

Council Meeting

to be held at the Civic Centre, Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Wednesday 26 April 2023 commencing at 7:00pm.

Attachments

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Friday 28 April 2023

(updated following Council Meeting)

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088
Telephone 9433 3111
Facsimile 9433 3777
Website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Nillumbik Shire Council

Attachments

COM.001/23	Confirmation of Minutes Council Meeting held Tuesday 28 March 2023	
Attachment 1	Minutes of Council Meeting held 28 March 2023.....	1
AC.003/23	Advisory Committee Report - 26 April 2023	
Attachment 1	Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes reported 26 April 2023	40
CM.026/23	March 2023 Quarter Financial Report	
Attachment 1	Quarterly Finance Report March 2023	48
CM.027/23	Draft Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029	
Attachment 1	Draft Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029	61
CM.028/23	January 26 Citizenship Ceremonies moving forward	
Attachment 1	Announcement of changes to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code.....	96
Attachment 2	Amended - Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code December 2022	97
CM.029/23	Jalna Court, Eltham - Proposed Special Charge Scheme	
Attachment 1	Jalna Court Special Charge Scheme Area	146
Attachment 2	Apportionment to affected properties.....	147
CM.030/23	Land Management Incentive Program - Risk Review	
Attachment 1	LMIP Deer Control Risk Assessment - March 2023	148
Attachment 2	LMIP Guidelines - November 2021 (Council adopted)	155
Attachment 3	LMIP Review Fact Sheet - November 2021	164
CM.031/23	Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022 - Final Report	
Attachment 1	Final Report of the Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan.....	169
Attachment 2	Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022.....	184
Attachment 3	Ageing Well in Victoria Action Plan 2022-2026	217
Attachment 4	Ageing is Everyone's Business - Report on Isolation and Loneliness among Senior Victorians	261
CM.035/23	Informal Meetings of Councillors Records - 26 April 2023	
Attachment 1	Informal Meetings of Councillors Records reported 26 April 2023.....	335
CM.036/23	Appointment of Councillor Representative to the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning Employment Network Inc. Board - May 2023	
Attachment 1	Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network AGM invitation	342
Attachment 2	Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Inc Board Election Notice.....	345

Council Meeting

held at the Civic Centre, Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Tuesday 28 March 2023 commenced at 7:02pm.

Minutes

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Friday 31 March 2023

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088
Telephone 9433 3111
Facsimile 9433 3777
Website www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

Nillumbik Shire Council

Contents		
1. Welcome by the Mayor		1
2. Acknowledgement of Country		1
3. Good Governance Pledge		1
4. Prayer		1
5. Apologies		1
6. Presentations		1
7. Confirmation of Minutes		2
8. Disclosure of conflicts of interest		2
9. Petitions		2
10. Questions from the gallery		2
11. Reports of Advisory Committees		4
AC.002/23	Advisory Committee Report - 28 March 2023	4
12. Officers' reports		5
CM.011/23	Endorsement of Youth Council Advisory Committee Members 2023-2025	5
CM.012/23	Youth Strategy 2022-2026 Implementation Plan Year 1 Review and Year 2 Plan	9
CM.013/23	Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Terms of Reference	11
CM.014/23	Quarterly Risk and Safety Report - December 2022	13
CM.015/23	Living & Learning Nillumbik Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee Membership recommendation	15
CM.016/23	Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 - Expression of Interest Assessment Report	17
CM.017/23	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting February 2023	21
CM.018/23	Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee 2023-25 - Endorsement of additional member	23
CM.019/23	Residential Building at 1225 Main Road, Eltham	25
CM.020/23	Contract Report - Contract 2223-045 INFOR Pathway	27
CM.021/23	Contract 1819-086 Provision of garbage, recycle and organic waste collection services - variation claim JJs Waste & Recycling	29
CM.022/23	Tender Report - Contract 2223-017 Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works	31
CM.023/23	Informal Meetings of Councillors Records - 28 March 2023	35

Council Meeting Minutes	28 March 2023
13. Notices of Motion	36
14. Delegates' Reports	36
15. Supplementary and urgent business	36
16. Confidential reports	36
17. Close of Meeting	36

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

Nillumbik Shire Council

**Minutes of the Meeting of Nillumbik Shire Council held Tuesday 28 March 2023.
The meeting commenced at 7.02pm.**

Councillors present:

Cr Ben Ramcharan	Sugarloaf Ward (Mayor)
Cr Richard Stockman	Blue Lake Ward
Cr Karen Egan	Bunjil Ward
Cr Natalie Duffy	Edendale Ward
Cr Peter Perkins	Ellis Ward
Cr Frances Eyre	Swipers Gully Ward
Cr Geoff Paine	Wingrove Ward (Deputy Mayor)

Officers in attendance:

Carl Cowie	Chief Executive Officer
Vince Lombardi	Chief Financial Officer / Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure
Blaga Naumoski	Director Governance and Communications
Corrienne Nichols	Director Community Services
Rosa Zouzoulas	Director Planning and Community Safety
Jeremy Livingston	Executive Manager Business Transformation and Performance
Lance Clark	Senior Procurement Specialist
Katia Croce	Governance Lead

1. Welcome by the Mayor

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country was read by the Mayor, Cr Ben Ramcharan.

3. Good Governance Pledge

The Good Governance Pledge was ready by Cr Peter Perkins.

4. Prayer

A prayer was read by Captain Allison Footer, Chaplain, Salvation Army Greensborough.

5. Apologies

Nil

6. Presentations

Nil

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

7. Confirmation of Minutes

Confirmation of the minutes of the Council Meeting and Confidential Council Meeting held on Tuesday 28 February 2023.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Geoff Paine

That Council:

- 1 Confirms the minutes of the Council Meeting and Confidential Council Meeting held on Tuesday 28 February 2023 (**Attachment 1** and **Attachment 2**).
- 2 Resolves that the Confidential Council Meeting minutes (**Attachment 2**) remains confidential in accordance with section 3(1) (a) and (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

Nil

9. Petitions

10. Questions from the gallery

David Smith has submitted the following questions:

Question 1

If council is serious about reconciliation with first nations tribes then council should invite the Wurundjeri people to speak at the beginning of councils monthly meetings.

Have council invited the Wurundjeri people to the monthly council meetings to make opening remarks?

Response 1

Council currently hold monthly cultural consultations with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. These consultation meetings have been taking place for over two years and provide Council with guidance for many projects and programs.

Council currently invite an Elder from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation at the beginning of each new Council term. Council have also recently proposed future funding in the draft budget to inviting an Elder from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to attend a Council meeting once a year to provide a 'Welcome to Country' and a smoking ceremony.

Question 2

The CFA will not go down Bella Vista Court in Plenty due to the extremely narrow road, lack of alternative escape route and the fire danger posed by the tall pine trees which are located on council land (i.e. roadway). This causes significant stress to the residents of this area. Council have not connected Namitjira Ave to Grange Road so there is only one way in and one way out.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

Why have council protected these dangerous pine trees whilst they deemed the pine plantation of the Plenty Primary School not of significance and cut those down to make housing?

Response 2

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee - Fuel Management Working Group consisting of subject matter experts in advising Council on bushfire related risk on roadsides unanimously agreed that the pine trees in Bellavista Court, Plenty:

- do not pose a significant additional fire hazard to the area;
- will not be included in the review of primary and secondary roads in Nillumbik as it does not fit the criteria, and
- whilst the group accepts that access and egress to the area is negatively impacted by the trees, their removal would not result in any significant improvement of access and egress in an emergency.

The former Plenty Primary School is on private land and the provisions of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme exempt the requirement for the applicant at the time to seek a planning approval for the removal of the specific pine trees from this site.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

11. Reports of Advisory Committees

AC.002/23 Advisory Committee Report - 28 March 2023

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Director Governance and Communications

Summary

Council has a range of Advisory Committees which provide a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation. Although they do not make any formal decisions, they provide valuable advice to Council.

In accordance with Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, the following minutes of Advisory Committee meetings are attached (**Attachment 1**) and presented to Council for noting:

1. Youth Advisory Committee meeting held 5 December 2022;
2. Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee meeting held 16 December 2022;
3. Positive Ageing Advisory Committee meeting held 3 February 2023;
4. Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee meeting held 17 February 2023;
5. Living and Learning Nillumbik Advisory Committee meeting held 20 February 2023
6. Arts and Culture Advisory Committee meeting held 20 February 2023; and
7. Youth Advisory Committee meeting held 6 March 2023.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Natalie Duffy

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council notes the Minutes of the Advisory Committee meetings reported (**Attachment 1**).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

**CM.011/23 Endorsement of Youth Council Advisory Committee Members
2023-2025**

Distribution: Public

Manager: Corrienne Nichols, Director Community Services

Author: Nichole Johnson, Manager Community Partnerships

Summary

The Nillumbik Youth Council acts as a Formal Advisory Committee of Council, consisting of up to fifteen young people aged 15-25 years of age who are passionate about their community and represent the views, ideas and needs of young people in the municipality.

Recruitment for the Youth Council 2023-25 opened on 12 January 2023 and closed on Sunday 12 February 2023.

A total of 21 applications were received, assessed and shortlisted against the selection criteria by an internal assessment panel. Shortlisted applicants were then offered an opportunity to interview with a Council Officer to confirm their suitability and commitment to the program.

This report provides Council with a full copy of the assessment outcomes against the 21 applications, including Officer comments to support the recommendations (see **Attachment 1**). A total of 15 applicants are being recommended for the Nillumbik Youth Council Advisory Committee.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the fifteen applicants listed (**Attachment 2**) onto the Nillumbik Youth Council Advisory Committee:
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (b) Applicant 2 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (c) Applicant 3 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (d) Applicant 4 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (e) Applicant 5 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (f) Applicant 6 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (g) Applicant 7 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (h) Applicant 8 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

**CM.011/23 Endorsement of Youth Council Advisory Committee Members
2023-2025**

-
- (i) Applicant 9 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (j) Applicant 10 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (k) Applicant 11 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (l) Applicant 12 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (m) Applicant 13 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (n) Applicant 14 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (o) Applicant 15 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
2. Authorises Officers to appoint the next available applicant according to the assessment results (**Attachment 1**), if an appointed applicant declines or resigns from the advisory committee.
 3. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted applications to the Youth Council Advisory Committee.
 4. Resolves that the Assessment Results (**Attachments 1**) are to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Motion

MOVED: Cr Natalie Duffy

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council:

1. Endorses the fifteen applicants listed (**Attachment 2**) onto the Nillumbik Youth Council Advisory Committee:
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (b) Applicant 2 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (c) Applicant 3 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (d) Applicant 4 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (e) Applicant 5 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.011/23 Endorsement of Youth Council Advisory Committee Members
2023-2025

-
- (f) Applicant 6 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (g) Applicant 7 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (h) Applicant 8 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (i) Applicant 9 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (j) Applicant 10 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (k) Applicant 11 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (l) Applicant 12 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (m) Applicant 13 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (n) Applicant 14 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
- (o) Applicant 15 _____ for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member

(

2. Authorises Officers to appoint the next available applicant according to the assessment results (**Attachment 1**), if an appointed applicant declines or resigns from the advisory committee.
3. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted applications to the Youth Council Advisory Committee.
4. Resolves that the Assessment Results (**Attachments 1**) are to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
5. **Resolves that the successful applicants be named.**

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

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Natalie Duffy

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council:

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

**CM.011/23 Endorsement of Youth Council Advisory Committee Members
2023-2025**

1. Endorses the fifteen applicants listed (**Attachment 2**) onto the Nillumbik Youth Council Advisory Committee:
 - (a) Applicant 1 Fieke van der Kamp for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (b) Applicant 2 Niamh Coffey for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (c) Applicant 3 Ayelet Yahav Zloof for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (d) Applicant 4 Joshua Adams for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (e) Applicant 5 Elysia Cheche for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (f) Applicant 6 Orianna Edmonds for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (g) Applicant 7 Sophie McDonald for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (h) Applicant 8 Kirra Imbriano for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (i) Applicant 9 Bailey Cumming for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (j) Applicant 10 Soren Kean for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (k) Applicant 11 Emily Yin for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (l) Applicant 12 Aeve Pelley for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (m) Applicant 13 Scarlett Magnanini for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (n) Applicant 14 Martina Charalambous for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
 - (o) Applicant 15 Aishah Pelley for their role as a Youth Council Advisory Committee Member
2. Authorises Officers to appoint the next available applicant according to the assessment results (**Attachment 1**), if an appointed applicant declines or resigns from the advisory committee.
3. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted applications to the Youth Council Advisory Committee.
4. Resolves that the Assessment Results (**Attachments 1**) are to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020.
5. Resolves that the successful applicants be named.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.012/23 Youth Strategy 2022-2026 Implementation Plan Year 1 Review and Year 2 Plan

Distribution: Public

Manager: Corrienne Nichols, Director Community Services

Author: Nichole Johnson, Manager Community Partnerships

Summary

Nillumbik's Youth Strategy 2022-2026 (**Attachment 1**) sets out a four-year strategic commitment to how Council will support and respond to the needs of young people aged 12-25 years of age who live, work, study, volunteer or play in the Nillumbik Shire.

This report presents the Youth Wrap Up Report 2022 (**Attachment 2**) alongside a Year 1 Progress Report (**Attachment 3**) which outlines the substantial progress made in the first year of delivery for the Youth Strategy 2022-26, and Year 2 Implementation Plan (**Attachment 4**) for Councillor endorsement.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 1 Progress Report (**Attachment 2**).
2. Makes the Nillumbik Youth Wrap Up 2022 report (**Attachment 3**) publicly available on Council's website.
3. Endorses the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 2 Implementation Plan 2023 (**Attachment 4**).

Motion

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. **Notes** the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 1 Progress Report (**Attachment 2**).
2. Makes the Nillumbik Youth Wrap Up 2022 report (**Attachment 3**) publicly available on Council's website.
3. Endorses the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 2 Implementation Plan 2023 (**Attachment 4**).

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

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.012/23 Youth Strategy 2022-2026 Implementation Plan Year 1 Review and Year 2 Plan

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. Notes the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 1 Progress Report (**Attachment 2**).
2. Makes the Nillumbik Youth Wrap Up 2022 report (**Attachment 3**) publicly available on Council's website.
3. Endorses the Youth Strategy 2022-2026, Year 2 Implementation Plan 2023 (**Attachment 4**).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.013/23 Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Rebecca Burton, Manager Recreation and Leisure

Summary

The Recreational Trails Advisory Committee (RTAC) consists of a selection of community members, representatives the diverse users of Nillumbik's trails.

The RTAC term of membership ceased in June 2022. The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the updated RTAC Terms of Reference and recruitment process to take place during 10 April – 8 May 2023.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Richard Stockman

SECONDED: Cr Karen Egan

That Council:

1. Thanks and acknowledges the outgoing members of the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee for their advice and contribution to Council's work to represent the diverse views, ideas and needs of users of Nillumbik's trails.
2. Endorses the revised Terms of Reference for the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee (**Attachment 1**).
3. Endorses the recruitment process for the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee to renew the committee by July 2023.
4. Instructs officers to report nominations to the Recreational Trails Advisory Committee to Council for endorsement in June 2023.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.013/23 Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.014/23 Quarterly Risk and Safety Report - December 2022

Distribution: Public

Manager: Jeremy Livingston, Executive Manager Business Transformation and Performance

Author: Craig Commene, Risk and Safety Lead

Summary

This report provides a summary of Council's Risk and Safety Report for the quarter ending December 2022.

The report is presented in accordance with the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, which requires the presentation of a report to Council at least every six months, detailing the strategic risks, operational risks, the consequences and likelihood of occurrence, and risk mitigation strategies.

Risk and Safety reporting to Council is tabled each quarter following consideration by Council's Audit and Risk Committee, which in this quarter occurred on 27 February 2023.

The full confidential Risk and Safety Report for December 2022 is attached to this report (**Attachment 1**) and provides detailed information for Council's consideration.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of the confidential Risk and Safety Report (**Attachment 1**) for the quarter ending December 2022.
2. Resolves that the attached Risk and Safety Report (**Attachment 1**) remains confidential in accordance with section 3(1)(a) and (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.014/23 Quarterly Risk and Safety Report - December 2022

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.015/23 Living & Learning Nillumbik Neighbourhood House Advisory
Committee Membership recommendation

Distribution: Public

Manager: Corrienne Nichols, Director Community Services

Author: Cobie Vermeulen, Coordinator Living & Learning Nillumbik

Summary

Following the endorsement of six Advisory Committee nominees at the Council meeting held 13 December 2022 it was decided that ongoing recruitment would be prioritised until the maximum number of 12 members was achieved. As a result of further recruitment initiatives one additional Expression of Interest has been received.

The purpose of this report is to seek formal endorsement of an additional nominee (**Attachment 2**).

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the additional nominee listed for appointment 2023 – 25 L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee (**Attachment 2 - Confidential**):
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ for their role as L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee member.
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted expressions of interest to the L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee.
3. Resolves that the Panel Recommendations (**Attachment 2**) remains confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Motion

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Geoff Paine

That Council:

1. Endorses the additional nominee listed for appointment 2023 – 25 L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee (**Attachment 2 - Confidential**):
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ for their role as L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee member.
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted expressions of interest to the L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee.
3. Resolves that the Panel Recommendations (**Attachment 2**) remains confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
4. Resolves that the successful Applicant be named.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.015/23 Living & Learning Nillumbik Neighbourhood House Advisory
Committee Membership recommendation

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

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Geoff Paine

That Council:

1. Endorses the additional nominee listed for appointment 2023 – 25 L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee (**Attachment 2 - Confidential**):
 - (a) Applicant 1 Alison Lynne Ellis for their role as L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee member.
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted expressions of interest to the L&LN Neighbourhood House Advisory Committee.
3. Resolves that the Panel Recommendations (**Attachment 2**) remains confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
4. Resolves that the successful Applicant be named.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.016/23 Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 - Expression of Interest Assessment Report

Distribution: Public

Manager: Corrienne Nichols, Director Community Services

Author: Nichole Johnson, Manager Community Partnerships

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from Councillors for the final outcomes and recommended funding allocations (**Attachment 1**) for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026.

The report also outlines the evaluation process (**Attachment 2**) and provides information on the panel members (**Attachment 3**).

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended funding allocations for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 (see **Attachment 1**).
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (b) Applicant 2 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (c) Applicant 3 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (d) Applicant 4 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (e) Applicant 5 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (f) Applicant 6 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (g) Applicant 7 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (h) Applicant 8 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (i) Applicant 9 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted grant applicants for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026.
3. Thanks the community panel for their contributions to the assessment process.
4. Resolves that the Triennial outcomes (**Attachment 1**) and individual Panel details (**Attachment 3**) to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.016/23 Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 - Expression of Interest Assessment Report

Motion

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended funding allocations for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 (see **Attachment 1**).
 - (a) Applicant 1 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (b) Applicant 2 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (c) Applicant 3 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (d) Applicant 4 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (e) Applicant 5 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (f) Applicant 6 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (g) Applicant 7 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (h) Applicant 8 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (i) Applicant 9 _____ as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted grant applicants for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026.
3. Thanks the community panel for their contributions to the assessment process.
4. Resolves that the Triennial outcomes (**Attachment 1**) and individual Panel details (**Attachment 3**) to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
5. **Resolves that the successful Applicant be named.**

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

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.016/23 Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 - Expression of Interest Assessment Report

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended funding allocations for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 (see **Attachment 1**).
 - (a) Applicant 1 Diamond Creek Rotary Town Fair as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (b) Applicant 2 Eltham Jazz Food and Wine Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (c) Applicant 3 Warrandyte Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (d) Applicant 4 Hurstbridge Wattle Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (e) Applicant 5 St Andrews Community Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (f) Applicant 6 Rotary Eltham Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (g) Applicant 7 Nillumbik Artists Open Studios as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (h) Applicant 8 Night on the Hill Festival as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026
 - (i) Applicant 9 Open Cellars of Nillumbik as a successful applicant for the Triennial Events and Festivals 2023-2026.
2. Acknowledges and thanks all community members who submitted grant applicants for the Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026.
3. Thanks the community panel for their contributions to the assessment process.
4. Resolves that the Triennial outcomes (**Attachment 1**) and individual Panel details (**Attachment 3**) to remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
5. Resolves that the successful Applicant be named.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.016/23 Triennial Events and Festivals Program 2023-2026 - Expression of Interest Assessment Report

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.017/23 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting February 2023

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Chief Financial Officer

Author: Melika Sukunda, Finance Manager

Summary

In accordance with section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and good governance principles, councils must have an Audit and Risk Committee.

As resolved at the 23 June 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting, the minutes of an Audit and Risk Committee meeting are to be reported and presented to a subsequent Council Meeting.

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 27 February 2023. The minutes for the meeting are shown in **Attachment 1**.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Peter Perkins

That Council notes the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 27 February 2023 (**Attachment 1**).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.017/23 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting February 2023

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.018/23 Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee 2023-25 - Endorsement of additional member

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Lisa Pittle, Manager Environment

Summary

An expression of interest from a suitably qualified applicant has been received for membership of the Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System (PHBRS) User Group Advisory Committee 2023-25. The current committee has seven members and the terms of reference allow for up to ten members.

Council endorsement of this additional committee member is recommended.

The committee may remain open to expressions of interest from suitably qualified applicants (as per the terms of reference) to increase member numbers and diversity of representation of the various user groups.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended applicant listed for membership of the Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee for the 2023-2025 term:
 - a) Applicant _____
2. Resolves that the Evaluation Panel Assessment (**Attachment 2**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1) (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Resolves that the successful applicant be named.

Motion

MOVED: Cr Karen Egan

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended applicant listed for membership of the Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee for the 2023-2025 term:
 - a) Applicant _____
2. Resolves that the Evaluation Panel Assessment (**Attachment 2**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1) (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Resolves that the successful applicant be named.

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

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.018/23 Pantan Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory
Committee 2023-25 - Endorsement of additional member

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Karen Egan

SECONDED: Cr Natalie Duffy

That Council:

1. Endorses the recommended applicant listed for membership of the Pantan Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group Advisory Committee for the 2023-2025 term:
 - a) Applicant Sueann Penrose.
2. Resolves that the Evaluation Panel Assessment (**Attachment 2**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1) (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Resolves that the successful applicant be named.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.019/23 Residential Building at 1225 Main Road, Eltham

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Natalie Campion, Coordinator Property

Summary

Council owns a parcel of land known as 1225 Main Road, Eltham as shown in **Attachment 1** which is adjacent to the Alan Marshall Reserve. There is a residential building located on a portion of this land.

This residential building resided on the land when council purchased the land for public open space in 1995. The residential house has been leased out since Council purchased the property and has recently become vacant. The condition of the dwelling has been assessed as not fit for purpose any longer.

Council is now in a position to determine whether or not to demolish the house with the purpose of fulfilling the original intention that the land can be utilised for public open space.

This report is seeking that Council resolve to demolish the residential building on the land known as 1225 Main Road, Eltham and reinstate the land as public open space.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Karen Egan

That Council:

1. Resolves to demolish the residential building on the land known as 1225 Main Road, Eltham and reinstate the land as public open space.
2. Requests Council Officers to investigate options on future use of the parcel of land zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone, outlining the process for any community engagement requirements and report back to Council at a future Council meeting.

CARRIED

Cr Natalie Duffy abstained from the vote.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.019/23 Residential Building at 1225 Main Road, Eltham

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.020/23 Contract Report - Contract 2223-045 INFOR Pathway

Distribution: Public

Manager: Jeremy Livingston, Executive Manager Business Transformation and Performance

Author: Daniel Tarquinio, Manager Information Technology

Summary

This report recommends the awarding of contract 2223-045 for INFOR Pathway.

The contract term is for a period of five (5) years and is for software licensing and maintenance renewal for INFOR Pathway.

Under section 2.3.2.1 *Exemptions from tendering* of the Council Procurement Policy 2021-2025, there was no public tender issued as the INFOR Pathway solution is:

- a proprietary software solution with no third party reseller model available; and
- only available via Infor Global Solutions.

Costing for a 5-year software licensing and maintenance agreement was obtained directly from Infor Global Solutions.

The existing INFOR Pathway platform is a business critical software platform within Council's operating and technology environment.

Pursuant to the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, the value of this contract exceeds the specified financial limits and a Council resolution is therefore required to award the contract.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins

SECONDED: Cr Geoff Paine

That Council:

1. Accepts the tendered software licensing and maintenance agreement submitted by Infor Global Solutions for the sum of \$1,013,509.70 (inclusive of GST) and enter into the following contract:
Number: 2223-045
Title: INFOR Pathway
Term: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2028
Options: Nil
2. Authorises the Executive Manager Business Transformation & Performance to finalise and execute the contract documentation.
3. Authorises the Executive Manager Business Transformation & Performance to approve additional cost variations that are a result of changes to operational requirements throughout the term of the contract.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.020/23 Contract Report - Contract 2223-045 INFOR Pathway

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.021/23 Contract 1819-086 Provision of garbage, recycle and organic waste collection services - variation claim JJs Waste & Recycling

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Lisa Pittle, Manager Environment

Summary

JJ's Waste & Recycling have submitted a claim to vary the contract price per lift for collection of 240 litre food organics & garden organics (FOGO) bins. The Variation Claim (**Attachment 1**) is based on a significant increase in FOGO tonnages and a loss of service growth income attributable to the roll out of 240 litre FOGO bins at contract commencement.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins

SECONDED: Cr Karen Egan

That Council:

1. Accepts JJs Waste and Recycling claim to vary contract 1819-086 - Provision of garbage, recycle and organic waste collection services including:
 - a) The amended 240 litre bin collection rate provided in **Confidential Attachment 1** commencing 1 July 2021.
 - b) With the following triggers applying to review the varied rate:
 - i) If tonnages reduce from the current levels to 8,000 tonnes per year. FOGO tonnage to be reviewed in April each year.
 - ii) If Council arranges for disposal of FOGO at a facility which reduces travel distance and time.
2. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to finalise and execute the contract variation.
3. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to approve variations that are a result of changes to operational requirements throughout the remaining term of the contract.
4. Resolves that the Variation Claim (**Attachment 1**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.021/23 Contract 1819-086 Provision of garbage, recycle and organic waste collection services - variation claim JJs Waste & Recycling

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.022/23 Tender Report - Contract 2223-017 Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Acting Director Operations and Infrastructure

Author: Jonathon Miller, Manager Property and Facilities Maintenance

Summary

This report recommends the awarding of contract 2223-017 for Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works

The contract commencement date is 28 March 2023 with an intended completion date of 30 June 2023.

The Tender Evaluation Panel (TEP) has assessed all submissions and this report provides a summary of their evaluation in recommending the awarding of the contract for 2223-017 for Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works.

Pursuant to the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, the value of this contract exceeds the specified financial limits and a Council resolution is therefore required to award the contract.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted by the **preferred tenderer** for the sum of **[\$[Redacted]]** plus **[\$[Redacted]]** for contingency (inclusive of GST) and enter into the following contract:
Number: 2223-017
Title: Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works
Term: 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023
Options: Not applicable
2. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to finalise and execute the contract documentation.
3. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to approve cost variations that are a result of unknown latent site conditions with a value of no more than the total contract value.
4. Notes that any variations that exceed the total contract value including contingency will require a further Council resolution.
5. Advises all tenderers accordingly.
6. Resolves that the Tender Evaluation Report (**Attachment 1**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
7. Resolves that the preferred tenderer be named.

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.022/23 Tender Report - Contract 2223-017 Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works

Motion

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted by the **preferred tenderer** for the sum of **[\$[Redacted]]** plus **[\$[Redacted]]** for contingency (inclusive of GST) and enter into the following contract:
Number: 2223-017
Title: Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works
Term: 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023
Options: Not applicable
2. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to finalise and execute the contract documentation.
3. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to approve cost variations that are a result of unknown latent site conditions with a value of no more than the total contract value.
4. Notes that any variations that exceed the total contract value including contingency will require a further Council resolution.
5. Advises all tenderers accordingly.
6. Resolves that the Tender Evaluation Report (**Attachment 1**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
7. Resolves that the preferred tenderer be named.

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

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender submitted by the preferred tenderer AJ Grant Building Pty Ltd for the sum of \$269,500.00 plus \$40,425.00 for contingency (inclusive of GST) and enter into the following contract:

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.022/23 Tender Report - Contract 2223-017 Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works

Number: 2223-017
Title: Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's Cottage - Conservation works
Term: 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023
Options: Not applicable

2. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to finalise and execute the contract documentation.
3. Authorises the Director Operations and Infrastructure to approve cost variations that are a result of unknown latent site conditions with a value of no more than the total contract value.
4. Notes that any variations that exceed the total contract value including contingency will require a further Council resolution.
5. Advises all tenderers accordingly.
6. Resolves that the Tender Evaluation Report (**Attachment 1**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
7. Resolves that the preferred tenderer be named.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

**CM.022/23 Tender Report - Contract 2223-017 Kangaroo Ground Caretaker's
Cottage - Conservation works**

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

12. Officers' reports

CM.023/23 Informal Meetings of Councillors Records - 28 March 2023

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Director Governance and Communications

Author: Katia Croce, Governance Lead

Summary

In accordance with *Item 19 of Council's Governance Rule – Meeting Procedure*, adopted on 25 August 2020, Council is required to report as soon as practicable to a Council Meeting a record of each Informal Meeting of Councillors held.

This report lists Informal Meetings of Councillors Records submitted since the matter was last reported to Council on 28 February 2023.

An Informal Meeting of Councillors Record was kept for the following meetings (**Attachment 1**):

1. Environment & Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held 14 February 2023;
2. Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System User Group – Advisory Committee meeting held 16 February 2023;
3. Clean Energy Nillumbik team - Climate Action Plan and Clean Energy Nillumbik held 17 February 2023;
4. Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee - sub-committee meeting held 20 February 2023;
5. Living and Learning Nillumbik Advisory Committee meeting held 20 February 2023;
6. Councillor Briefing held 21 February 2023;
7. Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held 24 February 2023
8. Positive Ageing Advisory Committee meeting held 3 March 2023;
9. Councillor Briefing held 7 March 2023.

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Karen Egan

That Council, in accordance with *Item 19 of Council's Governance Rule – Meeting Procedure*, receives the Informal Meetings of Councillors Records (**Attachment 1**) for the meetings held.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Meeting Minutes

28 March 2023

13. Notices of Motion

Nil

14. Delegates' Reports

Nil

15. Supplementary and urgent business

Nil

16. Confidential reports

Nil

17. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 7:45pm.

Confirmed:

Cr Ben Ramcharan, Mayor

Positive Ageing Advisory Committee

Minutes



Date: Friday 3 March 2022

Time: 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber and via Zoom

Chair: Cr Frances Eyre

Present: *Committee members:* Janice Crosswhite, Tianjian Shen, Joy Ferguson, Sabi Buehler, Anne Fitzpatrick and Sandra Verdam.

Council Officers: Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Natalie Duffy, Narelle Hart, Leanne Horvath, Stephanie Vassilios, Jade Zigenbine and Julie Ann Grech.

Apologies: Richard Kottek, Sue Riley, Jan Taylor, Deanna Finn, Ray Carrol, Carl Cowie and Corrienne Nichols

Order of business

1. Welcome

Welcome by Cr Eyre to attendees. This is the last Positive Ageing Advisory Committee for the 2023 period with the new committee beginning in May 2023. Thank you to everyone for your passion and input and acknowledge everyone's work and contributions to the Nillumbik Community.

Narelle reported we have received all the Expressions of Interest. The applications will go to Council in April then we can advise applicants if they were successful. Certificates for all Positive Ageing Advisory Committee members are being prepared and will be mailed out.

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country was read by Cr Frances Eyre.

3. Conflict of Interest and Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

Nil

4. Minutes of previous meeting & Outstanding Action Items

That the minutes of the meeting held 3 February 2023 are confirmed as a true and accurate **record** of the meeting.

Moved: Sabi Buehler

Seconded: Sandra Verdam

Carried

5. Business Arising

No business arising.

Cr Natalie Duffy explained that St Vincent's Care Services Eltham that is an independent living residence for aged care is closing. Council is aware and are meeting with the CEO of St Vincent's Care on Tuesday 7 March 2023. The buildings have been deemed unfit and they have 12 months to find other living arrangements for the residence. All the residents will have social workers assisting them to find other suitable accommodation. This highlights how important it is to have affordable living and aged care in Nillumbik Shire.

Council is currently working on the housing strategy and the previously suggested subcommittee for community transport.

6. New staff to commence in Community Support Services

Positive Ageing Officer and Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Officer

Jodie Hosking- Aged Care Navigation Advocacy Officer, start date, 6 March 2023

Heather McMillian– Positive Ageing Officer, start date Monday 20 March 2023.

Both staff have local knowledge along with state and local government experience. Both will be in attendance at the next PAAC meeting.

7. Positive Ageing Advisory Committee – Expressions of Interest – update

Applications are closed and a report will be presented to Council in April 2023 for endorsement. Successful applicants will be formally advised prior to first meeting scheduled for May.

8. Grants update

Nillumbik community fund provides up to \$5000 to support community focused projects and events.

[Nillumbik Community Fund - Nillumbik Shire Council.](#)

9. Communications update

The Communications team are unable to attend this meeting today, but have provided the following up date. They understand the committees concerns, they do a drive through of the municipality and ensure that the distribution points and local post offices have received the Nillumbik News. There will be some newsletters available at the library in Warrandyte. It is acknowledged that some sites are more difficult for distribution and will continue to monitor and assist those sites

A Council Information Noticeboard has been placed at Edendale

The Communications team are trying to improve the reach that council information is being shown in the community. They are making efforts to get out and making sure the information is being disseminated and will continue to do so.

Copperline is another private newsletter in the Shire. It is available online and it has been seen in print in Eltham shopping centre.

10. Roundtable

This is the last meeting for Sabi. Sabi shared her story and the personal impact of the housing crisis for ageing people in the Shire. Sabi expressed her pleasure of the insight into council and fellow members and can really speak from the heart. Sabi expressed how important it is to keep people informed and have somewhere to begin for people requiring services and supports when any disaster strikes.

Sandra explained the new Coffee mornings in Smith's Gully. They are also expanding the Memory Café's and spreading the information out further too now include Banyule.

Tianjian explained how PAAC has provided him with great connection and link between groups and councils. Happy to have the chance to talk and understanding what council can do. Would like to find another person in the Chinese community to join the PAAC but at this stage it is difficult. Hoping to possibly have a member of the Council to visit one of the Chinese community gatherings and provide information and promote PAAC.

Janice advised that Arthur's creek is organising a town fair. Thank you for grant to the Tennis club she is involved in. They have now had a meeting and decided on the name for the next event it will be called Early Easter community Social BBQ in the Panton Hill tennis club. Invitations out next week.

The Pathways to Carers in Eltham program is being run again. The program has been renewed for the community and is run in collaboration with Healthability.

Participants at the walk expressed they are keen to keep the program going and seeking new participants. The next meeting is scheduled for April.

Social connections grants are open. We have received 3 to 4 applications.

June 15 – activities planned to raise awareness for elder abuse. Please keep an eye out for further information via council website and social media and newsletters.

11. Lunch Break

12. Councillor thanks to outgoing committee

Cr Eyre and Cr Duffy thanked all outgoing members highlighting the many positive years of contribution to the committee and the many positive outcomes from the connections formed within the Committee. Thanks for sharing stories and experiences to better enhance the community as a whole

13. Next Meeting

This is the final meeting of this committee. A new committee will be convened.

Action Summary Table			
Action	Who	Due	Completed?
Invite a member of the communications team to the PAAC and discuss Communications at Council	Positive Ageing Officer	March 2023 Complete The Communications team will attend a meeting of the new committee in the second half of 2023	Please consider what specific questions you would like answers and email the positive ageing team
Explore the establishment of a subcommittee for transport. There is a Council Plan FY 22/23 Priority Action to “Develop a new Integrated Transport Strategy to guide transport planning, sustainable outcomes and advocacy”.	Positive Ageing Officer, Transport team	TBA	Please email your expressions of interest to be part of this subcommittee to the positive ageing team Community members with interest in the matter also welcome to join.
Explore the establishment of a subcommittee for housing	Positive Ageing Officer	TBA	

Current and upcoming Council engagements:

Engagement	Details

Youth Council Formal Advisory Committee Minutes



Date:	Monday 3 April 2023
Time:	4.00pm – 6.00pm
Venue:	Council Chambers
Chair:	Youth Mayor Brianne Keogh
Minute Taker:	Nicola Clutton
Committee Members:	Bailey Cumming, Fieke Van Der Kamp, Jack Linehan, Indi Sandwell, Kirra Imbriano, Maali Kerta-Rice, Martina Charalambous, Niamh Coffey, Orianna Edmonds, Rhys Warrillow
Councillor Representative	Cr Natalie Duffy
Other:	New Youth Council Members : Joshua Adams, Elysia Cheche, Soren Kean, Scarlett Magnanini, Sophie McDonald, Ayelet Yahav Zloof and Emily Yin. Corrienne Nichols, Nichole Johnson, Katie Camilleri, Nicola Clutton Frances Biggar, Molly Jessop
Apologies:	Ava Grzechnik, Lachlan Wadsworth, Rhys Warrillow, Aeve Pelley, Aishah Pelley.

Order of business

1. New Youth Council Photos

New and continuing Youth Council members arrived from 3.30 to have individual and group photos taken.

2. Welcome

Brianne Keogh welcomed attendees to the April Youth Council meeting. New Youth Council members were welcomed to their first advisory committee meeting.

3. Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People. We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

4. Apologies

Apologies received from Ava Grzechnik, Lachlan Wadsworth and Rhys Warrillow.

5. Conflict of Interest and Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

No conflicts of interest were declared

6. Minutes of previous meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held 6 March 2023 are confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Minutes moved by: Martina Charalambous

Minutes seconded by: Niamh Coffey

7. Outstanding Action Items

No outstanding action items.

8. Ice-breaker

Martina lead the ice breaker activity, each person was asked if you were to hang out with one cartoon character who would it be and why?

9. Presentations from current Youth Council members

Existing Youth Council were invited to present to new Youth Council members on a range of topics, to give insight what it's like to be a Youth Council member and showcasing the achievements from the past two years.

What is a Youth Council meeting like?

Orianna Edmonds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yqB0iB-KBA>

Meetings are a safe and inclusive safe, each meeting will start with an Acknowledgment of Country and a casual ice breaker to begin conversations. Then Officers will have organised a consultation on a different subject that Youth Council are invited to provide feedback on. Youth Council have provide feedback on a number of projects and policies across their term, including:

- Neighbourhood Character Study
- Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries youth engagement
- Youth Strategy
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Plan

Youth Engagement - 2021 Young Minds Your Voice Our Future

Kirra Imbriano

<https://youtu.be/ENyZ1xSOpMk>

Youth Council co-designed and lead the 2021 *Young Minds: Your Voice Our Future* youth engagement program which ran from 14 June to 20 July 2021. The program was a broad-level engagement co-developed by the Nillumbik Youth Council, aimed at engaging young people of Nillumbik through a range of activities. A total of 897 young voices were captured during the engagement period.

Youth council were integral to the creation and promotions and in turn the success of the program.

Your Voice Our Future – Summary Report is available here:
<https://www.nillumbikyouth.vic.gov.au/What-we-do/Youth-Strategy>

Nillumbik Youth Strategy

Indi Sandwell

Nillumbik Shire Council's four-year Youth Strategy shows Council's strategic commitment to how we will support and respond to the needs of young people aged 12-25 who live, work, study, volunteer or play in Nillumbik.

In the development of this strategy, across 8 months the Nillumbik Youth Council played a lead role in engaging and consulting with the young people in Nillumbik to gain a diverse perspective on matters impacting their lives within community. This process has ensured young people have a stronger voice and sense of importance in community.

This strategy has been informed by Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future community consultation and key internal and external stakeholders and sets out the strategic priorities and focus areas for Council's next four years' of planning and delivery.

Nillumbik Youth Council, young people and stakeholders identified five key priorities which will set the strategic direction over the four years 2022-2026. This includes:

- Healthy and Well
- Empowered and Engaged
- Access to Safe Spaces and Places
- Equipped and Employed
- Welcome and Connected.

The full youth strategy can be found [here](#), Youth Council members will all be provided a copy at their induction meeting.

You can watch the Youth Strategy Video [here](#).

Youth Summit 2022

Niamh Coffey

Student leaders from across the Shire were brought together to make recommendations to Council on actions to support young people locally at the inaugural Nillumbik Youth Summit 2022. More than 50 students from Diamond Valley College, St Helena Secondary College, Eltham High School, Catholic Ladies College, and Montmorency Secondary College attended the summit on Wednesday 25 May 2022 to discuss the topics that matter most to Nillumbik's young people.

The full youth summit video and report card can be found here:
<https://www.nillumbikyouth.vic.gov.au/What-we-do/Youth-participation/Youth-Summit>

Youth Led Projects

Brianne Keogh

Youth Council have the opportunity to work with Council staff to plan and deliver youth led projects. Brianne worked with Council on an idea of delivering a sporting employment forum. Brianne successfully delivered the Youth in Basketball Summit in 2022, in partnership with Nillumbik Youth and Diamond Valley Basketball Association.

Youth council members are encourage to let the team know if they have any project ideas they would like to work on during their time on Youth Council.

10. Item of business 3: Meet and Greet

Existing Youth Council members were paired up with new Youth Council Members to have discussions. Pairs had 10 minutes to discuss the below questions:

- Name, pronouns and what you are most passionate about
- Why did you want to join Youth Council?
- What did you most enjoy about youth Council? What were some of the projects you most enjoyed working on?
- Do you have any advice for how to get the most out of youth council?

11. Item of business 2: What is it like being the Youth Mayor

Brianne Keogh and Fieke van der Kamp discussed their time as the Nillumbik Youth Council Mayor. Being Youth Mayor you get provided many opportunities to represent Youth Council at events, including speaking and MC'ing different community events. Fieke prefaced that it is not a position of power, but a position of equal responsibility to other Youth Council members and that it is important to remember that as Youth Council members we are representing the 20% of young people that make up the Nillumbik Community.

More information on Youth Mayor elections will be provided to Council at their induction meeting.

12. Item of business 4: Youth Hub Update

Katie Camilleri provided an update to Youth Council on the recent Youth Hub funding. Nillumbik Shire Council has received \$300,000 under the Victorian Government's Youth Hubs grant program 2022-23 to support the establishment of the first youth hub for the Shire.

As part of this project, Nillumbik will be redeveloping its community facility located at 32-34 Elizabeth St, Diamond Creek, into a dedicated, stand-alone youth hub to provide centralised support for young people 12-25 years old.

For more information on the Youth Hub project, visit:
<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/youth-hub>

13. Other Business

Nichole Johnson addressed the group to thank all the outgoing members for their time and commitment to Youth Council.

14. Next meeting date and location

Youth Council Formal Meeting, Monday 1 May 2023, 4-6pm, Council Chambers.

Financial Report 31 March 2023

nillumbik.vic.gov.au    



Financial Report - 31 March 2023

Contents	
Financial Statements	
1. Income Statement	3
2. Balance Sheet	4
3. Statement of Cash Flows	5
Detailed Analysis	
1. Income Statement Variance Analysis	6
2. Statement of Capital Works	9
3. Treasury	10
4. Rates Analysis	11
5. Grant Activity	12
6. Defined Benefit Superannuation Update	13

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

Income Statement

For the financial year to date 31 March 2023

	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	YTD Variance Fav / (Unfav)		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Income					
Rates	60,278,052	60,666,127	388,075	0.64	60,698,506
Waste management charge	13,167,359	13,232,386	65,027	0.49	13,167,359
Government grants-recurrent	2,515,087	2,725,157	210,070	8.35	5,630,555
Government grants-non-recurrent	12,908,871	19,147,051	6,238,180	48.32	16,365,701
User charges	11,719,780	10,192,222	(1,527,558)	(13.03)	17,574,097
Statutory fees and fines	1,510,323	1,482,677	(27,646)	(1.83)	2,022,640
Reimbursements	62,771	109,782	47,011	74.89	182,771
Interest income	130,000	809,823	679,823	522.94	150,000
Capital contributions	369,131	378,562	9,431	2.55	1,235,759
Other revenue-recurrent	472,243	536,573	64,330	13.62	647,548
Other revenue-non-recurrent	-	30,903	30,903	100.00	-
Contributions	111,250	461,904	350,654	315.19	133,500
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Total income	103,244,867	109,773,167	6,528,300	6.32	117,808,436
Expenses					
Employee benefits	29,724,705	28,469,581	1,255,124	4.22	38,739,477
External contracts	15,375,073	14,780,802	594,271	3.87	22,858,199
Materials and related costs	11,873,292	12,864,302	(991,010)	(8.35)	16,725,879
Bad and doubtful debts	-	-	-	-	-
Other expenditure	4,742,092	4,897,127	(155,035)	(3.27)	7,382,313
Interest expenditure	562,160	562,160	-	-	583,469
Financial year projects allocation	1,719,000	2,632,671	(913,671)	(53.15)	2,941,463
Total expenses	63,996,322	64,206,643	(210,321)	(0.33)	89,230,800
Earnings before Depreciation	39,248,545	45,566,524	6,317,979	16.10	28,577,636
Depreciation	9,121,500	9,121,500	-	-	12,162,000
Net Surplus	30,127,045	36,445,024	6,317,979	20.97	16,415,636

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

Balance Sheet

For the financial year to date 31 March 2023

	31-Mar-23	30-Jun-22
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash assets	8,698,081	9,760,000
Other Financial Assets	39,000,000	41,873,000
Receivables	30,828,407	11,383,000
Accrued income	359,681	495,000
Prepayments	408,377	1,004,000
Inventories	29,705	35,000
Total current assets	79,324,251	64,550,000
Non-current assets		
Investments in associates	1,748,273	1,748,000
Other Financial Assets	5,000	5,000
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment		
At cost	1,152,740,380	1,153,025,000
Accumulated depreciation	(267,033,951)	(257,912,000)
Work in progress	35,204,433	21,091,000
Right of use assets	621,248	621,000
Total non-current assets	923,285,383	918,578,000
TOTAL ASSETS	1,002,609,634	983,128,000
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Creditors	3,408,496	1,958,000
Trust funds	1,859,302	2,992,000
Prepaid income	-	42,000
Unearned Income	-	12,413,000
Accrued expenses	1,123,167	3,481,000
Provisions	8,393,774	12,657,000
Borrowings	471,692	3,340,000
Lease liabilities	161,991	162,000
Total current liabilities	15,418,422	37,045,000
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	18,850,337	14,189,000
Borrowings	13,582,319	13,582,000
Lease liabilities	458,134	458,000
Total non-current liabilities	32,890,790	28,229,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	48,309,212	65,274,000
NET ASSETS	954,300,422	917,854,000
Presented by:		
Accumulated surplus	408,656,056	401,516,000
YTD surplus/(deficit)	36,445,024	7,139,000
Asset revaluation reserve	476,291,726	476,291,000
Other reserves	32,907,616	32,908,000
TOTAL EQUITY	954,300,422	917,854,000

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

Statement of Cash Flows

For the financial year to date 31 March 2023

	31-Mar-23 YTD \$	30-Jun-22 * \$
Inflows from operating activities		
Rates	54,453,106	70,672,000
Statutory fees & fines	1,482,677	1,970,000
User charges	10,150,222	11,163,000
Grants	9,551,225	17,493,000
Contributions	883,768	2,410,000
Interest	809,823	182,000
Other receipts	677,258	6,465,000
Total inflows from operating activities	78,008,079	110,355,000
Outflows from operating activities		
Payments to suppliers	(30,186,083)	(44,340,000)
Payments to employees	(28,469,581)	(36,575,000)
Trust	(1,132,698)	(43,000)
Other payments	(4,897,127)	(7,038,000)
Total outflows from operating activities	(64,685,489)	(87,996,000)
Movement in operating activities	13,322,590	22,359,000
Inflows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of assets	284,438	5,522,000
Proceeds from investments	2,873,000	-
Outflows from investing activities		
Payments for property, infrastructure, P&E	(14,111,412)	(27,468,000)
Payments for investments	-	(15,548,000)
Movement in investing activities	(10,953,974)	(37,494,000)
Inflows from financing activities		
Proceeds from borrowings	-	7,000,000
Outflows from financing activities		
Repayment of borrowings	(2,868,375)	(3,465,000)
Borrowing costs	(562,160)	(550,000)
Interest paid - lease liabilities	-	(22,000)
Repayment of lease liabilities	-	(221,000)
Movement in financing activities	(3,430,535)	2,742,000
TOTAL CASH MOVEMENT FOR PERIOD	(1,061,919)	(12,393,000)
Opening bank balance	9,760,000	22,153,000
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,061,919)	(12,393,000)
CLOSING BANK BALANCE	8,698,081	9,760,000

*Comparative reflective of annual report which has been rounded to the nearest thousand

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

1. Income Statement Variance Analysis

a. Operating Income year to date

	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	YTD Variance Fav / (Unfav)		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Income					
Rates	60,278,052	60,666,127	388,075	0.64	60,698,506
Waste management charge	13,167,359	13,232,386	65,027	0.49	13,167,359
Government grants-recurrent	2,515,087	2,725,157	210,070	8.35	5,630,555
Government grants-non-recurrent	12,908,871	19,147,051	6,238,180	48.32	16,365,701
User charges	11,719,780	10,192,222	(1,527,558)	(13.03)	17,574,097
Statutory fees and fines	1,510,323	1,482,677	(27,646)	(1.83)	2,022,640
Reimbursements	62,771	109,782	47,011	74.89	182,771
Interest income	130,000	809,823	679,823	522.94	150,000
Capital contributions	369,131	378,562	9,431	2.55	1,235,759
Other revenue-recurrent	472,243	536,573	64,330	13.62	647,548
Other revenue-non-recurrent	-	30,903	30,903	100.00	-
Contributions	111,250	461,904	350,654	315.19	133,500
Total Operating Income	103,244,867	109,773,167	6,528,300	6.32	117,808,436

Significant variance commentary:

Rates and Waste Management Charge \$453,102.

- Reflective of additional properties and timing of supplementary valuations.

Recurrent Government Grants \$210,070.

- Additional funding received from:
 - Department of Education and Training \$15,000
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing \$11,000
 - Department of Health (Cwlth) \$21,419
 - Department of Health (Vic) \$56,380
 - Department of Transport \$87,812
 - Victorian Grants Commission \$22,980
- New funding received from:
 - Department of Health (Vic) \$30,000
 - National Australia Day Council \$14,500
 - VicHealth \$10,000.
- Funding forgone from Department of Education due to cessation of vocational education programs and relinquishment of registered training organisation status (\$97,796).

Non-Recurrent Government Grants \$6,238,180.

- Additional funding received from:
 - Manningham City Council \$80,000
 - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning \$29,428.
- New funding received from:
 - Department of Education and Training \$24,062
 - Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning \$310,492
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing \$578,431
 - Department of Justice and Community Safety \$178,592
 - Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions \$4,676,636
 - Regional Arts Victoria \$16,703
 - Sustainability Victoria \$45,114
 - VicHealth \$48,873.

User Charges (\$1,527,558).

- Lag in memberships for leisure facilities (\$1,613,808). This is offset by a \$1,177,072 reduction in contract expenditure.
- Childcare fees higher than anticipated due to increased enrolments \$82,286.
- Living and Learning centres neighbourhood house and learn local program fee income \$43,192.
- Recycling and Recovery Centre gate fees (\$34,601).
- Eltham Community Reception Centre venue hire (\$25,923).
- Subdivision supervision fee income (\$22,626).
- Increase in demand for Edendale education programs \$10,821.
- Edendale admission donations \$11,301.

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

Significant variance commentary (continued):

Statutory Fees and Fines (\$27,646).

- Parking infringements have been higher than anticipated \$163,823.
- Planning and subdivision applications have reduced (\$222,079).
- Building permit fee income \$34,000.
- Planning search and copy fee income \$12,355.

Reimbursements \$47,011.

- Insurance refund received for claim made \$36,238.

Interest Income \$679,823.

- Interest on investments has increased as a result of rising interest rates \$679,823.

Other Revenue - Recurrent \$64,330.

- Workcover refunds for claims made \$41,724.
- Non-residential rental income \$11,296.

Contributions \$350,654.

- Developer contributions received for open space and DPO2 area open space \$325,695.

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

b. Operating Expenditure year to date

	YTD Budget \$	YTD Actuals \$	YTD Variance \$	%	Annual Budget \$
Expenditure					
Employee benefits	29,724,705	28,469,581	1,255,124	4.22	38,739,477
External contracts	15,375,073	14,780,802	594,271	3.87	22,858,199
Materials and related costs	11,873,292	12,864,302	(991,010)	(8.35)	16,725,879
Bad and doubtful debts	-	-	-	-	-
Other expenditure	4,742,092	4,897,127	(155,035)	(3.27)	7,382,313
Interest expenditure	562,160	562,160	-	-	583,469
Financial year projects allocation	1,719,000	2,632,671	(913,671)	(53.15)	2,941,463
Total operating expenditure	63,996,322	64,206,643	(210,321)	(0.33)	89,230,800

Significant variance commentary:

Employee Benefits \$1,255,124.

- Year to date variances resulting from position vacancies, partly offset by agency staff backfilling periods of vacancy.

External Contracts \$594,271.

- Leisure facilities expenditure favourable due to reduction in operational costs due to lag in memberships \$1,177,072.
- Agency and temporary staff engaged to backfill vacant roles (\$467,565).
- Plenty tip leachate disposal costs (\$261,310).
- Closed landfill compliance monitoring \$39,857.
- Recycling disposal costs \$107,043.

Materials & Related Costs (\$991,010).

- Contractors engaged for:
 - Provision of mowing services (\$304,483)
 - Maintenance of Council owned buildings (\$153,769)
 - Maintenance and beautification of high use sites throughout the Shire (\$82,740).
- Fire hydrant inspection and maintenance costs (\$217,374).
- Insurance policy premiums higher than budgeted due to insurance market conditions (\$139,380).
- Increased demand for specialist legal advice and services (\$108,102).
- Fleet running cost increase as a result of higher diesel and unleaded fuel prices (\$104,178).
- IT software licence costs following implementation of new asset management system (\$77,665).
- Major patching of potholes and pavement failures after heavy rain and flooding events (\$56,288).
- Graffiti removal costs (\$32,071).
- Reduced expenditure on building maintenance materials \$48,317.
- Water savings due to demand controlled irrigation system and heavy spring and summer rainfall \$80,557.
- Decrease in tonnage of domestic garbage collected resulting in lower tipping fees \$130,703.

Other Expenditure (\$155,035).

- Aboriculture external permits costs (\$49,314).
- Infringement follow-up action expenditure (\$29,059).
- Lease costs for parking over-stay detection devices (\$28,011).
- Festive grants program (\$19,240).
- Sportsground repairs and maintenance (\$11,855).

Financial Year Projects (\$913,671).

- Clean up costs associated with storm event in October 2022, classified under financial year projects to isolate costs for potential recovery purposes (\$650,690).
- Essential maintenance works on Diamond Creek Trail (\$51,394).
- Maintenance works as part of environmental offset programs (\$43,368).
- Grant funding received has given rise to unbudgeted expenditure for:
 - Communities First resilience and bushfire preparedness (\$54,683)
 - Eltham Copper Butterfly habitat restoration (\$42,050)
 - Peri-urban Weed Management Partnerships program (\$22,951)
 - Nillumbik deer control (\$22,300)
 - Eltham gateway (\$16,432).

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

2. Statement of Capital Works

For the financial year to date 31 March 2023

Asset Class	YTD Budget	YTD Actuals	YTD Variance Fav / (Unfav)		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Bridges	99,630	99,630	-	-	225,131
Children's playground equipment	65,249	65,248	1	-	300,000
Commercial centres/major streetscapes	84,548	84,547	1	-	231,040
Digital transformation projects	78,244	150,149	(71,905)	(91.90)	644,974
Disability access works	113,213	113,213	-	-	291,067
Drainage	338,773	338,773	-	-	854,054
Footpaths	776,218	776,217	1	-	1,497,966
Landfill closure/regional park	2,968,792	3,170,113	(201,321)	(6.78)	4,932,776
Major leisure centres & community halls	133,745	208,455	(74,710)	(55.86)	265,822
Other council buildings	1,462,375	1,566,838	(104,463)	(7.14)	7,744,197
Plant & vehicle replacement	440,718	440,717	1	-	1,668,083
Public open space	457,011	474,124	(17,113)	(3.74)	1,160,077
Recreation, leisure & community	-	14,419	(14,419)	(100.00)	750,000
Recreation trails	385,505	390,505	(5,000)	(1.30)	4,599,063
Roads	3,524,834	3,592,428	(67,594)	(1.92)	7,311,355
Special charge schemes	363,927	363,926	1	-	483,416
Sportsfields & pavilions	1,793,399	1,839,045	(45,646)	(2.55)	5,367,127
Traffic works	297,252	303,434	(6,182)	(2.08)	676,489
Various/miscellaneous capital	57,834	76,457	(18,623)	(32.20)	665,083
Total	13,441,267	14,114,066	(672,799)	(5.01)	39,667,720
Renewal	4,856,838	4,884,339	(27,501)	(0.57)	8,202,403
New	1,615,266	1,717,046	(101,780)	(6.30)	6,188,269
Upgrade	6,827,769	7,371,288	(543,519)	(7.96)	22,575,986
Expansion	141,394	141,394	(-)	-	2,701,062
Total	13,441,267	14,114,067	(672,800)	(5.01)	39,667,720

Commentary:

The 2022-23 annual capital works program is underway and is tracking well, with a total spend variance of 5.01% percent ahead of budget. This remains within annual budget projections. The variance is predominantly attributable to:

- Additional works required for:
 - Grant funded improvement works at Early Years facilities
 - Marngrook Oval surrounds as part of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding
 - Energy efficient upgrades
 - Ben Frilay sports lighting upgrade
 - Diamond Creek Community Centre and Library upgrade

The overall financial position of the capital works portfolio spend continues to be closely monitored.

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

3. Treasury

a. Loans

Financial Institution	Start date	Term (years)	End date	Principal	Interest Rate	Current Balance
				\$	%	\$
CBA	28/06/2013	10	28/06/2023	400,000	5.86%	13,096
NAB	28/06/2007	20	28/06/2027	2,200,000	6.96%	723,282
NAB	27/06/2008	20	27/06/2028	3,647,000	7.87%	1,531,402
TCV	22/06/2022	7	22/06/2029	7,000,000	4.42%	6,348,699
NAB	10/06/2011	20	10/06/2031	2,120,000	7.91%	1,275,384
NAB	21/06/2021	10	21/06/2031	3,303,000	2.03%	2,724,975
ANZ	29/06/2012	20	29/06/2032	2,373,000	5.88%	1,437,174
Total						14,054,012

b. Investment activities

Council carries out investment activities according to Section 143 of the Victorian Local Government Act 1989. All Council funds are invested with Authorised Deposit Taking Institutions (ADI's), in either cash, at call or term deposits. The following tables provide our investment portfolio by maturity and rating type.

Financial Institution	Green Investment	S & P Rating	Investment Type	Principal \$	Maturity Date	Term (days)	Interest Rate %
Macquarie		A1	11:00am	5,213,524			3.30%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	4,000,000	3/04/2023	90	3.90%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	1,000,000	2/05/2023	89	3.95%
Macquarie		A1	Term Deposit	1,000,000	10/05/2023	91	4.07%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	2,000,000	23/05/2023	90	4.15%
BOQ		A2	Term Deposit	1,000,000	29/05/2023	91	4.05%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	2,000,000	29/05/2023	91	4.20%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	4,000,000	1/06/2023	90	4.25%
Bendigo	Yes	A2	Term Deposit	2,000,000	6/06/2023	92	4.00%
Macquarie		A1	Term Deposit	1,000,000	6/06/2023	90	4.32%
ME Bank		A2	Term Deposit	5,000,000	6/06/2023	364	3.30%
BOQ		A2	Term Deposit	2,000,000	7/06/2023	93	4.15%
BOQ		A2	Term Deposit	4,000,000	9/06/2023	92	4.15%
Macquarie		A1	Term Deposit	1,000,000	9/06/2023	91	4.35%
Macquarie		A1	Term Deposit	1,000,000	13/06/2023	91	4.40%
AMP		A2	Term Deposit	1,000,000	14/06/2023	91	4.30%
AMP		A2	Term Deposit	3,000,000	15/06/2023	91	4.30%
AMP		A2	Term Deposit	1,500,000	22/06/2023	91	4.30%
NAB		A1+	Term Deposit	1,500,000	27/06/2023	90	4.35%
Macquarie		A1	Term Deposit	1,000,000	28/06/2023	91	4.45%
Total				44,213,524	Weighted average		3.97%

Financial Institution Rating	Investment	Portfolio
A1+	14,500,000	29.56%
A1	10,213,524	17.90%
A2	19,500,000	52.54%
Total	44,213,524	100%

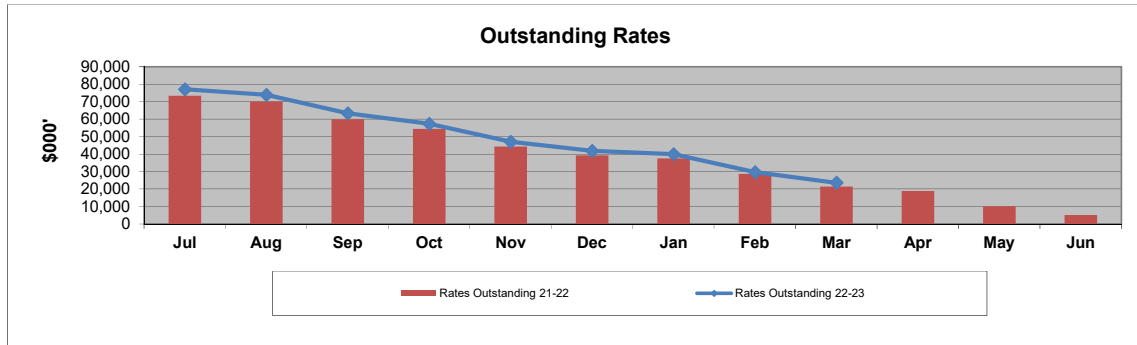
Council's current average rate of return on investments for the 2022-23 financial year is 3.97 percent and is compliant with Council's investment policy.

The portion of investment portfolio currently invested with green institutions is 4.52 percent.

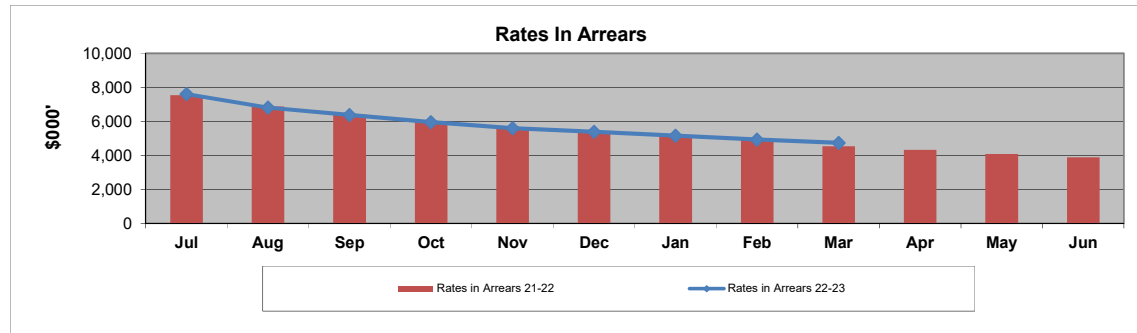
Financial Report - 31 March 2023

4. Rates Analysis

	YTD Actual 31-Mar-22 \$000'	YTD Actual 31-Mar-23 \$000'	Variance \$000'	Variance %
Rates Outstanding	21,543	23,588	(2,045)	(9.49)
Rates in Arrears (prior years)	4,541	4,735	(194)	(4.27)



When Council adopts the budget, rates are levied on properties and the full amount due is treated as income at that point.



Supplementary Valuations

Between the annual revaluation cycle, supplementary valuations are conducted to:

- record changes made to properties that affect property value,
- record changes to the rateability status, and
- consider any planning amendments made within the cycle.

Growth in the number of rateable assessments predominantly occurs as a result of developments within the Shire, creating assessments through subdivision of land and/or buildings.

Rateable properties at 1 July 2022	24,087
2022-23 growth	42
Rateable properties at 31 March 2023	<u>24,129</u>

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

5. Grant Activity

The following table provides a summary of grant funding, greater than \$50,000, received for Council activities during the period 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Project Description	2022-23 Actuals YTD \$	Funding Body
Recurrent		
Best Start	95,094	Department of Education and Training (Vic)
Panton Hill Childcare rebates	72,845	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Cwlth)
Eltham Childcare rebates	68,844	Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Cwlth)
Diamond Creek Neighbourhood House	70,750	Department of
Home & Community Care - transport	69,075	Department of Health (Cwlth)
Maternal & Child Health universal funding	263,269	Department of Health (Vic)
Aged Care Regional Assessment Service funding	142,628	Department of Health (Vic)
Enhanced Maternal & Child Health	68,687	Department of Health (Vic)
Enhanced Maternal & Child Health interface councils	55,025	Department of Health (Vic)
Grants Commission - general purpose	276,855	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Grants Commission - roads	245,340	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
School crossing supervision	354,576	Department of Transport
Learner driver mentor program	127,138	Department of Transport
Total Recurrent	1,910,126	
Non-Recurrent		
Council Plan / Grant Funded Initiatives		
PWMP Rivers to Ranges 2022-25	150,000	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Nillumbik deer control 2022-23	140,492	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Carers support hub	169,000	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Disaster resilient Nillumbik	178,592	Department of
Engage 2022-2024	50,000	Department of Premier and Cabinet
Emergency Management Officer	80,000	Manningham City Council
Eltham Copper Butterfly restoration project	187,821	Melbourne Water
Capital Works		
Andrew Park - pocket park	325,000	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Eltham North dog park	68,750	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Alistair Knox Park accessibility upgrades	413,431	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Roads and carpark renewal	445,000	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
BMX facility	2,163,424	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Rejuvenating Ryan's Reserve	1,190,837	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Diamond Creek netball courts roof	800,000	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Diamond Valley Library outdoor space	438,243	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Total Non-Recurrent	6,800,590	

Financial Report - 31 March 2023

6. Defined Benefit Superannuation Update

Council has an obligation to contribute to any funding shortfalls within the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (LASF) Defined Benefit Plan.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) standard SPS160 uses the Vested Benefits Index (VBI) as its primary measure of fund solvency. The VBI measures the market value of assets in a defined benefit portfolio against the benefits that members would have been entitled to if they had all resigned on the same day.

The independent Actuary to the fund calculates the VBI at 30 June each year. It is necessary for the VBI to be 100% or greater at 30 June each year.

Vision Super produces interim quarterly VBI estimates based on actual quarterly assets and membership.

The recent history of the LASF VBI is shown below:

Estimated Vested Benefit Index

Year	30 Sept (estimated) %	31 Dec (actual) %	31 Mar (actual) %	30 Jun (actual) %
2022/23	101.50	101.70	**	
2021/22	109.90	111.20	108.50	102.20
2020/21	104.50	109.60	111.50	109.70
2019/20	107.30	107.70	102.10	104.60

** The 31 March 2023 estimated figure is not yet available from Vision Super.

To enable Council to monitor this risk, reliance is placed on the actuarial reviews conducted on the fund on a periodic basis. The most recent actuarial review was completed at 30 June 2022 and the fund actuary found that the LASF Defined Benefit Plan was in a satisfactory financial position.

Draft Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029

Draft Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029

This document is the first **draft version** of the proposed Nillumbik Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029 developed for public release and consultation. The appearance, format and some content is likely to change after the public consultation period has concluded; to incorporate public feedback and the graphic formatting necessary to prepare this draft as a final strategic document of Council.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Overview of onsite wastewater treatment plants in Nillumbik.....	4
1.2 Overview of reticulated sewerage in Nillumbik.....	6
1.3 Unsewered townships	6
1.4 Policy and Legislative framework	7
1.5 Roles and Responsibilities	9
2. Nillumbik Profile.....	12
2.1 Receiving Waterways and Catchments	13
2.2 Yarra Valley Water Community Sewerage Program	15
3. Risk Assessment	18
3.1 Onsite Wastewater risks	18
3.2 Risk Management Approach	19
4. Management focus areas.....	20
4.1 Focus Areas	20
4.1.1 Information and Data Collation	20
4.1.2 Education and Awareness.....	20
4.1.3 Sewer Connection and CSP Prioritisation	21
4.1.4 Regulation and Enforcement	21
4.1.5 Collaboration and Review.....	22
4.2 Action Plan	23
5. Funding and Budget Allocation	25
Appendix 1: Community Engagement	26
Appendix 2: Community Sewerage Program areas (to be updated by YVW for final draft)	27
CSA007 Hurstbridge / Wattle Glen / Diamond Creek.....	27
CSA042 St Andrews.....	28
CSA041 Panton Hill.....	29
CSA040 Yarrambat	30

THIS PAGE WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under section 29 of the *State Environment Protection Policy (Waters)*, councils that manage onsite wastewater management systems (OWMS) within its municipality are required to develop a *Onsite Wastewater Management Plan* (OWMP) in consultation with the local water authority and community.

The purpose of the Nillumbik OWMP is to:

- Identify current responsibilities, practices, procedures and obligations for domestic and commercial wastewater management within the Shire of Nillumbik;
- Identify and prioritise the main environmental and public health risks posed by wastewater within the Shire;
- Improve and enhance the public health and environment protection measures undertaken by Council to address the identified wastewater threats within the Shire; and
- Assist with long term planning and development of un-sewered areas in the Shire.

This OWMP will provide an informed and targeted direction, through the Action Plan, for Council and its wastewater partner agencies to action the strategies that address the wastewater issues facing the Shire over the next five years. This Plan will be implemented in conjunction with other key strategic Plans of Council including the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, and the *Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013*.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 identifies four themes, the review and update of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2021-2023, falls under the theme of Council being responsible and accountable, with the objective *to facilitate the best possible outcomes for our community, by demonstrating strong leadership and working actively to achieve the community's objectives*. Strategies to achieve this include, good governance, risk management and services and programs.

The action plan of this OWMP will satisfy the Council strategy, *to seek to enhance community safety, public health and amenity and the environment, through improved planning and community engagement, prioritising fair and transparent approaches to managing compliance and enforcement*. This will be achieved through a collaborative approach with Council's internal and external wastewater management partners.

Specifically, the OWMP provides Council with a:

- Planning tool to enable long term strategies to be developed for wastewater management;
- Framework to facilitate decision-making and policy about individual OWMS installations, including enforcement and compliance options.

As part of the development process for this Plan, data was reviewed on Nillumbik's existing domestic wastewater profile in addition to current National, State and Local government policies, standards and legislation. Work previously undertaken in the development of *Nillumbik's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2021-2023* has also provided a development platform for this OWMP.

Analysis of the data currently available to Council indicates that:

- There are approximately 4,600 existing on-site OWMS in the Shire, however Council does not have records for approximately 17% of these systems.
- Historically, Nillumbik has a significant proportion of older OWMS that were legally permitted (under previous lower standards) to discharge their wastewater off-site.
- Almost 1,000 properties contain OWMS with permits to discharge effluent close to the ground surface (15cm from the ground surface) or to surface waters such as dams.
- Less than 20% of OWMS receive regular maintenance as required by their permit conditions.

The Onsite Wastewater Management Plan which have been divided across **5 key areas**:

1. Information and Data Collation
2. Education and Awareness
3. Sewer connection and Community Sewerage Program (CSP)
4. Regulation and Enforcement
5. Collaboration and Review.

In order to implement these recommendations a range of resources must be committed. Structured co-ordination of Council's existing environmental strategies and combined internal capacity toward implementation of the objectives is necessary to maximise the Shire's wastewater management and catchment protection position.

The actions of the Plan have been set across a 5-year timescale. This is to allow enough time for the scope and objectives of the Action Plan to be properly resourced and implemented.

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic wastewater pollutants are derived from everyday household chemicals, sewage and greywater that discharge into OWMS, the reticulated sewerage system or the environment. When different OWMS overflow during heavy rain or as a result of damage, failure or overuse, wastewater can leak out of systems into the local environment and waterways. The source of this pollution is almost entirely due to failing or older OWMS within the Shire.

The environmental impacts associated with domestic wastewater are due to the many pollutants it contains, including:

- human faeces and waste products;
- particles of food, dirt, lint;
- oils and greases; and
- chemicals derived from detergents and other cleaning products.

These pollutants can build up in the soil, damaging its structure, altering soil acidity/alkalinity balances and harming plant growth.

Wastewater pollution can also present human health risks, cause odours and attract vermin and insects. Microbial contaminants such as bacteria, viruses and algal blooms pose significant public health risks. The excess nutrients present in domestic wastewater can harm aquatic life and cause waterway conditions to become toxic.



Figure 1: Greywater discharge to street culvert in Howell Road, Plenty



Figure 2: Blackwater leakage and pooling at Kent Hughes Road, Eltham



Figure 3: Wastewater overflow at a property in North Warrandyte

There are approximately 4,600 OWMS in use in the Shire, with a significant proportion of these not performing satisfactorily. This results in threats to human health and environmental pollution of land and local waterways. System failure is often due to poor maintenance and management practices by property owners and occupiers. In many cases, these systems do not comply with the current wastewater standards having been approved under the lower treatment and discharge requirements of now superceded standards; with many systems (historically) approved for offsite discharge.

1.1 Overview of onsite wastewater treatment plants in Nillumbik

Onsite wastewater treatment plant means a treatment plant for the bacterial, biological, chemical or physical treatment of sewage generated on site. For example, a septic tank system, a wet or dry composting toilet, aerobic treatment and sand filter (EPA, publication 1974). Across Nillumbik the two most common methods of wastewater treatment are primary treatment septic tank systems and secondary treatment often via an aerated wastewater treatment system (AWTS) or sandfilters.

Primary treatment (often known as septic tanks)

The modern primary treatment system is usually a concrete or plastic in-ground tank that has two internal chambers separated by a baffle. The tank holds and treats wastewater from the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry and toilets. The tank houses a living ecosystem of bacteria that decompose the organic material, treating the solids and wastewater before it is drained into the natural environment by means of an effluent disposal system, most commonly via absorption trenches.

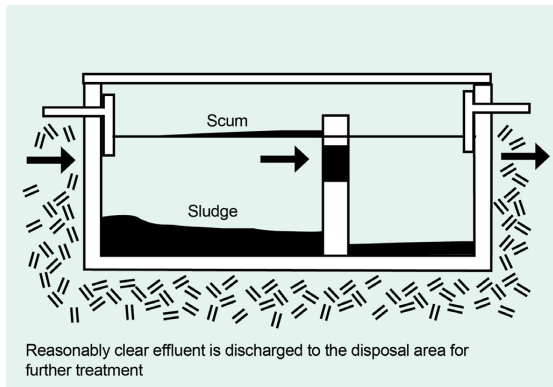


Figure 4: Cross-section of a properly functioning primary treatment tank

Absorption trenching incorporates perforated PVC piping to transport wastewater allowing it to pass through stone aggregate before being absorbed into the existing earth surrounding the trench. Trenching is one type of land application system available; and is the type of land application predominantly utilised for primary treatment systems.

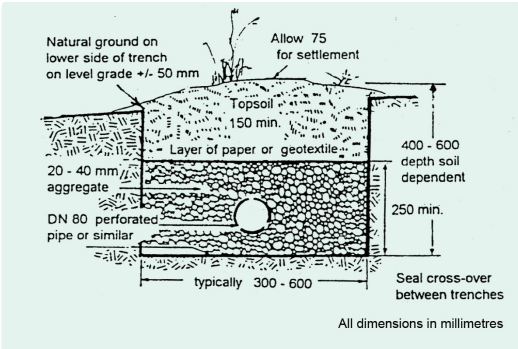


Figure 5: Cross-section of a typical absorption trench

The main maintenance requirements specific to primary treatment system is the removal of the build up of solids every 3-8 years. This occurs via a pump-out of the accumulated sludge performed by specialist contractors; and is commonly referred to as “de-sludging”. If these solids are not removed, they can carry over to the disposal area, causing odour problems and the trenching to fail.

Typically primary treatment systems have no moving parts and generally require no power.

Secondary treatment

Secondary treatment systems pass wastewater from a primary treatment tank into a second treatment process, this can include aeration (often by electrically powered blowers) or via polishing filters.

The current most common secondary treatment method of aerated treatment systems (AWTS) also use clarification and disinfecting chambers with sludge return to the primary treatment tank. Aerated treatment systems require regular maintenance by a suitable service technician, as well as a reliable power supply. The tank requires pumping out approximately every five years. See Figure 5 below.

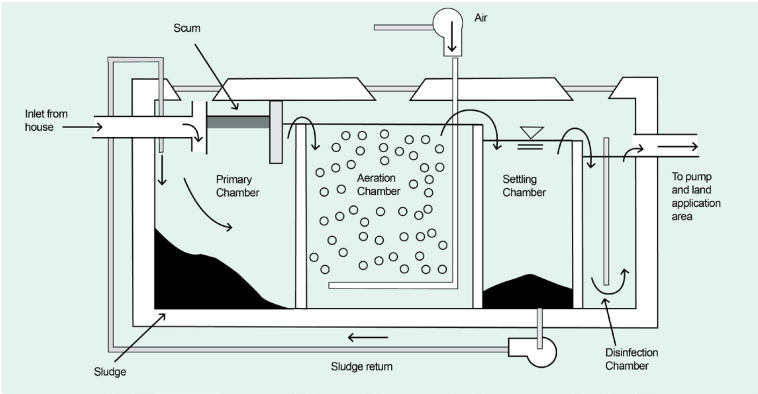


Figure 6: Typical schematic of an aerated wastewater treatment system

AWTS are designed to discharge their (secondary) treated wastewater to land via sub-surface drip irrigation. Sub-surface drip irrigation can only receive secondary treated wastewater in order to function properly.

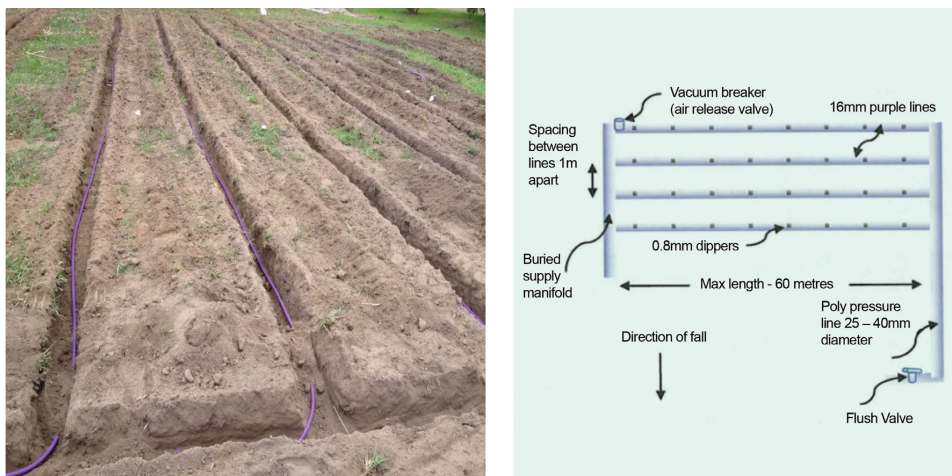


Figure 7: Images showing typical sub-surface irrigation layout

Other types of systems found within Nillumbik include:

- Older 'Split' systems;
- Septic into Sand Filter systems;
- Composting Toilets; and
- Worm Farm systems.

1.2 Overview of reticulated sewerage in Nillumbik

Over the last decade from 2013 there has been considerable activity relating to the provision of reticulated sewer services in Nillumbik, this has included the provision of reticulated sewer to :

- approximately 180 properties in the Eltham/Research (2013/2014)
- nearly 1,000 properties across North Warrandyte (2015/2016)
- 300 properties in Eltham South, completed in November 2022

1.3 Unsewered townships

Reticulated sewerage has been provided to Greensborough, the majority of Eltham, Eltham North, Diamond Creek, North Warrandyte and parts of Plenty, Research, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. The remainder of the Shire is unsewered and those properties not located within the Yarra Valley Water CSP will continue to rely on OWMS to treat and contain all wastewater within the property boundary for many years to come.

This means that properties with primary treatment systems will be required to ensure that there is sufficient available space to accommodate a reserve area (as per the Code of Practice) in the event that the system fails. In order to prevent failure owners and occupiers will need to ensure adequate monitoring and maintenance to provide proper operation of systems.

The following table shows the number of properties in areas are not on the CSP and are not expected to be connected to a reticulated mains sewer network, due to the distance from the existing network and the size of allotments being large enough to adequately manage and contain all wastewater on site with sufficient area for reserve if required.

Township	No. of properties with WTS system
Arthurs Creek	191
Bend of Islands	116
Christmas Hills	160
Cottles Bridge	236
Kangaroo Ground	450
Kinglake / Kinglake west	1
Nutfield	60
Smiths Gully	140
Strathewen	75
Watsons Creek	27
Yan Yean	10
TOTAL	1,294

Table 1.: Property data for developed allotments that will remain on OWMS.

1.4 Policy and Legislative framework

There is a comprehensive and complicated policy and legislative framework around domestic onsite wastewater management which includes several State Acts and subordinate legislation, along with guidelines, Codes, Australian Standards and local policies.

In July 2021 the *Environment Protection Act 1970* was superseded by the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, which establishes a new framework for the environmental protection and is underpinned by the general environmental duty (GED) and duties for waste, contaminated land and incident notification and management. Much of the content of SEPP (Waters) has been replaced by the Act, its Regulations and the Environmental Reference Standard (ERS), or through new guidance published by EPA. A limited number of clauses in the SEPP (Waters) will remain in force under the Environmental Protection Transitional Regulations 2021. This has allowed time for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action [DEECA (formally known as Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning)] and the EPA to consult with duty holders to identify the most suitable replacement instrument to address these clauses.

However where content is not directly replaced under the new legislative framework, or EPA has not yet published new guidance, the information in those clauses of SEPP (Waters) may continue to provide a useful source of information to aid duty holders and regulatory decision-makers.

Victorian State Legislation

Environment Protection Act 2017

Water Act 1989

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Local Government Act 1989 and 2020

Building Act 1993.

Subordinate legislation, Policy, Codes, Strategies and Guides

Environmental Protection Transitional Regulations 2021 – retain limited State Environment Protection Policy (Waters) clauses

Environment Protection Regulations 2021

EPA Publication 1974: Regulating on-site wastewater management systems (local government toolkit)

EPA Publication 1976: Guidance for owners and occupiers of land with an OWMS equal to or greater than 5,000 litres on any day (including septic tank systems)

EPA Code of Practice - Onsite Wastewater Management (891.4) July 2016

Onsite Wastewater management plans risk assessment guide: final report (DELWP, 2022)

Victorian Land Capability Assessment Framework (January 2014)

VCAT Decisions & Precedents

National Standards

Australian/New Zealand Standards and JAS-ANZ Certification

Nillumbik Shire Council Strategic Plans and Policies

Nillumbik Planning Scheme

Council Plan 2021-2025

Shire of Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Nillumbik Climate Action Plan 2022-2023

Nillumbik Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013

1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

Environment Protection Authority

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for the protection of the Victorian environment by developing policies and guidelines, encouraging best practice environmental management and maintaining a complaints register. EPA also performs a regulatory and enforcement role to protect the quality of the environment.

The EPA's responsibilities in relation to the management of domestic wastewater disposal are as follows:

- Developing policies and legislation in relation to domestic wastewater disposal.
- Developing and reviewing the *Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management* and other relevant publications.
- Approving the type of domestic wastewater treatment systems that can be installed in Victoria via the Australian Standards Certificate of Conformance process.
- Providing advice to local Councils where required.
- Approval of systems discharging more than 5,000 litres on any day

Nillumbik Shire Council

Under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, Environment Protection Regulations 2021 and through the *EPA Code of Practice - Onsite Wastewater Management*, Council (in particular, Environmental Health, Planning and Building Services) is responsible for:

- Providing educational information and advice regarding onsite wastewater management to the community;
- Ensuring new residential subdivisions in unsewered areas are provided with reticulated sewerage - or that the allotments are capable of treating and containing all domestic wastewater on site;
- Issuing permits to install or alter onsite wastewater management and issuing a certificate to use the OWMS;
- Refusing to issue a permit if the system does not hold a current Certificate of Conformance or if the site is unsuitable and/or the area available for the treatment and disposal of effluent is not sufficient;
- Ensuring that OWMS are operating correctly and that property owners comply with conditions on OWMS permits and certificates; and
- Submitting an annual report to the EPA on OWMS activity.

Landowners and occupiers

A landowner's wastewater responsibilities consist of the following:

- Connecting to the mains sewerage system where it is available (in a declared sewer area) and the existing WTS does not meet EPA standards at the time the sewer (connection point) became available;
- In unsewered areas, obtaining a permit to install or alter an OWMS before a building permit is issued and any OWMS installation or alteration works commence; and
- Obtaining a certificate to use the system once installation has been completed and approved.

With regard to the on-going maintenance of a OWMS, it is the land occupier's responsibility to ensure that:

- The maintenance requirements of the OWMS are implemented, including de-sludging (every 3-8 years, depending on the system loading), and any specified monitoring conditions under the permit (including annual sampling);
- If the system type is a secondary treatment plant – it undergoes maintenance checks every 3 months by an accredited maintenance provider;
- The effluent disposal area remains clear from development, impermeable surfaces and unsuitable vegetation; and
- Copies of all maintenance, based on the type of system in use, is provided to Council in accordance with permit conditions.

OWMS Installers (Plumbers) and Maintenance Providers

OWMS Installers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that any plumbing work is either undertaken by a licensed plumber, or under the direct supervision of a licensed plumber;
- Only installing OWMS approved for installation in Victoria (with a current JAS-ANZ Certificate of Conformance); and
- Ensuring that all of the plumbing work complies with the Plumbing Regulations 2018 the Plumbing Code of Australia (Volume 3 of the National Construction Code) and any referenced Australian Standards relevant to the plumbing work undertaken; and issuing a compliance certificate for any plumbing work valued at \$750 or more.

Compliance certificates must be issued by licensed plumbers for specific plumbing work carried out in Victoria. A compliance certificate signed by a licensed plumber is a certification that their work complies with the prescribed plumbing standards.

A licensed plumber is not able to issue a certificate for plumbing work that has been carried out by someone else, except in limited circumstances.

OWMS Maintenance Providers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are an accredited maintenance service provider;
- Ensuring that any maintenance plumbing work requiring a compliance certificate is either undertaken by a licensed Plumber, or under the direct supervision of a licensed Plumber; and
- Ensuring that any wastewater pumped out of a OWMS as part of a maintenance service is only disposed of at a licensed facility.

Standards Australia and JAS-ANZ

Standards Australia develops internationally aligned Australian standards (AS) and participates in standards-related activities that deliver benefit nationally. Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand also work together to develop joint standards (AS/NZS).

Although Standards Australia develops and publishes different national standards they are not responsible for enforcing, regulating or certifying compliance with those standards. The responsibility for system assessment and the evaluation of minimum performance requirements for OWMS sits exclusively with the accreditation authority JAS-ANZ (Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand) and is carried out by the accredited certification body; Global Certification Pty Ltd (GC) under the GC Domestic Wastewater Treatment Units (Septic Tanks) certification scheme. OWMS that pass the certification scheme are provided with a Certificate of Conformance. Only systems with a valid Certificate of Conformance can be installed in Victoria.

JAS-ANZ utilise the published joint Australian/New Zealand Standards for on-site domestic wastewater as the basis for the majority of the performance criteria applied to their certification scheme (for OWMS). For example, the current certification scheme for secondary treatment systems requires the different manufactured systems to have completed and passed a comprehensive testing program by 2020 based upon the requirements of AS/NZS 1546.3:2017 *On-site domestic wastewater treatment units: Part 3: Aerated wastewater treatment systems* to receive a Certificate of Conformance post 2020.

Yarra Valley Water

Yarra Valley Water (YVW) is the local water authority for supplying and maintaining reticulated water and sewerage services to the Shire of Nillumbik (and across their catchment). YVW works in partnership with local councils in planning and implementing appropriate infrastructure developments; determining which properties are unable to contain wastewater within their boundaries and to recommend priorities for the provision of sewerage services. They are the key primary authority in setting the scope and direction of the extension of mains sewerage infrastructure across the Shire through the continuing rollout of the Community Sewerage Program (CSP).

Melbourne Water Corporation

Melbourne Water (MW) is the regional drainage authority for Metropolitan Melbourne and is also the Waterway Manager for natural waterways within Melbourne Metropolitan of which Nillumbik is a part. Melbourne Water is responsible for:

- Major trunk services for stormwater, sewer and reticulated water;
- Monitoring and maintaining the ongoing viability and health of major waterways and major catchments; and
- Providing information on floods and their control.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

The Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA formally known as DEWLP) is responsible for the management of Victoria's natural resources (water, land, etc.).

DEECA was also responsible for the management of the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program (CTWSSP). This State Government program was initiated in 2004 to:

- Introduce sewerage solutions to rural and regional towns that have critical public health and environment problems.
- Introduce new water supplies or upgrade existing water supplies.
- Identify sewerage needs to prevent future risks to public health and the environment.

The CTWSSP saw the State Government invest \$42 million over a number of projects across the State. Nillumbik Shire Council was unable to apply for funding through this program to improve domestic wastewater management in rural areas and townships, as the municipality did not meet the rural or regional criteria. Council has previously advocated to the state government for an expansion of the program, however was unsuccessful in getting the funding criteria expanded.

2. NILLUMBIK PROFILE

The Shire of Nillumbik is an interface Shire located approximately 25 kilometres to the north-east of Melbourne's central activities area and extends to the Kinglake Ranges. It has the following characteristics:

- An area of approximately 430 square kilometres, 80 percent of which is non-urban.
- The non-urban land uses within the Shire are predominantly rural residential, hobby farms and conservation bush blocks, but also include various agricultural activities such as grazing, piggeries, poultry farms and vineyards. A significant area of land is covered by native forest.
- The Shire is generally bounded by the Yarra and Plenty Rivers and the Kinglake Ranges.
- The municipality includes the urban areas of Diamond Creek, Eltham, Eltham North, Plenty, Research, Wattle Glen and parts of Greensborough.

- Low density residential development generally exists around Eltham, Eltham North, Plenty, Yarrambat, North Warrandyte and Research.
- A number of smaller townships and communities are dispersed throughout the municipality and include Hurstbridge, Panton Hill, St Andrews, Arthur's Creek, Christmas Hills, Cottles Bridge, Doreen, Kangaroo Ground, Nutfield, Smiths Gully, Strathewen and Watson's Creek.

The Council has a strong environmental focus and a keen desire to maintain and enhance the natural values of the Shire which attract both residents and visitors alike. The Council actively promotes responsible environmental management practices, both within the Council and to its residents. The Shire includes one of Melbourne's Green Wedges and has a reputation for its protection and preservation of the natural environment.

2.1 Receiving Waterways and Catchments

Nillumbik is a critically important water catchment area for greater Melbourne. There are five significant waterways in Nillumbik:

1. The Yarra River;
2. Plenty River;
3. Diamond Creek;
4. Watsons Creek; and
5. Arthurs Creek.

The Yarra River forms the southern boundary of Nillumbik, snaking alongside the Bend of Islands, Kangaroo Ground and North Warrandyte.

Diamond Creek runs through the centre of Nillumbik, taking in the townships of Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge.

The Plenty River forms part of western boundary of Nillumbik. The headwaters of the Plenty River provide the water supply to the Yan Yean Reservoir.

These waterways provide stock and domestic water, form important habitat links and are a recreation resource for current and future generations. (Source: *Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2012*).

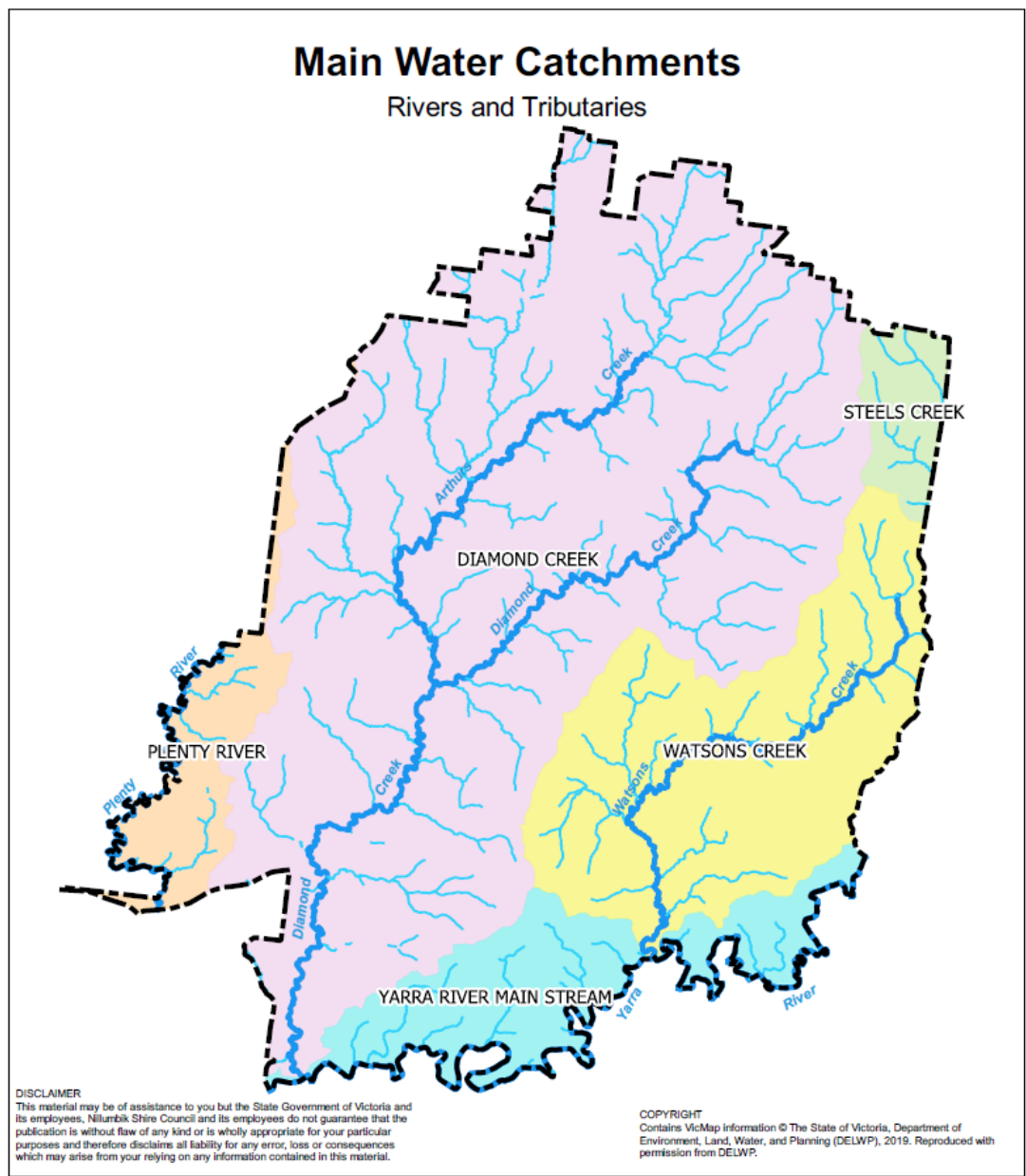
Arthurs Creek, Running Creek and the Upper Diamond Creek all form the headwaters of Diamond Creek. Running Creek meets Arthurs Creek at the township of Arthurs Creek and the Upper Diamond Creek joins Arthurs Creek at Hurstbridge.

There are four main water catchment areas within Nillumbik:

- Diamond Creek
- Plenty River
- Watson's Creek
- Yarra River Main Stream.

Using these catchments is a way of simplifying the assessment of the values and threats posed by domestic wastewater and failing systems. This allows management actions to be prioritised to the catchment areas of highest priority.

Figure 8 (below) shows the location of the above four main catchments within the Nillumbik Shire boundaries; including the rivers and tributaries within them.



2.2 Yarra Valley Water Community Sewerage Program

As a result of many properties in Melbourne being built before sewerage infrastructure was available, over 14,000 homes in the northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne are using a range of different OWMS to manage their domestic wastewater, many of which do not meet current acceptable standards.

These substandard systems present a potential risk to public health, local waterways and the environment. As such, an identified proportion have been placed on the Yarra Valley Water Community Sewerage Program to be provided with a sustainable sewerage service at a cost of more than \$400 million (until 2032).

Council will continue to work with Yarra Valley Water in the development of the Nillumbik Community Sewerage Program (CSP). The priority and timing of the development of effective wastewater services in areas within Nillumbik are determined based on the following factors:

- Level of risk to the environment and/or human health posed by failing OWMS systems;
- Level of interest from residents to connect to a reticulated sewerage system;
- Number of residents/properties likely to be affected by the provision of a reticulated sewer service;
- Degree of difficulty in the design and construction of reticulated sewerage systems;
- Costs involved in the different possible wastewater solutions; and
- Priority in relation to other townships/areas serviced by YVW.

As a result, larger rural properties beyond the inner “township” zone of the townships throughout the Shire where the above criteria are not met, will not be included in the CSP and are likely to require OWMS management permanently.

Nillumbik is in direct competition with other municipalities also serviced by Yarra Valley Water with regards to the CSP. The priority for towns or areas to be provided with a reticulated sewerage supply is determined through the risk prioritisation schedule developed by YVW.

The next YVW prioritisation process will occur in 2026.

The number of properties currently on the CSP and the cost to YVW for the implementation of the program often results in significant delays for the provision of reticulated sewerage. It is therefore important that Council continues to work in partnership with YVW and their prioritisation timeframes. Nillumbik Shire Council was successful in the 2021 prioritisation process resulting in 7 of Nillumbik’s CSP areas recognised as higher priority and now within the top 10 priority areas for YVW. Council’s work to collect data in relation to the risks for human health and the environment has facilitated the inclusion of more properties and bringing some areas forward expected sewer connections from 2032 to 2026/27.

Table 1 Compares the previous Nillumbik CSP scheduled dates for the provision of reticulated sewerage between the 2016 and 2021 Prioritisations initiated by YVW.

2016 Prioritisation results			
CSP Area	Township/Area	Number of lots	Project dates
BA012	Eltham (North) / Research	180	complete
BA004A/B/C/D	North Warrandyte	975	complete
BA005	Eltham (South)	~300	complete
CSA007	Hurstbridge / Wattle Glen / Diamond Creek	~75	2031/32
CSA042	St Andrews	~117	2031/32
CSA041	Panton Hill	~119	2031/32
CSA040	Yarrambat	36	2030/31
Total remaining for connection		347	2030/32
2021 Priorisation results			
CSA063	Research	5	2026
CSA060	North Warrandyte	7	2031
CSA080	Eltham	21	2027
CSA073	Hurstbridge	51	2029
CSA007	Diamond Creek	30	2027
CSA079	Wattle Glen	51	2027
CSA042	St Andrews	126	2029
CSA041	Panton Hill	110	2027
CSA040	Yarrambat	52	2026*
CSA050	Plenty	53	2027
CSA078	Yarra Glen (Christmas Hills)	5	2041
Total remaining for connection		511	

Table 1: CSP timetable showing all the included Nillumbik Townships (data supplied by YVW is subject to change dependant on design and funding requirements) *The timing of the Yarrambat Sewerage Project may be influenced by Stage 2 of the Yan Yean Road Upgrade Project.

Figure 9 (below) shows the extent of Yarra Valley Water's existing Sewer Catchment Area (i.e. areas serviced with sewer) and areas that are on the Community Sewerage Program (CSP); that have not yet been provided with a service. The 'township' areas listed on the CSP, are limited to properties within a centralised area of the township. It does not include larger, more rural properties on the outskirts and surrounds.

This map demonstrates that following completion of the Nillumbik CSP, on-site domestic wastewater management will still require significant input and management on a permanent basis.

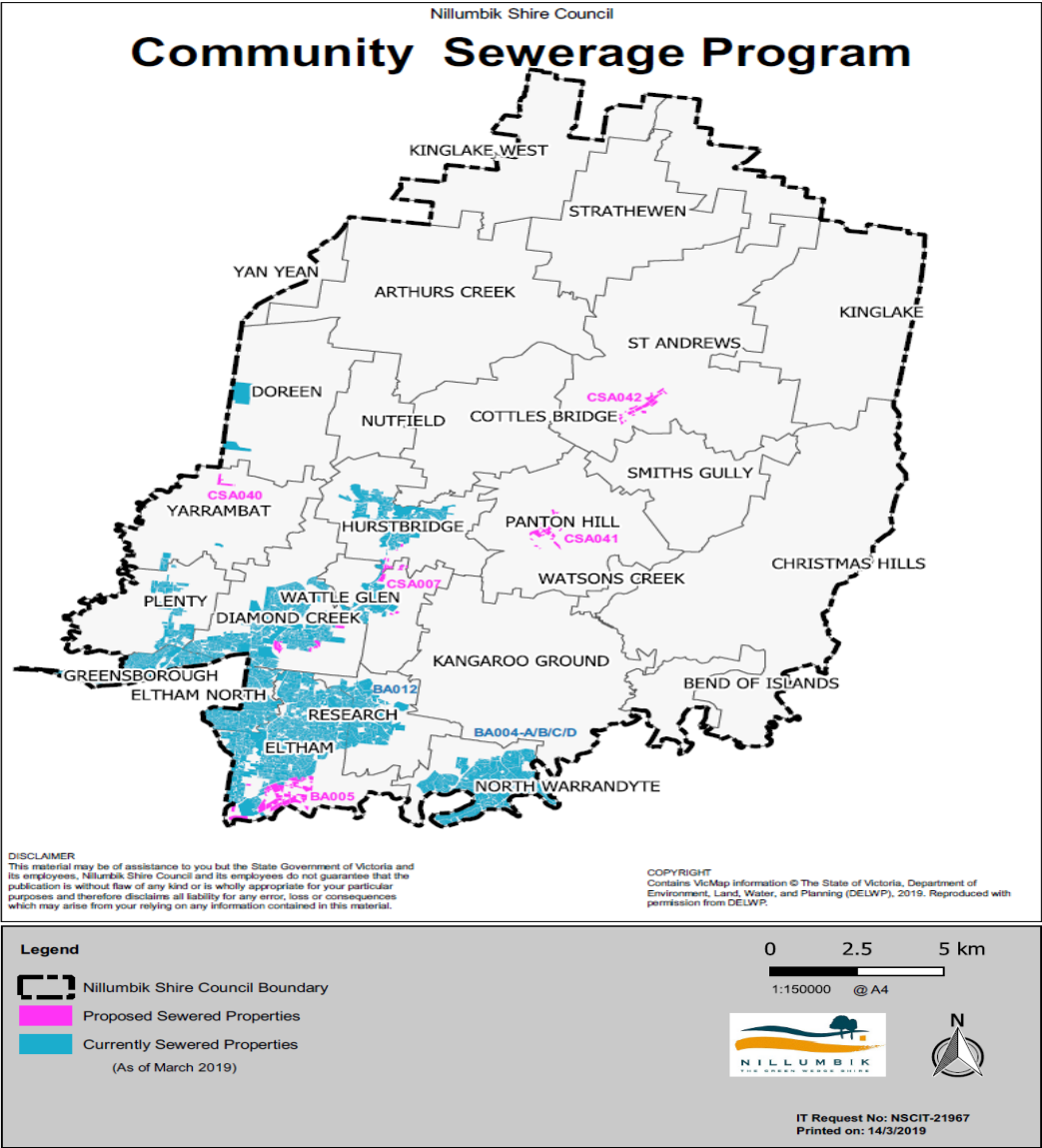


Figure 9: Sewered/Unsewered and CSP areas (see Appendix 2 for detailed maps of individual CSP Areas)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Onsite Wastewater risks

A primary objective of the OWMP is to identify and implement strategies aimed at minimising the impact of existing or potential risks to human health and the environment. All wastewater generation and/or discharge is seen to be a risk with potential harm to human health or damage to the environment. Wastewater risks that need to be considered, their cause and key impacts are described in Table 3.

Risk	Cause	Key Impacts
Failed systems with off-site discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damaged effluent disposal drains/trenches Increased loading from extensions to dwellings Design criteria not complied with Faulty installation New works & activities impacting on disposal area Age of the system Septic tank full Poor maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrients Pathogens Odour Visual amenity Oxygen depleting material Local land degradation Pollution of water courses Pooling of effluent causing mosquito breeding
Treated off-site effluent discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permitted system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution of water courses Local visual amenity Demand on Council drainage infrastructure
Treated on-site effluent discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permitted system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local visual amenity Pollution of groundwater
Untreated off-site sullage (grey water) discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly maintained system with sand filter not functioning Sand filter bypassed to stormwater Septic tank full Permitted system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrients Pathogens Odour Visual amenity Oxygen depleting material Local land degradation Pollution of water courses Demand on Council drainage infrastructure
Ineffective regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with permit conditions Ineffective database Non-connection to sewer Unclear regulatory responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liability Increased incidence of preventable pollution and environmental degradation Increased risk to public health
Re-use of waste water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed re-use Low water supply Poor management by individual residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathogens Odours

Table 3: Wastewater threats

These risks have been identified by incorporating information from:

- literature reviews;
- a review of complaints;
- discussions with Council staff;
- field inspections;
- YVW regarding the extent of sewerage provision across the Nillumbik catchments

3.2 Risk Management Approach

A OWMP risk assessment methodology has been developed for councils to assess the risk of OWMS at a sub catchment and catchment level, published by DELWP, 2022.

The guide outlines the following objectives to be considered when assessing risks associated with OWMS:

- Onsite wastewater systems and their effluent are appropriately located and managed through a consistent risk assessment process
- Human health and environmental risks are minimized, particularly for potable water supply and environmentally sensitive areas.

The methodology of the guide is in alignment with ISO 31000 Risk Management and includes, risk identification, risk analysis and, risk evaluation and treatment.

Using the guide Council will develop a risk management plan to inform ongoing monitoring of OWMS throughout the Shire, particularly in areas where reticulated sewer is not a viable option for wastewater management.

The risk management plan will be developed by using the following the risk assessment structure:

Initiation: defining the scope and context to the risk management plan

- Determine sub catchments and catchment areas for assessment, identify endpoints

Risk Identification: data collection

- Collect data and allocate data to risk band levels for each risk factor

Calculate consequence

- Determine consequence through calculation of contaminant loads from risk factor data

Likelihood assessment

- Determine likelihood for each risk pathway. Calculate likelihood from risk factor band level data

Risk analysis

- Calculate risk rating for each sub catchment risk type and pathway

Cumulative risk

- Calculate risk rating for specific endpoints and review results

After the risk treatment plan is developed (within the life of this 2024-2029 plan), options of more complexity such as delivering a program of monitoring inspections and liaison with property owners will have delivery plans developed to manage the detailed nature of implementation.

Regular monitoring and review of the risk treatment plans, including track implementation of the delivery plans will be undertaken. This will include the stakeholder engagement and reporting of implementation progress as required as part of the ongoing development of Council's OWMP.

4. MANAGEMENT FOCUS AREAS

The focus area for Council's management of onsite wastewater is informed by several main factors, including Council's statutory duty and key stakeholder strategic priorities (YVW, MW, EPA & DEECA). The Council's capacity to undertake wastewater management programs, along with the community's engagement feedback and the risks posed by ineffective and non-complaintant OWMS together determine the plan's objectives.

4.1 Focus Areas

The **OWMP 5 focus areas**:

1. Information and Data Collation
2. Education and Awareness
3. Sewer connection and CSP prioritisation
4. Regulation and Enforcement
5. Collaboration and Review

A summary description of the 5 focus areas and their objectives follow.

4.1.1 Information and Data Collation

Information and data collation is a critical primary phase of the Action Plan that must be completed before effective risk-based interventions can be undertaken. The quality and extent of the information Council holds for individual wastewater treatment systems (OWMS) directly influences the quality and extent to which subsequent actions can be conducted.

Information and data collation objectives:

- Collation and auditing of all current and historic OWMS information into a single information management system to identify information gaps, provide status reports, improve risk assessment data and accuracy of information on OWMS currently operating within the Shire.

4.1.2 Education and Awareness

Conducting targeted education and awareness programs will contribute toward the objectives of the Action Plan and provide a solid foundation for increasing community and industry awareness levels around wastewater responsibilities and requirements; and subsequent compliance and monitoring activities.

Education and awareness objectives:

- Implementation of wastewater education and information strategies for OWMS owners in Nillumbik to achieve increased awareness of their responsibilities and improved OWMS maintenance management practices.

4.1.3 Sewer Connection and CSP Prioritisation

Connection of properties to reticulated sewer effectively eliminates the existing and potential environmental and human health risks that could originate from properties due to its wastewater. It is the most effective solution available from an environmental and public health perspective; particularly for Nillumbik.

To this end, educating owners of properties in declared (sewer) areas about the requirement to connect and facilitating the connection occurring is a key objective Council can undertake to significantly improve the environmental and public health outcomes for the Shire.

YVW effectively re-prioritises their complete listing of the CSP townships (and therefore the included properties within them) every five years. The last CSP re-prioritisation occurred in 2021. It is important to note that much of the data collation, risk and land capability assessment activity that determines the final re-prioritisation of the CSP list occurs in the years leading up to each re-prioritisation year. Nillumbik's success in having CSP areas move up the prioritisation schedule highlights the imperative for Council to be proactively engaging with YVW in the CSP advocacy actions

Sewer connection and community Sewerage Program objectives:

- Advocacy into Yarra Valley Water's Community Sewerage Program.
- Encourage property owners to connect to sewer (in declared areas).

4.1.4 Regulation and Enforcement

Council has several statutory responsibilities relating to wastewater control under a number of different Victorian Acts, including the:

- *Environment Protection Act 2017*; the
- *Building Act 1993*; and the
- *Planning & Environment Act 1987*

These responsibilities include activities such as:

- Ensuring that approved planning permits contain the necessary wastewater conditions for unsewered and sewer development
- Ensuring that OWMS Permits contain all the necessary wastewater conditions for the land-based constraints of the installation site and the type of system being installed.
- Approval of new OWMS installations and alterations of existing systems
- Monitoring the maintenance reporting requirements for different systems
- Building Act "Consent to Use" requirements
- Addressing wastewater non-compliances and complaints

There will always be a requirement for Council to undertake regulation or enforcement activities in relation to different wastewater issues and non-compliances that pose an immediate risk/threat to the environment or human health. This is an integral part of Council's statutory responsibility. However, Council's enforcement policy is generally based on the premise that enforcement is the last tool employed when education and mutual co-operation on a compliance issue has not been successful. The exception to this, is when a wastewater non-compliance poses an unacceptable immediate threat to human health and safety and it is necessary to employ an enforcement measure from the onset to address it.

The recent introduction of the new *Environment Protection Act 2017* and *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*, have established the ability for Council to enforce maintenance of OWMS to both owners and or occupiers (ie rental tenants), via infringements, Notices and if required Prosecution. Council's regulation and enforcement is guided by the EPA Publication 1974: Regulating onsite wastewater management systems: local government toolkit. The toolkit clearly provides the legislative requirements of owners and operators of OWMS under the GED and Council's investigative and enforcement processes to follow

Regulation and Enforcement Objectives:

- To ensure all unsewered site developments are capable of adequately treating and containing all effluent on site prior to planning approval
- To investigate and enforce where required, correct operation and maintenance of OWMS

4.1.5 Collaboration and Review

To maximize the impact of the different actions and projects identified in the OWMP Action Plan, there must be integration and co-ordination of Council's internal resources. Internal collaboration is a key component to achieving the successful implementation of the OWMP.

Likewise, external collaboration and consultation is also a critical factor, specifically required under *SEPP (Waters)*, in the development of the OWMP and its subsequent implementation. Strengthening relationships with key external partners and stakeholder agencies such as YVW, the EPA, MAV and EHPA is a fundamental element in improving the level of collaboration, consultation, information and resource sharing between agencies.

Council has developed a comprehensive Community Engagement Program that is applied to the majority of Council projects. Community engagement and collaboration is recognised by Council as a foundational component to any project that involves or affects the community. It is an approach that Council supports and advocates.

Collaboration and Review objectives:

- Regular review of plan as per legislative requirements.
- Advocate for and contribute to reform of the wastewater legislative framework..

The above 9 objectives have been developed into a series of separate strategies and falling under the **5 focus areas** in the **OWMP Action Plan**. These are detailed below under section 4.2.

4.2 Action Plan

Nillumbik Shire Council actively promotes responsible environmental management practices. By preparing and adopting the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP), Nillumbik demonstrates its commitment to improve the management of domestic wastewater within the Shire. The successful implementation of the OWMP Action Plan can largely be contained within the existing Environmental Health budget and allocation of resources, along with some cross organization development of solutions; such as improved use of technology to achieve greater compliance. External funding will also be sought, including grants, from Melbourne Water and the State and Federal governments.

The following is Council's Onsite Wastewater Management Action Plan for the 2023 to 2028 period.

Onsite Wastewater Management Action Plan

Focus area: information and data collection

Objectives	Strategies
All wastewater information is readily accessible in a single database and enables identification of areas of critical concern and confirm number of unsewered properties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digitalise all records for wastewater systems onto a single database - historic hardcopy information verified and uploaded to Council database 2. Undertake data cleansing of existing information in database, to remove duplicates and removal of sewer connected properties 3. Conduct onsite inspections of properties without records to confirm onsite wastewater management method
Maintain accurate database of properties sewered by Yarra Valley Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regularly update and upload property connection data obtained from YVW to GIS and database systems
Develop Risk prioritisation plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise the onsite wastewater plans risk assessment guidance developed by DWELP 2022, to develop a risk based approach to ensure appropriate systems are installed throughout Nillumbik and identifying areas of high environmental or health risk 2. Conduct regular water sampling of waterways to assist with evidence based risk assessment.

Focus area: Education and Awareness

Objectives	Strategies
Improve education and awareness of wastewater management responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase distribution of Council education publications to new wastewater system owners, new residents/owners and real estate agents 2. Ensure wastewater management information on Council's website is relevant and easy to understand

Focus area: Sewer Connection and Community Sewerage Program

Objectives	Strategies
Advocacy into Yarra Valley Water's Community Sewerage Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quarterly collaboration meetings between YVW and Council to implement CSP 2. Assist YVW with relevant information and data for design proposals throughout Nillumbik CSP areas 3. Assist YVW with community engagement during design consultation and implementation of CSP infrastructure
Encourage property owners to connect to sewer (in declared areas)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In conjunction with YVW provide communications to properties that have sewer available but have no connection record 2. Ensure retention of any secondary treatment systems at a declared property is based on evidence of compliance with EPA requirements (EPA Publication: 891.4) 3. Ensure declared properties that cannot show evidence of compliance are connected to sewer

Focus area: Regulation and Enforcement

Objectives	Strategies
All unsewered site developments are capable of adequately treating and containing all effluent on site prior to Planning approval	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain up to date and relevant wastewater specifications and standard conditions for planning permits 2. EHOs undertake specialist training in wastewater management

Focus area: Collaboration and Review

Objectives	Strategies
Regular review of plan as per legislation requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct annual internal review and assessment of the progress of the action plan 2. Conduct 3-yearly audit and report on the progress of the plan and publish report to Council's website 3. Review and update the plan every five years 4. Conduct community engagement every 5 years as part of review and update of the plan
Advocate for and contribute to reform of the wastewater legislative framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate for improvements to legislative framework 2. Provide input into proposed legislation and standards pertaining to onsite wastewater management or reticulated sewer

5. FUNDING AND BUDGET ALLOCATION

The Domestic Wastewater Management Plan will require the allocation of budget and resources throughout the full 5 year implementation. The majority of actions will be absorbed into the existing Environmental Health budget, the current *Domestic Wastewater Officer* role being key to achieving some priority actions including the collection and collation of data associated with all existing OWMS throughout the Shire. Where there are specific projects, funding in the form of grants may be applied for from the State Government and other peak associations. Additional funding may also be sought in the respective budgets for each year of the plan.

Appendix 1: Community Engagement

Nillumbik Shire Council has a comprehensive Community Engagement Program structure in place that is applied to the majority of Council projects.

During the implementation of the 2019-2023 Domestic wastewater management plan (DWMP), Yarra Valley Water commenced the CSP prioritisation program in 2021, as part of the data collection for the prioritisation it became evident that a significant focus of the 2023-2028 OWMP would be on reticulated sewer provision. The resulting community engagement consisted of a survey of the Community Sewerage Program areas of Nillumbik.

Onsite wastewater management survey

The primary tool used to capture the resident's feedback and inform the priorities of the next plan was a 'Domestic Wastewater Survey'. All residents within the Community Sewerage Program (CSP) areas of Nillumbik were invited to participate in the survey via mail or via an online version of the survey available to residents on the Participate Nillumbik website.

The CSP areas consist of the townships of St Andrews, Panton Hill, sections of Plenty, Wattle Glen and Yarrambat and outer areas of Eltham, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge. A total of 342 surveys were distributed via mail with 62 respondents providing a total response rate of 18%

The survey consisted of eleven questions. Grouped into two parts, the first to find out about existing onsite wastewater management systems, including what type of systems and the issues associated with them. The second part consisted of questions about whether people would be interested in opportunities to improve wastewater management, including options to connect to a piped sewer system and Council services.

Conclusions

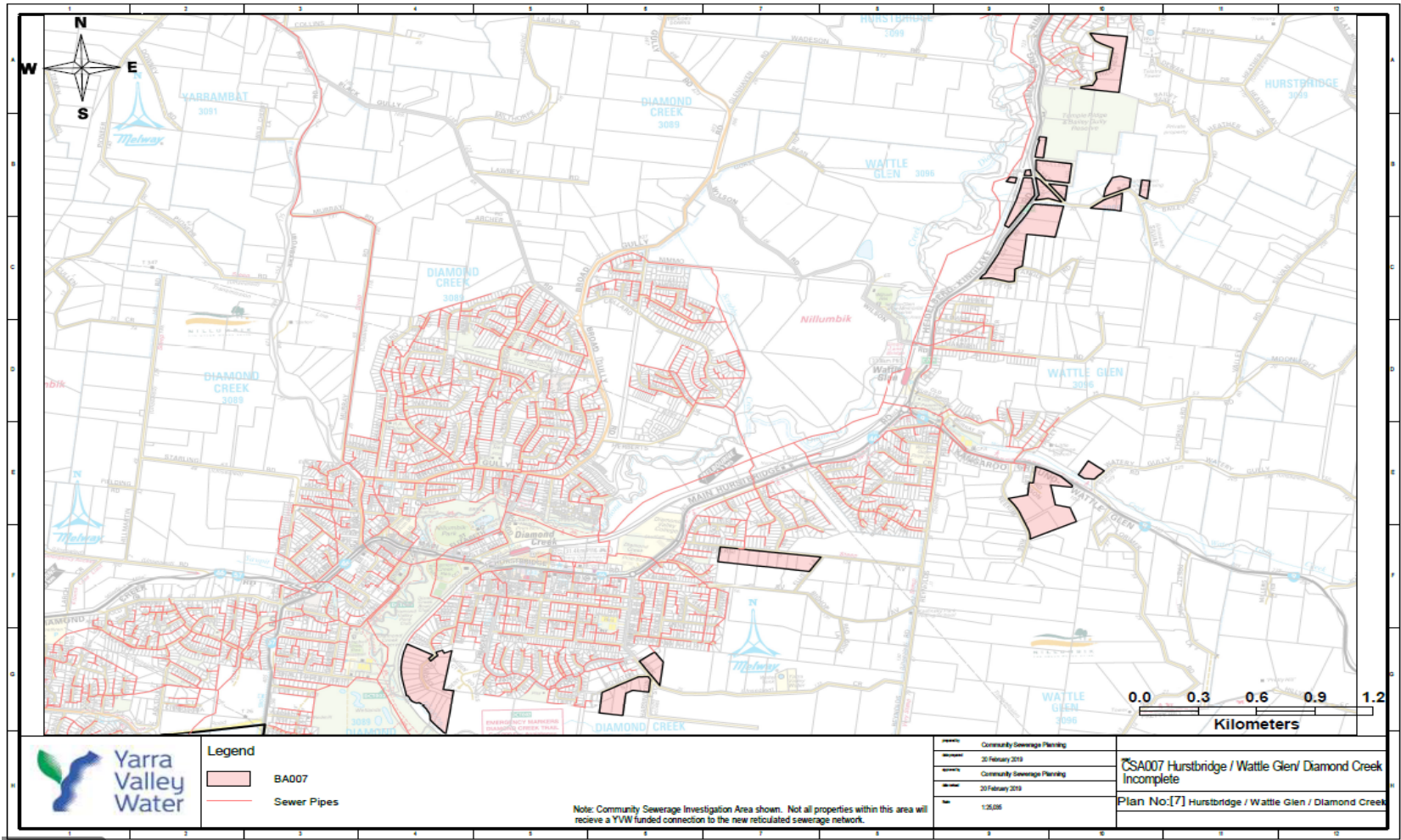
The results of the survey show that within the community sewerage program areas there is an interest in connecting to sewer, wastewater reuse and increased opportunities for education or information about wastewater systems.

The interest in connection and wastewater reuse will be provided to the local water authority, Yarra Valley Water to assist with any design decisions for potential future sewer provision, particularly in township areas away from existing sewer networks.

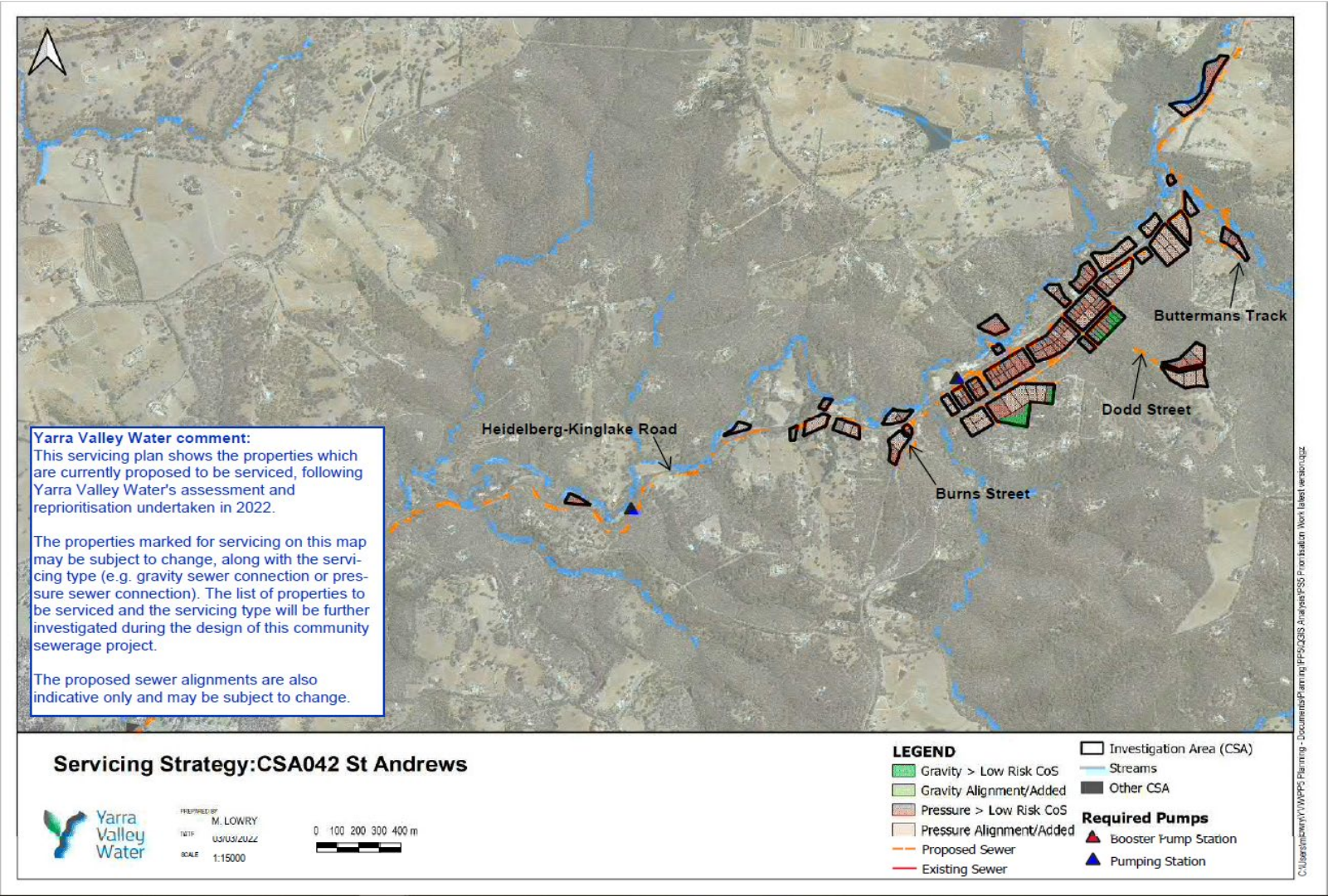
The interest in additional information and updates can be addressed by Council via increasing the education opportunities to residents who own or operate an onsite wastewater systems throughout the Shire and will be added to the action plan of the 2023-2028 Onsite Wastewater Management Plan.

Appendix 2: Community Sewerage Program areas (to be updated by YVW for final draft)

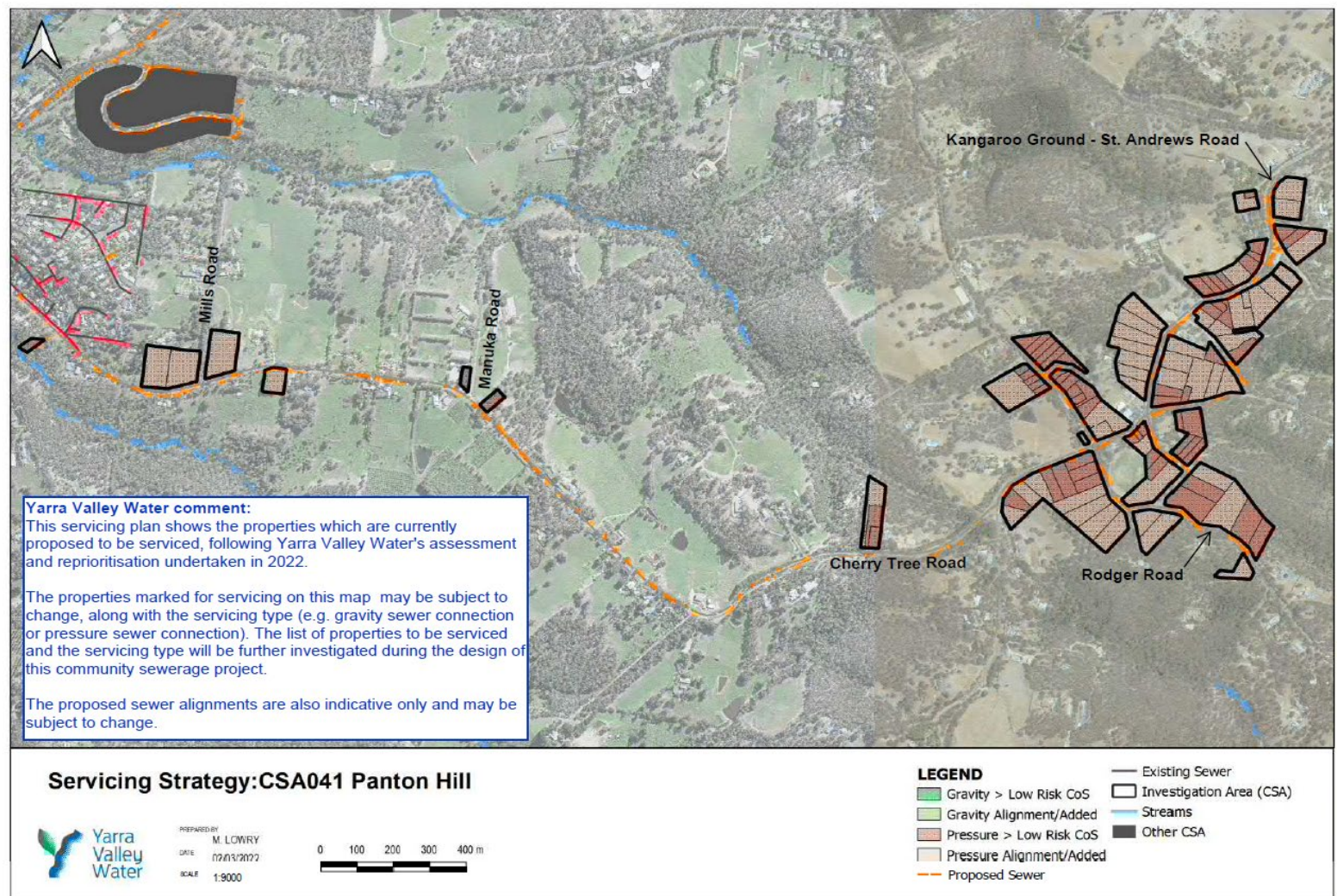
CSA007 Hurstbridge / Wattle Glen / Diamond Creek



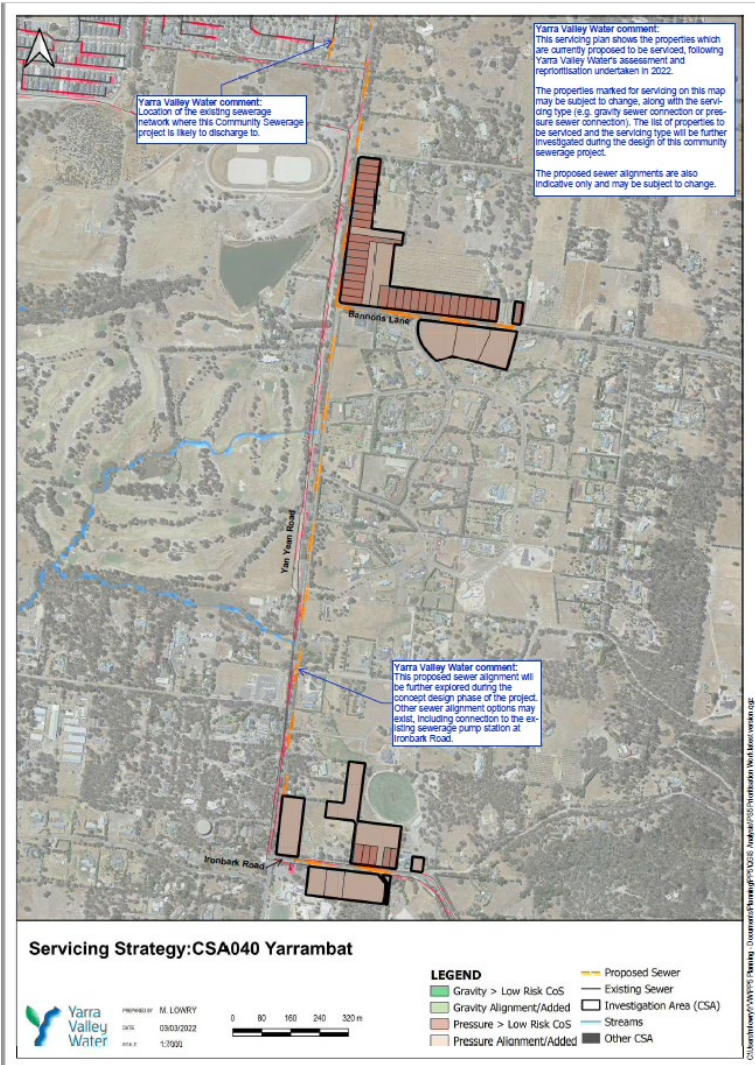
CSA042 St Andrews



CSA041 Panton Hill



CSA040 Yarrambat



Glossary

- **AWTS:** Aerated Wastewater Treatment System.
- **CSP:** Community Sewerage Program.
- **COC:** Certificate of Conformance (provided by Standards Australia).
- **Desludging:** The removal of sludge and sediment from the wastewater treatment system.
- **DELWP:** Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- **Domestic Wastewater:** Wastewater arising from a domestic dwelling. Domestic wastewater can comprise of blackwater (toilet waste) or greywater (sullage waste from bathrooms, laundry and kitchen appliances), or a combination of both.
- **Effluent:** Combined wastewater coming from (leaving) a domestic residence and/or coming from (leaving) a wastewater treatment system. It is a direction-based term used for wastewater exiting a household or treatment system.
- **EPA:** Environment Protection Authority.
- **GIS:** Geographic Information System.
- **Greywater:** Domestic wastewater that does not contain toilet waste. Also known as sullage.
- **Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ):** Is an accreditation authority and framework, with the purpose to enhance national, trans-tasman and international trade via accreditation to achieve international recognition for the excellence of Australian and New Zealand goods and services. JAS-ANZ provides a certification mark for use on goods and services that meet their accreditation requirements.
- **Land Capability Assessment (LCA):** A method used to assess the capability of land to manage on-site wastewater disposal, which recommends whether effluent can be adequately treated and retained on-site.
- **MAV:** Municipal Association of Victoria.
- **MW:** Melbourne Water.
- **OWMP:** Onsite Wastewater Management Plan.
- **Primary Treatment System:** A wastewater treatment system that treats the effluent to a primary standard.
- **Secondary Treatment System:** A wastewater treatment system that treats the effluent to a secondary standard.
- **SEPP:** State Environment Protection Policy (Waters).
- **Sewage:** Any wastewater containing human excreta or domestic wastewater.
- **Sewerage:** The infrastructure system (drains etc.) used to carry, treat and dispose of sewage.
- **YVW:** Yarra Valley Water.
- **OWMS:** Onsite Wastewater Management System, the generic term used to refer to all available types of on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems across both primary and secondary treatment systems.

From: NatO Ceremonies <Natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 16 December 2022 10:03 AM
To: NatO Ceremonies <Natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au>
Subject: Australia Day 2023 - Changes to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear Mayors and citizenship ceremony organisers,

Australia Day provides an opportunity for all Australians to reflect, respect and celebrate our national day. Australia Day is marked by events across Australia, including special citizenship ceremonies.

As you may be aware, the Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, recently announced an update to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code (the Code) - see [announcement link](#).

The Government expects local government councils to hold a citizenship ceremony as part of their Australia Day celebrations. Many thousands of Australians have had their citizenship conferred on Australia Day, and many Australians would like to receive their citizenship on our national day, in their community.

The amendment to the Code states that Councils must hold a ceremony on Australia Day, or the three days prior or the three days after Australia Day.

Local government councils may require flexibility to plan their citizenship ceremonies. There are higher operational costs involved in hosting a ceremony on a public holiday, and councils might benefit from the ability to schedule their ceremonies as part of a broader program of Australia Day community events, among other reasons.

The requirement for councils to hold a ceremony if they conferred Australian citizenship on 20 or more people in the 2021-22 financial year remains. Councils which have conferred Australian citizenship on fewer than 20 people in the previous year will continue to be exempt from the requirement. However, even where not formally required to do so based on previous conferee numbers, many councils in the past have still chosen to hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day and this is still strongly encouraged.

For 2023, this means ceremonies held in the period Monday 23 January 2023 – Sunday 29 January 2023 will meet the requirements of the Code, as per the update.

Should you have any questions in relation to Australia Day 2023, please do not hesitate to contact your local state or territory citizenship ceremonies team.

Kind regards

Libby McDonald
Director, Citizenship Ceremonies Section
Citizenship Program Delivery Branch | Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Division
Social Cohesion and Citizenship Group
Department of Home Affairs
E: natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au



The Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force acknowledge the Traditional Custodians throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and the community. We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their Elders past and present.



Australian Government

Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

© Commonwealth of Australia 2022

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, all material presented in this publication is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

This means this license only applies to material as set out in this document.



The details of the relevant license conditions are available on the Creative Commons website at <https://creativecommons.org/> as is the full legal code for the CC BY 4.0 license at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

Use of the Coat of Arms

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website—<https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/commonwealth-coat-arms>.

Contact us

Enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this document are welcome at:

Media and Communication Branch
Department of Home Affairs
PO Box 25
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Contents

Part 1: Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code	6
Legal requirements	6
Authorised presiding officer	6
Reading the preamble	6
The pledge of commitment	7
The importance of Australian citizenship	7
Responsibilities	7
Privileges	7
What is a citizenship ceremony?	8
Our democratic beliefs:	8
Our freedoms:	8
Our equality standing:	8
The nature of the ceremony	9
What is the pledge of commitment?	10
Pledge 1	10
Pledge 2	10
Roles and responsibilities	10
Minister	10
The Department of Home Affairs	11
Presiding officer	12
Official guests	12
Federal Members of Parliament	13
State and Territory Members of Parliament	13
Mayors	13
Ceremony organisers	14
Conferees	14
Australian Electoral Commission	15
Guests of conferees	15

Citizenship ceremonies during election periods	16
Local council elections	16
State and Federal elections	16
Federal elections	16
Overseas Australian citizenship ceremonies	17
Online Australian citizenship ceremonies	18
Contact the Department of Home Affairs	18
Glossary	19
Part 2: Before the ceremony	20
Scheduling ceremonies	20
Events	21
Parliamentary sitting days	22
Ceremony planning report	23
Rescheduling ceremonies	23
Special purpose ceremonies	23
Organising the ceremony	24
Venue	24
Products	24
Dress Code	24
Seating plan	24
Symbols	25
Gifts and entertainment	27
Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements	28
Invitations	29
Children	30
Children under 16 years of age	30
Children aged 16 years or over	30
Pledge verification list (PVL)	31
Media, photos and consent forms	31
Media	31
Photographs	32
Consent forms	32
Suggested program for ceremony	33
Before the Ceremony Checklist	34

Part 3: At the ceremony	35
Registration	35
Identity verification	35
Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country	36
If the Minister attends	36
Speeches	36
The Minister/Minister's Representative	36
Inviting official guests to speak	37
Suggested length and content of speeches	38
Preamble	39
The pledge of commitment	39
Pledge 1	39
Pledge 2	39
Children	40
Holy books and scriptures	40
Australian citizenship certificates	40
Presenting Australian citizenship certificates to conferees	40
Altering citizenship certificates	41
If details are incorrect on Australian citizenship certificates	41
The Australian Citizenship Affirmation	42
The Affirmation	42
Australian electoral enrolment	43
At the Ceremony Checklist	44
Part 4: After the ceremony	45
Returning the PVL	45
Privacy	46
Disclosing names and addresses of new citizens	46
Returning Australian citizenship certificates	47
After the Ceremony Checklist	47
Exemptions to the Code	47

PART 1

Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

The Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code (the Code) follows the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* (the Citizenship Act) and sets out the legal and other requirements for conducting citizenship ceremonies as well as the roles and responsibilities for those involved in citizenship ceremonies.

The Code provides guidance to organisations to help plan and conduct citizenship ceremonies.

The Code is structured in four parts, providing relevant responsibilities and advice for before, during and after the ceremony. This is prefaced with a quick guide, outlining the key ceremony information and background.

The resources in the Code are reviewed regularly to ensure that information is up to date. This version of the Code was published in December 2022.

Legal requirements

There are three legal requirements under the Citizenship Act that must be strictly adhered to when conducting citizenship ceremonies:

1. an authorised presiding officer
2. reading the preamble
3. the pledge of commitment

Authorised presiding officer

It is a legal requirement that the presiding officer is authorised by the Australian Government minister responsible for citizenship matters. Authorisation is given to **Australian citizens only** and is specific to a position or person. Further information on the role of the presiding officer is at page 12.

Reading the preamble

It is a legal requirement that the presiding officer must read aloud to the conferees the preamble for citizenship ceremonies (found at Schedule 1 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016*).

The pledge of commitment

It is a legal requirement that most conferees 16 years of age and over (at the time of application) make the pledge before an authorised presiding officer.

The presiding officer reads the pledge aloud, generally line by line, for the conferees to repeat. This is referred to as 'administering' the pledge.

Further information on the pledge of commitment is at page 10.

The importance of Australian citizenship

Australian citizenship is an important common bond for all Australians, whether Australians by birth or by choice, and lies at the heart of a unified, cohesive and inclusive Australia.

It is a unique symbol of formally identifying with Australia, acknowledging responsibilities and conferring significant privileges that allow people to participate fully in the community.

Responsibilities

As an Australian citizen you must:

- obey the laws and fulfil your duties as an Australian citizen
- vote in federal and state or territory government elections, and in a referendum
- serve on a jury if called to do so
- defend Australia should the need arise.

Privileges

As an Australian citizen you have the right to:

- vote in federal, state or territory, and local government elections, and in a referendum
- apply for work in the Australian Public Service or in the Australian Defence Force
- seek election to parliament
- apply for an Australian passport
- receive help from Australian officials while overseas
- register children born to you overseas, after you become an Australian citizen, as Australian citizens by descent.

What is a citizenship ceremony?

The final legal step in the acquisition of Australian citizenship, for most people, is to make the pledge of commitment at an Australian citizenship ceremony.

At the citizenship ceremony, conferees pledge that they share Australia's democratic beliefs and respect the rights and liberties of the people of Australia.

Our democratic beliefs:

- parliamentary democracy
- the rule of law
- living peacefully
- respect for all individuals regardless of background
- compassion for those in need.

Our freedoms:

- freedom of thought, speech and expression
- freedom of association
- freedom of religion and secular government.

Our equality standing:

- equality before the law
- equality of genders
- equality of opportunity.

Citizenship ceremonies are public, ceremonial occasions, which fulfil legal requirements prescribed by the Citizenship Act and the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016*.

Citizenship ceremonies also provide an important opportunity to formally welcome new citizens as full members of the Australian community. Since the early 1950s, local government councils have conducted the majority of citizenship ceremonies on behalf of the Department responsible for citizenship. Local government councils are well placed for this welcoming role as the arm of government closest to new citizens and the communities to which they belong.

Representatives of all three levels of government (federal, state or territory and local), community leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, and guests of the conferees are invited to attend.

After the conferral, citizenship ceremonies often include the Australian Citizenship Affirmation, giving everyone present an opportunity to publicly affirm their loyalty to Australia in a similar way to the new citizens.



The nature of the ceremony

To reflect the significance of the occasion, citizenship ceremonies should be formal and meaningful occasions conducted with dignity, respect and ceremony. They should be designed to impress upon conferees the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship.

They should warmly welcome new citizens as full members of the community. Conferees are the most important people at the ceremony and the focus of attention should be on them.

Citizenship ceremonies must be non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular. They must not be used as forums for political, partisan or religious expression, for the distribution of political material or the sale of souvenirs.

As conferees come from diverse cultures, it is important to be aware and respectful of cultural differences.

What is the pledge of commitment?

The pledge of commitment made by conferees under Section 27 of the Citizenship Act is the last step in becoming Australian citizens. It is a legal requirement for most conferees to make the pledge.

The pledge allows conferees to publicly state their loyalty to Australia and its values.

Conferees can choose between two versions of the pledge; one that refers to God and one that does not.

Pledge 1

From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Pledge 2

From this time forward,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities for those involved in Australian citizenship ceremonies.

Minister

The Australian Government Minister(s) responsible for citizenship matters has precedence to preside at any ceremony they choose to attend. The Minister does not require individual event invitations from ceremony organisers.

When attending a ceremony, the Minister should be invited to speak immediately after the opening address and Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country, before any other official speeches.

Where the Minister is not attending, the local Federal Member of Parliament (MP) or Senator should read the Minister's message (regardless of political party). Where both the MP and Senator are in attendance, precedence goes to the MP. When no Federal representative is present, the presiding officer must read the Minister's message.

A copy of the Minister's message is available on the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).

The Department of Home Affairs

The Department of Home Affairs manages the Citizenship Program including the policy around Australian citizenship ceremonies, and the list of conferees who have been approved for citizenship and are ready to attend a ceremony.

Generally, officers of the Department of Home Affairs will:

- liaise with local government councils or other community organisations undertaking ceremonies to ensure ceremony organisers are aware of, and abide by, the requirements set out in the Code
- provide advice on the authorised presiding officer
- provide regular reports to councils on the number of people waiting for a ceremony in their local government area
- work with ceremony organisers to ensure that ceremonies are held regularly to facilitate timely conferral of prospective citizens
- ensure that the pledge verification list (PVL) is provided to ceremony organisers in a timely manner
- distribute citizenship certificates to the ceremony organisers prior to the ceremony and ensure any certificates for non-attendees are returned to the Department of Home Affairs
- ensure citizenship certificates are treated as accountable documents and stored correctly
- provide advice and assistance on ceremonies for ceremony organisers.

Attendance by departmental staff to assist with the conduct of ceremonies may occur at the discretion of the Department of Home Affairs.

Where arrangements have been made for departmental officers to assist at a ceremony, this may include:

- assisting with registration and verification of the identity of conferees on arrival
- ensuring the legal and other requirements of the Code are adhered to, and/or
- assisting with enquiries and other issues as they arise.

The Department of Home Affairs may also provide assistance such as sending invitation letters to conferees and, if required, providing a presiding officer for ceremonies.

Presiding officer

The presiding officer has the lead role in a citizenship ceremony. Their legal responsibilities involve:

- reading out the Preamble for citizenship ceremonies (Schedule 1 of the [Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016](#))
- administering the pledge.

Additionally, the presiding officer:

- reads the Minister's message in the Minister's absence where no Federal parliamentary representative is present
- signs the PVL immediately at the completion of the citizenship ceremony after ensuring that it is accurate and any conferees who have attempted to present fraudulent identification documents or no identification have been immediately referred to the Department of Home Affairs.

It is a legal requirement that the presiding officer is authorised by the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters. Authorisation is given to **Australian citizens only** and is specific to a position or person. These are outlined in the [Instrument of Authorisation](#).

It is possible to apply for one-off authorisation to preside at a citizenship ceremony by writing to the Minister.

Presiding officers have no power to appoint a proxy or to share the role of presiding officer at a ceremony. However, a person may perform the duties of the presiding officer when they are acting in place of an authorised person for a period of time.

To avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, presiding officers must not confer Australian citizenship on family members or close friends. Contact the Department of Home Affairs to manage potential conflict of interest matters in public ceremonies.

Official guests

The presence of official guests serves to introduce new citizens to Australia's three-tiered, democratic system of government, as well as to formally welcome them into the local community.

Ceremony organisers must invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government, including:

- Local Federal MP and a Senator (of a different political party)
- Local state or territory MP
- A local government representative.

Invitations are to be extended to elected representatives. Invited elected representatives cannot send a delegate to act in an official capacity on their behalf. Delegates may attend in a private capacity. Delegates will not be provided with an official speaking role, VIP seating, and will not be referenced in the speaking notes.

While an MP or Senator cannot be prevented from asking an individual to attend on their behalf, the nominated person should not be included in the official guest party and under no circumstances should that person be invited to speak.

Candidates for election, who currently do not hold elected office, may attend the ceremony in a private capacity, however they should not receive an official invitation, should not be included as an official guest or provided with a VIP seat.

It is particularly important that the above guidelines are adhered to in the period leading up to an election. The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community.

Official guests can also include:

- community leaders
- representatives of community organisations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders or leaders.

Federal Members of Parliament

Ceremony organisers must invite all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government. This is to allow local representatives to introduce themselves and welcome new citizens as full members of the community.

Where there are multiple MPs across local government boundaries, ceremony organisers should work with the MPs to arrange a rotation of responsibility.

Where a Federal MP or Senator attends a ceremony, they should read the Minister's message. MPs and Senators are reminded that, if invited to speak by the ceremony organisers, it must be in accordance with the nature of citizenship ceremonies which are apolitical, bipartisan and secular. For this reason, material which could be perceived to be political, commercial or religious must not be distributed.

All Federal MPs and Senators have standing authorisation to preside at Australian citizenship ceremonies. This allows ceremony organisers to approach their local MP or Senator if they wish to hold a ceremony and require a presiding officer. This usually happens on nationally significant days such as Australia Day and Australian Citizenship Day. MPs and Senators should not assume that an invitation to attend a ceremony is an invitation to preside. This will be specified in the invitation.

MPs and Senators make occasional requests to conduct citizenship ceremonies that may be accommodated on an exceptional basis. The Department of Home Affairs can provide advice regarding all aspects and requirements of a ceremony.

It is important that MPs and Senators do not seek to fulfil ceremony requests from constituents as the Department of Home Affairs manages ceremony attendance to ensure fair and equal treatment for all conferees. Additionally, to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, citizenship must not be conferred on family members, close friends or members of staff at private ceremonies.

State and Territory Members of Parliament

If invited to a ceremony as an official guest, the same guidelines apply to State and Territory MPs as for Federal representatives. However, state and territory parliamentarians do not have standing authorisation to preside at citizenship ceremonies, and are not permitted to read the Minister's message.

If invited to preside at a ceremony, requests may be made in writing to the Minister for one-off authorisation on each occasion they wish to preside. State and territory parliamentarians should include a signed letter of agreement with their request, indicating they will abide by the requirements for the conduct of citizenship ceremonies set out in the Code. A copy of this letter can be provided by the Department of Home Affairs. Where a State and Territory MP has been authorised by the Minister to preside, they then can read the Minister's message.

Mayors

Mayors play an important role in formally welcoming our nation's newest citizens into the Australian community by hosting the majority of Australian citizenship ceremonies. It is usual for them to fulfil the role of presiding officer. Unless specifically excluded, mayors have standing authorisation to preside.

Other positions authorised to preside over citizenship ceremonies (such as Deputy Mayors or Chief Executive Officers of local government councils) are detailed in the [Instrument of Authorisation](#).

Upon election, mayors and authorised presiding officers are requested to complete an Authorised presiding officer form to confirm their Australian citizenship status and agreeance to abide by the Code. This form is available from the Department.

Ceremony organisers

Ceremony organisers are usually staff from local government councils or other approved organisations whose role it is to organise the ceremony. A ceremony organiser is responsible for ensuring a citizenship ceremony is conducted in accordance with the Code.

Most citizenship ceremonies are conducted by local government councils. Community organisations may also conduct citizenship ceremonies, particularly on significant national days such as Australia Day or Australian Citizenship Day.

Community organisations that wish to conduct a citizenship ceremony should approach their local office of the Department of Home Affairs to discuss the possibility of hosting such a ceremony and securing a presiding officer. Community organisations will be asked to provide an Expression of Interest form detailing the plans for the ceremony, in addition to signing an agreement with the Department of Home Affairs on how ceremonies are to be conducted.

Responsibilities for ceremony organisers are to:

- ensure that ceremonies are conducted in accordance with the Code
- ensure that person invited to preside is an Australian citizen and is authorised to preside over a ceremony
- ensure that all elected officials of the locality, at all levels of government, including local Federal MP and a Senator (of a different political party), local state or territory MP and a local government representative are invited to attend
- provide advice to those who have a role in the ceremony
- ensure that the ceremony is conducted in a meaningful, dignified, orderly and memorable way with proceedings designed to impress upon conferees the significance of the occasion
- ensure all conferees are informed about appropriate protocols for the citizenship ceremony
- include a Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country in the proceedings
- conduct identity verification of conferees.

An officer of the Department of Home Affairs may attend ceremonies conducted by local government councils and community organisations to assist with the ceremony.

Checklists are available for ceremony organisers for [Before the ceremony](#), [At the ceremony](#) and [After the ceremony](#).

Conferees

A conferee is a person who has made an application for Australian citizenship which has been approved and whose details have been provided by the Department of Home Affairs to an organiser for attendance at a ceremony. The final legal step for the applicant to acquire citizenship is to make the Australian citizenship pledge of commitment before the presiding officer at the citizenship ceremony.



Australian Electoral Commission

All organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies should receive Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) [Electoral Enrolment of New Citizens](#) information sheets from the Department of Home Affairs. Information sheets are to be provided to each conferee over the age of 16 and used to facilitate online electoral enrolment.

As staff from the AEC may not be in attendance at ceremonies, conferees must be reminded to read the information sheet and complete an online enrolment application at their earliest convenience. See page 43 for further information about electoral enrolment.

Guests of conferees

Guests may be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony with conferees, these may include invited friends and relatives of the conferee. The number of guests may be limited according to the practicalities of organising a ceremony, for example, size/capacity of the venue, and should be outlined in the invitation to the ceremony.

Citizenship ceremonies during election periods

At the Federal level, the caretaker period begins at the time the House of Representatives is dissolved and continues until the election result is clear or, if there is a change of government, until the new government is appointed.

Ceremonies can continue as usual during the caretaker period. Election periods should not cause unnecessary delays in conferees attending their ceremonies.

Citizenship ceremonies are apolitical and must not be used for political or partisan expression or for the distribution of political, promotional or election material.

Local council elections

Citizenship ceremonies should not be held by local government councils after the election date until the results of the election become known.

As local council elections can be complicated, ceremony organisers can contact their relevant state or territory departmental office for advice on ensuring presiding officers are authorised.

State and Federal elections

MPs should not be invited to ceremonies held after the election date until the results of the election are known.

An MP's status does not depend on the meeting of the parliament, nor on the MP taking their seat or making the oath or affirmation of allegiance before the Governor-General. An MP is technically regarded as an MP from the day of election—that is, when they are, in the words of the Constitution, 'chosen by the people'. A new MP is entitled to use the title MP once this status is officially confirmed by the declaration of the poll.

Candidates for election should not be included as part of the official party. The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community.

Persons currently authorised to preside at citizenship ceremonies (i.e. mayors of a local council) may still preside at a ceremony in their current capacity if they are intending on running for State or Federal Government. They are to be reminded that they must remain apolitical and that citizenship ceremonies are not to be used to promote a political or ideological agenda and must not distribute political or election material.

Federal elections

The Minister's message can be read at ceremonies after the election date until it has been announced that there is a new Minister. If there is a new Minister, the new Minister's message will be provided.

Citizenship certificates with the incumbent Minister's signature can be issued up until a new Minister is sworn in. In the event there is a change of Minister, there will be a period of time where certificates are not available.

Once printing of certificates resumes, the Department of Home Affairs will commence distribution. Conferees who attended their ceremonies during this period will receive their certificate by registered mail.



In the event that official citizenship certificates cannot be provided on the day of ceremony, ceremony organisers have the option of providing conferees with a commemorative citizenship certificate at the ceremony. The commemorative certificate has no legal standing but is purely for marking the occasion. This should be made clear at the ceremony.

Commemorative citizenship certificates are not to be created or amended by ceremony organisers. They can be ordered from the Department of Home Affairs website by using the [order form](#).

Overseas Australian citizenship ceremonies

All applicants are expected, as far as possible, to attend a citizenship ceremony in Australia. In limited circumstances, however, it may be possible for eligible conferral clients who meet certain requirements to be offered a ceremony overseas. An application must be made to the Department of Home Affairs for consideration.

Ceremony organisers must ensure that the person who is to preside at the ceremony is an Australian citizen and is listed in the Instrument of Authorisation, or request a one-off authorisation for the ceremony. Written requests for authorisation should be sent to the Minister.

Online Australian citizenship ceremonies

Where a council or community organisation is not able to conduct in-person ceremonies or would like to supplement their already planned in-person ceremonies, they are able to conduct online citizenship ceremonies.

Online citizenship ceremonies must be conducted in accordance with legislative requirements. The ceremonies focus on the minimum requirements necessary to make someone a citizen, while being conducted in a professional and warm manner.

The mandatory requirements for a ceremony are:

- identification of the conferee prior to conducting the ceremony
- a person (the presiding officer) must be authorised to receive the pledge of commitment and must be an Australian citizen
- the presiding officer must read the preamble verbatim from Schedule 1 of the [Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016](#)
- further guidance on organising and undertaking an online ceremony can be provided by the departmental office in the relevant state or territory.

Contact the Department of Home Affairs

For all enquiries relating to Australian citizenship ceremonies, your first point of contact should be to email the departmental team for the relevant state or territory.

In the event of crises, such as pandemics or natural disasters, ceremony organisers are to follow state-based guidelines. Further guidance can be sought from the Department of Home Affairs by contacting the relevant departmental team in the state or territory.

Enquiries from applicants relating to their citizenship application, including their ceremony, should be referred to the Department of Home Affairs website.

Glossary

- **The Citizenship Act:** The *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* is the legal basis for all citizenship provisions.
- **Australian Citizenship Affirmation:** The Australian Citizenship Affirmation offers an opportunity to those who wish to express their pride in being an Australian citizen and affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people.
- **Australian citizenship ceremony:** Fulfills the legal requirements prescribed by the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* and the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* that a person must make a pledge of commitment to become an Australian citizen.
- **Australian citizenship certificate:** Evidentiary notice given to a person stating that the person is an Australian citizen at a particular time.
- **Commemorative certificate:** A memento given to conferees when the official citizenship certificate is not available for the ceremony. The commemorative certificate has no legal status and cannot be used as evidence of Australian citizenship. Commemorative certificates are not to be created by ceremony organisers, they can be ordered free of charge from the Department of Home Affairs.
- **Community organisation:** An organisation that is not-for-profit, whose activities are intended to benefit its members and the wider Australian community. Examples include Lions and Rotary Clubs, Scouts and Guides Associations and Surf Life Saving Associations.
- **Conferee:** A person who has applied for Australian citizenship by conferral whose final step to becoming a citizen is to attend a ceremony.
- **The Department of Home Affairs:** Australian Government department responsible for citizenship matters.
- **Master of ceremonies:** A local government official or other person who assists the presiding officer in conducting citizenship ceremonies.
- **Minister:** Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters.
- **Non-attendee:** A conferee who has been invited to a particular ceremony but did not attend the ceremony to make the pledge of commitment.
- **Presiding officer:** A person who is an Australian citizen and who has been approved in writing by the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters to confer Australian citizenship.
- **Pledge:** Most people are required to make the pledge of commitment at a citizenship ceremony. In doing so they are making a public commitment to Australia and accepting the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- **Pledge verification list (PVL):** This is provided by the Department of Home Affairs to ceremony organisers and provides the details of people who are to attend a particular ceremony, their Australian citizenship certificate numbers, whether they are part of a family group and their pledge preference.
- **The Regulation:** The *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* is the subordinate legislation that sets out detailed requirements for some matters as provided for by the Citizenship Act.



PART 2

Before the ceremony

Scheduling ceremonies

In keeping with government policy that ceremonies be held at regular intervals, most local government councils should arrange for ceremonies to be held at least every two to three months, regardless of the number of conferees available to attend, and more frequently if necessary. There is no maximum or minimum number of conferees prescribed for citizenship ceremonies.

Local government councils must provide their local office of the Department of Home Affairs with a schedule of their planned ceremony dates. This allows for the Department of Home Affairs to allocate conferees to particular ceremonies. In localities which confer more than 100 conferees per year the council should provide the ceremony schedule for the calendar year. Any changes to the schedule should be advised to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible.

Councils may schedule extra ceremonies throughout the year, in liaison with the Department of Home Affairs, if the numbers of people waiting to attend a ceremony have increased.

Community organisations holding approved/special ceremonies must complete an Expression of Interest form and provide it to their local office of the Department of Home Affairs at least three months before the proposed date of the ceremony. Community organisations should also work in partnership with local government councils to ensure a coordinated approach.

Community organisations should consider the availability of authorised presiding officers such as the local Federal MP or mayor when scheduling citizenship ceremonies.

Events

The Government expects ceremony organisers to schedule citizenship ceremonies on days of significance, for example in the context of annual celebrations to mark Australia Day (26 January) and Australian Citizenship Day (17 September).

Organisations may also wish to hold citizenship ceremonies in conjunction with other community events or activities, such as Harmony Day or Refugee Week. Citizenship ceremonies may, for example, be incorporated into annual festivals or activities of community service organisations however these ceremonies must remain non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular.

It is important that ceremonies remain apolitical and that special event ceremonies not be used to promote a political or ideological agenda.

Australia Day – 26 January

Australia Day provides an opportunity for all Australians to reflect, respect and celebrate our national day. Australia Day is marked by events across Australia, including special citizenship ceremonies.

The Government expects local government councils to hold a citizenship ceremony as part of their Australia Day celebrations. Many thousands of Australians have had their citizenship conferred on Australia Day, and many Australians would like to receive their citizenship on our national day, in their community. Councils must hold a ceremony on Australia Day, or the three days prior or the three days after Australia Day.

Councils that conferred citizenship on fewer than 20 people in the previous year are exempt from this requirement.

More information about Australia Day celebrations can be found at australiaday.org.au

Australian Citizenship Day – 17 September

Introduced in 2001, Australian Citizenship Day is a day for everyone in the community to reflect on and celebrate the meaning and importance of Australian citizenship and the role Australian citizens have played in shaping our nation.

It is an opportunity for all Australians, by birth or by application, to reflect on the common bond of citizenship in our diverse society. It is an opportunity to celebrate our democratic values, equality and respect for each other, and think about what unites us as Australians.

Local government councils should hold a citizenship ceremony on or around 17 September. Australian Citizenship Day is celebrated with special citizenship ceremonies, affirmations and other events around Australia.

Local government councils, community organisations, schools and others in the community are encouraged to participate in Australian Citizenship Day.

For ideas on events and activities for celebrating Australian Citizenship Day visit the [Department of Home Affairs website](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au).

Note: Australian Citizenship Day is an exception to the expectation that citizenship ceremonies be held outside of parliamentary sitting days, as 17 September generally falls on a federal sitting day.



Parliamentary sitting days

It is important and appropriate that elected representatives have the opportunity to welcome new citizens as formal members of the Australian community.

When scheduling citizenship ceremonies organisers should:

- not schedule ceremonies on federal, or the relevant state or territory sitting days, unless impracticable
- engage with relevant federal and state or territory elected members to ascertain availability
- provide the schedule of ceremony dates to the offices of elected representatives along with the Department of Home Affairs.

Where a citizenship ceremony is scheduled on the same day as a local government council meeting, the citizenship ceremony may proceed but must be conducted with due ceremony and importance.

A sitting calendar for Federal parliamentary sittings can be obtained from the [Australian Parliament House website](#). The next parliamentary sitting calendar is generally released in the late months of the year.

In the event that a sitting day is added late to the sitting calendar, the ceremony organiser is not required to move that ceremony if it has already been planned for that date.

Ceremony planning report

The Department of Home Affairs will provide ceremony organisers with a list of approved conferees, referred to as the ceremony planning report, who are waiting to attend a citizenship ceremony in their local area approximately four weeks before the scheduled date. Ceremony organisers must use this list as the basis for planning the ceremony.

This list should not be provided to any official guests or other parties before or after the ceremony as this contains personal information.

If a person approaches the ceremony organiser or an authorised presiding officer for a private ceremony, or inclusion in a planned public ceremony, refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs. Do not include additional people in the ceremony unless advised to do so by the Department of Home Affairs. Until a person has been included by the Department of Home Affairs on the list of approved conferees for ceremony, the Department of Home Affairs may still be assessing the person's application.

If the council sends an invitation to conferees, they should advise conferees of the date, time and location of the ceremony for which they are scheduled as soon as possible when they receive the ceremony planning report. The Department of Home Affairs will assist community organisations in inviting conferees.

Rescheduling ceremonies

Conferee request

A conferee who wishes to change the date of their allocated ceremony must contact the Department of Home Affairs. If a conferee approaches the ceremony organiser, they may refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

Ceremony organiser request

The ceremony organiser must contact the Department of Home Affairs at the earliest possible opportunity if a ceremony is to be rescheduled. Rescheduling a ceremony may affect Australian citizenship certificates, the PVL and invited conferees.

Special purpose ceremonies

The majority of citizenship ceremonies are public occasions and conferees are encouraged to participate in a public citizenship ceremony wherever possible.

Special purpose ceremonies, or private ceremonies, may only be arranged in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a conferee has a significant disability preventing them from attending a public ceremony, or where the Department of Home Affairs has asked the ceremony organiser to provide urgent conferral for an applicant. All special purpose ceremony requests are to be referred to the Department of Home Affairs for assessment.

Organising the ceremony

Venue

Citizenship ceremonies are significant occasions and care should be taken to ensure that the venue reflects the importance of the occasion.

In choosing a location for the ceremony, ceremony organisers should ensure they undertake the necessary event planning and/or a risk assessment in line with their policies and procedures. Consideration should be given to accessibility such as ramps or elevators.

It is important to select a venue that is appropriate to the size of the ceremony. In the case of local government councils, the most suitable venue may be the town hall or council chambers. Many community organisations also have appropriate sized function rooms on their premises. If this is not the case, an appropriate venue could be hired for the occasion.

Citizenship ceremonies may be held outdoors, for example, in a park or in the same locality as a relevant community event (should there be no security concerns). An alternative venue in case of inclement weather should be considered. Ceremony organisers should also ensure an outdoor venue is conducive to conferees being present throughout the ceremony to make the pledge and receive their Australian citizenship certificate.

As citizenship ceremonies are apolitical and secular, they should not be held in a place of worship or in a venue which has political affiliation. A community hall adjacent to a place of worship is acceptable where there are no religious symbols in view.

It is not appropriate for a citizenship ceremony to be held at a venue for the purpose of promoting a commercial enterprise. Consideration should be given to avoid exposing conferees and guests to potentially inappropriate areas such as drinking and gaming areas. Attendees should not have to pay entry in order to attend the ceremony.

Products

There are a number of free citizenship promotional products available to either download or order online from the Department of Home Affairs website using the [order form](#).

Dress Code

The attire of attendees at citizenship ceremonies should reflect the significance of the occasion. A Dress Code is to be set by individual councils.

Councils must provide a current copy of their Dress Code to the Department of Home Affairs.

Seating plan

Prior to the ceremony, the Department of Home Affairs will provide a ceremony planning report which lists the people waiting to attend a ceremony. This report has a linking group section which can be used to identify groups or families who are having Australian citizenship conferred upon them and who wish to attend the same ceremony. This can be used to arrange seating so that the conferees remain with their group/family.

The PVL also provides the linking group detail to aid seating arrangements.



Symbols

Citizenship ceremonies are conducted under the authority of the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters. In keeping with other Commonwealth official occasions, the following national symbols should be present in a citizenship ceremony:

- the Australian national flag
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- the Commonwealth Coat of Arms
- an official portrait or photograph of Australia's head of state, The King of Australia, His Majesty King Charles III
- the Australian national anthem (*Advance Australia Fair*) should be played.

These national symbols and the Australian national anthem are available free of charge through the local Federal MP under the Constituents Request Program.

Further guidance on displaying national symbols and [flag protocols](#) is available on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website at [Information on Australian Flags and Symbols](#).

Portrait of the The King

The portrait should be placed behind the presiding officer or in another prominent position at the same level and to the left (when facing) of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



Commonwealth Coat of Arms

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is to be displayed. The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia that signifies Commonwealth authority and ownership.

The Australian national flag

The Australian national flag is to be displayed in one of the following ways:

- Flat against a surface, whether horizontally or vertically, with the top left (first) quarter placed uppermost on the observers' left as viewed from the front
- On a staff, with the top left quarter placed in the position nearest the top of the staff. When carried, the flag should be aloft and free
- On a flag rope (halyard) with the top left quarter placed uppermost, raised as close as possible to the top and the flag rope tight.

Other Australian flags

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags should also be displayed at citizenship ceremonies. State flags or local government flags may also be displayed.

The Australian national flag should always have precedence over all flags.

Australian national anthem

The Australian national anthem (*Advance Australia Fair*) should be played at the ceremony. This may be played as a live performance or a recording, and it is at the discretion of ceremony organisers whether only the first verse or both verses are played though verse two is appropriate to new citizens. All attendees at the ceremony should be invited to join in singing the Australian national anthem. The words of the Australian national anthem should be provided to all attendees.

Gifts and entertainment

In addition to observing the legal requirements and important elements of the ceremony, those conducting citizenship ceremonies may wish to consider incorporating other features which would significantly enhance the occasion.

The provision of gifts, entertainment and refreshments is entirely voluntary and at the discretion of organisations conducting ceremonies.

Gifts

Ceremony organisers may choose to present gifts to new citizens to mark the acquisition of Australian citizenship.

Any gifts are to be appropriate to the occasion and cannot be of a political, commercial or religious nature.

Examples of appropriate gifts include:

- a native plant that could grow well in the local area (consider size)
- a genuine item reflecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- a book about the local region
- a commemorative coin or pin
- a free copy of a professional photograph of the occasion.

Additionally, information could be provided to conferees on local community services including volunteering opportunities and multicultural services.

Entertainment

Entertainment befitting the occasion may be incorporated into a ceremony.

If music is being played, ceremony organisers should ensure that the appropriate music licence is obtained by contacting [APRA AMCOS](#) (Australasian Performing Right Association Limited Australasian and Mechanical Copyright Owners Society Limited).

Ceremony organisers may like to consider inviting local school choirs or community groups to sing/perform at the event to incorporate local community elements into the ceremony.

Catering

Citizenship ceremonies may be followed by a social gathering that includes refreshments. The gathering provides an opportunity for officials and new citizens to become acquainted and enhances the welcoming atmosphere of the occasion.

The form of the gathering and the choice of refreshments are matters for local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies.

In making these arrangements, it is important to take into account any special dietary or religious requirements which people may have.

Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements

There is great value in incorporating appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into citizenship ceremonies and the Department of Home Affairs encourages all organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies to do so.

Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into citizenship ceremonies enhances awareness and understanding by new citizens, as well as the wider community, of their histories and cultures and their status as the First Australians and traditional custodians of the land.

The presiding officer or other appropriate person should publicly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where the citizenship ceremony is taking place. An example of an acknowledgment could be as follows:

General

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today.
I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Specific

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today,
the [people] of the [nation] and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The following are a range of ideas for incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elements into or within citizenship ceremonies:

- Invite a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander leader or leaders to Acknowledge Country and/or perform a Welcome to Country ceremony
- Invite members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to perform other traditional ceremonies, for example a smoking ceremony
- Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to perform or a local leader or personality to address the citizenship ceremony.

Incorporating Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural considerations into a citizenship ceremony should be done in consultation with representatives of the local traditional peoples.

Further information is available at the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

Invitations

Only approved conferees as advised by the Department of Home Affairs may be invited to take the pledge at a ceremony. Conferees are invited to attend their ceremony by letter, which can be posted or emailed. Depending on local arrangements, invitation letters are sent to conferees either by the local government council or by an office of the Department of Home Affairs. For ceremonies conducted by community organisations, the Department of Home Affairs will generally send out invitations.

Invitation letters to conferees from the Department of Home Affairs include the following advice:

- Date, time and venue for the ceremony and expected arrival time for registration
- Conferees 16 years of age and over must bring photographic identification to the ceremony, such as a driver license or passport
- Children under 16 years are not required to make a pledge of commitment or attend a ceremony although they are welcome and encouraged to do so if they wish
- Conferees who wish to make the pledge of commitment on a holy book or scripture of their choice should bring it to the ceremony.

If invitations are sent by the Department, conferees may also receive a reminder email and SMS closer to the ceremony.

Ceremony organisers may wish to add the following information as appropriate:

- Process for RSVPs (if relevant)
- Dress Code (attendee attire should reflect the significance of the occasion and venue, including national or cultural dress)
- A voluntary Australian Citizenship Affirmation (if included in the program) will take place after the citizenship ceremony
- Any special arrangements concerning seating and the taking of photographs or video during the ceremony
- The number of guests each conferee may invite to attend the ceremony and subsequent social gathering
- Attendees may be asked to sign a form providing their consent for photographs, video or film taken during the ceremony to be used for future citizenship promotional purposes
- Advice on venue accessibility or parking.

Additionally, information for conferees about attending ceremonies is available on the [Department of Home Affairs website](#).



Children

Children under 16 years of age

Children under the age of 16 years are not required to make the pledge of commitment or attend a citizenship ceremony although they are welcome and encouraged to do so with their parent(s) if they wish. Children who were under 16 on application, but have since turned 16 are not required to make the pledge. Children do not have to present identification at citizenship ceremonies.

Australia has a welcoming and inclusive citizenship policy. Encouraging dependents to attend the citizenship ceremony is in keeping with this policy. It is also important for children, particularly older children, to witness the occasion as part of their introduction to, and understanding of, civic life in Australia.

Children aged 16 years or over

Most children aged 16 years or over must make the pledge of commitment and provide identity documents at the ceremony.

Pledge verification list (PVL)

The PVL is provided by the Department of Home Affairs to ceremony organisers and lists the people who are to attend a particular ceremony, their pledge preferences, Australian citizenship certificate numbers and groups who wish to sit together (e.g. families).

The PVL must be signed by the authorised presiding officer and be returned to the Department of Home Affairs within two days after the ceremony so that the conferee's record can be updated to reflect their Australian citizenship status. The PVL may be scanned and sent digitally, but hard copies must be returned along with any non-attendee citizenship certificates.

Media, photos and consent forms

Media

Every effort should be made by ceremony organisers to publicise forthcoming ceremonies and to encourage local and even national media to attend and report on the event. Publicising citizenship ceremonies promotes to the wider community the contribution of new citizens to Australia.

Media coverage can be enhanced by providing local media, for example, newspapers, newsletters and magazines, with details of the ceremony as far in advance as possible. Details provided should include a list of speakers and important guests. Local community organisations could similarly be informed. Details of attendees should not be provided to media without their consent.

Where a ceremony could be of interest beyond the local district, consideration could be given to alerting the national media. Examples of such situations include:

- an unusually large ceremony
- where the ceremony is planned to coincide with a local or national event such as Australia Day or Australian Citizenship Day
- where conferees include prominent figures in local affairs, the arts, sport or other fields
- where there are particularly interesting features planned for the ceremony.

Conferees should be informed in advance that ceremonies may attract media attention and that departmental officers or representatives of the media may attend ceremonies to film, photograph or interview conferees for promotional purposes or for social media. While some new citizens may welcome publicity, others may not.

Local government councils and community organisations should be aware of privacy obligations. For more information, refer to the [*Privacy Act 1988*](#).

When the Minister responsible for citizenship matters is in attendance, liaison with their media adviser is required for any press releases or media coverage. Public affairs officers of the Department of Home Affairs will liaise with the Minister's media adviser and can also assist with publicity arrangements.



Photographs

There is no requirement to hire a professional photographer to take photos of the citizenship ceremony but having photographs is a great way of recording the occasion. The photos can also be used to present as a gift to the conferees as a memento of the ceremony.

It is important to be aware that images of individuals or Australian citizenship certificates in photographs or videos are treated as personal information under the *Privacy Act 1988* where the person's identity is clear or can reasonably be worked out from that image.

Consent forms

If a picture or video is to be used for something that the attendee is unaware of, the attendee will likely be required to give consent, unless they would reasonably expect their image to be used for this other purpose.

If images are to be used in a publication, website or social media platform that ceremony organisers put out, consent forms must be signed and collected from the subjects. Personal details in these images (such as names on certificates) must not be visible.

It may be applicable to include information on media and promotional image use in the invitation.

Suggested program for ceremony

The names of the presiding officer, master of ceremonies and official guests should be inserted.

1:30 pm	Conferees arrive, are registered and identity verified then are seated.
1:55 pm	Official party enters (List names and titles of official guests).
2:00 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> Welcomes all present.
2:02 pm	Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country.
2:05 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> welcomes all present, introduces official guests, delivers the opening address, and foreshadows the Australian Citizenship Affirmation.
2:15 pm	<p><i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> introduces each speaker in the following order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister or Minister's representative • If the Minister/Minister's representative is not in attendance, the presiding officer reads the Minister's message • Other speakers
2:30 pm	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> reads the preamble for a citizenship ceremony to the conferees.
2:32 pm	<i>(Presiding officer)</i> administers the pledge to conferees.
2:35 pm	<p><i>(Presiding officer, master of ceremonies or official guest)</i> presents Australian citizenship certificates to new citizens and congratulates them. Each conferee who has made the pledge is called forward to receive their Australian citizenship certificate.</p> <p>A gift may also be presented at this time.</p>
2:50 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> advises that new citizens must enrol to vote by completing an online enrolment application form. New citizens can access the AEC's website via the QR code on the information sheet provided.
2:52 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> introduces dignitary to conduct affirmation ceremony.
2:54 pm	<i>(Presiding officer, master of ceremonies or other appropriate Australian citizen)</i> conducts affirmation ceremony.
2:57 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> asks all present to stand for the Australian national anthem.
3:00 pm	<i>(Master of ceremonies)</i> concludes the ceremony; invites new citizens, official guests and all present to join him/her for light refreshments.

Before the Ceremony Checklist

These checklists can be used to assist your organisation of the ceremony.

Before the ceremony	
Annually (for councils with >100 conferees per annum)	
	Provide the Department of Home Affairs with an annual schedule of planned ceremonies
3-6 months before	
	Check Federal and State/Territory parliamentary sitting days
	Ensure scheduled ceremonies avoid parliamentary sitting days
	Advise Department of Home Affairs of the date of ceremony to allow provision of certificates and PVL
1-2 months before	
	Check venues for suitability (access, size/capacity, power, secular, wet weather contingencies)
	Prepare invitations for conferees with relevant ceremony details
4 weeks before	
	Invite conferees from list of approved applicants provided by the Department of Home Affairs
	Invite elected government members and other official representatives. Include which officials are to preside and present a speech
	Prepare a ceremony <u>program</u>
	Order products such as pledge cards and affirmation cards
1 week before	
	Confirm the Master of Ceremonies, and arrange lectern and sound system
	Ensure receipt of Australian citizenship certificates, PVL and AEC Electoral Enrolment New Citizens information sheets
	Ensure portrait of The King, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and Australian flag are available for display
	Arrange for the Australian national anthem to be played/performed
	Arrange for Welcome to Country and/or Acknowledgement of Country
	Arrange who will deliver the Australian Citizenship Affirmation
	Arrange seating plan for VIPs and conferee guests
	Arrange seating plan for conferees with families/groups together
	Ensure certificate of currency for insurance purposes (if applicable)
Additional considerations	
	Arrange gifts and entertainment
	Arrange catering
	Arrange photography
	Notify media of ceremony
	Print media consent forms if images to be used on social media or publications
	Arrange speaking notes for the presiding officer and Master of ceremonies
	Order commemorative certificates, promotional items



PART 3

At the ceremony

Registration

The Department of Home Affairs provides a copy of the PVL for each citizenship ceremony. The PVL lists invited conferees and includes personal details to assist ceremony organisers to verify their identities.

It is a requirement that each conferee making the pledge be formally registered at the ceremony. Use the PVL to mark non-attendance or failure to make the pledge by marking a single line through the person's name.

Registration areas should be well lit to allow proper verification of conferee identity.

Identity verification

The Minister cannot approve a person becoming an Australian citizen unless satisfied of a person's identity. All conferees aged 16 and over at the time of application must have their identity verified prior to making the pledge of commitment and receiving their Australian citizenship certificate.

Identity documents and verification are not required for children under the age of 16, however, the identity of the responsible parent on their application will need to be verified.

A form of photographic identification is required for each person aged 16 and over, which will allow facial comparison between the person and their identification. A driver licence, passport or other official document with a photograph is acceptable. If a conferee cannot produce any form of photographic identification, at least three documents bearing their name and/or current address, for example, bank statements, credit cards or bills, are required. Identity documents should be current and original documents (not photographs or photocopies).

Unofficial documents with a photo such as student cards are not acceptable. Conferees may bring their invitation letter to the ceremony to assist with registration but the letter is not an identity document.

If the conferee has attended without any identity documents and their identity cannot be verified, they cannot proceed to the ceremony. Refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

Guidance on face-to-photo identification is available from the Department of Home Affairs.

If there are doubts about the identity of the person, or the person does not have sufficient identity documentation, they cannot proceed with the ceremony. Refer the person to the Department of Home Affairs.

Officers of the Department of Home Affairs may attend to assist in identifying the conferees for citizenship ceremonies arranged by community organisations.

Welcome to Country/ Acknowledgement of Country

A Welcome to Country is a ceremony performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to welcome visitors to their traditional land. It can take many forms, depending on the particular culture of the traditional owners. It can include singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing awareness of and respect for the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their Country.

An Acknowledgment of Country can be informal or formal and involves visitors acknowledging the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander owners of the land as well as the long and continuing relationship between First Nations and their Country.

Further information is available on Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country at the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

Ceremony organisers should consult with their local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander elders or leaders about the most appropriate way to recognise their communities.

If the Minister attends

If in attendance, the Minister will have precedence to assume the role of presiding officer, conduct the citizenship ceremony and confer Australian citizenship on conferees.

The Department of Home Affairs will advise ceremony organisers if the Minister is interested in attending a citizenship ceremony.

Speeches

The Minister/Minister's Representative

The Minister will be given the opportunity to speak at the citizenship ceremony. The Minister is not required to read their own message verbatim, as they may wish to deliver a speech specific to the event.

If the Minister does not attend, the local Federal MP or Senator (if present) should read the Minister's message. This must be read in its entirety and without amendment.

When neither the Minister nor a federal representative attends, the Minister's message must be read by the presiding officer in its entirety and without amendment.

Inviting official guests to speak

Speeches by other official guests must immediately follow the Minister's speech/message.

All elected local representatives, at the federal, state/territory and local government level, should over time have an opportunity to provide a welcoming speech to citizenship conferees. It is preferable, however, that not all elected representatives speak at every ceremony. This will ensure that the number of speeches remains manageable, particularly where local areas cross a number of electorates. They are still to be invited to attend the ceremony as guests if no formal role is given.

Appropriate arrangements should be reached at the local level to meet the requirements of all concerned.

For example, ceremony organisers may wish to reach early agreement with elected representatives on appropriate dates in the year for each representative to speak, for example in the context of setting up or reviewing the annual ceremony schedule.

The emphasis remains on elected representatives welcoming new citizens to the local community. Candidates for election must not be invited to speak. The apolitical nature of the ceremony must be maintained. People attending on behalf of elected representatives must not be included in the official party.

Other official guests do not have to be invited to speak, however, subject to the number of speeches by elected representatives, a few brief messages of welcome from any local community leaders and/or local clubs and associations may contribute to a feeling of welcome.



Suggested length and content of speeches

Local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies should give speakers an idea of how long they are expected to speak. To manage the length of the ceremony, each speech would ideally be less than five minutes long.

Speeches must be relevant and appropriate to the occasion and must avoid issues that may be contentious from a political, racial or sectarian point of view. Speeches that have particular political or denominational overtones, for example, would not be appropriate. It is essential that the dignity and significance of citizenship ceremonies be maintained at all times.

Citizenship ceremonies must not be used as forums for political or partisan expression or for the distribution of political or promotional material.

Ceremony organisers should draw these matters to the attention of all speakers in their invitations.

Speakers may welcome conferees as new citizens and refer to the economic, social and cultural contribution that new citizens make to Australia.

Conferees come from a variety of circumstances and backgrounds. It is advisable to avoid assumptions and generalisations about their background and their reasons for coming to Australia.

Preamble

It is a legal requirement under section 10 of the *Australian Citizenship Regulation 2016* that the presiding officer read aloud to the conferees the preamble for citizenship ceremonies. The words of the Preamble are found in [Schedule 1](#) of the Regulation.

The Preamble should be read directly before the pledge of commitment.

The pledge of commitment

It is a legal requirement that most conferees 16 years of age and over make the pledge of commitment before the presiding officer.

The pledge must be made in English. It comes in two versions:

Pledge 1

From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Pledge 2

From this time forward,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

The version of the pledge which each conferee has indicated they wish to make is specified on the PVL forwarded to ceremony organisers by the Department of Home Affairs. Pledge cards may be placed on the conferees' seats or handed to conferees on arrival. Pledge cards are available from the Department of Home Affairs website [order form](#).

A person may elect to switch pledge group on the day or make one pledge with the other pledge group in order to stand with their family group. As long as one form of the pledge is made, their citizenship is conferred.

Only conferees on the PVL can take the pledge. A person who attends a ceremony but was not invited and is not on the PVL cannot be allowed to make the pledge before the presiding officer as their application may still be under assessment.

As a matter of practice, and to facilitate the making of the pledge, the presiding officer 'administers' (i.e. reads out and the conferees repeat) the pledge. The presiding officer, with the support of organising staff, should observe that each conferee makes the pledge.

If it is observed that a conferee has not said the pledge, they are considered not to have acquired citizenship and must not be presented with their citizenship certificate. The conferee should be taken aside respectfully at the end of the ceremony, advised that making the pledge is the final legal requirement to become an Australian citizen, and given another opportunity to say the pledge before the presiding officer.

Should they refuse, they should not be presented with their citizenship certificate, their name should be ruled out on the PVL and the Department of Home Affairs should be contacted immediately.

Generally conferees who have a permanent or enduring physical or mental incapacity will not be allocated to attend a ceremony. Councils will be made aware of conferees with other needs (e.g. an Auslan interpreter) to allow enough time to prepare the necessary support.

Children

Children under 16 years of age are welcome to make the pledge if they wish. The conferral of their citizenship is dependent on the responsible parent making the pledge before the presiding officer.

If the responsible parent does not attend the ceremony or fails to make the pledge, then the child does not acquire Australian citizenship nor receive their Australian citizenship certificate, even if they are present at the ceremony. Rule a line through the name of the child on the PVL and contact the Department of Home Affairs if this occurs.

Holy books and scriptures

It is not a requirement for conferees to use a holy book or scripture or hold up their hand/s when making the pledge however, conferees are permitted to do so if they wish.

Conferees who wish to use a holy book or scripture when making the pledge, should be invited to bring the holy book or scripture of their choice to the citizenship ceremony in the invitation to ceremony letter.

Organisations who wish to provide holy books are not permitted to place the books on the conferees' chairs. They should be placed in an area where conferees may choose to use one during the ceremony, but it must not be made to look like a requirement. For example, a small table at the back of the room may be appropriate.

Holy books must not be provided as gifts to conferees.

Australian citizenship certificates

Presenting Australian citizenship certificates to conferees

It is not a legal requirement that:

- Australian citizenship certificates be presented to conferees attending a ceremony
- Australian citizenship certificates be presented by the presiding officer or other authorised person.

However, both of these are common practices.

Usually, the Department of Home Affairs will provide Australian citizenship certificates to organisations in advance of citizenship ceremonies for distribution to conferees at the ceremony. On the rare occasion that certificates are not available, the ceremony should continue as scheduled. The certificates will be sent to the new citizens at a later date by the Department of Home Affairs.

It is recommended that ceremony organisers hold a quantity of commemorative certificates to present to conferees in this situation. Commemorative certificates are not to be created by ceremony organisers, they can be obtained by contacting your local ceremonies team for a copy of the file or ordered free of charge through the Department of Home Affairs website [order form](#). Commemorative certificates are of no legal standing and are not official evidence of Australian citizenship.

It is the making of the pledge of commitment before an authorised person that is the final legal requirement for acquiring Australian citizenship by conferral. The citizenship certificate does not make a person an Australian citizen however it is legal evidence of Australian citizenship and should be treated as an accountable document. Citizenship certificates should be stored in a safe when not being used for the purpose of arranging the ceremony.

When family members are conferred Australian citizenship at the same ceremony, each family member should be presented with their own certificate. If children under 16 years do not attend the ceremony, their certificates may be handed to the parent.

Altering citizenship certificates

The presiding officer may, if they wish, sign each certificate at the dotted line on the bottom right corner of the certificate. However, this is not compulsory. No other amendments, additions, deletions or marks may be made to the certificate.

Altering Australian citizenship certificates is an offence under the Citizenship Act and carries serious penalties.

The person who signs the certificates prior to the ceremony must then be the presiding officer on the day of the ceremony for those certificates to be valid.

Australian citizenship certificates are only valid if the conferee makes the pledge before the presiding officer on the date printed on them.

Where conferees fail to attend a scheduled ceremony or do not make the pledge, their certificates must be returned by registered mail immediately following the ceremony, along with the PVL, to the office of the Department of Home Affairs that provided the certificates. The dates on the certificate must not be amended if the conferee attends a ceremony at another date. A new certificate will be provided by the Department of Home Affairs.

If details are incorrect on Australian citizenship certificates

If a conferee claims that information on their Australian citizenship certificate is incorrect, they should still be allowed to make the pledge and be presented with the certificate. Conferees should be directed to the [Department of Home Affairs website](#) for further information.

The Australian Citizenship Affirmation

To further enhance the meaning and symbolism of citizenship ceremonies, ceremony organisers are encouraged to conduct the Australian Citizenship Affirmation (the Affirmation) at the conclusion of the citizenship ceremony.

The Affirmation is a statement affirming loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people. It is based on the pledge made by conferees at citizenship ceremonies in order to become Australian citizens.

The Affirmation increases awareness of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship, promotes community involvement and participation, and helps people feel that they belong. It also helps to build pride in Australians about their citizenship.

Unlike the pledge, the Affirmation is entirely voluntary, has no status in law and has no legal effect.

The Affirmation may be incorporated at the end of the Australian citizenship ceremony and allows all present to join with the new citizens to publicly affirm their loyalty and commitment to Australia and its people. Non-citizens are able to participate by joining in at the second line.

The Affirmation

As an Australian citizen
I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect,
and whose laws I uphold and obey.

If the Affirmation is to be included, affirmation cards may either be placed on all seats at the venue, or handed to all members of the audience as they arrive. Affirmation products, such as cards and banners, can be ordered through the Department of Home Affairs website by using the [order form](#).

The Affirmation must be led by an Australian citizen.

They may be a person of some standing in the community, such as an official guest, a leader within the community, a federal or state/territory parliamentarian or other appropriate person.



Australian electoral enrolment

Local government councils and community organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies are asked to facilitate electoral enrolment of new citizens.

The Department of Home Affairs provides AEC Electoral Enrolment of New Citizens information sheets to organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies. The information sheet must be issued to each conferee aged 16 and over to help facilitate online enrolment.

As enrolment and voting is compulsory for Australian citizens, once they have made the pledge and been presented with their Australian citizenship certificate new citizens must be advised to:

- use the QR code on the information sheet to access the [AEC's website](#)
- complete the online enrolment application form.

Conferees can contact the AEC if further assistance or information on enrolment and voting is required. The AEC contact details are provided on the information sheet.

At the Ceremony Checklist

On the day	
	Arrange flags, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and official portrait/photo of His Majesty King Charles III, according to protocols
	Verify identity of conferees against photographic identity document provided
	Mark attendance or non-attendance on the PVL
	Collect written consent of conferees to use images if they are to be used for promotional purposes
	Issue pledge cards, program, AEC Electoral Enrolment of New Citizens information sheets and affirmation cards to the conferees
	Ensure no political, commercial, promotional or religious material is available for distribution
	Advise conferees they must complete an online enrolment application form accessible through the QR code on the AEC information sheet they have been provided
During the ceremony	
	Welcome to Country and/or Acknowledgement of Country
	Reading the Minister's message
	Reading the Preamble
	Observe conferees making the pledge of commitment
	Present Australian citizenship certificates to conferees who have made the pledge
	Play the Australian National Anthem
	Conduct the Australian Citizenship Affirmation

PART 4

After the ceremony

Returning the PVL

The PVL is considered official evidence that an applicant has fulfilled the final legal obligation of making the pledge of commitment before a person authorised to receive the pledge (the presiding officer).

The Department of Home Affairs is required to retain completed PVLs as a record documenting acquisition of Australian citizenship on behalf of the National Archives of Australia. It is therefore important to return the signed PVL to the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible after the ceremony.

The presiding officer must sign the PVL immediately after the conclusion of a ceremony, certifying that each person on the list has attended and been observed making the pledge.

The names of people who did not attend the ceremony, whose identity has not been verified or who have not made the pledge of commitment, must have a line ruled through them on the PVL. If they are a responsible parent, their child must also have a line ruled through their name on the PVL. The PVL should not be altered in any other way.

A copy of the completed and signed PVL must immediately be forwarded to the Department of Home Affairs electronically. Hard copies are to be returned with any non-attendee citizenship certificates within two working days.

Hard copy PVLs and non-attendee citizenship certificates should be returned to the Department of Home Affairs within two working days following a ceremony.

The Department of Home Affairs relies on ceremony organisers returning signed PVLs promptly. Delays can result in significant problems being encountered by new citizens, for example, when applying for an Australian passport.

Privacy

The names and addresses of conferees on the PVL must be used by organisations only for the purpose of conducting citizenship ceremonies, for example, to identify the conferees, manage invitations and RSVPs.

Improper use or disclosure of personal information provided for the purpose of citizenship ceremonies may be in breach of the *Privacy Act 1988*. Inappropriate use of personal information could lead to revocation of authorisation to conduct citizenship ceremonies.

Authorised secondary use of conferees' personal details includes providing names and addresses to elected representatives for the purpose of a welcome.

Disclosing names and addresses of new citizens

Whether local federal, state and territory MPs attend the ceremony or not, it is important and appropriate that they have the opportunity to welcome new citizens as formal members of the Australian community.

Where requested, local government councils should forward the names and addresses of new citizens (including email addresses) to local federal, state and territory MPs and local government councillors.

New citizens are informed through the application form for conferral of Australian citizenship that their information may be disclosed to MPs and local government councillors for the purpose of welcoming new citizens as constituents.

Only names and addresses are forwarded to MPs, unless a justifiable reason for other information is provided. Copies of the PVL containing other identity and personal information must not be sent to MPs.

Conferee details must not be provided before the ceremony. They will be provided only after the ceremony is completed and only upon request. This is to ensure that only conferees who attend the ceremony and become citizens receive a welcome letter.

The information must be sent with advice that clearly states the names and addresses of new citizens are disclosed to local MPs solely for the purpose of welcoming new citizens into the community. This advice must be provided to be consistent with privacy legislation.

Advice to MPs and local government councillors should also clearly state that the names and addresses of new citizens should not be forwarded to other persons or organisations, or used by local MPs and local government councillors for any other purpose.

The PVL must not be used by local government councils for any purpose other than administering a ceremony. The list must not be shared with candidates for election.

Ensure that any conferee who did not attend the ceremony, whose identity was not verified, or who did not make the pledge is removed from the list provided to MPs and local government councillors.

Returning Australian citizenship certificates

Australian citizenship certificates are only valid for the date printed on them and under the condition that the conferee makes the pledge on that same date.

Where conferees fail to attend a scheduled ceremony, their identity was not verified or they did not make the pledge, their certificates must be returned by hand or by registered mail immediately following the ceremony to the office of the Department of Home Affairs that provided the certificates.

After the Ceremony Checklist

After the ceremony	
	Non-attendees, those whose identity was not verified, or those who did not make the pledge (including their children) have been ruled out on the PVL
	The presiding officer has signed the PVL
	Completed PVL has been returned to the Department of Home Affairs. The hard copy PVL should be returned within two working days
	All non-attendee certificates have been returned to the Department of Home Affairs
	Any issues regarding identity or the pledge have been referred to the Department of Home Affairs
	Names and addresses forwarded to MPs and local government councillors (on request)

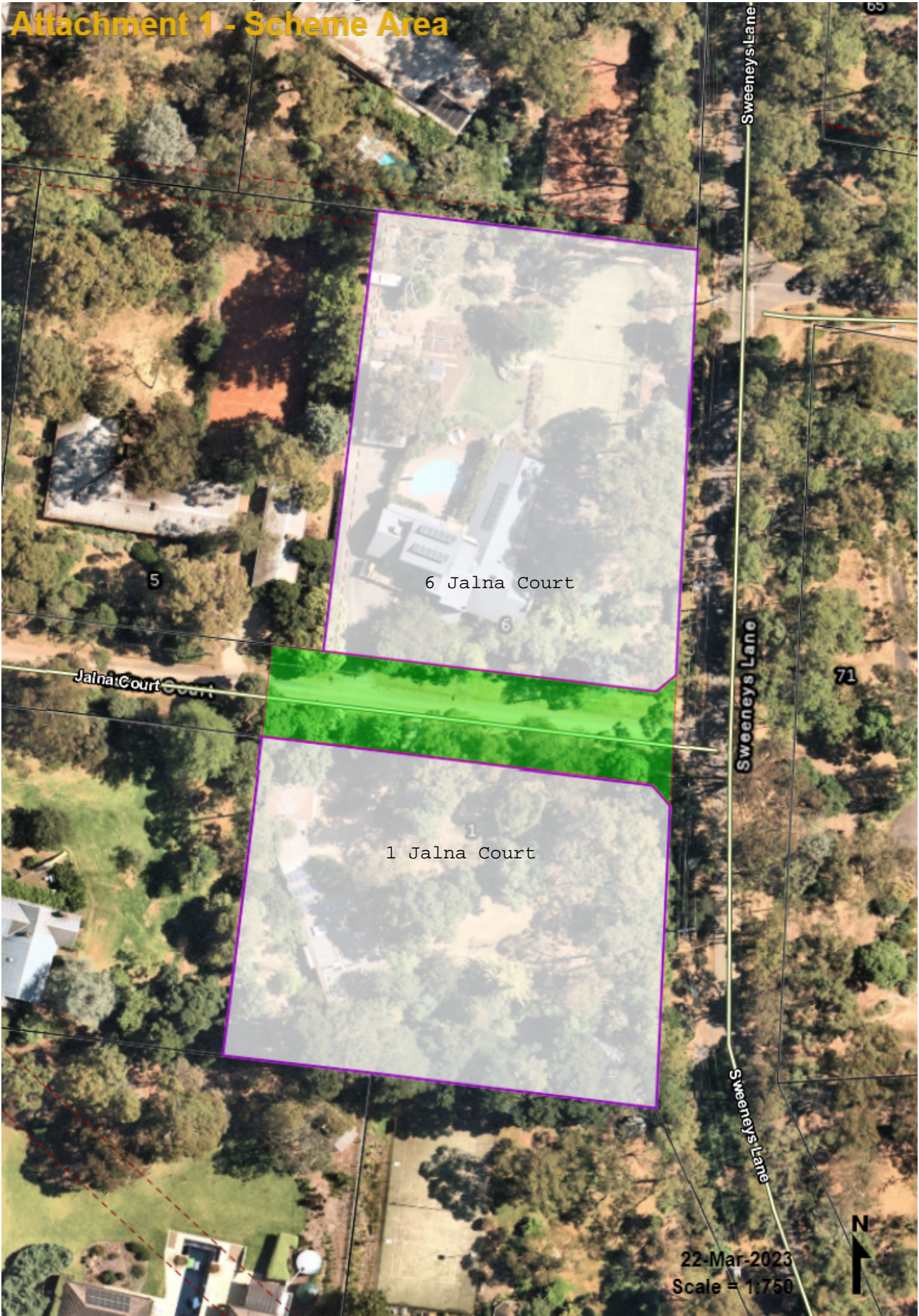
Exemptions to the Code

In exceptional circumstances councils may apply for an exemption to the requirements of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code by writing to the Department of Home Affairs.





Attachment 1 - Scheme Area



ATTACHMENT 2

APPORTIONMENT - JALNA COURT SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME, ELTHAM

Property Address	Frontage	Sideage/ Rearage	Abuttal Unit	Abuttal Cost	Access Benefit Unit	Access Benefit Cost	Total Cost	Upper Limit Cost
1 Jalna Court	59.0	0.0	59	\$ 5,665.56	1	\$16,996.69	\$ 22,662.25	\$ 27,194.70
6 Jalna Court	59.0	0.0	59	\$ 5,665.56	1	\$16,996.69	\$ 22,662.25	\$ 27,194.70
			118		2		\$ 45,324.50	\$ 54,389.40

TOTAL SCHEME COST \$ 45,324.50

COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION \$ -

AMOUNT TO BE LEVIED \$ 45,324.50

	ABUTTAL RATE PER METER	\$ 96.03
	BENEFIT RATE PER UNIT	\$16,996.69

ABUTTAL PERCENTAGE 25%

ACCESS BENEFIT PERCENTAGE 75%

TOTAL ABUTTAL COST \$ 11,331.13

TOTAL ACCESS BENEFIT COST \$ 33,993.38

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Risk Name:	Land Management Incentive Program – General risk assessment and use of firearms
Date of Assessment:	10/03/2023

Background

Council has previously successfully managed and completed grant funded deer cull projects, i.e. Sugarloaf Link Project.

Pre-procurement planning for these projects included reliance on risk assessments to firstly understand the processes, then to identify major risks and mitigate these risks through a series of controls.

Issues assessed included the use of contractor coordination, firearms, live animals, public consultation and engagement, public notice, professional animal controllers, control and management agreements, procurement process and public tenders.

In November 2021, Council considered and endorsed revised Land Management Incentive Program (LMIP) Grant Guidelines to include funding opportunities for the community for deer control.

The LMIP is funded by Council and limited to a \$60,000 budget with the maximum available grant of \$10,000.

The guidelines are similar to the Council operated deer cull projects, and relies on individual landowners or a project control group to manage the funded project and engage a professional animal controller.

Scope

The purpose of this risk assessment is to review the control environment and make recommendations for improvements to the deer portion of the LMIP.

Deer cull methodology includes the use of firearms, which is a high-risk activity and therefore the control environment should be very strong and very robust to manage the level of risk.

Information

Council's firearm district is ND5 controlled from Diamond Creek.

The District Firearms Officer (Vic Police) considers and approves a Public Places Permit and Shoot Plan for each site.

LMIP grant guidelines ask for a professionally qualified animal controller.

The professional animal controller is responsible for all controls under the Public Places Permit and Shoot Plan.

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Risk assessment (Summary)

Primary risks identified were related to:

- Use of firearms
- Procurement process
- Community consultation and reputational
- Proximity to Council assets
- In kind support
- Grant categories and their assessment.

Reflection: for future reference, a risk assessment should have been undertaken for this high-risk activity and inclusion of deer control into the LMIP.

Recommendations

It is recommended to:

- Remove deer funding from the Land Management Incentive Program; and
- Consider the use of Council contractors to deliver the program

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Hazard (What is the thing that has the potential to cause harm?)	Action of Injury / Harm (What action needs to occur for the hazard to cause injury or harm?)	Consequence	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	Current Controls (What are we currently doing to reduce the risk?)	Action Required (What improvements can we make to further reduce the risk?)	Action Owner	Action Due Date
Shooting a person or an off-target animal or structure or near miss Projectile carry across into neighbouring property Landowner or control group does not take action to correct the contractors behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor is lax in their safety system Safety system / risk assessment is not considered in procurement Contractor error or poor judgement Ricochet Accidental discharge Poor weapon handling Poor firearm / ammunition security and storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death of a person Death of an animal Significant incident reportable to the police Serious accident resulting in an injury Damage to a structure Community complaints Land owner complaints Increased community anxiety and apprehension Scheme is seen as a Council operation as funded by Council Police offence WorkSafe notifiable incident 	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional animal controller Shoot plan Public Places Permit Terms and conditions of Grant <p>Council is not party to the procurement and has no control or management over the contractor.</p>	Recommendation 1 Suspend deer grant funding under the LMIP. Explore opportunities to improve the landowner or the control group accountability to manage the contractor.	Environ	TBA
Night Shooting (Deer only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best time to undertake a shoot as deer are active at night Night time comes with its own risks and hazards both to the person and to the process of shooting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above More active targets Shooter more at risk than in daytime 	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Note - Makes community awareness more important		

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Hazard (What is the thing that has the potential to cause harm?)	Action of Injury / Harm (What action needs to occur for the hazard to cause injury or harm?)	Consequence	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	Current Controls (What are we currently doing to reduce the risk?)	Action Required (What improvements can we make to further reduce the risk?)	Action Owner	Action Due Date
High powered weapons (Deer only) (0.223 or greater)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower powered weapons are not as effective against deer High powered weapons mean additional carry compared to a low powered weapon (see above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above Noisier Longer bullet distance 	Unrated	Unrated	Unrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Note - Makes community awareness more important		
Deficiencies in the procurement of a contractor Lack of contractor oversight during shoots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one quote is required. Council's procurement process requires two or more written quotes Contractor suggested selection guidelines are not followed. No formal contract = No requirement of the contractor to disclose details of their safety system. No control and management agreement. Contractor takes short cuts in their shoot plan, public places permit or safety system caused by lack of scrutiny from control group Council has no control or influence once the grant is approved and \$ distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above Council has no control or influence to compel procurement No complaint handling process – no recourse options are available to Council Council drawn into issue as the source is a Council Grant leading to a reputational risk. 	Possible	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging a professional Public place permit Shoot plan A neighbour notification plan is required Police matter 	Refer Recommendation 1		

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Hazard (What is the thing that has the potential to cause harm?)	Action of Injury / Harm (What action needs to occur for the hazard to cause injury or harm?)	Consequence	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	Current Controls (What are we currently doing to reduce the risk?)	Action Required (What improvements can we make to further reduce the risk?)	Action Owner	Action Due Date
<p>Lack of community communication and consultation about the program, use of fire arms and safety,</p> <p>Wider community concerns</p> <p>How complaints from participating land owners are managed</p> <p>How complaints from adjoining landholders are managed</p> <p>Community members anxious and apprehension of a shoot near their property lacking information</p> <p>Includes Firearm safety Projectile carry Safety (general) Animal welfare Noise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbours# disgruntled at lack of notice given proximity. Noise issues Lack of neighbour understanding of shoot Neighbours# do not have any recourse for objections - no process. Complaints handling - In humane dispatch of wounded animal Complaint handling - Carcasses left in situ in proximity to public areas. Complaints to Council (as it is a Council approved Program) <p># Note - not limited to immediate neighbours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate warnings to local neighbour and local community. Extent of neighbour notification plan is subjective (distribution and content) Could lead to community complaints and concerns about how the shoots are being managed. Confrontation involving abuse, harassment, or physical violence No complaint handling process – no recourse options are available to Council Council drawn into issue as the source is a Council Grant leading to a reputational risk. 	Possible	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A neighbour notification plan is required as part of the grant application Shoot Plan Public Place permit 	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Suspend deer grant funding under the LMIP.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to improve community consultation, community information and complaint handling and to reduce Council's reputation risk.</p>	Environ	TBA
Proximity to Council Land (the public)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deer problems are most likely in the rural area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No warnings to users of these facilities of a shoot in progress. 	Possible	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Council controls 	Recommendation 3	Environ	TBA

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Hazard (What is the thing that has the potential to cause harm?)	Action of Injury / Harm (What action needs to occur for the hazard to cause injury or harm?)	Consequence	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	Current Controls (What are we currently doing to reduce the risk?)	Action Required (What improvements can we make to further reduce the risk?)	Action Owner	Action Due Date
<p>No notice to Council as an adjoining land owner.</p> <p>No requirements to provide notice to public users of the land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has roads, reserves and trails that could be in proximity to shoot site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could lead to community complaints and concerns about how the shoots are being managed. Council drawn into issue as the source is a Council Grant leading to a reputational risk. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police matter if shoot plan or public places permit are not followed. 	<p>Include in the guidelines the need to consult with Council if there is any proximity to Council land or assets.</p> <p>Council may have additional notification requirements as part of any funding approval. i.e. nearby horse riding trail</p>		
In kind support is not valid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant application does not specify 50% monetary (funds) co-contribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application refused 	Possible	Minor	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse application if not 50% cash contribution. Assessment by Environmental Services Grant is restricted to a maximum of \$10k 	<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Guidelines need to be scrutinised to ascertain what is meant by 50% monetary (funds) co-contribution.</p> <p>Does this mean 50% actual cash or is it in kind support?</p>	Environ	TBA
Category A to D grants – Environmental and community benefit not defined creating a potential inequity. I.e. what constitutes a high environmental benefit or high community benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant application can be miss categorized in a subjective analysis. I.e. A property that has low deer activity could attract the same level of grant as one with high deer activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dis equity in allocation of grant funds. Lack of understanding of Category A to D is required particularly in classification of high or very high benefit. 	Possible	Minor	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing grant categories Assessment by Environment Services Grant is restricted to a 	<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Review category A to D definitions and what constitutes levels of environmental or community benefit.</p> <p>Explore more options for rigor around provision and collection of evidence to support levels of environmental and community benefit.</p>	Environ	TBA

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Hazard (What is the thing that has the potential to cause harm?)	Action of Injury / Harm (What action needs to occur for the hazard to cause injury or harm?)	Consequence	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	Current Controls (What are we currently doing to reduce the risk?)	Action Required (What improvements can we make to further reduce the risk?)	Action Owner	Action Due Date
<p>No evidence is collected to support category selection.</p> <p>Description of Category A and Category B is confusing and very similar</p> <p>If the landowner is already undertaking controlled shooting how is additional shooting of any additional environmental or community benefit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence is collected or considered to support category selection. Current categories are subjective. "Advice from a professional deer controller ... will have meaningful benefit and effect" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice from professional deer controller does not inform high environmental benefit or community benefit, just meaningful benefit and effect. The advice may not be independent from the deer controller contracted leading to a conflict of interest. May lead to reputation risk for Council 				maximum of \$10k	Check categories specifically for the scenario that if the landowner is already undertaking controlled shooting, how is additional shooting of any additional environmental or community benefit.		

Review Date	Reviewed by	Comments

Land Management Incentive Program

Draft Guidelines (November 2021)

1. About the program

Nillumbik Shire Council's **Land Management Incentive Program (LMIP)** offers incentive grants for sustainable land management activities that have positive environmental outcomes, threatened species conservation and/or improved and sustainable land productivity outcomes.

The program is open year round, commencing 1 July of each year, until the grant pool has been expended.

The program has a priority focus on encouraging and supporting the adoption and enhancement of best practice land management - by new and longer term residents of the Shire.

Council officer advice is available to help you assess your land management options and priorities, and to help you apply for this funding. Phone 9433 3111 or email environment@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

Details on how to apply for a grant are provided in Section 8 of these guidelines.

2. Overarching eligibility

To be eligible, activities are required to provide:

- Positive environmental or sustainable agriculture outcomes at the project site; and
- Positive environmental, social or community outcomes that extend beyond the property boundary

The degree to which the project will achieve the above determines whether an eligible activity is assessed as being a category A, B, C or D project, and the associated amount of LMIP funding that the project may receive. Details are provided in Sections 6 and 7.

Note: Waterway projects are given low priority for funding under this program because assistance is available through [Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Management Program](#).

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



3. What we can assist you with: (Eligible project activities)

1. Weed control (of key priority species listed in the publication Nillumbik Live Local Plant Local)
 - These costs can include contractor hire, machinery hire, labour and chemical/herbicide costs; and/or fees to attend an approved Chemcert Farm Chemical User Course or recognised equivalent.
 - Costs may not include the purchase of weed control equipment or machinery. Spraying of flowering annuals is ineligible for funding.
 - Environmental weed control will only be funded within areas of native vegetation or where the weeds are causing a direct threat to an adjacent environmental asset.
 - Agricultural weed control will only be funded when in alignment with the recommendations of the Nillumbik Invasive Species Action Plan.
 - Removal of Radiata Pines will only be considered under Category C and D.
2. Revegetation (using species that are indigenous to Nillumbik and the property) and which:
 - Enhance the biodiversity of an area
 - Buffer remnant vegetation
 - Create or enhance habitat corridors, habitat stepping stones, and/or significant habitat locations
 - Establish shelterbelts
 - Prevent and/or rehabilitate soil erosion

These costs can include the purchase of plants and associated (non plastic) guards, mats and stakes; or other materials on a case-by-case basis. The grant recipient is responsible for ordering and purchasing plants from a local indigenous plant nursery and ongoing watering, weeding and maintenance.
3. Indigenous seed collection, propagation and planting (subject to the applicant obtaining any necessary permits)
4. Works for threatened species conservation
5. Rabbit control (across a minimum of five adjacent properties, or at least 5Ha) – refer Grant conditions, Section 11
6. Fox control (targeted to protect listed threatened species, across a minimum of five adjacent properties, or at least 5Ha) – refer Grant conditions, Section 11
7. Deer control (targeted towards biodiversity protection, across a minimum of five neighbourhood properties, or at least 20Ha) – refer Grant conditions, Section 12

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



8. Pasture management improvements to support control of invasive grassy weeds and reintroduction of native grasses
9. Sustainable / regenerative agriculture enhancements
 - Trials in integrated pest management for an orchard/vineyard
 - Companion planting to enhance predatory insects/reduce insecticide use
 - Software tools to monitor and manage groundcover or pasture feed budgeting
 - Drill sowing of native perennial grasses inter-row
 - Multi-species cover crop trials
 - Shelterbelt planting and associated fencing
 - Training courses or farm planning advice in sustainable practices/ processes
 - Soil testing to minimise excess fertiliser usage
10. Costs associated with organising/delivering relevant environment and/or land management education and training for Nillumbik landholders
11. Co-contributions to help support grants offered through other agencies, for very high benefit projects, e.g. PPWCMA and Melbourne Water community grant funding.
12. Biodiversity or exclusion fencing to protect high biodiversity value sites from grazing and browsing by herbivores, or rubbing and thrashing by deer
 - Fencing of remnant vegetation (including paddock trees and around dams) or revegetation works
 - Exclusion fencing to protect a known or likely potential population of listed threatened flora or fauna species
 - Gates must be installed, to enable future managed grazing as required.
 - Permanent fencing must include end and corner assemblies. It may be standard rural/post and wire or permanent electric fencing. The use of barbed wire is not permitted due to the dangers posed to wildlife.
 - Fencing of waterways that are eligible for Melbourne Water Stream Frontage funding will not be funded, and boundary fencing is ineligible.
13. Non-standard projects that provide significant environmental and broad-scale community benefit (e.g. demonstration sites or trials of innovative environmental management or pest management; cultural burning; development of landscape-scale land management plans etc). Applications must detail how demonstration/ trial findings will be useful to and shared amongst the broader community.

4. Eligible applicants

- Private landowners or landholders
- Community groups including, for example: Landcare; rabbit, fox or deer action groups; environment groups, other community clubs and groups.

The applicant must display a commitment to ongoing good land management practices in order to be eligible for funding.

5. Eligible properties

To be eligible, your property must be:

- Located within the Shire of Nillumbik; and
- Located within the Green Wedge Zone, Rural Conservation Zone, or have an Environmental Significance Overlay
- Other locations by exception, for example at sites with cultural heritage significance

6. Available funding

There is a recurring annual LMIP grant pool of around \$60,000 per year.

A maximum grant of up to \$2,000 is available per single property, or up to \$10,000 for a community led cross-tenure or landscape-scale initiative, per financial year.

Projects will not be funded retrospectively.

Applications will be assessed and categorized as being Category A, B, C or D (refer to Section 7). The category will determine the maximum amount of funding that the project is eligible for, and associated co-contribution requirements.

* Most successful applications will require a 50% co-contribution of funds, materials or in-kind labour.

- In kind labour is assessed at the rate of \$40 per hour and must be undertaken as part of upcoming (not retrospective) project works.
- In addition to physical labour, in-kind support can include, for example, the provision of materials, running workshops, project management (for complex projects) and planned monitoring activities.
- A monetary co-contribution is a requirement of all pest management projects (i.e. deer, foxes, rabbits).

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



7. Assessment Process

Each application is assessed against the LMIP eligibility criteria specified in Sections 2-5 above (i.e. whether the project activity and applicant and property is eligible).

Applications that meet those eligibility criteria are then assessed to determine their level of a) environment benefit and b) community/social benefit. This determines whether the application is graded as being of Category A, B, C or D benefit, and the associated level of funding support that the grant program can provide.

Category A. High environment and very high community benefit: 100% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$2,000 (single property) or up to \$10,000 (community-scale initiative)

Category B. High environment and high community benefit: 50% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$2,000 (single property) or up to \$10,000 (community-scale initiative)

Category C. Medium environment and community benefit: 50% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$500

Category D. Low environment and community benefit: ineligible

The funding category that each eligible project will fall within is determined according to:

a) Level of environment benefit

The types of matters considered when assessing the level of environmental benefit include:

- Biodiversity or agricultural values of the property and its surrounding area
- Presence of threatened species or habitat
- Weed species and location
- Water quality outcomes
- Soil conservation outcomes
- Sustainable agricultural / improved pasture management outcomes
- The degree to which the positive project outcomes extend beyond any single property
- The likely environmental consequences of inaction

b) Level of community / social benefit

The types of matters considered when assessing the level of community benefit include:

- Possession of a valid Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card – If applicants with such a card (who are not able to make a co-contribution) propose works that will provide high or very high environment benefit, they can be funded under Category A.
- Community support and involvement
- Whether the community benefit matches / outweighs the private benefit

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



- What the community benefit is, e.g. improved amenity, reduced pest animal harbour / weed spread, community safety impacts, increased knowledge
- The consequences to the broader community/landscape of inaction.

8. Grant Application Procedure

Step 1 - To apply for an LMIP grant, a short Expression of Interest (EOI) form is available on the LMIP web page of Council's website. After submitting the EOI (via Smarty Grants), a council officer will contact the applicant within 10 working days to discuss the project and usually to arrange a site visit.

Step 2 - If the project appears to be eligible, an application form will be sent to the applicant to provide Council with additional information about the project, such as photos and quotes/ costings.

Step 3 – Applications are assessed monthly. The application will be assessed by Council officers against the LMIP eligibility criteria. The applicant will then be notified of whether their grant application has been successful and of any conditions.

Step 4 – Successful applicants or their contractor can then commence the project works.

Step 5 – At the completion of the project, submission of an acquittal form is required.

All grant administration and assessment processes are housed within the Smarty Grants digital platform and are undertaken in alignment with Council's grant management policy.

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



9. Project approval, payments and acquittals

Final approval of applications lies with Council officers, and follows Council's governance policies and the LMIP eligibility criteria and conditions.

Payment of the grant money depends on the Landholder Agreement being completed, signed and submitted, with the correct supplementary paperwork and photographs.

Payment is made after the works have been undertaken upon receipt of project invoices*.

*On occasion milestone or staged payments may be agreed to where a project involves the progressive implementation of individual elements of a Land Management Plan or similar.

Works must be completed by 30 May in the same financial year as the application. An online project acquittal will be required to be completed by this date in Smarty Grants, with receipts / invoices and before and after photographs of completed works to also be provided. Projects may be audited at an agreed time after the grant has been acquitted.

10. General conditions

1. Past recipients are eligible to apply for funding, however depending on the number of applications received, priority may be given to new applicants.
2. In general, projects are funded for a maximum of three consecutive years, and this occurs only when a multiple-year approach is required to achieve a good outcome. In exceptional circumstances where more than three years treatment is required to achieve success, and a detailed and approved Land Management Plan (or similar) has been submitted, this condition may be varied.
3. Applicants are eligible to be awarded a maximum of one LMIP grant per financial year.
4. Applicants must acquit the grant by the date stated on the Landholder LMIP Agreement.
5. Applicants must acquit previous grants prior to applying for new LMIP funding, and for multi-year projects must provide a long term plan of works which is reviewed prior to each new year of funding.
6. If other funding sources are being utilised by the landowner to undertake the proposed works (e.g. registered offset credit sites), or there is a land management plan required by a Planning decision, the project is ineligible.
7. However, applicants may apply for LMIP funding to use as a co-contribution for grants offered through agencies such as Melbourne Water or the Catchment Management Authority.
8. LMIP grant funding will not be approved in instances where a council Compliance Notice is active at the property address.
9. In exceptional circumstances a non-standard grant that exceeds the standard maximum funding may be considered for approval. In such instances, additional information will

ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES



be required to be submitted and additional governance will be applied to the assessment process. If successful, comprehensive evaluation and reporting will be required.

10. The applicant may be required to repay the grant to Council if the project is not delivered within the specified time schedule, or the completed project differs from the project detailed in the Project Agreement.
11. An inspection /audit of the completed project may be undertaken by a Council officer, at a mutually agreed time.
12. Photographs associated with funded projects may be utilised in Council publications.
13. Data on the invasive species or biodiversity that are targeted via the LMIP grant may be submitted by Council officers to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.

11. Additional rabbit and fox control conditions and eligibility

Funding for rabbit and fox control is only possible where it is demonstrated that a sustained and well-coordinated rabbit or fox control program will be adopted. This must include multiple integrated control methods.

The group must:

- Includes five or more neighbouring properties or cover more than five hectares.
- Demonstrates clear justification that rabbits or foxes are a serious community and environmental problem in this area.
- Have a designated project leader / coordinator of works.

12. Additional deer control conditions and eligibility

Funding for deer control is only possible where it is demonstrated that a sustained and well-coordinated deer control program will be adopted.

Deer control programs must be:

- Planned and undertaken by professional (commercial) pest animal / deer controllers with Public Liability Insurance (\$20 million covering firearms use).
- Carried out in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1975 and all other relevant legislation.

It is important to understand that many peri-urban areas of Nillumbik require a Public Place Permit to carry and use a firearm. As such the program can only provide provisional approval to fund deer control through LMIP until:

- Confirmation has been provided that no Public Place Permit is required, or
- A Public Place Permit is required and a Shoot Plan has been prepared by the appointed contractor and has been approved by Victoria Police (District Firearms Officer)

In addition, to be eligible for consideration for funding the following is required:

- Involvement of five or more neighbouring properties or that cover more than 20 hectares. Together, these properties will be considered a local Deer Action Group.

**ENVIRONMENT
SERVICES**



- A designated / nominated project leader of the Deer Action Group
- A written Plan that includes:
 - a list of property addresses and contact details for the owners of all of the properties that are part of the Deer Action Group
 - a list of goals that the Group hopes to achieve in the short, medium and long-term and a rationale for why the deer control is required
 - a list of the integrated control methods that the Group intends to employ and the approximate timing involved for each method
 - a neighbour notification plan
 - a quote from a professional deer controller
 - advice received from a professional deer controller that confirms that the Deer Control Group comprises sufficient area(s) within its property cluster where control works can be undertaken that will have a meaningful benefit and effect.

Council has produced “Deer control (ground-based shooting)” information, checklists and templates that can be used to assist with the above. They are available on Council’s website on its “Deer management and control” page at: [Deer - Nillumbik](#)

Council also has an online “Community Deer Directory” on its website that can assist you in finding professional businesses and volunteers that offer deer management services in Nillumbik. [Deer - Nillumbik](#)

Attachment 2 - Land Management Incentive Program factsheet

This factsheet outlines:

1. Current operation of the LMIP and associated achievements.
2. Review of the LMIP guidelines, including benchmarking.
3. Recommended changes.

1. Current operation of LMIP

Grant allocation timing

The LMIP program is open year round, commencing 1 July of each financial year, until the grant pool has been expended.

Grant pool

With a total funding pool of \$60,000, the current LMIP has funded an average of 30 grants per year ranging from large Community Group grants up to \$15,000 to smaller \$250 grants to landowners.

Grants require a matching co-contribution from the applicant which may be financial or in-kind.

Promotion

There are a number of ways that residents find out about and access the LMIP. This includes:

- Direct promotion via Council's website, Nillumbik News, Environment E-news, Council's Facebook page and social media posts
- Resident enquiries to the environment and agricultural advisory service may warrant a site visit and, if they fall within the guidelines of the LMIP, they may lead to a grant funded project under LMIP.
- Targeted mail outs occur, particularly to address a specific issue or project and where there are complementary works on public land. For example, 130 residents south of Yarrambat Park were recently specifically contacted to participate in group rabbit control, in conjunction with works occurring at the Yarrambat Golf Course, Pony Club, Historical Society and Archery Club, and to support management of Plenty Gorge Park.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the LMIP, a project must meet the program guidelines.

Private landowners and community groups in the Rural Conservation Zone, Green Wedge Zone or areas under an Environmental Significance Overlay within the Shire of Nillumbik are eligible to apply for a grant under the LMIP. Community groups, for example Landcare, and rabbit action groups can undertake cross-tenure and/or landscape-scale works across multiple properties.

No changes to the criteria for eligible applicants or eligible properties are proposed.

Officers also provide an up front land management advice service to anyone in the community regardless of eligibility. Officers triage enquiries and encourage landowners with eligible projects to apply for the LMIP:

- In FY20/21 out of 223 general land management enquiries, 33 resulted in projects funded through the LMIP.

- Not all projects meet the guidelines for funding, however the education and advice service, including on-site tailored advice, is available to all residents.

The current LMIP guidelines allow for revegetation, weed control, fox control, rabbit control, biodiversity fencing and other non-standard activities to trial new techniques, develop demonstration sites, trials and/or to develop detailed management plans or strategy documents as part of medium or large scale projects.

Deer control isn't explicitly mentioned because it wasn't a big issue in 2011. It is technically eligible under the broader pest animal control category, but hasn't been promoted.

Recent LMIP Outcomes

The LMIP has been funding approximately 30 grants per year, ranging from \$250 small grants, \$2000 medium grants and up to \$15,000 community grants.

Table 1: Number of recent LMIP funded projects, by grant size

Grant size	20/21	19/20	18/19	17/18
Large grants (up to \$15,000)	3	4	12	4
Medium grants (\$250 - \$2000)	27	24	16	20
Small grants (up to \$250)	3	4	2	7
Total	33	32	30	31

Case study of a large community grant:

In 2018/19 Christmas Hills Landcare received a LMIP community grant of \$14,894. In order to facilitate good post-burn regeneration, this project funded the trial of temporary electric fencing to exclude deer and other large herbivores from four traditional burn demonstration sites in Christmas Hills, totalling 2.7 ha. The Christmas Hills Landcare Group worked with the Wurundjeri to establish the four sites. The project was undertaken to support the Wurundjeri to regain traditional burning capacity and demonstrate traditional burning outcomes in Nillumbik. The burns were planned for late Autumn/Winter in 2018. The Wurundjeri undertook the burn plans with each landholder, conducted the burns, and the pre- and post-burn monitoring, costing a total value of \$28,000. The electric fencing supported this project as it enabled a true demonstration of the vegetation and fauna responses to applying traditional burning practices in Christmas Hills, by removing/reducing the grazing pressure of deer and other large herbivores on the post-burn regeneration. Through this project, the Wurundjeri Narrap team was engaged to erect the electric fencing around all the burnt areas after the burns were conducted.

2. Review of the LMIP guidelines

The current LMIP guidelines have not substantially altered since they were adopted in 2011. Minor administrative changes were made in 2014 to strengthen some aspects of the guidelines and costing principles.

Over time, the experience gained through the implementation of the LMIP at Nillumbik and through observing biodiversity/land management incentive programs at other councils has demonstrated a need for an update of some aspects of the current guidelines, particularly the eligibility criteria and categories of funding.

Additions/refinements to the eligibility criteria and categories for funding are based on:

- a) Community enquiry data, based on emerging issues and trends that have been identified with private landowners in the operations of Council's land management advice service
- b) State and federal government policy changes, priorities and mapping.

- c) There is ongoing work with private landowners to maintain the pest plant and animal control which was initiated through the state government funded Sugarloaf Link and Conservation Futures projects. To continue the positive works undertaken within these projects, inclusion of community led deer control and threatened species protection projects may be more explicitly included in new LMIP guidelines.

Benchmarking

It is common practice for peri-urban councils to provide incentives to encourage landowners to undertake environmental works on their properties, effectively raising awareness and motivating landowners to take action on environmental and land management improvements.

The update of the LMIP eligibility criteria involved benchmarking with other councils including Manningham, Whittlesea, Hume and Wyndham councils.

Manningham City Council are the only Council that currently funds deer control through their incentive program. Each year deer control can be funded up to two thirds of the total cost, to a maximum of \$1,000, when carried out in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1975 and the Council's checklist requirements. Manningham's deer control grants are in addition to their LEAF and RELEAF grants.

Officers also considered emerging issues raised by landowners, seeking opportunities to provide support for previously grant funded projects such as Sugarloaf Link and Conservation Futures as well as current best practice in biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management across Victoria.

3. Recommendations for revised LMIP Guidelines

Inclusions to the LMIP eligibility criteria and categories for funding

The LMIP eligibility criteria and funding categories guidelines have been updated to include the ability to:

- a) Respond to new land management and environmental trends and threats,
- b) Provide greater equity and accessibility for landowners
- c) Provide more clarity in terms of what is eligible to be funded and how eligibility decisions are made
- d) Provide more flexibility to incentivise very high biodiversity value projects

The changes and inclusions within the guidelines will also enable support for the continuation of works conducted as part of council's externally funded grants and projects such as Sugarloaf Link and Conservation Futures to be supported.

In addition to those works already specifically identified under the current guidelines, the major changes will include an opportunity to fund projects related to the following:

a. Deer management:

Deer have become an increasing threat across the Shire. The Sugarloaf Link Project has established a successful trial of a model deer control program across the landscape. However, there is a need for this program to continue and expand into other rural areas of Nillumbik to manage deer impacts. Inclusion of community led deer control within LMIP will enable these environmental benefits to continue and assist the community and council to retain the technical knowledge gained through the Sugarloaf Link Project.

Supporting deer control under the original guidelines was possible under the generic category of pest animal control, but not specifically detailed.

b. Cultural burning:

Community interest in indigenous land management practices, particularly traditional burning is growing. The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy 2018 outlines opportunities to expand the knowledge and use of cultural burning on private land. By incorporating this management technique into the eligibility criteria there will be an opportunity to engage and support more private landowners who may wish to work with Traditional Owners to implement Cultural Burning on their land.

c. Sustainable agriculture:

Cleared rural land interacts with adjacent bushland and human settlements and assets. Enhancing the ecological value and function of farmland through promotion of best practice agricultural land management is essential for protection of adjacent biodiversity, resilient food production, healthy waterways and climate change adaptation. On-farm projects in this category could include, for example, trials in integrated pest management strategies for orchards or vineyards, companion planting to promote pollination services and insect diversity or use of software to monitor and manage groundcover.

d. Pasture management improvement:

Well managed pasture can capture and hold carbon, slow the movement of water and provide food and habitat for native fauna. Vigorous pasture swards are also resilient to the establishment of noxious weeds, such as Serrated Tussock and Chilean Needle Grass. Projects in this category could include, for example, drill sowing of native grasses.

e. Works for threatened species conservation:

There is a long history of successful threatened species conservation projects in the area including the state government funded Conservation Futures project. Further support is required to protect previous investment in threatened species conservation and to continue to protect these vital habitats for Nillumbik's threatened species. Some threatened species have very unique management requirements, including many rare native orchids found nowhere else, such as the endangered Rosella Spider-orchid and Charming Spider-orchid. Allowing a more specific criteria that allows for threatened species conservation works under the LMIP will cater to these requirements.

f. Reduced scope to fund invasive tree removal projects:

Support to remove invasive trees such as Radiata Pines where this will achieve high environmental benefit will continue to be an eligible LMIP activity but only up to a maximum co-funding value of \$500. Whilst there is environmental value - such works, particularly for large mature trees, reduce general canopy and have not been a cost-effective use of the LMIP budget compared to other eligible activities.

g. Greater flexibility for very low income residents:

Council officers have been contacted by residents who would like to apply for a LMIP grant however are unable to meet the 50% landholder financial or in-kind contribution required by the grant, due to financial and physical reasons. To increase the accessibility of the grant, residents on very low income such as a disability pension or aged pension will be eligible for 100% funding, if all other grant conditions are met.

4. Revised grant size

The current allocated budget of \$60,000 for LMIP has not changed since 2011.

It is anticipated that with the increase in eligible projects there will be an increase in eligible applications seeking funding.

The changes to the LMIP guidelines propose that a maximum grant of up to \$2,000 is available per single property, or up to \$10,000 for a community led cross-tenure or landscape-scale initiative, per financial year based on the following categories:

- a) Category A. High environment and very high community benefit: 100% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$2,000 (single property) or up to \$10,000 (community-scale initiative)
- b) Category B. High environment and community benefit: 50% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$2,000 (single property) or up to \$10,000 (community-scale initiative)
- c) Category C. Medium environment and community benefit: 50% Council LMIP contribution, up to \$500
- d) Category D: Low environmental and

Where Council provide funding on a dollar for dollar basis (i.e. 50% funding), the applicant must contribute in-kind labour and/or funds or materials equivalent to the grant amount.

Current grant size	Proposed grant size
Community grants (up to \$15,000)	Community-scale grants (up to \$10,000)
Medium grants (\$250 - \$2,000)	Single property grants (up to \$2,000, depending on category)
Small grants (up to \$250)	

Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan (2019 – 2022)

Final Report – Year 1- 4

PRIORITY 1: ACCESS TO SERVICES

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
Develop a policy position for Council that will guide future decision making and participation in service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report went to Council as a Briefing Paper as an FYI in October 2021, with evaluation of Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Officer position, and Social Connection Officer position. • Council's plan at time of transition was to establish Social Connections Officer position, Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Officer position. These roles are in now place and actively supporting older residents in our community through a range of activities, information sessions, and individual support to navigate the aged services system.
Undertake a service delivery review for community based social meals in place of delivered meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based social meals overseen by Social Connections Officer • Regular seniors social lunches planned and delivered in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ April 2022, October 2022 ○ April 2021 ○ None delivered in 2020 ○ October 2019 – as launch of 2019 Seniors Festival • Monthly Coffee and chats sessions established in 2022 at Living & Learning Nillumbik
Develop a transition plan for delivery of alternative supports and services	All clients of exited aged care programs (including delivered meals, personal care, domestic assistance, social support individual, respite care and home maintenance and modifications) have been transitioned to

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
for older people in Nillumbik as a result of the National Aged Care Reform	<p>provider Mecwacare in 2020. (Mecwacare were previously subcontracted by Council to deliver above services)</p> <p>Continued support is provided to clients through Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Service, as well as supporting service providers.</p> <p>Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy officer provides regular free Information and education sessions to community groups on navigating the aged care system, in addition to individual support as required.</p>

PRIORITY 2: INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
Plan and establish an information, advocacy and navigation service which supports older residents and carers to navigate a significantly changed service system and a diverse range of positive ageing programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy Service established in July 2020, and monitors community need for services Episodic support for older residents, their families and carers is provided to assist them to navigate the services and supports available to meet their needs
Develop multiple strategies to disseminate a wide range of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing Well in Nillumbik Newsletters disseminated hard copy and electronically via mail chimp – 4 regular newsletters each year

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
information, events and services relevant to older people in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New regular column written by Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy officer, outlining case studies and examples of support residents can receive ○ In 2020: 4 regular quarterly newsletters and 3 COVID special editions published • Health and wellbeing tips and articles sought from community members, including PAAC members, community groups including Hurstbridge Sow and Grow Club. Rewire Musical Memories choir, Nillumbik U3A, OM:NI groups and others, local funeral homes and shared throughout AWiN newsletters. • Topics include: Dementia support services, emergency management, digital tech help, social connections • Community education sessions delivered in 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 x Mental health and wellbeing sessions in partnership with St Vincent's Healthy Ageing Service: ○ 2 x navigating aged care system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home support services ▪ Home care packages ▪ Residential aged care ○ 1x advanced care planning session ○ Memory concerns • Community education sessions delivered in 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4x Navigating aged care ○ Voluntary assisted dying ○ Advanced care planning ○ Palliative care ○ Ageing well ○ Elder abuse awareness

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grief and loss ○ Dementia prevention and support • Development and dissemination of Positive Ageing Information and Resource Guide in 2021 to community-community groups, residents, via AWIN Newsletter. Translated into Italian, Greek and Chinese – top 3 languages spoken by residents over 65 who are speak a language other than English. • Healthy and Active Ageing Expo held in March 2020 at Eltham High School in partnership with Banyule City Council, with an estimated 500-600 people in attendance. There were multiple components of the expo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main expo hall with 50 exhibitors representing community groups, aged care services, health services, businesses from throughout Nillumbik and Banyule ○ Entertainment from 2 local community choirs ○ Performance by Performing Older Women’s Circus ○ Group based exercise classes – including chair based pilates, belly dancing ○ Information sessions on topics related to healthy ageing such as decluttering, memory, and mindfulness ○ Demonstration of Nillumbik’s new Community Directory ○ Cooking demonstrations
Review current communication and information approaches to ensure continued activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Ageing Advisory Committee have created a Communications Subcommittee, exploring ways that Council can ensure that communication and information for older people is accessible, appropriate and meeting the needs of older residents. The Subcommittee has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instigated and lead the development of a joint submission to the draft Communications Strategy in 2022

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
is meeting community and Council needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided 2 recommendations to Council about customer service standards, and preferences for terms used to describe older people ▪ Provided feedback on the proposed framework for review of the Ageing Well in Nillumbik newsletter
Support carers of older people to be able to access a range of relevant information and resources on supports and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for carers promoted regularly in AWIN newsletter • Supporting local newly developed peer-support network for carers (The Carers Collective) to connect with older carers. • Development and dissemination of Positive Ageing Information and Resource Guide with information specific to carers • Community education sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carer Support information session held in partnership with Merri Health Carer Gateway • Grandparent's morning teas held at St Andrews in 2022, in collaboration with Grandparents Victoria. <p>Recommendations at a local level included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ establish camps for kids in their LGA ○ host social engagements for grandparents, including an annual thankyou reception for grandparents, create a register of respite care providers for use of vulnerable families in the LGA's ○ making it easier for families to install granny flats on their property
Monitor population trends related to older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia Australia data of dementia prevalence by municipality informed development of Dementia Friendly Nillumbik Alliance • 3 focus groups held with Senior Citizens Club members as part of Together in Nillumbik consultation in 2020 • Together in Nillumbik survey completed by PAAC members

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAAC members and community members encouraged to complete COTA Victoria survey on the impact of COVID-19 in 2020 • PAAC members provide observations and insight into emerging issues relating to ageing well in the Shire regularly • Dementia Alliance Group- Open Minds Nillumbik - formed and submitted Draft Action Plan to Dementia Australia for feedback – in progress.

PRIORITY 3: COMMUNITY CONNECTION, RESILIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
Provide education and information to older people and their families to support planning and decision making around end of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education sessions held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advanced Care Planning with Banksia Palliative Care ○ Financial, Medical and Personal Powers of attorney by Office of the Public Advocate ○ Death cafes (for Dying to Know Day) where people are encouraged to have conversations about death and end of life ○ Palliative Care community information session ○ Grief and bereavement ○ Future Planning for carers delivered by Mind Australia (online in 2020) • AWIN Newsletter:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article written by local funeral company destigmatizing conversations about death in Spring 2021 edition • Development of Positive Ageing Information and Resource Guide contains information about palliative care services
Continue to deliver the Nillumbik Neighbours Social Support Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nillumbik Neighbours Social Support Group continues to be delivered at Panton Hill. This group is funded by as part of Council's Commonwealth Home Support Program activities.
Continue to consult and engage with a diverse representation of older people in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAAC consulted on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our People Our Future Our Place – phase 1 and phase 2 consultations ○ Climate action plan ○ Health and Wellbeing plan ○ Presentations to the PAAC: ○ Eltham traffic congestion project ○ Andrews Pocket park grant ○ Municipal Planning Scheme ○ Ageing farmers project ○ Wattle glen public realm framework ○ Community engagement policy ○ Recreation and Leisure Strategy– joint PAAC submission developed and presented to Council ○ Draft Communications Strategy – joint PAAC submission developed and presented to Council • 7 new PAAC members recruited and inducted joining standing PAAC members in Feb 2021 • 'Our People, Our Future, Our Place' community consultation with local multicultural senior citizens groups including Eltham Chinese Senior Citizens Club

<p>Work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop proactive and preventative strategies to support ageing well in Nillumbik</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education sessions about Mental health and Wellbeing in partnership with St Vincent's Healthy Ageing Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 x Low mood, depression ○ 1x Anxiety and stress ○ 2x memory concerns, dementia risk and prevention • Development and dissemination of 'Be in Motion' exercise booklets, developed in collaboration with Aligned Leisure staff. Booklets designed to encourage older residents to exercise safely within their own home. • 8 x Health and Wellbeing Sessions delivered by Bolton Clarke and Living & Learning Nillumbik delivered over zoom in 2020 • Established iPad loan program 38 people have been supported through the iPad loan program to learn how to use ipads • Intergenerational Digital Storytelling Program delivered in 2021 and in 2020, supporting 31 older people, and providing meaningful employment to 11 young people in total during lockdowns: https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Community/Older-people/Projects/Intergenerational-Digital-Storytelling • Tech and Connect program delivered in 2021/22, supporting 12 older people, and providing meaningful employment to 3 young people • Tea, Tech and Tales program delivered in 2019 at St Andrews Community Centre https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Community/Older-people/Projects/Tech-Tea-and-Tales
<p>Develop a social media awareness campaign to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During COVID-19 Lockdowns, 'Be Kind' campaign was promoted throughout Council social media, as well as regular articles in AWIN newsletter

promote 'good neighbor' model support for older people	
Develop a proposal for a future business model to support and facilitate social connection and social participation for older people across Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered and evaluated Trauma Teddies project supporting the Red Cross. Development of business model unable to be completed due to COVID-19. Council is part of external working group to develop a Digital Inclusion Resource guide – in progress Social Connections Officer overseeing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ipad loan program Seniors Social Lunch Digital Storytelling Program Tech & Connect programs Taste Testers sessions at Living & Learning Centres Pathways for Carers

PRIORITY 4: TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
Support Council's advocacy for public transport solutions and responses to ensure older persons needs are included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC consulted on Eltham Traffic congestion project and Wattle Glen public realm framework Council provided feedback on the Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 strategy
Provide training and information to older people on safe travel using public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sessions delivered in 2021 on safe travel on public transport. Attendance at 'safe travel on metro trains' in 2019 was low.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Wiser Driver education programs held in 2021, in Eltham and Hurstbridge. Funding for these programs through Department of Transport grant. Feedback was unanimously positive, with additional funding allocated to run an additional Eltham based program • One Wiser Driver education program held in 2022 in Eltham, funded by Council. • Successful grant application for two more Wiser Driver programs (based in Diamond Creek, St Andrews) scheduled for 2022/23, funded through Department of Transport.
Develop a policy position regarding Council's delivery of community transport to guide further development and integration into universal transport solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transport is delivered as part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2020, 965 trips were made ○ In 2021, 1300 trips were made ○ In 2022, 1749 trips were made ○ 16 volunteers (2023) • Nillumbik Shire Council has a stated Advocacy Priority to seek "increased funding to support the high demand for community transport". Advocacy provided to the Commonwealth and State via Victoria Tasmania Community Transport Alliance (VTCTA) about the need for funding for community transport • Community transport provided to residents with disabilities who are not funded under government programs (eg. NDIS, HACC PYP, CHSP) on an adhoc basis

PRIORITY 5: SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
<p>Assist older people to plan and prepare for disasters and critical incidents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood • Fire • Heat Events • Pandemics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Ageing Well in Nillumbik newsletters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information about COVID-19 and where to get up to date information ○ Information about COVID-19 vaccinations and where to receive the vaccination, and where to contact for more information if people have concerns • Community information sessions about COVID-19 Vaccinations: • Organized COVID-19 Vaccination engagement session with Eltham Chinese Senior Citizens Club. Delivered by Co-health bilingual educators • Two workshops in November 2021, providing practical assistance to older residents and residents with disability to prepare for emergencies in particular bushfires. Delivered by CFA • Emergency Management Pop-up sessions planned in 2022 where anyone with a disability, or older person with care needs is able to get one-one support with a CFA and Red Cross staff member to plan for emergencies such as storms, power outages, bushfires and heatwaves. • Heat health and bushfire preparedness information included in Summer AWiN Newsletters • Emergency relief and COVID-19 Specific services promoted in AWiN newsletter • Welfare calls conducted throughout pandemic lockdown • Community Activation and Social Inclusion initiative (CASI) position distributed masks to vulnerable residents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness workbooks have been provided to support older people and people with a disability to plan according to their needs. Emergency planning drop in sessions were held in partnership with Red Cross and the CFA to support the use of these workbooks
Raise community awareness and enhance community resilience about elder abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder abuse awareness information in Ageing Well in Nillumbik newsletter (Winter 2021) • Inaugural 'Age on the Page' poetry competition in 2021 developed in partnership with Arts and Cultural Development, and Gender Equity officer. Themes encourage participants to challenge ageist stereotypes. Workshop delivered by poet Anne M Carson. • Council website updated with Elder abuse resources for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day • Community wide 'yarnbombing' campaign for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in 2022, installed in public spaces in all townships. • In 2022 Community information session held at Eltham Community Reception Centre with presentation by Seniors Rights Victoria, and local Christine Lister, who spoke about 'ageing disgracefully'. • Elder Abuse event planned for June 15, 2023 to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.
Develop a policy position regarding Council's future role in supporting older people experiencing family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder abuse is embedded into Council's internal Family Violence Policy 2022. • Information specific to elder abuse included as a separate section on Council's webpage with other resources related to family violence for community • Existing internal policy on elder abuse for aged care (CHSP) clients is currently being reviewed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020 Video produced for 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence interviewing local older women about respect: https://www.facebook.com/nillumbikcouncil/videos/137573007924341/
Explore the opportunity for Council to join as a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Age Friendly Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. This will be a key action for the Positive Ageing Officer in 2023/2024
Raise community awareness and enhance community resilience around dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Advisory Committee established a Dementia Subcommittee, exploring ways that Council can support people living with dementia and their carers to live and age well. This group meets monthly and reports to the PAAC. The subcommittee is now disbanded and reformed as a Dementia Friendly Nillumbik Alliance, with a broader membership including people living with dementia, carers and general community members. Delivered 1x online 'Memory concerns, dementia risk prevention and strategies' in partnership with St Vincent's Healthy Ageing Service , and 1 in person session in 2021 Information about dementia services and supports promoted via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AWIN newsletter (Spring 2021) Nillumbik News (Spring 2021) Social media during Dementia Action Week (Sept 20-26) Council's website. Living with dementia - Nillumbik Shire Council Supported community group 'Rewire Musical memories' to promote community choir for people with dementia to networks

PRIORITY 6: HOUSING

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
Develop resources to assist older people to consider and plan for their future housing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on housing options, and homelessness services available in the Positive Ageing Information and Resource Guide Referrals provided to older residents experiencing housing crisis to housing services and financial aid. Information session on Residential Aged Care in 2021 in Greensborough
Advocate for housing diversity and options as people plan to downsize or seek alternative housing options and solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandparents consultation in 2022 identified need for the barriers to installing 'granny flats' on properties to be removed so that pressures on carers and vulnerable families are reduced. Social Connections discussion paper 2022 identified the importance of housing support as a key driver for social connection / isolation Positive Ageing Advisory Committee consulted on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Housing Policy 2020 Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2022 Eltham Activity Centre plan 2020 Diamond Creek Activity Plan 2020 Community Services (Positive Ageing and Disability Inclusion) provided feedback to Housing Strategy draft, Affordable Housing Policy

PRIORITY 7: CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Key Actions	Output/Outcomes
-------------	-----------------

Support and promote volunteering opportunities in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAAC met every month on zoom or in person. Meetings to move to Bi-monthly with the appointment of the new committee in 2023 • Community Connect Network of community group leaders currently managed by Community Partnerships team • Volunteer opportunities regularly promoted through AWIN Newsletters throughout the year, including article in AWIN newsletter about National Volunteer Week • National Volunteer Week events supported by Community Support Services team, PAAC members attended • 24 current Community Transport volunteers • Trauma teddies knitting project engaged 100 knitters throughout the Shire • Intergenerational digital story telling project delivered in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter writing between young and old – residents of aged care facilities St Vincent's Eltham, Estia Health Wattle Glen, Kerala Manor and retirement village Koorringa Close received handwritten letters from children and students throughout May 2020 in response to lockdown
Facilitate research into the needs of mature age workforce participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting desktop research about experiences of mature aged workers. Data specific to Nillumbik is limited • Ongoing



Nillumbik Shire Council

Ageing Well in Nillumbik


Action Plan 2019-2022





NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL

 Civic Centre
Civic Drive
Greensborough Vic 3088
 9433 3111
 9433 3777
 nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

 nillumbik.vic.gov.au
 facebook.com/nillumbikcouncil
 twitter.com/nillumbikshire
 PO Box 476
Greensborough Vic 3088

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit relayservice.gov.au

Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the traditional custodians of the land now known as the Shire of Nillumbik and values the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the Shire.

Nillumbik Shire Council

Ageing Well in Nillumbik

Action Plan 2019-2022

CONTENTS

Definition of terms	4
Introduction	6-7
Background to the National Aged Care Reform	8
Council's role in the National Aged Care Reform	10-11
Age-Friendly Cities and Communities	13
Community Change as Drivers for Action	14
Community Consultation and Engagement	16
Distribution of people aged over 55 in Nillumbik	17-18
Ageing Well Facts and Figures	19-20
Ageing Well Vision and Priorities	21
Ageing Well Strategic Framework	22
Ageing Well Action Plan	23-32

Ageing Well in Nillumbik

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Aged Care Reform	<p>The Australian Government is progressively implementing changes to the aged care system. This is in response to the growing population of older people and the challenges facing the current aged care system. The changes seek to create a better system to give older people more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of aged care services.</p> <p>More information is available on the Department of Health website agedcare.health.gov.au/aged-care-reform</p>
Age friendly cities	<p>Age friendly cities and communities are places where older people live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved. Guiding the development of Age Friendly places is a process that actively involves older people in decision-making, implementation and evaluation of a plan of action to bring about sustainable change.</p>
Commonwealth Home Support Program	<p>The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is one of the changes made by the Australian Government to the aged care system to help older people stay independent and in their homes and communities for longer. The CHSP provides entry-level home support for frail older people who need assistance to keep living independently.</p>
Consumer Directed Care	<p>Consumer Directed Care (CDC) is a model of service delivery designed to give more choice and flexibility to consumers. Consumers who receive a Home Care Package will have more control over the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who delivers the services and when.</p>
Council	<p>Nillumbik Shire Council; within the context of this guide that also includes Councillors, employees, agents and contractors of Council.</p>
My Aged Care	<p>My Aged Care is the main entry point to the aged care system in Australia. My Aged Care aims to make it easier for older people, their families, and carers to access information on ageing and aged care, have their needs assessed and be supported to find and access services. It includes the My Aged Care website myagedcare.gov.au and the My Aged Care contact centre 1800 200 422.</p>
Positive Ageing Advisory Committee	<p>The Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) acts as a formal mechanism within Council in which community representatives can discuss, advise and action ideas around opportunities and challenges related to positive ageing in Nillumbik. Their goal is for Nillumbik to have an older population (aged 55 and over) who is informed, connected and supported to live well and age even better.</p>
Regional Assessment Service	<p>The Regional Assessment Service (RAS) is for people 65 years and over or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is a face to face Assessment undertaken by a trained Home Support Assessor to work out a person's aged care service needs and to refer them to appropriate Commonwealth Home Support Programme services. RAS is for older people who have low level needs. This means that they can remain in their home, but need some assistance with daily activities such as house cleaning or shopping.</p>



Ageing Well in Nillumbik

INTRODUCTION

Nillumbik's older residents are vibrant, active and valued members of our local community. Contributing to our social, economic and community success, our older residents are a rich resource of knowledge and ideas and offer significant benefit to our Shire. By 2036 we expect the number of people over the age of 65 years to grow by 73% and make up 20% of our total population¹.

Levels of disadvantage vary across local government areas in Victoria, and within each local government area. Overall, the population of Nillumbik is at the higher end of the socio-economic gradient in Victoria. This means that in many aspects, the population of Nillumbik enjoys better than average health and wellbeing. Our relatively healthy population also demonstrates that Nillumbik provides an environment that fosters good health. The Nillumbik community have a strong level of engagement with green space and the arts, which is a protective factor for both physical and mental health. Additionally, Nillumbik's strong sense of connectivity, cohesiveness and trust in its neighbourhoods contribute to people's overall feeling of wellbeing.

A commonly used measure of socio-economic status in Australia is the Socio-economic index for Areas (SEIFA) and Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD).

The IRSD is a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. The IRSD is standardised so the Australian average is 1000, and individuals are compared against this benchmark.

Overall, in 2016 Nillumbik had a SEIFA IRSD score of 1099, indicating that the economic and social conditions of people and households within Nillumbik are well above the national average. A higher score indicates relatively greater advantage in general. Nillumbik has one of the highest SEIFA IRSD scores in Victoria, indicating it has less disadvantage on average than other municipalities

However, there are certain wide-spread health inequalities persist within our municipality, affecting different population groups in different ways. For example, the growth in the ageing population of Nillumbik means that particular issues faced by the older population will increase. These include limited transportation options, social and geographic isolation, limited housing options and access to services and facilities.

1

Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2036, prepared by .id, the population experts, October 2017

Ageing Well in Nillumbik

INTRODUCTION CONT..

In 2015 the Commonwealth Government's National Aged Care Reform commenced across Victoria. This reform introduced significant changes to the funding and delivery of aged care services, including changes to the way in which Council participates in the delivery of outcomes to our older residents.

As a signatory to the Age Friendly Declaration in 2016, Council has confirmed its commitment to working with other tiers of Government and our community to create an age friendly community as a contribution to Council's vision of Nillumbik as Australia's most liveable Shire.

Community consultation and Council's Positive Ageing Advisory Committee has provided the opportunity to clarify our future focus and ensure the needs and priorities that were identified as most important, are adequately resourced.

The Action Plan has been developed as part of an integrated set of Council plans to contribute to community outcomes and has a specific focus on priorities actions and activities to strengthen, benefit and resource older people, their carers and families across Nillumbik.



BACKGROUND

to the National Aged Care Reform

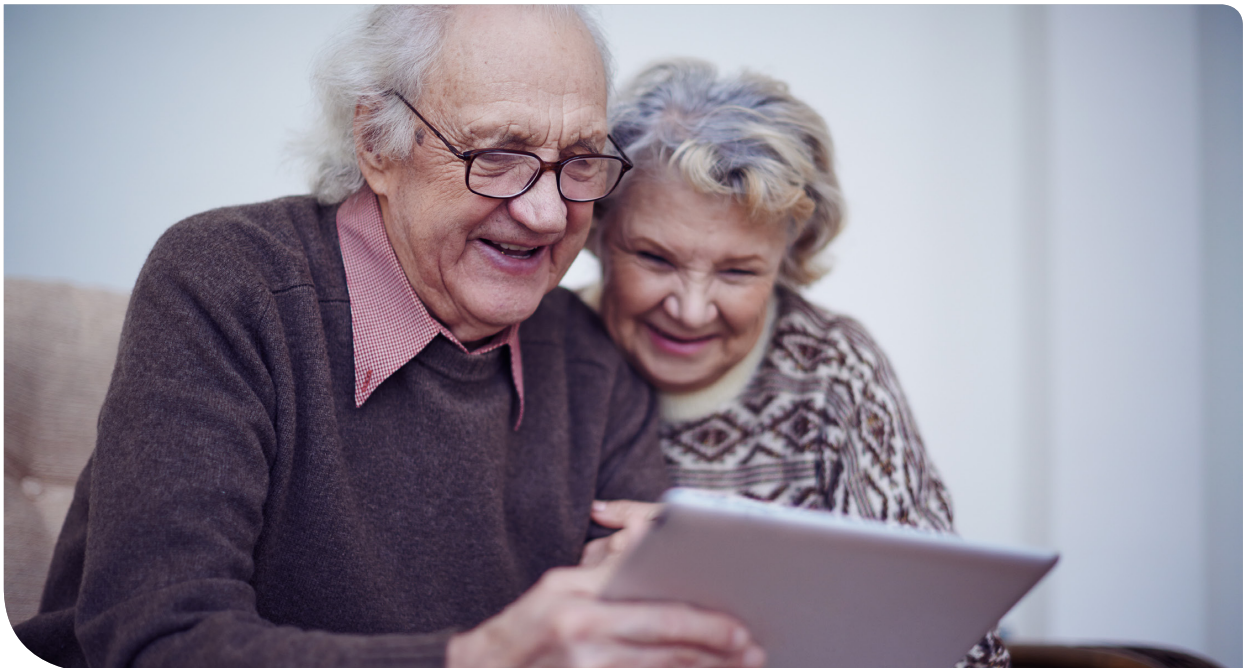
In July 2016 the Commonwealth Government assumed full funding, policy and operational responsibility for services provided to older people under the Home and Community Care (HACC) program in Victoria and these services are now delivered under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

For more than 30 years, Victorian Local Government has been supporting older people, people with disabilities, their carers and families to live independently in their community. Following the Commonwealth Government decision to undertake a national reform of the aged care and disability service systems in 2013, arrangements for the delivery of services to older people are undergoing a transformational change.

Access to all services is now via the My Aged Care gateway and assessment of service eligibility is undertaken by the Regional Assessment Service (RAS). Service types, service levels and service guidelines are determined by the Commonwealth as part of a transition to create a national aged care system.

These changes mean that Council no longer has a role in determining priority of access to services or service levels and Council is no longer the preferred provider of these support services. The Commonwealth Government now funds multiple providers to deliver these CHSP services.

The planned introduction of the Aged Care Reform priority known as Consumer Directed Care (CDC) is intended to provide older people seeking service support with greater choice over the types of care and services they access, how and when those services are delivered and who delivers them. The Consumer Directed Care model supports a competitive market driven model that enables client choice in the delivery of services and the service provider.





COUNCIL'S ROLE

in the National Aged Care Reform

Council has considered the best way to respond to the National Aged Care Reform and to respond to the needs and priorities of older people their carers and families into the future. Three important roles for Council are identified to support the vision for all residents to live and age well in Nillumbik. These are:

Planning and advocacy

Council will continue to:

- Plan for the current and emerging needs and aspirations of an ageing population.
- Encourage and attract services and supports in response to identified need and work in partnership with other tiers of government to strengthen access and opportunities for older people in Nillumbik.
- Advocate for funding to address the needs of the older community, the delivery of services, solutions and effective responses to identified priorities and needs.

Partnerships and community strengthening

Council will:

- Provide collaborative and consultative leadership that will strengthen internal partnerships to support integrated and cross organisational approaches to best meet the needs of older people.
- Establish new and strengthen established partnerships with aged care sector and community partners.
- Work toward building a robust service system to provide choice opportunity and options for older people living in Nillumbik.
- Work closely with the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee.
- Consult, engage and partner with older people, their carers and families to strengthen social connection, participation and opportunities to build age friendly communities across Nillumbik.

Service provision

Council will continue to:

- Assess and respond to the National Aged Care reform and seek to attract adequate funding, diverse and quality service providers and innovation in the delivery of services and supports to older people living in Nillumbik.
- Address barriers to access and actively participate in the provision of services and facilities to enable the participation and inclusion of older people in community life.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

continued...

In late 2018 Councils Futures Committee adopted a number of resolutions to guide and support a considered response to the National Aged Care Reform. The resolutions include:

- Transition from the delivery of highly subsidised services which can be offered by other providers in the market based aged care system by June 2020.
- Realign Councils role in supporting older people toward improving the opportunities and choices for older residents to live and age well in Nillumbik by;
 - » Establishing an information advocacy and navigation service which supports older residents and carers to navigate a significantly changed service system and a diverse range of positive ageing programs.
 - » Continuing to provide Community Transport and conduct a service delivery review.
 - » Developing a business model for social connection and social participation.
 - » Undertaking a service delivery review for community based social meals in place of delivered meals for Council consideration.
- Continue to deliver Regional Assessment Services until such point that the Commonwealth and State Governments determine the future operating and funding model and then review Council's role.
- Continue to engage with the PAAC as part of the transition process and service delivery reviews.
- Develop and resource a transition plan to effectively implement these changes.





AGE-FRIENDLY

cities and communities



Social participation



Communication and information



Housing



Transportation



Community support and health services



Outdoor spaces and buildings



Civic participation and employment



Respect and social inclusion

In an age-friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively.

In 2007 the World Health Organisation (WHO) released a guide to assist government to create age friendly cities. *Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide* identifies eight domains that support age friendliness in communities which are illustrated above.

These domains reflect and align with the priorities identified through consultation with older people in Nillumbik in 2018 and are reflected in this action plan.

In 2016 Nillumbik Shire Council became a signatory to the *Age Friendly Declaration* confirming Council's commitment to work with the State Government to create liveable communities for older Victorians.

In signing this declaration, Council has made a commitment to build the age friendly capacity of its local communities by:

- Promoting and planning for age friendly communities.
- Empowering older people and ensuring their input and engagement.
- Encouraging the participation and involvement of older people in issues of priority to them.
- Responding to the eight domains as illustrated above.
- Valuing engagement and partnerships with older people.

COMMUNITY CHANGE

as drivers for action

Ageing population

Nillumbik's population is growing older with people aged 65-85 years expected to increase 73% by 2036, representing 20% of people living in Nillumbik¹. Ensuring public places and spaces are accessible and age friendly and that structures and systems engage and involve older people are priorities for the future. Sustainable services, supports and the meaningful participation of older people in social, economic, civic and community life will contribute to Councils Vision for Nillumbik to be Australia's most liveable Shire.

Households

40% of households in Nillumbik are households without children of which 24.7% are couples without children and 13.8% are lone person households². Additionally a number of older people living in Nillumbik have limited or no family supports and may become vulnerable if services, supports and opportunities to participate are not accessible. Access to transport, health services, retail and community spaces will continue to be critical connections for people to age well in Nillumbik.

Housing options

The range of housing options available to older people across Nillumbik is limited and impacts their options to remain in the local community as their needs and lifestyle changes. This includes opportunities to downsize; to access social, shared and other housing models; and supported care options including retirement and residential aged care.

Economic factors

For many people the family home is their main asset and may be relied upon to support and fund housing, health and related needs as they age. The effect of being "asset rich and income poor" also impacts older people across the community. Reliable information and advice; access to housing and service options and confidence in accessing home modifications and maintenance services to enable older people to remain living in their homes are important resources to secure choice and control in older peoples decisions.

Social isolation

The opportunity to establish and maintain connections to community, to remain active and healthy and to participate in social, economic and community life and other activities of living can be a challenge for many older residents, particularly when circumstances change, such as the loss of a life partner, illness or disability.



1 Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2036, prepared by .id, the population experts, October 2017
2 ABS Census 2016



COMMUNITY

consultation and engagement

The Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan has been developed in partnership with the Nillumbik Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC). Two consultation workshops with the PAAC informed the plans priorities and to develop relevant and meaningful actions for implementation. A sub group of the PAAC confirmed the title of the plan and developed the vision statement to guide Council's commitment.

Two additional consultation processes informed the development of this Action Plan:

'What do you need to live and age well in Nillumbik' survey

The survey provided the opportunity to consult older people, their carers and families and the broader Nillumbik community to identify current and future needs and priorities. The feedback provided and findings emerging from the consultation processes were compelling, with four priorities emerging for Council's further consideration. These are:

1. Support and assistance to get the right services and information to be able to make independent decisions and access services.
2. Access to transport options to assist me to maintain my independence and reduce my isolation.
3. Reduce social isolation and loneliness through service programs and initiatives that maintain and improve social connection and assist to address related health and wellbeing concerns, including activities for mobility.
4. Access to health services, retail precincts facilities and places.

'Meeting older people's needs for social connection and to live independently at home' (Ideas Hack)

In 2018 Nillumbik Shire Council partnered with five other NMR councils to facilitate an "Ideas Hack". Formally titled "Meeting older people's needs for social connection and to live independently at home" the consultation and engagement workshop and subsequent activities provided an opportunity to ask the broad question "What do our older residents need to age well into the future?"

Drawing on the feedback and findings from the six individual community consultations undertaken by the participating NMR councils, 60 community agencies, service providers, advocacy and other groups contributed ideas and insights regarding the needs of older people and discussed a range of ideas for how councils could support the building of more coherent, coordinated sector.

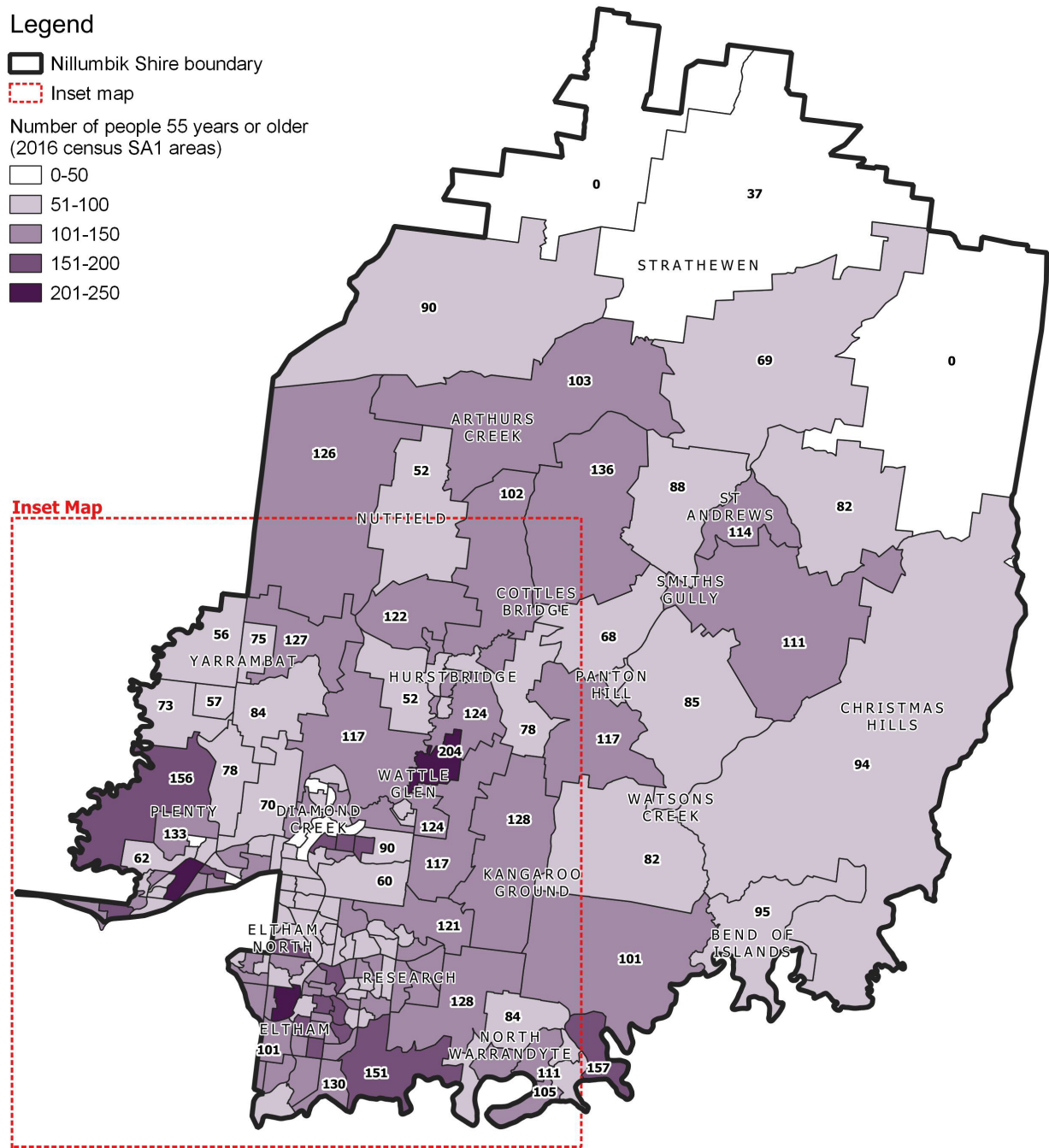
Three major needs across the Northern Metropolitan Region also consistent with the priorities emerging from the 'Live and Age Well in Nillumbik' survey, were identified as:

1. Social connection and social participation.
2. Services and supports to help people live independently at home.
3. Information as needs change.

The Action Plan commits to continued consultation and engagement with the PAAC and community to support and guide implementation and identifies strategies to consult with older residents progressively through the life of this plan.

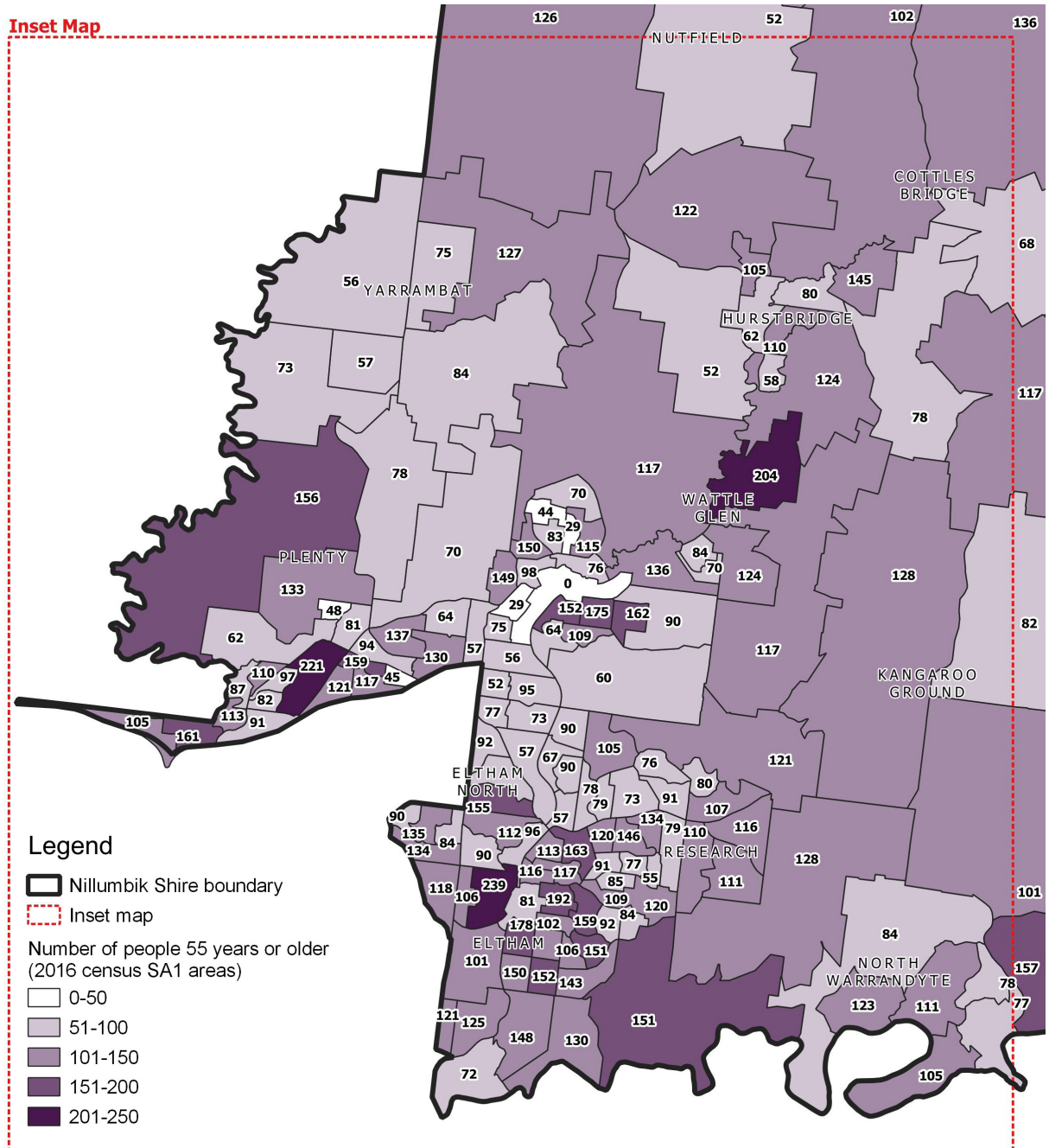
DISTRIBUTION

of people aged over 55 in Nillumbik



DISTRIBUTION

of people aged over 55 in Nillumbik



The maps on pages 17 and 18 represents the distribution of people aged 55 years and over living within Nillumbik Shire, according to data collected in the 2016 Census. The three geographical areas highlighted with the highest number of residents aged 55 years and over (between 201-250 residents) aligns with where residential aged care facilities are located within the Shire.

AGEING WELL

facts and figures

Older people



8,035 people over 65 now live in Nillumbik

- 51% are female and 49% are male
- 17% are over the age of 80
- 12% need assistance with core activities

Source: ABS Census 2016

By 2036 the number of people aged 65-85 will increase another 73% to 14,115 people and will represent 20% of the Nillumbik population.

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2036, prepared by .id , the population experts, October 2017.

Older person households (aged 65 years or older)

- 10.3% of households are older couples without children
- 6.1% are older lone persons
- 10% of households speak a language other than English
- Main languages spoken at home other than English include Italian, Greek, German, Macedonian and Mandarin



Source: ABS Census 2016.

AGEING WELL

facts and figures

Health



- By 2050 the number of people with dementia will increase by 900%
- The **total number** of people living with dementia in Nillumbik will increase by 7% each year

Source: NATSEM, University of Canberra, January 2016. Commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia Vic

Health priorities for older people in Nillumbik include anxiety, depression, arthritis, mental health, cancer and heart disease

Source: Victorian Population Health Survey 2014.

Work and income



- 1,010 men and 629 women over 65 years are employed full or part time
- 1,824 people over the age of 65 volunteer with organisations or groups

Source: ABS Census 2016

- **48%** of older person households depend on the age pension

Source: Social Health Atlas of Australia, Victoria. Data by Local Government Area. Published 2018: November 2018.

AGEING WELL

vision and priorities

Council's Positive Ageing Advisory Committee developed the following vision and identified seven priorities for Council action in response to the National Aged Care Reform and to ensure that all residents can live and age well in Nillumbik.

VISION

Nillumbik residents will live and age well in healthy and safe communities that are inclusive and respectful.

PRIORITIES

- | |
|--|
| 1. Access to services |
| 2. Information and advocacy |
| 3. Community connection, resilience and engagement |
| 4. Transport and mobility |
| 5. Safe and healthy communities |
| 6. Housing |
| 7. Civic participation |

AGEING WELL

strategic framework

The Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022 joins an integrated set of plans developed by Council to guide the development and growth of Nillumbik. It is directly influenced by the National Reform of Aged Care and Disability services, Council's commitment to creating an age friendly community and will inform the work across Council and with older people, to guide and be guided in the implementation of identified actions and priorities.

The Action Plan will contribute to the goals and priorities of Council's key strategic plans. These include;

- Plan suitable housing for changing community needs.
- Ensure the effective participation of older people in social and civic activities.

Disability Action Plan

- Reducing barriers to people with a disability accessing Council goods, services and facilities.
- Reducing barriers to people with a disability in the area of employment.
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community.
- Achieving tangible changes in attitude and practices that discriminate against people with a disability.

Council Plan 2017-2021

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

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021

Support healthy ageing by:

- Working to ensure public spaces and buildings are designed to be age friendly.
- Supporting access to transportation to enable older people to remain physically active socially connected and able to access shops, health facilities and other essential services.

Gender Equity Framework

- Improve gender equity, safety and respectful relationships in the workplace.
- Ensure our services and facilities are gender equitable, safe and inclusive.
- Raise community awareness of gender equity and respectful relationships.
- Increase the promotion of gender equitable and non-violence messages through communications and social marketing.
- Collaborate with other organisations and community groups to collectively work towards preventing violence against women.

AGEING WELL

Action Plan

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 1 : Access to Services					
Develop a transition plan for delivery of alternative supports and services for older people in Nillumbik as a result of the National Aged Care Reform.	Continue to engage with Council's Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) as part of the transition process and service delivery reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) Community Programs Unit 	All clients are transitioned to another provider	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP
Develop a policy position for Council that will guide future decision making and participation in service delivery	Produce a discussion paper that highlights Council's position on service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC Community Support Services 	Discussion paper is produced and endorsed by Council	June 2020	
Undertake a service delivery review for community based social meals in place of delivered meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for social meals programs with community Identify partnership opportunities to implement and embed new service model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC healthAbility Diamond Valley Community Support Other LGA's 	Social support program is developed and implemented	June 2019	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 2 : Information and Advocacy					
Plan and establish an information, advocacy and navigation service which supports older residents and carers to navigate a significantly changed service system and a diverse range of positive ageing programs.	Explore existing models and co-design a business proposal for an information, advocacy and navigation service in consultation with the PAAC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Programs Unit PAAC 	Model is developed and endorsed by Council	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP
Develop multiple strategies to disseminate a wide range of information, events and services accessible to older people in Nillumbik	Disseminate information through a range of channels that are accessible for everyone including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Information Sessions Ageing Well in Nillumbik (AWiN) Newsletter Facebook Flyers / brochures Newspaper Website Libraries Service providers Develop a Shire wide calendar of events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services Corporate Affairs Marketing Community Strengthening Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries healthAbility Bolton Clarke Mecwacare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x quarterly newsletters are distributed annually in hard copy and electronic formats 4x quarterly community information sessions are delivered annually 	Ongoing 2019-2022	
Review current communication and information approaches to ensure continued activity is meeting community and Council needs	Survey older residents and clients to understand how they access information by building relevant questions into existing annual surveys delivered by Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services Positive Ageing Officer PAAC Nillumbik Community Corporate Affairs Marketing Governance 	Survey questions are developed and incorporated into Council's annual household and satisfaction surveys	September 2019 and ongoing annually	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 2 : Information and Advocacy continued...					
Support carers of older people to be able to access a range of relevant information and resources on supports and services	Survey carers to understand how they access information by building relevant questions into existing annual surveys delivered by Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Support Services• Positive Ageing Officer• PAAC• Nillumbik Community• Corporate Affairs• Marketing• Seniors Rights Victoria• Dementia Australia• healthAbility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey questions are developed and incorporated into Council's annual household and service satisfaction surveys• Information is available and accessible to Nillumbik residents	September 2019 and ongoing annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES• RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP
Monitor population trends related to older people	Utilise existing data sources to inform service planning and community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive Ageing Officer• Social Planning and Policy Officer• Community Support Services• ABS	Older people's needs are addressed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocacy• Policy• Service and program delivery	Ongoing	
Priority 3 : Community Connection, Resilience and Engagement					
Provide education and information to older people and their families to support planning and decision making around end of life	<p>Information session delivered in partnership with Seniors Rights Victoria</p> <p>Information provided through AWIN Newsletter and other relevant channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive Ageing Officer• Community Support Services• COTA Victoria• Corporate Affairs• Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 x information session is delivered annually• 1 x article included in AWIN newsletter on an annual basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dying to Know Day 8 August 2019 and ongoing• Winter edition 2019 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES• ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES• ACTIVE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE• A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 3 : Community Connection, Resilience and Engagement continued...					
Develop a social media awareness campaign to promote 'good neighbor' model support for older people	Investigate existing model and campaigns Co-design a social media communication strategy in consultation with the PAAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Ageing Officer • Community Support Services • Corporate Affairs • Marketing • Community Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media campaign is developed and rolled out on Facebook by 2021 	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
Develop a proposal for a future business model to support and facilitate social connection and social participation for older people across Nillumbik	Work in partnership with North East Healthy Communities and other LGA's to consider potential models that address social isolation and encourage social participation across Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support services • North East Health Communities • Other LGA's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business model is developed • Pilot project tested and evaluated 	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES • ACTIVE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE
Continue to deliver the Nillumbik Neighbors Social Support Group	Explore opportunities to expand program model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nillumbik Neighbours Social Support Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is fully utilised • Program addresses the social needs of older people in the Northern region of the Shire 	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 3 : Community Connection, Resilience and Engagement continued...					
Continue to consult and engage with a diverse representation of older people in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen and consolidate the role of the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee (PAAC) to support consultation and engagement with older people, their carers and families Develop a consultation and engagement approach that ensures the voice of older people is included in planning, decision making and strategy development throughout Council Engage with Council departments and services to explore ways in which the voice of older people may strengthen and support planning and development of councils services and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer PAAC Community Engagement Officers Inclusion Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC consulted on a range of Council projects Townships and facilities within Nillumbik are progressively inclusive and accessible to older people 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ACTIVE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY
Work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop proactive and preventative strategies to support ageing well in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver free health and wellbeing sessions in partnership with Bolton Clarke Explore opportunities to incorporate activities into Council's Social Support Group that encourage health and wellbeing such as physical activity, falls prevention, healthy eating etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer Bolton Clarke Community Support Services Nillumbik Neighbours Support Group PAAC healthAbility North East Healthy Communities Living & Learning Nillumbik Eltham Leisure Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series of information sessions delivered throughout the year Minimum of 1 x health and wellbeing activity or program with an older person focus developed and implemented 	2019 and ongoing December 2021	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 4 : Transport and mobility					
Conduct a Community Transport service delivery review to ensure the delivery model best responds to the new aged care service system and contributes to community outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey older adults to understand needs for community transport Explore and activate shared transport models that may address and meet community need (e.g., linking in with existing transport providers such as LINK and LINC) Develop partnerships with neighbouring LGA's to enhance available services to local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services LINK Community Transport LINC Positive Ageing Officer Banyule City Council Whittlesea City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in the number of residents that have access to transport services to access shops, social activities and health services 	August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS
Support Council's advocacy for public transport solutions and responses to ensure older persons needs are included	Utilise the PAAC to provide advice and feedback around community public transport needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC Transport Advocacy Officer Positive Ageing Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older people's needs are represented in advocacy campaign 	Ongoing	
Support Council's work in the planning and delivery of bus shelters, footpaths, seating, lighting, road crossings, signage, charge points and other infrastructure that will support the mobility of older people with safety and confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the PAAC is included in consultation and engagement on the planning and delivery of a range of projects across Council Explore the opportunity to develop mobility maps to assist residents to navigate the Shire and to encourage activity and community connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAC Transport and Development Infrastructure Unit Statutory planning Community Inclusion Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobility maps developed and distributed to support accessibility of activity precincts 	June 2022	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 4 : Transport and mobility continued...					
Provide training and information to older people on safe travel using public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in partnership with Metro Trains to deliver 'safe travel on metro trains' session across community• Promote information on public transport travel to older adults in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Metro Trains• Positive Ageing Officer• Victorian Seniors Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum of 2 training sessions run annually• Information on public transport included in annual Seniors Festival program	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS
Develop a policy position regarding Council's delivery of community transport to guide further development and integration into universal transport solutions	Produce a discussion paper that highlights Council's Policy position on community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Support Services• Community Transport Officer• Positive Ageing Officer• PAAC• Corporate Affairs• Marketing			
Priority 5 : Safe and healthy communities					
Assist older people to plan and prepare for disasters and critical incidents including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• flood• fire• heat events• pandemic	Promote awareness through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community information sessions• Facebook / social media• AWIN Newsletter• Information packs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Management• Positive Ageing• Community Support Services• Corporate Affairs• Marketing• Community Inclusion Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 x community safety information session held annually• Information on fire preparedness & heat health included in Summer edition of AWIN newsletter• Heat and fire danger alerts posted on Council's Facebook page• Emergency Management toolkit created to support older people and people with a disability	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 5 : Safe and healthy communities continued...					
Raise community awareness and enhance community resilience around elder abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise community awareness on elder abuse through information sessions Provide elder abuse information and training to Council staff and volunteers working with older people Develop a resource kit of local information to support older people experiencing Family Violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services Positive Ageing Officer Organisational Development Family Support and Gender Equity Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information session held around World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Elder abuse training is provided to all Council staff and volunteers Resource kit developed and community have access to information and advice 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS
Develop a policy position regarding Council's future role in supporting older people experiencing family violence	Work with Council's Family Support and Gender Equity Officer to ensure Elder Abuse is incorporated into Council's work on Family Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer Family Support and Gender Equity Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elder abuse is addressed as part of Council's Prevention of Family Violence work 	December 2019	
Explore the opportunity for Council to join as a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Age Friendly Network	Understand requirements for Council to become a member of the WHO Global Age Friendly Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer Relevant Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council obtains membership to the WHO Global network 	December 2022	
Raise community awareness and enhance community resilience around dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and awareness of dementia throughout Dementia Awareness Month (Sep) Explore opportunity of developing a dementia alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer Dementia Australia Carers Link North Bolton Clarke 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 1 awareness session held annually Information included in AWIN newsletter Community Alliance for Dementia explored and developed 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2022</p>	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 6 : Housing					
Advocate for housing diversity and options as people plan to downsize or seek alternative housing options and solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the current and future housing needs for older people across Nillumbik • Support the development of Council's Housing Strategy and ensure the needs of older people are considered and included • Investigate intergenerational housing options and models • Participate in master planning and advocacy processes to enhance options, spaces and places for older people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support Services • Positive Ageing Officer • PAAC • Integrated Strategy • Community Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A contribution to Council's Housing strategy and a policy position is developed in consultation with PAAC and older residents 	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS
Develop resources to assist older people to consider and plan for their future housing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FAQ's information sheet • Hold a Community information session on Housing options • Promote available services to support older people through residential and aged care processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support Services • Positive Ageing Officer • PAAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ sheet produced and distributed • Community information session delivered regarding housing options • Information on available housing related services provided through AWiN newsletter 	April 2021	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION	PARTNERS	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	COUNCIL PLAN GOALS
Priority 6 : Housing continued...					
Investigate the development of local short term emergency housing in response to elder abuse	Work in partnership with local service providers and aged care facilities to understand the capacity for short term accommodation in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services Service Providers Aged Care Facilities St Vincent's 	Options identified and agreements for short term housing developed	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS
Priority 7: Civic Participation					
Support and promote volunteering opportunities in Nillumbik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate older adult community group leaders network to provide the opportunity to share, inform and discuss topics to build the capacity and enhance volunteering in Nillumbik Recognise and celebrate Council volunteers through a range of events and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Ageing Officer Community Development Officer Community Development Officer - Volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Group Leaders Network re-established Volunteers are recognised through annual NVW event 	December 2019 May 2019 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENGAGED CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ACTIVE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE
Facilitate research into the needs of mature age workforce participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) to better understand the local needs of a mature aged workforce in Nillumbik Shire Draw upon research findings to raise awareness on the benefits of mature aged employment to local business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Support Services Positive Ageing Officer PAAC Business Development and Tourism Officer Centrelink Berry Street Seniors Rights Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature aged employment is promoted and encouraged amongst local employers 	June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY



NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL Civic Drive, Greensborough | PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088
Telephone 9433 3111 | Facsimile 9433 3777 | Email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

 facebook.com/nillumbikcouncil  twitter.com/nillumbikshire  nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Ageing well in Victoria

An action plan for
strengthening wellbeing
for senior Victorians
2022–2026



To receive this document in another format email the
Office for Senior Victorians, <seniorsprojects@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government,
1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families,
Fairness and Housing, June 2022.



With the exception of any images, photographs or branding (including, but not limited to the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing logo), this work, *Ageing well in Victoria: an action plan for strengthening wellbeing for senior Victorians 2022–2026*, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence.

The terms and conditions of this licence, including disclaimer of warranties and limitation of liability are available at
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>>

You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria, Australia (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) as the author, indicate if any changes have been made to the work and comply with the other licence terms.

The cover image and page four shows models and an illustrative setting. The other images of senior Victorians are used with consent. Pages 13, 18, 22, 28, 33, 34, 40, 42 – University of the Third Age (U3A) Victoria Network. This document may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

ISBN 978-1-76096-777-2 (print)

ISBN 978-1-76096-778-9 (online/PDF/Word)

Available at the **Seniors Online website**

<www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/ageing-well-action-plan>

(2202185)

Minister's foreword



Our state is better off because of the significant contributions of senior Victorians. It's why we are ensuring they are appreciated, respected and enabled to live well later in life.

That means a high quality of living, the ability to spend time with loved ones, the opportunity to pursue hobbies and interests, and the financial stability and community support to achieve the things seniors want.

It's what every Victorian deserves as they reach this next stage of life.

That's why the Victorian Government has developed the Victorian Ageing Well Action Plan. It outlines the Victorian Government's vision to support Victorians to age well, so seniors can participate and contribute to their communities while staying close to family – whether this is in their own home, with a family member or in aged care.

The Action Plan supports Victorians from all backgrounds to connect socially and to live healthy, active, and purposeful lives. The plan's actions are based on the lived experience of older people and will be undertaken in partnership with community organisations, peak bodies, local government, and government services.

It will lead to better outcomes for older Victorians.

I thank the Commissioner for Senior Victorians and the members of the Senior Victorians Advisory Group for their contribution to the Action Plan and their passionate commitment to supporting older people in Victoria.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Brooks'.

Hon Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Contents

Minister's foreword	3
Acknowledgements	6
Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Victoria	6
Treaty with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians	6
Victoria's seniors	7
Our vision	10
Ageing in place	10
Ageing well in Victoria	11
Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	14
What government will do – Ageing well in Victoria action plan	15
Action areas	15
An 'ageing well lens'	16
Delivering in partnership and by listening	16
Resilient, connected seniors	19
Tech-savvy seniors	23
Valuing senior Victorians	27
Health self-care	35
Next steps	41

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Victoria

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we rely. We celebrate that Australia is rich in living Aboriginal culture, based on the values of reciprocity and respect for Elders and Country.

Treaty with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians

In Victoria, through treaty, there will be an important shift in the relationship between the State and Traditional Owners and First Peoples. This shift may enable greater Aboriginal control over decision making. The Victorian Government commits to working proactively to support this work in line with the aspirations of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

Ageing well in Victoria will involve regular reviews. This is so the plan may evolve or be updated to align with the Victorian treaty process, including actions, activities and supporting governance arrangements.

Victoria's seniors

Victoria's population is ageing.¹ In 2021 there were almost 1.5 million Victorians aged 60 years or older. This represents 22 per cent of the total population. By 2046 that number is expected to increase by around 60 per cent to more than 2.3 million people. By that point, about 25 per cent of the population will be 60 years of age or older.

The older population will increase more quickly than younger cohorts. Compared with the 60 per cent increase in the older population over the next 25 years, the population aged 20 to 59 years is expected to grow by 40 per cent. This younger cohort will remain at around 55 per cent of the total population throughout this period.

The older population is not a uniform group. Each sub-group of the population has different needs and is growing at a different rate. There are currently around 280,000 Victorians aged 80 or older, which is 4.3 per cent of the population. This age group is growing even faster than the older population as a whole. By 2046 it will have more than doubled in number and account for about 7 per cent of the total population. We can expect more frail and vulnerable older people living in their own homes for much longer. This includes increasing numbers of those living with dementia.

Among the older population there are more women than men, but the balance is changing. In 2021, 58 per cent of the 80+ population was female. As the gap between women's and men's life expectancy narrows, by 2046 the population aged 80 or older is expected to be about 56 per cent female and 44 per cent male.

¹ This section uses unpublished Victorian Government Projections (2021) unless otherwise stated. These figures are supplied by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). They are based on unpublished internal modelling. DELWP is the agency responsible for developing the official state government population projections. These include the latest population estimates, evidence from the latest Census plus assumptions about future births, deaths, migration and local development trends.

Victorians over the next 25 years

Age	Increase in population	2021	2046
20–59 years	40%↑	This younger cohort will remain at around 55% of Victorians	This younger cohort will remain at around 55% of Victorians
60 years or older	60%↑	22% of Victorians almost 1.5 million people	25% of Victorians more than 2.3 million people
80 years or older	100%+↑	4.3% of Victorians around 280,000 people	7% of Victorians more than 560,000 people

Victorians today



The 2016 Census² shows that 27 per cent of Victorians aged 60 or older are from non-English speaking backgrounds. This compares with 21 per cent for Victorians under 60 years of age. Greater Melbourne has the highest proportion of senior Victorians from non-English speaking backgrounds (35 per cent of people aged 60+). Geelong (14 per cent), Latrobe-Gippsland (10 per cent), Shepparton and Hume (8 per cent respectively) also have large rates of older people from non-English speaking backgrounds living locally.

The number of people aged 60 or older is higher in rural and regional Victoria (26 per cent in 2016) than in Greater Melbourne (18 per cent). This difference is expected to continue over the long term. Rapid and uneven growth for older people in regional areas has knock-on effects for services and communities. This is especially true for local government areas where a large share of the population is getting close to retirement age. In the Borough of Queenscliffe, for example, half of the population is older than 60 years and nine months (median age equal to 60.8). In the Shire of Loddon the median age is 54.

The number of older people in private homes is likely to grow as the population ages. More older people are living longer in their own homes. About half the people living alone are over the age of 60. This number will increase over time. As they tend to live longer than men, women represent almost two-thirds of the people over 60 who live alone.

The action plan recognises the influence of the social determinants on health and people's experience of ageing. Many senior Victorians identify with attributes and traits that can combine to create overlapping systems of disadvantage, discrimination and barriers to ageing well. This action plan adopts an intersectional approach, with particular regard for older Aboriginal Victorians.

We developed Victoria's *Closing the Gap* implementation plan in partnership with the Aboriginal community-controlled organisation sector, using shared governance structures. Under the plan the government is working to identify and embed initiatives that enable Aboriginal Elders to live longer, healthier and active lives. It highlights community engagement and connection in line with cultural protocols. This will be through embedding mandatory consideration of the needs and rights of Elders in all aspects of Victoria's implementation plan, including in each sector strengthening plan. We will also give early consideration to standalone policy for Aboriginal Elders.

² All 2016 data are from the ABS Census of Population and Housing (2016).

The action plan recognises that senior Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds can face extra challenges in keeping social connections and taking part in community life. This is often the case where there are language and communication barriers. The action plan recognises that LGBTIQ+ seniors may lack family connections and be at risk of isolation as a result of ageing.

As our population ages, we can expect more people to live to a very old age. More people will live longer in their own homes with support. *Ageing well in Victoria* sets out actions to address the needs of different groups of older people in Victoria in four priority areas.

Our vision

Senior Victorians enjoy the benefits of living longer, as respected members of our community.

The diversity of our population is valued and there are ongoing opportunities to contribute and take part in our communities as people age.

All Victorians can safely age in place at home, accessing services, maintaining purpose, independence and autonomy in life with family, community and social connections.

Ageing in place

Ageing in place is about staying independent in the familiar places where we live. It involves connections to local neighbourhoods and communities. Most people prefer to age in place. Ageing in place becomes possible through:

- age-friendly environments for mobility and safety
- local social activities
- opportunities for volunteering and exercise.

For some, ageing in place becomes possible through help with daily activities.

Older people living in aged care facilities also have the right to age well with:

- essential services
- community and family support
- opportunities for social participation and lifelong learning.

Ageing well in Victoria

Before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Commissioner for Senior Victorians surveyed approximately 5,000 older Victorians. The Commissioner asked what it means to age well, the barriers to ageing well and the opportunities to better support ageing well. The outcomes were released in the 2020 report, *Ageing well in a changing world*. The report details issues of concern to seniors and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

The action plan includes actions to support older Victorians to achieve and live with the **eight attributes of ageing well** the Commissioner identified:

1. A positive attitude

- to ageing, enjoying life and having fun
- able to deal with life changes such as loss and grief
- having realistic expectations about abilities and limitations
- accepting that help with daily life may be needed one day
- able to deal with a shrinking social circle as you age.

2. Life has purpose and meaning

- finding meaningful social roles and continue to contribute to society
- recognised and acknowledged as capable and able to contribute
- able to access employment, volunteering, lifelong learning and other opportunities
- having personal independence and autonomy in decision making
- key wishes and aspirations for living are understood and acknowledged.

3. Respected and respectful

- valued in society as a respected member of the community
- having a voice and the opportunity to be heard
- working together across generations and within community
- tolerant of others and receiving respect from others including government, younger people and businesses
- not subject to ageism, stigmatised, ignored or denied service because you are old
- respect for personal identity, culture, gender and diversity.

4. Connected to family, friends and society

- having and keeping fulfilling and sustaining social connections and personal relationships, including family relationships and friendships
- able to take part in meaningful activities related to interests
- having places to meet and connect with other people
- able to meet with people from the same cultural background as well as from diverse backgrounds
- able to get support for risks such as elder abuse.

5. In touch with a changing world

- not left behind in our changing world
- knowing what help is available as needs change and increase
- able to get information when needed
- having opportunities to develop technology skills and knowledge, and to access technology
- provided with alternatives to online platforms for information and services.

6. Safe and secure at home and financially

- having the right housing at the right time in the right place
- able to age in place with the right supports
- able to supplement income through work
- able to afford accommodation and utilities costs
- having access to a wide range of discounts for seniors
- feeling safe at home and in the community, particularly at night
- having the right support to manage family relationship stress and elder abuse
- able to access free and low-cost social activities
- able to undertake life planning and have decisions respected and supported.

7. Able to manage health issues including mental health

- able to access services and support when needed
- actively managing health conditions
- able to exercise and maintain good nutrition and a healthy diet
- having access to recreation and sporting facilities
- having the knowledge and information to access support and services, particularly mental health services
- having health needs, including mental health needs, recognised and responded to.

8. Able to get around

- having access to cost-effective local community transport services, particularly after giving up a driver's licence
- having access to parking and safe carparks, including select parking for seniors, carers and disability
- having an age-friendly built environment – for example, with pedestrian crossings and footpaths suitable for those using mobility aids.

Growing older is an achievement
and ageing is cause for celebration.



Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

In preparing this action plan, more than 5,000 older Victorians took part in a 2019 survey. One thousand older people got involved in in-person consultations with the Commissioner for Senior Victorians in 2021. This lived experience and these voices informed the action plan.

The latter research focused on experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several positive outcomes were reported. These included that older people:

- became more visible
- were more motivated to get online to keep in touch with families
- found neighbours and strangers more friendly and supportive.

On the other hand, those who were already lonely and those in aged care had their loneliness magnified. Many older people reported declines in physical and mental health. Many spoke of uncertainty about the future and being unable to make plans.

Some viewed government messaging and media coverage on the pandemic as ageist and reinforcing ageist stereotypes. Ageist attitudes that cast older people as out of touch, forgetful or worthless worsened during the pandemic. Some media commentary framed the COVID-19 response as a 'health vs the economy' debate. This positioned the wellbeing of older people as secondary to the needs of the economy.

Even now, with a highly vaccinated population, many older people are wary of contracting COVID-19. Because they have a higher risk of serious illness and death, they are limiting activities such as exercise, social engagements and gatherings in groups. Some are delaying medical attention.





COVID-19 has heightened many issues that the Commissioner identified as barriers to ageing well, particularly:

- loneliness and isolation
- ageist attitudes
- difficulty accessing services, particularly online services.

What government will do – Ageing well in Victoria action plan

Action areas

To address the priority issues of older people, the government will deliver on this action plan in four priority areas.

Priority action area	Outcome
 Resilient, connected seniors	Older people have a sense of purpose through social, cultural and intergenerational connections.
 Tech-savvy seniors	Older Victorians can take part in the digital world. Those who can't do not experience discrimination, and can access services via other means.
 Valuing senior Victorians	Reduced ageism and increased visibility and appreciation of older people as valued and contributing Victorian citizens.
 Health self-care	Healthcare advances driven by the pandemic improve the health of older people and their ability to protect themselves.

An 'ageing well lens'

To strengthen the vision and actions of this action plan, the government will encourage an 'ageing well lens' in all government services and programs. This means factoring in the diverse needs of people of all ages and their different abilities into program and service design and delivery.

For example, Safer Care Victoria is undertaking work on age-friendly health services. A trial of improved responses for older cardiovascular patients is building in health self-care elements. During 2022, Safer Care Victoria will consult with the Senior Victorians Advisory Group on how to better include the consumer voice of older people in health service design. This will include more diverse older consumers' voices.

Senior Victorians without access to digital technology face challenges accessing online services. This heightened during the pandemic when many in-person services shut down. To help people without online access, government departments will be requested to develop alternatives to online access. This will target services for seniors and key social services that currently provide online access only.

For example, as part of its rollout of the March 2022 Victorian Travel Scheme, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions designed a Seniors Travel Voucher Scheme. Under the scheme, a portion of the vouchers were set aside specifically for seniors. Seniors Card holders could apply online for five days. (This is instead of the first come, first served Statewide Travel Voucher Scheme where vouchers were exhausted in under an hour.) Seniors got support from a dedicated call centre to help with their applications.

Delivering in partnership and by listening

The Victorian Government supports diverse communities across all ages. We acknowledge the value of partnerships and co-design to plan and deliver services and to support culturally diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ people and First Nations peoples. We will continue to consult with a diverse range of older people and with the members of the Senior Victorians Advisory Group about implementing activities in the four priority domains. We will continue to keep an eye on the ongoing issues that are important to our diverse senior population.

We will also ensure the needs of different age groups of older people are recognised and heard. The needs of people aged 60 to 70 years compared to those aged over 80, for example, can be as different as the needs of preschool children compared with those of young adults.

The government supports Metropolitan Partnerships and Regional Partnerships to advise on the important issues for community in their regions. Metropolitan Partnership Development Fund projects supporting older people include:

- Aboriginal Elders Cultural Wellbeing (metro-wide) – understanding issues and solutions for Elders related to social connection and mental wellbeing
- the Chatty Café Scheme (inner south-east) – local cafés supporting social connection
- digital inclusion (inner metro) – improving digital capability and improving digital literacy
- bilingual health workers (western) – supporting access to health services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The government will continue to value feedback from Metropolitan Partnerships and Regional Partnership on the experience and needs of senior Victorians. We will prioritise their advice on designing and delivering policy and programs affecting senior Victorians.

The government recognises the important role and responsibilities of local government in providing support for people to age in place. Councils offer a range of programs and activities available in local communities. Councils also invest across a wide range of services and infrastructure to support older Victorians. The government will continue to consult with councils to better understand changes in local demographics and community need.

Our funded partnerships with peak bodies provide important policy advice on the diverse needs of our older population. They also provide information, advocacy and advice to older people. Funding arrangements with community-based organisations such as Universities of the Third Age, neighbourhood houses, men's sheds and libraries provide local, community-driven activities.

We will work with local government, peak bodies and community-based organisations to deliver the actions in the action plan.

People who are socially engaged are happier and healthier than those who are not.





Resilient, connected seniors

Increasing opportunities for older people to retain a sense of purpose through social and intergenerational connections

The importance of social connections

Social connection to friends, family and community is vital to everyone's wellbeing. Many older people have fulfilling personal relationships through family contact, neighbourliness, volunteering or belonging to organisations and clubs. These can improve the experience of less social contact in later life due to:

- retirement
- loss of family connections
- death of a partner
- onset of illness
- entry to residential aged care
- loss of mobility.

Loneliness and social isolation can severely affect physical health and mental wellbeing. Loneliness in older people can lead to depression, mental impairment, heart disease and high blood pressure. These conditions can mean admitting a person to acute health services or aged care too early. Health concerns can also mean more visits to emergency departments. Loneliness can also lead to risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse and further isolation.

People who are socially engaged are happier and healthier than those who are not. They have better levels of health and wellbeing that, in turn, allow ongoing social activity and wellbeing.

Older people told the Commissioner for Senior Victorians that volunteering and belonging to clubs or community groups is vital for having meaning and purpose in life. It also leads to social connections that they can sustain. During our extended lockdown periods, many community-based organisations stopped operating. This meant they lost volunteers and members, and stopped running activities. Helping older people and community organisations get back to offering social activities will help the wellbeing of all Victorians.

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
More volunteering opportunities for seniors. We will work with the volunteer sector to deliver meaningful and flexible volunteering roles in safe, age-friendly and inclusive spaces.	From 2022	More people volunteer
Consideration of the needs of older migrants and refugees . This follows the report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into support for older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds.	2022–23	The needs of older migrants and refugees are identified and explored
Under the Victorian Government’s LGBTIQ+ and youth strategies, support opportunities for young and older LGBTIQ+ people to foster connections with peers and LGBTIQ+ communities.	2022–25	More social connection across the LGBTIQ+ community and better health outcomes

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
Continue to expand and reimagine the Victorian Seniors Festival . This includes online performances and the Recognising Senior Victorians Living in Aged Care program. The program reaches out to aged care residents to record and post their life stories on Seniors Online.	2022–24	Greater recognition and entertainment for aged care residents
An education campaign across the Victorian public service for the recently launched Public Engagement Framework (PEF). The PEF has two domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build stronger relationships and engaged communities • A public sector that engages effectively with Victorians. 	2022–23	Increased capability within the VPS in running public consultations

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
Support for multicultural seniors' groups through the Multicultural Seniors Support program . This will be for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excursions • cultural activities • regular gatherings • running costs • purchasing resources or equipment (sewing machines, laptops, printers) for the benefit of groups and members • delivering practical supports (such as home deliveries of essential items) • advancing multicultural seniors' internet accessibility, digital literacy and access to computers. 	2022–25	Reduced social isolation and better social connections among multicultural seniors

The pandemic has exposed the extent and impact of the 'digital divide'.





Tech-savvy seniors

**Older Victorians can take part in the digital world.
Those who can't are not discriminated against
and can access services via alternative means**

The digital divide

There are many social benefits to being online and connecting with family, friends and communities of interest across the globe. There are economic benefits in being able to take advantage of online goods and service offers. These parts of the 'new normal' of the pandemic include:

- shopping online
- completing forms or applications on websites
- using telehealth for medical appointments
- accessing digital vaccination certificates
- getting information for help and support online.

Many people previously not online adapted to digital devices for family connection and essential services during lockdowns. At the same time, the pandemic has exposed the extent and impact of the 'digital divide'. While the COVID-19 pandemic showed the ability of some older people to engage with digital technology including attending online meetings, many have been left behind.

Given the rapid growth in use of digital platforms by banks, governments and essential services, many people need extra support to use online services and resources. The online world is getting more complex. There are many older people who need extra training, guidance and practical help to navigate it safely and securely. In every one of the Commissioner's consultations held in 2019, people talked about:

- the lack of ability to use and keep up with technology
- the cost of maintaining and updating systems
- the difficulty of finding someone to help them improve their technology skills.

The government will encourage an 'ageing well lens' view in all government services and programs.

Many older people have safety concerns with using digital technology. This leaves them open to online exploitation and the targets of scammers. Targets often include:

- older women who live alone
- lonely people
- those with little experience of managing household finances.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reports that between January and September 2021 people aged 65 years or older lost the most money of any age group to scammers: in total, \$49.1 million or 23 per cent of total losses occurred in that period. Helping older people to use digital technology and be in the online world includes training and information on cyber safety and how to detect and avoid scammers. The Victorian Government will continue to work with industry and Victoria Police to improve online safety for older people.

The Senior Victorians Advisory Group noted the digital divide as a key priority for government action. The Victorian Government has asked the Commissioner for Senior Victorians to review and provide further advice about how to improve the levels of digital connectedness for senior Victorians. This will include priority issues of:

- improving digital ability and building confidence
- affordability concerns
- addressing privacy and scamming protections.

Some people may never make the leap across the digital divide. We will ask government departments to develop options for alternatives to online access for services targeted to seniors. This will include key social services that currently only offer online access.

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
Improved digital access through the Connecting Victoria program. This will invest in better mobile coverage and broadband across the state. Locations will be based on economic uplift, digital inclusion and community input. This will help identify where services are not meeting user needs.	From 2022	More people with better access to the internet across Victoria
Government departments will be requested to develop alternatives to online access . This will be for services targeted to seniors and for key social services that currently only offer online access.	2022–23	Services easier to access for those not online
Resources for the Commissioner for Senior Victorians to review digital connectedness and provide advice to government.	2022–23	Clearer understanding of strategies to strengthen and build digital connectedness among Victorian seniors
Older people are more vulnerable to injury and death in road crashes. Explore ways to encourage older people to use vehicles fitted with five-star safety technologies. Diversify travel modes to promote the health benefits of active transport.	From July 2022	Older drivers and passengers are more aware of the safety benefits of newer vehicles and options for alternative mobility modes

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
The Learn Local network is supporting pre-accredited training in local communities . This includes core skills training such as digital skills for contemporary workplaces, further study and life.	Current and ongoing	People have stepping stones to formal training options and jobs
The Social Seniors program in partnership with Telstra and public libraries. Social Seniors offers older people low-cost or free training in libraries in how to use social media .	2022–23	Increased safe use of social media among older Victorians
Improved cyber safety drawing on existing scams awareness resources and campaigns , including from the national Scamwatch network and Consumer Affairs Victoria.	Current and ongoing	More people will be able to connect with online information, communication, and resources with confidence to recognise and avoid scams

To age well requires our community to have a positive view of older people.



Valuing senior Victorians

Increasing the visibility of older people as valued and contributing Victorian citizens

Tackling ageism and discrimination

No matter their age, background or gender, most people want to be part of our whole community. They want to be valued for their contribution and treated with respect. **To age well requires our community to have a positive view of older people.** It means recognising their ability to contribute to society and the economy. But many older people talk about their experience of 'becoming invisible' as they age. They are concerned their needs are often not acknowledged within the wider community.

Being treated differently because of your age can lead to feeling vulnerable and can erode self-esteem. While ageism is a driver of elder abuse, women are more likely than men to be victims through lifelong patterns of family violence. Women's longer life expectancy means many more women live alone in later life. The number of homeless older women is increasing due to:

- family violence
- insecure housing and income
- lack of superannuation.

In 2020, Age Discrimination Commissioner Dr Kaye Paterson AO reported ageism across all ages as the most accepted form of prejudice in Australia. The average duration of mature age unemployment is 75 weeks. This compares with 48 weeks across all age groups. Older age is the main reason why employers reject job applications. A study by the University of New South Wales found increases in older-age participation in work are slowing. This is despite older Australians being healthier, more educated and more employable.



Those who were already
lonely and those in
aged care had their
loneliness magnified.

Older LGBTIQ+ people are likely to have experienced a history of stigma, isolation and criminalisation during most of their lifetime. This can have consequences for how private and discreet some are about their sexuality. For example, there is a trend of returning to live in 'the closet' once entering aged care due to a fear of discrimination and misunderstanding.

Intergenerational programs have the potential to reduce stigma associated with ageing. They can reduce discrimination and build social capital by strengthening intergenerational ties and promoting mutual support and understanding. Intergenerational programs can reduce or prevent social isolation. They can nurture a sense of taking part and of meaningful engagement. Also, by enabling older adults to mentor or tutor children and youth, intergenerational programs have the potential to improve life outcomes for younger people.

Providing support to employers to recruit and keep on older workers can address age discrimination in the workplace.

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
Extending the Seniors Card to Aboriginal people from age 50 years.	From 2022	More Aboriginal older people will have access to Seniors Card benefits
The State disability plan 2022–26 . The plan aims to embed universal design principles in all elements of the design and delivery of infrastructure projects. It seeks to identify opportunities to strengthen safeguards to better protect people with disability who are at risk of abuse or neglect. This includes older Victorians.	From July 2022	Improved design and delivery of infrastructure projects for older Victorians and strengthened inclusive practices and better outcomes for people with disability
Alliances and collaborations on activities to improve awareness of ageism (Commissioner for Senior Victorians). This includes working with the Every Age Counts campaign. Every Age Counts is a long-term national campaign tackling ageism. It aims to improve the value and respect afforded to older people and the experience of growing older.	From 2022	Increased awareness of the negative impacts of ageism and respect for older Victorians
Action to address the barriers faced by women that contribute to disadvantage in later life through the renewed <i>Gender equality strategy</i> .	Current and ongoing	Increased outcomes for women of all ages across four key focus areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safety • health and wellbeing • leadership and representation • economic equity

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
Refreshed business discount offerings to older people through the Seniors Card and Senior Business Discount Card . We will review and update the Seniors Card digital channels. These include Seniors Online, the Seniors Card Facebook page and a digital Seniors Card.	2022–23	More and easier-to-reach Seniors Card offers will help reduce the cost of living for older people
Pathways for older people into the post-compulsory education and training system . We will work with the Victorian Skills Authority and the Department of Education and Training to deliver this. It will involve exploring the barriers that prevent older people from accessing courses for reskilling and retraining. It will also cover the associated transition into meaningful employment.	2022–23	Older long-term unemployed people have more opportunity to gain employment
Improved housing options for older people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. This is based on the principle of ageing in place. It includes options to age in place in locations that maintain social networks. This includes action to prevent and respond to homelessness among older people as a priority cohort.	From July 2022	More stable housing options for vulnerable older people to age at home with support and social connections
The continued trial of an integrated model of care for responding to suspected elder abuse in five public health services.	2022–23	Strengthened elder abuse identification, responses and support across five health services

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
Eight Elder Abuse Prevention Networks for a further year. This will ensure service responses and primary prevention efforts continue to support and protect older Victorians from elder abuse.	2022–23	Elder abuse prevention through targeted local community action that raises awareness of and addresses the drivers of elder abuse
The continuation of the Preventing Elder Abuse Through Financial Counselling project in bushfire-affected communities of East Gippsland, Alpine and Towong. This will ensure targeted support for older people. It will help the finance and related workforces to identify, prevent and respond to elder abuse alongside recovery efforts.	2022–23	Targeted and timely support to older people in bushfire-affected communities, helping to prevent or reduce elder abuse

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
Continued encouragement to councils to plan for people to age well in place through age-friendly communities. Improving the health and wellbeing of older people through municipal public health and wellbeing plans .	Current and ongoing	The needs of an ageing population are included in municipal public health and wellbeing plans and services

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
<p>The Jobs Victoria Fund provides wage subsidies of up to \$20,000 to help businesses employ new staff, with a focus on groups of jobseekers most affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic. The Fund has specifically set aside \$50m for women over the age of 45.</p> <p>The Fund also supports targeted, large-scale projects that provide people with training and jobs in sectors with workforce shortages, with a focus on older workers – particularly increasing women’s participation in majority-men industries, such as transport and logistics.</p>	Current	Increased support for older long-term job seekers and businesses to employ older workers
<p>Local Jobs Victoria Advocates support Victorians looking for work and help people navigate employment and training services through proactive outreach in local communities – in libraries, community centres, sports clubs, public housing foyers and shopping centres – to connect people with the information, support and training that is right for them.</p> <p>Jobs Victoria Advocates focus on communities where rates of unemployment are high to help increase social and economic participation and engage with community members to understand their needs and connect them to relevant services.</p>	Current	Increased support for older long-term job seekers

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
Jobs Victoria Mentors work with job seekers of all ages to help them become work-ready, find a job that suits them, and to support them in their role for the first six months. Mentors offer personalised support by connecting job seekers to services such as re-training, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy courses and referrals to Skills & Job Centres that can help with resumes.	Current	Increased confidence for older job seekers and workers to explore career options
A Jobs Victoria Careers Counsellor to provide assistance to plan work goals, such as a job search, or to identify skills and strengths, or to explore a career change.	Current	Increased confidence for older job seekers and workers to explore career options

The older population is not a uniform group.



Positive mental health
and wellbeing links with
physical health and
ageing well.





Health self-care

Leveraging healthcare advances driven by the pandemic to improve the health of older people and their ability to protect themselves

Increased control over health and health limitations

A strong factor in quality of life as we get older is understanding how to manage the onset of health conditions. This helps in maintaining independence. More broadly, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of self-management in health care. People have tackled the virus through individual actions such as:

- physical distancing
- hand sanitising and washing
- wearing face masks
- getting vaccinated.

One clear lesson from the pandemic has been the importance of actions by individuals, governments and health services to manage health risks. Good health literacy can prevent hospital and emergency admissions. It also keeps healthcare costs down.

Positive mental health and wellbeing links with physical health and ageing well. Through Victoria's reform of the mental health system, the government commits to ensuring senior Victorians have the same access to mental health treatment, care and support as the wider adult population.

Ageing in place is about
staying independent
in the familiar places
where we live.

In recent years people aged 50 years or older have been more likely to drink alcohol. They are doing so at riskier levels than in previous generations. People in this age group more often use illicit and non-prescribed pharmaceutical drugs. The specific risks linked with drinking include cardiovascular disease, dementia and various cancers. For drug use, the risks include overdose and chronic health conditions.

We recognise that complex interactions of various political, social, economic and environmental conditions determine a person's health, experience of disease and mortality. But the pandemic has shown us the importance and benefits of supporting healthy behaviours. Despite this, many older people have postponed treatments or medical care for ongoing conditions because of fear of catching the virus on public transport or in a hospital. Even with our high vaccination rate, older people are wary of contracting COVID-19. This makes sense given the higher risk of serious illness and death. Older people have continued to avoid activities such as exercise, medical visits and social engagements.

What the government will deliver	When	Impact
<p>Innovative models to improve the health of older people. VicHealth will explore this through intergenerational methodologies within its existing strategic agenda.</p>	From 2022	Improved health and wellbeing of older Victorians
<p>Incorporation of the evidence-based elements of ageing well in guidance to councils for their municipal health and wellbeing plans (Department of Health).</p>	From 2024	More local ageing well strategies to benefit older people
<p>Victoria's end-of-life and palliative care framework. This will ensure all Victorians and their families receive the best possible end-of-life care. This care will place them at the centre where preferences, values, dignity and comfort are respected, and quality of life matters most.</p>	Current and ongoing	Improved end-of-life and palliative care
<p>Service delivery across Victoria at local, area-based and statewide levels, including 22 Adult and Older Adult Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services. We will deliver these partnerships between public health services and hospitals and non-government organisations that provide wellbeing supports.</p>	2022–23	Improved mental health and wellbeing of adults and older adults with higher levels of need
<p>A responsive integrated mental health and wellbeing service stream for older Victorians. The stream will ensure improved access to the same mental health treatment, care and support as the rest of the adult population.</p>	2022–23	Improved care and mental health and wellbeing outcomes for older adults

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
The Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum strategic priorities. These are in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap priority reforms and Korin Korin Balit-Djak system transformation priorities.	Ongoing	Aboriginal community-controlled organisations enabled to support Elders to determine their health priorities and plans
Cancer screening and health promotion programs on type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke prevention.	Ongoing	More people engaging in healthy activities to prevent and address chronic conditions
Social prescribing trials in the first six Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services. The trials will prioritise isolated senior Victorians, supporting health professionals to refer people with psychological distress or mental illness into community initiatives.	From 2022 (three-year trial)	Improved community participation, inclusion and connection for senior Victorians
The largest public sector residential aged care services (PSRACS) sector in Australia. The sector will provide 5,620 operational PSRACS places across Victoria (at 31 March 2021). PSRACS also include specialist aged persons' mental health facilities . These facilities address the needs of vulnerable older people with complex physical and/or mental health needs.	Current and ongoing	Maintaining access to appropriate care and support for senior Victorians with socioeconomic disadvantage, or who have complex care needs

What the government is delivering	When	Impact
Aged persons mental health inpatient units. These units provide assessment and treatment for older adults with acute symptoms of mental illness through recovery-oriented care.	Current and ongoing	Improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes for older people during an acute phase of mental illness
60 Local Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services. These services offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mental health treatment, care and support for people with mental health needs related to ageing • consultative help to primary and secondary care services that support older people, including of aged care. 	From 2022–23	Improved mental health care access and wellbeing outcomes for older people

We will continue to consult with older people and listen to their lived experience.



Next steps

We will continue to consult with older people and listen to their lived experience through the Commissioner for Senior Victorians and the Senior Victorians Advisory Group (SVAG). The Commissioner for Senior Victorians chairs the SVAG. Its membership includes peak bodies and organisations representing a wide range of interests affecting senior Victorians. Members of the SVAG have provided advice throughout the pandemic on the status of older people.

The SVAG will continue to track and advise on the needs of older Victorians. The Commissioner, with the help of the SVAG will undertake another survey of older Victorians on 'ageing well' in 2022. This survey will identify more opportunities to improve and support ageing well for all Victorians. The Commissioner will report on how we are travelling.



This page has been left blank for the purpose of double-sided printing.



Commissioner for Senior Victorians

Ageing is everyone's business



a report on isolation
and loneliness among
senior Victorians

January 2016

Ageing is everyone's business



a report on isolation
and loneliness among
senior Victorians

January 2016

Commissioner for Senior Victorians
50 Lonsdale Street Melbourne 3000

To receive this publication in an accessible format, please email
CommissionerForSeniorVics@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, January 2016

Except where otherwise indicated, the images in this publication show models and illustrative settings only, and do not necessarily depict actual services, facilities or recipients of services.

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

ISBN 978-0-7311-6879-8

Available at www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au

Printed by Impact Digital, Brunswick on sustainable paper (1601016 – Commissioner report)

Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Executive summary	1
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Project objectives	5
1.2 Methodology	6
2. What the research tells us	9
2.1 Definitions and incidence	9
2.2 Australian and international research	10
2.3 Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness	13
2.4 Specific populations at risk of isolation and loneliness	16
2.5 Impacts of isolation and loneliness	20
2.6 Interventions to reduce social isolation and loneliness	21
2.7 Policy considerations	23
3. The Victorian context	27
3.1 The senior population	27
3.2 Isolation and loneliness in the Victorian context	29
3.3 Regional and rural areas	32
3.4 Financial status	34
4. What seniors told us	35
4.1 Social needs and wants	35
4.2 Causes and risk factors	39
4.3 Impacts on health, wellbeing and quality of life	46
4.4 Identifying those at risk	47
4.5 Interventions aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness	48
4.6 Role of volunteering in the lives of senior Victorians	51
5. Addressing isolation and loneliness	53
5.1 An integrated and coordinated response	53
5.2 The benefits of taking action now	55
5.3 Building blocks for action	56
5.4 Taking action	67
References	68

Acknowledgements

This report has been developed with input from a large number of people from the community and from various organisations.

Thank you to Aaron Wyllie, Research Assistant, Benetas, for his work in developing the literature review, and the group of academics who provided advice, facilitated by the National Ageing and Research Institute.

Many seniors attended and contributed during the listening tour, with support from local government staff in each location who assisted with organising the venues and encouraging local participation.

Thanks also to the representatives from a broad cross-section of community organisations, service providers, peak bodies and local government who attended the stakeholder forum, facilitated by Cath Smith, who also provided valuable advice during the drafting of this report.

A number of individuals and organisations provided ideas and feedback including members of the Municipal Association of Victoria's Positive Ageing Forum and Home and Community Care assessors.

Valuable input was received from an advisory group of individuals selected on the basis of their experience and knowledge – Mary Agostino (City of Whittlesea), Meghan Albert (VicSport), Lisa Astete (Brotherhood of St Laurence, Frankston), Dr Frances Batchelor (National Ageing Research Institute), Ric Blackburn (Victorian Men's Sheds Association), Lindsay Doig (Life Activities Clubs Victoria), Elizabeth Drozd (Australian Multicultural Community Services), Damian Ferrie (Inner South Community Health Service), Bridget Gardner (Neighbourhood Houses Victoria), Sue Hendy (COTA Victoria), Penny Pavlou (City of Stonnington), Donna Richards (The Country Women's Association of Victoria), Mary Sayers (Victorian Council of Social Service) and Tonye Segbedzi (Volunteering Victoria).

Thanks also to the staff in the Department of Health and Human Services who provided feedback and to the staff of the Seniors Programs and Participation unit who assisted with the work associated with this project and the report.

Executive summary

A key role of the Commissioner for Senior Victorians is to advise and report to the Victorian Government on priority policy issues affecting senior Victorians. This year, the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley MP, requested consideration of the issue of loneliness and isolation of older people, including the role of volunteering in addressing this.

The objectives of this project were to:

- establish the evidence base for isolation and loneliness for senior Victorians
- identify the causes and drivers of isolation and loneliness
- identify the major impacts of isolation and loneliness on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of senior Victorians
- consider the impacts of disadvantage and vulnerability on the incidence and consequence of isolation and loneliness for senior Victorians
- examine the role of volunteering, both in supporting and empowering isolated and lonely senior Victorians
- identify potential policy and program responses to mitigate the negative impacts of isolation and loneliness.

A set of six 'building blocks' has been identified as the basis for an integrated approach for action to address social isolation and loneliness among older people from state and local government, funded services, community-based organisations and community members. Consequently, an integrated and coordinated approach is proposed, in partnership with a broad range of key stakeholders including local government, businesses, peak bodies and community organisations. The aim is to enhance the benefits to the state of Victoria associated with our ageing population at the same time as reducing the risks and costs associated with premature decline in individual wellbeing and capacity caused by loneliness and isolation.

AGEING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Coordinated action across all six areas would deliver a comprehensive response to social isolation and loneliness among older people, including those who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, centred on supporting older people in their homes and communities in recognition that 'ageing is everyone's business'.

In responding to the social isolation and loneliness of older Victorians, actions in the six building block areas would:

- ▶ reaffirm the Victorian Government as a key continuing player and advocate in seniors policy and service delivery, in light of the transfer of responsibility for assessment and Home and Community Care services for people over 65 years old to the Commonwealth Government
- ▶ promote the meaningful roles, value and purpose of seniors as they age
- ▶ increase opportunities for seniors to join, attend and participate in existing clubs, groups, organisations or activities, both seniors-specific and generic
- ▶ focus on socially excluded seniors, including the special needs of seniors who are carers, and the importance of life transition or trigger points, for example, loss of a partner or moving to live in a new area
- ▶ increase older people's knowledge of the importance of maintaining and strengthening their levels of social participation and promote what is available through streamlined information and community education
- ▶ address personal mobility and local transport issues by building on existing networks to facilitate seniors' access to services and involvement in local activities.

Figure 1: Building blocks for action



There are different roles to be played by different stakeholders in achieving outcomes through these six areas. No one sector can do this work alone, and the state government is particularly well placed to take a leadership role, in partnership with local government and other sectors. This could be achieved by applying an integrated and coordinated approach across government based on a seniors ageing action plan predicated on the building blocks mentioned above.

There are also important roles to be played by local government, peak bodies, business and community organisations, as well as seniors themselves, in taking action to address social isolation and loneliness. It is important that this work is integrated across the different sectors and coordinated with the participation of key players.

There are existing models of coordination that could be referenced to create a state-led multisectoral coordinating group to inform the Victorian Government on priorities, actions and outcomes for a seniors ageing action plan.

Arising from the research and consultations undertaken in this project, priorities could include:

- ▶ developing place-based initiatives working with local government, funded services and community organisations to strengthen service responses to socially isolated and lonely older people, increasing the age-friendliness of local clubs, groups and organisations and assisting local seniors organisations to maintain their viability
- ▶ addressing the digital divide that threatens to increasingly leave seniors disconnected from access to information and services, through initiatives that provide more comprehensive levels of training and support for seniors to navigate the growing online service environment.

1 Introduction

One of the key roles of the Commissioner for Senior Victorians is to advise and report to the Victorian Government on priority policy issues affecting senior Victorians.

This year, the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley MP, requested consideration of the issue of loneliness and isolation of older people, including the role of volunteering in addressing this.

1.1 Project objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- ▶ establish the evidence base for isolation and loneliness among senior Victorians
- ▶ identify the causes and drivers of isolation and loneliness
- ▶ identify the major impacts of isolation and loneliness on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of senior Victorians
- ▶ consider the impacts of disadvantage and vulnerability on the incidence and consequence of isolation and loneliness for senior Victorians
- ▶ examine the role of volunteering, both in supporting and empowering isolated and lonely senior Victorians
- ▶ identify potential policy and program responses to mitigate the negative impacts of isolation and loneliness.

1.2 Methodology

In this report 'older people' and 'seniors' are defined as people 60 years old and over.

There were four key stages in the development of this report:

- a literature review into social isolation and loneliness
- a listening tour of Victoria
- advisory group input
- stakeholder consultations.

1.2.1 Literature review

The literature review was conducted to identify the key issues relevant to social isolation and loneliness and to provide a framework for developing intervention strategies aimed at fostering greater levels of participation and social connectedness among older Victorians.

The literature review provided an overview of existing Australian and international research examining the issue of social isolation and loneliness among older people.

The following key questions were used to guide the review of existing literature:

- What are the key risk factors that can lead to the experience of social isolation and loneliness in later life?
- How prevalent is the experience of social isolation and/or loneliness among older people, and what are the common pathways or trajectories associated with these experiences?
- What are the consequences of social isolation and loneliness for older people and the community more broadly?
- What interventions have been found to be effective in reducing loneliness and encouraging participation and social connectedness among older people?

1.2.2 Listening tour

The purpose of the listening tour was to hear firsthand from seniors and those organisations that support seniors in the community about:

- ▶ the social wants and needs of older adults as they age
- ▶ the causes and risk factors of isolation and loneliness
- ▶ the impact of isolation and loneliness
- ▶ how to identify isolated and lonely seniors
- ▶ how to address isolation and loneliness.

The listening tour was held in June and July 2015, supported by the Department of Health and Human Services. Listening tour consultations were held in:

- ▶ Altona (City of Hobsons Bay)
- ▶ Ballarat (City of Ballarat)
- ▶ Broadmeadows (City of Hume)
- ▶ Echuca (Shire of Campaspe)
- ▶ Safety Beach (Shire of Mornington Peninsula)
- ▶ Springvale (City of Greater Dandenong).

Local councils facilitated the listening tour consultations by bringing together local seniors, seniors' groups, service providers and community support organisations. More than 150 people attended the listening tour consultations, and 22 subsequently provided written feedback.

1.2.3 Advisory group

An advisory group provided advice by considering the issues and possible solutions, and by contributing to the development of the final report. Members brought knowledge and expertise from a range of perspectives to add value to the information obtained through the literature review and listening tour. The group met twice and considered issues and priority areas for possible action. (See the acknowledgements page for a list of advisory group members.)

1.2.4 Stakeholder consultation

The literature review and the listening tour identified key themes and issues for further investigation in the context of addressing isolation and loneliness. The issues were followed up through individual and group stakeholder consultations and included:

- ▶ the role of volunteering
- ▶ age-friendly communities
- ▶ assessment and referral mechanisms
- ▶ building personal and community resilience
- ▶ strengthening connections at the local level
- ▶ information and planning.

Seventy people representing a wide range of services and agencies attended a forum to receive an update on the project findings and to identify practical opportunities and priorities to address the issues associated with isolation and loneliness.

2 What the research tells us

2.1 Definitions and incidence

Although often used interchangeably, loneliness and social isolation are distinct concepts. Loneliness is a subjective, unwelcome experience of lack of or loss of companionship. An important aspect of loneliness is that it does not refer simply to the experience of 'being alone' or 'living alone' but to the degree to which these experiences cause a negative perception and experience of the situation.

In contrast to the subjective experience of loneliness, social isolation relates to the overall level of integration into the wider social environment in which people live, and is often seen as an objective state in which a person has minimal contact with others and low involvement in local community life. Social isolation is caused by a lack of functional social support, including as a result of geographic isolation, and can lead to loneliness.

While social isolation may be considered to be either a voluntary or involuntary situation, the state of loneliness is almost always involuntary and unwelcome. The distinction explains why someone can be 'alone but not lonely' or 'lonely in a crowd'.

For the purposes of this report, the following definitions are used:

Loneliness is 'a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship or emotional attachment with other people'.¹

Social isolation is 'an objective state of having minimal contact and interaction with others and a generally low level of involvement in community life'.²

2.2 Australian and international research

Loneliness can manifest in older people in different ways as a result of their individual experience. Some people are lonely throughout their lives and bring this experience into their senior years. For others, loneliness is brought on by 'trigger events' such as the loss of a partner or a series of life events. Research has identified five interrelated dimensions of loneliness as experienced by older people:

- 1** Loneliness is a private experience that is unique to each individual and often difficult to describe and talk about. It can be exacerbated by the stigma and shame associated with talking about loneliness, with some people afraid to speak up about loneliness for fear of being viewed as weak or defeated.
- 2** Loneliness is relational. Meaningful relationships can prevent or reduce loneliness, while poor-quality relationships is a defining feature of loneliness.
- 3** A sense of connectedness to local communities, and of belonging to others, is an important antidote to loneliness for many older people. In contrast, a feeling of disconnection from community, and of feeling like a stranger or an outsider, is associated with loneliness.
- 4** Loneliness may be temporal and might change over the course of a day, emerge at particular times during the year, or shift between different stages of life such as in response to the loss of a loved one.
- 5** Loneliness can be influenced by periods of readjustment following major life events in older people's lives, such as retiring from the workforce, losing a loved one or facing one's own mortality.



Loneliness in later life can be a continuation of previous experience, or newly experienced as a result of a trigger event. The experience of loneliness is often of a private and hidden nature, therefore obtaining accurate data in relation to the prevalence of loneliness in older populations is difficult and varies depending on the definition adopted and outcome measures used.

Listed below are some of the prevalence estimates from recent research regarding the proportion of older people who experience chronic or significant isolation and loneliness that impacts significantly on their health and wellbeing:

- ▶ Research conducted to inform the United Kingdom's *Campaign to End Loneliness* estimated a prevalence of loneliness (either all or most of the time) of about 10 per cent of the general population over 65 years of age.³
- ▶ Research commissioned by COTA Victoria cites several studies including research in Perth where seven per cent of seniors reported severe loneliness, with higher levels of loneliness reported by single participants, those who lived alone, and those with self-reported poor health. A national study of veterans found that 10 per cent were socially isolated and that another 12 per cent were at risk of social isolation.⁴
- ▶ The Canadian Government National Seniors Council's literature review to inform its *Report on the social isolation of seniors 2013–2014* noted that the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health reports that loneliness affects approximately 10 per cent of older adults.⁵
- ▶ A literature review prepared for the Department of Health and HIACP Collaborative Hume Region stated 'Social isolation studies consistently find that approximately seven to eight per cent of older people are socially isolated'.⁶
- ▶ Research conducted for the Queensland Government found that it is 'likely that 10 per cent of people 65 years of age or older are socially isolated and a further 12 per cent are at risk of social isolation, where social isolation was defined as including the experience of loneliness'.⁷
- ▶ A meta-analysis review in 2011, drawing on an English longitudinal study of ageing, found that nine per cent of those 51 years of age or older were 'often lonely' and a further 25 per cent were 'lonely some of the time'. For 10 per cent of the older population in Britain, loneliness is a chronic feeling and heavy burden.⁸

Research findings also indicate the group of older people who experience isolation and loneliness is likely to be larger than that indicated, as older people experience loneliness at different stages in their lives. It is not consistently a particular group of older people.

The research indicates the prevalence of chronic loneliness among older people to be typically in the range of 7–12 per cent. However, most researchers note that the prevalence rate increases when more in-depth research is conducted, for example, face-to-face interviews compared with written questionnaires. In addition, the research has also found that loneliness is likely to be under-reported due to the associated stigma.



2.3 Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness

There is wide acknowledgement in the literature that good social networks and the ability to sustain positive personal and social relationships are protective factors against loneliness. The 2015 Australian Wellbeing Index identified good personal relationships as one of the key essential indicators of happiness for all people. Access to support and resources in early life to build capacity for productive and sustaining relationships may account for the resilience to loneliness that some older people demonstrate, whereas others have limited capacity to engage in similar protective behaviours. Despite this, the research shows that the risk of social isolation increases with age, as older people experience significant and ongoing life changes that require continual adjustment. While a range of factors can compound the risk of isolation and loneliness, in many cases particular factors can be both risk and protective factors.

2.3.1 Relationships and social contact

Quality of relationships sits alongside social contact in importance as a protective factor against social isolation and loneliness. The loss of peers and a spouse in later life commonly lead to reduced social networks. This can be exacerbated for people in later old age, who are increasingly likely to outlive friends and siblings, and where physical or mental incapacity either of their own or within their social networks imposes difficulties in maintaining social contact. An individual can also be lonely in a crowd if their significant social network is lost. This can often be the case in settings such as long-term residential care facilities where individuals can be disconnected from meaningful social interaction with people who are important to them.

However, ageing does not always result in social losses, and there are often important relationship gains in late life that can reduce loneliness. These may be new partnerships after widowhood or divorce, new commitments post-retirement and more interactions with children following the birth of grandchildren. Fostering new relationships in later life is particularly important in protecting against isolation and loneliness.

2.3.2 Life transitions, events and role changes

Life transitions which are common in later life can weaken or diminish social roles that provide personal value, belonging and attachment. Retirement or redundancy is often the first major transition of later life. The research suggests that up to one-third of retirees have difficulty adjusting to the reduced income, loss of work-based social connections and altered social role and entitlements that retirement brings. Change in marital status through divorce or bereavement can result in loss of companionship, changed social status, lower self-esteem and reduced social interaction. Transitioning to living alone through bereavement, divorce or loss of a partner through their relocation to aged care are significant transitions that increase the risk of loneliness.

An older person might relocate several times during older age in response to changing circumstances. The research shows that where it involves the disruption of longstanding connections to networks of informal support and resources, relocation is a risk factor for isolation and loneliness. Relocation may be especially difficult for those who are already isolated, as they make fewer social connections in their new location and experience more sustained emotional and physical health difficulties.

In addition, a range of other life events or experiences can impact on the ability of older people to build and maintain social connections. For example, events such as loss of a driver's licence or being a victim of crime or elder abuse can directly increase the level of isolation and loneliness.

2.3.3 Functional health

Poor physical and mental health, and needing care, can lead to loss of confidence and withdrawal from social engagement. Health issues such as sensory loss, impaired vision or hearing, onset of dementia, mental illness and disability are risk factors, and the research indicates that the more health issues an older person has, the higher their risk of isolation and loneliness.⁹ Older adults with four or more chronic illnesses are 1.7 times more likely to be socially isolated than those with fewer than four chronic illnesses.¹⁰ In turn, increased social isolation can have a negative impact on a person's health, with higher illness and mortality rates among lonely people. Issues for these people include managing treatment regimens, controlling symptoms, preventing and managing crises, managing the illness trajectory, funding the costs of healthcare and preparing for an uncertain future.

On the other hand, research affirms that good-quality social relationships offer protective health effects through, for example, providing meaningful roles that provide self-esteem and purpose to life, and through the modelling of healthy behaviours. Relationships buffer the negative impact of life changes that occur as one ages. The literature is clear that socially active older people are happier and healthier than those who are not socially active, and that socially active older people, through continued participation, have reduced risk of social isolation and its negative health consequences.

2.3.4 Local neighbourhood

The research identifies 'place' as an important consideration for the social participation experiences of older people. The quality of neighbourhood locations such as parks, cafés and shops, and the transitory zones people pass through during their daily activities, influence social participation and general life engagement. Poor-quality neighbourhood conditions, such as discontinuous or broken footpaths, poor or no public transport, lack of street lighting and high traffic levels, limit older people's ability to connect and interact. These barriers to community engagement are more prevalent in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The importance of the neighbourhood environment for wellbeing is especially pertinent to older people, given the preference of many older adults to 'age in place' at home, the increasing number of older people who will do so into the future, the number of older people reliant on the aged pension and the increasing number of older people living alone, particularly women. As the population ages, the role of local government and other key stakeholders, including peak bodies and local community organisations, in creating age-friendly neighbourhoods is increasingly important for promoting social participation and maintaining quality of life for older adults.

2.3.5 Mobility and transport

Australian research shows a clear link between transport options, social connection, community connectedness and psychological wellbeing. The evidence shows that people with strong social networks travel more than others, so access to transport is a key factor for community participation. There are a range of older people who are at risk of social exclusion through lack of transport options, for example, people on low incomes, people with disabilities, older women, those living with dementia or chronic health conditions and people living in rural areas.

2.4 Specific populations at risk of isolation and loneliness

2.4.1 Disadvantaged groups

Research has identified that the considerable diversity of seniors' life experiences and backgrounds impacts on the risk of isolation and loneliness. Older people at particular risk of social isolation and loneliness include those:

- on low incomes
- living with a disability
- living in low socioeconomic and/or rural areas
- living with housing stress or homelessness
- who are single, childless or living alone
- who are vulnerable and at risk of elder abuse
- with low levels of literacy where this reduces their access to information and services
- with limited or no information and communication technology skills, where this reduces their ability to locate and access services.

2.4.2 Aboriginal populations

Older Aboriginal people may have their experience of loneliness exacerbated by loss of cultural identity and lack of cultural sensitivity from service providers. In addition, Aboriginal populations face specific issues associated with poor health status and the impacts of life-long disadvantage and intergenerational disadvantage in health and welfare.

2.4.3 Cultural and linguistic diversity

In Australia in 2011 around 20 per cent of people over the age of 65 years were born outside of Australia, a figure expected to rise to approximately 30 per cent by 2021. The older culturally and linguistically diverse population consists over 50 countries of birth, 34 languages and 30 religions. Moreover, owing to migration patterns, there are some cultural groups in which more than 60 per cent of their population is 65 years of age or older.¹¹

The research suggests a number of themes in relation to loneliness and isolation common among culturally and linguistically diverse older people. Refugees and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who migrate to Australia at an older age have higher rates of adverse health and social outcomes. Even for those who may have been resident in Australia for many years, a sense of loss of one's home culture and values can emerge for culturally and linguistically diverse older people. For those with immediate family members living in Australia, such feelings can be exacerbated when intergenerational change has reduced the older person's cultural connection with their immediate family. For culturally and linguistically diverse people without family members living in Australia, old age can bring with it changes in mobility and capacity that can impact on their ability to access culturally appropriate activities and services.

Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly those with limited English language proficiency, can experience difficulties in accessing health and social services. For example:

- ▶ reluctance to access services due to cultural beliefs regarding self-sufficiency and resilience
- ▶ different understandings of certain conditions, such as cultural stigma attached to dementia
- ▶ lack of exposure to aged care services and systems.

This interplay of issues among older culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians creates an additional level of complexity to their needs and risks compared with those identified among older people more generally.



2.4.4 Gender and sexual diversity

Australian and international research suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex older people may be at a higher risk of loneliness than their heterosexual peers. While it is important to recognise the diversity within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex community, it is generally true that some older people are likely to have smaller family networks than other older people, both due to isolation from their own families and lower rates of child-rearing. In an Australian survey, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex older people reported greater reliance on their partners, friends and care agencies for social support than heterosexual older people.¹² Consequently, potential reasons why older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex people experience greater levels of loneliness are that they may have smaller social networks and less access to biological family relationships.

Due to the historical stigma and oppression experienced by older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex people, there may be reluctance to engage in 'mainstream' social activities, fearing rejection and judgement by heterosexual older people, medical professionals and service providers. This can mean that they are not only likely to be at higher risk of loneliness and isolation, they may also be less likely to seek help or assistance.

2.4.5 Older people with a caring role

Another specific population at risk is those seniors who undertake roles and responsibilities related to being a carer. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that more than 12 per cent of people 60 years of age or older are carers, compared with around eight per cent of people under the age of 60. Older carers are considered particularly at risk of social isolation and loneliness due to the all-consuming nature of the caring role, and the impact this can have in shrinking their social network. Causes of social isolation related to caring include not being comfortable talking to friends about caring, not having the time or financial resources to participate in social or recreational activities and not being able to leave their house due to the medical condition of the person they are caring for, such as the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Older carers are more likely to be financially disadvantaged and experience chronic health difficulties. These circumstances can further exacerbate their isolation, as they have limited resources available to arrange respite care or to invest in their own health and wellbeing. Recent Australian research has found that carers have the lowest wellbeing of any population group.¹³

Some older people providing care for others may not identify themselves as being in a 'caring' role and therefore may not be aware of or receive support from carer programs. This may be particularly relevant for some culturally and linguistically diverse older people based on cultural beliefs regarding self-sufficiency and resilience. Some may also be expected to provide care for grandchildren, may not speak English or may be disconnected from the whole community.

2.4.6 Place-based disadvantage

Particular locations of disadvantage include:

- ▶ rural areas with small populations in isolated locations with limited transport and service options
- ▶ areas experiencing high growth, including growth in the population of people 60 years of age or older, and with limited social and community infrastructure, particularly outer metropolitan fringe areas
- ▶ areas with low socioeconomic measures across the population, and with intergenerational disadvantage.



2.5 Impacts of isolation and loneliness

Isolation and loneliness have impacts at both the individual and the societal level. International research has consistently identified that the experience of loneliness for an older person is a significant risk factor for morbidity and mortality, comparable to other high risk factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity.

The health impacts of loneliness include:

- ill health and risk-taking health behaviour such as an unhealthy diet, heavy alcohol consumption and physical inactivity
- high blood pressure
- poorer quality and quantity of sleep
- disability onset
- mental health and wellbeing issues such as anger, depression, worthlessness, resentment, pessimism and suicidal thoughts
- increased rates of cognitive decline and higher risk of cognitive progression towards Alzheimer's disease
- increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Recent research from the United States has demonstrated that loneliness triggers physiological responses that make people ill, and experiencing extreme loneliness can increase a person's chances of premature death by 14 per cent.¹⁴ The research emphasises the importance of good relationships for older people to develop resilience and the ability to deal with adversity and stress.

'The consequences to health are dramatic, as feeling isolated from others can disrupt sleep, elevate blood pressure, increase morning rises in the stress hormone cortisol, alter gene expression in immune cells, increase depression and lower overall subjective wellbeing.'¹⁵

The wider community and societal impacts include lost productivity, increased healthcare service use and increased healthcare costs including hospitalisation and re-hospitalisation. Consequently, addressing social isolation and loneliness through preventive effort can help manage the costs of delivering health services.

2.6 Interventions to reduce social isolation and loneliness

There is strong evidence in the literature that older people who are socially engaged are happier and healthier than those who are socially isolated, and that the socially engaged have better levels of health and wellbeing that, in turn, enable continued social activity. Consequently, policies and strategies that promote healthy and active ageing and age-friendly communities are key to addressing isolation and loneliness.

The research literature identifies a range of strategies to address isolation and loneliness among older people. These include legislation on ageing and older people, multidisciplinary, cross-portfolio government ageing policies, programs that set targets specific to older people and providing general support services such as transport, housing and age-friendly infrastructure. There are also examples of targeted activities aimed to overcome loneliness by providing direct support and specific interventions such as home visits.

Actions that have been commonly found to successfully address social isolation among older people include access to health and aged care services, recreation, leisure activities, volunteering and life-long learning. Examples of successful approaches to address social isolation include mentoring, involving older people in service planning and design, and emphasising home care, ageing in place and good communication strategies.

2.6.1 Social networks

The literature suggests quality of social support, rather than quantity, is key to addressing social isolation and overcoming loneliness, and that having access to a range of social support opportunities increases the likelihood of developing a strong social network. In addition, integrated, holistic models such as intergenerational community networks or person-centred models of care and referral services can strengthen local community responses to social isolation.

2.6.2 Group interventions

Group activities, mutual support and discussion groups have been found to be effective in reducing feelings of loneliness among older people. However, the research notes the importance of group activities targeted at the particular life interests of individual older people. For example, participating in cultural, sporting or artistic activities can strengthen social networks while also providing a sense of meaning and purpose. At a local community level, arts activities have been shown to generate social cohesion and improve community members' perceptions and feelings about their community.¹⁶

2.6.3 One-to-one interventions

The research identified one-to-one interventions aimed at providing direct support as including counselling, assessment, information and referral. These interventions also include interacting with volunteers or professionals through home visits, telephone support or specific activities. Overall, one-to-one interventions were found to be inferior to group-based interventions in addressing isolation and loneliness, mainly due to their inability to widen social networks or encourage community participation.¹⁷

2.6.4 Information and communications technology-based interventions

Information and communications technology-based interventions are an emerging area of research given the enhancements in internet communications and other technology. While the lack of information and communications technology proficiency among many seniors remains a barrier to such interventions, the take-up of new technology among some seniors is growing.¹⁸

There is research evidence that new technologies have the potential to bridge a number of the challenges associated with social engagement in later life, such as decreased physical mobility and loss of a driver's licence.¹⁹ However, evidence regarding the effectiveness of these technologies in reducing social isolation and loneliness is mixed.

2.7 Policy considerations

Over recent decades, social policy, health and technological advancements have combined to change the way people view the experience of living beyond the age of 60 years. The next generation of seniors who approach retirement are likely to continue the trend to work for longer, live more years in good health and be able to live better with chronic health conditions. However, there will also be those who experience significant challenges such as living with disadvantage or living in their own homes with greater levels of frailty or with some disability.

The prevalence and impacts of isolation and loneliness in the older population warrant recognition as a key policy issue.



There is a need for increased public awareness – and awareness among health and other service providers – that loneliness is a significant health and wellbeing issue, noting that its identification, assessment and provision of support are complicated by its stigma.

Best practice social policy approaches to population ageing include:

- ▶ the life course framework, which links the influences of life experiences to late life outcomes and vulnerabilities
- ▶ active ageing strategies that emphasise setting in place the conditions that enable older people to live active lives for sustainable ageing
- ▶ age-friendly cities and communities that create enabling environments for active ageing.

These approaches aim to address vulnerabilities among older people by:

- ▶ emphasising the importance of building internal capacity and personal resilience over a lifetime and into later life
- ▶ empowering older people to maintain independence and capability
- ▶ enabling ageing in place by creating environments conducive to older people's needs and vulnerabilities.

They require coordinated actions to create resilience to protect against isolation and loneliness at the individual, family, neighbourhood and societal levels.

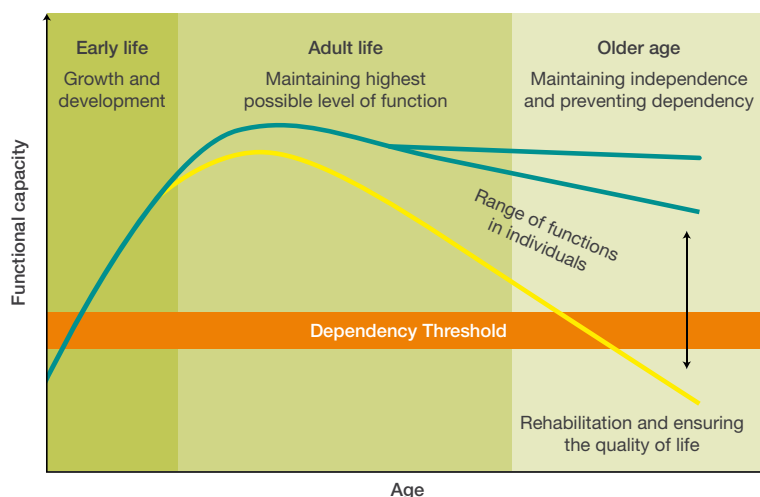
2.7.1 Life course experience

Social connectedness characterised by high-quality relationships promotes positive and protective health and wellbeing behaviours. Preventive strategies with interventions designed to build social connectedness throughout the life course do provide protections against social isolation and loneliness. It is vital that ageing population policies promote the importance of extending the time spent experiencing active and healthy ageing, that is, aiming to keep people above the threshold of poor health and disability.

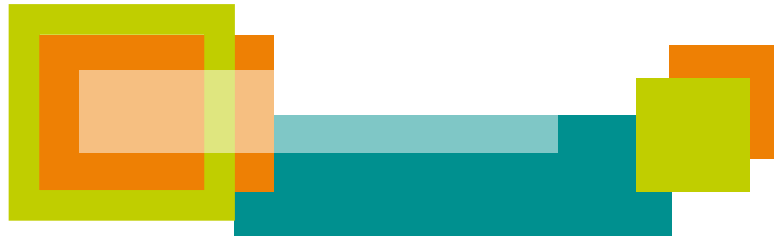
The life course approach recognises the importance of social investment early in life to boost personal resilience and offset the negative impacts of the ageing process. It also emphasises the importance to individuals and government of investing in protective strategies and interventions in adult and later life to maintain independence and reduce dependence on services and supports.

This is demonstrated in Figure 2, where maintaining good health and high levels of functioning during adult life, combined with maintaining independence for as long as possible in later life, can extend functional capacity and prevent dependency for longer in the life span. Figure 2 also refers to the existence of a 'dependency threshold' where a combination of external and environmental factors can extend or decrease dependency. The dependency threshold is higher when barriers such as poor urban design, inadequate public transport, hard-to-access information and lack of social support are prevalent.

Figure 2: Active ageing – a life course approach



Source: Plouffe L 2015, *Active ageing: a policy framework in response to the longevity revolution*, International Longevity Centre Brazil, Rio de Janeiro.



The World Health Organization has identified that a key policy priority is to ensure as far as possible that each individual maximises their capacity for healthy and active ageing in order to maintain functional capacity for as long as possible. This is a significant policy driver given the ageing of our population.

It is a policy priority to ensure that lifestyle and external and environmental factors promote a long and independent life in good health. Equally important is a focus on preventive health strategies so that each individual can maximise the period of their life where they remain healthy and active. Combining preventive health strategies with age-friendly planning and design interventions can facilitate independence and reduce the dependency threshold.

A key policy risk is the significant cost to both the individual and the health system if older people become dependent or experience declining functional capacity in situations where this could have been prevented. This also brings a significant opportunity cost, where the positive contribution from many older people is lost due to the inability to participate fully in their community.

2.7.2 Life course approach and disadvantage

One critical point is that while early intervention is important across the full life course to enhance individual and community wellbeing, there are significant economic, social and fiscal consequences when disadvantaged or vulnerable people cross the 'dependency threshold' earlier than necessary as they get older.

Older people whose lives have been marked by continuing disadvantage or dealing with challenges they have experienced through their life course (such as mental health issues, homelessness, chronic illness and disability) are particularly vulnerable.

It is important that policies and strategies target the delay of loss of functional capacity for people as they age, and specifically target those within communities who are at higher risk of premature ill-health and dependency.

2.7.3 Healthy and active ageing

International research and evidence clearly demonstrate that public health responses to ageing should ameliorate the losses associated with older age, as well as reinforcing resilience and psychological growth. Healthy ageing is identified as 'the process of developing and maintaining functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age'.²⁰

One goal of healthy ageing policies is to maximise functional capacity as people age, including those with:

- relatively high and stable capacity
- declining capacity
- significant loss of capacity.

The functional ability of all three groups can be enhanced through actions to align health systems to older populations, develop systems of long-term care, create age-friendly environments and improve measurement, monitoring and understanding.

The international evidence clearly identifies the importance of providing opportunities for all people as they age to continue to contribute to their communities and to retain as much autonomy for decision making as is realistic and possible. Consequently, responses to the issue of isolation and loneliness need to be closely linked to strategies and approaches that will strengthen opportunities for healthy and active ageing during the life course.

The World Health Organization identifies the importance of involving older people themselves, as well as organisations who represent them, in the development and evaluation of policies to ensure relevance.

The recently released World Health Organization 2015 *World report on ageing and health* concludes that 'Embedding healthy ageing in policies in all levels of government [is] crucial, as is coordination that spans multiple sectors and levels of government'.²¹



3 The Victorian context

It is important to consider the issue of isolation and loneliness in the context of both the structure and changing nature of the Victorian population.

3.1 The senior population

3.1.1 Population ageing

Victoria's population is growing. The population at June 2011 was 5.5 million. By 2014 this had grown to 5.8 million, with an annual average growth rate of 1.8 per cent. From 2014 to 2031, the population of Victoria is projected to grow to 7.7 million, at a rate of 1.6 per cent per annum.

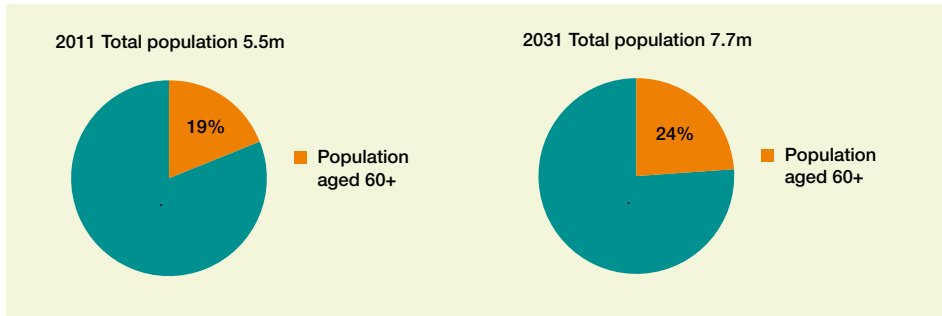
As shown in Table 1 and Figure 3, Victoria's population is also ageing, and this is projected to continue. In 2011, 19.4 per cent of Victorians were 60 years of age or older. This had grown to 20.1 per cent by 2014, and is projected to grow to 24.1 per cent by 2031, representing an annual average growth rate of 2.75 per cent – almost double the rate of overall population growth. It is therefore timely to consider preventative measures to both manage the financial and social impacts across society and to offset the risks of increased social isolation in the older population.

Table 1: Victoria's population 2011 and 2031

Population group	Number of people 2011 (actual)	% of total population	Number of people – 2031 (estimated)	% of total population
Total population	5,537,816		7,701,109	
Population aged 60+	1,075,083	19.4	1,859,621	24.1

Source: *Victoria in Future 2015: Population and household projections to 2051*, The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Figure 3: Victoria's population 60 years of age or older as a percentage of the total population



Source: ibid.

3.1.2 Seniors economic and social contributions to the community

The considerable economic and social contributions of seniors, now and into the future, should be acknowledged. This includes participation in the paid workforce, provision of support for others as unpaid carers and volunteerism in the community.

In 2011, more than 12 per cent of the population over 60 years of age in Victoria were providing unpaid care to another person. This included assistance with self-care, supervision of mobility and transport support provided for a partner, parent, adult child or other person who was ill, frail or had a disability.²²

In 2012, the annual economic value of volunteer support in Victoria provided by people 65 years of age or older was calculated to be \$681 million.

The real value is not just in dollars.²³

Volunteering provides significant social benefits for both the volunteers and the community, including health and wellbeing benefits through maintaining connections with others.



An Australian study has shown that in 2011 grandparents provided 34 per cent of child care, and that grandparent care was the predominant form of child care for two-parent families, exceeding formal long day care and family day care.²⁴

3.1.3 Prevalence of loneliness in Victoria

As discussed in section 2, based on international research evidence, this report assumes a baseline prevalence rate of 10 per cent for isolation and loneliness among people 60 years of age or older. Due to the ageing of the population, by 2031 (in only 15 years' time) the number of lonely older people is anticipated to grow by 73 per cent, from 107,508 to 185,962 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Estimated prevalence of loneliness among seniors in Victoria

Victorian population aged 60+	2011 (actual)		2031 (projected)			
	Number	% of total population	Number of lonely people estimated	Number	% of total population	Number of lonely people estimated
Males	499,261	9.01	49,926	871,003	11.3	87,100
Females	575,822	10.4	57,582	988,618	12.8	98,862
Total	1,075,083	19.4	107,508	1,859,621	24.1	185,962

Source: *ibid.*

3.2 Isolation and loneliness in the Victorian context

Specific population groups at higher risk of isolation and loneliness include those living alone, those with limited English and people who provide unpaid care for others.

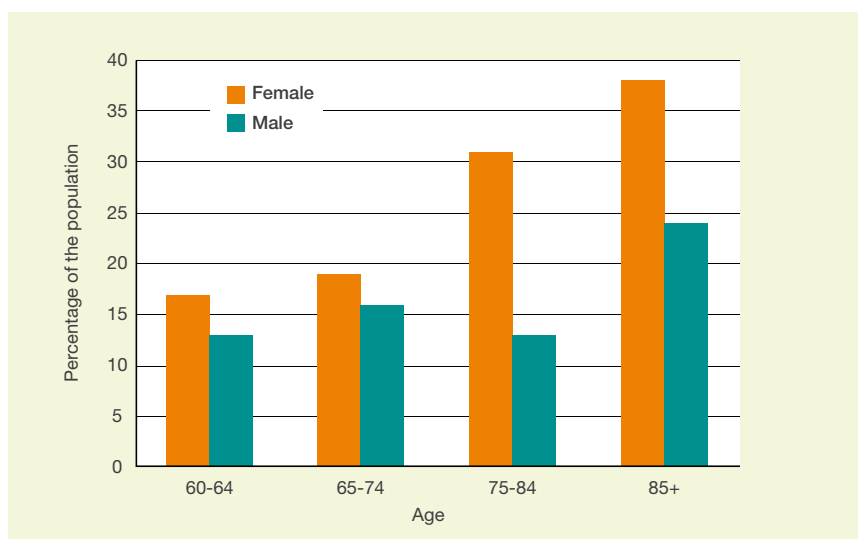
3.2.1 Living alone

Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that people living alone were almost three times as likely as people living with others to say that they would prefer to spend less time alone (29 per cent compared with 11 per cent).²⁵

Older people are more likely than younger people to live alone. In Victoria in 2011, 15 per cent of people 60–64 years of age and 18 per cent of people 65–69 years old lived alone. Twenty-seven per cent of people 75–84 years old lived alone, rising to 34 per cent (one in three) of people over 85 years of age. This compares with eight per cent of people between 15 and 59 years old living alone.

Living alone is more common for older women. For example, 17 per cent of women 60–64 years old, 19 per cent of women 65–74 years old, 31 per cent of women 75–84 years old and 38 per cent of women over 85 years old lived alone in 2011. The percentage of older men living alone rises from 13 per cent of men 60–64 years old to 24 per cent of men 85 years old or older (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Victorian population living alone by age and sex 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2011 Census)

As identified in the literature review, people living on their own are at higher risk of social isolation and loneliness. The data shows increasing numbers of older women will face a higher risk of isolation and loneliness. This is of particular relevance for those living with dementia or other chronic health conditions that may impact on their social connections, including those with family or friends.

3.2.2 Culturally and linguistically diverse groups and English proficiency

The literature review identified that for culturally and linguistically diverse populations there are factors such as poor English language skills that can limit their access to services and support used by other older people. Of the population who were 60 years old or over in Victoria in 2011, more than one-quarter were born in a non-English speaking country.

In addition, the literature review has identified there are culturally and linguistically diverse population groups that are ageing at a more rapid rate than the general population.

For example:

- ▶ 74 per cent of those born in Italy are over 60 years old
- ▶ 71.5 per cent of those born in Greece are over 60 years old
- ▶ 67.3 per cent of those born in the Netherlands are over 60 years old.

Experiences of isolation and loneliness can be exacerbated by lack of English proficiency. In many cases, these same groups have higher proportions of older people with low English proficiency. For example:

- ▶ 43.3 per cent of those over 60 years of age from Macedonia have low English proficiency.
- ▶ 43.2 per cent of those over 60 years of age from Greece have low English proficiency.
- ▶ 39.1 per cent of those over 60 years of age from the Russian Federation have low English proficiency.
- ▶ 28.8 per cent of those over 60 years of age from Italy have low English proficiency.

3.2.3 Carers

As identified in the literature review, being a carer increases the risk of social isolation and loneliness due to the all-consuming nature of the caring role, and the impact this can have in shrinking the carer's social networks. Just over 12 per cent of Victoria's older population were providing care for another person or persons.

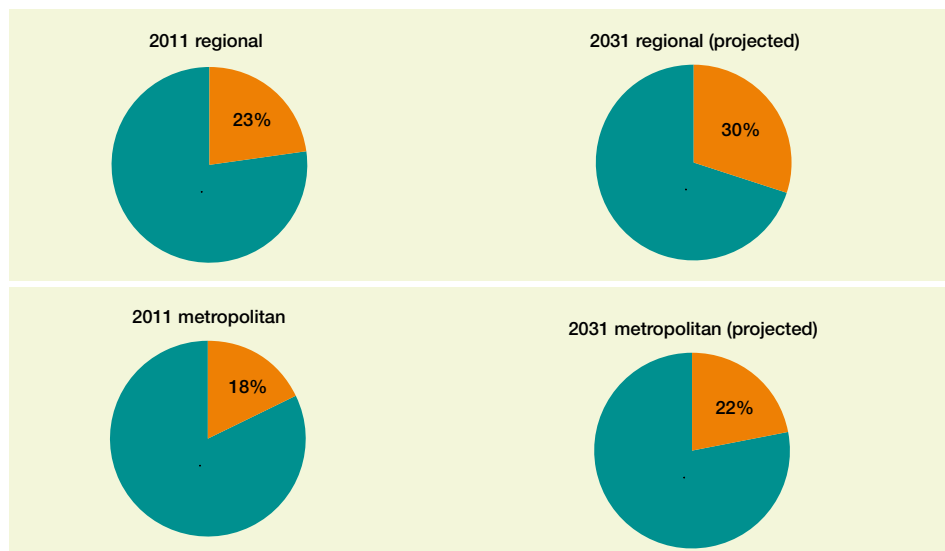


3.3 Regional and rural areas

The literature review identified older people living in rural areas as one of the groups at higher risk of social isolation due to transport disadvantage and reduced access to services.

Population ageing is more pronounced in regional Victoria than in metropolitan Melbourne. In 2011, 18 per cent of Victorians living in the Greater Melbourne area were 60 years of age or older, compared with at least 23.5 per cent in regional Victoria. In 2031, these ratios will increase to 22.4 per cent in the Greater Melbourne area and 29.6 per cent in regional Victoria (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Victorian regional and metropolitan populations 60 years of age or older, 2011 and projected for 2031



The ageing of the population in regional Victoria is exacerbated by the shift of younger people from regional and rural areas into more highly populated metropolitan regions. This has left many rural communities with fewer resources and services available to support the remaining older population.

Consequently, the incidence of social isolation and loneliness in the older population caused through living alone, lack of transport and lack of access to services or support is likely to be more pronounced for rural areas.

In addition, not only do some rural local government areas (LGAs) in Victoria currently have a higher proportion of their population over 60 years of age, this trend is predicted to increase in the years ahead.

Table 3 shows that, as at 2011, of the 10 regional LGAs with the highest proportion of older people who are over 60 years of age, the proportion is between 30 and 40 per cent. By 2031 the proportions of older people who are over 60 years old is predicted to continue to increase to between 40 and 50 per cent in these areas.

Table 3: Top 10 regional Victorian LGAs with a population 60 years of age or older, 2011 and projected for 2031

2011 (actual)		2031 (projected)	
LGA	% of population aged 60+	LGA	% of population aged 60+
1. Queenscliffe	40.9	1. Queenscliffe	52.3
2. Strathbogie	33.4	2. Loddon	46.9
3. Central Goldfields	32.8	3 Central Goldfields	43.4
4. Loddon	32.2	4. Strathbogie	41.8
5. Yarriambiack	31.8	5. Buloke	41.0
6. Buloke	31.6	6. Mount Alexander	40.5
7. East Gippsland	31.4	7. Alpine	40.2
8. Gannawarra	31.4	8. Benalla	39.9
9. Pyrenees	30.2	9. Hepburn	39.3
10. West Wimmera	29.8	10. North Grampians	39.3

Source: *Victoria in Future 2015*, op cit.

In addition, significant increases are predicted in the older population for some outer metropolitan areas over the next 20 years. Table 4 provides information about predicted changes in the proportion of residents 60 years of age or older in outer metropolitan areas. This data forecasts a significant increase in the proportion of the population 60 years of age or older in outer metropolitan areas.

Table 4: Population ageing in six outer metropolitan Victorian LGAs, 2011 and projected for 2031

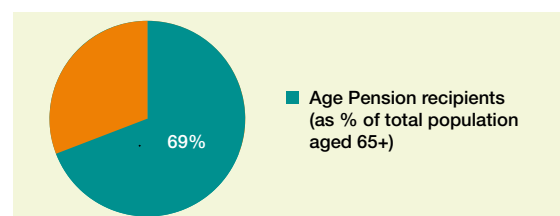
2011 (actual)			2031 (projected)		
LGA	Population aged 60+	% of LGA population	LGA	Population aged 60+	% of LGA population
Mornington Peninsula	42,277	28.3	Mornington Peninsula	66,990	35.2
Casey	34,005	13.0	Casey	94,322	21.7
Knox	28,350	18.3	Knox	52,606	29.4
Yarra Ranges	27,580	18.5	Yarra Ranges	49,834	29.0
Hume	23,371	13.4	Hume	55,007	18.8
Whittlesea	24,634	15.3	Whittlesea	58,999	18.6

Source: *ibid.*

3.4 Financial status

The minimum eligibility age to receive the Australian Age Pension is 65 years. Almost 70 per cent of people who are 65 years of age or older in Victoria receive the Age Pension, including those on a part pension – a total of 609,444 individuals (see Figure 6).²⁶

Figure 6: Age Pension recipients in Victoria, 2015



Almost 20,000 people who are 65 years of age or older receive other Commonwealth Government income support payments including the Carer Payment and the Disability Support Pension. More than five per cent of people 65 years of age or older receive a Carer Allowance (46,564) – an income supplement for carers who provide additional daily care and attention for someone with a disability or medical condition, or who is frail aged.

There is a longstanding correlation between old age and poverty in many developed nations around the world, including Australia.²⁷ In later life people on a fixed income are particularly vulnerable to changes to their income situation. Many individuals receiving income support do not have substantial savings or other assets. The impact of this lack of discretionary spending is that a significant proportion of older people are excluded from fully participating in a social life due to limited financial resources, which can in turn lead to isolation and loneliness.

4 What seniors told us

A key aspect of understanding isolation and loneliness was to hear firsthand from seniors about their experiences and to give them an opportunity to share their stories and those of their friends. For this reason, the listening tour provided highly relevant and extremely useful firsthand information from seniors, which has contributed significantly to the conclusions reached in this report.

4.1 Social needs and wants

At the beginning of each listening tour meeting, we commenced our conversations by asking those present to provide their initial responses to the question: 'What is it that older adults want and need socially as they age?' Their answers are summarised below and provide strong evidence about the importance for seniors to have meaningful roles and a sense of purpose in life as they age.

4.1.1 An intrinsic value and purpose in life as we age

Seniors spoke with real fervour about the importance of continuing to have life interests that are meaningful. Clearly there is enormous diversity in the life experiences of Victorians as they age – their family background, heritage, personal beliefs, values and spirituality.

In addition, at every meeting seniors spoke passionately about the importance of mutual respect for people as they age, to have the opportunity to be heard and to have their views canvassed and considered important. At every meeting seniors present expressed their sincere appreciation for the fact that the Commissioner had come to hear about their views, aspirations and experiences.

As they move through their journey of ageing, seniors want to be able to have a meaningful role and continue to contribute to society, for example, as volunteers. However, many participants spoke about the, at times, subtle age discrimination they felt where there was a sense (often unspoken) that just because they were getting older they had less to offer or contribute.

4.1.2 Importance of inclusion not discrimination

Seniors spoke about the importance of being valued and having opportunities to continue to make a meaningful contribution with an emphasis on mutual respect, having the opportunity to be heard and not being considered 'too old to count'.

4.1.3 Desire for respect

In addition to the feedback regarding age discrimination, seniors also expressed the view that the process of ageing could be linked to feelings of loss of respect. That is, a sense of being 'out of sight and out of mind' as well as a sense that because they were older our community did not demonstrate appropriate levels of respect towards them. To balance this discussion, other seniors pointed out the importance of this needing to be two way, that is, from older people towards younger people and vice versa.

4.1.4 Desire for independence and control

Seniors spoke with strength and commitment about the vital importance of being able to exercise as much decision making as possible as they age. At every meeting some seniors shared their stories about situations where wishes or aspirations were not adequately understood or considered by those around them, including friends or family, as well as organisations that provide services such as Home and Community Care or aged care.

4.1.5 Family, friendship, companionship, relationships

One of the most compelling drivers of a sense of value and purpose in life was directly related to the experiences of friendship, family, companionship and relationships more widely. Where these relationships were functioning in a positive manner, they provided a real sense of value to people as they age. However, many seniors spoke about the serious challenges they and others feel due to the global nature of our world, the rapid growth of technology and the changing nature of community. These matters, when combined, were a key factor in their experiences of isolation and loneliness.

We cannot assume that the experience of ageing is accompanied with retention of key family and friendship relationships. Children or relatives may move interstate or overseas. Friends may move to new areas. The communities in which we live continually change in their composition and make up.

We heard from a man who had retired and moved from interstate to a flat in Melbourne. He knew no-one in his local area and became very isolated. The local council did a letterbox drop with information about a 'friendly neighbour' program inviting people to attend an informal get-together in a local café.

From this small beginning, he now receives personalised letters advising him about what's on, attends a range of activities and knows people to say hello to at the local supermarket. He told us about the difference this has made in his life where instead of 'sitting at home in my flat', he is now happily connected to his local community.



4.1.6 Importance of a sense of community

At each meeting, seniors spoke with passion about the vital importance of feeling part of their local community as they age. While there were consistent and positive examples, others bemoaned what they felt as a 'loss of community spirit'. There were concerns that all too often today people are so busy that they simply walk by and don't take an interest in those around them, including seniors.

Yet it is clear that many seniors desire significant connections at their local community level and prefer local opportunities for social participation.

4.1.7 Security and safety

At each meeting personal safety was raised as an important basic want and need for people as they age. In particular, it was expressed that older people feel most 'vulnerable' during the evening.

4.1.8 Physical health, health limitations and active ageing

There was strong recognition that good physical health and active ageing have a central role to play in enabling people to remain connected to the world around them as they age. Likewise, living with multiple health conditions, mobility restrictions or chronic illness all had limiting impacts on the capacity of people to remain socially connected. Mental health was considered by seniors to be just as important as physical health. People living with dementia may be left out of social gatherings, sometimes due to stigma, further exacerbating isolation and loneliness.

4.1.9 Living with disadvantage including financial hardship

During each of the listening tour meetings there was very real recognition that the journey through the senior years was often closely tied to experiences of disadvantage at some points. For some, their senior years continued or exacerbated challenges they experienced throughout their lives such as physical disability, financial hardship, family violence, homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction or at-risk behaviours including gambling. For others, the journey through their senior years created new life challenges such as the onset of disability, becoming a carer, loss of a partner or loved one, the onset of mental health concerns, mobility issues, dementia or loss of social connections due to moving to a new neighbourhood.

4.1.10 Adapting to change

At each meeting seniors acknowledged the need to retain the ability to adapt to the changing world as we age. They considered this to be linked to personal resilience because the journey of ageing inevitably throws challenges and 'curve balls'.



4.2 Causes and risk factors

Seniors who attended our listening tour meetings confirmed that the causes and risk factors of isolation and loneliness are very complex, and the experience of isolation and loneliness for an older person will most likely be the result of a culmination of more than one factor or set of circumstances. Isolation and loneliness can occur as a result of both the cumulative effect of the 'daily hassles of life' and more acute 'stressful life events'.

Importantly, a number of factors affecting isolation and loneliness can be both risk factors and protective factors. A prime example is health, whereby poor health (such as loss of hearing) can limit one's ability or confidence to be socially active, while good health can contribute to healthy and active ageing. There was broad consistency in both the literature review and the listening tour of the key risk and prevention factors for isolation and loneliness. Some of the common causes of isolation and loneliness identified by participants are outlined below.

4.2.1 Personality and personal preferences

Participants noted different expectations, wants and needs regarding social interaction as people age. For example, they spoke about friends who desire and need lower levels of social interaction than others. They also pointed out that being involved in a group did not necessarily bring a sense of inclusion and fulfilment because we can also 'feel lonely in a crowd'.

Seniors were clear that we must not assume that just because someone has limited social contacts, they feel isolated and lonely. It is important to take time to consult with people, understand their wishes and provide opportunities for social participation.

However, they spoke with a deep sense of passion about the feelings of not being included, or being actively excluded from opportunities to participate, and how significant this was in denting their confidence.

4.2.2 Poor health and/or disability

Frailty, physical limitations, pain and/or poor physical or mental health can cause isolation as older people lose confidence, become self-conscious and withdraw from social engagement. This can occur because they are not physically able to travel to, attend or participate in social activities. It can also occur because they perceive that they will slow down or hinder a group activity.

Chronic pain, lack of physical strength and susceptibility to falls, incontinence, hearing loss, reduced vision and dementia were specifically raised as conditions impeding the ability or confidence of older people to be socially active.

Some seniors explained the difficulty they have participating in group activities and conversations with others due to hearing loss. In other cases individuals had hearing aids but still experienced difficulty; for example, they did not know to how to use them properly but found it difficult to ask for assistance.



'I used to go to a local community group, but my hearing deteriorated and I couldn't hear what people were saying, so I stopped coming.'

4.2.3 Chronic health conditions

Seniors at the listening tour meetings also spoke about the impact of the onset of chronic health conditions. While there was acknowledgement that some support was regularly available to help manage such conditions, there was recognition that the struggle to maintain personal health can lead to withdrawing from social networks and gradually lowering the level of social engagement.

4.2.4 Disadvantage, including financial hardship and housing

Seniors identified many examples of disadvantage that arose as they progressed through their senior years, for example, the significant impact of financial limitations on their affordability to participate in, or join, social or other activities.

One of the women in attendance said she lived in a rural area and relied on her local community bus. However, a recent price increase in the cost of bus travel meant she had to go without something in order to still use the bus to get to her weekly seniors activity group that she valued highly. She said this was a difficult financial decision for her.

Numerous participants expressed the view that they were particularly vulnerable to changes in their financial situation. They spoke about the impacts on discretionary spending, such as the cost of participating in clubs, groups and organisations or attending activities that provide an opportunity for social participation.

They expressed concern about the number of older Victorians who are excluded from full participation in a social life due to their limited access to economic resources, which can in turn lead to isolation and loneliness.

4.2.5 Loss of personal confidence

As noted above, erosion of personal confidence has an enormous and direct impact on the capacity of individual seniors to seek out opportunities for social participation.

4.2.6 Cultural, linguistic and gender diversity

At each of the listening tour meetings, seniors spoke about the significant impact and challenges that can arise due to differing cultural expectations, language barriers and different value systems.

4.2.7 Life events, traumas and transitions

Participants acknowledged how life could be affected by 'life transitions' during their senior years. They spoke about the impact of retirement, relocation to a new area, adjustment to loss of a partner, the onset of health conditions, the changes in life associated with becoming a carer or the loss of one's driver's licence.

4.2.8 Moving into a new community

One particular example of a 'life transition point' is relocation to a new geographic area either as part of retirement planning or at some point during the later years. There were positive examples where the proactive decision to move to an area provided better housing choices, as well as better access to community resources and services. However, there were also examples where moving to a new area had a negative impact on social participation due to subsequent life events.

One participant at the listening tour meetings shared her experiences of moving into a new area. She and her husband chose a new location because of its appeal as a lifestyle area, and they moved while aged in their late 60s. However, her husband was then diagnosed with a terminal illness, but she did not have the friendship or other networks to draw upon in her new area and the experience of being a carer was a significant challenge.



4.2.9 A growing digital divide

In addition to the challenge of obtaining information about what is available for seniors in their local community, at each of the listening tour meetings some participants spoke with fervour about the major challenges that technology now brings for them. Increasingly, the online world is a barrier to access for many older people who have limited skills to interact or communicate in a meaningful way through online or social media.

While some seniors had good levels of internet skills and competency, others with more basic levels of computer or technology literacy expressed concern that the rapid nature of information technology change is an increasing challenge for them.

4.2.10 The digital divide and access to services

Participants spoke about the challenges many seniors face due to the increasing number of businesses, government departments and community organisations that use the internet as the entry point for access to information, services, support or resources. There were concerns that the more vulnerable seniors may be at risk of missing out on access to services and support. There were concerns that seniors with limited or no technology skills could be locked out of access to information and basic services.

4.2.11 Becoming a carer or loss of a partner

Another key life transition point raised at each of the meetings was the experience of becoming a carer or losing a partner, and the particular challenges of then maintaining social connections and opportunities for meaningful social participation.

Participants outlined how becoming a carer, particularly when providing high levels of caregiving, could result in a greater risk of isolation and loneliness. The demands of caring are significant, and participants spoke about the gap between the resources available to them and the needs of the person they were caring for. They also spoke about the tendency of the person providing care to put the needs of the person they are caring for first, even when this had a detrimental impact on their social connections and own health. The personal commitment of the carer to their loved one meant they put their own needs last, and any available resources or offers of additional support were directed towards the person they were caring for rather than their own needs.

In other cases participants who were providing care did not access services or support because they did not see themselves as a 'carer'.

'I am not a carer. I just look after my husband.'

Participants spoke about the challenge of providing care in the home to other seniors with higher levels of frailty or disability or health and mobility issues.

4.2.12 Impacts of living alone

There were participants at each meeting who identified the challenges of living alone, including after the loss of a partner. Those who are living on their own are considered to be at particular risk of isolation and loneliness.

Participants spoke about the compounding impact of living alone while at the same time experiencing health challenges. They spoke about the importance of being able to access in-home support or care, and the challenge of maintaining their social connections. There was a particular concern from those in rural areas about whether they would be able to access appropriate information, services and support in their own homes as they age and become frail.

‘A lady in our local community had her husband pass away. She couldn’t drive so she was out on the farm all by herself.’

4.2.13 Social contact and relationship quality

Seniors spoke about how the ‘ageing journey’ was often accompanied by changes in their friendship networks, family relationships and local community involvement. On the one hand were experiences where substantial challenges occurred trying to maintain social connections. Others identified that ageing did not always result in social losses and there may be relationship gains later in life that can reduce loneliness.

4.2.14 Nature of community organisations

Participants shared quite diverse experiences, both positive and negative, about accessing activities or support or participation opportunities in local community groups and organisations. While there were very positive stories of active inclusion and effective involvement of seniors, there were also experiences reflecting barriers to participation such as relevance of activities, unwelcoming group dynamics or a culture that did not support the participation of older people.

One of the men who attended the listening tour meetings told us he had lost his wife some years earlier and shared his experience of isolation and the enormous impact it had on his own confidence. He spoke about how he built up the courage to attend a local group but that after going on two occasions he did not feel he was included or acknowledged and so stopped attending.



As a result of the conversations at the listening tour meetings, it is clear there is widespread change in the nature and type of participation by older people in local groups and organisations. That is, some of the more archetypal forms of seniors' participation opportunities seem to be in decline. For example, various seniors clubs or senior citizens groups have declining numbers or are questioning their viability. Some of the local groups that are experiencing a decline in levels of participation cited negative community perceptions and questions about the relevance of activities.

At the same time, other local groups and organisations shared their experiences of sustained or even rapid growth, for example, the University of the Third Age, Men's Sheds and Life Activities Clubs. There were many examples of local community organisations providing seniors with positive social participation opportunities. However, there were also occasions where local community groups were experiencing difficulty in their level of engagement with seniors. For example, one of the more practical issues raised in each meeting was what seniors viewed as the 'barriers to entry', such as group dynamics that they felt effectively excluded new members.

The loss of personal confidence has an enormous and direct impact on the capacity of individual seniors to seek out opportunities for social participation.

4.2.15 Access to appropriate information

While some participants spoke in positive terms about the information that is available from their local council, library or community organisations such as a neighbourhood house, others spoke about how difficult it is to access information about opportunities for participation in their local community or supports that are available.

Many seniors expressed a lack of clarity about where they would access information or find out about opportunities for a greater level of participation at their local community level. This included discussion about local organisations that did not seem to encourage the ongoing participation of people once they became older.

4.2.16 Mobility and transport

Participants commented that personal mobility and/or access to localised transport play an important role in supporting opportunities for social interaction. Thus, low levels of mobility or lack of transport options are key risk factors for isolation and loneliness. Seniors were clear in their view that there is a strong link between mobility and/or access to transport and social participation. A concerning moment expressed by older people was the point at which they lose their driver's licence.

4.3 Impacts on health, wellbeing and quality of life

There was an overwhelming consensus among participants that isolation and loneliness was a significant issue for older Victorians.

However, the direct link between being alone and being lonely should not be assumed; some older people are happy to be alone.

Seniors' comments mirrored the impacts of isolation and loneliness identified in the literature review, speaking about:

- reduced quality of life as a result of a lack of meaningful personal relationships
- mental health issues including depression, which can lead to further isolation when it limits the capacity or confidence of older people to remain socially active
- ill health, which can also limit an older person's capacity or confidence to be socially active

- ▶ decreased sense of self-worth, low self-esteem and loss of confidence making it harder to reconnect socially
- ▶ adopting risky behaviours such as gambling, smoking, drinking and drug abuse
- ▶ elder abuse occurring when seniors are isolated from their communities.

'Loneliness is a big issue. Our community don't see it, but it is there. What we do see is the tip of the iceberg.'

4.4 Identifying those at risk

It was recognised that, in many instances, it is difficult to identify isolated and lonely older people. A number of channels to identify and reach older people at risk of, or affected by, isolation and loneliness were identified:

- ▶ through the healthcare system including general practitioners, community health centres, pharmacists, hospitals and district nursing services
- ▶ home care and home support, respite and residential aged care assessment services and providers
- ▶ community organisations including Universities of the Third Age, senior citizens clubs, sporting groups, churches and other religious organisations
- ▶ family, friends and neighbours
- ▶ self-identification, although a lack of confidence and feelings of shame from the negative perception attached to loneliness may deter people from actively seeking support themselves
- ▶ libraries
- ▶ other professionals including real estate agents, police and veterinarians.

Having an understanding of social support services and having systems and processes in place to connect people with and refer people to these services was seen as being as important as identifying isolated and lonely people. In addition, supporting people to attend services and supports, at least on an interim basis, was identified as being important.

4.5 Interventions aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness

It was recognised that isolation and loneliness is a complex issue to address, particularly given the large number and multidimensional nature of risk factors and causes. Participants put forward a range of ideas for addressing isolation and loneliness.

4.5.1 Community groups and sporting clubs

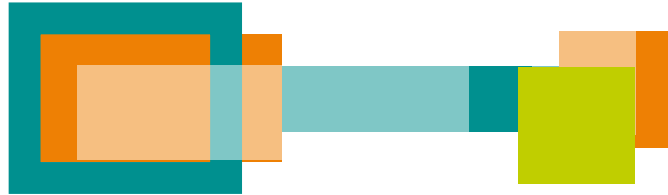
Local organisations such as senior citizens clubs, sporting clubs, neighbourhood houses and community groups were identified as having an important role to play in providing opportunities for older people to be socially active and thus protect against isolation and loneliness. However, it was felt some clubs and groups are not being fully utilised, with declining participation levels being put down to:

- ▶ the negative perception of 'senior citizens clubs' and 'senior activities'
- ▶ lack of engaging activities
- ▶ groups not encouraging and welcoming new members.

A number of examples were provided of groups that are reversing this trend at both the state and local levels. A key feature of these successful groups is that they provide innovative and creative opportunities for social interaction targeted at what people actually want to do.

A 72-year-old man with Parkinson's disease participates in a community singing group. A friend in the group commented 'He can be distressed when he is not singing. Singing brings out the best in in him. It is his therapy and gives him something that he can still do well.'

Seniors suggested that additional support could be provided for these groups to help reinvigorate them with more and younger members, make them more relevant to older people and reduce the negative stigma attached to some seniors clubs and programs. An organisational health check template was one example of a tool that has been used to help some groups grow and thrive.



4.5.2 Community information and communication

A consistent theme among participants was the need for better communication to older people about the range of programs, activities and supports available to them in the community. This could help address isolation and loneliness where these services and supports are accessed by older people in the community. It was suggested that information could be provided through local community information hubs supplemented by online information. Establishing these community information hubs in places where older people frequent, such as shopping centres, pharmacies or libraries, would also increase community awareness of this information.

An innovative suggestion for providing information on social interaction opportunities involved using correspondence from utility bills, Centrelink and other government services supplemented with social support information.

4.5.3 Community connections

It was suggested that isolation and loneliness could be addressed by improving community spirit. This could be achieved by connecting different groups of people in the community. It was noted that many older people enjoy being around younger generations and that intergenerational interaction is an important element of social connectedness for older people. Examples of successful intergenerational programs included linking older people with mothers and babies groups and school-based programs where children either learnt from or taught older people. It was felt that these types of programs benefit both older and younger people.

The concept of 'good neighbouring' was also identified as a protective factor for isolation and loneliness. The Neighbourhood Watch program was mentioned as an example of a program that achieved 'good neighbouring' by establishing connections and fostering community spirit. Local councils could also support this concept by connecting older people who retire to a new area through newcomers groups, providing information and opportunities for informal social interaction between long-term and newer residents.

Several other ideas were identified as having the potential to address isolation and loneliness. These included:

- addressing community attitudes, including ageism
- building personal resilience
- utilising community registers
- considering innovative approaches to housing
- participation in interest-based activities such as music and arts.

4.5.4 Mobility and transport

Personal mobility and access to transport were acknowledged as barriers to social participation and participation in community programs, particularly in rural areas. Participants felt that isolation and loneliness could be assisted by improving the availability of public, community and volunteer transport. Options identified to improve access to transport for older people included:

- more frequent public transport services (especially on weekends)
- coordinating timetables for different modes of public transport
- placing public transport service stops close to the most used facilities
- training or support to improve understanding of, and confidence in using, public transport
- additional community transport
- more availability of volunteer transport.

4.5.5 Transitioning and life planning

As isolation and loneliness can be brought about by 'trigger events', participants recognised the value of planning for, rather than reacting to, crisis situations. There were opportunities to avert isolation and loneliness by thinking ahead and obtaining information about opportunities to participate socially and about the support services that may be needed in the future. It was noted that the Seniors Card program provides an important vehicle for accessing information about planning for the future as we age.

Retirement is a key 'trigger' event, in many cases the first one faced by many older people. It is an important transitional period in which an older person may need to redefine their identity. Providing information and education for the workforce on the services and activities available in the local community could help reduce isolation and loneliness following retirement. One option suggested for providing social support and social participation information and education was through superannuation funds. This could help ensure life planning is recognised alongside financial planning as a key issue facing retirees.

4.6 Role of volunteering in the lives of senior Victorians

Volunteering was seen as an important part of addressing isolation and loneliness, both for volunteers and those people receiving support from volunteers. Volunteering and unpaid work provide a sense of value and purpose to seniors as they age, and can help replace social networks lost through retirement from paid work.

It was noted that some older people want to continue in paid work on a part-time basis. It was suggested that encouraging individuals to volunteer while still in the workforce would provide ongoing social connections that could protect against isolation and loneliness once paid work ceases.

'I started volunteering after I left work as most of my friends were work colleagues who didn't live in the area. I joined the local Probus Club and the Country Women's Association and met people who will be friends for life. Now I am on a number of committees, I write newsletters and I provide haircuts for isolated people. Most of all, I love being able to use the skills I have developed throughout my life.'



A number of actions to increase rates of volunteering were suggested on the basis that volunteering protects against isolation and loneliness. The suggested actions included:

- ▶ increasing the awareness of volunteering opportunities
- ▶ linking volunteers to opportunities that make use of their professional skills
- ▶ actively seeking out volunteers, noting that some people want to be asked, rather than offer, to volunteer.

Interestingly, some volunteers did not see themselves as 'volunteers'. Instead, descriptions such as 'working without pay' and 'supporting the sort of community I want to live in' were used. In this context, in addition to seeking to increase the number of volunteers it may also be worthwhile thinking about volunteer messaging.

5 Addressing isolation and loneliness

5.1 An integrated and coordinated response

Emerging strongly from the consultations with community members and stakeholders is the need for greater opportunities to participate in the cultural, civic and social aspects of our community. These opportunities provide older people with a variety of meaningful roles that:

- ▶ value and honour their skills
- ▶ promote feelings of self-worth and belonging
- ▶ address negative community perceptions towards ageing
- ▶ act as a safety net for vulnerable people at risk of loneliness.

In response to isolation and loneliness among older people, responsibility for creating, building, and promoting opportunities for older people's social participation resides with everyone. It is multijurisdictional across the three levels of government, crosses portfolios within governments and involves the business, community and service sectors. There are many existing policies, plans, programs, services, groups and volunteers that all contribute to addressing the issue in some way. Across all sectors, we need to capitalise on what we do well, make improvements and work better together where we can, and look at service and opportunity gaps to make sure we meet the needs of isolated and older people in the community.

AGEING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

In doing so, and based on the consultation and research findings, attention needs to be given to important principles that underpin actions. Actions need to:

- ▶ empower senior Victorians to play an active role in their local community so they can participate in their community as much as possible
- ▶ empower senior Victorians to have a meaningful role, value and purpose as they age, including personal resilience as well as active social engagement and participation
- ▶ include interventions that respond to key life transition points such as the move into retirement, loss of a partner or the entry of a parent or partner into aged care
- ▶ identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable seniors and those who are at risk of falling through the cracks in our current service and support system
- ▶ maximise each individual's capacity to be active, healthy and have meaning in life as they age, so they remain for as long as possible above the functional disability threshold. Importantly, aim to avoid premature decline below the functional disability threshold (refer to section 2.7.1 and 2.7.2).

This approach is supported by the recently released World Health Organization *World report on ageing and health*, which concludes that there are five strongly interconnected domains of functional ability that are essential for enabling older people to do the things they value.

These are the abilities to:

- ▶ meet their basic needs
- ▶ learn, grow and make decisions
- ▶ be mobile
- ▶ build and maintain relationships
- ▶ contribute.

‘Together these abilities enable older people to age safely in a place that is right for them, to continue to develop personally, to contribute to their communities and to retain their autonomy and health.’²⁸

5.2 The benefits of taking action now

As described earlier in this report, there is a disproportionate increase in Victoria's population of people over the age of 60 years. Older people who are as healthy and active as possible are a huge asset to Victoria, and there are benefits in targeting supports to delay functional decline and a shift into dependency. There are direct benefits to the Victorian Government in leading efforts to ensure social connectedness among senior Victorians.

As a key planner and provider of health services, transport, urban infrastructure, housing and other social supports, the Victorian Government stands to gain by utilising the assets of our ageing population, and better manage health costs if loneliness and isolation among older people is reduced.

Recent research into the impacts of loneliness on older people concludes that loneliness not only makes people sick, it increases an older person's chances of premature death.²⁹ As noted earlier, it is anticipated that by 2031, due to population ageing, the number of older Victorians experiencing loneliness will increase by 73 per cent. Already in Victoria, 48 per cent of public hospital patients are over 60 years old, and typically stay longer than younger patients. Addressing loneliness can help reduce the impact on the health system over time. Policy settings that respond to population ageing include healthy and active ageing approaches that try to limit unnecessary costs to health and welfare services.

Older people who experience disadvantage and/or social disconnection after they enter their senior years – for instance, through the transition into retirement, relocation to a new home or through loss of a loved one or from becoming a carer – can become vulnerable. On the other hand, those for whom the journey into ageing means a continuation of disadvantage or challenges they have experienced throughout their life course, face the risk of moving prematurely into ill-health or dependency.

What this means is that two streams of effort are needed. The first stream is to target policies and strategies to promote healthy and active ageing for the majority of Victorians as they get older. The second stream requires more focused targeting of the people within communities who are at higher risk of social isolation and loneliness.

The functional capacity of each individual, social participation levels and contribution through volunteering are all policy success measures in this framework.

Australian and international literature, as well as feedback from the listening tour, point clearly to the need for integrated and coordinated approaches that build on existing activities.

There is enormous opportunity to leverage and build on the work that is underway in many communities across Victoria. Outcomes for older people in addressing isolation and loneliness will be maximised by taking a coordinated and strategic approach.

5.3 Building blocks for action

The research and findings have emphasised the importance of an integrated, whole-of-community approach to strengthen the roles and value of older people in our community, and at the same time, ensure there is scope and commitment to reach out to those vulnerable to social isolation and at risk of loneliness.

The following set of six building blocks (Figure 7) would provide an integrated approach requiring action from the state and local governments, funded services, community-based organisations and community members.

Integrated and coordinated action in all six building block areas will enable a focus on the needs of vulnerable older people within a broader context, based on supporting older people in their homes and communities.

In the context of responding to social isolation and loneliness by older Victorians, the actions represented by the building blocks will:

- reaffirm the state government as a key continuing player and advocate in seniors policy and response and seniors service delivery, in light of the transfer of responsibility for assessment and Home and Community Care services for people over 65 years old to the Commonwealth Government
- promote the meaningful roles, value and purpose of seniors as they age
- increase opportunities for seniors to join, attend and participate in existing clubs, groups, organisations or activities, both seniors-specific and generic

- ▶ focus on more socially excluded seniors, including the special needs of seniors who are carers, and the importance of life transition or trigger points, for example, loss of a partner or moving to live in a new area
- ▶ increase older people's knowledge about the importance of maintaining and strengthening their levels of social participation, and promote what is available through streamlined information and community education
- ▶ address personal mobility and local transport issues by building on existing networks to facilitate seniors' access to services and involvement in local activities.

Figure 7: Building blocks for action



There are different roles ideally played by different organisations in achieving outcomes through the above six areas. No one sector can do this work alone, and the Victorian Government is particularly well placed to take a leadership role, in partnership with local government and other sectors. There are also important roles to be played by local government, peak bodies, business and community organisations, as well as seniors themselves.

Roles for the Victorian Government include as:

- supporter of seniors participating in activities
- policy leader and enabler to bring together organisations that have an interest in, or contribution to make, to social participation by seniors (in particular, local government has an important role to play in actively involving seniors in decisions that affect them, as a referral and information access point to guide seniors to services or supports that are available, and as provider of funding and access to venues for community organisations)
- advocate to the Commonwealth in representing the interests of the Victorian community in policy areas such as aged care, home support and in-home programs
- community capacity-builder to maximise, in collaboration with local organisations and local government, the positive values and sense of community that are important to Victorians in general and older people in particular.

Local government is accountable for delivering municipal health and wellbeing plans, and older residents are a key group in this regard. Councils are also ideally placed to convene local partnerships and alliances, as well as offer accessible sources of information through public facilities, including libraries, and through networks of supports and services in their area.

Peak bodies, businesses and member associations all have a vital role in engaging individual seniors (including those playing a caring role) and in building greater community awareness as well as supporting age-friendly practice by community organisations and businesses.

5.3.1 Integrated and coordinated seniors action plan

One of the key findings of this project is that Victoria is now in the early stages of the fundamental shift towards an ageing population that will predominate for at least the next two decades. In addressing the isolation and loneliness of older people, a strategic approach is needed, where existing and future resource allocations for an ageing population are considered in a planned, coordinated, integrated and consistent manner across all government departments. The elements of such an approach include integrated and coordinated policy objectives, priorities and outcomes in a four-year seniors ageing action plan.

The plan would set priorities for seniors across portfolio areas promoting and improving opportunities for seniors' participation.

Key priorities of the seniors ageing action plan include individual government departments, organisations, businesses and service providers actively supporting the transition of older workers, including those who are underemployed and unemployed, into their retirement years, and setting seniors' participation within a community context.

In addition, it is important that collaborative actions by stakeholders within local government, non-government, community and relevant business organisations are included and well coordinated.

5.3.2 Role, value and purpose as we age

As noted, isolation and loneliness are best addressed in the context of integrated and coordinated responses to population ageing. As many older people are vulnerable to loneliness at different stages throughout their life course and during the ageing process, it is vital that approaches to prevention, which include addressing the roles and purposes for older people, are designed for all older people.

The listening tour revealed that many seniors feel that ageism underlies their feeling of loss of value and purpose. Building on existing positive mechanisms that promote the contribution and value of seniors can assist in eliminating ageism across our community. However, addressing ageism is a much wider community issue that links to other priorities such as addressing domestic violence and elder abuse. The wider community (including service and local community organisations) has a vital role to play, and the Victorian Government can continue its work with community organisations to foster positive change in community attitudes towards older people.

As a result of the direct feedback from seniors through the listening tour, it is evident that the stronger their sense of roles and purpose, the greater opportunity there is to ensure seniors remain active members of their community and consequently avoid the risk of chronic isolation and loneliness. This is one of the most important prevention measures.

Through a whole-of-person approach, strategies can be developed to identify and address personal barriers to participation such as negative attitudes to using assistive devices such as hearing aids, unwillingness to seek assistance and adoption of at-risk behaviours such as self-medication and gambling as coping mechanisms.

Roles for older people

More could be done to investigate methods of valuing, strengthening and promoting the roles of seniors as volunteers and the benefits received by older people who are assisted by volunteers. This will maximise and enhance opportunities for volunteering among seniors and provide meaningful social participation for the growing number of seniors at risk of isolation and loneliness.

In framing responses to isolation and loneliness, it is important to recognise the enormous diversity of life experiences, skills and capacities among those over 60 years of age. While many people retain high levels of capacity until a late age, for others their wellbeing and capacity may deteriorate earlier. The varied roles, interests and diverse participation needs of individual seniors need to be clearly understood in the design of services and programs.

The role of older people, both as volunteers and as beneficiaries of volunteering, could be specifically considered within government consultation and engagement arrangements with the volunteering sector.

Other opportunities to develop strategies to affirm the positive contributions of older people include through community building, 'better neighbours' schemes and other local capacity-building activities.

Intergenerational programs

One of the clear messages coming from the research is that, due to the range of issues that contribute to social isolation and loneliness of older people, it is important to encourage a whole-of-community approach that builds connections across the generations, for example, through volunteering. While there are a significant number of government programs, services and funding or grant programs that contribute to active ageing, there is scope for increased work with the youth and education sectors to develop a universal platform for intergenerational volunteering and to identify, support and promote a range of options for intergenerational participation.



5.3.3 Strengthening seniors' inclusion at the local level

One of the most important findings from this report is that social participation opportunities for Victorian seniors have a strong place-based element. Seniors identify very strongly with their local community activities, meeting places and their communities of interest including culture, sporting and life-long learning. A priority for current as well as the next generation of seniors is to have face-to-face opportunities for social participation.

There is significant opportunity to strengthen the role of existing local organisations and networks to enable greater seniors' participation and activity, without seeking to limit or exclude:

- ▶ senior citizens organisations
- ▶ neighbourhood and community houses
- ▶ libraries
- ▶ Universities of the Third Age
- ▶ Men's Sheds
- ▶ Life Activities Clubs
- ▶ Country Women's Association branches
- ▶ RSL clubs
- ▶ local service clubs
- ▶ Probus Clubs
- ▶ sporting clubs or organisations based on particular interests or activity including arts and craft.

Strengthen governance of community organisations including alternative models

Not all older people identify with what is offered by seniors groups and organisations. There are some organisations, clubs and groups who face declining memberships and will need to adapt to ensure their longer term survival through approaches such as membership renewal and refocusing of purpose. Seniors-specific community organisations need to be able to grow and expand. In some cases, it may be necessary for them to rationalise their governance and operating structure, for example, where management committees are experiencing difficulty in recruiting office bearers. There is

AGEING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

enormous opportunity to strengthen the governance of many groups through sharing resources such as governance toolkits, best practice recruitment models, succession planning and professional education.

There is also an opportunity to consider 'micro-organisations' – that is, smaller groups that provide access to benefits without the need for administration of an incorporated association structure. For activity groups offering low-risk, low-maintenance activity, there may be an opportunity to explore the use of alternate ways for organisations to auspice or support activity. Such arrangements could also enable the processes and administration of fundraising permits, relevant insurances and Working with Children and police checks to be streamlined.

Increase opportunities for seniors' participation at the community level

The research has identified a clear need to strengthen, streamline and allow innovation in local community groups, organisations and activities to enable increased access by older people. This could be through strengthening the senior-friendly nature of local organisations, for example, creating an inclusive culture, active recruitment of new members, membership across age groups and by enhancing outreach models, that is, 'go and find them' as well as 'they come to us'.

In addition, in many local communities there exists an opportunity to build more seniors-inclusive organisations by creating community partnerships and more effective models of local networks that enable coordination of effort and shared learnings across organisations.

There may also be particular roles that local government, peak bodies, neighbourhood houses, community health centres, libraries and local community organisations can play in creating age-friendly environments and in supporting the more disadvantaged older people, in particular people who may be at risk of multiple disadvantage or who are experiencing multiple risk factors. In doing so, it is important to develop evidence-based strategies that enhance social inclusiveness and age-friendliness.

Local government has a vital role as an enabler of joined-up local community responses to isolation and loneliness and connecting local needs with local resources such as volunteering, use of venues and coordination support. This can link with the focus on building more age-friendly communities including providing infrastructure and environments that facilitate and support social participation for older people.

5.3.4 Referral pathways and professional practice

With Home and Community Care service delivery responsibilities for older people transferring from the Victorian Government to the Commonwealth Government in 2016, it is important that linkages and referral pathways, as well as cross-referral and promotional opportunities, across the broad range of services that support older people are strengthened and maintained. Relevant services include Home and Community Care services, aged care services, community health services, hospitals, general practitioners and Primary Health Networks, as well as generalist community services such as neighbourhood houses, libraries and local government. Regional offices of government departments also have a role to play.

There is an enormous opportunity within this broad range of services to provide much clearer and effective pathways and referrals to improve personal resilience and reablement and to meet social inclusion and social participation needs. Such referral pathways need to be based on key principles including:

- ▶ promoting professional practice within organisations that encourages partnering with people to give seniors as much control over their life decisions as possible
- ▶ promoting organisational and professional practice based on a whole-of-person approach. That is, person-centred practice where the complex needs of older people, including social participation needs, are identified early and a system response is provided
- ▶ building on existing interventions and pathways that promote personal resilience and social connectedness
- ▶ ensuring an appropriate focus on those seniors who are at risk of disadvantage, social exclusion, multiple risk factors and elder abuse.

Approaches for those at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion

It is important to develop place-based and targeted capacity-building initiatives for those at highest risk of exclusion and disadvantage, by enhancing existing activity for a range of interventions. For example, geographically targeted initiatives to address loneliness could, in a particular location:

AGEING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

- assess disadvantage, social exclusion and loneliness among older people
- identify and strengthen referral locations, routes and resources
- link to and support related community-based organisations to build on existing activity for a range of interventions including those focused on building personal resilience.

Approaches for those at risk of elder abuse

Elder abuse is one of the identified risk factors for isolation and loneliness. The abuse of older people occurs through a broad spectrum of settings including within family and friendship networks, within institutional care settings such as aged care facilities or hospitals and acts by strangers. Protection for older people is found across a range of legislative and regulatory remedies and agencies including the Commonwealth Government, Victoria Police, the Department of Health and Human Services and local councils.

Identifying the precursors of elder abuse is an important aspect of prevention. In particular, ageism and the social isolation of older people can be key risk factors in elder abuse. In some cases, isolation is used by abusers as a strategy to control and dominate an older person's life, and can lead to all of the defined types of elder abuse: physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and neglect. Well-connected communities, with older people who are aware of their rights, can provide a protective factor, and this can help reduce the abuse and neglect of older people.

The listening tour found there is a low level of understanding about strategies that can be set in place to minimise the risk of elder abuse. There is scope to increase community understanding of services such as Seniors Rights Victoria and to build awareness among individuals about risk minimisation approaches such as use of powers of attorney. It is important that all service provider organisations are able to identify those at risk of, or experiencing, elder abuse, and provide appropriate support and referral to assist.

With this in mind, strengthening referral pathways would enhance the resources and support for individuals at risk of elder abuse, and this would require further professional development of workers who engage with seniors. There is a need to design and implement targeted programs that strengthen professional knowledge about seniors' rights, enhance referral pathways to support services, and ensure practitioners can better link seniors to social participation opportunities.

5.3.5 Community education and access to information

Given the importance of local opportunities for participation by seniors, including as a safety net against isolation and loneliness, it is important that seniors know what is available to them. This report has found there is a significant disconnect between lower levels of individual knowledge held by older people about services, support and opportunities for social participation, as compared with the range of opportunities made available in many local communities.

There is an opportunity to strengthen and increase the information provided directly to seniors through local government, in partnership with other information channels such as the Seniors Card program, Seniors Online and local libraries.

In addition, localised communication strategies utilising local groups could increase knowledge of the benefits of healthy and active ageing and community participation, and opportunities for older people to participate.

An integrated, cross-department community education program could be developed so that seniors can be provided with access to timely information during their journey through their later years. Such a community education program could leverage:

- ▶ existing communication and media opportunities, for example, the Victorian Seniors Festival, funded programs, membership of peak bodies, seniors publications, and healthy and active ageing programs
- ▶ the Seniors Card program communication to approximately one million Victorian seniors.

Life planning and health promotion

It is important that older people are assisted to realise their potential value and opportunity to contribute, and to not assume they are unable to contribute due to inability or incapacity. For many people, their journey through the senior years can all too often lead to a sense of 'disconnection', which is then one of the key elements triggering isolation and loneliness. This report has concluded that many of the challenges or risks that will confront individual seniors as they age can be planned for, predicted or ameliorated.

A fundamental requirement is for individuals themselves to acknowledge the ageing process and plan for the change in roles that will accompany their journey through the senior years, with associated impacts on health, housing,

financial capacity, wellbeing, social participation and risk of more significant life challenges. In particular, life course planning needs to be built on specific life transition points, for example, moving to retirement, becoming a carer, changing housing status and the onset of health conditions.

There is an opportunity for the Victorian Government and key stakeholders to build on the current development of online life planning tools, how-to guides, rights information, and links to support and information agencies to help seniors plan for critical issues in later life. This includes information about opportunities to maintain connections within the community, and health promotion information developed for and targeted to older people.

Service delivery and the digital divide

Data on the level of information technology capacity among individual Australians regularly finds that those over 70 years old generally possess the lowest level of digital literacy in comparison with other adult age groups. There is a substantial difference between the level of skill required to use a mobile phone or digital device compared with those skills required to navigate complex websites.

At the same time, businesses, government departments and community organisations are increasingly using online platforms for their business or service transactions. Government programs at all levels from local government information to federally funded aged care services frequently require individuals to navigate complex websites such as Centrelink or My Aged Care. Local government, membership organisations and other services or activities are all embracing online communication as their core method of access and communication, including internet banking, online shopping and access to transport.

Participants in the listening tour meetings expressed serious misgiving about how the increasing move to online platforms means an increasing number of seniors are being locked out of access to key information as well as services. In light of the capacity for the digital divide to effectively limit access to services for those who are likely to be at higher risk, a more sophisticated approach to addressing the digital divide is now a priority activity for the Victorian Government.

5.3.6 Personal mobility and local transport

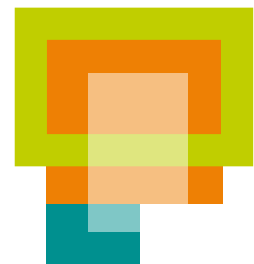
Establishing an integrated and coordinated response to isolation and loneliness through a seniors action plan would provide opportunity for personal mobility and local transport options such as:

- ▶ age-friendly transport, for example, by including age-friendly criteria in the review of local bus routes and timetabling to ensure that buses stop at key seniors activity centres such as libraries, shops, neighbourhood houses, community health centres and other services
- ▶ training and support to improve understanding of and confidence in using public transport
- ▶ local community transport, in particular in collaboration with local government and service providers at a local level, especially in outer urban growth areas
- ▶ localised 'micro transport' options including use of volunteers as one element of linking older people in particular geographic locations with social participation opportunities.

5.4 Taking action

The research and findings of this report emphasise the importance of an integrated and coordinated approach to strengthen the roles and value of older people in our community and, at the same time, ensuring there is scope and commitment to reach out to those vulnerable to isolation and the risk of loneliness.

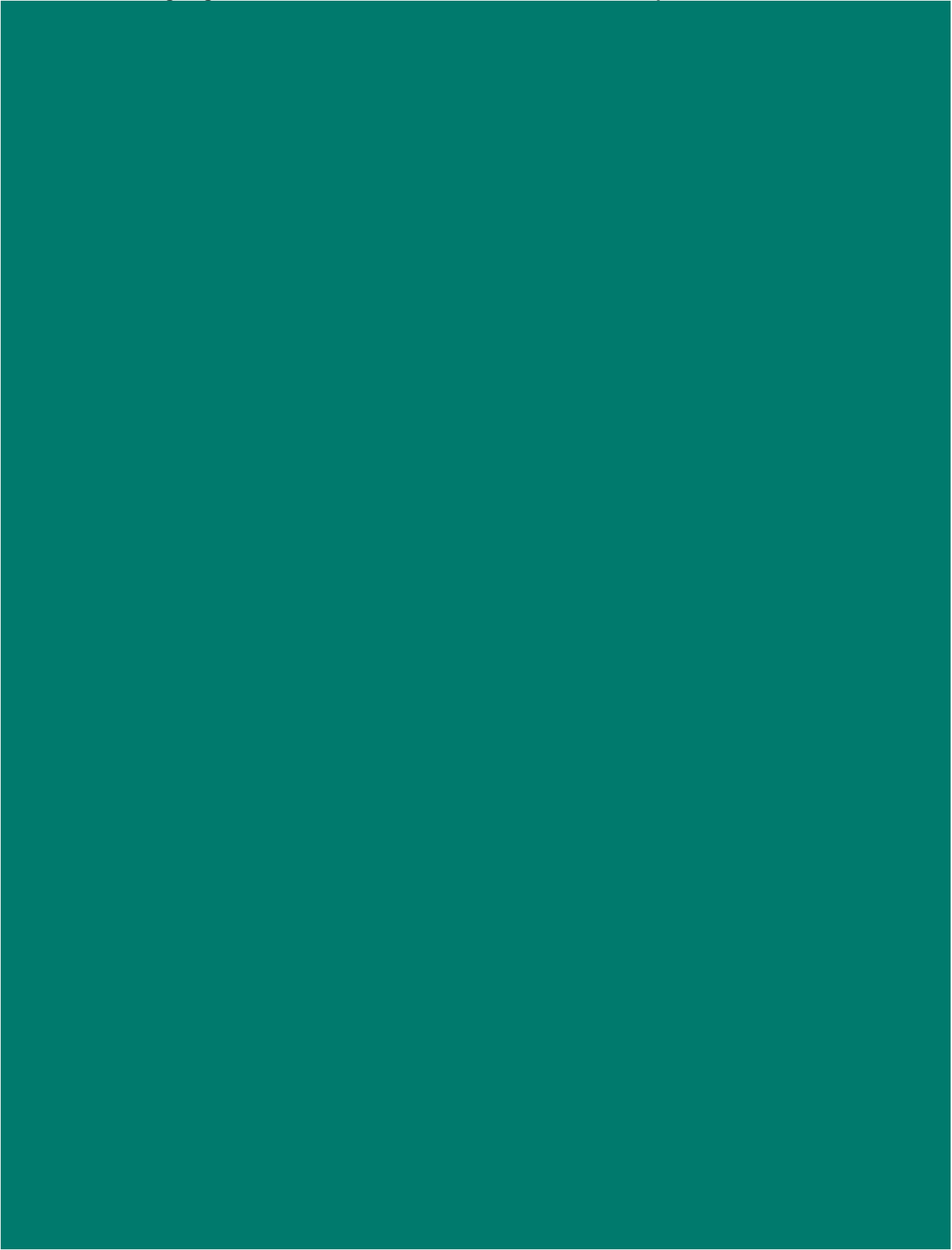
In responding to the needs of seniors who are at risk of isolation and loneliness, it is recommended that the Victorian Government address the needs of the growing number of Victorian seniors at risk through an integrated and coordinated response and action on the six building blocks identified in this report.



Action across all six areas will enable a focus on the needs of vulnerable older people within a broader, role-affirming context centred on supporting older people in their homes and communities.

References

- 1 Naufal R 2008, *Addressing Social Isolation Amongst Older Victorians*, Paper prepared for Office of Senior Victorians, Department of Planning and Community Development, Melbourne. p. 10.
- 2 Grenade L and Boldy D 2008, *Social isolation and loneliness among older people: issues and future challenges in community and residential settings*, Australian Health Review, CSIRO Publishing, Canberra, Vol 32 No 3, p. 468-478
- 3 Bolton M 2012, *Loneliness – the state we're in. A report of evidence compiled for the Campaign to End Loneliness*, Age UK Oxfordshire, Abingdon. p. 5.
- 4 Pate A 2014, *Social isolation: Its impact on the mental health and wellbeing of older Victorians*, COTA Victoria, Melbourne. p. 7.
- 5 Government of Canada 2014, *Scoping review of the literature. Social isolation of seniors 2013–2014*, National Seniors Council Ottawa. p. 6.
- 6 Department of Health and HIACP Collaborative Hume Region 2011, *Improving social connectedness for older people literature review*, Lime Management Group, Melbourne. p. 1.
- 7 Findlay R, Cartwright C 2002, referenced in Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (2009) *Comparative social isolation amongst older people in the ACT*, Cultural & Indigenous Research Centre Australia, Leichhardt. p. 14.
- 8 Social Finance 2015, *Investing to tackle loneliness – a discussion paper*, Social Finance Ltd, London. p. 6.
- 9 Havens B, Hall M, Sylvestre G, & Jivan T 2004, *Social isolation and loneliness: Differences between older rural and urban Manitobans*. Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue canadienne du vieillissement, 23(02), p. 129-140.
- 10 Havens B, & Hall M 2001, *Social isolation, loneliness, and the health of older adults in Manitoba, Canada*. Indian Journal of Gerontology, 15(1-2), p. 126-144.
- 11 Department of Health and Ageing 2012, *National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.
- 12 QAHc 2008. *The young, the ageing and the restless: Understanding the experiences and expectations of ageing and caring in the Qld LGBT community*. Brisbane: QAHc. www.qahc.org.au/files/u17/Ageing_Report.pdf
- 13 Australian Unity 2015, *What makes us happy?* Australian Unity Ltd, South Melbourne. p. 18.
- 14 American Association for the Advancement of Science 2014, *Loneliness is a major health risk for older adults*. Viewed 30 November 2015, <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2014/02/16/aaas-2014-loneliness-major-health-risk-older-adults>
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Kinder K & Harland J 2004, *The arts and social inclusion: what's the evidence?* Support for learning, 19(2), 52-56.
- 17 Dickens, A P, Richards, S H, Greaves, C J, & Campbell, J L 2011, *Interventions targeting social isolation in older people: a systematic review*. BMC public health, 11(1), 647
- 18 Chesters J, Ryan C & Sinning M 2013, *Older Australians and the take-up of new technologies*. NCVeR, Adelaide.
- 19 VicHealth 2013, *Technology and older people: findings from the VicHealth Indicators Survey*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton. p. 1.
- 20 World Health Organization 2015, *World report on ageing and health summary*, WHO, Geneva. p. 13.
- 21 Ibid. p. 20.
- 22 Australian Bureau of Statistics, catalogue number 3101.0, Australian Demographic Statistics, 2014. TABLE 52. Estimated Resident Population By Single Year Of Age, Victoria. 24 September 2015.
- 23 Ironmonger D 2012, *The Economic Value of Volunteering in Victoria*. Department of Planning and Community Development, Melbourne. p. 22
- 24 Hamilton M & Jenkins B 2015, *Grandparent childcare and labour market participation in Australia*. (SPRC Report 14/2015). National Seniors Australia, Melbourne. p. 18.
- 25 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009, *Living alone*. ABS, Canberra. p. 3.
- 26 Department of Social Services 2015, *DSS Demographic June 2015*. Viewed 10 November 2015, <https://data.gov.au/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data/resource/e6457899-378e-406f-8027-a6ee8a19e6c6>.
- 27 Goldfield T 2005, *Wealth of the Nation 2005*. CACI. Brighton.
- 28 World Health Organization 2015, op cit. p. 19.
- 29 American Association for the Advancement of Science 2014, op cit.



Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 11.00am

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Positive Ageing Advisory Committee
	Date:	Friday 3 March 2023
	Location:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, and Zoom
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Natalie Duffy
	Council Staff:	Leanne Horvath, Narelle Hart, Jade Zigenbine, Stephanie Vassilios, Julie-Anne Grech
	Other:	Tianjian Shen, Anne Fitzpatrick, Janice Crosswhite, Sabi Buehler, Sandra Verdam, Joy Ferguson
APOLOGIES:		

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1.	Welcome/ introductions	No disclosures made
2.	New Staff in Community Services	No disclosures made
3.	PAAC Advisory Committee – Expressions of Interest update	No disclosures made
4.	Grants update	No disclosures made
5.	Communications update	No disclosures made
6.	Roundtable	No disclosures made

The Meeting concluded at 2.00pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name:	Leanne Horvath
	Officer Title:	Coordinator, Community Support Services

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 5:21pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Pre-Meet
	Date:	Tuesday 14 March 2023
	Location:	Council Chamber
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Peter Perkins, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Karen Egan, Cr Geoff Paine, Cr Ben Ramcharan and Cr Richard Stockman
	Council Staff:	Carl Cowie, Vince Lombardi, Blaga Naumoski, Corrienne Nichols, Jeremy Livingston, Daniel Tarquinio, Katia Croce,
	Other:	
APOLOGIES:		Cr Natalie Duffy

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Pre-Meet <i>Cr Peter Perkins entered at 5:26pm</i>	No disclosures were made

The Meeting concluded at 5:40pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Katia Croce Governance Lead
-----------------------------	---	--------------------------------

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 5.05pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Councillor Briefing
	Date:	Tuesday 21 March 2023
	Location:	Virtual meeting
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Peter Perkins, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Natalie Duffy, Cr Ben Ramcharan and Cr Richard Stockman
	Council Staff:	Carl Cowie, Vince Lombardi, Blaga Naumoski, Corrienne Nichols, Jeremy Livingston, Rosa Zouzoulas, Natalie Town, Nichole Johnson, Anna Maio, Heath Gillett, Leah Farrell, Renae Ahern, April Wilson, Danielle Phyland
	Other:	
APOLOGIES:		Cr Geoff Paine, Cr Karen Egan

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Communications Strategy 2022-2025 Annual Action Plan Update	No disclosures were made
2	January 26 Citizenship Ceremonies moving forward	No disclosures were made
3	Draft Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029	No disclosures were made
4	Indigenous Voice to Parliament: Discussions Paper	No disclosures were made
5	Economic Development and Tourism Update - March 2023	No disclosures were made
6	CEO Update with Councillors - 21 March 2023	No disclosures were made

The Meeting concluded at 7.40pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Blaga Naumoski Director Governance and Communications
-----------------------------	---	--

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 5:15pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Council Meeting Pre-Meet
	Date:	Tuesday 28 March 2023
	Location:	Council Chamber
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Peter Perkins, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Natalie Duffy, Cr Karen Egan, Cr Geoff Paine, Cr Ben Ramcharan and Cr Richard Stockman
	Council Staff:	Carl Cowie, Vince Lombardi, Blaga Naumoski, Corrienne Nichols, Jeremy Livingston, Rosa Zouzoulas, Nichole Johnson, Enrique Gutierrez, Alex Marshall, Anna Maio, Katie Camilleri, Tess, Justine, Lance Clark, Michael Ioannides, Natalie Campion, Rebecca Burton, Katia Croce
	Other:	
APOLOGIES:		

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Council Meeting Pre-Meet	No disclosures were made

The Meeting concluded at 5:45pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Katia Croce Governance Lead
-----------------------------	---	--------------------------------

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 5.00pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Councillor Briefing
	Date:	Tuesday 4 April 2023
	Location:	Virtual meeting
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Ben Ramcharan, Cr Peter Perkins, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Natalie Duffy (5.15pm), Cr Geoff Paine and Cr Karen Egan (5.49pm -7pm)
	Council Staff:	Carl Cowie, Vince Lombardi, Sally Johnson, Corrienne Nichols, Jeremy Livingston, , Melika Sukunda, Nichole Johnson, Narelle Hart, Craig Commene, Renae Ahearn, Madeleine McClelland, Katie Camilleri
	Other:	Briony Stephen – Matheson Stephen Valuations Zoe Sriratana – Matheson Stephen Valuations
APOLOGIES:		Cr Richard Stockman

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	2023 Property Revaluation	No disclosures were made
2	Preliminary Overview - Approach to Creative Infrastructure Framework	No disclosures were made
3	Youth Hub project update	No disclosures were made
4	Positive Ageing Advisory Committee - 2023 Membership Endorsement	No disclosures were made
5	Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022 - Final Report	No disclosures were made
6	Land Management Incentive Program - Risk Review	No disclosures were made
7	CEO Update 4 April 2023	No disclosures were made

The Meeting concluded at 7.35pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Sally Johnson Acting Director Governance and Communications
-----------------------------	---	--

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 4:30pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) consultation with Councillors
	Date:	Tuesday 11 April 2023
	Location:	Council Chambers, Civic Centre
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Ben Ramcharan, Cr Geoff Paine, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Richard Stockman, Cr Natalie Duffy (attended virtually via Teams); and Cr Peter Perkins (entered meeting at 5.15pm)
	Council Staff:	Corrienne Nichols, Nichole Johnson, April Wilson, Vicky Bonafede
	Other:	Not Applicable
APOLOGIES:		Cr Karen Egan and Carl Cowie

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Review of Consultation Information Sheet for the (RAP). Items 1-10 were discussed and Councillor feedback was recorded.	Nil disclosures. Cr Perkins was in attendance from 5.15pm- 5.34pm for Items 7-10.

The Meeting concluded at 5:34pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Nichole Johnson Manager Community Partnerships
-----------------------------	---	---

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

The Meeting commenced at 5:39pm

MEETING DETAILS:	Title:	Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Pre-Meet
	Date:	Tuesday 11 April 2023
	Location:	Council Chamber
PRESENT:	Councillors:	Cr Peter Perkins, Cr Frances Eyre, Cr Geoff Paine, Cr Ben Ramcharan and Cr Richard Stockman
	Council Staff:	Vince Lombardi, Sally Johnson, Corrienne Nichols, Jeremy Livingston, Rosa Zouzoulas, Melika Sukunda, Katia Croce
	Other:	
APOLOGIES:		Carl Cowie, Cr Natalie Duffy and Cr Karen Egan

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	PCC Pre-Meet	No disclosures were made
2	Solar Farm Update	No disclosures were made

The Meeting concluded at 5:57pm

RECORD COMPLETED BY:	Officer Name: Officer Title:	Katia Croce Governance Lead
-----------------------------	---	--------------------------------



BNLLEN
BANYULE NILLUMBIK
LOCAL LEARNING &
EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



You are invited to join the Board of Management and staff for the 2023 Annual General Meeting. We will begin with official AGM business, a review of BNLLEN's achievements and activities in 2022 followed by a light morning tea. A schedule with guest presenter information will be forwarded to you shortly.

DATE	TIME	VENUE	COST
Wednesday 24th May 2023	8:00am - 10:00am	The Gallery Rivers of Yarrambat 28 Kurrak Road, Yarrambat 3091 Parking is available onsite	Nil. A light morning tea will be provided

Please RSVP to Melissa Casey on melissa@bnllen.org.au or 03 9431 8000 with any dietary requirements by 17th May 2023.



THE BANYULE NILLUMBIK LOCAL LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORK INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 24th MAY 2023

Board Election Notice

IMPORTANT NOTE

The Rules of Association of The Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Inc. establish a two-year term for each elected Board Member. Therefore, at each AGM half the Board are required to nominate for re-election.

In 2023 the following membership categories are open for nomination. All members of the Banyule Nillumbik LLEN are invited to apply, by completing the attached nomination form.

Category number	Category	Total No. of reps	Positions requiring nominations	Positions for election
1	Schools	4	Nominations invited	2
2	TAFEs/Universities	2	Nominations invited	1
3	ACE	1	Nominations invited	1
4	RTOs/GTOs/Employment Services	2	Nominations invited	1
5	Trade Union	1	Nominations invited	1
6	Employers	3	Nominations invited	3
7	LGAs	2	Nominations invited	2
8	Other Community Agencies	3	Nominations invited	3
9	Koorie	1	Nominations invited	1
10	Independent Community	1	Nominations invited	1
11	Co Opt	2	Nominations invited	2



Calls for Nominations

In accordance with the schedule for BNLLEN's Board of Management, BNLLEN hereby calls for nominations to the Board for 2023. The following positions are up for election at the AGM:

- a) Chair
- b) Treasurer
- c) General Board Members (half of the current Board members)
- d) Current members of the Association interested to nominate themselves or with the member's consent, be nominated by another member.

Nominations process and timeframes

- NOMINATIONS will be received prior to the AGM on Wednesday 24th May 2023 and comply with the rules of the BNLLEN Association.
- Nominations must reach our office or postal address no later than Wednesday 17th May 2023.
- A NOMINATION FORM is included with this Election Notice.

ADDRESS FOR LODGING NOMINATIONS

By Post:

The Secretary
PO Box 259
Greensborough 3088
C/O: Meri@bnllen.org.au

By Hand:

The Secretary, Room A231, Building A,
61 Civic Drive
Greensborough 3088

BALLOT: If a ballot is necessary, voting material will be emailed to eligible members at the address shown in the Association's records. The ballot will close at 4.00pm prior to the commencement of the Banyule Nillumbik LLEN Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday 24th May 2023 from 8.00am – 10.00am at the AGM event.



**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 24th May 2023
Nomination Form – Board of Management**

Name of NOMINEE: _____

Representing: _____

I, the above nominee, agree to be nominated for a position on the Board of Management of The Banyule/Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Inc.

In the Category of: _____

Signature of Nominee: _____

Date: _____

Name of NOMINATOR: _____

Representing: _____

Signature of Nominator: _____

Date: _____

Name of SECONDER: _____

Representing: _____

Signature of Seconder: _____

Date: _____

as members of the Board of Management of The Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Inc. we nominate the Nominee.

To be valid, this form must be **received** by hand, email or post no later than **Wednesday 17th May 2023**, to:

The Secretary

The Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning & Employment Network Inc.

Email c/o: Meri@bnllen.org.au

Post: PO Box 259, Greensborough VIC 3088

Address: Room A231, Building A, 61 Civic Drive, Greensborough VIC 3088