

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

to be held at the Civic Centre, Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Tuesday 14 June 2022 commencing at 7:00pm.

Agenda

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 9 June 2022

Distribution: Public

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Council Chamber Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting seating plan

**Cr Natalie
Duffy**
Edendale Ward

Cr Karen Egan
Bunjil Ward

**Cr Richard
Stockman**
Blue Lake Ward

**Cr Peter Perkins
(Chairperson
Planning Matters)**
Ellis Ward

**Cr Ben Ramcharan
(Deputy Mayor)**
Sugarloaf Ward

**Cr Frances Eyre
(Mayor)**
Swipers Gully Ward

Katia Croce
Governance
Lead

Blaga Naumoski
Executive Manager
Governance,
Communications
and Engagement

**Cr Geoff Paine
(Chairperson
Consultation Matters)**
Wingrove Ward

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive
Officer

Nillumbik Shire Council

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Nillumbik Shire Council

**Agenda of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting to be held
Tuesday 14 June 2022 commencing at 7:00pm.**

1. Welcome by the Chair

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

2. Acknowledgement of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country to be read by the Chairperson

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect 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 the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people hold a deep and ongoing connection to this place. We value the distinctive place of our First Nations People in both Nillumbik and Australia's identity; from their cultural heritage and care of the land and waterways, to their ongoing contributions in many fields including academia, agriculture, art, economics, law, sport and politics.

3. Apologies

Recommendation

That the apologies be noted.

4. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

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

5. Confirmation of Minutes

COM.001/22 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 10 May 2022

Summary

Confirmation of the minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 10 May 2022.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) confirms the minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 10 May 2022 (**Attachment 1**).

Attachments

- ⇒1. Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held 10 May 2022

6. Officers' reports

PCC.020/22 Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy - Response to first round of public engagement

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Rosa Zouzoulas, Executive Manager Planning and Community Safety

Author: Leigh Northwood, Strategic Planning Lead

Summary

This report summarises and considers the response to a first round of public engagement that was recently conducted in developing a new Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy.

A Neighbourhood Character Strategy (NCS) is an important policy document to enable Council to identify and protect neighbourhood character in residential areas. Council has an existing NCS which dates from 2003 and a new strategy is now required. Developing a new NCS is a priority action in the current Council plan.

The project to develop a new NCS includes three rounds of public engagement. The first round of engagement (the subject of this report) was conducted from 28 March to 8 May 2022 (over 6 weeks) for the purpose of eliciting community response regarding what is important to the neighbourhood character in the Shire and how can future development best support neighbourhood character.

Council received 332 written responses to the engagement, plus additional feedback received verbally from a number of Council's Community Advisory Committees and at information stalls held during the engagement. There is a strong emphasis in the feedback received on the importance of vegetation and landscape in defining the local neighbourhood character in Nillumbik and many suggestions are made regarding how to ensure future development supports neighbourhood character. The key themes from this engagement are detailed in the body of this report and particular attachments.

The next stage in the project is for the results of the engagement to be synthesised with technical work to develop a first draft of the NCS, which is scheduled to be presented to the August Council Meeting with a recommendation it be endorsed for public engagement.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes:
 - a) The community response to the first round of engagement for the Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy.
 - b) That a first draft of the Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy is scheduled to be presented to the August 2022 Council meeting to be endorsed for public engagement.
2. Resolves that the confidential un-redacted copies of survey responses and general written submissions to the recent public engagement for the Neighbourhood Character Strategy, as provided in **Attachments 5 and 6**, remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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3. Requests Officers write to all respondents to the community engagement to express Council's gratitude for their contribution and to advise them of Council's resolution and the next scheduled steps in the project.

Attachments

- ⇒1. Policy hierarchy and context for a Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Strategy
- ⇒2. Study area for the Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy
- ⇒3. Redacted and consolidated survey responses - First round of NCS Engagement
- ⇒4. Redacted and consolidated general submissions - First round of NCS engagement
5. Un-redacted and consolidated survey responses - First round of NCS engagement - *CONFIDENTIAL*
6. Un-redacted and consolidated general submissions - First round of NCS engagement - *CONFIDENTIAL*
- ⇒7. Consultation Findings Report - First round of NCS engagement - Chatterbox Projects

Discussion

Developing a new Nillumbik NCS

1. It is a requirement of State Planning Policy that each Council develops:
 - a) A NCS to identify a preferred character for residential areas and how future development will support that character.
 - b) A Housing Strategy (HS) to identify how the municipality will provide sufficient growth in housing supply and diversity.
2. The NCS is particularly required to inform and justify provisions that the Council and community wants in the local planning scheme to protect neighbourhood character, including when decisions are reviewed at VCAT. Both the NCS and HS are required by State Planning Policy to support the State Government's intended growth in housing supply and diversity in metropolitan Melbourne. The planning context for the NCS and HS is explained further in a diagram provided as **Attachment 1**.
3. Council has an existing NCS and Housing Strategy. However, both are dated, noting that the existing NCS was produced in 2003 and the HS was produced in 2001. The significant age of these documents will increasingly have consequences for the weight given to them in planning settings, such as VCAT. Consequently, the development of a new NCS and HS are priority actions in the current Council Plan.
4. The project to develop a NCS is fully funded over 2 financial years (see "Budget implications" below) and is significantly advanced. The study area for the NCS is identified in **Attachment 2** and only includes those parts of the Shire that are within residential zones.
5. A consultant team, comprising Ethos Urban and Chatterbox Projects, has been engaged to assist with much of the technical and consultative project work to develop the new NCS. The project has the following key stages:

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PCC.020/22 Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy - Response to first round of public engagement

TABLE A – KEY STAGES TO DEVELOP THE NILLUMBIK NCS

Step	Action	Timing/Status
a)	Develop the project and conduct background research.	Completed
b)	Conduct further research, including to conduct a first round of public engagement as to what constitutes the preferred character in residential areas.	This first round of public engagement was completed on 8 May. Other research is continuing.
c)	Prepare a first draft of the NCS	To be completed by August 2022
d)	Conduct public engagement on the draft NCS	August – September 2022
e)	Consider changes to the draft NCS, including by further engagement, and then recommend Council adopt a final NCS (potentially with further changes) and commence a planning scheme amendment to implement it (note that a planning scheme amendment to implement the NCS would require completion of the HS).	From early 2023 with the NCS scheduled to be adopted in late 2023

6. The planning scheme amendment referred to in Stage e) of Table A will be run as a separate, subsequent, project. The amendment process will have its own extensive round of consultation and right of review, in accordance with the statutory process set down by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The results of the first round of public engagement

7. The first round of public engagement for the NCS, referred to as Stage b) in Table A, was conducted from 28 March to 8 May (6 weeks). The engagement particularly sought to elicit from the community:

- a) What is important to the neighbourhood character in the Shire?
- b) How can future development best support neighbourhood character in the Shire?

8. Council has conducted a robust first round of engagement. The consultation was promoted through a variety of means, such as a project page on Council’s Participate Nillumbik website, information stalls, distributing consultation material to key community destinations, a range of local e-newsletters, social media updates and paid social media advertisements. Further details of how the engagement was promoted are provided in a later section of this report, entitled “Community Engagement”.

9. The engagement primarily sought feedback via the following means:

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- a) A written response, which could be provided by completing a short survey, or making a standard submission.
 - b) Feedback from a number of Council Advisory Committees, including the Youth Council, Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee, Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, the Positive Ageing Committee and the Inclusion and Access Committee.
 - c) Discussions with the community at the information stalls held for the engagement, with one stall held at each of Diamond Creek, Hurstbridge and Eltham.
10. Some numerical results of the engagement are:
- 220 people participated in the three place-based pop-ups
 - There were 2,689 visitors to the Participate Nillumbik project page and 1,678 people were directed to the project page via social media posts
 - 332 written responses were received, comprising 312 survey responses and 20 general written submissions.
 - Almost all survey respondents reported living in Nillumbik. 93% said their main connection to the area was living in Nillumbik and 95% said they reside in the study area for the project.
 - Individuals predominantly used the survey to provide feedback, whilst almost half of the general written submissions were provided by community groups.
11. The response regarding Eltham has been very strong, noting a high number of the survey responses wished to comment on that locality, as did a number of general submissions, such as one provided by the Eltham Community Action Group (ECAG). The size of the response from Eltham probably reflects that this is the Shire's largest residential area.
12. However, other residential areas are notably represented in the survey responses, as well as in other forms of feedback. For example:
- General written submissions were received from the Warrandyte Community Association, the Hurstbridge Community Voice, the Wattle Glen Residents' Association and from the Stringybark Community Nursery (which operates at St Andrews) and these submissions focused on character issues relevant to those particular communities.
 - The advisory committees, such as the Youth Council, provided notable feedback on a range of localities, such as Diamond Creek, Plenty and Hurstbridge.
13. The responses to the engagement are provided as:
- **Attachment 3** – redacted and consolidated survey responses.
 - **Attachment 4** – redacted and consolidated general submissions.
 - **Attachment 5** – (confidential) un-redacted and consolidated survey responses.
 - **Attachment 6** – (confidential) un-redacted and consolidated general submissions.

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- **Attachment 7** – A consultant report by Chatterbox Projects which documents all the feedback received (i.e. from written responses, discussions with advisory committees and discussions at the engagement stalls).
14. It is noted that **Attachments 5 and 6** remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
15. The following key themes are evident across all the feedback received:
The Shire’s residential areas have a distinct and attractive character, which is tied to the location and its natural attributes.
16. There is a particularly strong sentiment in the public response that the Shire’s residential areas have a distinctive and attractive semi-rural character. Further, a range of elements are commonly cited as significantly contributing to this. For example:
- a) Vegetation is highly prominent in the streetscapes and landscape, including vegetation in gardens, road reserves and nearby public open space. Particular importance was attached to this element.
 - b) A dominance of indigenous vegetation, as opposed to native or exotic. There was strong mention of the dominance of canopy indigenous eucalypts in key residential areas such as Eltham and rural townships and how this canopy cover across the landscape makes these residential areas unique. However, there was also comment that the importance of understorey vegetation needs to also be appreciated.
 - c) That gardens visually spread between properties and into the road reserve and “appear to have evolved rather than being imposed”.
 - d) The outer location of the Shire’s residential areas provides a strong semi-rural or “Melbourne meets the country” feel.
 - e) The local topography, particularly its distinctively hilly, vegetated form.
 - f) The scenic views available, including views to surrounding vegetated hills, views within the streetscape and non-urban views on the main approach to rural townships, such as Wattle Glen.
 - g) The existence of semi-rural streets typified with roads being curvy, well-planted, lacking kerb and channel and being unsealed or partially sealed.
 - h) The considerable open space in proximity to, or mixed within, residential neighbourhoods.
 - i) The native fauna which the vegetated residential areas support.
 - j) The local community and its heritage, such as its historic association with the arts and alternative building techniques.
 - k) Particular aspects of the design and pattern of residential development were identified as important, such as:

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- i. A non-uniform or “random” residential appearance, typified by varied front setbacks and an appreciable variation in design style and era in most neighbourhoods.
 - ii. The common existence of large front setbacks, which provide sufficient space for vegetation that screens buildings on a residential property and provide enough space for canopy trees to contribute to the overall vegetated character of the landscape.
 - iii. Use of minimum to no front fencing, including use of rural fencing, which allows uninterrupted vegetation between road reserve and front gardens.
 - iv. Development that respects the sloping topography by avoiding cut and fill.
 - v. A low scale of development and low building heights.
 - vi. A low density of residential areas, with a sense of openness or open spaces.
 - vii. Numerous examples of building design which reflect the heritage and artistic tradition of the area e.g. mud-brick dwellings, rustic designs or older buildings. The Warrandyte Community Association indicated the architecture of many dwellings in North Warrandyte are significant and interesting for this reason.
 - viii. Use of natural materials to blend buildings into the natural environment.
 - ix. Local design techniques (such as an emphasis on retention of vegetation) which also contribute to reducing energy use and providing habitat for flora and fauna.
17. A key point is that a combination of factors, not just one, were typically mentioned as important to neighbourhood character. However, vegetation and landscape were certainly identified as central to the overall attractive character, but also important is that buildings and streetscapes have respected or showcased these elements.

Varied response on how to protect neighbourhood character, but emphasis on requiring development to be sympathetic to local natural attributes.

18. There was some variation in the response to the question of how future development can appropriately support neighbourhood character in the Shire, which is explained as follows:
- a) Some respondents essentially stated that neighbourhood character could only be protected by allowing no further residential development, or by applying restrictions that would essentially prevent any appreciable further development. Examples of the restrictions sought were no further subdivision and no increase in density.
 - b) A substantive number of responses appeared to be accepting of some further residential development, subject to strong use of at least one (typically several) guidelines to protect neighbourhood character. Examples of such guidelines included:
 - i. To use natural looking exterior materials.

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- ii. Provide variation in design across any larger residential development.
- iii. Ensure the external appearance of residential development reflects aspects of the immediate neighbourhood or rural township.
- iv. Promote Nillumbik’s vegetated theme, particularly in the front setback of residential developments and also in side and rear setbacks and in road reserves. Again, with strong support for indigenous vegetation.
- v. Ensure sufficient space is available for canopy trees, particularly indigenous, to maintain the vegetated landscape.
- vi. Related to the two previous points, maintain generous front setbacks for landscaping, whilst also providing side and rear setbacks suitable for planting.
- vii. Better articulate and defend the role of understorey plants, not just canopy trees, in protecting neighbourhood character.
- viii. Protect adjacent habitat values and wildlife corridors. For example, by promoting fencing in residential areas that avoids injury to local fauna.
- ix. Design development to be sympathetic to surrounding open space. For example, in terms of how the development is orientated to and setback from any open space.
- x. Visually break-up any medium density housing with single dwellings and restrict the extent of medium density housing.
- xi. Require development to respond to the values of a site, rather than allowing development that is not designed to suit the site.
- xii. Use pitched roofs to mimic the topography.
- xiii. Encourage mudbrick as a design and building material for dwellings, as it contributes significantly in various ways to the Shire’s local character.
- xiv. Retain a preference for minimal or rural style front fencing.
- xv. Set guidelines to suitably restrict the size of ancillary structures (e.g. sheds)
- xvi. Avoid hard surfaces in front gardens to allow for more landscaping.
- xvii. Ensure neighbourhood character guidelines support reducing energy use in residential areas. For example, by encouraging large trees to be located in a position where they will add to a continuous canopy and retain appropriate solar access for north-facing windows.
- xviii. Carefully design improvements in the public realm. For example, to design footpaths in St Andrews to be in keeping with the charm of the township.
- xix. Put power lines underground in the road network.

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PCC.020/22 Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy - Response to first round of public engagement

- xx. Look to alternative road design, rather than “national standards”, and do this by designing roads to run between trees and by using less obtrusive road surfaces.
 - xxi. Minimise the density and footprint of residential development where required to support particular guidelines outlined above e.g. to allow generous setbacks for landscaping and canopy trees.
19. A common theme in these responses is to encourage developments that blend with and exemplify the local environment, rather than making an architectural statement.
20. Some responses attached particular importance to the local application of specific planning provisions to protect neighbourhood character, particularly as a means to protect and enhance the contribution of natural attributes (e.g. vegetation) in residential areas. For example:
- The Wattle Glen Resident’s Association emphasised the importance of particular overlays, such as the Significant Landscape Overlay, to protecting neighbourhood character in the area.
 - A resident advocated for changes to Rescode (which are State Planning provisions) to better require and support biodiversity sensitive urban design, including by requiring a garden bed suitable to support a canopy tree.
 - A resident advocated for changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay to reduce environmental impacts from the vegetation management requirements often set in accordance with that overlay.
21. It is emphasised that the above high-level summary regarding feedback on what is the character of the Shire’s residential areas and how should it be protected does not capture all the views expressed and some views were expressed that are contrary, or vary, to those outlined above.

Related Council decisions

22. Council’s resolution of 26 October 2021 to adopt the Council Plan 2021-2025, which includes as priority actions to develop a NCS and HS.

Options

23. The Committee has no requirement to consider options at this point of the project, noting the purpose of the public engagement was not to review a proposed Council decision or strategy, but instead to inform the preparation of a draft NCS.
24. In accordance with Table A above, which outlines the key stages of the project, the next scheduled decision for Council is at the August 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting where Councillors will consider a first draft of the NCS and a recommendation to conduct public engagement on the draft.
25. Any presentations made to the June 2022 Planning and Consultative Committee, including any points of clarification from submitters, will be added to the existing feedback and will be considered in preparation of the first draft of the NCS.

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PCC.020/22 Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy - Response to first round of public engagement

Council plans and policies

26. This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategy:
- We respect and enhance the unique neighbourhood character in our communities to ensure a considered approach to planning and development.
27. Further, it implements a priority action in the Council Plan which is to develop a new Neighbourhood Character Strategy.

Sustainability implications

28. Protecting a preferred neighbourhood character can provide direct benefits in regard to sustainability, including but not limited to retention and facilitation of vegetation cover.

Community engagement

29. The first round of engagement was conducted using a variety of methods, such as:
- A page on Participate Nillumbik, Council's engagement website, was dedicated to the engagement and provided:
 - Access to the survey, or the option to upload a submission.
 - Information explaining the project, including a video
 - Fact sheets
 - Maps of the study area, including an interactive mapping tool to allow residents to identify if their property is within the project's study area.
 - Three pop-up information stalls were conducted for the engagement, including at Hurstbridge, Eltham and Diamond Creek.
 - Material promoting the engagement, particularly postcards, were left at key local facilities and destinations, such as libraries, leisure centres, community centres, child-care centres and particular shops.
 - Relevant stakeholder groups, such as community groups, were notified directly by letter.
 - The consultation was promoted electronically through:
 - social media notices (including reminder notices)
 - paid advertisements on social media.
 - local e-newsletters, particularly school newsletters
 - The engagement was promoted through Council's Community Advisory Committees. Further, interactive sessions were conducted with members of the following committees; Inclusion and Access, Environment and Sustainability, Youth Council and Positive Ageing. The Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation received a presentation and advised it would delay providing any feedback until the draft Strategy is released.

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PCC.020/22 Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Strategy - Response to first round of public engagement

30. The results of the engagement are detailed above in this report and in relevant attachments.

Innovation and continuous improvement

31. The project is important to updating Council's planning policy regarding housing in residential areas, particularly in regards to neighbourhood character.

Collaboration

32. The project is being managed in consultation with an internal Project Working Group comprising members from relevant units within Council.

Budget implications

33. The project is fully funded and accounted for across Council's 2021-22/2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years to the amount of \$220,000 (with additional for GST).

Relevant law

34. The project responds to relevant provisions within the Nillumbik Planning Scheme and relevant to that from a legal perspective, *The Planning and Environment Act 1987* is the State legislation that regulates all Victorian planning schemes.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

35. As outlined earlier, a NCS and HS are required by State Planning Policy.

Conflicts of interest

36. No officer involved in the writing of this report has a conflict of interest with its subject matter.

6. Officers' reports

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Executive Manager Governance, Communications and Engagement

Author: Licardo Prince, Communications and Advocacy Lead

Summary

This report provides a brief overview of the feedback gleaned through a round of community engagement, conducted from 29 April to 25 May 2022, on Council's Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 (Draft Strategy) (**Attachment 1**) and on how this feedback could inform the Strategy, when finalised.

The Draft Strategy aims to provide an overarching framework through which Council will communicate relevant information clearly, accurately and in timely fashion, to its community and other key audiences.

Ensuring the two-way flow of communication and ensuring the community is able to communicate with Council when and how it finds most appropriate is another key aim of the Draft Strategy.

These elements, along with the importance of placing access, equity and inclusion considerations at the heart of all communications between Council and its community, were prominent themes to emerge from the engagement process.

These aims will be achieved through an effective combination of approaches and channels and in pursuing a continual process of engagement, with the community, other external stakeholders and importantly, Council staff, to ensure Council has a strong insight into the community's preferred means of communication.

An increasingly fragmented communications environment highlights both, the scale of these challenges and the critical need for Council to address them.

The Community Engagement and Consultation process drew 21 formal responses. Additional verbal feedback was received from Advisory Committees, as well as at community and staff feedback and information sessions.

The feedback already received and any further feedback from the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting will be assessed and if within the project scope, will be incorporated to inform the updated final Communications Strategy to be presented at the July Council Meeting for adoption.

Feedback received, which recommended more specific day-to-day communications actions, will also be considered as part of the detailed implementation plan which will underpin the final Communications Strategy.

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PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Receives and notes the submissions received from community members contained in **Attachments 2 and 3**, in respect to the Draft Communication Strategy 2022-2025 (**Attachments 1**).
2. Requests Officers to consider and incorporate feedback into the Draft Communications Strategy document, where appropriate.,
3. Requests Officers present the final version of the Communications Strategy 2022-2025 at the 26 July 2022 Council Meeting for formal adoption by Council.
4. Resolves that the confidential un-redacted copies of survey responses and general written submission to the recent public engagement for the Draft Community Strategy 2022-2025, as provided in **Attachments 4 and 5**, remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(g)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
5. Thanks submitters for providing Council with feedback on this important matter.
6. Requests Officers write to all respondents to the community engagement to express Council's gratitude for their contribution and to advise them of Council's resolution and the next scheduled steps in the project.

Attachments

- ⇒1. Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025
- ⇒2. Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 - Redacted Participate submissions table
- ⇒3. Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 - Redacted written submissions
4. Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 - Un-redacted written submissions - *CONFIDENTIAL*
5. Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 - Un-redacted Participate submissions - *CONFIDENTIAL*
- ⇒6. Consultation Findings Report - May 2022

Discussion

Community Engagement

1. Council's Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 (Draft Strategy) (**Attachment 1**) was exhibited on Council's Participate Nillumbik site for the period 29 April to 25 May 2022. Participants were asked to complete a survey to provide their feedback in relation to the Draft Strategy.
2. Council officers were consulted in the development of the Draft Strategy and Council staff were also offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Strategy.
3. A total of 20 submissions were received from the Participate Nillumbik site (**Attachment 2**) together with one written submission (**Attachment 3**)

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PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

4. A strong diversity of preferences and views from members of the community was reflected in the feedback received through this community engagement process.

Consultation Findings

5. The current communications environment is continuously changing and is increasingly fragmented, meaning different audiences and groups prefer to communicate in different and often very specific ways. These developments mean connecting with the community and other Council stakeholders is more challenging than ever.
6. Our audiences no longer receive their news from just one or two traditional media sources, but read and disseminate news in a variety of ways, using a wide range of digital and social media platforms. There is also a segment which prefers their communication in a more traditional fashion – primarily through printed material and publications or in-person.
7. The Draft Strategy was intentionally developed as a high-level document aimed at providing the overarching framework to guide Council’s day-to-day communications activities.
8. Some feedback received included specific actions, more applicable to the implementation plan which will be finalised upon the formal endorsement of the Strategy. This feedback was nevertheless important as it will be used to inform the Strategy itself.
9. The engagement and consultation process validated the priorities articulated in the Draft Strategy while underlining the need to sharpen the emphasis in certain aspects – the importance of the two-way flow of communication and the centrality of access equity and inclusion considerations being among these.
10. While both of these aspects will be comprehensively addressed actions to flow from the implementation plan, the revised draft of the Strategy will also refer to them more prominently.

Related Council decisions

11. ***That Council:***
 1. *Endorses the draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 (Attachment 1) for the purposes of public exhibition and community feedback.*
 2. *Invites written submissions on the draft Communications Strategy to Council by 25 May 2022.*
 3. *Considers public submissions at the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting to be held on 14 June 2022.*

Options

12. **Option 1** – Note the submissions made and request the preparation of the final Communications Strategy 2022-2025 to be presented for consideration at the 26 July 2022 Council Meeting (preferred)

By choosing to proceed with the final drafting of the Communications Strategy 2022-2025, Council is signalling its commitment to improving how our community are connected to the information they need and want about relevant Council programs,

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PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

services and decisions, to enable them to live supported, active and connected lives within our community.

13. **Option 2** – Not proceed with preparing the final Communications Strategy 2022-2025 for adoption

Council may chose not proceed with preparing the final Communications Strategy 2022-2025 for formal adoption. Failure to endorse such a strategy will result in Council not having a clear framework that guides Council in keeping our communities connected to our programs, services and decisions in community-relevant and wide-reaching way.

Council plans and policies

14. This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategy:
- We act in the best interests of our community.

Sustainability implications

15. In the implementation of this final Communications Strategy 2022-2025 Council will:
- Consider and manage the impact of printed materials.
 - Use recycled and recyclable materials for printing where practicable.
 - Direct customers to online forms and information.

Community engagement

16. The Draft Strategy was heavily promoted with the aim of attracting community feedback through the following activities:

Website	The initiative was hosted on Council’s Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 Participate Nillumbik webpage. The page contained information about the program including resource materials, promoted engagement activities, copies of the surveys, and timelines for the project and contact information. During the engagement period, a total of 503 visits were recorded to the Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025 Participate Nillumbik website.
Posters	Displayed throughout the Shire at Council and non-Council locations.
Postcards	A total of 300 postcards were displayed across the Shire in both Council and non-council locations. The postcards included a QR code that linked to the project website.
Social Media	14 Social media posts and paid targeted ads (Facebook and Instagram) were used to promote the Draft Strategy and encourage engagement and feedback. Our social posts achieved a total reach of approximately 6000 .
Newsletters	The Draft Strategy was promoted through a range of Council and non-Council newsletters including through local schools, community and sporting groups.

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Advisory Committee	PAAC Communications Sub-committee meeting held 16 May 2022.
Word of Mouth	Councillors, Council Officers, local service providers and community groups were encouraged to promote the Draft Strategy through their networks. Project information and resources were provided to support this promotion.
Youth Council	The Draft Strategy was also shared with the Youth Council who were in turn encouraged to share it through their networks.

- 17. Engagement activity included an in-person session at Diamond Valley Library and two online community information and feedback sessions.
- 18. Submissions and feedback were received primarily through Council’s Participate website, but also separately in writing and through comments in response to social media posts promoting the Draft Strategy. The redacted Participate submissions and written submission are provided in **Attachments 2** and **3**.
- 19. The confidential Un-redacted Participate submissions and Un-redacted written submission are provided in **Attachments 4** and **5**.
- 20. The attached report titled Draft Communications Strategy Consultation Findings Report (**Attachment 6**) provides further details on the engagement findings for Council consideration.

Innovation and continuous improvement

- 21. The development the Draft Strategy was informed by feedback obtained from previous Council engagement and research. Among these were the results of our Annual Community Satisfaction Survey, feedback obtained through the *Our People, Our Place, Our Future* project and feedback from engagement undertaken in the development of Council’s Community Engagement Policy, adopted in March 2021.
- 22. All of these sources provided valuable insights into community views on communicating with Council.

Collaboration

- 23. In developing the Draft Strategy examples of the communications strategies of other Councils were examined.

Budget implications

- 24. The development of this Draft Strategy is accommodated within Council’s operating budget.

Relevant law

- 25. *The Local Government Act 2020*.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

- 26. Not applicable.

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Conflicts of interest

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

6. Officers' reports

PCC.022/22 Endorsement of Nillumbik Shire Council Submission to the MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Executive Manager Governance, Communications and Engagement

Summary

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council adopted a resolution on 21 May 2021 to refer a proposal to the MAV Board for a full review of the MAV Rules of Association (the Rules) (**Attachment 1**) (Review).

The stages in the Review include the distribution of a discussion paper to stakeholders, opportunities for feedback from stakeholders, then the formulation of a directions paper and feedback about the proposed direction.

The MAV Board will then be asked to consider and endorse the proposed direction for the draft Rules. Changes to the Rules will be determined by State Council and 60 per cent of MAV Representatives must vote in favour of any proposed amendments. The Governor in Council must also approve the changes.

The MAV Board appointed Mr. Phil Shanahan as the consultant to conduct the review and, Capire Consulting Group, to oversee the engagement activities which will inform the Review.

Mr. Mark Hayes, Partner Public Law at Maddocks Lawyers, was engaged to provide advice regarding the project and the drafting of the new Rules.

This report requests that the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) formally notes Council's position on the matters raised in the MAV Rules review Directions Paper (**Attachment 2**) and write to all MAV interface representatives seeking support for Council's position. Nillumbik Shire Council's Submission to MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper (**Attachment 3**) was submitted to the MAV Board for consideration.

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Notes the MAV Rules Review Directions Paper response tabled at **Attachment 3** as put forward to the MAV Board.
2. Requests the Mayor write to all MAV interface representatives and Mayors of the 10 Interface Councils seeking support for Council's position outlining the concept and rationale.

Attachments

- ⇒1. MAV Rules of Association
- ⇒2. MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper
- ⇒3. Nillumbik Shire Council Submission to MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.022/22 Endorsement of Nillumbik Shire Council Submission to the MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper

Discussion

1. The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council adopted a resolution on 21 May 2021 to refer a proposal to the MAV Board for a full MAV Rules of Association (the Rules) review.
2. This review will be the first comprehensive Rules review undertaken since 2006.
3. The MAV Board released a Discussion Paper signalling the commencement of a deliberative engagement process to inform the review of the Rules in November 2021.
4. Phase 2 of the review commenced in April this year with the release of a Directions Paper (**Attachment 2**). The proposed reforms in this Directions Paper have been informed by the round table discussions and submissions we received in response to the Rules Review Discussion Paper.
5. The MAV is working with lead consultant Phil Shanahan, who is conducting the review and consultant team, Capire Consulting Group, to oversee the engagement activities that will inform the review. Mark Hayes, Partner Public Law, Maddocks, was engaged to provide advice regarding the project and draft the new Rules.

Related Council decisions

6. Not applicable.

Options

7. That Council notes the matters raised in the MAV Rules review Directions Paper and Nillumbik Shire Council Submission to MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper tabled at **Attachment 3**.

Council plans and policies

8. This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategy:
 - We are forward-thinking, data-driven and evidence-led in our decision making, always looking to identify new opportunities.
 - We act in the best interests of our community.

Sustainability implications

9. Council's submission supports Council to meet its social and environmental objectives.

Community engagement

10. Not applicable.

Innovation and continuous improvement

11. Council's submission supports the continuous improvement and effectiveness of the MAV.

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.022/22 Endorsement of Nillumbik Shire Council Submission to the MAV Rules Review 2021-2022 Directions Paper

Collaboration

12. Council is a key stakeholder in the MAV Rules engagement process.
13. Other key stakeholders involved in the review include MAV Representatives, member Councils, Mayors, CEOs, Minister for Local Government, Local Government Victoria and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Australian Local Government Association, state associations, the Victorian Electoral Commission, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, other relevant state government departments and agencies.

Budget implications

14. Preparation of the Council submission has been funded through the Council operating budget.

Relevant law

15. The MAV is established by the *Municipal Association Act 1907*. The MAV is not a Council and is governed by its own legislation. The MAV's operations are subject to normal review mechanisms of the State, like the Victorian Auditor General. Also, the MAV is subject to prudential regulation required by the *Federal Corporations Act 2001*.

Regional, state and national plans and policies

16. Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

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

7. Supplementary and urgent business

8. Confidential reports

Nil

9. Close of Meeting