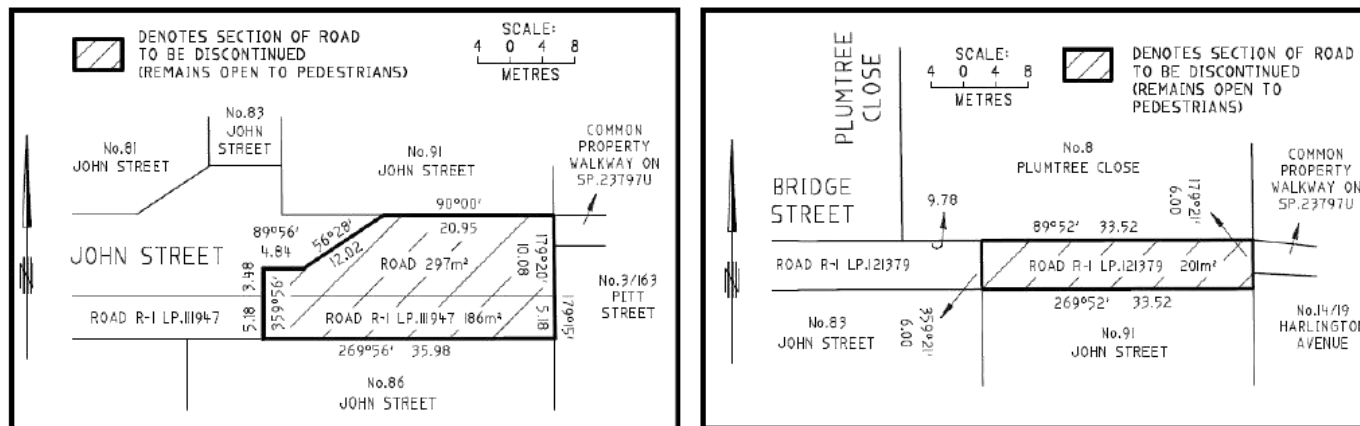
Hjalmar Philipp
Director Operations & Infrastructure

John Street and Bridge Street

Road Reservation Discontinuance Proposal



Council is proposing under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1989 to discontinue the portions of roads shown hatched on the plans below, and take ownership of the resultant land. Despite any discontinuance, Council will retain pedestrian access.



Any person may make a submission under section 223 of the Act regarding the proposal and additionally request in the submission that the person wishes to appear in person, or to be represented by a person specified in the submission, at a meeting to be heard in support of the submission.

Submissions should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and must be received by 24 November 2020 either by email to nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or by post to PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088.

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Attachment 4 – Summary of Submissions

Submission	Summary of submission
1	Received on 26 October 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. Provides safe pedestrian access, passive recreational space, adds to the amenity of the area and increased planting of vegetation enhances native birdlife and wildlife
2	Received on 12 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. Both areas are used for walking and other forms of exercise Maintaining public open space makes a difference to habitat, shade and beauty.
3	Received on 23 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads however wants the western end of the road discontinuance to be extended to align with the intersection of Plumtree Close.
4	Received on 23 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads as it will improve pedestrian safety, amenity and the local habitat. The proposal preserves a community asset and maintains a highly utilised pedestrian link.
5	Received on 24 November Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. The roads provide pedestrian access which is also used by children accessing the local primary school.
6	Received on 24 November Objects to the proposal to discontinue the roads. Wishes to acquire the road reserve located at the eastern end of John Street, Eltham based on their continual occupation of the land.
7	Received on 24 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. Walkway is used by many residents. It would be unsafe to allow vehicles to access the pathway due to the obstruction caused by their garage. Is seeking a reserve realignment at Bridge Street.
8	Received on 2 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. Maintains green areas and canopy overlay which contribute to character of the immediate location and surrounding areas. The removal of common treed space would erode cultural and heritage attributes. Frequently used as a walkway so provides important pedestrian access.
9	Received on 23 November 2020 Objects to the proposal to discontinue the roads as it will remove access rights however will accept the discontinuance if Council allows an extended crossover to be constructed.
10	Received on 2 November 2020 Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. Avoids the intrusion of vehicle traffic into an area which is accessed by pedestrians. Provides for the preservation of the pedestrian reserve which with appropriate landscaping allows the area to retain both beauty and character. Prevents excess traffic noise and inappropriate development.
11	Received on 5 November Supportive of Council's proposal to discontinue the roads. No reasons given in support of the position.
12	Received 20 November 2020 Objects to the proposal to discontinue the roads as it will remove access rights.

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6. Officers' reports**FNC.005/21 De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat Special Charge Scheme**

Portfolio: Infrastructure**Distribution: Public****Manager: Hjalmar Philipp, Director Operations and Infrastructure****Author: Vladimir Mistic, Project Engineer****Summary**

Following a consultation process Council resolved on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.138/20) to declare a Special Charge Scheme to construct De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat.

Council's notice of its intention to declare a scheme was publicly advertised in *The Age* newspaper on 14 September 2020.

A letter and notice of the proposal was sent to all property owners with a liability under the scheme. Council has received correspondence from one affected property owner that constitutes a submission and objection under the *Local Government Act 1989 (the Act)*.

This report recommends that the Committee refers a decision regarding the formal declaration of De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme, to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes that one submission and one objection was received for the Special Charge Scheme to construct De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat..
2. Refers a decision regarding the formal declaration of the De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme, Yarrambat (between Ironbark Road and Hacketts Road) to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Attachments

- [↓1. De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat - Special Charge Scheme Area](#)
- [↓2. Guidelines for apportionment of costs](#)
- [↓3. Apportionment to affected properties](#)
- [↓4. Summary of submission received by Council](#)

Discussion

1. Consultation to date has involved initial and formal questionnaires being sent to all property owners in the scheme, public information sessions and task group meetings, to finalise the design details for the road.
2. Council resolved its intention to declare the De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme, Yarrambat (between Ironbark Road and Hacketts Road) on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.138/20). Property owners were notified of the resolution via public notice

6. Officers' Report**FNC.005/21 De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat Special Charge Scheme**

in *The Age* newspaper on 14 September 2020. A letter and a notice of the proposal was sent to all property owners with a liability to the scheme.

3. Both the public notice and the letter sent to the property owners of intention to declare a scheme outlined the rights of any person to make a submission under Section 223 or an objection under Section 163B of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), in relation to this Special Charge Scheme. Submissions and objections were to be made in writing within 28 days after the date of the public notice, so by 12 October 2020.
4. Correspondence representing one (1) objection under Section 163B of the Act, was received in relation to this Special Charge Scheme. This objection was also considered as a submission for the purposes of Section 223 of the Act. Issues raised in the objection/submission were regarding:
 - Not a “special benefit”.
 - Increased Traffic.
 - Water, drainage and dust.
 - Environment and character of the neighbourhood.
 - Unreasonable burden due to financial hardship.
5. A summary of the issues raised in the submission and an officer comment in response to each issue, is attached to this report (**Attachment 4**).

Related Council decisions

6. Council resolved on 30 April 2019 to proceed with development of a Special Charge Scheme for the sealing of De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat (Item OCM.053/19).
7. Council resolved on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.138/20), to give public notice of its intention to declare a Special Charge Scheme in accordance with Part 8 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, for the consideration of De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme, Yarrambat (between Ironbark Road and Hacketts Road).

Options

8. This report recommends that a decision regarding the declaration of De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme, be referred to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Council plans and policies

9. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - Ensure that the provision of community infrastructure responds to community needs.

Sustainability implications

10. Should a Special Charge Scheme proceed, environmental management would form part of criteria by which the contractor is selected to complete the road construction.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.005/21 De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat Special Charge Scheme

11. Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 identifies that an expected weather impact on the Shire of Nillumbik includes: 'increased number of heavy precipitation events'. The construction of De Fredericks Road, with appropriate drainage, will mitigate the risk of flooding to local properties in the event of heavy rainfall.
Community engagement
12. This project is proposed to be funded by adjoining property owners via a Special Charge Scheme. Community engagement beyond the affected property owners was not undertaken in relation to this project.
13. Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's Special Charge Schemes for Road and Drainage Works – Policy and Guidelines 2018 (**Attachment 2**) and (**Attachment 3**). Information sessions for all residents and meetings with task group members to finalise design details for the street were held. All affected property owners have been advised of Council's intention to declare the scheme and their rights to make submissions or objections to this.

Innovation and continuous improvement

14. Not applicable.

Collaboration

15. Not applicable.

Budget implications

16. Council has incorporated costs for administering the scheme in the current services budget. The survey and other scheme development costs incurred will be recovered if the scheme proceeds and the charge is levied.

Relevant law

17. The authority of Council to declare a special charge is in accordance with Section 163 of the Act.
18. The rights of a person lodge a submission are in accordance with Section 163A and Section 223 of the Act.
19. The rights of a person to lodge an objection are in accordance with Section 163B of the Act.

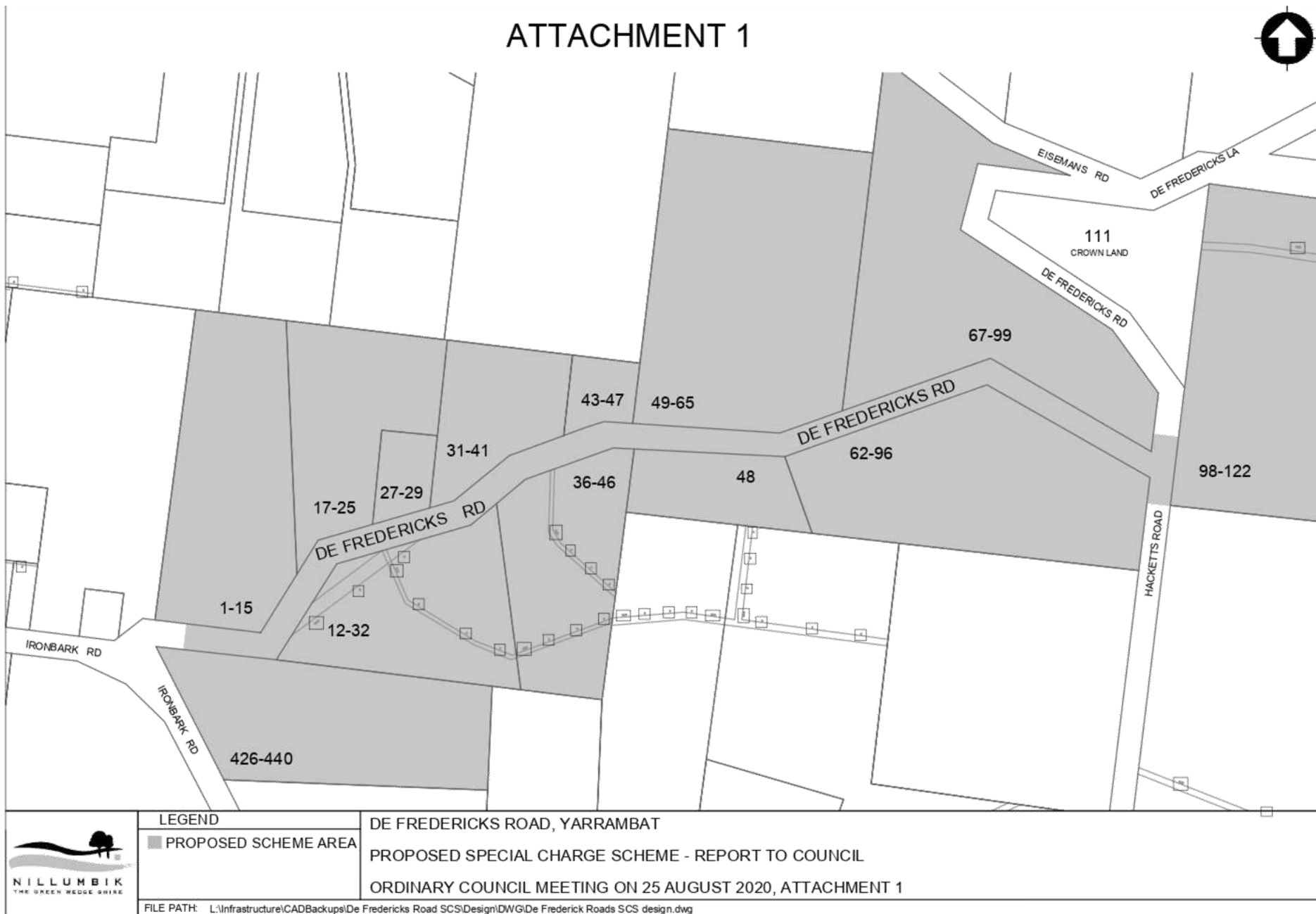
Regional, state and national plans and policies

20. Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

21. The officers involved in the preparation of this report do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

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ATTACHMENT 2

6 GUIDELINES FOR APPORTIONMENT OF COSTS FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION

6.1 Apportionment of 75% of the road construction cost on the basis of Benefit Unit

A property derives 'special benefit' through having its road constructed. This benefit may be made up of issues including reduction in dust, better/smooth access, reduced vehicle operating costs, environmental benefits and control of storm water runoff from the road. This 'benefit' is not necessarily related to the dimensions of a property, so the concept of Benefit Unit is used, as follows:

- All properties whether developed or otherwise, to which direct access may reasonably be obtained by means of the streets to be constructed in the scheme shall be apportioned one (1) Benefit Unit.
- All properties that have a sideage or rearage to the scheme shall be apportioned one half (0.5) of a Benefit Unit.
- Units or dual occupancies that have a frontage to the scheme shall be apportioned 0.6 of a Benefit Unit.
- Units or dual occupancies that have a sideage to the scheme shall be apportioned 0.3 of a Benefit Unit.
- The Benefit Unit for properties (where there is already a section of constructed road in front of their property) will be based on a percentage of constructed road versus unconstructed road.
- Properties which are considered to have subdivisional potential when the owners have demonstrated an intention to subdivide by applying for a planning permit either prior to or during the Scheme process, up to the reconciliation stage. These properties will be apportioned an extra Benefit Unit for each additional property for the purpose of being "fair and equitable" in regards to the special benefit that these properties will receive.

6.2 Apportionment of 25% of the road construction cost on the basis of Amenity Unit

The benefit that a property receives from road construction varies to some extent with the exposure that it has to the road. For example, a property with a very long frontage has more exposure to the dust problem from a gravel road and, therefore, is considered to receive more benefit from construction of the road than does a property that has a smaller frontage. This difference in relative benefit is not generally proportional to the difference in dimensions between properties, which is why only 25 percent of the total cost of road construction is apportioned on this basis. The concept of Amenity Unit is as follows:

- All properties with frontage to the scheme will be proportioned one (1) Amenity Unit per metre of frontage for that property.

ATTACHMENT 2

- All properties with a sideage to the scheme will be apportioned one half (0.5) Amenity Unit per metre of sideage for that property.
- All properties with a rearage to the scheme will be proportioned one half (0.5) Amenity Unit per metre of rearage for that property.

6.3 Council Contributions

6.3.1 Council Reserves

Council owned reserves within the scheme area will attract a liability in accordance with **section 6.1** and **6.2** of these guidelines. Council (as the land owner) shall be responsible for this liability. This does not include land designated as road reserve.

6.3.2 Exempt Land

Council is responsible for the liability of any land that is exempt from Special Charge Schemes (under the *Local Government Act 1989*). This generally applies to Crown Land within the scheme area. This liability shall be in accordance with **section 6.1** and **6.2** of these guidelines.

6.3.3 Community Benefit:

In addition to the special benefit derived by those properties with direct abuttal or sole access from a road, Council will make a contribution for 'community benefit' in cases where the construction standard needs to be increased beyond that of a typical residential street, to cater for through traffic. The level of Council's contribution will be based on the cost differential between the required standard and the standard that would be required solely for local traffic.

6.3.4 Direct Financial Contribution

Council may consider a financial contribution if it wishes to upgrade or replace existing infrastructure within the scheme area, at the same time as the works.

Council may also consider a financial contribution, where it has been determined that the scheme will provide benefit to those not included in the scheme.

6.3.5 Limits to Council Contributions

The limit on Council's contribution to a scheme for Council owned land and exempt land will not exceed \$1,000 per average property involved in the scheme without specific Council approval. Should the required Council contribution exceed \$10,000 in total, it will need to be considered as part of the Council's Capital Works budget estimates process.

This is to ensure both equity and financial control, to manage Council's obligations in cases where the contribution required for exempt land may be an excessive subsidy provided to individual property owners by the ratepayers of Nillumbik. It provides guidelines to affected property owners in the case where high Council contributions may arise and simply means that such a case would need to go through the Council approval and budget process.

Whilst Council shall make a financial contribution as outlined above, Council is excluded from voting procedures to determine whether or not the scheme proceeds.

ATTACHMENT 3 - APPORTIONMENT DE FREDERICKS ROAD SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME, YARRAMBAT - 13 PROPERTIES

Property Address	Frontage (m)	Sideage/ Rearage	Abuttal Unit	Abuttal Cost	Access Benefit Unit	Access Benefit Cost	Total Cost
1-15 De Fredericks Road	143.63	0	143.63	7879.84	1	\$24,211.19	\$32,091.04
12-32 De Fredericks Road	238.24	0	238.24	13070.17	1	\$24,211.19	\$37,281.36
17-25 De Fredericks Road	80.70	0	80.70	4427.25	1	\$24,211.19	\$28,638.44
27-29 De Fredericks Road	49.17	0	49.17	2697.50	1	\$24,211.19	\$26,908.69
31-41 De Fredericks Road	129.24	0	129.24	7089.92	1	\$24,211.19	\$31,301.11
36-46 De Fredericks Road	124.72	0	124.72	6842.44	1	\$24,211.19	\$31,053.63
426-440 Ironbark Road	0	78.50	39.25	2153.28	0.5	\$12,105.60	\$14,258.87
43-47 De Fredericks Road	58.64	0	58.64	3216.88	1	\$24,211.19	\$27,428.08
48 De Fredericks Road	127.06	0	127.06	6970.59	1	\$24,211.19	\$31,181.78
49-65 De Fredericks Road	176.02	0	176.02	9656.56	1	\$24,211.19	\$33,867.75
62-96 De Fredericks Road	331.52	0	331.52	18187.38	1	\$24,211.19	\$42,398.58
67-99 De Fredericks Road	283.85	0	283.85	15572.07	1	\$24,211.19	\$39,783.27
98-122 De Fredericks Road	56.80	0	56.80	3116.08	1	\$24,211.19	\$27,327.27
			1838.84		12.5		\$403,519.88

TOTAL SCHEME COST	\$403,519.88
COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION	\$0.00
AMOUNT TO BE LEVIED	\$403,519.88

ABUTTAL RATE PER METER	\$54.86
BENEFIT RATE PER UNIT	\$24,211.19

ABUTTAL PERCENTAGE	25%
ACCESS BENEFIT PERCENTAGE	75%

TOTAL ABUTTAL COST	\$100,879.97
TOTAL ACCESS BENEFIT COST	\$302,639.91

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Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
<p>Not a “special benefit”</p> <p>As per section 163 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> (Vic), the Council can only defray costs to residents if the Council considers that the performance of the function or the exercise of the power is or will be of special benefit to the persons required to pay the special rate or special charge.</p> <p>You propose that De Fredericks Road residents are to bear 100% of the costs of the proposed project. This means you take the provisional view, at least, that they are the only residents who will benefit from the scheme.</p> <p>However, per 6.3.3 of your <i>Special Charge Schemes for Road and Drainage Works Policy & Guidelines</i>, the Council is required to make a contribution where there is a wider 'community benefit' involved.</p> <p>I assert that the road upgrade provides general, community benefits in the form of a higher standard road for through traffic, which will increase as a result of the improved road surface and also water drainage improvements which will have "downstream" community benefits as a whole. The general rather than special benefit in relation to water drainage I elaborate on below. Therefore, I say that De Fredericks Road residents should not bear the full burden of the proposal themselves.</p>	<p>The 'Special Charge Scheme' legislation under Section 163 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> (the Act), enables Council to recover the cost of the works from property owners, for works that will be of special benefit to them. De Fredericks Road is classified as an access road, which predominantly serves to provide access to properties in the local area. The construction of local residential streets is seen to primarily benefit the people that live in those streets. It is also worth noting that property owners have funded construction of the vast majority of residential streets in the Shire. This has happened either directly through the Special Charge Schemes (or Private Street Schemes under the old 1958 Act) or indirectly through developers constructing roads at the time of subdivision, when the cost of construction is then passed on to the purchaser. Under The Act, Council can levy a charge to adjoining property owners only once for the purpose of sealing the road and is required to take on the responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the road at the upgraded standard.</p> <p>Council will make a contribution for 'community benefit' in cases where the construction standard needs to be increased beyond that of a typical residential street, to cater for through traffic. The level of Council's contribution would be based on the cost difference between the typical construction standard for a local access road and any higher standard required to cater for external factors. The construction standard proposed for De Fredericks Road Special Charge Scheme is typical for a local access road and therefore Council would not be contributing based on the 'community benefit'.</p>

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
<p>Increased Traffic</p> <p>As mentioned at the Task-group meeting 1 (held on 26 September 2019), traffic is of concern to the residents of De Fredericks Road due the sealing of the road. However, increasing the lanes on De Fredericks Road creates more of a thoroughfare and increased pressure on traffic, exacerbating the problem raised in meeting 1, not decreasing traffic. This creates an alternate "rat-run" to Yan Yean and Ironbark Roads, benefitting general commuters and increasing through traffic and noise for the residents (Fig 1). Your proposal means that general benefits will flow to those commuters as a result of raising a special levy. I object to that.</p>	<p>At its first meeting the Task Group did raise concerns about vehicle speeds and volumes due to road sealing. At the second Task Group meeting (held on 11 March 2020) there were discussions of including two speed humps within the road design along the western side of De Fredericks Road and using a 'special' asphalt mix at the intersection of De Fredericks Road and Hacketts Road to deter reported hooning incidents by the Task Group.</p> <p>De Fredericks Road is a two way traffic local access road and it is proposed to remain two way after the road sealing. The existing road widths and alignment will be maintained, with some localised widening to improve road safety agreed with the Task Group.</p> <p>Council conducts traffic speed and volume surveys before road and up to 12 months after road sealing. Furthermore, Council is advocating for an expedited Local Area Traffic Management Plan to be delivered by Major Roads Projects Victoria prior to construction works commencing on Yan Yean Road Stage 2 to support the local road network and mitigate against construction traffic related congestion.</p> <p>Council will continue to monitor traffic conditions along De Fredericks Road as part of implementing the Special Charge Scheme and the Yan Yean Road Stage 2 upgrade works.</p>

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
<p>Water, drainage and dust</p> <p>Drainage was raised as an issue at meeting 3 (held 25th March 2020), which was stated as causing "erosion downstream". The proposed upgrade to drains to improve water run-off and mitigate this issue is of general utility to the area. This includes surrounding streets and provides general environmental improvement with regard to erosion issues. Again, I say that the cost of a general benefit should be borne generally rather than specifically, so I object on that basis.</p>	<p>There is existing erosion within the water course running through 12-32 De Fredericks Road and there are concerns that by sealing the road this problem would be made worse. It is not expected that the scheme can solve the erosion issue on this property, however at its third meeting the Task Group agreed that additional cut off drains are formalised directing road runoff into 12-32 De Fredericks Road to minimise the concentration of stormwater at a single location (the road crossing culvert) and to construct rock beaching to mitigate erosion at that location.</p>
<p>Environment and character of the neighbourhood</p> <p>The road is currently wide enough for one vehicle (stated in meeting 3). As per the photos attached (Fig 2 and 3), widening of lanes will result in loss of trees and destruction of vegetation. This further negatively impacts on the character of the Neighbourhood and the wildlife in this "green-wedge". I object to the special levy on this basis.</p>	<p>As stated above in 'Officer comment about Increased Traffic' the existing road widths and alignment will generally reflect existing road width conditions. At its third meeting the Task Group agreed that the road should be wide enough to allow for at least two cars to pass. The concern mainly related to the section of road adjacent to 27-29 De Fredericks Road, which was proposed to be four metres wide. After further consideration it was determined that by asphalted table drains at this location a driveable width could be achieved to allow for two cars to pass, without widening the road pavement or a need to further remove trees.</p> <p>The design seeks to minimise impact on neighbourhood character by minimising tree and vegetation removal. There are two trees (one dead) and one stump proposed to be removed as part of the design.</p>

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
<p>Unreasonable burden due to financial hardship</p> <p>The cost of this project is imposing an unreasonable financial burden on me. I am currently living off a single pension income of approximately \$944 per fortnight. The total of my pension goes toward my everyday living expenses and a loan of approximately \$380,000, leaving me with little to no disposable income. Additionally, I am also suffering from medical issues and will require hip surgery in the near future. The costs of this treatment will further exacerbate my already dire financial circumstances. I will not be able to work for the foreseeable future due to these health issues. I have been seeing a counsellor for the stress that this road is causing me, financially which I cannot afford.</p>	<p>Where a ratepayer is experiencing financial hardship and is unable to make required repayments or has overdue rates/charges, they can apply to make a payment agreement with Council. The application form can be found on the Council website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au, under the heading 'Council', 'Rates and rates calculations', 'About Council rates', 'Overdue rates'.</p>

6. Officers' reports**FNC.006/21 Rockliffe Street, Eltham - Special Charge Scheme**

Portfolio: Infrastructure**Distribution: Public****Manager: Hjalmar Philipp, Director Operations and Infrastructure****Author: Patrick Wood, Design Coordinator
 Vladimir Misic, Project Engineer****Summary**

Following a consultation process Council resolved on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.139/20), to declare a Special Charge Scheme to construct Rockliffe Street, Eltham.

Council's notice of its intention to declare a scheme was publicly advertised in *The Age* newspaper on 14 September 2020.

A letter and notice of the proposal was sent to all property owners with a liability under the scheme. Council has received seven pieces of correspondence from affected property owners which constitute a submission and two pieces of correspondence constituting an objection under the *Local Government Act 1989*.

This report recommends that the Committee refers a decision regarding the formal declaration of the Rockliffe Street Special Charge Scheme, to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes that seven submissions and two objections were received for the Special Charge Scheme to construct Rockliffe Street, Eltham..
2. Refers a decision regarding the formal declaration of the Rockliffe Street Special Charge Scheme, to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Attachments

- [↓1. Rockliffe Street, Eltham - Special Charge Scheme Area](#)
- [↓2. Guidelines for apportionment of costs](#)
- [↓3. Apportionment to affected properties](#)
- [↓4. Summary of submissions received by Council](#)

Discussion

1. Council resolved its intention to declare the Rockliffe Street Special Charge Scheme on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.139/20). Property owners were notified of the resolution via public notice in *The Age* newspaper on 14 September 2020. A letter and notice of the proposal was sent to all property owners with a liability to the scheme.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.006/21 Rockliffe Street, Eltham - Special Charge Scheme**

2. Both the public notice and the letter sent to property owners of intention to declare a scheme outlined the rights of any person to make a submission under Section 223 or an objection under Section 163B of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), in relation to this Special Charge Scheme. Submissions and objections were to be made in writing within 28 days after the date of the public notice.
3. Correspondence representing seven (7) submissions was received by Council. Of these submissions:
 - Four were supportive of the scheme;
 - Two were not supportive of the scheme;
 - One was supportive of the scheme, but disagrees with the distribution of the charge.
4. A summary of the issues raised in the submissions and an officer comment in response to each issue, is attached to this report (**Attachment 4**)
5. Correspondence representing two objections under Section 163B of the Act, was received in relation to this Special Charge Scheme. These objections were also considered as submissions for the purposes of Section 223 of the Act.

Related Council decisions

6. Council resolved on 28 May 2019 to proceed with the consultation process for the Rockliffe Street Special Charge Scheme (Item OCM.070/19).
7. Council resolved on 25 August 2020 (Item OCM.139/20), to give public notice of its intention to declare a Special Charge Scheme in accordance with Part 8 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, for the construction of the full length of Rockliffe Street.

Options

8. This report recommends that a decision regarding the declaration of the Rockliffe Street Special Charge Scheme, be referred to the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Council plans and policies

9. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
 - Ensure that the provision of community infrastructure responds to community needs.

Sustainability implications

10. Should a Special Charge Scheme proceed, environmental management would form part of the criteria by which the contractor is selected to complete the road construction.
11. Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 identifies that an expected weather impact on the Shire of Nillumbik includes: 'increased number of heavy precipitation events'. The construction of Rockliffe Street, with appropriate drainage, will mitigate the risk of flooding to local properties in the event of heavy rainfall.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.006/21 Rockliffe Street, Eltham - Special Charge Scheme

Community engagement

12. Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's Special Charge Schemes for Road and Drainage Works – Policy and Guidelines. Information sessions for all residents and meetings with task group members to finalise design details for the street were held. All affected property owners have been advised of Council's intention to declare the scheme and their rights to make submissions or objections to this.

Innovation and continuous improvement

13. Not applicable.

Collaboration

14. Not applicable.

Budget implications

15. Council has incorporated costs for administering the scheme in the current services budget. The survey and design costs incurred will be recovered if the scheme proceeds and the charge is levied.

Relevant law

16. The authority of Council to declare a special charge is in accordance with Section 163 of the Act.
17. The rights of a person lodge a submission are in accordance with Section 163A and Section 223 of the Act.
18. The rights of a person to lodge an objection are in accordance with Section 163B of the Act.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

19. Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

20. The officers involved in the preparation of this report do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

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ATTACHMENT 2

6 GUIDELINES FOR APPORTIONMENT OF COSTS FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION

6.1 Apportionment of 75% of the road construction cost on the basis of Benefit Unit

A property derives 'special benefit' through having its road constructed. This benefit may be made up of issues including reduction in dust, better/smooth access, reduced vehicle operating costs, environmental benefits and control of storm water runoff from the road. This 'benefit' is not necessarily related to the dimensions of a property, so the concept of Benefit Unit is used, as follows:

- All properties whether developed or otherwise, to which direct access may reasonably be obtained by means of the streets to be constructed in the scheme shall be apportioned one (1) Benefit Unit.
- All properties that have a sideage or rearage to the scheme shall be apportioned one half (0.5) of a Benefit Unit.
- Units or dual occupancies that have a frontage to the scheme shall be apportioned 0.6 of a Benefit Unit.
- Units or dual occupancies that have a sideage to the scheme shall be apportioned 0.3 of a Benefit Unit.
- The Benefit Unit for properties (where there is already a section of constructed road in front of their property) will be based on a percentage of constructed road versus unconstructed road.
- Properties which are considered to have subdivisional potential when the owners have demonstrated an intention to subdivide by applying for a planning permit either prior to or during the Scheme process, up to the reconciliation stage. These properties will be apportioned an extra Benefit Unit for each additional property for the purpose of being "fair and equitable" in regards to the special benefit that these properties will receive.

6.2 Apportionment of 25% of the road construction cost on the basis of Amenity Unit

The benefit that a property receives from road construction varies to some extent with the exposure that it has to the road. For example, a property with a very long frontage has more exposure to the dust problem from a gravel road and, therefore, is considered to receive more benefit from construction of the road than does a property that has a smaller frontage. This difference in relative benefit is not generally proportional to the difference in dimensions between properties, which is why only 25 percent of the total cost of road construction is apportioned on this basis. The concept of Amenity Unit is as follows:

- All properties with frontage to the scheme will be proportioned one (1) Amenity Unit per metre of frontage for that property.

ATTACHMENT 2

- All properties with a sideage to the scheme will be apportioned one half (0.5) Amenity Unit per metre of sideage for that property.
- All properties with a rearage to the scheme will be proportioned one half (0.5) Amenity Unit per metre of rearage for that property.

6.3 Council Contributions

6.3.1 Council Reserves

Council owned reserves within the scheme area will attract a liability in accordance with **section 6.1** and **6.2** of these guidelines. Council (as the land owner) shall be responsible for this liability. This does not include land designated as road reserve.

6.3.2 Exempt Land

Council is responsible for the liability of any land that is exempt from Special Charge Schemes (under the *Local Government Act 1989*). This generally applies to Crown Land within the scheme area. This liability shall be in accordance with **section 6.1** and **6.2** of these guidelines.

6.3.3 Community Benefit:

In addition to the special benefit derived by those properties with direct abuttal or sole access from a road, Council will make a contribution for 'community benefit' in cases where the construction standard needs to be increased beyond that of a typical residential street, to cater for through traffic. The level of Council's contribution will be based on the cost differential between the required standard and the standard that would be required solely for local traffic.

6.3.4 Direct Financial Contribution

Council may consider a financial contribution if it wishes to upgrade or replace existing infrastructure within the scheme area, at the same time as the works.

Council may also consider a financial contribution, where it has been determined that the scheme will provide benefit to those not included in the scheme.

6.3.5 Limits to Council Contributions

The limit on Council's contribution to a scheme for Council owned land and exempt land will not exceed \$1,000 per average property involved in the scheme without specific Council approval. Should the required Council contribution exceed \$10,000 in total, it will need to be considered as part of the Council's Capital Works budget estimates process.

This is to ensure both equity and financial control, to manage Council's obligations in cases where the contribution required for exempt land may be an excessive subsidy provided to individual property owners by the ratepayers of Nillumbik. It provides guidelines to affected property owners in the case where high Council contributions may arise and simply means that such a case would need to go through the Council approval and budget process.

Whilst Council shall make a financial contribution as outlined above, Council is excluded from voting procedures to determine whether or not the scheme proceeds.

ATTACHMENT 3 - APPORTIONMENT TO AFFECTED PROPERTIES

Property Address	Frontage (m)	Sideage/ Rearage	Abuttal Unit	Abuttal Cost	Access Benefit Unit	Access Benefit Cost	Total Cost
10 Rockliffe Street	10.00	0	10	\$1,453.16	1	\$11,112.37	\$12,565.53
11-13 Rockliffe Street	30.50	0	30.5	\$4,432.13	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,544.50
12 Rockliffe Street	19.60	0	19.6	\$2,848.19	1	\$11,112.37	\$13,960.56
14 Rockliffe Street	25.60	0	25.6	\$3,720.08	1	\$11,112.37	\$14,832.45
15 Rockliffe Street	30.50	0	30.5	\$4,432.13	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,544.50
166 Pitt Street	45.80	0	45.8	\$6,655.46	1	\$11,112.37	\$17,767.83
16A Rockliffe Street	1.90	0	1.9	\$276.10	1	\$11,112.37	\$11,388.47
16B Rockliffe Street	2.30	0	2.3	\$334.23	1	\$11,112.37	\$11,446.60
170 Pitt Street	0.00	26.3	13.15	\$1,910.90	0.5	\$5,556.19	\$7,467.09
18 Rockliffe Street	3.00	0	3	\$435.95	1	\$11,112.37	\$11,548.32
19-21 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
20 Rockliffe Street	27.50	0	27.5	\$3,996.18	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,108.55
22 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
23-25 Rockliffe Street	30.60	0	30.6	\$4,446.66	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,559.03
26-28 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
27-29 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
30-32 Rockliffe Street	30.50	0	30.5	\$4,432.13	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,544.50
31-33 Rockliffe Street	30.50	0	30.5	\$4,432.13	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,544.50
34 Rockliffe Street	30.50	0	30.5	\$4,432.13	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,544.50
35-37 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
38 Rockliffe Street	21.00	0	21	\$3,051.63	1	\$11,112.37	\$14,164.00
39 Rockliffe Street	20.80	0	20.8	\$3,022.57	1	\$11,112.37	\$14,134.94
40 Rockliffe Street	19.00	0	19	\$2,761.00	1	\$11,112.37	\$13,873.37
7-9 Rockliffe Street	30.40	0	30.4	\$4,417.60	1	\$11,112.37	\$15,529.97
8 Rockliffe Street	23.50	0	23.5	\$3,414.92	1	\$11,112.37	\$14,527.29
89 Mount Pleasant Road	0.00	51.70	25.85	\$3,756.41	0.5	\$5,556.19	\$9,312.59
97 Mount Pleasant Road	0.00	51.00	25.5	\$3,705.55	0.5	\$5,556.19	\$9,261.73
			650		25.5		\$377,820.63

TOTAL SCHEME COST	\$377,820.63
COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION	\$0.00
AMOUNT TO BE LEVIED	\$377,820.63

ABUTTAL RATE PER METER	\$145.32
BENEFIT RATE PER UNIT	\$11,112.37

AVERAGE	\$13,993.36
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ABUTTAL PERCENTAGE	25%
ACCESS BENEFIT PERCENTAGE	75%

TOTAL ABUTTAL COST	\$94,455.16
TOTAL ACCESS BENEFIT COST	\$283,365.47

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Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
Sealing the road will address a number existing issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate drainage - Dust - Traffic - Potholes in the road - Pedestrian Safety 	These are generally acknowledged as benefits to roads sealing, particularly with regard to drainage, dust and potholes. From a traffic perspective, sealing a road can result in increased vehicles speeds, however traffic calming measures are proposed as part of this scheme to mitigate the risk.
The majority of residents are in favour of the scheme proceeding	The results of the formal questionnaire indicated that 18 of 27 (66.7 per cent) property owners supported the development of a scheme
Wish to ensure that the tender process is fair and that the residents receive good value	The proposed works would be carried out in accordance with Council's procurement guidelines to ensure best value for the property owners contributing to the scheme. This would involve a publicly advertised tender
Traffic calming is supported as part of the scheme	A separate questionnaire was sent to all property owners in the scheme, to determine the level of support for the inclusion of traffic calming as part of the scheme. The results indicated that 66.7 per cent of property owners support the inclusion of traffic calming as part of the scheme.
Increased density of properties in the street has increased the need for road sealing.	Noted
The design needs to ensure that cars will not scrape when exiting and entering driveways to and from the street	Noted. Council officers will review levels of driveways to reduce the likelihood of vehicles scraping.

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
Would like to take up the option of having additional driveway sealed	Property owners who wish to arrange additional driveway works will be able to do so at their own cost.
Sealing the road will impact on the semi-rural neighbourhood character which was the reason for moving to the area	The majority of the roads in the immediate vicinity of Rockliffe Street are sealed, so the neighbourhood character will not be inconsistent with the surrounding area
Including kerb and channel will diminish the neighbourhood character; would be happier if it at least matched the colour of the road	Kerb and channel has been included in the design in order to provide better drainage protection to the properties on the low side of Rockliffe Street. To minimise it's visual impact, kerb and channel has only been included on the low side of the road, with the high side of the road to remain an open (sealed) table drain.
Not satisfied that the drainage works included in the design will address the current drainage issues; larger culverts and deeper table drains are required	The design of the road will provide a higher level of drainage protection to the property owners than is currently provided. Larger table drains and culverts would provide higher capacity, however this would also result in a larger drop-off from the road edge (which can be a safety hazard) and reduce the amount of driveable road width available for vehicles.
The proposed traffic calming and accompanying lighting will result in more light pollution, diminishing the character of the street	Current standards require that traffic calming treatments, such as the road humps proposed for Rockliffe Street, be sufficiently illuminated. However additional lighting is a consideration for many residents, which is one of the reasons that a separate questionnaire was conducted to determine the support for traffic calming.

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
Sealing the road will make it less safe for pedestrians; a narrow unsealed 'footpad' will suffice as opposed to a footpath	There is no footpath proposed as part of the scheme. However, the need for a footpath was raised throughout the consultation process. It was highlighted by officers that any footpath would need to be considered in accordance with Council's Footpath Strategy. In accordance with the strategy, Rockliffe Street is currently listed on the footpath priority list, but funding was not allocated in the 20/21 capital works program. It will remain on the priority list and be considered for funding in future years.
Sealing the road will require a footpath, however there is insufficient room for a footpath in the section of road from 27 - 31 Rockliffe Street	This design consideration would be addressed, should a footpath for Rockliffe Street receive future funding.
The unsealed road already has a natural calming effect on the traffic	Unsealed roads typically attract lower vehicle speeds. However, along with traffic, the major issues highlighted throughout the scheme consultation process have been 'dust' and 'drainage' which can be more adequately addressed by sealing the road.
The maintenance costs to Council are the same for both sealed and unsealed roads	<p>This is read as indicating that there is no material benefit to Council by sealing the road as it has been claimed that the costs difference between the upkeep of a sealed and unsealed road are the same.</p> <p>In the case of a scheme, its implementation is solely dependent on the aggregated vote of each scheme member and maintenance costs would only be a consideration should this be important to any one of those voting members.</p>
As it is, the road offers a limited wildlife corridor	The design has aimed to reduce the impact of the works on the area by being predominantly contained within the existing footprint of the road.

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
Concerns about the scheme process and requesting the votes to reviewed	All questionnaire responses received have been reviewed and the results confirmed to be correct. Of 27 property owners, all returned the questionnaire. Of these, 18 supported a special charge scheme and 9 were not supportive.
Not concerned with the dust and stormwater problems	The Special Charge Scheme policy recognises that each property owner will view the benefits of road sealing differently. For this reason, for a scheme to proceed, the policy requires support from at least 60 percent of the property owners involved.
<p>Property is being charged a full benefit and frontage unit. However the previous proposal for a scheme (in 2003) apportioned half benefit and sideage units.</p> <p>The property also contributed to a previous scheme for the construction of Pitt Street (in 1980) and was charged the full frontage portion at the time.</p>	<p>The Special Charge Scheme policy has been updated since the previous investigation into a scheme for Rockliffe Street and the current proposal was prepared independent of the previous investigation and apportionment. A notable time has lapsed since the 1980 Pitt Street Scheme, including changes in Legislation and Council Policy. Therefore, this property and the apportionment methodology has been assessed based on current Legislation and Council policy.</p> <p>Under the policy, the 'Guidelines for apportionment of costs for road construction' states <i>'All properties whether developed or otherwise, to which direct access may reasonably be obtained by means of the streets to be constructed in the scheme shall be apportioned one (1) Benefit Unit'</i>.</p> <p>The guidelines also state <i>'All properties with frontage to the scheme will be proportioned one (1) Amenity Unit per metre of frontage for that property'</i>.</p> <p>The property in question has been treated as having 'frontage' to Rockliffe Street as this is primary point of vehicle access.</p>

Attachment 4 – Summary of submissions received by Council

Comment	Officer Comment
<p>Property has no direct access to Rockliffe Street. It also does not use Rockliffe Street as the road is restricted to 'left-out' into Pitt St. Therefore the apportionment is excessive relative to the benefit received.</p>	<p>Under the Special Charge Scheme policy, the 'Guidelines for apportionment of costs for road construction' costs are not only apportioned on the basis of direct access, but also sideage to the road being constructed.</p> <p>The guidelines state that <i>'All properties that have a sideage or rearage to the scheme shall be apportioned one half (0.5) of a Benefit Unit'</i> and <i>'All properties with a sideage to the scheme will be apportioned one half (0.5) Amenity Unit per metre of sideage for that property'</i>. For the property in question, both of these conditions apply.</p> <p>Furthermore, the principle of benefit which underpins these guidelines and Sec. 163 of <i>the Act</i> not only applies to the property as it is currently used, but also to how it may potentially be used in the future. Therefore, the guidelines allow a property with sideage (or rearage), but no formalised vehicle access to be apportioned costs (at half the rate of a property with direct access and frontage).</p>

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6. Officers' reports**FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy**

Portfolio: Finance and Governance**Distribution:** Public**Manager:** Blaga Naumoski, Executive Manager Governance, Communications and Engagement**Author:** Bianca Caruso, Marketing and Community Engagement Officer
Licardo Prince, Communications and Advocacy Lead**Summary**

As part of the *Local Government Act (Act) 2020*, it is now a statutory obligation for all Victorian councils to have a Community Engagement Policy in place on or before 1 March 2021.

The policy outlines our commitment to provide the community with genuine opportunities to contribute to and inform projects, strategies, services and decisions that affect them.

The intent of this policy is to provide clarity about how Council will fulfil its commitment to engaging with the community in line with the Act.

An initial phase of community engagement was undertaken from 26 October 2020 to 15 November 2020 for community feedback on how they like to be engaged and to identify areas for improvement.

These findings helped to shape and inform the draft Community Engagement Policy which was then released for a second phase of community consultation from 16 December 2020 to 26 January 2021. A report of findings is attached (**Attachment 1**).

The general consensus was that the broad principles and approach mapped out in the policy – including its adherence to the IAP2 core values and to deliberative engagement – was positive. The feedback received clearly prioritised ensuring that the principles contained in the policy were put into practice.

Minor amendments (primarily for style and grammar) have been made to the draft Community Engagement Policy (**Attachment 2**).

The purpose of this meeting is to hear further submissions on the draft Community Engagement Policy.

Following the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting, any necessary changes and recommendations will be made before the final version of the Community Engagement Policy is brought to Council for adoption at its meeting on 23 February 2021.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

- a) Receives and notes the Community Engagement Findings Report including all submissions (**Attachment 1**) on the draft Community Engagement Policy.
- b) Requests that officers consider the matters contained in the written and verbal submissions during finalisation of the Community Engagement Policy.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy

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- c) Provides any additional input to the Community Engagement Policy before the Policy is due to be endorsed at the next Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.
 - d) Requests that officers thank submitters and provide a written response to their submissions.
 - e) Notes that the final Community Engagement Policy will be designed and presented to Council for adoption at the Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

Attachments

- [1. Community Engagement Findings Report](#)
- [2. Draft Community Engagement Policy](#)

Discussion

1. Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), the Community Engagement Policy must be developed with input from the community and include the following elements:
 - a) an overview of the types and forms of engagement Nillumbik will use;
 - b) outline how Nillumbik will 'close the loop' on engagement opportunities;
 - c) include representative and deliberative engagement practices;
 - d) include the engagement principles in section 56 of the Act; and
 - e) be capable of being applied to Council Laws, budget and policy development.
2. The Community Engagement Policy must be in place before engagement on Council's strategic documents can occur. There is a greater emphasis on engagement being representative as well as deliberative in developing Council's long-term Community Vision, 4 year Council Plan, 10 year Financial Plan and 10 year Asset Management Plan.
3. Phase one of consultation involved asking the community to share its thoughts on Council's current engagement practices, areas for improvement and a question in regards to specific detail to be included in the policy. Engagement was undertaken from 26 October 2020 to 15 November 2020 (3 weeks) via a survey on Council's Participate Nillumbik site.
4. The second phase of consultation asked for community feedback on the draft Community Engagement Policy.
5. Community members and local residents were asked to share their thoughts on the draft Community Engagement Policy from 16 December 2020 – 26 January 2021 (6 weeks).
6. The community was informed of the engagement through social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, local community newspapers (Warrandyte Diary, Whittlesea Town Crier and Hurstbridge Roundabout), Advisory Committees, various e-newsletters, Yarra Plenty Regional Library, and community groups sharing through their own social media channels, contact lists and word of mouth. COVID-19 restrictions precluded in-person engagement activities.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy

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7. Feedback was obtained via our Participate Nillumbik site – <https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-engagement>, conversations with committee members, written submissions specifically from the Ageing Well newsletters as well as an option to attend virtual community conversations on Monday 21 December 2020, Thursday 14 January 2021 or Wednesday 3 February 2021 for feedback and discussion.
 8. Comments on social media channels in response to Council posts on the draft Community Engagement Policy were also taken as submissions.
 9. In total 24 community written submissions were received.
 10. The full report on feedback received, as well as metrics on output, reach and engagement through Council's various channels (online and traditional) can be viewed in **Attachment 1**.
 11. A summary of themes and recommendations to emerge from the consultation process are as follows:

What we heard (themes)

12. There is a general view that the Community Engagement Policy is a comprehensive document. The community are interested in seeing how it will be implemented and there was a view expressed by some of it being a 'tick the box' exercise.
13. Community Engagement is at the center of what a council should be and that Council must represent its community. Council should be receptive and responsive to community input. The policy will only be effective if implemented in this way.
14. Closing the loop and being transparent is critical to consultation and for the community to understand how their feedback has been used. The more visible the engagement and community feedback the greater chance of increased participation and trust with Council.
15. The Community Engagement Policy should emphasis the importance of a two-way flow of information between Council and community.
16. It is important to cater to those not on digital platforms as well as young children, the vulnerable and the aged.
17. Community members who attended a community conversation and information session about the draft policy, felt positive about having the Councillors in the 'virtual' room contributing to the discussion.

Community Recommendations

18. Below are some of the recommendations received through the community engagement process:
 - To assist with implementation – a suggestion was put forward to form a community panel comprising of individuals with specific areas of interest, to contribute as part of a focus group. They would, for example, represent broader interest groups such as sporting clubs or associations.

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FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy

- Councillors' role as community representatives is critical. Their key role is to remain aware of what is important to their constituents so that what to engage on – and how- could be accurately reflected in Council activities.
- Regular updates on Council website or Participate on how decisions are made.
- Create a local sporting network which could be directly engaged for any relevant community consultation.
- Have a monthly newsletter with each edition has a particular theme and share this to networks via an email using the subscriber list.
- Advertise ALL submissions for community consultation on the front page of the website along with communication via all mediums (email, letter, phone, SMS advertising and social media). The accessibility of these documents must be paramount.
- Now that COVID-19 restrictions are easing, opportunities for informal engagement such as BBQs in parks where people can connect and discuss issues in person would be desirable.

Related Council decisions

19. Not applicable.

Options

20. The Community Engagement Policy must be developed in consultation with the municipal community and adopted by 1 March 2021.
21. The draft Community Engagement Policy has been developed to meet the requirements under the Act and best practice engagement standards. These will underpin our approach to the extensive community engagement program Council will undertake this year and beyond.
22. Failure to respond to the requirements of the new Act, both in terms of timeliness and content, would result in non-compliance with Council's most significant and important item of legislation. It may result in subsequent delays to the engagement processes required for the development of the Council Plan and Community Vision. Both these significant strategic documents require an endorsed Community Engagement Policy to be in place in order to progress to adoption by Council.

Council plans and policies

This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:

- Improve community trust through better communications and genuine engagement.

Sustainability implications

23. The draft Community Engagement Policy was developed to ensure that community engagement practices reflect available resources and are tailored to meet Nillumbik's unique social, economic and environmental needs.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy

Community engagement

24. Community engagement on the policy occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore primarily via online platforms. The engagement took place at the 'Consult' and 'Collaborate' levels of the IAP2 spectrum.
25. A two phase engagement process was developed to help inform the draft policy.

Phase 1: Community Survey October - November 2020 (Completed)

26. Community members and local residents were questioned on aspects of community engagement. The community was asked to share its thoughts on Council's current engagement practices, areas for improvement and a question in regards to specific detail to be included in the policy.
27. Engagement was undertaken from 26 October 2020 to 15 November 2020 (3 weeks) via a survey on Council's Participate Nillumbik site <https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-engagement>. Conversations were held with community groups and individuals, as well as with advisory committees. In addition, the option to contact the engagement officer directly by phone or email was also made available.
28. The draft Community Engagement Policy was developed using the feedback provided by the 191 community members who responded to the opportunity to have their say on how they would like Nillumbik Shire Council to engage with them.
29. It was also informed through direct feedback from Council Advisory committees, as well as from an internal working group comprising Council officers drawn from a broad range of operational areas.

Phase 2: Engagement and Workshops (Completed)

30. The community was able to provide feedback on the draft Community Engagement Policy for six weeks, from 16 December 2020 to 26 January 2021. While the timing is less than ideal, it is dictated by the legislative requirement that the policy must be endorsed by 1 March 2021.
31. The community have been be afforded every opportunity to engage on the draft Community Engagement Policy, with officers actively promoting the opportunity to provide feedback through all Council communications channels.
32. Opportunities to engage were also actively supported through a detailed communications and engagement plan.
33. Consultation activities included:
- a dedicated page through our online 'Participate' portal, inviting community members to a conversation. This page was prominently promoted and linked from the homepage of Council's website;
 - a series of information sessions and workshops;

6. Officers' Report**FNC.007/21 Draft Community Engagement Policy**

- a Community Network information and feedback session and a “Community Conversations” consultation forum on 21 December 2020, 14 January 2021 and 3 February 2021 respectively, were conducted. Twenty registrations via Eventbrite were received for the 14 January 2021 session and eight participants attended. An evening session was also available on Wednesday 3 February 2021.
- mention in Summer edition of Nillumbik News;
- media release and news story on Council website;
- distribution of flyers;
- e-newsletters, including a link to the survey to all subscribers;
- a scheduled series of posts – including paid posts - on Council social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram);
- a targeted social media strategy aimed at those generally harder to engage (e.g. youth);
- advertising and editorial in community newspapers;
- directly contacting key stakeholder groups;
- an article in the Ageing Well newsletter which included a postage paid envelope for individuals to submit feedback;
- promotional signage with QR codes to be positioned in areas with high foot traffic;
- draft policy promoted and hard copies placed at Council facilities - including Libraries, sport and leisure facilities and community centres; and
- hard copies of the draft policy available to anyone upon request.

Innovation and continuous improvement

34. The evaluation activities will allow Council to meet its commitment to best practice community engagement by responding to evolving needs and expectations.
35. By evaluating and reviewing our engagement it allows us to be both transparent and accountable. Feedback from our community provides clear data and evidence, it is also an important tool used by our Council to help inform their decision making in matters before the Council.

Collaboration

36. The community survey questionnaire and draft policy were developed with input from an internal Working Group, comprising officers representing a range of departments across Council.
37. Discussions regarding the community engagement policy were also held with a number of other councils, including Melbourne City Council. This collaboration provided an insight into common ways of working and also how each council approached some things differently.

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38. In preparation for the implementation of the Act, officers attended a number of webinars on deliberative engagement including co-design workshops and Local Government network meetings through Local Government Victoria (LGV).

Budget implications

39. The application of the Community Engagement Policy will influence expenditure on future project deliverables that will be subject to community engagement activities. Some actions identified within the policy are core activities and are funded through existing operating budgets and others will be subject of future budget proposals.

Relevant law

40. Under section 55 of *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), the Community Engagement Policy must be developed with input from the community and include the engagement principles in section 56 of the Act.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

41. No regional, state and national plans and policies are directly applicable to this briefing.

Conflicts of interest

42. Officers who have been involved in the preparation of this report declare they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

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Draft Community Engagement Policy

Consultation Findings Report



January 2021

Executive Summary

The Community Engagement Policy outlines our commitment to ensure meaningful opportunities for the community to contribute to and inform Council projects, strategies, services and decisions that affect them.

The intent of this policy is to provide clarity on how Council will fulfil its commitment to engaging with the community in line with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

We invited community members to have their say and help develop Council's new Community Engagement Policy.

This report provides an analysis of the feedback collected during the second consultation phase from 16 December 2020 - 26 January 2021.

This was an opportunity for the community to provide input in to the Draft Community Engagement Policy which is to go before Council at its meeting on 23 February 2021 for endorsement.

Changes to the *Local Government Act 2020* dictate the timeframe within which the Policy must be adopted and therefore dictate the time during which Council could engage the community on the draft policy.

Background

1. Section 55 the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), states “A Council must adopt the first Community Engagement Policy under this section on or before 1 March 2021.”
2. The first phase of community engagement was conducted from 26 October – 15 November 2020 through a survey to gather feedback from the Nillumbik Shire community on how it would like to be engaged and ways it can be improved. This feedback helped to shape and inform the draft Community Engagement Policy (Draft Policy).
3. The second phase of consultation from 16 December - 26 January 2021 gathered feedback via Council's online portal, Participate, social media, written submissions as well as a community conversations to discuss the community engagement policy.
4. These and any further community submissions will be addressed at the Future Nillumbik Meeting on 9 February 2021.
5. All feedback has been considered in the development of the Community Engagement Policy which is to be endorsed at Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.

How we engaged

Community members and local residents were asked to share their thoughts on the Draft Policy from 16 December 2020 – 26 January 2021.

The community was informed of the engagement via social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, local community newspapers (Warrandyte Diary, Whittlesea Town Crier and Hurstbridge Roundabout), Advisory Committees, various e-newsletters, Yarra Plenty Regional Library, Council staff also shared the Draft Policy through their various community networks.

Community groups were also engaged to share the draft policy through their own social media channels, contact lists and word of mouth.

Feedback was sought and collected in a number of ways. This was done via Council's Participate Nillumbik site – <https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-engagement>, conversations with committee members and written submissions specifically from the Ageing Well newsletters as well as an option to attend a morning or evening virtual community conversation on 14 January or 3 February to discuss the Draft Policy.

Comment through Council social media channels were also accepted as submissions.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions during the consultation period, direct and in-person engagement was not possible.

While every effort was made to reach our community, consideration must also be given to the level of interest in the topic. Community will generally engage if a decision is going to directly impact them.

Who we heard from

A total of 24 community members

Female 30%

Male 70%

Participate Nillumbik:

In total, the Participate Nillumbik project page was viewed 382 times.

At least 1 contribution was made in 2.9% of visits

At least 2 contributions were made in 3.8% of visits

Engagement rates via Participate Nillumbik



Engagement Rates via the Ageing Well Newsletter

A total of 300 newsletters were distributed via post in January to the Ageing Well mailing list. 4 responses were received from this newsletter.

Comments can be seen in the submissions summary in in **Appendix 1**.

Virtual Community Conversations

Twenty registrations via Eventbrite were received for the 14 January 2021 session and eight participants attended. An evening session was also available on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

See **Appendix 2** for meeting notes.

Social media

# of social posts	# reached	# of engagements	# of shares	# of comments
7	5379	185	1	2

The paid posts reached a wider audience with the highest engagement while the post that included the explainer video had an average watch time of 0:12 seconds.

What we heard (overview)

Most feel that the Draft Community Engagement Policy is a comprehensive document, detailed and well written.

The community are interested in seeing the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy however some feel that it may just be a tick of the box approach.

Community Engagement is central to what a council should be about and that Council needs to represent its community. They should be responsive and allow community to have input. The policy will only be effective if implemented.

Consultation is important and being transparent to the community on how we use their feedback is crucial to the engagement process. Empower people after the consultation phase.

The more open and genuine effort made by Council to engage the community and gain its feedback the greater the chance of increased participation and trust of Council.

Some feel like engaging is simply a waste of time and their voices won't be heard and that Council needs to build trust with the community once again.

The engagement policy is about the two-way flow of information between Council and community.

Need to consider residents who are not on digital platforms as well as young children, vulnerable and aged as they may be overlooked in the engagement process as well as those living in Retirement Villages. These groups may be missed as they are harder to reach.

Re-iterated that the holiday periods are not a good time to engage and should be avoided wherever possible which is stated in the policy.

Community members who attended the session felt positive about having the Councillors in the 'virtual' room contributing to the discussion.

Recommendations from community members

1. Council needs to recognise the role of councillors as community representatives - key role is stay in touch with their constituents and be aware of what issues are coming in and what groups are being affected.
2. Implement a particular panel of community member who have specific areas of interest to be contacted by the way of a focus group. Put out an expression of interest request for residents who would like to be contacted either online or what works for them. For example if you had one or two representatives from all the sporting groups that would amount to a good representation for sport & recreation consultation.
3. Regular updates on Council website or Participate on how decisions are made.
4. Create a sporting network to be able to engage with them when there are consultation opportunities.
5. Have a monthly newsletter where there is a particular theme and share this to networks via an email using our subscriber lists.

6. Council should consider pursuing increased efforts to inform and educate the community about Council and its activities. There is a lack of awareness in the community about Council: how it works, the range of services it provides, and what it does.
7. Advertise ALL submissions for community consultation on the front page of the website along with communication via all mediums (email, letter, phone, SMS advertising and social media). Consideration must be made into the accessibility of these documents.
8. Have BBQs in the park where people can connect

Next steps

- Consider community member submissions.
- Amendments to the policy where required.
- A final document to be designed and presented at a Councillor briefing in February
- All feedback has been considered to develop the Draft Community Engagement Policy which is to be endorsed at the Council Meeting on 23 February 2021.
- Once the Policy has been endorsed, socialise the document throughout the organisation.
- Finalise community engagement guidelines document and template for Council officers.
- Ensure majority of Council officers conducting engagement are trained in, and familiar with, the IAP2 framework.

APPENDIX 1:

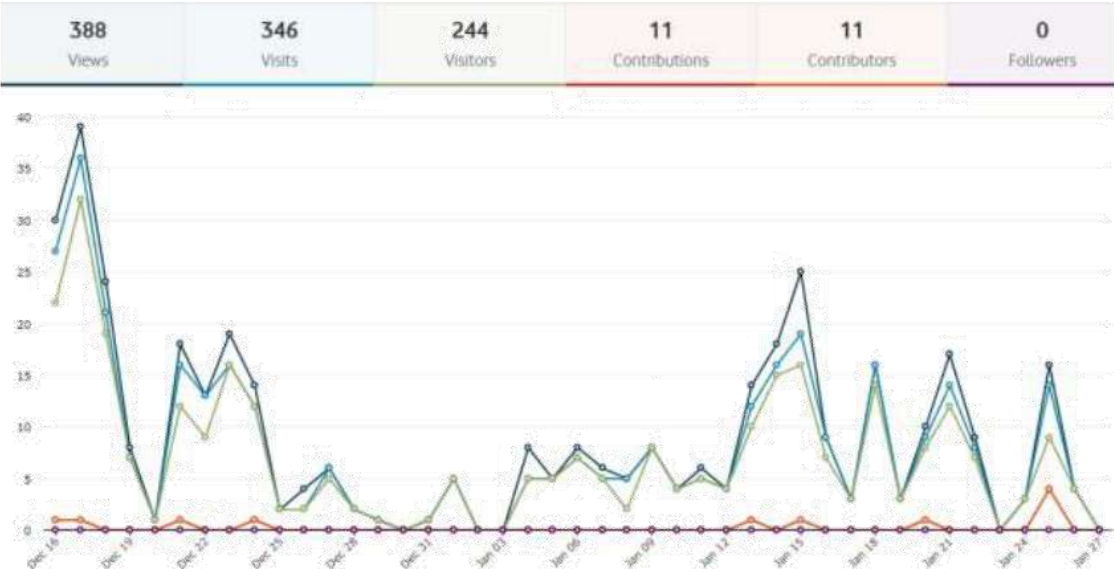
Draft Community Engagement Policy Feedback

Submissions summary

Consultation Period: 16 December 2020 – 26 January 2021

Participate Nillumbik – visitation statistics

Draft Community Engagement Policy feedback



Feedback on the Draft Community Engagement Policy

	Response	Where we heard from
1	All pretty standard and suitably high level stuff. Clear and well written. Not sure what's different about this relative to previous years. I guess more references to "deliberative". I would have liked something on ethnographic research and human centred approaches. Applying different techniques to understand more about the lived experience of citizens would help Council officers to be more deliberative in how they discharge their duties. Qualitative and the human experience has greater importance for the consumer world. As a citizen of Nillumbik I want to feel more like a club member than service recipient. Rates are my membership to club Nillumbik and community.	Participate
2	Maybe the council can protect the rate payers by decreasing the fire risk; There is undergrowth up to 1 metre high along the road ways in Christmas Hills. This has been communicated to the council with no action taken and no risk to property and or life accepted by the council. In addition, there are historical sites in Christmas Hills which are going becoming un-repairable, once again no action taken. Two sites which need urgent attention, Christmas Hills Post Office, David Christmas Plaque. In summary, if the council is looking for community engagement, maybe the council should provide their engagement 1st.	Participate
3	The framework in the draft policy is there. However the way forward in a digital platform sense has not been made clear and quick wins have not been articulated well. Therefore, consider residents who do not subscribe to the Councils social media account(s), may only see what is happening in Council via people who share the Council's postings. Consider Council joining the many Nillumbik/Ward/suburb/postcode community groups so that Council can have a greater reach. Be sure to moderate your postings too.	Participate
4	The draft is fairly straight forward and encompassing. That said I think a number of things that had been common practice in the past have been dropped off that should be adopted again. As an example when major infrastructure builds, upgrades or renovations are proposed, plans would be published or displayed for public viewing and this practice appears to not happen these days. As an example the building works for Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness centre has no real public facing plans available for view and comment and it appears from the outside that no consultation around requirements had happened prior to the build starting.	Participate

	Response	Where we heard from
	From what I have been able to gather many of the important community capabilities that would be expected in such a build have not been considered in the limited design information that is available to the public. This is the type of consultation and discussion that would occur naturally if plans are published both in an online as well as physical posting in the facilities themselves. These plans should have some level of substance and not just a marketing version of the outcome of the build.	
5	<p>Please advertise ALL submissions for community consultation on the front page of the website along with communication via all mediums (email, letter, phone, SMS advertising and social media).</p> <p>I do not like that Nillumbik shire hides its community consultation pieces on other pages (which are hard to find) it's not transparent.</p> <p>To be truly inclusive you must embrace all forms of communications. We need to be accessible for all. Scanning and printing documents needs to go out the window when dealing with people who have accessibility issues. The application process should be fully digital (no scanning or printing) as well as paper for those who are not tech savvy. People with disabilities cannot simply go and get a printed copy or scan of a document. Not everyone has a printer.</p> <p>Finally please do something about customer experience. Nillumbik like most councils are not good at it. They think customer experience is a friendly voice on the other end of the phone when it is so much more.</p> <p>Thank you</p>	Participate
6	<p>It is imperative that any community engagement that Council has is transparent, meaningful and is representative of the many different stakeholders within our Shire.</p> <p>Many of us have felt enormous frustration over recent years at the choice of "stakeholders" who have been included in or excluded from the community engagement/consultation process. Not only formalized groups who use facilities or groups with a vested economic interest should be consulted but more individual or casual users such as families using playgrounds, walkers, cyclists, runners, dog walkers, shoppers etc.</p> <p>Community engagement also needs to occur when there is an issue that the community would like addressed, not just when Council introduces the issue. The Community also needs to know who at Council make the decision as to which issues are deemed to require community engagement</p> <p>If community engagement occurred before the planning stage began then Council would be in a better position to begin planning with</p>	Participate

	Response	Where we heard from
	<p>community views in mind. Further engagement would then occur as the process proceeds.</p> <p>Another major concern in recent years has been the release of draft documents to be commented on/ consulted about over a major and lengthy holiday period. This is an absolute disadvantage for the community even though the requisite timeframe for commenting is adhered to. The same situation has applied to significant planning applications which affect the community greatly.</p> <p>The ways in which information is disseminated needs to be considered and more avenues included. To include engage and inform the less formalised groups of the Nillumbik Community consideration should be given to erecting notices in the public areas of parks tracks etc for the duration of the engagement period. Not all sources of information used in the past have been effective. For instance Nillumbik News has not reached many households before the time period for commenting on draft policies has passed. The large scale use of social media platforms discriminates against those community members who do not use these platforms. The Nillumbik Shire website is difficult to navigate, particularly for those unused to using technology frequently.</p> <p>Technical or other expertise being required should not be a barrier to community engagement. There are many people within our community who have expertise in the areas needed. If such expertise from the community was ascertained by an engagement process at the beginning before planning began it may result in better outcomes. Local knowledge of local issues and ethos may prevail. This also may result in less monies being spent on outside consultancies with no knowledge or feel for Nillumbik.</p>	
7	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback for the Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC) Draft Community Engagement Policy (draft policy). I will provide my feedback in point form below –</p> <p>I support IAP2 as the correct model for community consultation at a local government level.</p> <p>Provide a shorter Executive Summary at beginning of document for residents to be able to gain a quick and succinct understanding of the policy.</p> <p>Provide a clear commitment with examples of how feedback will be provided to the community in the draft policy when they participate in any community consultation with NSC.</p> <p>Provide an example in the draft policy of how community input into consultation is reflected and itemized in any reports on a particular topic made available to the community for consultation by NSC.</p>	Participate

	Response	Where we heard from
	<p>Provide an option in the draft policy for what I call '11th hour' consultation options for members of the community who have not had the opportunity to provide feedback. On some occasions and with all the best intentions by NSC, residents do not know about a consultation process and are disgruntled when they are directly impacted and haven't had the opportunity to provide their viewpoint. An example might be to provide an extended consultation period if required.</p> <p>Under 'Community Engagement Principles, Clear Remit' ensure that the draft policy is very clear in relation to community consultation being avoided over Christmas, New Year and holiday periods (unfortunately not like the current draft policy which is contradicting its own remit) To ensure an 'Inclusive, diverse & transparent' process is always undertaken.</p> <p>The draft policy sets out 'When we engage' I would also like to see a reference to the NSC's budget process included so that residents are able to have a say in what they would like to prioritize for funding at each and every yearly budget process at NSC. I understood that this is a stipulation in the Local Government Act.</p> <p>I would also like the consultation process for land use planning included. Reinstate the opportunity for easier access to involvement in planning applications. Reinstate the process of 6 community objections to a planning process triggering a community consultation meeting with the planning applicant and resident objectors or supporters and for the planning application with 6 objections to go directly to the planning committee meeting for deliberation by the whole of Council.</p> <p>Planning process to provide a more specific process of surrounding properties to be consulted in relation to a nearby planning application.</p> <p>Who we Engage to provide direction into identifying community & stakeholders who have an interest to avoid an 11th hour reaction from community members.</p> <p>I support the VAGO elements of consultation.</p> <p>NSC's Independent research undertaken each year to include more residents in the process.</p> <p>Investigate the development of a community panel of interested residents who are asked to identify their area of interest. Residents to be called on via their preferred way of consultation to provide feedback to NSC when required. An example could be utilizing sporting networks, senior groups, early years or by townships.</p> <p>Thank you</p>	

	Response	Where we heard from
8	I don't think we need both. That is Nillumbik News and Ageing Well in Nillumbik. Cost in sending these out is wasting resources. A lot of paper shuffling for very little return. Circled Keep it Simple easy to understand language.	Ageing Well newsletter
9	Would like support for seniors on downsizing. Concerned about deliberate suppression of genuine public input regarding Fitzsimmons and Main Rd expansion works.	Ageing well newsletter
10	Consider residents of retirement villages who need the same degree of community involvement. The perception that they are involved with the 'community' of their villages is not necessarily true. While they pay rates like everyone else they not receive full recognition by Council.	Ageing Well newsletter
11	<p>Comments on areas of the policy which were:</p> <p>Inclusive and Diverse: particular attention to children, young people, aged and other vulnerable groups</p> <p>These groups are usually overlooked in consultation processes - often because they are harder to access.</p> <p>Transparent: The Council should commit to an Annual Report on Community Engagement that reports to the community how many consultations were undertaken, how many people involved and outcomes.</p> <p>When we engage: There should be a mechanism that engages the community in what it should be engaged with.</p> <p>It shouldn't be left up to Council to decide, otherwise it will be a self-fulfilling loop that keeps engagement restricted</p>	Emailed Engagement
12	It's visibly noticeable as you drive from Doncaster to Eltham how once you enter Nillumbik shire the road, edging, weeding, grass and bush and tree care is non-existent as you enter Eltham. Let's make Eltham a great place to visibly arrive into and welcome visitors who will spend money in our small businesses. Not to mention reducing the fuel load and potential fire impact!!!	Facebook post
13	Certainly gone downhill since the 'care taker mode' and the 'new Council' jumped in. Fire Hazard to the extreme 🔥!! Looks like the Green/Lefty has gone 'missing in action'? Perhaps they presumed the La Niña is a saving grace???? BS. all prevention is better than a fizzled environment.... the sooner people/ Council understand this the better 😊	Facebook post

Submission 1

Nillumbik Draft Community Engagement Policy January 2021
Submission by Sue Dyet

I am very pleased that the actual time for the Nillumbik Community to make submissions has been extended. 2020 has been a very unsettling year anyway and having the initial Participate Nillumbik process being undertaken for three weeks in October/November during a Council Election period resulted in only 191 residents making comment, hardly a representative number considering the approximate 65,000 population.

There is much in this draft that is good or excellent but in the interests of wanting to improve it further, I will be critical.

General Comments

This document as a whole could apply to any Council – surely this is ‘our’ Council - Nillumbik Council, so use the words ‘Nillumbik Council’? I realise that at the end of the document the authors felt the need to define the word council. If a word needs definition surely the definition page ought to be at the beginning so the ordinary person may understand the jargon! But yet P3 and an ‘insight’ in the document states ‘Easy to understand and use less jargon’ so why was a page of definitions needed?

Do keep smiling please and don’t be offended whoever it is who reads my submission!

If the word council is not used, the word ‘we’ is used even more frequently as in P8 When ‘we’ engage, I dragged out my 2 volume Macquarie to look up definitions of ‘we’ to find:

(used by a sovereign when alluding to him or herself) as in ‘*we are not amused*’

or possibly

(used by and editor or other writer to give an impersonal tone) *we deplore the current situation*

If the tone of the document is to be impersonal, therefore distant that, together with the use of jargon, surely it is at odds with the intention of engaging with the general Nillumbik community?

This is just an observation to consider. I know that Council Officers are across all this and probably dream in local government speak but that language is a closed book to many of the people that you want/should want, to be engaged with!

Specifics.

P4

Community Engagement is:

There should be a 3rd dot point or amend dot point 2 to include the words: ***or an issue that the community wants council to address*** – having said in Dot point 1 community engagement is a 2 way process – the community should then be able to raise an issue with Council.

This policy:

Dot Point 2 add these words in boldbuild relationships and strengthen the ***Nillumbik communities sense of identity*** this document is about Nillumbik and its residents not some amorphous mass of people somewhere

Dot point 3 includeinfrastructure is considered ***and again prior*** to when a decision is made. ie: not just at the beginning

Final dot point P 4 the words 'can expect' is that a suggestion that the role of community members in planning & decision making is generously 'allowed' by Council or is not a right of the community to be involved with a democratic process? I understand the intent but a more encouraging wording should be found if this is about Community Engagement as is stated in p 5 point 1 of the IAP2 core values.

P7

Clear Remit (jargon-what do you really mean? And take note of dot point 4 at all times – community grant applications etc should be included as part of the engagement process eg the History & Culture Grants were to be completed during early January 2021 but thankfully the time has again been extended))

Inclusive and Diverse

Last Dot point: add at the end ***and be willing to amend a position if a good argument/idea has been made.*** I think the rationale for this addition is easily understood.

When discussing engagement ideas, give consideration to producing a simple inexpensive black & white monthly 11 Page document titled 'What's on for you in Nillumbik by Your Council' listing all the Participate Nillumbik surveys/sessions, Grant Applications and a whole range of 'stuff' that might interest residents. The aim is to show what Council is doing and how their rates are being used eg – XX road is being graded, what classes are being offered and where – one liners of information info. This could be circulated by email to the community database held by Nillumbik Council. Also posted on FB to large Social Media pages, hard copies could be available at the entrance to all libraries, in cafes, on notice boards in sporting group etc.

P.9 Dot point 3 why is 'technical or other expertise' to be an allowable 'barrier'?

That wording could develop to be a catch-all phrase to prevent a very wide range of issues being open to community input. Also, is there possibly another word or phrase that could be used than barrier? The image that word creates is of a wall with the community on the other side of the decision making process of Nillumbik Council.

P10 1st para – could that wording be turned around to emphasis the key drivers of participation?

Eg:

The key drivers of participations gained from community input are:

- Having a clear understanding of the scopes and potential impact of a decision
- The type of influence that the community can have on a decision
- An understanding of the outcomes possible by being involved in community participation

Thank you for the opportunity to make some observation on the work that has already been produced. Community involvement with Nillumbik Council is crucial in developing strong social bonds. Engagement is a 2 way process, residents should feel they 'own' their Council. Council should not be 'the enemy'. It is this sense of community ownership that supports individuals in times of unease, such as we are all experiencing. People need to feel comforted by being part of a larger group, with a Council that supports them. Local Government will play a huge support role in the future and each Council needs to be embedded in the life of their community in order to make the right supportive decisions according to the needs of that community. Frequent and vigorous Community Consultation should be in the forefront of all of Nillumbik Council's actions.

Do contact me if you are unclear about any points I have made.

Submission 2

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Council's Draft Community Engagement Policy. While I recognise that the development of the policy is mandated by the new Local Government Act, it has been pleasing to see the efforts made by Council in developing this policy.

I note that the Act requires Council to adopt this policy by 1 March 2021; naturally this has necessitated the most recent round of consultation occur over the Christmas holiday period. As the draft reflects, and some councillors have also noted in the past, the holiday period is not a good time to conduct community engagement and should be avoided wherever possible. To this end I encourage Council to lobby the Victorian Government to avoid applying this requirement on Councils in future on this or other areas of policy development.

The draft is an excellent document. It is clear in what it communicates and what it aims to achieve. It is brief, which hopefully broadens the appeal to residents to read the document and engage with it.

I agree with the insights, values, principles and framework expressed in the document, and hope that across the Council this document is kept on hand to provide a constant reminder of the importance of doing community engagement and doing it well. The four key insights at the beginning of the draft, and the three community engagement principles provided on pages 7-8 are a good way to summarise to community members and others what Council seeks to achieve.

My commentary to Council on this topic, rather than focusing on the policy itself, instead largely looks to the next stage – the 'how' – as Council goes about community engagement. I recognise that much of this goes beyond the draft policy specifically but believe this commentary is relevant to the topic of community engagement.

Learning lessons from the past

Both most recent council elections included a theme of the community – or at least part of the community – feeling that the Council at the time was out of step with the general population or had failed to engage properly with them.

In 2016 this was represented in the debate and community campaign over the C81/C101 issue, linked into the broader idea of a Council that had 'lost touch'.

In 2020 this was represented through community campaigns during the term of Council on the proposed land sales, the new Green Wedge Management Plan and the proposed sale of the old Eltham Shire office site in Main Road – again linked to a broader idea that Council had 'lost touch' or failed to understand the community.

I believe the election of new councillors (at least some of them) at both elections is linked to residents having the view or 'feeling' that the incumbent Council needed a change.

Putting to the side the specific campaigns and issues raised, what Council should learn from these experiences is that there is a perception in some parts of the community, rightly or wrongly, that Council has failed to meet community expectations and does not understand the community. It needs to look at what causes this perception, and how to go about ensuring Council improves to avoid this in the future.

Telling residents why consultation is important

As the draft policy notes, community engagement is important in supporting good decision making, as well as building relationships with residents and groups, and strengthening communities.

Council should include an expression of this across all efforts to engage with the community. It is all well and good for councillors, interested people or community groups to share with the wider community that community engagement is occurring – but what is sometimes missing is the 'why'. Consultation efforts should be clear in promoting why receiving public feedback is important and the value that comes from the public participating in a consultation process.

This aligns closely with the IAP2 core values that Council spells out in the draft policy, particularly numbers two, six and seven. Residents will be more likely to participate in a consultation process if they know that:

- Meaningful participation is not dependent on existing knowledge or expertise
- Participation can occur in many forms, is accessible and doesn't need to take a lot of time (the draft picks up this theme well)
- Through participation in the process Council will be able to produce a stronger policy that is more reflective of the views and expectations of the community it represents, and produce better outcomes for the community

Telling residents that Council values them spending even a short period of time engaging on an issue and that their engagement is worthwhile is important.

Council needs to spend on consultation in order to get results

The loss of local print media has I believe had a significant impact on community awareness of Council as well as opportunities to get involved and engage. With no local paper in most of Nillumbik those who are not online, whether through email, web or Facebook, are reliant on receiving Council information from Nillumbik News and ad hoc communications via rates and other notices. Even those who are online need to search out information about Council in a way they didn't need to when the local paper was delivered to their letterbox.

In order to undertake community consultation that reaches the community properly, Council needs to be prepared to dedicate funds to promoting consultation periods.

It was good to see that for the consultation process on this draft policy Council ran an ad on Facebook over December and January promoting it. While the ad attracted little in terms of 'likes' or comments the frequency with which the ad appeared suggests Council put an appropriate amount of money into running the ad and ensuring it reached residents.

I encourage Council to produce more videos focused on community engagement and other Council activities. Video generally has a greater reach on Facebook than 'traditional' photo and text posts and can feel more accessible to the public.

In terms of print communications, I think Nillumbik News is a good publication and provides a good mix of information, including on consultation opportunities. While print deadlines can make it hard to provide dates and other time-sensitive information on community engagement opportunities I do think Council needs to try as much as it can to be clear in asking residents for their engagement and explaining how they can be involved.

Council should also think about producing a supplementary newsletter or notice in between Nillumbik News editions to update residents on current community engagement and other Council-related opportunities. While this is an additional cost, delivering a print notice directly to letterboxes remains one of the most effective ways to reach residents.

Across print and digital Council needs to catch the attention of residents when asking for public feedback. Colourful, eye-catching graphics and text that is 'to the point' is important to grab residents' attention. For example, research suggests that a Facebook user scrolling through their newsfeed spends an average of only a couple of seconds looking at a post. It's a challenge to grab someone's attention in two seconds but that is the challenge Council's communications team needs to set itself as it prepares promotional materials on engagement processes.

Being prepared to undertake additional consultation when needed

I also think it's important that Council acknowledge that a lack of response from a community engagement process does not mean approval or support from the community of the topic under consideration. Rather it needs to be understood as a sign that the community does not understand the policy or how they should engage on the policy. Council should look at why there hasn't been engagement from the community and seek to adapt the approach and methods of engagement and try again.

While the whole community won't care about every issue there will always be someone interested. How the engagement occurs and how it is promoted to residents is important. It is good to see Council has talked about this in the draft and flagged that it will continue to deploy a range of communication methods.

Increasing community awareness of Council

One area of work that I think Council should consider pursuing is increased efforts to inform and educate the community about Council and its activities. There is a lack of awareness in the community about Council: how it works, the range of services it provides, and what it does.

For example, Council could tackle the perpetual issue of rates in Nillumbik. Time and time again residents vent frustration about the cost of rates – even when Council adopts a zero or minimal rate rise. A public education campaign that informs people about the lack of commercial and industrial rates base, and the over reliance on residential rates when compared to other municipalities, could go a long way to boosting awareness of the facts around this issue, reducing the amount of misdirected grumbling, and instead allow a realistic consideration of the issue and options available.

A more informed community will be a more engaged community, and would I think help contribute to greater involvement in Council activities, including community engagement processes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the Draft Community Engagement Policy, and more broadly on community engagement.

Submission 3

Draft Community Engagement Policy. Comments by Max Garner 25 January 2021

1. Communication

To enable the public to comment a link to a PDF was provided on the website.

Many in the community lead busy lives. It is difficult for people to comment on a PDF.

Therefore the community needs to be provided with drafts in a variety of mediums that make it easy and quick for them to make comments. Those mediums should include:

An offer to be mailed a hard copy for marking up for either scanning and emailing, or dropping off at Council offices, hubs, library, mobile library etc.

Being emailed a Word document for making changes using Track Changes and emailing a reply.

To speak with a member of staff.

2. Page 4 What is community engagement?

"Community engagement is the process of involving the public in decisions that affect them."

The remainder of the document describes topics relating to strategic planning and decisions and improved services.

There is no mention of community engagement by Council on day-to-day activities. No detail is included on the time it should take for Council to respond to verbal or written questions or submissions.

3. Community generated ideas

The document is written assuming the only source of good ideas for the community are those generated by Council.

I suggest there should be content included describing where a member of the community or an entity in the community makes a suggestion for an activity or program that has benefits for many households in the Shire.

For a community suggested activity topic the Council should nominate a case manager as the responsible person within the Council for the suggested activity. The case manager' role should include liaison with the entity or person, Councillors and staff, and co-ordinate all communication and marketing within council and on Council's website including social media.

APPENDIX 2

Community Conversation- Community Engagement Thursday 14 January at 10:30 am

Summary of conversation:

Attendees:

Anna Maio
Bianca Caruso
Blaga Naumoski
Fiona Vuong
Licardo Prince
Michelle Welsby
Cr Geoff Paine
Cr Natalie Duffy
Cr Frances Eyre
Ray Carroll
Helen Coleman
Kevin Hadingham
Steven Bendle
Paula (resident of Hurstbridge)
Greg Jeffers - Wildcats
Jim Connor
John McBride

1. What does Community Engagement mean to you and does our Policy capture this adequately in a broad sense?

- Interested elderly citizen.
- Member of PAC, more and more interested in council.
- Extensive policy document - too detailed, covers too much may not proceed past intro - too many pages. Although once got reading, was really interested - covered everything.
- Has not happened in council before.
- Interested in seeing the implementation.
- Concerned that the development of the policy is a Tick the box approach.
- Understands that Council is committed.
- Needs to more broadly engage.
- Caveats on what council wont engage with - appears to provide council officers with an out - could be just wording, not intent. Could be tweaked to be more indicative of council engaging with all matters.
- CE must be done.
- Hate to see the process as a tick the box action.
- Does council currently have a CE policy?
- CE basic soul of what council is about - there to represent the community, should be responsive, allow community to have input. Council must be able to respond to what community needs. Policy is only effective if implemented. Outcome needs to be there, it is in theory not practice.
- Passionate about responsibility of council being responsive to their communities.
- Hope policy is effective for both officers and community.

- Appears to be more about strategic planning and projects - not necessarily about people issues - community services doing a marvellous job connecting community.
- Helen - former councillor and 2 x mayor - engagement policy - part of the councillor's existence.
- Feedback to community crucial part of what we do.
- Feedback process needs to be included.
- CE policy was developed back in 2015, process - was updated but no consultation to that effect.
- Community Panel should be available to council - on line for smaller community consultations.
- Not just applying to planning.
- Sending out consultation over xmas and new year should not happen, extend consultation time to February.
- Policy should include 11th hour responses to community for those that have not been made aware of the previous consultation process.
- Resident of Hurstbridge - Paula - empowerment of people after consultation.
- Ways to get things is through community groups.
- Consultation important - what happens at the end of it that is more important.
- Very small representation of people in the community (in this consult).
- Kevin - council needs to recognise the role of councillors as community representatives - key role is stay in touch with their electorate and be aware of what issues are coming in and what groups are being affected.
- Elected reps to speak on our behalf - delegated responsibility, council administration - support to the corporate board.
- Role of community organisations - network is a great way to disseminate info and communicate to their members.
- Communication media - community radio role - publicly known on decisions.
- We will implement what you decide (page 6) - rather than implementing what the consensus is.
- Not all groups are being represented.
- Page 8 council will engage what is worthy of engagement - leaves it open - who makes the decision?

2. How do you prefer to engage or provide feedback to Council?

- Disappointed in the way it works currently - really important to have a CE process.
- Make sure it represents the community.
- People want to be contacted digitally - but that is modern way. Some still want the old fashioned way of connection.
- Transparent and connect with the community.
- There used to be a town crier - who is that, we are not very good at it.
- What's app group - street level group - good medium for council to send sms, more specific type group.
- Local television – in the USA communities have their own tv stations (means of communication) - use it for younger people for training.
- Nillumbik News theme for each edition? Rotary's monthly publication has a specific theme for - make it a topic.
- Gap in our community – reaching the local, street level.

3. How do we engage those hard to reach community members in the future and be more inclusive?

- Having a bbq in the local park - people are starting to connect in person again.
- FB is the town crier. Sites like 3095 are the modern town crier with community groups and we should respond to these mediums.
- Lost paper, no mail outs - can't cold email (laws around this) we can respond only.
- Community decides to go to a fb - we have to conform.
- Positive to see how many council staff and councillors in the room contributing to this discussion.
- Council meetings on line in zoom.
- Should be a way of dot pointing decisions in council meetings - council website? On where decisions are being made. Simple mechanism feeding back to the community on how the decisions have been made.
- Eltham BB club - technology hard for everyone to communicate - significant issue with a lack of trust as feel like it is a waste of time.
- Optimism comes through around workshops and engagement like this one.
- Engagement is across the board across the whole issue – eg: of local school and car parking and how the right people were not consulted.
- People give time and effort in these processes and seen as disrespectful if actions are not carried through.
- Nillumbik no. 2/3 in sport participation although it is the only place with no sport network - need those networks.
- Tapping into existing networks - outreaching to schools.

4. What are the issues on which you would like to be engaged?

- Policy, legislative - deliberation on the budget.
- What do we want to use our money for?
- Focus groups - people interested in a particular area.
- Feedback process - target particular people.
- Topical issues - roundabout - individuals and community doing things.
- Monthly meeting to open up discussions around issues - key people from council – progressive.

Chat discussion

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 11:48 AM

I think Kevin's point links to Helens about feedback to the community about decisions

From Kevin Hadingham to Everyone: 11:55 AM

Difficulty of monthly themes is that info on an issue can be up to 12 months out of date between postings.

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 11:57 AM

Anna

I think you have to have strategy across every channel you can think of. You have a few people here who are happy with zoom. But there are heaps of different ways.

From Cr. Frances Eyre - Nillumbik to Everyone: 11:57 AM

It would be great to have another session in the evening for those who are working.

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 12:00 PM

I also think it is progressive.

The more engagement & community feedback that residents see the greater chance of increased participation.

There is no silver bullet for communications

From Helen to Everyone: 12:02 PM

As I mentioned engage a particular panel of community members who have specific areas of interest to be contacted by way of a focus groups. Put out an EOI for residents who would like to be contacted either online or what works for them. For example if you had one or two representatives from all the sporting groups that would amount to a good representation for sport & recreation consultation.

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 12:07 PM

Great point Jim

Maybe the engagement policy is not only when Council want info from community but also to provide info to the community

From Kevin Hadingham to Everyone: 12:10 PM

Jim, I think a dot point listing of items to be discussed at council would be useful to give people a heads up more so than listing of decisions made (ie after the consultation horse has bolted).

From Cr. Frances Eyre - Nillumbik to Everyone: 12:11 PM

It could also include what policies/strategies are out for feedback and response with due dates. This could also have a list of grants open or coming up. list*

From Kevin Hadingham to Everyone: 12:12 PM

That's true Frances

From Helen to Everyone: 12:14 PM

The Nillumbik community is very connected in so many different ways as we are discussing so there is a great opportunity to not 'reinvent wheels' and hook into what is already happening

From Cr. Frances Eyre - Nillumbik to Everyone: 12:17 PM

We could also have some community leaders or representative (additional to Cr's) given the opportunity to do some lap2 training.

As an example topical issues such as: pandemic response and support needed for community

From Kevin Hadingham to Everyone: 12:17 PM

Community noticeboards in shopping centres can still be useful if well managed.

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 12:17 PM

I will reinforce my first point in that Council should assume that there be engagement on all issues. The scope & depth might vary, but the assumption should be that the community be engaged.

From Cr. Natalie Duffy - Nillumbik to Everyone: 12:19 PM

Yes, Stephen. This is important.

From Helen to Everyone: 12:21 PM

You could almost call it a 'hot topic' engagement process

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 12:21 PM

Has there been any benchmarking of the policy with other Councils or organisations like Health Services?

From Cr. Frances Eyre - Nillumbik to Everyone: 12:23 PM

Benchmarking would be good

From Paula's iPad to Everyone 12:23 PM

thx all have to leave!

From Kevin Hadingham to Everyone: 12:24 PM

Our current community group's network meetings only touch the tip of the iceberg - the massive number of community groups in our area. Refer to the Rotary listing of "Community Organisations in Nillumbik and Environs" Download latest update from homepage of www.rotaryeltham.org.au

From Bianca Caruso Engagement Officer to Everyone: 12:28 PM

Internet connection is going haywire: If you would like to know about projects Council is engaging on

Sign up to Participate

Participate.Nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Draft Community Engagement Policy feedback will close 11.59pm 26 January
participate.Nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-engagement

Or please email Bianca Caruso with any further feedback.

engagement@Nillumbik.vic.gov.au

From Helen to Everyone: 12:28 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback xx

From Blaga Naumoski to Everyone: 12:29 PM

Thank you to everyone for your time and feedback. We truly do appreciate it.

From Cr. Natalie Duffy - Nillumbik to Everyone: 12:29 PM

Anna it would be good to keep this recording rather than delete it

From Stephen Bendle to Everyone: 12:30 PM

Thanks for the opportunity

From Bianca Caruso Engagement Officer to Everyone: 12:30 PM

I've really enjoyed this session and listening to all your input. BIG thank you

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Draft Community Engagement Policy



Image: Home Harvest Picnic 2020

Acknowledgement

Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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.

January 2020

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Thank you to our community

Nillumbik Shire Council would like to thank community members who have contributed to the development of our community engagement policy.

Community feedback was used to inform the policy on how Nillumbik Shire Council will engage with our community going forward.

Through the feedback received by our community members and staff we identified some core engagement objectives.

Transparent	Effective two-way communication with clear and relevant information.
Time	Fair and reasonable opportunity for community to give input.
Keep it simple	Easy to understand language and less jargon.
Opportunity	Multiple options to participate in the engagement processes.

What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of involving the public in decisions that affect them. It is critical to the successful development and implementation of Council strategic planning and decisions, and for improving services by being responsive to the needs of the community.

Community engagement is:

- a two-way process of interaction between Council and the community; and
- about matters such as a decision Council needs to make, or a problem or issue affecting the community that Council wishes to address or an issue that the community wants council to address.

Purpose of this policy

This Community Engagement Policy (Policy) is a formal expression of Council's commitment to engaging the Nillumbik community in planning and decision-making through the use of appropriate, effective and inclusive practices.

This Policy:

- Articulates Council's commitment to engaging effectively with its community in a meaningful, accountable, responsive and equitable way;
- outlines how Council will ensure that community engagement is integrated into Council activities to support decision making, build relationships and strengthen the Nillumbik communities sense of identity;
- should be applied at the planning stage of any project or initiative, when a change in service, activities or infrastructure is considered and again prior to when a decision is made;
- when a change in government policy or legislation impacts Council services/business;
- seeks to improve Council's engagement processes and outcomes through; encouraging a consistent and transparent approach and continual learning through evaluation, and through expanding the range of engagement methods used;
- applies to Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers. It also serves as a guide to external organisations delivering infrastructure and services in Nillumbik; and
- outlines the key role of the community in Council's planning and decision-making.

Our commitment to community engagement

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to providing good governance and the delivery of high quality local services by enabling meaningful engagement with the community.

It will achieve its commitment to inclusive and effective community engagement by adherence to this Community Engagement Policy to guide efforts to enhance the planning and delivery of Council's services and programs.

Community engagement does not necessarily mean achieving consensus. However, it does involve seeking broad, informed input into the decision-making process to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Community engagement core values

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) specify a series of core values that should be used to underpin community engagement. Nillumbik's Community Engagement Policy builds on these core values.

1. *Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.*
2. *Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.*
3. *Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.*
4. *Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.*
5. *Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.*
6. *Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.*
7. *Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.*

Source: www.iap2.org.au

Community engagement framework

Council's approach to community engagement is guided by the IAP2 framework for community engagement.

Council will apply the IAP2 framework appropriately in its community engagement processes based on the activity and context of the subject and the time and resources available. The table below identifies each of the five levels of engagement.

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL				
To provide the public with balanced, succinct, and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place the final decision in the hands of the public
COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY				
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives development and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
EXAMPLES				
Printed materials such as brochures, email, displays, website, Social media, local radio	Participate (online consultation platform), Printed materials, mailed surveys, Feedback register	Printed materials, Focus groups, interviews, workshops, field trips, Council Meetings	Council Advisory Committees with specific focus, Community representatives on Council committees	Mediation, Negotiation, Dialogue, Citizen juries, Deliberative polling

Source: International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

We will also look to introduce new and innovative ways to communicate to ensure our engagement achieves the necessary reach and level of information.

Community engagement principles

The following principles will guide Council's approach to community engagement:

Clear Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly define the objectives and scope of the community engagement process, by describing the decision to be made, taking into account relevant legislation, and making clear how the community's input will influence Council decision making. • ensure that all information will be captured in a succinct summary and be available to the community. • ensure that the engagement is undertaken early enough in the decision-making process to ensure that its outcomes are considered before the decision is made. • ensure that the community is given enough time to take part in engagement processes and provide feedback, avoiding where possible engaging only over holiday periods such as Christmas and New Year and other significant occasions. • promote opportunities and provide reasonable support to enable a wide cross section of the people and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of community engagement to actively participate in decision-making. • consideration will be given to the types of engagement activities being planned to ensure they are inclusive and maximise the potential for participation.
Inclusive and Diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach engagement free from bias toward any stakeholder and treat all participants in the engagement process with respect and dignity • provide participants in community engagement with relevant, objective, accessible and timely information and resources such as leaflets, rates notice, newspapers, Nillumbik News, social media, direct stakeholder engagement, stalls at community events to allow informed participation. • be accountable, accessible and ethical in all dealings with the community in a way that is consistent with our codes of conduct and relevant laws. • actively listen to all points of view and respect the rights of all citizens to be heard. • be willing to amend a position if a good argument/idea has been put forward.

Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commit to providing participants with updates at key stages throughout the project and why certain feedback may or may not have been taken into account. • demonstrate that all community contributions and relevant data have been considered, prior to making any decisions that affect the local community. • report back to the community on the outcome of the community engagement and how the community's input influenced decision-making.
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When we engage

Council is committed to being inclusive and transparent in its decision-making. Council will engage on matters that affect our community and where it believes that community engagement will result in a better outcome for the community and better informed decisions.

Council's engagement will commence as early as possible in the process. This helps to ensure our community and stakeholders can make a meaningful contribution that can help direct Council outcomes and decision making. Engagement may occur once or multiple times, commensurate with the scope, complexity and impact of the project or decision. Opportunities to give feedback and input will be made available for 3-4 weeks.

The following are examples of the occasions when community engagement would be undertaken:

- Major strategic planning;
- Land use planning;
- Service levels/standards;
- The design of new infrastructure or facilities and renewal of existing infrastructure;
- Specific projects or programs (such as sport and recreation, community safety, tourism);
- Legislative, policy or service issues that are the responsibility of higher levels of government, but where the Council wishes to convey community views (such as issues impacting the Green Wedge, housing, education, the environment and health); and
- Where the *Local Government Act 2020* or other legislation prescribes that community consultation is required.

There may be reasons or times when engagement will not be possible these may include;

- an immediate resolution is required, such as in an emergency;
- a risk to public safety;
- technical or other expertise is required;
- an initiative involves confidential or commercial information;
- clear and defined legislative responsibilities must be met;
- developing or reviewing internal policies and procedures; and
- time frames and methodology have been predetermined by other levels of government.

Who we engage

Council values the input of all members of our community so it is important that our engagement methods are accessible and broad reaching.

For each engagement we will identify the communities or stakeholders who are impacted and seek to engage with them to ensure we have representative feedback to guide our project or decision making

The community includes but is not limited to:

- traditional owners of land in Nillumbik;
- people who live, work, participate in leisure activities, visit, study, invest in, or pass through Nillumbik;
- people and bodies who are ratepayers of the Council;
- Nillumbik Council Staff; and
- people and bodies who conduct activities in Nillumbik. This may include, but is not limited to: community groups, not-for-profit organisations, businesses, State and Federal Governments, other local governments and service providers.

How we engage

In planning for community engagement, Nillumbik Council will ensure that appropriate tools and methods are applied, taking into account the scope and objectives of the engagement project, the significance and complexity of the matter, the level of resourcing required and the level of impact on the community.

The key drivers of community participation are:

- Having a clear understanding of the scopes and potential impact of a decision;
- The level of influence that the community can have on a decision; and
- An understanding of the outcomes made possible through participation.

Council will align with 'engagement elements' specified by the Victoria Auditor General Office, which councils may be audited on.

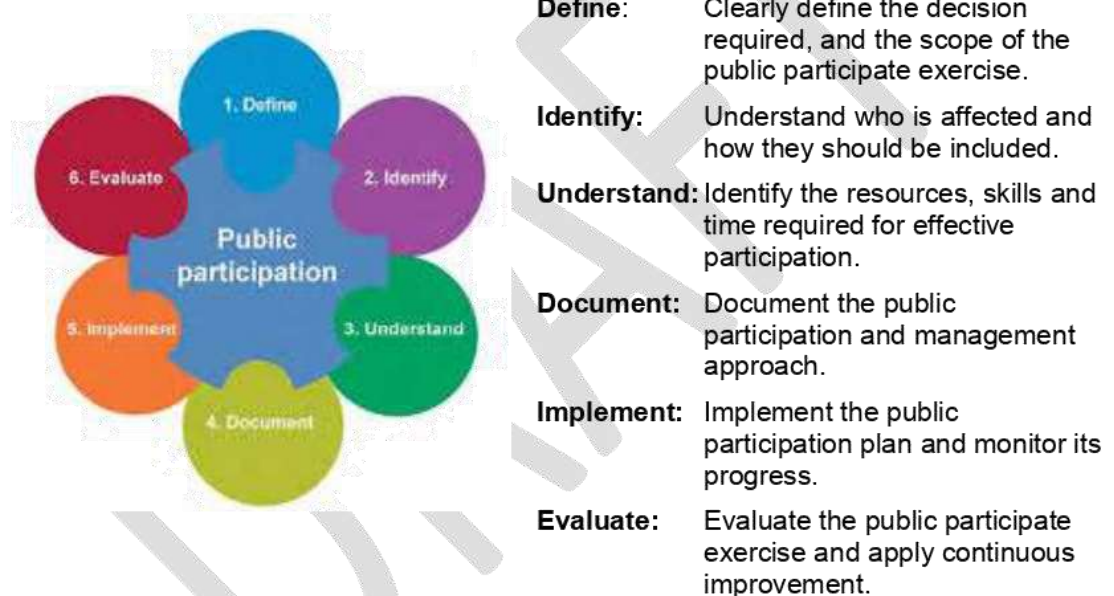


Figure 1: VAGO elements Source: www.audit.vic.gov.au

Council will apply deliberative engagement practices where legislation requires it such as the Long term Community Visions, 4 Year Council plans, financial management plans, Asset Management Plans and when it is suitable to the scope, complexity and impact of the project or decision.

Among the key features of deliberative engagement is that it must be:

- **Representative** in the sense that it involves a representative cross-section of the community, usually selected at random – with the aim of maximizing inclusion
- **Deliberative:** allowing for extended consideration of a key question; and
- **Influential:** Participants will be informed of the level of influence the community engagement process will have on Council decision-making.

We value and recognise the contribution of participants who have given up their time to provide feedback or attend engagement activities therefore our community will be informed by providing progress updates of engagement processes underway.

Council will provide notice on the collection, use and disclosure of personal information provided within a submission. Any data collected during the engagement process will be stored in a way that maintains privacy and meets the requirements of Information Privacy Principle 1 contained within the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

Submissions received under section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* until its repeal or received through a community engagement process undertaken by Council are made available for public inspection and may be published in Council business papers.

Evaluation and Review

The evaluation activities will allow Council to meet its commitment to best practice community engagement by responding to evolving needs and expectations.

Evaluating and reviewing our engagement allows us to be both transparent and accountable. Feedback from our community provides clear data and evidence. It is also an important tool used by our Councillors to help inform their decision-making in matters before the Council.

The Community Engagement Guidelines will provide guidance and transparent criteria for Evaluation and Review.

Resources and tools to support our Community Engagement Framework

Independent research

Community satisfaction and preferred methods of engagement are captured in independent research. This is based on a randomly selected sample of citizens and delivers statistically reliable results that can be compared across years and in some years across Councils.

Each year Council engages a consultancy company to undertake the Annual Community Satisfaction Survey as Council wants to know what our community thinks about a range of areas including Council's overall performance, Council's services and facilities, Planning and Housing development, Communication methods and more.

The survey assists in providing insight into how we can provide improved and effective services and facilities to our community.

The survey also assists Council in meeting annual and mandated State Government performance reporting requirements by measuring community satisfaction in a number of areas covered by the survey. We are able to compare our customer satisfaction ratings and benchmark our performance from year to year.

Our communication channels

To encourage and invite our community and stakeholders to participate in community engagement activities, we may promote the opportunities in a range of different ways.

All communications will be in line with the Nillumbik brand guide.

Some of the communications channels and tools that can be used to support our engagement activities include:

- Participate Nillumbik website, www.participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au;
- Nillumbik Shire Council website, www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au;
- Nillumbik News;
- eNewsletters;
- Social media including Instagram, Facebook and Twitter;
- Print promotions such as letters, posters or flyers;
- Drop in sessions, site visits and open days;
- Focus groups, workshops and stakeholder briefing sessions; and
- Media promotion including media releases and/or advertising.

Resources and Training

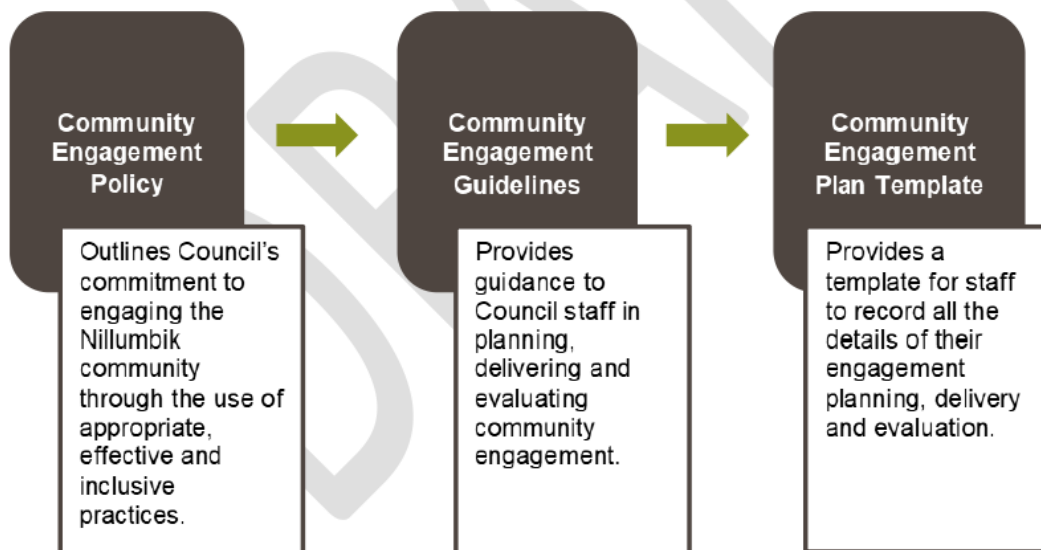
To ensure the effective and consistent application of engagement principles, processes and behaviours, appropriate to the opportunity, a set of Community Engagement Guidelines have been developed. These guidelines describe engagement approaches, provide guidance and set expectations for Council employees on the level of engagement and approaches we will use.

Access to expert staff to give advice on matters relating to project planning, resource allocation, communications and best practice engagement methods are also available.

Training will be provided to staff to increase understanding of our Community Engagement Framework, processes and tools, and to build capacity in order for staff to deliver sound engagement activities across the organisation.

Integrated community engagement

We have several legislative requirements to engage. It can also be managing several large projects across different parts of the organisation at any one time. Council is committed to being respectful of the community's time in our engagement activities. We will coordinate and integrate our large scale community engagement where possible in the interests of efficiency.



Definitions

Accessibility	identifying and eliminating obstacles and barriers to ensure anyone can access or use places, services and information, regardless of their ability, location, culture, time, resources or other differentiating factor.
Council	Can refer to Nillumbik Shire Council as an organisation as well as the Mayor, Councillors, Administrators, Council staff, Executive Council Officers, consultants, and contractors working on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council.
Community	A group of people, the members of which reside in the same geographical area or have a shared background, interest, affiliation or membership.
Deliberative Engagement	Describes a series of engagement practices that demonstrate all of the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence - Promise of influence over policy and decision-making (Involve/Collaborate/Empower using the IAP2 Levels of Engagement). • Inclusion - Participation that is representative of the community and inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values. • Deliberation - open dialogue and discussion, access to information and movement towards consensus.
Engagement	A genuine process of working with people to build understanding, strengthen relationships and inform decisions.
Guidelines	A resource developed to provide guidance for Nillumbik staff to plan and evaluate community engagement initiatives.
IAP2	The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an international organisation dedicated to advancing the practice of public participation
Public	Individuals who may not belong to a specific community relevant to the project, but they still have an interest in the project.
Stakeholder	Individuals or organisations, which affect, or can be affected by project decisions.
VAGO	Victorian Auditor General's Office

Statutory requirements

As a local government, Nillumbik Shire Council is required to meet a wide variety of legislative obligations. Many of these obligations relate to when and how engagement must occur, such as the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Nillumbik Shire Council will meet all of its legislative engagement requirements and this policy is designed to complement and support these existing requirements. Other relevant legislation includes, but is not limited to the following statutes and their associated regulations and guidelines:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Disability Act 2006
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Road Management Act 2004
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Subordinate Legislation Act 1994
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Matters subject to s.223 of the Local Government Act 1989.
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Public Administration Act 2004
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

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6. Officers' reports**FNC.008/21 Integrated Community Planning - Our People, Our Place, Our Future**

Portfolio: Planning**Distribution: Public****Manager: Jeremy Livingston, Executive Manager Business Transformation and Performance****Author: Yasmin Green, Strategy and Policy Advisor
Nichole Johnson, Coordinator Strategic Projects
Katie Camilleri, Team Leader Youth Development****Summary**

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to develop an integrated longer-term approach to strategic planning organised around a Community Vision.

Council's Strategic Planning Framework promotes strong strategic alignment between the Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan and other strategic documents. It therefore makes sense to undertake community engagement activities to support the delivery of these strategic documents in an integrated manner.

The proposed integrated community engagement approach to support the development of the above strategies recognises this, and seeks to engage the community to deliver these key planning documents in an integrated and efficient manner.

Informed by community and Councillor feedback received to date with respect to the draft Community Engagement Policy, an integrated community engagement proposal has been developed under the proposed banner of 'Our People, Our Place, Our Future' to support the development of future plans and strategies which includes the Community Vision for Nillumbik, Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Municipal Planning Strategy, Financial Plan and the Asset Plan.

While acknowledging that Council will not be in a position to adopt its Community Engagement Policy until later this month (at the Council Meeting), this proposal is consistent with community feedback and aligns closely with the objectives and sentiment of the draft policy. If required, this proposed integrated community engagement program could be amended to address any issues or conflicts that may arise.

Endorsement is sought for the proposed integrated community engagement approach, which is scheduled to commence later this month (February 2021) in order to meet tight legislated timeframes for adopting these important plans and strategies.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes and endorses:

- a) The proposed timelines for the integrated community planning engagement approach (**Attachment 1**).
- b) The proposed survey content (**Attachment 2**).
- c) The proposed community engagement plan (**Attachment 3**).

6. Officers' Report**FNC.008/21 Integrated Community Planning - Our People, Our Place, Our Future**

Attachments

- [↓](#) 1. Our People, Our Place, Our Future - Proposed timelines
- [↓](#) 2. Our People, Our Place, Our Future - Proposed survey content
- [↓](#) 3. Our People, Our Place, Our Future - Proposed community engagement plan

Discussion

1. The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to develop an integrated, longer-term strategic planning organised around a long-term Community Vision and in line with the following legislative principles contained within the Act (s.89):
 - a) an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted;
 - b) strategic planning must address the Community Vision;
 - c) strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation;
 - d) strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation;
 - e) strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
2. Strategic planning is the process of defining an organisation's direction and priorities and deciding how to allocate resources to pursue these. Much of the strategic planning for councils is to occur within the first year of a four year term of Council.
3. Effective engagement, planning and reporting by councils is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability to the community.
4. The development and implementation of Council's Strategic Planning Framework supports the efficient and effective delivery of strategic outcomes in line with Council resources and in recognition of Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*, along with other legislative and regulatory parameters. There is strong strategic alignment between the Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan, the Municipal Planning Strategy.
5. This encourages enhanced community engagement outcomes through the opportunity for more meaningful engagement with the community on a smaller number of strategies and plans in line with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Related Council decisions

6. Not applicable.

Options

7. This proposed integrated community engagement approach seeks to engage the community to provide input into key strategic planning documents in an integrated and efficient manner under the banner of 'Our People, Our Place, Our Future'.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.008/21 Integrated Community Planning - Our People, Our Place, Our Future

8. The key strategic planning documents to be delivered through this approach include:

Strategic Planning Document	Due date for adoption	Relevant Act
Municipal Planning Strategy (Planning Scheme)	June 2021	Victorian Planning Provisions / <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
Community Vision	October 2021	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Council Plan	October 2021	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan	October 2021	<i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i>
Financial Plan	October 2021	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Asset Plan	October 2022	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>

9. While each deliverable has its own unique requirements, strong strategic links have been identified between the documents that will direct and influence initiatives, activities and projects undertaken by Council.
10. The proposed program approach acknowledges this, and seeks to engage the Nillumbik community in an integrated and efficient manner, avoiding duplication and mitigating the risk of engagement fatigue.
11. The proposed process and timeframes provided in **(Attachment 1)** outlines the suggested approach to implementing the proposed community engagement approach:
- Phase 1: Broader engagement with the community.
 - Phase 2: Targeted consultations with key stakeholders.
 - Phase 3: Public exhibition of strategies.

Council plans and policies

12. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategies:
- Plan for the community's future needs for services and infrastructure.
 - Ensure that Council meets its legal responsibilities and manages its risks.
 - Improve community trust through better communications and genuine engagement.

Sustainability implications

13. The proposed approach has been designed to ensure that the processes used in the development, adoption and implementation of the both the engagement program and individual project deliverables will be reflective of available resources and tailored to meet Nillumbik's unique social, economic and environmental needs.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.008/21 Integrated Community Planning - Our People, Our Place, Our Future

Community engagement

14. A community engagement approach has been developed which includes an extensive consultation process to meet legislative requirements under both the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, and is consistent with what is required to inform and guide the Municipal Planning Strategy (Planning Scheme).
15. The following key elements will be included:

Phase 1

- a) Designed artwork focused on the banner of 'Our People, Our Place, Our Future'. This artwork has been completed by local artist Dean Wittmann-Lamb. The aim of this artwork is to create a strong identifiable brand for the community engagement approach where people can see themselves and where they live, work and play.
- b) Broad level community survey (**Attachment 2**) identifying "*what is important to the community*" against priorities within people and place to inform high level priority areas. The survey will be accompanied by a series of 'fact sheets' that are aimed at enhancing awareness of key areas and issues across Nillumbik to better inform participants.
- c) A proposed schedule of community engagement activities has been prepared (**Attachment 3**) detailing a range of consultation activities occurring right across the municipality (both in person and virtual) in order to provide broad opportunities for community input. These activities will be subject to the COVID-19 restrictions at any given time and can be adapted where possible to additional virtual engagement activities if required. An up to date schedule will be maintained on Council's website.

Phase 2

- d) Targeted consultation to identify action areas and test priorities. This consultation could include the expertise of advisory groups, networks and community partners to deliver a suite of themed community conversations online and in place. This phase relates directly to the development of the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, however depending on an analysis of the community response received, aspects of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and/or Asset Plan development could be referred to relevant committees, community partners and/or community groups for additional input.
- e) Internal Council staff consultation to bring together a range of expertise to inform the development and implementation of strategy deliverables.

Phase 3

- f) A public exhibition period will also align with the endorsement of the strategy deliverables (namely the Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan, Municipal Planning Strategy, along with other strategic documents), but not necessarily concurrently.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.008/21 Integrated Community Planning - Our People, Our Place, Our Future

Innovation and continuous improvement

16. The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated the need to develop and adopt new ways of connecting with the community. This has been considered in the project planning of the development of the integrated engagement program, which provides a range of opportunities for the community to be engaged across a number of platforms.

Collaboration

17. Officers have attended a number of forums including co-design workshops, seminars and local government network meetings through Local Government Victoria that explored approaches to strategic planning and community engagement at comparable councils. Officers have used this information to inform the development of the integrated community planning and engagement approach.

Budget implications

18. The current scope of the proposed integrated community engagement approach will be accommodated within the existing operating budgets.

Relevant law

19. The proposed approach is reflective of the overarching governance principles contained within the Act (s.9(2)(d)) including:
- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
 - b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
 - c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
 - d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
 - e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;
 - f) collaboration with other councils and governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
 - g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
 - h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
 - i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

20. Regional, state and national plans and policies have been considered in each of the development of each individual program deliverable.

Conflicts of interest

21. All officers who have been involved in the preparation of this report declare they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

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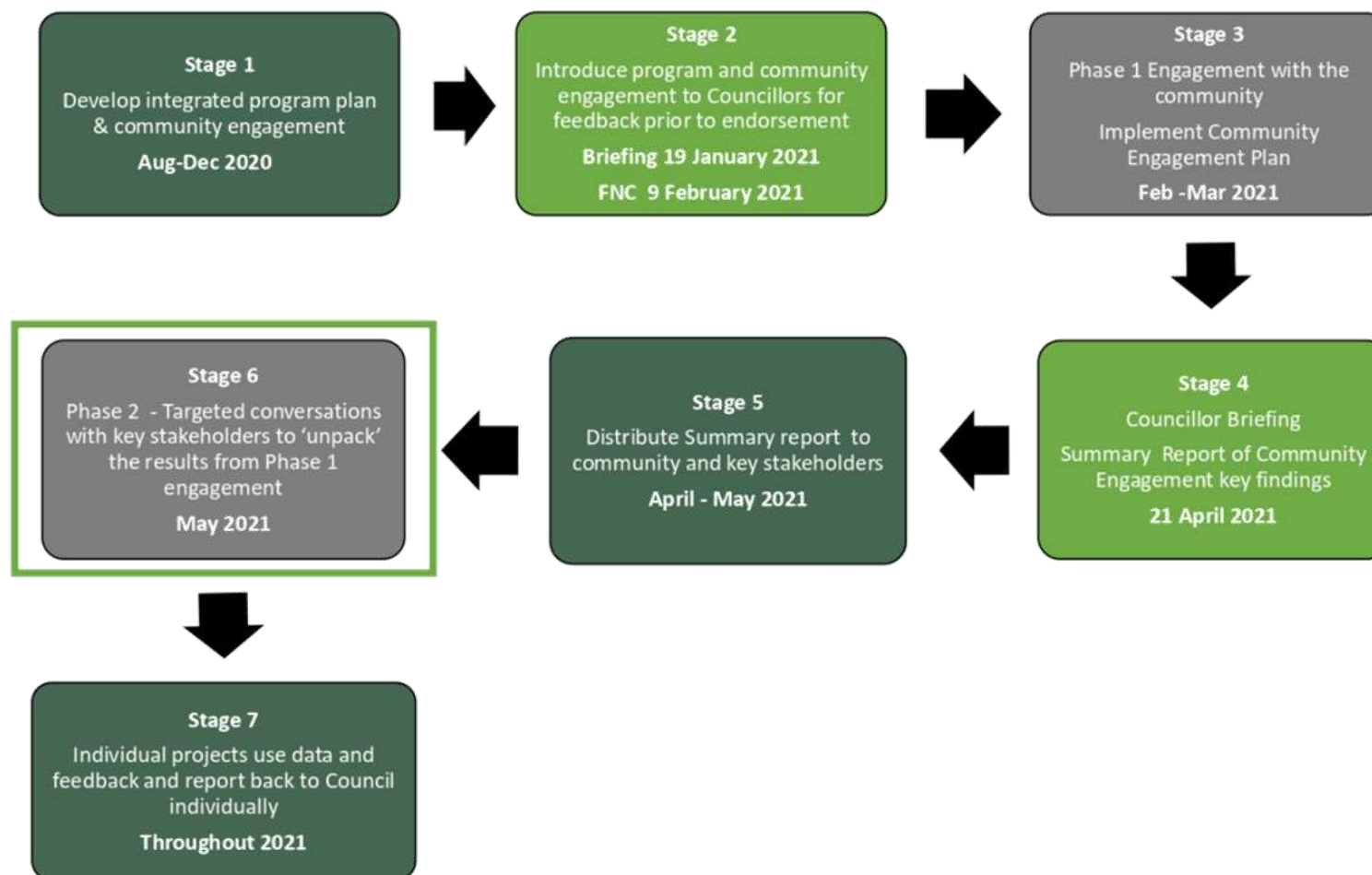
Process and Timeframes



Councillor Engagement



Community Engagement



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Our People, Our Place, Our Future

Tell us what is important to you!

Council is undertaking community planning for a number of key strategic documents including a Community Vision, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Municipal Planning Strategy, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

These strategic documents will be critical to shaping the community Nillumbik will be into the future and we want to hear what is important to you to obtain your input into this important work. You can complete as little or as much of the survey as you like to help us understand your priorities for Our People, Our Place and Our Future and sharing your big ideas for now and into the future.

If you would like to attend a virtual session or community pop up see participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/our-future for more information.

Please complete the following survey and return via:

Complete online at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/our-future

PO box: Nillumbik Shire Council
PO Box 476
Greensborough
VIC 3088

Drop box: Available at Eltham Library, Council offices, Eltham Community Reception Centre, Diamond Creek Community Centre, Hurstbridge Community Hub, Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre, Eltham Leisure Centre, Living and Learning Centres (Panton Hill or Diamond Creek)

Email or text: A copy or screen-shot of the survey to place@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or XXXX XXX XXX

Contact Nillumbik Shire Council on 9433 3111 if you require any support with the survey



SCAN ME

Gender identity:

Age:

Postcode:

Country of birth:

Please tick any that apply.

☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

☐ Person living with a disability

☐ LGBTIQA+

☐ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Stay informed

Email address:

[illegible]

Our People

Thinking about you and your family's wellbeing, what are the top three most important priorities for you under **each** of the following headings?

Number in order of priority 1-3, with 1 being the highest priority.

Inclusion

- ☐ Opportunities for all
- ☐ Gender equity
- ☐ Reconciliation
- ☐ Celebrating cultural diversity
- ☐ Inclusion of People with Disabilities
- ☐ LGBTQIA+ equity
- ☐ Accessible community and health services
- ☐ Support for children and families
- ☐ Community resilience
- ☐ Healthy ageing

Healthy Behaviours

- ☐ Physical wellbeing
- ☐ Mental wellbeing
- ☐ Reducing drug, alcohol, tobacco, gambling harms
- ☐ Healthy eating and drinking
- ☐ Sexual and reproductive healthcare
- ☐ Reducing injury
- ☐ Preventing violence
- ☐ Reducing community infections
- ☐ Active lifestyles

Resilient and Safe

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Pandemic (COVID-19) recovery
- ☐ Fire and emergency preparedness
- ☐ Climate health e.g. heatwave

Employment and Learning

- ☐ Education and lifelong learning
- ☐ Local business mix
- ☐ Volunteering options
- ☐ Local employment
- ☐ Social Enterprise
- ☐ Vocational or business mentoring

Connected and Engaged

- ☐ Community leadership
- ☐ Informed and consulted community
- ☐ Social connections
- ☐ Strong neighbourhood connection
- ☐ Thriving community groups and clubs
- ☐ Creative and artistic options
- ☐ Culture and local heritage
- ☐ Events, festivals and celebrations
- ☐ Local recreation and leisure options
- ☐ Local services and health care
- ☐ Local tourism attractions
- ☐ Night life and entertainment

Tell us your other People ideas:





Our Place

Thinking about your neighbourhood, township and surrounds, what are the top three most important priorities for you under **each** of the following headings?

Number in order of priority 1-3, with 1 being the highest priority.

Healthy Environments

- ☐ Clean, safe and inviting public spaces
- ☐ Public amenities (public, toilets, seating, water fountains, shelter etc.)
- ☐ Accessible places and spaces
- ☐ Park and playgrounds
- ☐ Sport facilities and pavilions
- ☐ Community facilities and halls
- ☐ Informal recreation options (BMX, basketball hoops etc.)
- ☐ Drainage and road infrastructure
- ☐ Thriving shopping precincts
- ☐ Restaurants, cafés and eateries

Housing

- ☐ Ageing in place
- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Eco-friendly design
- ☐ Sense of neighbourhood character and identity
- ☐ Building design (height, material, colour, roof forms)
- ☐ Trees and shade
- ☐ Protection of local history and heritage

Accessible Transport

- ☐ Public transport options
- ☐ Community Transport
- ☐ Connected walking paths/trails
- ☐ Bike trails
- ☐ Horse trails
- ☐ Walking to neighbourhood amenities

Open Space and Sustainability

- ☐ Preservation of the Green Wedge
- ☐ Protecting agricultural use
- ☐ Community and home gardens
- ☐ Roadside vegetation maintenance
- ☐ Water sustainability and availability
- ☐ Loss of biodiversity
- ☐ Reducing waste and recycling
- ☐ Action on climate change
- ☐ Recognising and Protecting indigenous sites of significance
- ☐ Access to passive recreation spaces (public parks and reserves)
- ☐ Responsible urban housing development
- ☐ Planning for bushfire

Tell us your other **Place** ideas:



Our Future

Tell us what other big ideas you have to support community wellbeing or improve the local areas in which you live, work or play now and into the future?

Have you got some more time?

We would value more of your feedback. We have developed a series a fact sheets to assist with thinking about the following questions. The fact sheets are available at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/our-future

Help us develop our Community Vision and Council Plan

Looking ahead to 2040 ...

What are the top three things you would like to see valued in Nillumbik?

1.

2.

3.

What three things need to change in Nillumbik?

1.

2.

3.



In the shorter term (1-4 years) ...

What do you think the top three focus areas for Council should be?

1.

2.

3.

What should Council do to address these focus areas?

How should Council work with the community to address these areas?

In the longer term (5-20 years) ...

What do you think the top three focus areas for Council should be?

1.

2.

3.

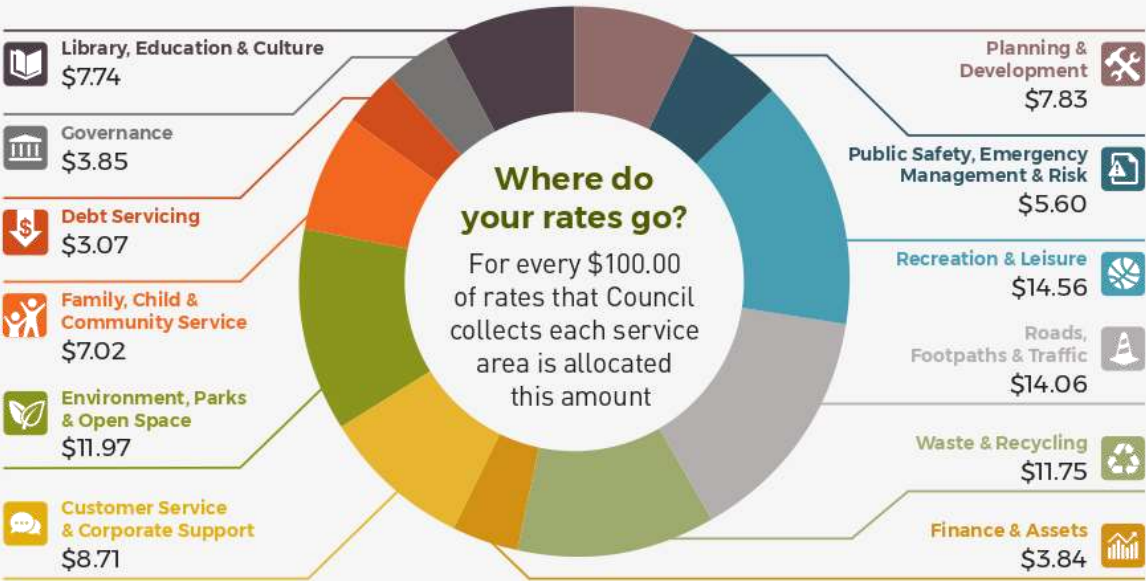
What should Council do to address these focus areas?

How should Council work with the community to address these areas?

Help us develop our Financial Plan

The chart below details how Council allocates its expenditure across the main services it delivers for every \$100.00 of rates that Council collects.

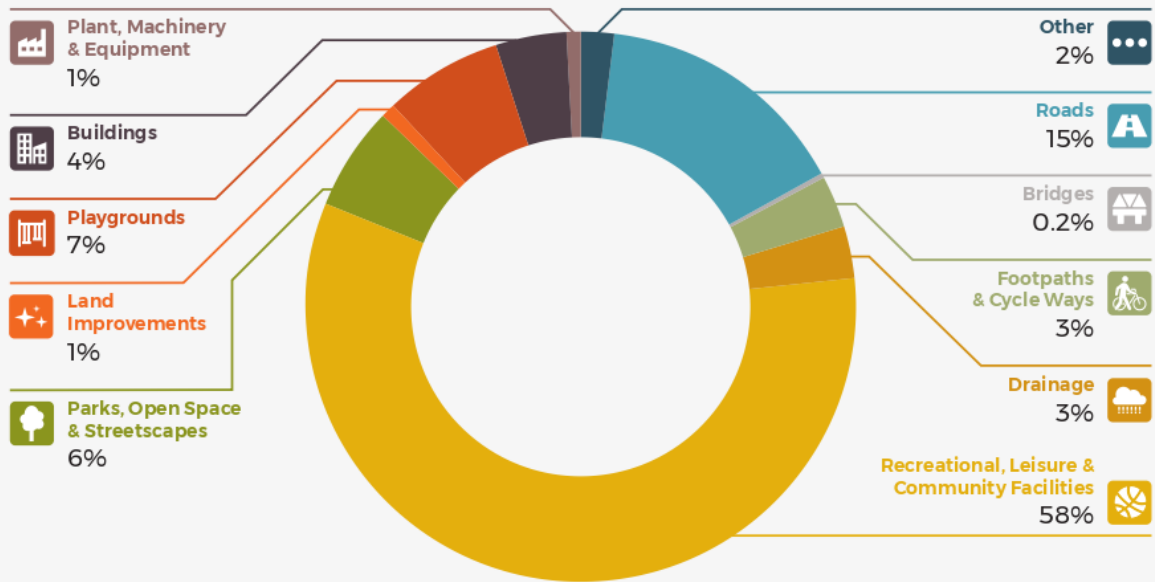
Thinking about this information, is there anything that you think needs to be redirected from one service to another? If so, what and why? Noting that the overall amount of \$100.00 is not increasing but can be redirected.



	Spend less	Spend the same	Spend more
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Please explain any redirections below:

Thinking about this information, is there anything that you think needs to be redirected from one area of capital works to another? If so, what and why?

[illegible]

**Thank you for your time in
completing this survey and
contributing to the shaping of
the development of important
Council plans and strategies.**



Nillumbik Shire Council

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03 9433 3159 | nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



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Our People, Our Place, Our Future

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

22 February - 28 March 2021

Public Pop Ups				
Date	Location	Engagement Activity	Time	Status
Sat 20 Feb	Virtual - online	Adapted consultation activity	10am – 12pm	Confirmed
Sat 27 Feb	Eltham Leisure Centre	Standard consultation toolkit. Targeted engagement activity: free healthy juice/shake for survey completion/ or free pool entry	8.30am - 1pm	Confirmed
Wed 3 Mar	Virtual - online	Adapted consultation activity	7pm – 9pm	Confirmed
Sun 7 Mar	Hurstbridge Market	Standard consultation toolkit. Targeted engagement activity: 1/2 hourly \$20 EFTPOS voucher raffle giveaways	9am - 2pm	Confirmed
Thurs 11 Mar	Virtual - online	Adapted consultation activity	10am – 12pm	Confirmed
Sat 13 Mar	St. Andrews Market	Standard consultation toolkit. Targeted engagement activity: 1/2 hourly \$20 EFTPOS voucher raffle giveaways	10am - 2pm	Confirmed
Sun 14 Mar	Eltham Farmers Market	Standard consultation toolkit. Targeted engagement activity: 1/2 hourly \$20 EFTPOS voucher raffle giveaways	9am - 2pm	Confirmed
Tues 16 Mar	Virtual - online	Adapted consultation activity	2pm – 4pm	Confirmed
Fri 19 Mar	Wattle Place	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement activity: seedlings, harvest inspired activity	2pm - 5pm	Confirmed - pending COVID safe plan
Sat 20 Mar	Eltham Town	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement activity: FreeZa music, popcorn, harvest activity	9am - 3pm	Confirmed - pending COVID safe plan
Sun 21 Mar	DC Activity Centre	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement activity: harvest activity	10 - 4pm	Confirmed - pending COVID safe plan
Sat 27 Mar	DC Playspace and surrounds	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement activity: free/reduced price drink at tram café for survey completion	10am - 4pm	Confirmed - pending COVID safe plan

Our People, Our Place, Our Future

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE
22 February - 28 March 2021

Public Pop Ups				
Sun 28 Mar	ENAP	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement activity: seedling planting through Edendale/ mobile coffee cart	11am - 3pm	Confirmed - pending COVID safe plan

Targeted Pop Ups				
Date	Location	Engagement Activity	Time	Status
1- 28 Mar	Community Advisory & Network Groups	Presentation at meetings. Approx 15 groups identified so far.	TBC	Confirm with group leaders
1 - 28 Mar	Service Networks and Essential Services. Eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthability • DVCS • CFA • Police 	Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off. Work with individual service providers to design appropriate consultation activity.	TBC	Confirm with group leaders
22 Feb – 28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Customer Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front of house • 1st point of call • community enquiries • Triage enquiries as required • Online & phone services 	Work with service unit to design information kits. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In Progress
1 – 28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Family Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergartens • Childcare • Best Start • MCH • Gender Equity • ATSI & LAN • Primary Schools 	Work with service unit to design child and family friendly consultation activity for stakeholders. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	Confirmed
1 – 28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Inclusion and Volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers Groups 	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders.	Various	Confirmed

Our People, Our Place, Our Future

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE
22 February - 28 March 2021

Targeted Pop Ups				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Groups 	Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off		
1 – 28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Positive Ageing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAAC Community Transport 	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	Confirmed
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Environment Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land management Waste management Environmental works Projects Biodiversity 	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In progress
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Economic Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Commerce Eltham Traders DC Traders Hurstbridge Traders Other Traders 	Work with unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In progress
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Youth Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Council Freeza Secondary Schools 	Work with unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In progress
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Arts and Culture	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders.	Various	In progress

Our People, Our Place, Our Future

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

22 February - 28 March 2021

Targeted Pop Ups				
		Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off		
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Shire Events & Grants	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In progress
1-28 Mar	Nillumbik Recreation Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted Service providers Sports Clubs Edendale 	Work with service unit to design consultation activity for stakeholders. Develop stakeholder capacity to promote consultations within their networks. Presentation at meetings and collateral drop off	Various	In progress
1 - 28 Mar	Various Aligned Leisure Centres	Work with Aligned Leisure to design consultation activity. Tie in to the development of the Aligned Leisure business strategy	Various	Confirmed - awaiting dates from Aligned Leisure
1 - 5 Mar	Primary Schools - Yarrambat PS - Strathewen PS - Apollo Parkways PS - St. Andrews PS - Wattle Glen PS - Research PS	Working with schools to design child and family friendly consultation activity	TBC	Awaiting confirmation from all schools
9 -12 Mar	Hurstbridge Hub / Living and Learning Centres - Panton Hill - Diamond Creek - Eltham	Scaled down consultation toolkit. Work with facility staff to design consultation activities	TBC	Confirmed
TBC	YPRL Service inclu; mobile library	Scaled down consultation toolkit. Work with library staff to design consultation activities	TBC	Confirmed - Awaiting dates from YPRL

Our People, Our Place, Our Future

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

22 February - 28 March 2021

Targeted Pop Ups				
23 - 25 Mar	Train Stations - Hurstbridge - Diamond Creek - Eltham	Standard consultation toolkit. Engagement Activity: free/reduced price coffee for survey competition	7am - 9am	Access request sent to Metro trains
TBC	Yarrambat Golf	Work with Belgravia to design consultation activity. Tie in to Yarrambat Golf strategic direction stakeholder forum and consultation	TBC	Confirmed - Awaiting dates from Belgravia
TBC	DC Secondbite Distribution	Standard consultation toolkit. Targeted engagement activity: sausage sizzle,	TBC	Awaiting confirmation date from Rotary

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6. Officers' reports

FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition

Portfolio: Planning

Distribution: Public

Manager: Renae Ahern, Manager Planning Services

Author: Paul Fyffe, Senior Strategic Planner

Leigh Northwood, Strategic Planning Lead

Summary

Council recently exhibited its proposed Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, which intends to remove the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) from land that was formerly known as 323-325 Yan Yean Road, Plenty. This report advises of the response to exhibition of the amendment.

The EAO is applied to land which is potentially contaminated and was applied in 2000 to land formerly known as 323-325 Yan Yean Road due to historical gold mining at the site. It is appropriate to remove the overlay when the potential for contamination has been appropriately responded to. Measures have been taken at 323-325 Yan Yean Road which identify and respond to contamination at the site and allow for residential subdivision of the site, subject to conditions. Considering this, Council resolved in June 2020 to commence a planning scheme amendment, Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, to remove the EAO from the site.

Amendment C129 was exhibited from 5 October to 16 November 2020 and Council received one submission, which is from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). In its submission, the EPA does not articulate support or non-support for the amendment, but does question the level of assessment regarding one of the measures taken to respond to the contamination. The EPA is the state authority responsible for contamination issues and so its response to Amendment C129 presents an issue for the amendment.

Where a submission raises an issue with a proposed amendment, the statutory amendment process provides for Council to request that the Minister for Planning appoint an independent planning panel to consider the amendment. This step allows Council to receive independent, technical recommendations on an amendment.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes the submission from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.
2. Recommends to Council's Meeting that it request the Minister for Planning appoint an independent planning panel to consider the amendment.
3. Requests that officers notify the EPA and owners and occupiers of land affected by the proposed amendment of the Committee's resolution.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition

Attachments

- ↓1. Land at the former site of 323-325 Yan Yean Road and application of the EAO to the site - both shown in orange
- ↓2. Submission from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme

Discussion

1. The Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)
1. Since 2000, State planning policy and legislation requires use of the EAO as the mechanism within all planning schemes to identify potentially contaminated land and to require an appropriate assessment and outcome before allowing any sensitive use or associated development. Residential use is a type of sensitive use.
2. The EAO performs its function by stating that a pre-requisite for a sensitive use, or any building and works associated with development for a sensitive use, to be permitted is that an environmental audit, undertaken by a qualified Environmental Auditor, must be conducted of the site and further, that the audit must deem that the use is appropriate in one of the following ways:
 - The auditor issues a Certificate of Environmental Audit, which occurs where an audit indicates that the land is suitable for any use within the land use zoning – there are no restrictions on the use of the site due to its environmental condition;
 - or**
 - The auditor issues a Statement of Environmental Audit. A Statement is issued when contamination is found on-site. A statement includes the nature of the contamination, and indicates that the site is either suitable for nominated uses, or not suitable for any uses at all. When it nominates suitable uses, the Statement usually also applies conditions to the use, such as to require remedial works, the requirement to maintain particular conditions, avoid particular activities, or to prohibit certain activities. If the contamination is sufficiently contained or minimal, a Statement can still allow a sensitive use to occur. All owners, current and future are bound by the direction and conditions of any Statement of Environmental Audit which is issued.
3. Guidelines for application, use and removal of the EAO are set out in *State Planning Practice Note No.30 – Potentially Contaminated Land* (2005). In regards to removing the EAO, the practice note states that the overlay should be removed from land which has been provided a Certificate of Environmental Audit. Further, it is stated that it may be appropriate to remove the EAO where a Statement of Environmental Audit has been issued, if the conditions are considered sufficiently minor, or have been completed. In addition, the planning practice note advises that the timely removal of an EAO will avoid costly and time-consuming requirements for all parties. The EAO can only be applied and removed by a planning scheme amendment.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition**

4. It is important to note that Council has experienced on-ongoing issues with the State Government in relation to use of the EAO, including:
 - The statutory framework for the EAO appears to have holes. For example, Council officers are of the view that the framework does not give Council the authority to require an environmental audit to be conducted before planning approval for residential subdivision is issued, rather it is only a requirement before residential use and development can occur (i.e. before construction and use of a dwelling).
 - Certain guidelines are rather vague. For example, whilst the relevant planning practice note suggests and appears to promote removal of an EAO where there are minimum restrictions or conditions, it provides no clear guidance as to what constitutes minimum conditions.
 - The State Government typically does not provide particularly clear advice regarding the EAO, presumably out a wish to avoid any liability issues.
 - The relevant planning practice note for the EAO, mentioned above, is now 15 years old, which brings into question the currency of its policy position and guidance.
5. The EAO at No. 323-325 Yan Yean Road
5. The EAO has been applied to land at what was no. 323-325 (the site) since the overlay came into operation in 2000. The site and existing application of the EAO is defined (by the colour orange) in **Attachment 1**.
6. An environmental audit was conducted for the site in 2000. It identified contamination on the property due to historical gold-mining activity, but deemed that the contamination did not preclude low-density residential use. A Statement of Environmental Audit was issued that allows for low density residential use, subject to conditions. These conditions particularly seek to prevent residential use occurring in an area that was identified to contain mullock heaps of contaminated soil and to ensure the mullock heaps are properly managed to prevent impacts.
7. In 2016 the owner of the property was granted a planning permit for residential subdivision (12 lots) and remedial works. The permit requires remedial works to address contamination before the subdivisional works can commence. The remedial works were conducted by Connolly Environmental Pty Ltd, who provided a report noting they had removed the contaminated soil from the proposed residential lots and capped this under part of the proposed road for the subdivision, which is now Thornbill Drive. These works were not conducted under the supervision of an Environmental Auditor, and as such, no revised Statement of Environmental Audit was ever prepared. Consequently, Council applied a legal restriction, a Section 173 Agreement pursuant to the Planning & Environment Act 1987, which replicates the conditions of the existing Statement of Environmental Audit to the whole of the site. A Section 173 Agreement is binding and clearly visible restriction which appears on title. This restriction 'flags' the on-going statutory requirements of the Statement of Environmental Audit in the absence of an EAO.

6. Officers' Report**FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition**

8. Commencement of Amendment C129
9. As noted above, the State Government's practice note on operation of the EAO, supports timely removal of the overlay when suitable conditions are in place. With the Section 173 Agreement in place on the site, which imposes the conditions of the Statement of Environmental Audit, Council resolved in July 2020 to request the Minister for Planning authorise the preparation and exhibition of an amendment, Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, to remove the EAO from land that was formerly 323-5 Yan Yean Road (i.e. to remove the EAO as shown in **Attachment 1**). On 17 August 2020, Council received the authorisation it requires from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the amendment. Further, on 4 September 2020, the Minister granted Council with exemptions from two of the standard notification requirements, which are the requirements to provide notice of the amendment in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the area. It is understood that these exemptions were provided given the localised and technical nature of the amendment.
10. Exhibition of Amendment C129
11. Amendment C129 was exhibited from 5 October to 16 November 2020 (six weeks) in full accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. As part of this, owners and occupiers of land affected by the amendment and adjacent land were directly notified of the amendment and notice of the amendment was provided on Council's Participate Nillumbik website. By exhibiting the amendment for 6 weeks, the exhibition period was notably longer than the minimum required of one calendar month.
12. Whilst Council received some calls from certain owners of land affected by the amendment, only one submission was received (discussed below), which was from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The lack of submissions to exhibition of the amendment is expected given:
 - The localised and technical nature of the amendment
 - It is expected that the landowners of lots within the amendment area would support removal of the EAO and residents mostly provide a submission to an amendment when they oppose it.
13. Submission from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
14. The EPA is the state government authority responsible for managing contamination and its submission indicates that it has an issue with the exhibited amendment.
15. A copy of the EPA's submission is provided as **Attachment 2** and its content is briefly summarised as follows:
 - It states that the EPA's response is intended to inform Council and does not endorse a particular outcome or "support" the proposal to remove the EAO.
 - Advises that Council should satisfy itself that removal of the EAO is appropriate.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition

- Notes as an issue that the remediation and validation at 323-325 were not carried out with the oversight of an environmental auditor and consequently does not have the same level of accountability as the assessments undertaken as part of the statutory audit process.
 - States that Council may wish to undertake its own review of the report to satisfy itself that remediation and validation has been done to an acceptable standard.
16. Officer's interpretation of the submission is that it is indicating that the EPA does not believe Council can appropriately satisfy itself that removal of the EAO is appropriate until a review of the remediation works has been conducted by an environmental auditor and that review approves of the works. This summation was confirmed in a subsequent conversation with the EPA.
17. One action Council has taken to assist in considering the EPA's submission is to receive an indicative quote from an environmental auditor to undertake a review of the remedial works conducted at the site. The auditor has advised Council that a review of the remediation works would likely cost approx. \$8,000.
18. If this work were to be undertaken, officers consider it appropriate that the cost of reviewing the remedial works should be borne by the relevant landowner(s), as:
- This is consistent with the general requirement that the owners of land are responsible for responding to planning requirements relevant to their land.
 - The relevant planning practice note generally infers or implies that the cost of satisfying the requirements of the EAO should be borne by landowners/applicants.
 - The EAO, which identifies the potential for contamination, has been applied to the site in an appropriately transparent manner for potential buyers.
 - It would set an unreasonable and unacceptable precedent for Council's use of public funds (i.e. rates) if Council were to accept the cost in this instance. Owners of other properties within the EAO would likely expect the same response.
 - It also sets a potential future liability for Council if it, rather than the owner, engages the auditor, and the auditor is found to have made an error.
 - There may be significant additional costs to Council if the auditor finds the remedial works which were undertaken by the owner and their contractor/s prior to the subdivision of No. 323-5 being released are not sufficient and that more works are required.
19. The next section of this report proposes a response to the EPA's submission.

Options

20. The role an independent Planning Panel
21. When a Council has one or more submissions which raise issue with an amendment and the Council wishes to still pursue the amendment, the next statutory step in the amendment process is for the Council to request the Minister for Planning appoint a Planning Panel to consider the amendment and the submission(s).

6. Officers' Report

FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition

22. Regarding this, there are good reasons for Council to continue to pursue Amendment C129 and to seek to appropriately remove the EAO from the site, including:
- The EAO is a significant imposition on land and the owners. Consequently, State guidelines detail that the overlay should be removed unless its continued application is necessary.
 - The necessity of retaining the EAO at the site is seriously questionable. The key requirements of the EAO have been fulfilled. An audit has been conducted and a Statement of Environmental Audit has been issued which defines that low-density residential use can occur subject to conditions.
 - The conditions of the Statement of Environmental Audit are replicated in a transparent and binding fashion by a Section 173 Agreement that has been registered to the site, including the recently created lots.
23. However, the EPA has raised a substantive procedural issue with the remedial works conducted by Connolly Environmental Management Pty Ltd. Therefore, to proceed with the amendment, Council would be required to request an independent planning panel to consider the amendment.
24. It is the officers' view that the appointment of a planning panel should greatly assist Council's consideration of the amendment, noting:
- The panel will use relevant expertise to provide Council with independent recommendations on the amendment.
 - It is expected the panel will recommend a path to Council and/or landowners to adequately and appropriately respond to the procedural issue (detailed above) with the remedial works.
 - If such a path is established and leads to the remedial works being approved by an auditor, this should present the opportunity to further improve and streamline the legal restrictions currently applied to the site by the Statement of Environmental Audit and replicated through the S173 Agreement.
25. Considering the above, the key advice of this report is that the Committee recommend to Council's February Meeting that it requests the Minister for Planning appoint an independent planning panel to consider Amendment C129.

Related Council decisions

26. At the July 2020 Council Meeting, Council resolved to request the Minister for Planning authorise Council to prepare and exhibit a planning scheme amendment which will remove the EAO from the former site of No. 323-325 Yan Yean Rd.

Council plans and policies

27. This report directly supports the achievement of Council Plan 2017-2021 strategy:
- Prepare and develop an improved and holistic approach to strategic planning.

6. Officers' Report

FNC.009/21 Amendment C129 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (Removal of the EAO from various parcels in Plenty) - Response to Exhibition

Sustainability implications

28. The subject matter is relevant to appropriately responding to potentially contaminated land through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

Community engagement

29. The proposed Amendment C129 was exhibited from 5 October to 16 November in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
30. Direct notification of the amendment was provided to:
- Owners and occupiers of the land affected by the amendment and adjacent land
 - Prescribed State Government ministers
 - The EPA
31. Notification of the amendment's exhibition was also placed on Council's Participate Nillumbik website.
32. Given the localised and technical nature of the amendment, the Minister for Planning exempted Council from the normal notification requirements to place a notice of the amendment in the Victoria Government Gazette and a local newspaper.
33. Further details explaining the exhibition conducted and the submission received are detail above under "Discussion".

Innovation and continuous improvement

34. The recommendations of a Planning Panel on this issue may provide steps that will improve Council's, and other parties, processes for managing contamination through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

Collaboration

35. Council officers are proactively seeking to liaise with DELWP and the EPA to address the issues outlined in this briefing paper.

Budget implications

36. The following are budget considerations relevant to this matter:
- The cost of convening an independent planning panel will be borne by Council and is expected to be under \$10,000 in cost.
 - As mentioned above under "Discussion", Council has received a quote for approximately \$8,000 for an environmental auditor to conduct a review of the remediation works at the site. Council officers would expect the relevant land owners to bear this cost, as for Council to do so appears broadly inconsistent with relevant guidelines and would set an unreasonable and unacceptable precedent for Council and its use of public funds.

6. Officers' Report

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Relevant law

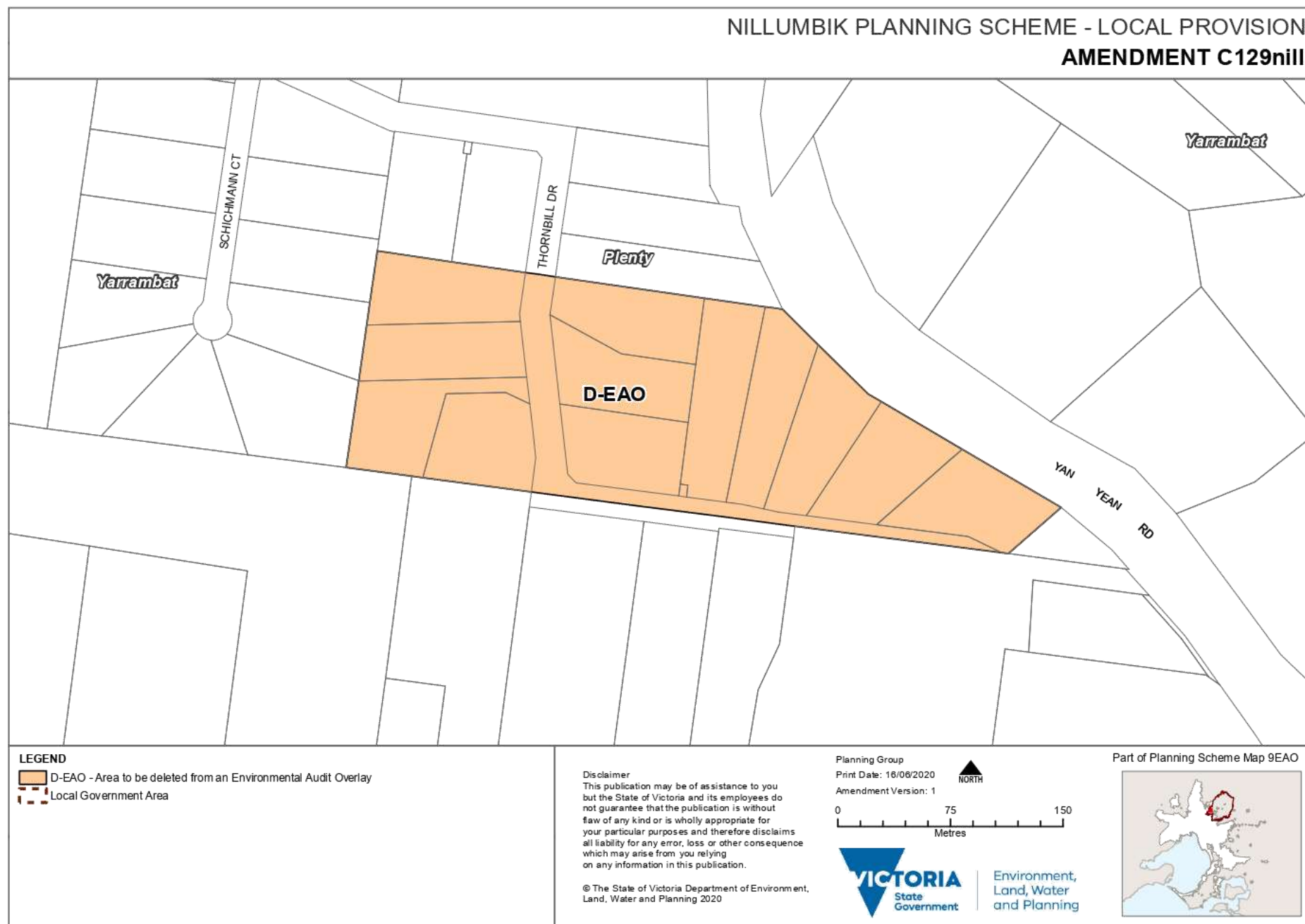
37. The *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 provides the regulatory framework for both the application of the EAO and conducting a planning scheme amendment.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

38. State planning policy for managing contamination is relevant and has already been outlined above in this report.

Conflicts of interest

39. Officers preparing this report have no conflict of interest in relation to its subject, content and recommendations.



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Our Ref: 5011192

5 November 2020

Paul Fyffe
Senior Strategic Planner
Nillumbik Shire Council
34 Civic Drive
GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088



Dear Paul

RE: PROPOSED PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C129 – REMOVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT OVERLAY

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response in relation to the proposed planning scheme amendment to remove the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) from a number of properties in Plenty, referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) via email on 5 October 2020.

EPA are in receipt of the following documents:

- Referral letter to EPA dated 5 October 2020;
- The draft Explanatory Report for Nillumbik C129; and
- The notice of amendment for Nillumbik C129.

Ministerial Direction 19

Ministerial Direction 19 requires planning authorities to seek early advice from EPA when undertaking strategic planning processes and preparing planning scheme amendments that may significantly impact Victoria's environment, amenity and/or human health due to pollution and waste.

EPA's consideration and advice on relevant planning matters is intended to support decisions made by planning authorities in the early stages of the planning process.

It is in this context that EPA provides the comments below.

Our Understanding of the Proposal

EPA understands the proposed amendment seeks to remove the EAO from a number of properties in Plenty, and comprises nos. 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 25A, 27, 29, 31, 33 and 1/35 Thornbill Drive, Plenty (the affected land). The land was formerly known as 323-325 Yan Yean Road, Plenty.



Figure 1 - Nillumbik C129nill 001d-eaoMap09 Exhibition
Source - Draft Explanatory Report

EPA understands that Council is seeking the removal of the EAO from the above-mentioned properties along Thornbill Drive, as it considers that the affected land satisfies the circumstances where it is appropriate to remove the EAO, given:

- *“The location and extent of existing contamination is known, as identified by the 2000 environmental assessment report and subsequent reports.*
- *A Statement of Environmental Audit has been issued which concludes that the affected land is suitable for low-density residential and agricultural use subject to conditions.*
- *Remedial works have been conducted which implement the conditions of the Statement of Environmental Audit to allow low-density residential living.*
- *Council considers the remaining restrictions and conditions of the Statement of Environmental Audit are suitably minor in terms of the effort required for compliance.*
- *A Section 173 Agreement was applied in 2019 to all land formerly known as 323-325 Yan Yean Road. The agreement requires compliance with the conditions of the Statement of Environmental Audit by current and future owners. (This Section 173 Agreement was finalised and was registered on title by Land Use Victoria on 20th September 2019 in dealing number AS541744C)”.*



Figure 2 – The properties along Thornbill Drive proposed to have the EAO removed
Source - VicPlan.

Site History – 323-325 Yan Yean Road, Plenty (formerly Yarrambat)

Council's website indicates that the EAO was applied to the subject land by the new format planning scheme in response to potential contamination from historical gold mining activity. The extent of contamination on the affected land was established by an environmental audit (EPA REF CARMS no: 36194-2) undertaken for 323-325 Yan Yean Road, Plenty in 2000. It is unclear what the trigger for the audit was – it may have been carried out on a voluntary basis. That said, a Statement of Environmental Audit was issued for the land, which concluded that the affected land is 'suitable for low density residential use and for agricultural use subject to four (4) conditions.'

The four conditions are:

1. *Residential use and any use for growing of food for human consumption must be confined to areas outside the area impacted by mullock heaps and/or contaminated fill as defined in the Statement;*

2. *If any earthworks take place within the area impacted by mullock heaps or contaminated fill as defined in the Statement, any soil moved from the area be tested and disposed of in accordance with EPA guidelines;*
3. *No sensitive use take place (residential, child care or growing of crops for human consumption) in the area impacted by the mullock heaps or contaminated fill as defined in the Statement unless the whole of the impacted area is graded and covered with at least 500mm of clean fill; and*
4. *The area impacted by mullock heaps or contaminated fill as defined in the Statement be maintained such that vegetative cover is sufficient to prevent erosion in the soil so that contaminated soil is not moved off the site.*

Since the completion of the audit in 2000, Council has advised that a planning permit was issued in 2016 for:

Subdivision of the land into 12 lots, removal of vegetation for road construction and rehabilitation of contaminated soil, in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Council have provided the following summary in the explanatory report:

- Connolly Environmental was engaged to conduct soil assessment and remediation prior to subdivision and redevelopment of the affected land for low density residential land use, in accordance with Condition 6 of the planning permit. The following works were carried out:
 - Mullock heaps were removed from the proposed residential lots;
 - Excavation and validation of chemically impacted soil, above the adopted low density residential criteria in the mullock heap area; and
 - Soil deemed to be 'chemically and aesthetically impacted' was retained beneath the proposed roadway.
- In 2018, Connolly Environmental prepared the *Final Environmental Site Assessment Report* to document the outcomes of the assessment and remediation work and advised that:
 - Soil in the proposed residential allotments was considered to be chemically and aesthetically suitable for low density use, consistent with the existing Statement of Environmental Audit, where:
 - The whole of the impacted area was graded and covered with at least 500 mm of clean fill, in accordance with condition 3 of the Statement of Environmental Audit.
 - The impacted soil had been appropriately retained (beneath the proposed roadway) to prevent erosion of the soil so that contaminated soil is not moved off the site, in accordance with condition 4 of the Statement of Environmental Audit.
 - Chemically and aesthetically impacted soil removed from the mullock heap area, was considered to have been suitably retained beneath the proposed roadway. Soil retained beneath the proposed roadway was below the adopted commercial/industrial criteria, where no direct exposure to residential receptors was reasonably expected.

EPA Assessment and Advice

In assessing the environmental condition of the affected land in 2000, the auditor has concluded the condition of the land is detrimental or potentially detrimental to one or more beneficial uses of the site. Accordingly, a Statement of Environmental Audit was issued. This differs from a Certificate of Environmental Audit, which has no limitation on a site's use. A Statement will typically identify uses which are not suitable and will include conditions to be met, sometimes requiring ongoing obligations on the landowner.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), General Practice Note: Potentially Contaminated Land, June 2005 (PPN30) states that: *In some circumstances where a Statement of Environmental Audit is issued, it may also be possible to remove the EAO (for example, where there*

are minimum restrictions or conditions on the use of the site, or the conditions have been complied with).

With regards to the proposed planning scheme amendment, the nature of EPA's advice is intended to inform Council, not endorse a particular outcome or 'support' the proposal to remove the EAO. On this basis, EPA wishes to draw Council's attention to the following observations:

- The subsequent remediation and validation of the land as documented by Conolly Environmental does not form part of the statutory environmental audit.
- The subsequent remediation and validation were not carried out with the oversight of an environmental auditor, and consequently does not have the same level of accountability as the assessments undertaken as part of the statutory audit process.
- While the response to remediation on site appears to be consistent with the intent of the Audit recommendations/conditions, Council may wish to undertake its own review of the report to satisfy itself that remediation and validation has been done to an acceptable standard. This assessment should be in accordance with the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999.
- Whilst the Statement of Environment Audit lists conditions for the remediation of the land, it is noted that some of the remediation measures undertaken deviate from the condition wording, e.g. removal of mullock heaps. Council should be confident that these variations, as outlined in the Section 173 agreement, follow the intended outcome(s) of the Audit recommendations.
- EPA is not able to confirm whether the requirements of the Statement, and the actions undertaken and referred to in the Section 173 agreement would satisfy the environmental auditor.

Summary and recommendations

In forming an opinion of the suitability of removing the EAO, Council should:

- Satisfy themselves that the environmental condition of the land is suitable for a sensitive use, given that the remediation and validation is a largely unregulated form of assessment and does not involve the oversight of an environmental auditor.

Ensure that all conditions listed in the Statement of Environmental Audit have been complied with, or confirm the actions undertaken and referred to in the Section 173 agreement have been carried out in a way that would satisfy the environmental auditor. On the basis that Council are satisfied that these considerations have been addressed, then its decision to proceed with the EAO removal appears consistent with the guidance given in PPN30.

If our assessment is not aligned with your view of the environmental risk, or if the proposal is subsequently amended, please contact Kristen Argus, Senior Planning Officer on 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842).

Yours sincerely,



Elita Briggs
Team Leader – Landuse Planning Delivery
Major Projects & Planning
EPA Victoria

7. Supplementary and urgent business

8. Confidential reports

Nil