What We Know

Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26
Community Consultation

SUMMARY REPORT

ARTS AND CULTURE

Nillumbik
The Green Wedge Shire

This is an ancient land with a rich and deep human history stretching back thousands of years. If you are not of Indigenous heritage, it is important to remember that you are here as guests on this land where the first people of Nillumbik, the *Wurundjeri Woiwurrung,* lived, loved, played, fished and farmed.

Our knowledge of this place is as complete as anything that has been seen. It is important to us that our history and culture are preserved and presented properly in all parts of our Country. Arts and culture are one and the same for Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people.

Axford, J. (Aunty) and Firebrace, A. and Freedman, D. and Gardiner, T. and Garvey, T. (Uncle) and Hansen, K. and Nicholson, G. (Aunty) and Smith, G. (Aunty). (2021). *Wurundjeri Text for Nillumbik Shire Arts & Cultural Strategy 2022–2026.* (RU071)

Image: *Zebras* by Born in a Taxi at St Andrews Market Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

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Cover image: *Angelic—Living Statue* by Kinetic Theatre, at Hurstbridge Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Image: *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Executive Summary

What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report **presents key findings from the most extensive community engagement process ever undertaken by Council specifically for arts and culture planning;** ***Artbeat—a pulse check for Arts and Culture in Nillumbik Shire*****. The Summary Report provides an evidence base for the development of an Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–2026.**

Sixteen consultation documents, comprising raw data, imagery, summaries and reports were produced as a result of the consultation process. This Summary Report outlines the consultation documents and identifies and explores key themes present across them.

Three key themes emerged strongly that reflect the Nillumbik community's cultural values and expectations. In addition, six actionable sub-themes are identified that relate directly to the key themes. Evidence from the consultation documents is presented for each of the three identified themes and six sub-themes and demonstrate a connection to established community needs.

The community consultation program included a comprehensive range of digital and in-person engagements. Digital engagements involved online surveys, online community focus groups including targeted consultations with cultural and special interest groups, and individual feedback though emails and online meetings. In-person engagements comprised 23 pop-up roving performance engagements in public spaces, a six-day interactive exhibition at the Eltham Community Library Gallery and in-person focus group discussions with performances.

The Summary Report sits within the Cultural Development Network's Planning Framework, in particular the 'theory of change' which informs decisions about activities to undertake. The Summary Report provides evidence (what we know) that sits between the intended outcome (what we are looking for) and activity planning.

The data was analysed by extracting all views and insights concerning arts and culture from the documents and sorting into themes. Common elements across the themes were used to establish three overarching themes representative of predominant wants, aspirations and values expressed through the consultations. Evidence was collected across the consultation documents that support these themes and used to identify supporting sub-themes.

Art and culture is intrinsic to the identity of Nillumbik. The key themes identified in the consultation data are ***Interconnectedness, Creative Capital,*** and ***Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice.*** These themes are central to who we are as a community and serve as the foundation to inform all strategic decisions.

The most referenced theme in the consultation documents is ***Interconnectedness.*** The community of Nillumbik sees itself predominantly as a creative ecosystem. It is this unique creative ecosystem that not only exists currently, but has spanned decades and is the heart of Nillumbik's magic, drawing artists here continuously over the years.

Evidence in the consultation document illustrate the profound value the community places on our interconnectedness and how it is imperative we work to ensure that our creative networks grow and flourish. Everything we have and value about our culture hinges on this interconnectedness.

The theme of ***Creative Capital*** speaks to our desire to establish Nillumbik as a known cultural centre that nurtures artists and creative work that is daring and original.

Our desire to facilitate greater ***Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice*** expresses our aspiration to have our culture embedded in a contemporary, progressive and inclusive space.

Six sub-themes are drawn from evidence that support the key themes.

The complete summary of key themes and sub-themes are listed on page 9.

The consultation data detailed in this Report will be used in support of the development of an Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–2026. The evidence in this Report will also be used to ensure future arts and cultural activities are connected to an established community need.

Cultural Identity

Collaborative, Creative, Forward thinking is how the Nillumbik community want to define our identity. We want to focus on telling our stories both old and new in daring and contemporary ways. We want to be more progressive and inclusive and less conventional.

We value our environment, our artistic heritage and our ability to work with community, but new things have emerged as more important: our interconnectedness, our desire to produce contemporary and challenging work, and the development of Nillumbik into a desirable cultural destination.

All goals and activities outlined in the Strategy must be **meaningful, bring enjoyment** or **celebrate our identity** in some way in order to ensure alignment with the culture of Nillumbik.

Themes

1. Interconnectedness

Our interconnectedness is our distinctive feature and the foundation of our identity. It is intrinsic to the practice and sharing of the arts in Nillumbik. We use creative expression to foster connection and partnerships, build social capital and create a sense of belonging.

1.1 Physical spaces for connection and creation

1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts and Culture in the community

1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

2. Creative capital

We desire to establish Nillumbik as a creative destination; one that nurtures the production of art and the wellbeing of creative practitioners and creative industries. We are not just a place where art is consumed, but where art is produced and people are inspired. We develop and grow our creative industries.

2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

We ensure respectful representation of Wurundjeri culture, cultures from other lands and LGBTQIA+ expression. We support the production of and engagement with contemporary work as well as unusual and non-mainstream art forms.

3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

Image: *Naughty Artist and Policeperson* by Stiltwalkers Australia at Diamond Creek Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Background

ARTBEAT

A pulse check for Arts & Culture in Nillumbik Shire

From 1 December 2020 through to 31 July 2021, Council undertook extensive community consultation to inform the development of the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–2026.

This report details what Council has learned through this process about what community want from its Arts and Culture service.

Residents from all corners of Nillumbik contributed to the creation of the *What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report:* numbering 2216 in total. Council developed a Community Engagement Plan that focused on putting community first in the development of its next Arts and Culture Strategy. This is the largest engagement process ever undertaken by Council specifically for its arts and culture planning.

Council understands that behind the themes that have emerged in this report are the Nillumbik people—their histories, cultural journeys, personal experiences, hopes, dreams, and visions of the future.

Following the community consultation, Council collated sixteen consultation data documents and reports into this ***What We Know—Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report.***

Image: *Angelic—Living Statue* by Kinetic Theatre, at Hurstbridge Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

How to read this Summary Report

Three definitive themes emerged from analysis of the sixteen consultation documents. These three themes and six sub-themes are explored in depth in this Summary Report, with excerpts from the consultation documents serving as evidence for each of the themes.

The three themes and six sub-themes are summarised on page 9 of this Summary Report.

The Methodology explains the process and framework used to establish the themes from the consultations.

The themes and sub-themes are organised with explanations and evidence in the Results and Findings section pp. 24–29. This gives the most complete overview of the findings.

Extensive evidence and expanded notes on the sub-themes are explored in the Appendix section. This section can be used to guide planning and delivery of Art and Culture activities.

The six sub-themes are used to understand the desired long term future for arts and culture in Nillumbik; all activities and resource allocation should align to these. The three overarching themes express the values and aspirations of the Nillumbik community and can be used to underpin the strategic plan and inform all strategic decisions regarding arts and culture.

Image: *Perky And Fiddle* by Kinetic Theatre at Edendale Community Environment Farm Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Methodology

Methodology

What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report **reviews and evaluates sixteen consultation documents. These documents make up a collection of reports and raw data produced from the extensive community consultation program;** ***Artbeat—a pulse check for Arts and Culture in Nillumbik Shire.***

The consultation program heard 2216 distinct voices across a wide and diversified field, including Wurundjeri voices, the voices of different cultures, from people of various ages and various interests. Two of the consultations were general in nature and engaged the general public, four focused on people with an interest in the arts, some on special interest groups such as Historical Societies, and three consultations specifically engaged creative practitioners working and living in Nillumbik.

The Summary Report identifies emerging themes from reports and raw data produced from the consultation program, and explores the evidence across the consultation documents that support these themes.

Framework for Cultural Development Planning

The analysis was undertaken with regular referral to the Cultural Development Network's *Framework for Cultural Development Planning.*

This Framework was conceptualised in response to the needs identified through a 2013 Local Government survey that highlighted the lack of an agreed framework and informing principles in the development of Council Cultural Plans/Strategies. This research also demonstrated the need for a more systematic use of data and evidence with a greater focus on outcomes rather than inputs and activities.

The Framework has been constructed in the context of key national and international policy agendas with particular reference to the United Nations United Cities and Local Government Committee's Policy Statement on Culture.

The Framework recommends a planning process that is integrated with the rest of Council's planning activity. It is underpinned by six key principles: based on values, directed towards goals, focused on outcomes, informed by evidence, underpinned by a 'theory of change' and respondent to evaluation.

The Framework contends the 'theory of change' concept is a requirement in effective planning to assist and explain choices of activities, informed by evidence. A theory of change can be summarised as a three-step logical argument for making decisions about activities to undertake:

- We are looking for (intended outcome)...
- And we know (evidence)...
- Therefore, we will do (this activity)...

The consultation data detailed in this Report will be used in support of the development of an Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 in line with the Cultural Development Network's Planning Framework, including utilisation of the 'theory of change'. This Report data will also be used in informing the development and delivery of local Arts and Culture activity at a program level to ensure connection to an established community need and alignment to existing Council strategic direction.

Consultation Program

The extensive community consultation encompassed both digital and in-person engagements that included:

- A **6-day interactive exhibition** at the Eltham Library Community Gallery. ***Artbeat of Nillumbik*** was an artist-led community engagement activity ahead of the formal community consultation process. The exhibition featured installations which enabled the artists to creatively engage community members. Ideas were also recorded via a canvas collage, a large map, conversations, collection boxes, and a project-specific email.
- **23 pop-up roving performance engagements** across the municipality. Delivered by specialist performance artists, these acts featured a range of wacky characters including Marquisa D'or and Angelic Living Statues, naughty gnomes Perky & Fiddle, Stiltwalkers, Zebras, and the Fantastic Flamingo. The locations for these performances were in everyday places such as markets, walking trails, parks, leisure centres, shopping precincts, sporting ovals, township streets, and local schools. Conversations centred on different questions about what people *enjoy and/or value about arts and culture in Nillumbik and what may be missing.*
- An **online survey** exploring all things arts and culture ran on ***Participate Nillumbik.*** A successful campaign to complete the survey was run and also incorporated QR code technology.
- **Individual feedback** was invited and received via email, zoom, or telephone.
- **Community focus groups** facilitated by an independent local creative consultant. Each session was opened by a live performance or art activity by a local musician or artist. A mix of community members, local artists and community group members were represented in each of these sessions. Separate specialist focus groups were held with Nillumbik Councilors, local history groups, the Arts and Cultural Advisory Group, and Council staff. In addition, a separate Ask the Artist focus group was held specifically for local artists.
- A targeted consultation with **Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation** was held to ensure that our First Nations voice is clearly represented.

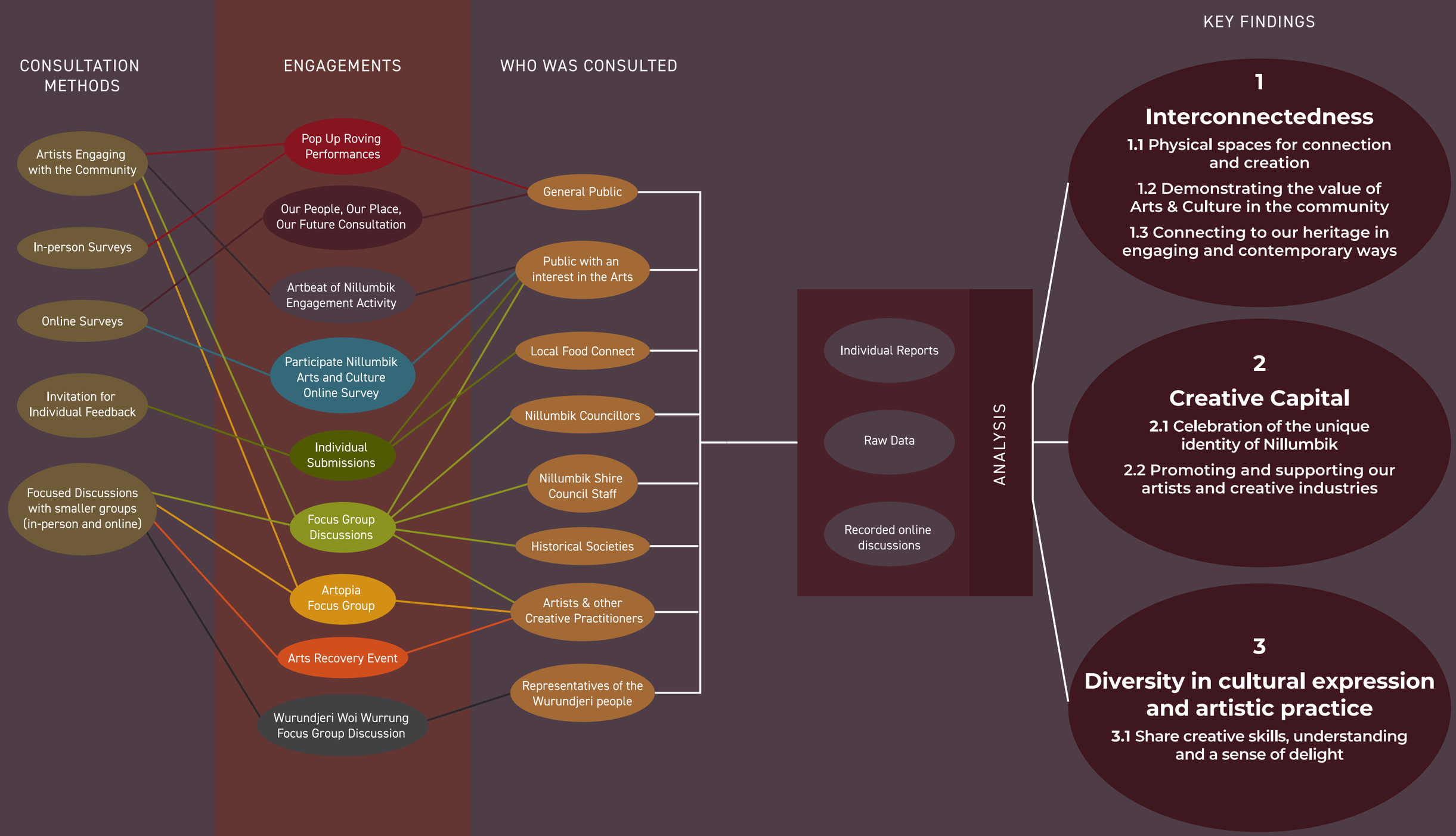
Themes

Based on an in-depth analysis of the consultation documents, three themes were identified that accurately reflect the Nillumbik community's values and expectations for arts and culture, and can potentially underpin all future cultural activities in Nillumbik. In addition, the Report lists six actionable sub-themes that relate directly to the overarching themes.

Each theme and sub-theme reflects the aspirations of the Nillumbik community and are supported by direct evidence from the consultation documents.

Methodology

Process from Consultation to Key Findings



Consultation Data Documents

What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report is an analysis of the findings and raw data from 16 consultation documents from 9 engagements.

Consultations have been undertaken across the whole community. The majority of the consultation documents encompass the voices of the general Nillumbik community; most of whom are the audience and enthusiasts of the arts. Care has been taken to ensure that the voices of our artists are well represented, particularly through the focus group discussions, Artopia and in the Arts Recovery Report.

The following is a summary of the consultation engagements and of the resulting consultation documents referenced in this report:

1. Pop Up Outcomes – Arts and Culture Strategy Consultation

1353 voices

The consultation process involved pop up events with roving artists and performers at local markets to gather thoughts and ideas from the public. Questions the performers posed to the public covered what people saw as important in arts and culture, what they enjoy and value in Nillumbik, and what they think is missing. The data is in the form of short pieces of text, phrases or one or two sentences that sketch out ideas and opinions. The document's value is in capturing emerging themes across a large number of responses.

1. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Pop Up Outcomes—Arts and Culture Strategy Consultation—2021.*** [Excel] Nillumbik Shire Council.

2. Participate Nillumbik Arts and Culture Online Survey

270 voices, 4 documents

Participate Nillumbik is Council's online community engagement site and serves to complement face-to-face engagement activities. The 'Artbeat' survey presented on this platform captured the voices of people with an interest in the arts, not just artists, but arts audience members, hobby artists and art enthusiasts, all of whom wanted to share their voice.

34.93% (80 respondents) identified as an artist or an arts organisation.

70.4% identified as established, mid-tier, emerging (36.4%) or hobby artists (34%).

The survey collected demographics and the public's opinions on what they like about arts and culture in Nillumbik and what could be done better. Answers ranged from single sentences to lengthy well-considered paragraphs.

2a. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Participate Nillumbik—Form Results Summary.*** (ID-254). [pdf] Nillumbik Shire Council.

2b. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Participate Nillumbik—Overview Report.*** (ID-254). [pdf] Nillumbik Shire Council.

2c. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Participate Nillumbik—Pre Survey Raw Data Visioner Exercise.*** (ID-235). [Excel] Nillumbik Shire Council.

2d. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Participate Nillumbik—Survey Raw Data.*** (ID-254). [Excel] Nillumbik Shire Council.

3. Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Data

6 voices, 3 documents

Consultation with Wurundjeri took the form of an online focus group discussion between Wurundjeri Elders, researchers and other representatives, and a Council Arts Officer and a creative facilitator. The discussion centered around Wurundjeri culture in Nillumbik and how this culture could be best represented and shared. The meeting resulted in a text piece, to be included in the new Arts and Culture Strategy introducing Wurundjeri culture and outlining what is important to Wurundjeri people, a statement of Commitment from Council to Wurundjeri, and a summary of the focus group meeting outlining what Wurundjeri see as priorities for Council.

3a. Axford, J. (Aunty) and Firebrace, A. and Freedman, D. and Gardiner, T. and Garvey, T. (Uncle) and Hansen, K. and Nicholson, G. (Aunty) and Smith, G. (Aunty). (2021). ***Wurundjeri Text for Nillumbik Shire Arts & Cultural Strategy 2022–2026.*** (RU071). [doc]

3b. Firebrace, A. and Gardiner, T. and Garvey, T. (Uncle) and Hansen, K. and Nicholson, G. (Aunty). (2021). ***Commitment from Nillumbik Shire Council to Wurundjeri Woiwurrung.*** [doc]

3c. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Reference Notes from the Arts and Culture Strategy Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Consultation—26 July 2021.*** [pdf] Nillumbik Shire Council.

4. Our People, Our Place, Our Future Wider Council Consultation Data

295 voices included from larger document, 2 documents

The *Our People, Our Place, Our Future* engagement program captured views and priorities of the Nillumbik community in order to inform the development of key strategic planning documents across Council, not just Arts and Culture.

The online survey asked the community to identify what is important to them in relation to their wellbeing and their neighbourhood both now and into the future, as well as what areas Council should focus on in order to support the delivery of these priorities and aspirations.

Over 3400 people engaged with the consultation. Responses ranged from single sentences to long detailed paragraphs. As the questions were general in nature, only the responses that concerned arts and culture in Nillumbik were extracted to inform this report. A total of 295 were included in this report.

4a. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Our People, Our Place, Our Future—Survey Responses—Free Text Comments—April 2021.*** [Excel] Nillumbik Shire Council.

4b. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Summary Report—Our People, Our Place, Our Future: Integrated Community Engagement.*** [pdf] Nillumbik Shire Council.

5. Artbeat of Nillumbik ELCG Report

164 voices

Artbeat of Nillumbik was a six day artist-led community engagement activity held at Eltham Library Community Gallery. Through interactive installations and conversations, people were asked to examine the idea of an 'artbeat' of Nillumbik and what they most enjoy and value in arts and culture in Nillumbik. The responses were collated into a report and key themes were outlined.

5. Bromley, E. and Mooney, L. (2021). ***Artbeat of Nillumbik at Eltham Library Community Gallery 19–24 January Artist Report.*** [pdf]

6. Arts Recovery Report

34 voices

This consultation was an arts industry-only event which included filmmakers, art tutors, writers, event managers, theatre makers, ceramicists and other visual artists. The discussion covered the impact and challenges faced by the creative industries during the pandemic and what their support priorities are.

6. Nillumbik Shire Council. (2021). ***Arts Recovery and the Pandemic; Evaluation of Arts Recovery Industry Event—11 March 2021.*** [pdf] Nillumbik Shire Council.

7. Focus Group Discussions

72 voices

These ten facilitated focus group discussions were a deep dive into what community wants from its Arts and Cultural Strategy. The discussions explored the cultural identity of Nillumbik, what cultural elements are intrinsic to the production and the enjoyment of the arts, and what is needed to ensure the arts are sustained and thrive in Nillumbik.

The groups attending the discussions included local creative practitioners, creative and community leaders, members of the general public with an interest in the arts, Council staff both within and out of the Arts and Culture Department, Councillors, past Council staff and past Councillors.

The report document includes verbatim excerpts from the discussions and identifies emerging goals and areas of opportunity.

7. Grant, A. (2021). ***Arts & Culture Focus Group Consultation Report.*** [pdf]

8. Artopia Focus Group

20 voices

Artopia was a special online event/focus group exclusively for artists, arts workers and arts organisations of Nillumbik, run by independent local creative facilitators. Twenty attendees representing a diverse creative community discussed topics such as game-changing plans for the arts in Nillumbik, what success looks like as an artist, what is needed for an artistic practice to thrive, and how to create cultural value.

8. Maziarz, D. and Johnson, N. (2021). ***Artopia Report.*** [pdf] Ask the Artist.

9. Separate individual submissions

2 voices, 2 documents

- Written submission from *Local Food Connect* illustrating the importance of food and local producers to the culture of Nillumbik.
- Notes from discussion with Nillumbik resident with an interest in the arts.

9a. Chapple, C. (2021). ***Local Food Connect Submission to Nillumbik Shire Council Arts & Culture Strategy 2022–26.*** [pdf] Local Food Connect.

9b. Stock, A. (2021). ***Notes from discussion RE Arts & Culture Strategy Community Consultation: with Robyn Burke.*** [doc] Nillumbik Shire Council.

The consultation documents are cited extensively throughout the Summary Report and are individually referenced from page 100.

Image: *Zebras* by Born in a Taxi at St Andrews Market Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Results & Findings

THEMES

1. Interconnectedness

Our interconnectedness is our distinctive feature and the foundation of our identity. Interconnectedness is intrinsic to the practice and sharing of the arts in Nillumbik. We use creative expression to foster connection and partnerships, build social capital and create a sense of belonging.

Interconnectedness particularly refers to connections of reciprocity; being part of a network or ecosystem; the idea that there is an underlying oneness, or shared identity in the exchange of knowledge, inspiration and empathy.

Nillumbik artists are particularly attuned to this intangible bond between each other, our artistic heritage and our natural environment. It is a source of reassurance and support as well as tremendous creativity. Connection to each other and community was classed it as important or very important by 92.6 % (238) of respondents from the *Participate Nillumbik Arts & Culture Online Survey.*

Interconnectedness is fostered by having physical spaces for creative people to encounter each other and to be inspired by new ideas and practices. Non-cultural players can tap into this interconnectedness by being invited into the spaces where creatives collaborate.

Interconnectedness can also be cultivated through communication; though embedding our creative practitioners in the life and activities of Council, and through Council having a visible physical presence in the creative community.

The theme of Interconnectedness is expressed through strategies and activities that foster connection and partnerships, build social capital and create a sense of belonging.

"Artists don't just need spaces and training—we need a creative ecology—a system of interconnected social relationships present in community and beyond." [1]

"Build a public museum or creative space that could showcase all types of art but also be a space that people can make art in and brings creative people together. Make the creativity more visible and accessible to all." [2]

"I would love to see more art and arts events dotted around the shire as I feel that they have been more focused around Eltham." [3]

"Interconnectedness is not only fundamental to our local identity, it is the vehicle by which artistic collaborations, new contemporary ideas, skill sharing, mentorships and creative inspiration are fostered. Our interconnectedness is the engine that fires our creative production." [4]

"Nillumbik arts is a collective thing, it's an atmosphere that runs through the whole place, and you can hook into that interconnectedness of it. That's quite a powerful thing." [5]

"I think the 'artbeat' of an area is really visible where the community comes into contact with the artists in places like gallery openings, local markets, workshops and classes. But it has to be open for everyone. Entry fees and high price tags prevent a number of people enjoying the scene." [6]

For additional supporting data please see *Appendix 1: Interconnectedness* pp.34–59

Interconnectedness: Sub-Themes

1.1 Physical spaces for connection and creation

Physical space in which to practice and share our art and culture is the most prominent and recurrent request from creative practitioners in Nillumbik. As well as functioning as places for the production of artwork, exhibitions and performance, dedicated creative spaces foster the valuable social, creative and business connections that artists and creative industries need to thrive.

Considerations

- Enhance creative output and a sense of connection through establishing a central creative hub/ precinct that includes studio and rehearsal spaces, performance and exhibition spaces and spaces to eat and socialise.
- Increase cultural activity and exposure to the arts through establishing physical spaces for performance and exhibitions in smaller townships.
- Expand the number of performance events, art workshops and studio spaces by making venues affordable for artists and cultural organisations.

1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

Raising the profile of the arts in Nillumbik and strengthening relationships between Council and the creative community is a high priority. It is of particular importance that communication and promotion of the arts, including clear messaging around arts funding, is improved.

Considerations

- Strengthen trust and connection between the creative community and Council by ensuring Council Arts & Culture Officers are regularly visible and active in the community.
- Increase the perceived value of art and culture in the community by ensuring the language used, when talking about arts and culture, prioritises cultural value over tourism and economic value.
- Strengthen trust and connection between the creative community and Council by having transparent information concerning the Council arts budget readily available.
- Enhance awareness and value of culture throughout Council departments by evaluating major Council projects through Cultural Impact Statements.
- Increase respect for the arts as a vehicle for recovery and social cohesion throughout Council and the community through commissioning art that addresses social issues.
- Connect new residents to local art and culture by including the work of artists and information on arts heritage in welcome packs to new residents.

1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

Nillumbik's rich heritage, from Wurundjeri culture to our more recent arts heritage and the rustic charm of our mudbrick architecture is beautifully celebrated through the arts. Contemporary re-imaginings of this heritage has the potential to engage a wider and younger audience.

Considerations

- Connect a wider audience to our artistic heritage by expressing it in a more engaging and contemporary way. This may include a re-imagining of the Heidelberg Artists Trail as one activity.
- Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture and develop a connection to Country by creating points of interest, and respite on established walking trails in consultation with Wurundjeri people.
- Connect a wider audience to the history of Nillumbik by connecting Historical Societies to volunteers and affordable spaces for research, archiving and digitising collections.

THEMES

2. Creative Capital

We desire to establish Nillumbik as a creative destination; one that nurtures the production of art and the wellbeing of creative practitioners and creative industries. We are not just a place where art is consumed, but where art is produced and people are inspired. We develop and grow our creative industries.

Becoming a destination that prizes creative capital is not just about being a preferred place to visit; it is also about creating a known and desirable centre for creative people to gather, socialise, work and live. Pride in a place that openly values creative capital on an equal footing as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability attracts artists and creative industries to the area and nurtures the artists that live and produce work here.

"Creative Capital measures the assets that are readily available to advance the missions of artistic and cultural organisations: to create new works of enduring significance, present extraordinary exhibitions, produce grand performances, and inspire an ever-growing audience... It is becoming increasingly clear that creativity itself is an essential ingredient in a community's prosperity." *

"If creative capital is not a luxury but rather is vital to personal and community well-being, then the traditional emphasis on consumption (e.g., attending, viewing, appreciating, and listening to what docents say) needs to give way to many more opportunities to produce and participate actively... a will to take part, engage, and leave a legacy." **

The theme of Creative Capital is expressed through strategies and activities that establish Nillumbik as a creative destination, facilitate the production of art, and nurture the social, mental, spiritual and financial wellbeing of creative practitioners and creative industries in Nillumbik.

"Nillumbik the Arts capital of Victoria." [7]

"Gallery spaces are seen as important, and a need was expressed for more gallery spaces or an arts centre: *Open Studios is a great opportunity for some artists but there are a lot of artists that live and work in Nillumbik and there is no space to show their work."* [8]

"Offer artist placements in community building and town planning projects in the design, roll out and evaluation stages." [9]

"Music festivals and live performance, buskers and musicians bringing public spaces alive." [10]

"A place that encourages the arts to flourish." [11]

"A desire for Nillumbik to be seen as a vibrant centre for the arts was very clear—as was ensuring that art and culture is visible to the community and visitors. " [12]

"Within the whole Shire we lack a playhouse/arts area that will attract traveling artistic and performance artists... This could be combined with a regional gallery and museum concept." [13]

For additional supporting data please see *Appendix 2: Creative Capital* pp.60–87

* Benefactor Group 2021, *Building Creative Capital,* Benefactor Group—Giving Institute, viewed 24 September 2021 <https://benefactorgroup.com/building-creative-capital/>

** Brown, A. (2006). *"An Architecture of Value." Grantmakers in the Arts Reader, Vol. 17, No. 1;* Tepper, S. J. and Ivey, W. (Eds.) (2007). Engaging Art: The Next Great Revolution in America's Cultural Life. New York: Routledge

Creative Capital: Sub-Themes

2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

The Nillumbik community would like to see Nillumbik's reputation cultivated as a quintessential arts destination; a place that is inherently thought of when seeking creative stimulus and when designing a cultural itinerary for guests to Victoria.

Considerations

- Establish Nillumbik as a cultural destination by building a dedicated exhibition space to display significant works of mid-career and established artists.
- Increase the number and quality of theatrical performances held in Nillumbik by building a dedicated performance and rehearsal space, ideally with tiered seating for 70–100 audience members.
- Enhance creative stimulation and social interaction thorough running an arthouse cinema.
- Strengthen a sense of local connection and identity through creative placemaking projects that celebrate and enhance local character.
- Increase the frequency of engagement with the visual arts in everyday life and enrich the aesthetic environment through creating more public art projects.
- Enhance a sense of communal ownership of the Nillumbik Art Collection by sharing it online in an interesting and easily navigable form.
- Introduce a wider audience to arts and culture by including local produce and local producers at cultural events.
- Expand knowledge and appreciation of arts and culture in Nillumbik though local artists designing a cultural tour itinerary for Council members.

2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

There is a desire to develop Nillumbik as an incubator where influential artists work productively, emerging artists advance their practice, and creative industries naturally establish and proliferate.

Considerations

- Extend engagement with the arts thorough an online calendar of cultural events and a directory of local artists and creative industries.
- Increase arts and cultural events throughout the Shire by creating a comprehensive and clear online list of venues for hire.
- Strengthen cultural awareness and expression though regular inclusion of artists in Council projects, both in consulting and commissioning.
- Expand support of local artists by employing them to perform or speak regularly at Council events and meetings.
- Create a greater sense of joy and connection through unique festivals, street fairs and events that showcase the work of local artists, particularly musicians.
- Connect a wider audience to the work of local musicians and non-mainstream music by sponsoring them to play in large festivals, such as the Eltham Town Fair.
- Inspire creativity and build stronger connections to Nillumbik for artists though establishing artist residency programs in inspiring places.
- Increase the financial success and longevity of creative industries by expanding a professional development program for creatives to learn business and marketing skills.
- Strengthen connection within the creative community by establishing a mentoring program for emerging artists.
- Improve support of art production by sharing resources/byproducts across departments for artists to use in artwork, such as timber from felled trees.

THEMES

3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

We ensure respectful representation of Wurundjeri culture, cultures from other lands and LGBTQIA+ expression. We support the production of and engagement with contemporary work and unusual and non-mainstream art forms.

There is a broad perception that we are not seeing Indigenous culture and we are not hearing multicultural voices expressed through the arts. People are curious about Wurundjeri culture and cultures from other lands and are frustrated by a lack of knowledge and representation in Nillumbik. In addition LGBTQIA+ spaces and creative expression is absent.

Further to this, there is a heavy focus on the visual arts; many art forms such as music, the performing arts, dance and literature, are under-represented and under supported in Nillumbik.

Respect and curiosity for non-mainstream or under-represented art forms, First Nations voices, multicultural voices and LGBTQIA+ voices gifts us all with a richer more connected cultural life.

The theme of Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice is expressed through strategies and activities that enable engagement with different cultures including Wurundjeri culture, engagement with contemporary work and with unusual and non-mainstream art forms and expressions.

"I think we need to be listening more to the diverse voices of the area as sometimes it feels like we are listening to the same voices over and over again." [14]

"There's no places to go for other forms of art and culture. We have been very strongly focused in the visual arts and it is definitely one of our strengths, but I think it might be time to think of contemporary and different sorts of arts and culture as well." [15]

"Maintain our reputation as an inclusive, artistic and creative community." [16]

"Connectedness to others makes you feel like you belong. Promoting tolerance, acceptance of difference, and a sense of belonging is important in our towns." [17]

Art forms needing more support and visibility in Nillumbik: [18]

dance literature theatre
socially engaged art
live music public art

"Aboriginal education and acknowledgment. We have a very rich Aboriginal history and it is disappointing that we do not have more acknowledgment of the traditional owners of our land within Nillumbik. Having Elders available to educate the community and local schools is needed!" [19]

"More indigenous and multicultural opportunities would enrich Nillumbik's arts and culture." [20]

"We need more multi-cultural activities—Persian, Somalian, and cultural classes: sewing, cooking, and talks." [21]

"More art activities for children. There was also a request for more art and culture activities for teenagers and for film, animation, gaming and sketching opportunities with youth tutors." [22]

For additional supporting data please see *Appendix 3: Diversity in Cultural Expression and Artistic Practice* pp.88–99

Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice: Sub-themes

3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

A diverse and accessible cultural education is vital to the creative life of Nillumbik, we value deeply the sharing of cultural and artistic heritage, knowledge, skills and inspiration.

Considerations

- Increase engagement with under-represented art forms, particularly music and performance art through supporting people to host creative events in intimate venues.
- Increase awareness of Nillumbik writers through literary festivals and events.
- Create more opportunities to engage with diverse art forms through a program based on Open Studios, but for non-visual art practitioners such as musicians, performers, writers and new media artists.
- Increase access to art from other cultures by including Wurundjeri art/artifacts and art from different cultures in the Nillumbik Art Collection.
- Establish multicultural representation and perspectives in Council projects by establishing a Multicultural Advisory Panel to inform all Council departments.
- Increase appreciation of Wurundjeri culture though an organised celebration of NAIDOC Week
- Greater creative stimulation through art programs for children and teenagers.
- Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture and facilitate the passing on of cultural knowledge by contracting Wurundjeri Elders to run bushwalks and storytelling sessions for the general public and young Wurundjeri people.
- Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture by establishing Kangaroo Ground Memorial Park as an information/storytelling space.

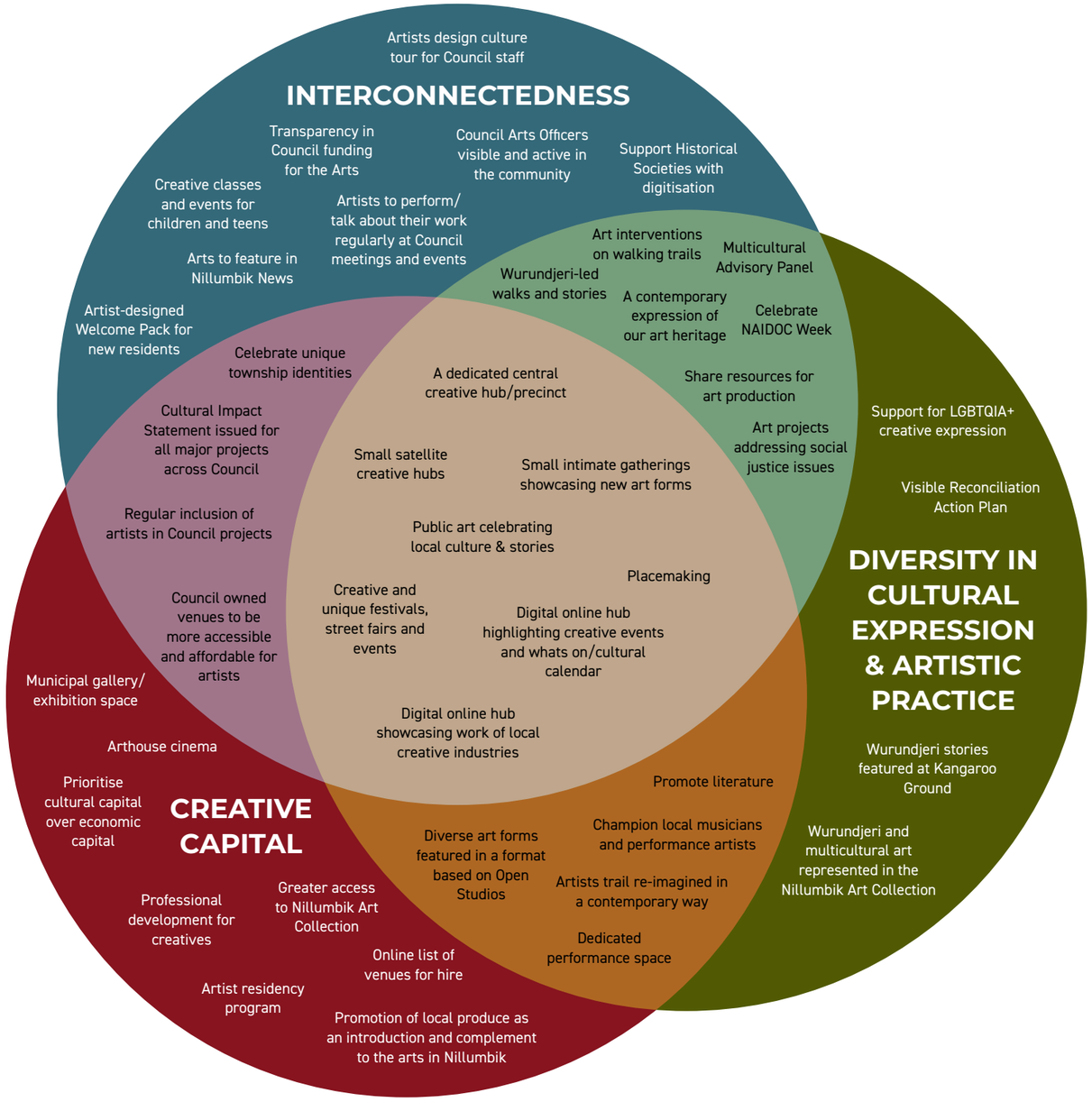
"We have heard that the people of Nillumbik would like Wurundjeri Woiwurrung arts and culture to be more visible and present in the area. We agree, Wurundjeri arts and culture should be part of everyday life and accessible to all.

For us, retaining cultural heritage and sharing this knowledge with the communities living on, and visiting, Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country is important." [23]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

"Involve Wurundjeri elders and younger members of Wurundjeri in projects/ programs involved in educating the community so that future elders can be mentored." [24]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people



Interconnectedness

Fostering connection and partnerships, building social capital and creating a sense of belonging.

Creative Capital

Establishing Nillumbik as a creative destination, facilitating the production of art and nurturing the wellbeing of creative practitioners and creative industries.

Diversity in Cultural Expression & Artistic Practice

Enabling engagement with different cultures including Wurundjeri culture, raising the profile of contemporary work and unusual and non-mainstream art forms.

Next Steps

What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report **will be used to inform the development of the *Arts and Culture 2022-2026 Strategy* and will provide a local evidence reference guide for the development and delivery of arts and cultural activity within the Shire for the next five years.**

The Summary Report identifies emerging themes with supporting evidence from documents produced from Council's extensive and comprehensive consultation program. Analysis of the consultation documents was undertaken with regular referral to the Cultural Development Network's Framework for Cultural Development Planning. The analysis identified three key themes as*: Interconnectedness, Creative Capital,* and *Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice.*

These themes are evidenced throughout the consultation documents as being central to the Nillumbik identity and as representative of community cultural aspirations. They are based on data drawn from extensive community consultation activities across a broad spectrum of the Nillumbik community.

These themes with supporting actionable sub-themes are:

1. Interconnectedness

1.1 Physical spaces for connection and creation

1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts and Culture in the community

1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

2. Creative capital

2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

To ensure alignment with the culture and aspirations of the Nillumbik community all strategy, goals and planned activities should embody the key findings of this Summary Report.

In addition to the key findings, a number of considerations appear throughout the consultations as a priority. These are considerations previously listed separately under sub-themes, but which are supported by a greater amount of evidence and have a more apparent sense of urgency in comparison to other requests from the community. These priority considerations are:

- A physical creative hub/precinct that includes studio and rehearsal space, exhibition space and performance space.
- A professional-level gallery space.
- Greater support for live music, theatre, dance, literature; particularly addressing the lack of performance venues and affordable rehearsal space.
- Addressing the inaccessibility of the Eltham Community and Reception Centre.
- Greater engagement with Council, particularly in commissioning artists in design and planning, performing at Council events, socially engaged art projects, public art projects and placemaking projects.
- Establishing a centralised online cultural information hub that includes a cultural calendar and details of local artists and creative industries.
- Greater visibility and connection to Wurundjeri culture.

The key findings from the consultation engagements and connecting evidence outlined in this Report will be used in support of the development of an Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 in line with the Cultural Development Network's Planning Framework and to ensure the connection of future arts and cultural activity to an established community need.

Image: *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Appendix

1. Interconnectedness

Nillumbik's unique connectedness and networks are our fundamental cultural attribute. Strategies and activities that foster connection and partnerships, build social capital and create a sense of belonging support the theme of interconnectedness.

SUB-THEMES

1.1 Physical spaces for connection and creation

1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

Interconnectedness is a fundamental aspect of being an artist in Nillumbik.

"Creative networks date back throughout our artistic heritage and are embedded in the way creative practitioners live and work together in Nillumbik today." [25]

"Although the environment and our artistic heritage are seen as significant aspects of our culture, they are not viewed in such a fundamental way as our interconnectedness. The Nillumbik magic is in our connected social fabric." [26]

Interconnectedness fosters creative social capital, nurturing our artists and the quality of their work

"It's those organic connections that really make a lot of the most interesting artistic intervention." [27]

Interconnected artists create a sense of belonging for everyone

"Visual arts, music and culture are the heart of any community and as I said, has a unifying effect on the society." [28]

"I love our huge range of local artists and writers, thinkers and makers. The sense of community support is wonderful."[29]

"Art connects us. It gives us a sense of shared identity. It helps us belong." [30]

"There is art throughout Nillumbik in the libraries, along the roadsides, in galleries, on fences and footpaths, virtually anywhere and everywhere. People embrace the opportunities to express themselves in many different ways and venues. It might be a special art installation or a piece of work created by a family at their front gate. Nillumbik art can take any form. Nillumbik art isn't exclusive. It's available for everyone through community hubs and classes. It's a feeling that this is part of our culture and our way of celebrating and expressing ourselves and our precious place." [31]

Connection is important across the community spectrum, not just in the arts

Throughout all the consultations, the following terms were consistently used to describe what people value in Nillumbik, in both a cultural and non-cultural context:

- Community connectedness
- Connected community
- Social connection
- Sense of community

"The health and connectedness of communities can be measured by the presence of social capital. Social capital is the benefit obtained by having links that bind and connect people within and between groups. It can provide sources of resilience against poor health, and can help people find work or cope with hardship." [32]

"Promoting social connections to prevent social isolation and improved mental health for our community" [33]

"Connectedness to others makes you feel like you belong. Promoting tolerance, acceptance of difference, and a sense of belonging is important in our towns." [34]

"Nillumbik needs to look to its heart, its soul. Let's restore and encourage the neighbourly connections, the welcoming attitude, the creative, constructive mindset of which we are so proud... If *'Womenjika'* does mean something like 'gathering for a united purpose', let's set that as our foundation and build upon it." [35]

"More broadly, our residents consider community connectedness and social inclusion as very important as they are viewed as a way to build resilience, foster a sense of belonging, improve mental health and is key in preventing and reducing social isolation." [36]

1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

"Creative practitioners thrive when they can connect with and inspire each other. These relationships form organically, in spaces where people can linger. There is great value in creating physical environments that naturally facilitate these interactions." [37]

The sheer number of requests for physical space in which to practice and share art reflects a great need, not only for cultivating the production of artwork, but to serve as an incubator for the valuable social, creative and business connections that can only be made in these spaces.

The consultation process made it clear that these spaces need to serve a number of roles:

- They must be informal; a place where people feel at home dropping in and spending long amounts of time; it is likely older buildings would work better than newly built structures.
- They must have areas that are adequate to produce work and show work: private studio spaces for visual artists, walls to hang work (not necessarily a formal gallery), rehearsal spaces for performing artists, space to perform music.
- People must feel comfortable socialising; this is where social connections are made, creative practitioners are inspired by one another, and the public learn about local artists and their projects.
- It is preferable to have food, comfortable seating and climate control available to foster a congenial social environment and a regular place to gather.

These spaces take the form of a central creative hub with a variety of offerings; which could include an exhibition space, a dedicated performance space and/or an arthouse cinema, private studios and rehearsal spaces and a cafe or restaurant. Smaller satellite creative hubs, that could be set up in cafes, wineries or halls, that reflect local town character and cultivate intimate settings for performance, artist talks or exhibitions. The use of existing venues can create affordable space for artists to produce and show their work.

Central Creative Hub/Precinct

Enhance creative output and a sense of connection through establishing a central creative hub/precinct that includes studio and rehearsal spaces, performance and exhibition spaces and spaces to eat and socialise.

Consistently, artists request a central creative hub or creative precinct where their work can be seen, they have space to produce work and they can connect with each other. This has also been repeatedly asked for by the general community who wish to see more art and performance in an accessible centralised location.

Although not everyone specifies a place, when an option is suggested it is invariably Eltham.

Such a centre serves to increase creative output and a sense of connection between the creative community and the wider community. In addition, a creative centre establishes Nillumbik as a place that nurtures the arts and encourages interactions with art and artists. Food, comfortable seating and a congenial atmosphere helps build social capital by providing space where people linger and creative networks are built.

27.4% (74 respondents) in the *Participate Nillumbik Arts & Culture Online Survey* specifically ask for more physical spaces for artists to make and show their work. 15.9% (43 respondents) specifically ask for exhibition space, 7.4% (20 respondents) ask for a dedicated performance space and 8.1% (22 respondents) ask for more live music and alternate music venues.

"We don't have an arts precinct. We don't have studio spaces and rehearsal spaces that people can readily access. I think that's a huge barrier and our artists are having to go outside the Shire to access those." [38]

"We don't have an art centre anywhere near Nillumbik given we have so many artists here. That's a real shame."[39]

"I think there a whole lot of issues that are an anomaly to the reputation of Eltham as a strong artistic community. A space is just one of them." [40]

"Establish a main physical creative hub to create community—pairing good food, good wine, comfortable seating with spaces for artists to make/rehearse and exhibit/perform work." [41]

"A main physical hub with:

- rehearsal space
- studio space
- good food, open late, cafe open for breakfast & lunch
- dedicated performance space, it does not have to be huge: optimally no more than 100 seats. *(see **Theme 2 Creative Capital; 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik p.65** for more on a dedicated performance space.)*
- small gallery space
- comfortable chairs; a good place to read and meet friends
- preferably close to train line and walking distance from town centre." [42]

"I would build an arts centre... a meeting place for artists with maybe a coffee bar and a bar that could host events. A place you can turn up to and have interesting artsy conversations." [43]

"A main physical creative hub to build a creative community is highly desirable. It would need dedicated rehearsal spaces, studio space, cafe, bar, art on the walls, performances, good food & wine." [44]

"Creating/fostering spaces for artistic expression, promoting connectedness for participants, 'audience' & community more generally" [45]

"There is a desire for an arts and cultural centre that includes an art gallery, cinema and art spaces for workshops for children, adults and young emerging artists." [46]

"I would like to work in a studio and have community space to share work, ideas and cups of tea and chats." [47]

"The Eltham Library Community Gallery exhibitions are well loved, as is the Artists Open Studios program, though some feel there is a need for opportunities for artists that don't fit into that program." [48]

"Also a 'arts hub'... that had excellent new artist studios that were for local artists and an artist in residence program to invite interstate, or international artists would be so good. Having dedicated ceramic, glass, printmaking hubs that delivered workshops, master classes and residency opportunities would be a great way to generate money back into the precinct. Please look at the success of Baldessin press and the excellent SOCA (School of Ceramic Arts) in Brunswick to see how successful a proper set up could reward the Council. This is needed to grow the community, to develop a more serious outlook, to be a dedicated art precinct to bring specialists together..." [49]

"Value and need more Public Art, Literature, Festivals, Theatre, Street Art. We need an Arts Centre." [50]

"We have amazing spaces and talent but [need a] HUB to showcase art and performance." [51]

Responses from *Our People, Our Place, Our Future* wider Council consultation data that concern a desire for creative centre and places for greater social connection:

Top 3 Things
- Arts and Culture Hub

Short Term Focus Areas
- Provide more social connection opportunities
- Provide opportunities for social connection in rural areas
- Unify the community and create a "hub...

Long Term Focus Areas
- Encouragement of enterprises and organisations which support cultural activity and communal participation.
- Arts here feel like a private affair. I want a space to connect regularly with fellow artists in, perhaps a group studio space.
- Arts precinct development
- Establishing ourselves as a contemporary cultural centre
- Building our profile as an arts area.
- Arts and cultural heritage
- Complete the regional art gallery and performance space/town hall.
- Promotion of Nillumbik as a shire for the arts, heritage...
- Promotion and maintenance of the artistic community

What to do Long Term
- Create business opportunities, hubs and enterprises with local people.
- Build arts infrastructure.

Working with Council Long Term
- Contact current art groups and negotiate needs. But there needs to be a physical space for individuals to go

What 3 things need to change
- Gathering spaces for art/play/exercise
- Working towards establishing a community centre/ art gallery/cinema.
- Investing in social connectedness where communities can thrive and support each other
- Continue lobbying for arts/performance spaces.

Asset Plan Redirections
- Art should be a significant expenditure in the interests of supporting local practitioners and the reputation of the area as an arts precinct. This has in the past contributed to Eltham's appeal to cultural tourists.
- Eltham is supposed to be an artists' hub. There was a proposal for a new art gallery. What happened?
- The shire needs a community art gallery to showcase the wealth of local talent!

"Community art precinct, gallery spaces and artists studio spaces." [52]

"Art space, play space, gathering space, incredible food and drinks..." [53]

"A creative hub that exists physically as well as digitally. A place that creatives can meet and share and is accessible to the public too. Encourage the whole community to take more ownership of the artists in the area." [54]

"We moved to the area thinking it would be more actively arty but find there is no centre or place for people to meet and interact... A central place would help for the community to feel more united." [55]

"As a new artist in the area, I've been trying to find other artists to socialise with.

I used to be part of a community group studio in the West which allowed me to get out of the house, encourage and inspire me to create because of the interactions with other artists. This was embellished with a monthly group exhibition which enriched our social lives and gave us an achievable deadline and an affordable entry fee since we had studios and it was free. Outside artists were also encouraged to show.

I would love to be part of an organisation like this again. Artist run with the help of the council, with subsidised rent and other programs. It wasn't elitist and it was very inclusive of different cultures and abilities.

Very grass roots, but I feel that's where the real art is made." [56]

"Somewhere for a young women of 20 to connect with other artists and a place to show their work." [57]

"We need an Arts Centre, a gallery, theatre." [58]

"I would open up an art space that was artist-run, funded by Council and businesses, open to everyone, inclusive of everyone. You could run workshops. An art space devoted to the arts in all its breadth and complexity." [59]

"Central points to gather and create." [60]

"A flexible arts hub venue that accommodates theatre, music, photograph, visual arts." [61]

"Develop arts facilities, venues, spaces, infrastructure." [62]

"Community centre with better arts support." [63]

"Community arts hub for live performances and other art forms." [64]

"Not enough support for the arts community. My dream is to build a big community arts center on the site next to the library. With theaters, galleries, studios, restaurants... to provide an art home for U3A, all artists, and youth." [65]

"Also school age kids could learn drama and art." [66]

"Rent out studios and theatre space. Restaurants and coffee shops and galleries to sell our art and craft.. This would be a huge tourist attraction. Bringing money to Eltham. Education children and youth in art, and (u3a) aging population. Give Eltham back the "art voice" it used to have." [67]

"Anywhere there is hot coffee, ordinary people will be empowered to do extraordinary things—everywhere!" [68]

"A lot of the art beat has disappeared even before Covid—Courthouse Poets, Volumes live readings and music, Ridge Cafe art exhibition space, The Lane art exhibition space, local book launches, local art exhibitions etc. We have no community art space and we should have one." [69]

"I feel we need to preserve our galleries, theaters etc... and creative spaces for artists to come together to work, learn and share with the wider community." [70]

"The use of more outdoor and indoor community spaces/ places, provide artist/creatives with a free platform to exhibit and collaborate, encouraging local residents to support, engage and build interest in local emerging and established creators." [71]

"It's vital that we keep the spirit of the arts alive in Nillumbik with lots of artistic community spaces, exhibitions, grants, special showcases and teaching for beginners." [72]

"The Rolling Stones jammed around the Montsalvat Pool. Do we have the environment for that to happen anymore?" [73]

"A place to feel safe and connected to other creative people. A place to display creative works." [74]

"ARTS HUB! Food and alcohol and art." [75]

"Venue for all to come together and enjoy the arts" [76]

"Community Art Centre to do classes and display." [77]

There is particular interest in gallery space being part of the creative hub/precinct. Note, this gallery space differs in focus to a dedicated municipal gallery which will be discussed later.

"A purpose built art gallery for local artists to run and inhabit —with multi functional areas for learnings and exhibitions—a place where the art vitality of local painters (in particular) is revered respected utilised enjoyed and shared with others. It can either be built or re-purposed but needs to be a sacred space for artists." [78]

Eltham central needs a quirky art & pottery gallery to 'meet the potters' with cheese, wine, sell ceramics, pottery, paintings, sculptures. [79]

"More display space for local artists" [80]

"...gallery and performance space" [81]

Although the following excerpts all offer the old Shire offices site as a solution, the important commonality is a desire for a centralised arts hub. The old Shire offices may not necessarily be the best site for this. It is important however to mention that any future use of this site has relevance to Nillumbik's culture. Thought should be given to:

- **the aesthetics: to match/complement the existing Burgess-designed Eltham Library**
- **that the site is in some way inclusive or representative of local creativity; For example if it becomes a hospital or medical centre, a gallery space and/or site specific public artworks could be commissioned.**

"Build something attractive on the Old Shire Offices Site, preferably designed by the same architect that designed our award winning beautiful library. The site is too small and Main Rd is too crowded for a hospital. An art gallery, information Centre, maybe health centre." [82]

"Ensure Eltham's Old Shire Office site is transformed into an Arts Hub (Gallery/Open Space/ Performance Areas) with a design to complement the library buildings." [83]

"We need to increase our focus on the culture of Eltham as a community of Art and Leisure activities. Using the vacant land of the old Eltham Shire offices as a Gallery/ Arts precinct should be a long term goal." [84]

"Ensure Eltham's Old Shire Office Site responds to community requests. Preferably an arts centre to complement the library complex- great architecture!" [85]

Something needs to be done with the old Eltham shire site. It is currently a waste. My suggestion would be in line of extending a structure in line with the library design to encompass and Arts/ Gallery precinct and perhaps an outdoor theater." [86]

"An Art Gallery on the old shire office site. This would:

- provide local employment
- provide a destination for out of area visitors
- allow the community to view the art they own
- provide flow on revenue to local traders
- provide a stop off destination for visitors on the way to the Yarra Valley
- support local artists
- support local schools and their students" [87]

"Explore possibilities of:

- expanding the Eltham library gallery
- including a gallery space and public art in the new hospital planned for the area. [88]

"Performing arts and exhibitions are my favourite and we should definitely have more of that." [89]

Satellite Creative Hubs

Increase cultural activity and exposure to the arts through establishing physical spaces for performance and exhibitions in smaller townships.

Performing a similar function to a main central creative hub, satellite hubs create smaller places of creative and social connection across the Shire, and specifically celebrate the character of individual townships.

Such places can use non-traditional venues and will flourish as part of, or in close proximity to, existing cafés, halls, wineries; anywhere people can comfortably spend time. They may take the form of an outbuilding converted to an art workshop, studio or gallery space, or a café hosting small performances, music or special creative events.
The concept of satellite creative hubs is also explored in *Art programs in small intimate spaces* on page 91, looking at diverse art forms in underutilised spaces.

An increase in live music venues, particularly alternatives from pubs is a common request from the general public and satellite hubs could provide these alternative venues for local musicians.

Satellite hubs would require partnerships between existing businesses or hall committees and artists and would need assistance with management, legal/safety requirements and promotion.

The advantages of satellite creative hubs is that they engage people who might not travel to Eltham for an exhibition or performance. They can be activated within existing businesses and venues without building infrastructure and they strengthen social networks and connection to local places and character.

"The idea of a centralised space—it doesn't have to be a giant big performing arts space—even a café or small venue—somewhere were people gather and somewhere that's essentially the creative hub that the creative community knows, that's the place where there's live music on the weekend, there's good wine and good coffee and there's always local art on the walls and people come together to share and talk and get to know each other and there's good food and a good vibe." [90]

"Social space makes for better connected and resilient communities. Spaces where people want to be are important; cafes or coffee carts in parks, walking trails that lead to a cultural centre and a place to eat, laneways with festoon lights and a bar, outdoor theatre, outdoor dining..." [91]

"...places where people will feel comfortable. Host regular talks / exhibitions / performances: People find dedicated art spaces exclusive; *'Do I belong, do I fit in? I don't know what to wear. Can I be myself when I'm there?'"* [92]

"Create physical creative hubs from existing spaces or businesses to build community connections; use cafés, wine bars, wineries and support regular cultural events and exhibitions." [93]

"More opportunities for performance are needed in more casual environments. Bars, restaurants, pubs, we have so many in Eltham so there is obviously something blocking the encouragement of live music and performance." 94

"Use underutilised spaces: "Old buildings for new ideas, new buildings for old ideas." [95]

"Residents enjoy a wide variety of recreational and cultural pursuits and have a strong sense of feeling part of their local community and townships." [96]

"Nillumbik townships to all share in having cultural and arts space so everyone has access and develops a sense of connection and young people are enabled to develop a love for the arts, both visual, creative art, music and theatre." [97]

"Small local events that were happening lots 5 years ago or so that don't happen any more due to new owners in venues and little support or funding being available." [98]

A local creative centre is desired in many smaller communities in the Shire; in particular Arthurs Creek, Kangaroo Ground, Strathewen Yarrambat and Plenty residents feel left out of cultural life in Nillumbik.

Hurstbridge, Panton Hill and Diamond Creek residents also feel a lack of accessible creative spaces.

Arthurs Creek

"Arthurs Creek would really benefit from something to draw the community together. At the moment the only options are joining the hall committee or CFA." [99]

Kangaroo Ground

"...specifically in Kangaroo Ground there is no community hub where art/music groups can meet and connect (I believe years ago there was near the primary school?) and just drop by—I think this would help a positive sense of community in this specific area." [100]

"Use underutilised spaces such as Evelyn County and the Incident Control Centre both in Kangaroo Ground as rehearsal space, studio space or gallery space. Council is positioned to handle issues artists find difficult: access, parking, power, water, toilets. Council can assist in making spaces accessible and useful." [101]

Panton Hill

"Better use of the living and learning space at Panton Hill. Hardly anyone knows it's even there let alone what's on offer." [102]

Strathewen

"More community events for Strathewen at the local community hall. It's never used and we've talked about cooking classes, gatherings, events for the kids, music" [103]

Diamond Creek

"D/C [Diamond Creek] has expanded over past 40 years but the town hasn't kept up artistically." [104]

Hurstbridge

"Revitalise Allwood House (it's languishing in an under-utilised state)." [105]

Yarrambat

"The community houses [Living & Learning centres] in Eltham, Diamond Creek and Panton Hills are a great meeting place and I wish we had something similar in Yarrambat." [106]

Image: *Zebras* by Born in a Taxi at St Andrews Market Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Affordable Venues

Expand the number of performance events, art workshops and studio spaces by making venues affordable for artists and cultural organisations.

Many artists felt that a major barrier to performing and exhibiting, and connecting with each other and the wider community is lack of affordable spaces.

Underutilised spaces, particularly Council-owned space is a great frustration.

67.74% (21 respondents) in the Participate Nillumbik Arts & Culture Online Survey see in-kind support (subsidised facility hire etc) as significantly needed by the performing arts sector in Nillumbik.

"Access to spaces for art creation." [107]

"Council has venues and they're not utilised by the community for a variety of reasons. Often they are multi-purpose rooms, so they're not actually useful for different kinds of things. They're also prohibitively expensive." [108]

"Already we have so many venues that are viable, good spaces to be utilised, but they're largely inaccessible... finding ways to make them vibrant and available and running all sorts of interesting things for people as a consistent everyday process and how to bring that also to the awareness of the broader community." [109]

"It's ridiculous that we can't put on a concert because we can't afford to and can't even pay ourselves and have to charge too much just for the hire of the hall." [110]

"There's nowhere to rehearse, there's nowhere to perform that's not prohibitively expensive." [111]

"Dedicated comm arts space in every suburb. Affordable rates." [112]

"Under-utilised spaces concern me and lack of opportunities for local arts professionals." [113]

"Scouts halls, football clubs should be available to other groups to support community connectiveness." [114]

"Needs:

- Affordable/low cost spaces for emerging artists to display artworks.
- A visible retail/exhibition/maker/workshop space and a living wage/funding.
- Exhibition space without severing an arm and leg to pay.
- Space to have workshops.
- Inspiration, networking, opportunities." [115]

"Bring costs down for venue hire. E.g. Halls are too expensive for small performances. Performers need to charge $60 a ticket to cover costs, whereas a reasonable price for a ticket should be $15." [116]

"Create more opportunities and support for struggling Artists and Musicians. Allow for free spaces that can be used for community based classes, given by members of the community as supportive interaction to those who need it." [117]

"More support for artists, perhaps a studio space that could be rented cheaply..." [118]

Many people expressed a general desire for affordable community spaces, not specifically art spaces, but spaces for community groups to meet and people to connect socially.

"Community hubs more accessible for community activities. Currently, the local facilities are more costly than those in Melbourne CBD." [119]

"Provide cheap meeting spaces both inside and outside for groups of varying sizes." [120]

Supporting community volunteers (like providing free venues) to have free cultural, leisure, sport, and other activity events." [121]

"Free to low cost opportunities for people to socially connect, to be creative, physically active and social. Connecting people with their local community." [122]

"Support the idea that local clubs could share their facilities during any downtimes. This could be for meetings and social get-togethers or presentations." [123]

"Accessible venues. Hiring costs subsidising" [124]

"Need for small spaces for people to meet e.g. community group committees." [125]

"Community halls provided free or cheap for community gatherings and activities." [126]

"More community spaces to hold meetings that are affordable (or not charged at all.)" [127]

"Affordable and available community spaces." [128]

"Create more inclusive spaces for community groups to meet at no cost. Build community spaces and a library, spaces accessible for groups to meet at low cost or no cost. There isn't community rooms for groups to meet at low cost. Not even Living and Learning centres. Look at other community venues and what are the barriers for community use, i.e. Eltham Community reception centre. How often are rooms hired, is cost a barrier for community groups? These venues are built for community use, yet cost may be prohibitive." [129]

Allow a community group to rent a building at subsidised rate so artists can access studio spaces at low costs." [130]

Strong opinions were expressed concerning the Eltham Community and Reception Centre

Attracting particular ire is the Eltham Community and Reception Centre which is seen as inaccessible and unaffordable. This venue is a potential solution to the lack of physical space in which to practice and share art and could serve as the creative hub the community is asking for. At the very least, the community asks for this venue to be significantly more affordable so if can be utilised by the creative community and community groups.

"Making the Eltham Community Centre into a centralised creative hub with café, bar, performance space, rehearsal space; areas for quiet focused work." [131]

"The Eltham Community Centre is misnamed because it's expensive to hire so therefore not accessible to the community and there aren't many community events there." [132]

"The Eltham Community Centre sits vacant most of the time, why can't community groups use this and host events without paying $700! It is out of reach" [133]

"Community centre—more community use." [134]

"It isn't a community centre, it's actually a commercial centre, isn't it?"—*about the Eltham Community & Reception Centre.* [135]

"I don't understand why places like the Reception Centre charge so much. If it's not going to be used, its not going to bring any money in." [136]

"Eltham Community Centre is far too expensive for community groups to consider using for events, much less a rehearsal space." [137]

"The community centre, it's a bit of an anomaly because not many people get to go inside it unless you pay for it. It can't be a community centre if it's a business model. We had our son's 21st in the foyer, it cost a fortune for just the foyer. Why can't we reassign something for that community centre and make it more available to artists?" [138]

"Eltham, where I live, doesn't really have a social centre and needs one. Its 'community centres' don't really act as such." [139]

"Allow the Eltham Community centre to be cost free for community groups to use." [140]

"[Eltham Community Centre, arthouse cinema and gallery space] could be combined but it needs to be in an accessible place, not Montsalvat or where the Shire Offices are." [141]

"...lack of an affordable venue for events, the complete absence of community assets like the Eltham Community Reception in the scheme of things—a white elephant so hugely expensive to hire..." [142]

Booking spaces is hard to navigate, and expensive. A space can cost $60 an hour for a meeting room for a wildlife meeting. The Amateur Winemaker's Guild found ECC too expensive and have moved to Manningham. [143]

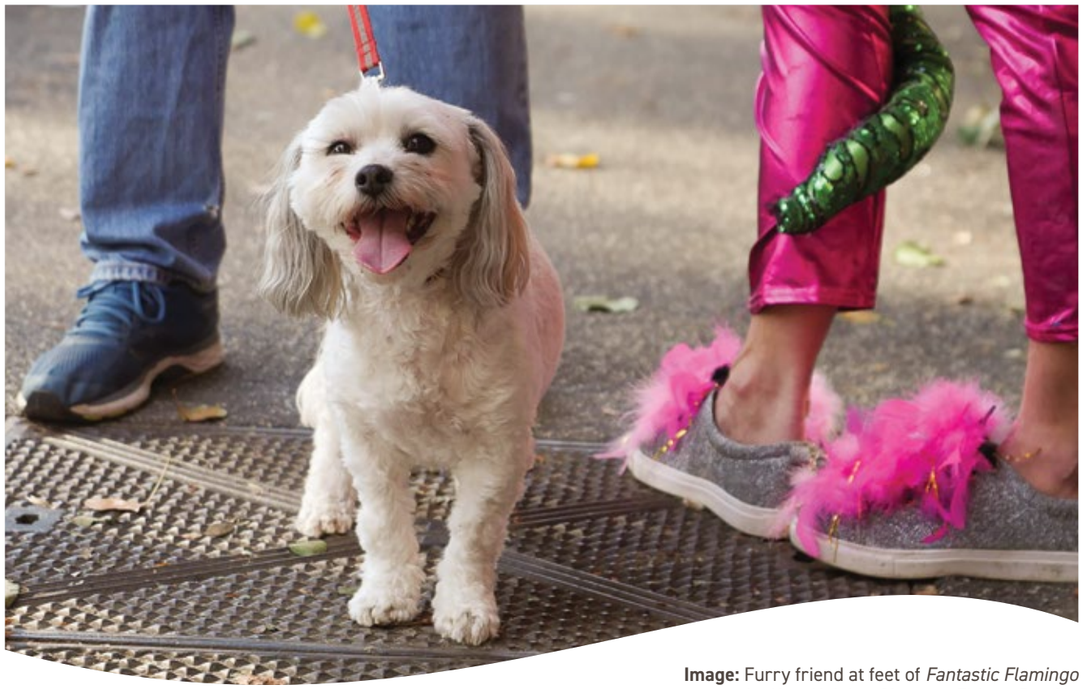


Image: Furry friend at feet of *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Managing Creative Hubs

Creative hubs need to be sustainable. Cultural spaces can be combined with commercial enterprises for financial support:

"Create physical spaces that combine commercial with non-commercial activities, balance financial returns with social and cultural returns." [144]

"Look to sports groups as an example of sustainability; the individual players are not expected to finance the club and make it sustainable, but the group are successful lobbyists for funding, and they usually have an area serving food and drinks connected to the club that generates the regular revenue they need for running costs." [145]

Principles for Successful Creative Hubs

- Curated mix of functions, balancing the commercial with the non-commercial; not open to just anyone (such as parties motivated by low rent.) All activities fit the cultural vision of the space and add what is lacking in the community.
- Brand positioning: being clear and bold about what the space stands for. Having a clear cultural identity for the space directs the type of activities that are chosen to be there.
- A shared common goal and ownership of the space among all stakeholders ensures everyone takes responsibility for ensuring the space is a success. There are clear agreements on programs and management.
- Ties to the local environment and community are essential; the space must match the DNA of the local area and address local community needs.
- It must have a sustainable long term business model with multiple income streams: rent, ticket sales, catering etc.
- It must be run by an independent community manager who connects with the local community and cultivates an active vibrant space.
- A discretionary budget (not a grant) for ideas/ innovation in the space; and/or loans to fund initiatives.

Best Practice Examples

Broedplaats literally translates into *incubator* and is a collectively shared building for artists and entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sector of Amsterdam. There is a balance between commercial and non-commercial activities; art studios with affordable rents sit alongside cafes and bars. The businesses bring in higher monetary returns for the centre and the artists bring in higher social, cultural and environmental returns.

https://whatsupwithamsterdam.com/broedplaats-amsterdam/

The Settlement House model has thrived worldwide for nearly a century and half. Artists live and work on site and engage the arts as a means for strengthening community life, re-spiriting the aspirations of individuals of all ages, and building relationships between people from diverse backgrounds and classes.

https://pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org/the-citizen-artist-the-settlement-house/

Bærums Verk is a village in Norway founded 400 years ago to boost the Dano-Norwegian iron production. Recent restorations have turned old buildings and iron production facilities into a unique shopping commons with a supermarket, post office, bakery, restaurants and various retail outlets. The village is known as a hub for traditional crafts, containing the workshops and galleries of blacksmiths, glass blowers, painters and woodworkers along the main street.

Some of the artists live on site and supply the galleries and homewares store with their work. The rent they pay for their living quarters and workshops are subsidised by the retail tenants. A sculpture garden connects the workshops with the retail section.

https://www.visitoslo.com/en/activities-and-attractions/attractions/?tlp=2984273&name=Barums-Verk

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g2418282-d656593-Reviews-Baerums_Verk-Baerum_Municipality_Akershus_Eastern_Norway.html

1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

Raising the profile of the arts in Nillumbik and strengthening relationships between Council and the creative community is a high priority. The way arts and culture is communicated needs to be improved: both in the way Council communicates the value of the arts to Nillumbik's creative practitioners, and the way arts and culture is promoted to the wider community.

"There is a lot of affection for the Shire as a place that cares for the Arts and the environment. However, for some there is a desire for a renewed commitment to the arts or a sense of disconnect between the perceived value of the arts and the reality." [146]

In addition, the creative community wants to see evidence of Council valuing the arts; through careful use of language focusing on the inherent value of culture over tourism and economics; through having Arts Officers physically in the community, and through clear and honest discussions about arts funding; where and how much is being spent, and where we need to direct more funding.

Another way the value of arts and culture can be represented in the community is by addressing social issues through Council working with socially engaged artists

The current perception that Council does not value the arts needs to be addressed

Currently there is a perception that Council do not value the arts as much as they should. Better communication and promotion of the arts from Council would be welcomed, as well as improved understanding around arts funding.

"The people of Nillumbik like the arts and are open to the arts, however the Council does not support the arts much at all." [147]

"Nillumbik has a thriving arts scene I and I value being connected with that community, but at times I feel Council approaches art in a way that is exclusive rather than inclusive of the wider community." [148]

"For somebody who works in the Shire, art is not at the centre or on the front of the Council." [149]

"More relevance given to the arts, everybody's poor cousin." [150]

"More creativity and celebration of the arts (local)." [151]

"More promotion and support of the local artist community." [152]

"For an industry that has been integral to building the culture of the area (which brought the people, the development and created the covetable nature of the region), the arts deserves a much more sophisticated and financed position in Nillumbik." [153]

"The second most selected priority involves Council's role as an advocate for the sector...

- Participants asks Council to champion the unique value of arts and culture as a force for change.
- We need to support this fragile industry with resources, information, facilitation, spaces and training" [154]

Council to be visible and active in the Creative Community

Strengthen trust and connection between the creative community and Council by ensuring Council Arts & Culture Officers are regularly visible and active in the community.

Having Council Arts Officers visible in the community has been highly regarded and appreciated in the past and the creative community would like to see this continue.

"The most important thing to artists regarding connection with Council is that Council people must be visible in the community and connect with key people in the community. There must be a clear way for artists to connect with Council without having to travel to Council offices." [155]

"We've finally met people within Council who were at arts events. Previously, Council had a closed door policy." [156]

"[There is] an absence of Council arts personnel from the township." [157]

What Should Council do? [158]

- Engage with community more to promote a sense of community and connectedness
- A more welcoming atmosphere in council offices. We feel as though we are intruders.
- Can you have regional offices? Drop into different towns for a day each month etc?
- Communicate with local people directly
- In outer areas utilise notice boards on P.O.s and general stores—these were installed by Council to improve communication but rarely contain Council info.

Image: *Perky And Fiddle* by Kinetic Theatre at Edendale Community Environment Farm Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Language focus

Increase the perceived value of art and culture in the community by ensuring the language used, when talking about arts and culture, prioritises cultural value over tourism and economic value.

It is important to centre artists and their work at the centre of arts and culture. When speaking about arts and culture, cultural value should be prioritised over tourism and economic value, as a way to establish our arts and culture as being of value.

This also communicates to the creative community that their work is worthy in and of itself, and not primarily as a vehicle for other businesses to profit.

"This may seem like a semantic exercise, but it takes emphasis off the arts as needing to have an economic value and positions the arts as having a cultural value. Much of the language around the financial benefits that the arts bring in for others is detrimental to the way artists think of themselves and how they value their work. If we truly want to see thriving creative industries, we need to establish Nillumbik as a centre of culture and celebrate our artists as the engine that raises our cultural value." [159]

Funding and Transparency in Communication around Funding

Strengthen trust and connection between the creative community and Council by having transparent information concerning the Council arts budget readily available.

The amount of funding available should also be a point of transparency and discussion between Council and the creative community.

"What's been lacking in the cultural plans is showing what percent of Nillumbik's budget is given to the arts. We were (running on) a $80M budget and my memory was 1% (allocated to the arts.) That should be in the cultural plan; doing a breakdown of what Nillumbik actually gives to the arts; the cultural plan needs to spell it out." [160]

"Increased communication around funding streams available to artists/organisations." [161]

Discussions around grant programs and how they are run is needed. As previously discussed, there are problems with festival and event grants that funnel grant money back into Council and put an unnecessary administrative load on artists and volunteers.

Provide a structure for funding rather than random grants that require massive extra work by volunteers in their attempt to get funding. [162]

Artists are grateful for arts funding provided by Council, particularly since the pandemic. Greater financial support for artists' work is still needed, in the form of more grant money, commissions by Council and employment of artists.

"When asked what support for the industry should Council prioritise, over 41% said income-based assistance.

- Measures addressing the financial vulnerability of artists/organisations are more important than ever with artists amongst those most financially impacted by the shutdowns.
- Suggestions ranged from Council employing local professionals to prioritising local arts businesses within non-grant schemes." [163]

"Gratitude for the NSC grants & having the time to learn to write one!" [164]

"Economic stimulus initiatives benefiting the creative community." [165]

"...support desired from Council. Number one priority was providing a financial means for artists to continue their work. This role is more important than ever and ideas ranged from NSC employing local professionals to prioritising local arts businesses within non-grant schemes. These initiatives directly address the financial vulnerability of artists/arts organisations." [166]

"Income related support was first priority for over 40% of group whilst 35% believed "Recognition of the value of arts & culture to recovery" should be the top priority for Council." [167]

"The importance of the Arts and funding for the Arts: This was a repeated theme... Arts matter, arts are important to Nillumbik, funding is crucial, and, 'when Federal funding for Arts is cut and arts degrees are twice the price, (we see) how much it matters for Arts to be funded in local Shires." [168]

"Recognise that living in and practicing art in Nillumbik is costly and difficult for many artists." [169]

"The Shire's commitment to the Arts is seen as particularly vital in the context of current events. It was identified that the lack of Federal Government support for arts makes local support even more valuable. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a sense of displacement and trauma and the Arts are seen as a proven way to help to heal this." [170]

"...would like an increased advocacy role from Council ranking "Increased recognition of the vital role Arts & Culture will play in recovery" as first priority but on almost equal ranking with second priority "grants/employment/ commissions." [171]

"I got more grant based work (but less commercial work)" [172]

Comparisons with other areas

"Sporting facilities have had a huge amount spent on them. Arts could do with more." [173]

"Could you levy an art tax on any multi unit/apartment/ commercial development." [174]

Good communication and transparency from Council is also valued by the general community

"Transparency in communications, inclusive/ imaginative/well-informed conversations for the whole community and within Council." [175]

"All themes referenced throughout the engagement and evaluation were dependent on the Council taking a lead role in keeping the community informed and connected. Community engagement was viewed as fundamental to all Council business regardless of its theme.

Participants also referenced 'informed and consulted communities' as being something that was of significance." [176]

Cultural Impact Statement

Enhance awareness and value of culture throughout Council departments by evaluating major Council projects through Cultural Impact Statements.

Awareness and the value of culture can be increased throughout Council departments by evaluating major Council projects through Cultural Impact Statements.

"It creates something that guides people through that thinking. It's a useful thing to do and it can change mindsets within an organisation." [177]

"We want evaluation based on social, community and culture instead of pure economic benefit." [178]

"It's the secret to the success of integrating arts and culture into everything that everyone does. If everyone's across it, then it doesn't become just an afterthought: *'Oh yeah, we need to throw that in the mix.'* It actually becomes something that starts at the very beginning and continues on through a project and is integrated into the way of thinking and builds the organisation as a whole; embraces the fact that its not just one team's responsibility, it's an organisational approach." [179]

Welcome Pack for new residents

Connect new residents to local art and culture by including the work of artists and information on arts heritage in welcome packs to new residents.

A welcome pack for new Nillumbik residents that is designed by local artists and highlights local history and identity is a small suggestion, but one that fits with the Nillumbik values; creating a sense of belonging (interconnectedness), establishing arts and culture as important, and celebrating local identity (creative capital).

There is potential here for a collaboration between visual artists and Historical Societies. A different welcome pack for each township would recognise local character and help connect new residents to their local community.

"We need to ensue that all who come are welcomed and made aware to the particular values and heritage... People do not understand what is unique to Nillumbik until they have lived here. Maybe a Welcome Stranger' bag should be available from Council for people to pick up from a library/church to hand to new neighbours with information about the area that the Real Estate agents did not tell them—the bags could be open to amendment for each area/street etc" [180]

"Create history packs for Real Estate Agents, so people understand the history of the area they are buying into." [181]

Art that addresses Social Issues

Increase respect for the arts as a vehicle for recovery and social cohesion throughout Council and the community through commissioning art that addresses social issues.

There is a call for more understanding of socially engaged art practice, that promotes interaction and change and for using artists to address social justice issues. Commissioning artists with a socially-engaged practice is a creative a way to connect across Council departments and engage artists in addressing a broad range of issues that affect the community.

This can also include creative recovery work; using creative practice to assist in developing resilience and addressing healing and recovery after disasters, including recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

Championing socially engaged practice builds empathy and respect and aims to reduce divisions in the community.

"Socially engaged practice describes art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work

Socially engaged practice, also referred to as social practice or socially engaged art, can include any art form which involves people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction...

The participatory element of socially engaged practice, is key, with the artworks created often holding equal or less importance to the collaborative act of creating them...

Socially engaged practice can be associated with activism because it often deals with political issues. Artists who work within this field will often spend much time integrating into the specific community which they wish to help, educate or simply share with...

The artists' aim could be to help this community work towards a common goal, raise awareness and encourage conversation around issues, or perhaps to improve their physical or psychological conditions."

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice

"Championing the idea that socially-engaged art practice is crucial to creating healthy/creative/connected communities" [182]

"As an artist who wants to facilitate the process of using the arts (all art forms) as modality to address social issues, I am yearning for opportunities for non-arts/arts partnerships and community-led arts projects. I would like socially engaged arts practice to be what makes the blood flow in our region. I would like the arts to be at the centre of early prevention and intervention, economic stimulus, community building and recovery efforts. When I tell people I live in Eltham, they say to me *'Wow, so you must go to Montsalvat all the time?'* and *'Do you live in a mudbrick?'* I wish they would say something like *'Wow, I was so impressed with how artists led the campaign to welcome the refugees.'*" [183]

"Opportunities to use Arts to address social issues." [184]

"The second most selected priority involves Council's role as an advocate for the sector. We have learnt from previous crises such as the bushfires that the arts play a crucial role in healing and making sense of difficult times. This focus group asks Council to champion the unique value of arts and culture as a force for change." [185]

"If Council learned anything from the bushfire recovery process, it was that you can't expect the people to come to you, you have to go to them and the programs need to go out in the community, whatever they are; they need to land at people's feet." [186]

"Work to obviate, by supporting local activities of all types which can help overcome, the divisions many Nillumbik residents feel between town and rural concerns and aspirations." [187]

"Value and build more respectful relationships, particularly in the context of people holding different views." [188]

"Art and culture creatives have been at the forefront of the climate change movement." [189]

1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

Nillumbik has an extraordinary rich cultural heritage, beginning with our First Nations people, the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung who see arts and culture as inseparable from their living ecosystem. In addition, the legacy of our more recent artistic heritage that burgeoned around 50–70 years ago influences our identity as an artistic centre. New connections to both these histories are important as they enrich the understanding and experience we have of our lives and allow us to create and experience artwork within a larger historical context

We have a better sense of belonging and become better caretakers of our communities when we are connected to our cultural heritage.

Reposition our artistic heritage for a contemporary audience

Connect a wider audience to our artistic heritage by expressing it in a more engaging and contemporary way. This may include a re-imagining of the Heidelberg Artists Trail.

A frustration expressed throughout the consultations is that Nillumbik doesn't have the creative energy and clout it once had in the previous decades; something intangible has been lost. There is a nostalgia for that time and a drive to reinstate Nillumbik as the arts centre it was. In particular, people want to see our artistic heritage expressed it in a more engaging and contemporary way that will appeal to a younger and wider audience.

"Nillumbik in some instances is a testament to an arts time that's gone. That story is finished and there's a new story in Nillumbik." [190]

"Our arts heritage needs to be looked at in a new light. Currently it does not appeal to young people and is not readily accessible, it needs to be treated as a living tradition, rather than a piece of history." [191]

"We have a bohemian history that is unexplored. We can also have fun with our artistic legacy; the serious and sometimes ponderous way it's presented is not engaging." [192]

"Our arts heritage... needs to be expressed in a contemporary way that will appeal to the next generation of artists. It is a direct link from the past to the artists currently working in Nillumbik." [193]

"My main concern is it [Nillumbik] is not using its heritage to build a future, it is rather letting its past fade and not creating a vibrant forward looking arts scene." [194]

"All I think of when it comes to arts in Nillumbik is the gallery at Eltham Library, and Montsalvat (which seems very stuffy and for rich retirees—every time we've been there we felt looked down on)." [195]

"I think the Nillumbik Community and Council need to move past the 'glory days' of the '70s and '80s and move into the 21st century." [196]

"The heritage of 'blokey modernism' is problematic. The alternative needs to become more viable and more exciting." [197]

"I have to say I'm a bit embarrassed about the state of our arts. Its living a bit in the 70s... I think there are some highly talented and professional artists in the shire but I don't think the shire offers them much and they have to seek other councils to gain opportunities." [198]

"I'm concerned by the tendency to lean on the past and not create new cultural spaces/narratives." [199]

" I can see an advertising campaign where we get all the old artwork from the collection and we call it *"The Artists are Dead"*, but we really celebrate them and then they're done, they're over and done with and we can move on...ok now, who's next!?" [200]

"They've still got a loud voice even though they're dead. We need to give them a different story." [201]
[about our past artists]

"Regain our Artistic Culture." [202]

"Trades on a historical stance that no longer is present. The old come across as purists elitist snobby and exclude the general community... There is not enough support for growing supporting promoting community artists... Just look at Warrandyte's pottery festival in February. We have nothing that turns the community out like that." [203]

Revitalise the Heidelberg Artists Trail

The Heidelberg Artists Trail is a source of disappointment; not only because of the faded and dilapidated condition of the signs, but also that they represent an old way of telling a story. There is great potential here to redevelop the concept of the trail, perhaps through contemporary sculptural pieces that celebrate the paintings and the artists.

"The Heidelberg Artists Trail is not a contemporary story any more. We don't have to lose that story, we could just present it in a different way." [204]

"Our place is rich in art history...an amazing resource which is under-used..." [205]

"Redo the artist trail pictures. Celebrating the historical character." [206]

Use public art to connect across generations e.g.. think about reviving the Heidelberg Trial in a contemporary way. Seen as dated (amongst the Historical Societies!)[207]

"The Heidelberg Arts trails are all faded and could benefit from a total revamp. Honouring this past is good to keep but needs fresh eyes." [208]

"Repair artist trail signs." [209]

A Shared Experience of Country

Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture and develop a connection to Country—by creating points of interest and respite on established walking trails in consultation with Wurundjeri people.

The natural environment and our walking trails are highly valued in Nillumbik. Art pieces including sculpture, seating and creative signage have been suggested as desirable additions to these trails.

The Wurundjeri perspective is particularly interesting; Wurundjeri feel that people come to know and understand the land by spending reflective time in the natural environment. Having rest/contemplation spaces or points of interest along the trails encourage people to see the environment from their perspective. Potentially these sites could be examples of Wurundjeri art and culture, or could present information on Wurundjeri culture or on local flora and fauna in a contemporary creative way. Our desire to show respect and connect to Wurundjeri culture in our everyday lives is mirrored in the desire of the Wurundjeri people to share their cultural knowledge.

"It is important to share knowledge of Wurundjeri culture and get it out into the communities—to be visible. Through apps, signage, trails, artwork." [210]

"It would be good to create more Wurundjeri trails with art and signage included. The aim would be to connect people to Country." [211]

"Create more trails in Nillumbik with signage or other interactive mediums to tell the stories of Wurundjeri history and life. E.g. like the Gawa trail and Panton Hill Bushland Reserves." [212]

"Connection: use stories, art and heritage to create a shared connection." [213]

"Physical Space: encourage storytelling and reflection in the natural environment." [214]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

"Attract people into the natural environment where they can learn about Wurundjeri culture. Target walkers and cyclists; people who naturally gravitate to the bushlands of Nillumbik. Use existing and possibly new walking trails to establish signs and/or an app that connects Wurundjeri heritage and stories to specific sites." [215]

"Facilitate rest and reflection in the natural environment, not just for exercise; make places for sitting, places for yarning. Places for people to stop and 'get the vibe' of the place. Rock is an appropriate material for seating as it comes from the land." [216]

"Art is all part of family and connection to country—this is Wurundjeri culture. Wurundjeri connect through artwork" [217]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

"We would welcome spaces that invite people to stop and experience Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country. These could include artwork and sitting rocks that encourage connection to the land. They could also attract people to the area so they could learn more about Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country, culture and history in Nillumbik." [218]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

Support for a Wurundjeri presence along walking trails also has support from the general community.

"More physical recognition i.e. signs, plaques, etc. acknowledging the traditional Indigenous peoples from our area." [219]

"Create a wayfinding strategy in partnership with First Nations peoples." [220]

"The Wurundjeri culture and arts is slowly becoming more visible in the community. It would be fantastic to provide more learning through the arts, an opportunity to educate our community about rich indigenous history in our local area. The Diamond Creek trail would be an amazing place to have information and artwork, as would along the Yarra in Warrandyte, as these waterways were an important part of Indigenous life." [221]

"Acknowledge Aboriginal heritage with art work." [222]

There is also support for artwork along walking trails, not necessarily connected to Indigenous culture, but serving a similar purpose; to have people pause in the landscape.

"Connecting walking trails and paths with clear signage and /or maps and apps for self-guided walks in the Nillumbik Shire area. [223]

"There is beauty between one's life/existence and the land, which feeds us, teaches us and inspires us to grow as it does. Language, culture and human growth is linked to land AND must be both respected and appreciated. One very beautiful part of Eltham/Nillumbik is this connection to land, culture and life. Let it not be forsaken." [224]

"It matters to me that the Arts connect us to Community, Land and Custodianship" [225]

"Spend more money on our walking paths and creating points of interest on the way to encourage more passive exercise." 226

"More art/sculptures along the walking tracks" [227]

"More seating on trails & in parks." [228]

"Place public art along our walking trails, they're a major asset." [229]

In addition to new work along trails, there are undiscovered/forgotten Wurundjeri sites throughout Nillumbik that potentially could be signposted or highlighted in some way to celebrate their history and stories.

"Indigenous local history as part of places of significance." [230]

"Identify and build local knowledge to share local knowledge of significant sites and practices of Indigenous [people.]" [231]

Other suggestions to having Wurundjeri culture represented in the physical environment

"More acknowledgment of our First Nations past in the form of memorials, perhaps a permanent exhibition somewhere, Indigenous place names where possible and Wurundjeri territory added to addresses as appropriate." [232]

"Tapping into our local Indigenous Culture would be amazing. This is an under-utilised amazing resource that could make Nillumbik stand out among other councils as truly appreciating our Indigenous heritage." [233]

"An Indigenous foods and medicine garden. A First Nations history with public signage in significant areas." [234]

"Form a partnership with the Local Wurundjeri tribe and work with them formulating a plan for Cultural education. [235]

Working with local Aboriginal Elders." [236]

"Knowledge of Nillumbik arts and culture mostly held around cultural heritage, travel and trading routes through Nillumbik, the significance of the ridge tops and Wurundjeri boundaries (which have changed over time)." [237]

"The group (Wurundjeri Corp and Council) are unsure if there is a comprehensive list of significant Wurundjeri sites in Nillumbik. This should be investigated." [238]

"Council could compile/research a list of significant Aboriginal sites in the Shire. Include the shack 1-2km from the Gawa Trail towards Yarra Glen (on the left.). Contacts: Parks Vic and Barry Coombs. Heritage Units can assist." [239]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

"Connection to country by bringing in Aboriginal education and working with Elders to achieve this." [240]

"First Nations storytelling" [241]

"Education of indigenous flora and fauna species. basically the eucalyptus trees. make people aware of the trees they live among. most live in 'leafy' suburbs for the trees. bring the people closer with information plaques in public spaces giving examples and help people more closely relate to the bush." [242]

"Dedicate and maintain Lower Eltham Park (wetlands section and along the creek and riverbanks) as an educational place in nature to showcase Indigenous knowledge." [243]

Support for Historical Societies

Connect a wider audience to the history of Nillumbik by connecting Historical Societies to volunteers and affordable spaces for research, archiving and digitising collections.

Collectively, our History Societies are the custodians of a vast collection of photographs, diaries, newspaper articles and other documents.

Digitising these collections is important in the long term to preserve the information and make it more available to the public. One suggestion made during the focus group with the Historical Societies was for assistance in advertising and managing volunteers, and to have access to a venue where a computer and scanner could be set up for the purpose of digitisation.

"History Groups need digitisation & collection management/support. Suggestion for there to be a volunteers page on Council website; where, for example, the Historical Societies detail what is needed and time commitment They also need help with a facility to house the volunteer e.g.. Library." [244]

"I believe Council should support art which tells compelling, well-crafted stories, that help us to understand each other and our world better." [245]

2. Creative Capital

There are two elements essential for Nillumbik to evolve as a significant creative and cultural centre; the first is to cultivate a reputation as a quintessential destination for visitors seeking creative stimulus; a place that is inherently thought of when designing a cultural itinerary for guests to Victoria.

The second, and more importantly for longevity and authenticity, is to develop Nillumbik as an incubator where influential artists work productively, emerging artists advance their practice, and creative industries naturally establish and proliferate.

SUB-THEMES

2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

"We need to place front and centre our local talented professionals. We need to support this fragile industry with resources, information, facilitation, spaces and training. This indirect assistance will result in more artists and organisations surviving the fallout [of the COVID-19 pandemic]." [246]

"I don't feel like the area has established itself as a destination which prioritises creative capital, so lacks an artistic allure." [247]

"We need to find ways to retain our artists; facilitate the production of art, better manage our cultural assets, and better promote artists and Nillumbik as a creative destination.

- "Become an attractive creative destination: cultivate unique things to do and places to be
- Become a known creative destination: improve our promotions and marketing
- Become a place filled with useful and accessible creative assets: improve management of cultural resources
- Become a place where artists continue to live and practice: work to retain our creative practitioners and creative industries" [248]

Image: *Zebras* by Born in a Taxi at St Andrews Market Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

*"Creative projects aimed at enriching a sense of community identity...can not only affirm the value of social and cultural diversity but also allow for an assertion of the importance of community in an uncertain world." **

*"There is great value in acknowledging different 'community identities'. Communities that are able to embrace diversity, creative expression and cultural activity are richer, stronger and more able to deal with social challenges." ***

Evident throughout the consultations is a communal pride in Nillumbik as a known creative area, although some believe that our reputation rests on a time that has passed, and we need to re-imagine ourselves in a contemporary way.

There is also a view that not enough professional-level work is being supported and this hinders the image of the cultural destination that we want Nillumbik to embody.

On a more local level, we understand ourselves to be a chain of villages, each with a distinctive identity, and we are open to unique events that suit our micro-environments.

The community's need to engage at this local level serves not just to attract visitors, but to strengthen our social fabric. We take pride in our creative interconnectedness. Our desire to connect is illustrated though an appetite for more community festivals, live music events and placemaking projects that serve to bring people together and celebrate our cherished local character.

"Become a destination for a day out of the city" [249]

"More money needs to be directed towards the arts and culture and can be used as a drawcard to bring visitors into the Shire." [250]

* Martin M & Smith P.(2009). *"Governance and the Turn into Community: Putting Art at the Heart of Local Government." ReGenerating Community Conference Papers.* Melbourne

** Castanet. *The Arts Ripple Effect; Valuing the Arts in Community.* Melbourne

Exhibition Space/Municipal Gallery

Establish Nillumbik as a cultural destination by building a dedicated exhibition space to display significant works of mid-career and established artists.

The purpose of an exhibition space or municipal gallery differs from a central creative hub: while a creative hub exists to build connections and facilitate the production and enjoyment of art, a dedicated exhibition space, or municipal gallery focuses on showcasing the best visual art the municipality has to offer, including older works as well as works from living artists. The space also serves to bring in work from outside the Shire to inspire and educate.

An exhibition space showcasing professional-standard artwork from mid career and established artists would establish Nillumbik as a serious cultural destination.

"Several participants discussed the lack of a major gallery or art centre in Nillumbik and a desire to have this in the community... Nillumbik needs to broaden the scope of the way the community engages in Art." [251]

"...the need for a gallery...*'other than Eltham Library & Montsalvat'*." [252]

"The most important goal for artists is to have a dedicated Art Gallery and Performance Space... There is no real space in Nillumbik and we have to exhibit own work in other Shires. At last we had an opportunity to say this and I hope the Council will tackle this more urgently." [253]

"Contemporary art practice that is exhibited and presented in a highly professional manner (a more appropriate space than Montsalvat or the library is needed - these are dowdy and saggy and don't show art work in the best light /context—I appreciate the cultural and historical value of these spaces but the shire is lagging behind in appropriate spaces for contemporary art.)" [254]

"Professionally curated art exhibitions, (pay contemporary art curators)." [255]

"Nillumbik needs a better gallery space that treats art with respect." [256]

"That professional level gallery that attracts not just artists from our own Shire, but international shows—that level is really missing here." [257]

"Contemporary professional artists are the most disgruntled; (for them) the Eltham Library Community Gallery and Artists Open Studios is not interesting. The high level professional contemporary artists are invisible, except for the Nillumbik Prize." [258]

"Currently the 'artbeat' is heavily focused on the craft and hobby artist which is very good for that sector (artist markets and grass root community support), however I think there is great potential for Nillumbik to be a strong arts precinct and destination however it needs to take itself more seriously and encourage more professional artists... there are many professional artists that live in this area that do not have a serious platform in the community... a new contemporary art centre and gallery is desperately needed to display the council collection and to develop its collection and interest in contemporary art further." [259]

"Our contemporary professional-level artists are largely unknown and invisible in Nillumbik. There needs to be something for them." [260]

"World class influential artists are not recognised here, e.g. Olsen, Tucker, Amor, Pugh." [261]

"It would be amazing if we could have a decent, dedicated arts space that's open to the public (not a private enterprise). The Eltham Library is too small. Montsalvat and other galleries are private and paid entry (that's not to say I wouldn't want to pay an entry fee if it was affordable). If we had a dedicated Gallery or even a Gallery and Performing Arts Centre it could really cement Nillumbik as an Arts destination. It could be a real attraction for visitors, especially if it was easy to access (i.e. near a train station). A place people can come to embrace the arts any time, not just seasonally or for a timed event." [262]

"We need a space where we can see new things that we haven't seen before and that come from outside Nillumbik. To broaden our minds and educate us, this is what's lacking." [263]

"We have the Open Studios for people to come and view painting and pottery in people's homes, etc. But if you come into town, there's no gallery or space that presents people's works, and it would be wonderful just to have a space where local artists could exhibit their work" [264]

"The artistic community in Nillumbik is recognised Victoria wide. Building on this would bring tourism to the area i.e. art conferences (international?), potter festivals, an art gallery—apart from Montsalvat—that houses paintings and other works of art that have a history in Nillumbik." [265]

"I have been impressed with the Community library art space for exhibitions but feel that a Regional Gallery in Eltham would really boost the arts sector and bring more people here to enjoy art." [266]

"Art gallery." [267]

"History & Culture of the area and for residents to know the input that these have had in the wider culture of Victoria, Australia & the world." [268]

"Rebuilding and further funding commitment to our local artists and creative industries including further planning for a contemporary art Gallery space in Nillumbik." [269]

"...of course it would be great if Eltham had its own art gallery." [270]

"Build an Art Gallery." [271]

"Develop an art gallery." [272]

"There are so many amazing artists in Nillumbik with so little space to display their work." [273]

"The lack of cultural institutions art galleries, heritage places buildings etc." [274]

In addition artists during the consultations have expressed frustration at having asked for this exhibition space over a number of years and through numerous consultations with no resulting communication or action.

"The artists don't know why the regional gallery hasn't been actioned. There needs to be better communication from Council on this issue." [275]

"They [the artists] think we're [Council] not listening to them, we're not taking what they say seriously and I feel (frustrated) asking them again what they want, when we already know what they want; we know they want a space and we've known that for years and yet there's still no space." [276]

Dedicated Performance Space

Increase the number and quality of theatrical performances held in Nillumbik by building a dedicated performance and rehearsal space.

A significant number of voices articulated disappointment at the lack of performing arts in Nillumbik. They expressed a desire to see more theatre, comedy, music and dance productions, particularly professional productions without having to travel into the CBD.

Local performing artists noted that they have no professional space to rehearse or perform in Nillumbik. Multi-purpose buildings and places without tiered seating such as the Eltham Little Theatre, are unsuitable for professional contemporary performance.

Interestingly the space required is not large, the optimal space according to local performance artists would be 70–100 seats

"More theatre productions" [277]

"Performing arts centre" [278]

"A proper theatre that will attract professional productions—located near a train station." [279]

"There is still a serious lack of theatre infrastructure for use by the community and touring companies. We need a theatre for the performing arts!" [280]

"More centres—spots that you know you can regularly go to for live performance art." [281]

"A purpose built venue specifically for arts—music, theatre, etc. —platforms to see live acts." [282]

"More regular drama, opera, comedy, alternative music." [283]

"A designated performance arts venue—music, theatre, other, inside and outside capacity." [284]

"One of the main things I have loved in terms of cultural Nillumbik unfortunately we no longer have. I thought it was unbelievably fantastic to have a local theatre company of incredible quality in Nillumbik doing innovative new performances in St Andrews, in Eltham and in Hurstbridge, bringing *La Mama* out to Nillumbik, it was just so fantastic. I saw so many unbelievable fantastic live performances. It was such a treat to not have to go into Brunswick or the city for really top rate live performance. I still feel really sad we don't have that in Nillumbik any more." [285]

"What are the barriers to success for performers in Nillumbik? [286]

- Affordable venue hire. Venue hire costs and insurance eats into the profits making the performances not profitable.
- There is no affordable theatre in Nillumbik that we have access to. ELT is tied up, Planetshakers is too expensive as is the Eltham Community Centre.
- Lack of places to perform and the expense of performing (for example a buskers permit is so pricey it would be difficult to make that money back from the busking)
- Opportunity to perform, lack of facilities and venues.
- I very rarely go to live gigs due to the distance I have to travel (into the city)... I would love to see a wider range of live music, both on public stages and in venues.
- Lack of availability of easily accessible and affordable performance space for rehearsals and performances that cater for those with special needs.
- Currently there are not enough venues offering live music which are paying musicians appropriately.
- Lack of variety of venues, both in size and purpose.
- Opportunities for performances. Access to performance spaces for hire at the moment.
- I have heard many artists say that Nillumbik Council also highly regulates the ways potentially great spaces could be used.
- There a limited spaces that support local music, especially different types of music.
- Lack of funding opportunities to develop and perform works. Lack of places to perform."

"The major barrier in performing in Nillumbik is the lack of a proper theater with full stage, fly towers, orchestra pit and tiered seating. Currently the orchestra uses the Eltham Community and Reception Centre, but having level floor seating it makes it difficult for the audience to see the whole orchestra playing." [287]

"Eltham Little Theatre is a not a viable space for contemporary theatre. *La Mama* would not go to Eltham Little Theatre, it's not the right space. A theatre company needs a space where it can actually do rehearsal. Multi purpose spaces don't work for theatre companies; because they need to have equipment there that doesn't need to be packed up and taken away.

...You do not need a space where the audience sits down below, that is not contemporary live performance these days. Usually it's tiered seating and the audience looks down. It doesn't have to be a big space, but it needs to be set up for a performance in a contemporary way." [288]

"Dance performances" [289]

"Theatre space" [290]

"Dance venue" [291]

"Community run performance spaces" [292]

"More theatre spaces locally so don't have to travel outside Nillumbik" [293]

"More theatre shows, more variety" [294]

"Regular dedicated music space and dance" [295]

"Really awesome live music venue, dedicated to music i.e. good acoustics, where it is focused, not just background." [296]

Arthouse Cinema

Enhance creative stimulation and social interaction thorough running an arthouse cinema.

There is some interest in a local arthouse cinema, which would be well placed as part of a creative hub.

"I would also love to have a cinema in Eltham—one that shows arthouse films like the Nova, Westgarth, Classic etc. I feel this is something the community would support." [297]

"A small cinema (like The Lido in Hawthorn) would be excellent and suit the area." [298]

"I wish we could have an arthouse cinema." [299]

Image: Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Opportunities for Placemaking

Strengthen a sense of local connection and identity through creative placemaking projects that celebrate and enhance local character.

Placemaking is a way to engage local artists in celebrating each of our unique township identities. The local character of our townships is highly valued. People would like to see their resident artists interpret this character and establish vibrant spaces that enhance the social and cultural value of the area.

"Throughout the consultations, it was established that "we are a chain of villages, unlike a city or densely populated area. Individual township cultures should be recognised and celebrated... Create opportunities for public art and public performance to reflect the character of individual places." [300]

"Local creatives for both design and construction of local spaces i.e. building, painting, murals, public space revitalisation." [301]

"Creative use of public spaces—art, literature, performance, gatherings, festivals, etc" [302]

"Activate public spaces, ensure good quality lighting, accessibility." [303]

"Artwork and local artists to assist in activating our places." [304]

"We should showcase places like Plenty as the gateway to the ranges. Think outdoor cinemas, vintage car clubs, art installations, art shows etc." [305]

"Nillumbik's creative and quirky character." [306]

"It was suggested that pop-up studios could happen using empty shops in town centres. The possibility of installing sculpture walks and creating opportunities for artists to install in shop windows was raised as a fun way to get people engaging in their community and able to see art in surprising places." [307]

"Make this a beautiful town that people will want to visit." [308]

"Allow them to be creative and not impose blandness on us." [309]

"Amplify the advantages of neighbourhood character." [310]

"Look at improving the face of our villages so that each area has its own look and vibe." [311]

Shopping precincts and town centres where people naturally go are popular suggestions for the location of placemaking projects.

"A town centre for people to hang out, relax, socialise, eat lunch out side at. wooden benches, trees, seats." [312]

"Community events and opportunities to gather" [313]

"Eltham town centre is ugly... give artists a challenge to do" [314]

"A visual look for Eltham that brings some harmony to the town centre... you have to think big and bold and unique." [315]

"Better maintenance and aesthetic standards of shopping areas." [316]

"Invest in town centres and streetscaping/assets/ infrastructure so they can attract tourism." [317]

"Harmonising Eltham town centre, building an art gallery." [318]

"Recognition that Nillumbik is different to other areas and as such be protected. Overall vision for a well designed attractive shopping precinct without the visual pollution that currently exists." [319]

"More sympathetic commercial signage laws; less about size and number, more about addressing the proliferation of ugly signage and encouraging imaginative signage in sympathy with local township character." [320]

"Eltham Research shops and precinct revamped and energised." [321]

"Focus on unique environment which makes Eltham stand out amongst the outer suburbs of Melbourne..." [322]

for Diamond Creek: "A town square, like in Eltham, where artists can play and the community come together." [323]

"Have more community-based events to connect more." [324]

Local township character is highly valued. People often feel anxious when contemplating changes that they think might strip their area of it's unique identity.

"...respondents reported having important connections with their local townships and valued the neighbourhood character." [325]

Participants also identified a sense of neighbourhood character and identity as being something that they valued." [326]

"The character of our townships... protection of that character." [327]

"Preservation of local character—don't turn it into just another suburb." [328]

"The region and town should as much as possible retain their natural and built environment and focus on the special character and charm to grown sustainable, small scale through events, projects and businesses." [329]

"A shire of vibrant villages." [330]

"Maintain neighborhood character. " [331]

"The loss of character of our larger towns... The uglification of our larger towns of Eltham, Greensborough and Diamond Creek must stop and we must ensure that the smaller townships have their characters better protected." [332]

"Preserve our built heritage...Acknowledge neighbourhood character... Preserve the uniqueness of our rural townships." [333]

"Nillumbik is unique: our places have cultural, environmental and community importance." [334]

"Maintain village characteristics preserving our unique local character." [335]

Some Nillumbik residents feel their township is neglected, in particular Yarrambat, Plenty and Kangaroo Ground and to a lesser extent Diamond Creek. There is a feeling their local spaces would benefit from beautification and the establishment of gathering places; as seen in *1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation*, p. 36.

"Suburb of Plenty needs more recognition (wasn't even drawn into recent artwork in Nillumbik community update report)." [336]

"Yarrambat and Plenty need a plan or there will be no identity to salvage." [337]

"Neighbourhood Character township makeover! Make Eltham more inviting!" [338]

"Expenditure across wards (Blue Ward seems to be rather neglected.)" [339]

"For the smaller villages of Plenty and Yarrambat there has been no community planning. As a result there are no gathering places, no local businesses, no identity." [340]

"Creating a better small community for the Yarrambat area." [341]

"Share funds with areas like Plenty that is the forgotten suburb in Nillumbik!" [342]

"Maintain the history of Yarrambat and Plenty area. Develop this area but maintain the cultural link." [343]

"Protect our unique charm with a vibrant but 'on brand' town centre" [344]

"Investment in a redevelopment of DC [Diamond Creek] centre—it's got no focus at present—just a scruffy wee place with very little community pride." [345]

Continue to work on 'beautifying' the smaller townships e.g. Yarrambat, Kangaroo Ground." [346]

"The Village like feel of Eltham Centre." [347]

Image: *Angelic—Living Statue* by Kinetic Theatre, at Hurstbridge Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Public Art

Increase the frequency of engagement with the visual arts in everyday life and enrich the aesthetic environment through creating more public art projects.

Public art is seen by the community as a prominent vehicle to distinguish Nillumbik as a cultural destination. People want to see more public art that proudly proclaims Nillumbik as having a distinctive and contemporary character. A strong public art presence shows that we place a high value on the arts in Nillumbik.

"As an 'arts' shire, there is very little public art. It needs to be front and foremost." [348]

"Large sculptures to reflect our passion for the arts..."[349]

"More public sculpture, we're meant to be an arts area, where is the art?" [350]

"Something that thousands can connect with everyday, art that you can see whilst walking, driving." [351]

"More visible public art." [352]

"Want big striking permanent art like decorated benches that fits in with the area." [353]

"Sculpture—want more in D/C, [Diamond Creek] especially local artists" [354]

"Would like to see more Public Art around the communities/street." [355]

"Improving the built environment with public art and celebrating artistic heritage." [356]

"Public art is seen as important and there is a clear desire to see more public art, both 2-D and 3-D in Nillumbik. There is a particular inclination to see public art that reflects and celebrates individual township character." [357]

The traditional tender process for public art has been identified as problematic, both for the artist and for the quality and relevance of the final piece." [358]

"More public art." [359]

More outdoor public art—visually welcome markers."[360]

"There were requests for more Public Art..." [361]

"More public art." [362]

"Art in parks, gardens, and homes and in the streets to happen upon." [363]

"Great public art projects." [364]

"A commissioned public sculpture." [365]

"Outdoor sculptures and installations... murals and art in public spaces." [366]

"I like the murals in Diamond Creek. I think beautifying the streetscape would add to more vibrant culture enabling artists to earn a living!" [367]

"Hold an Annual 4 week outdoor sculpture walk of a selection of Nillumbik's sculpture collection in the Eltham Town Square & surrounds." [368]

"Sculpture trail" [369]

Nillumbik Art Collection online

Enhance a sense of communal ownership of the Nillumbik Art Collection by sharing it online in an interesting and easily navigable form.

The main issue people have with the Nillumbik Art Collection is that it's not seen. Although it is partly on the Victorian Collections platform, it's not promoted. In addition, the Victorian Collections platform is not easily navigated, and is not a beautiful format that would engage the casual viewer.

If the collection were on a well designed, attractive and accessible platform that is well promoted, it may be that calls to get rid of the collection cease. The problem seems to be the lack of public visibility.

"Sell the art collection - it is mostly for the benefit of Councillors—public don't get to see it, but we paid for it!" [370]

"You spend more on bridges than you do on our Art Collection that you have locked away + we never get to see!" [371]

"I think Council needs to build up its art collection and display it in public places." [372]

"I think this is too static a collection for the general public to enjoy. What is its purpose? The money for this would be better spent in public art displays." [373]

Artist-designed cultural tour for Council

Expand knowledge and appreciation of arts and culture in Nillumbik though local artists designing a cultural tour itinerary for Council members.

No-one understands the creative soul of Nillumbik better than its resident artists. A cultural tour designed by local artists for Council is a great opportunity to build relationships between Council and the creative community and for new staff to experience the magic of Nillumbik.

"For Councillors and Council staff to better understand the arts and culture of Nillumbik: have local artists devise the itinerary for a cultural tour and performances. e.g.. Breakfast/coffee at St Andrews Bakery with music recital in the church, Dunmoochin exhibition/ performance, Strathewen bushfire memorial and Blacksmiths' Tree, Gawa Trail, exhibition at Eltham Library." [374]

Link locally grown produce and the arts

Introduce a wider audience to arts and culture by including local produce and local producers at cultural events.

Nillumbik traditionally has been a supplier of produce for Melbourne, from timber for the ovens in city bakeries in the 1800s and early 1900s to orchards and vegetable gardens throughout the 1900s and today's beef farms, fruit, olive oil and wine production. With the current obsession over food and farm-to-plate eating, it would be advantageous to leverage our food heritage and current food production as an introduction to our wider artistic culture. Art and food naturally go together both as attractions in their own right, and as reasons to connect socially. A combination of art and food is a celebration of the Nillumbik identity and a draw-card for visitors.

"Set up artistic space in Nillumbik where we showcase local artists including glass, pottery, chocolatiers, food, clothing,—all artists in one space—supporting local producers." [375]

"Regular community festivals! ...celebrate the cultural events of all members of the ethnically diverse community,...through food and music. Nillumbik is starting to become more ethnically diverse, and a celebration of food is a great way to welcome newcomers to the community." [376]

"Run small food and cultural events weekly during the warmer months: supply outdoor chairs and tables and a performance group for each township, partnering with Traders Associations." [377]

"We need more festivals and community get togethers that celebrate and promote local producers of food, wine, self sufficiency growing food etc. I stayed at Willunga in SA recently, and the community spirit and appreciation of local growers, artisan bakers, honey producers, organic produce etc was amazing. You could just feel the connection they all had for small local industry and being able to buy produce made and grown in that region. I really felt back home in Diamond Creek that we are missing out of the connection and togetherness that they have in Willunga. Local Festivals bring communities together to celebrate and reflect on how we are all connected." [378]

"Food also engages our senses in a complex kaleidoscope of the sensations of smell, taste, texture, colour, touch, temperature and sound." [379]

"Food isn't just something we eat, it is something we feel. To feel is to be connected. Food culture is the connection we have with food and our food system... Food culture is also about the way food is respected & celebrated as an essential part of what makes us human." [380]

"Community street feasts made available for people to connect" [381]

"Community events to bring locals together around food and arts." [382]

"Encourage celebration of local growers by holding more festivals." [383]

"Events and festivals celebrating arts, music and local food, wine, beer." [384]

"Food brings people together" [385]

"Embracing our art, food and drink production more." [386]

"The horticultural and farming history...continue to influence the emotional, social, economic and political realities that are embodied as the lived and living history of Nillumbik. Tragically, food production is a rather tattered remnant of Nillumbik's cultural memory." [387]

"The Markets are very important for social connectedness, inclusion and even food security." [388]

"Eltham is the door to wine—wineries of Yarra Valley." [389]

"There absolutely needs to be a performance and arts centre in Nillumbik. It's so frustrating that we have the artists and no place to shine a spotlight on them and allow community access to them." [390]

2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

Promoting the arts effectively, developing collaborative relationships between Council, local businesses, emerging and established artists, and sharing physical and intellectual resources all contribute to building the creative capital of Nillumbik.

The celebration of Nillumbik as a creative centre is facilitated though good promotion and marketing of our cultural offerings, involving creative practitioners in broad planning and development processes, and instituting unique events and a healthy live music and event scene.

The community has expressed a desire to increase their engagement with arts and culture in Nillumbik and frustration at not knowing how to access cultural activities and events. In particular, there is a marked absence of an online digital presence for artists and cultural events that is comprehensive and accessible for the general community.

Artists have a talent for adding value and a sense of occasion to various projects; through such things as art installations, performances at openings and clever community engagement, as well as developing creative processes.

As a Shire that aims to be a centre for culture and the arts, it would merit the inclusion of creative practitioners at the planning and design stages of Council projects across departments; to ensure our creative culture is embedded in the work Council does.

In addition having artists perform or give a talk about their practice at Council meetings and events builds trust and a stronger connection with Council. The consultations identified opportunities to strengthen relationships between Council and community groups and with the general public through management and administrative assistance. Collaboration between the creative community and Council, businesses and community organisations is a way to support the arts and also elevate its reputation among non-cultural players.

Image: *Naughty Artist and Policeperson* by Stiltwalkers Australia at Diamond Creek Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Digital Online Hub

Extend engagement with the arts thorough an online calendar of cultural events and a directory of local artists and creative industries. Increase arts and cultural events throughout the Shire by creating a comprehensive and clear online list of venues for hire.

People want to engage with the arts more, but find it difficult to know what is happening in the Shire. Searching for event and artist information through the number of portals that are available is confusing and prohibitive. What is lacking is a centralised information hub; an online calendar of cultural events, a directory of local artists and creative industries, and a clear online list of venues to hire for rehearsals, workshops, performances and exhibitions.

To engage people in our local creative ecosystem, it needs to be represented online in attractive and functional forms.

According to the needs of the community, a centralised information hub should serve three main purposes:

1. Happenings

A comprehensive cultural events calendar highlighting all creative events happening in the Shire: exhibitions, theatre performances, live music performances, workshops, artist talks, poetry readings, short story competitions, art festivals etc. It may also include markets such as the Eltham Farmers Market and St Andrews Market where musicians regularly perform.

The Participate Nillumbik survey indicates that people were least aware of and least engaged with the Eltham Library Community Gallery program and Arts & Culture focused events including festivals.

2. Spaces

There have been repeated requests for a list of what venues are available for creative events; for studios, rehearsals, performance, exhibition etc.

The list needs to be easy to see at a glance:

- Which venues are suitable for particular art forms,
- The cost to hire,
- Who to contact to book the space.

"Activities and opportunities are not promoted and/or advertised enough. I am interested in supporting the arts and artists, but never really know how." [391]

"Better process for finding information. Hard to scroll through council website to find stuff. One social online presence for all arts in Nillumbik to facilitate access and show calendar of events. Someone to maintain all info including dates, venues etc" [392]

The issues the creative community has is that the process is murky and unclear. It is hard to contact people. There are different points of contact and information for each venue, so it is onerous to chase up numerous venues in order to compare them. Most significantly, prices often are hidden until the applicant writes up a submission or a business plan. This includes for Council-run spaces. The process can result in much work for the applicant, just to find out the venue might be beyond their budget. **Securing a venue in Nillumbik is so difficult that many artists and community groups look outside the Shire.**

3. People

A list of a creative practitioners and industries in Nillumbik: showcasing their work and giving some information on their history and practice and how to contact them for commissions.

Note: Visit Nillumbik *is not a cultural hub; its focus is on tourism and people coming from outside the Shire. It does not serve to fostering our creative ecosystem like a cultural digital hub described here would.*

"Significantly increase Council's digital presence to engage and tap into the increasingly interconnected online spaces used by community." [393]

"Sometimes it feel like the arts/artist/creative culture is the spare wheel. It's integral to how the community functions, and most people like it, but only the niche/few people who know how to access it and where to find it within a community platform. Some may not know it exists within the community." [394]

"A desire for more information on what is available in regards to arts and culture in Nillumbik was also expressed." [395]

Digital Online Hub: Happenings

An online cultural calendar that includes exhibitions, performances, creative workshops, markets, festivals; any event where people can experience arts and culture in Nillumbik.

"A cultural event calendar with an up-to -date list of all exhibitions, activities, cultural meetings and events. Anyone can post, but the entries are curated. Needs to be beautiful with strong branding. A *'known and respected repository of information.'"* [396]

"...it's hard for people to know what is going on in their local community. An independent source of news is needed, and a place where locals can promote their events/ideas etc." [397]

"Improve communication on Council's services and what is available... there are so many available active, arts, cultural etc. services, groups etc. and many people are unaware of this information." [398]

"There is also a desire for better ways of informing residents about local arts and culture opportunities." [399]

"I would like to know what's happening in the Arts in Nillumbik and to have more information about Art activities in Nillumbik." [400]

"Tell the community whats on for them, advertise more get to the people that don't bother to know what their council do for them encourage participation" [401]

"I'm largely unaware of projects in the area. As such, tend to go to galleries, theatre, gigs etc. in the city or Inner North, rather than locally." [402]

"Council and Community also need to get better at promoting and advertising opportunities for non-artists to attend and participate in activities/shows/etc." [403]

"There were conversations around the need for more information about what Art/Culture events are available for Adults after work..." [404]

Digital Online Hub: People

An 'Arts Atlas' for artists, performers and creative organisations would be helpful not only to promote their work, but would also identify Nillumbik as a place that values its artists and fosters creative industries.

"A list of all the creative industries and individual artists and designers in the Shire with contact details for people looking to engage with an artist. A possible partnership with Economic Development." [405]

"More promotion of local art organisations through local channels" [406]

"NEW IDEAS FOR RESOURCE SHARING

- Digital noticeboard where people can ask questions, ask for help, find the people they need,
- Artist Directory with list of haves and needs.
- Gumtree for artists in Nillumbik.
- Artist Helpdesk." [407]

"We have world class writers and artists in Nillumbik that are not celebrated." [408]

"The artbeat of Nillumbik is almost a subculture. There are so many extraordinary artists that live in the shire, yet hardly any public representation...We have a thriving artistic community and if you're in the know, easy to find, but if you don't, then not." [409]

"Support marketing though social media, e-newsletters, a virtual hub listing so artists are not having to do all their own marketing." [410]

Digital Online Hub: Spaces

A common frustration is in finding a venue to hire. Venues for workshops and creative events are managed by many different entities. Information on who to contact to request information on a particular venue is missing. Also missing is an indication of costs.

"A list of performance/rehearsal/studio/meeting spaces available across the Shire with clear and transparent costs and an up-to-date contact or online booking process. This includes non-Council run spaces. Easy accessibility to whoever has the key. Also a list of cafes that are willing to display artwork, perhaps a contact from a Traders Association or Chamber of Commerce to curate and organise." [411]

"Sometimes I'd be pushed to Council, sometimes I'd be pushed to the Traders Association. Being able to book and use space to do things is really difficult." [412]

"[An] audit and promotion of the Shire's artistic spaces/galleries for hire/studios etc and/or a centralised industry database ensuring communications with the diverse creative sector of Nillumbik." [413]

Inclusion of Artists in Council Projects

Strengthen cultural awareness and expression though regular inclusion of artists in Council projects, both in consulting and commissioning.

Nillumbik artists are uniquely placed to contribute ideas on how art and creativity can be embedded in Council projects. Often art and artists are added to various projects and developments as an afterthought, but there is greater value in incorporating their work and their ideas at the early stages of planning so that creativity is manifest throughout the life of a project from design and community engagement to activation and promotion.

"I think it is the opportunity for local artists like myself to have a say in where we could contribute our art skill and suggestions for how art can be incorporated more into Nillumbik and how it can contribute to enhancing people's lives overall."[414]

"Make it a policy that there's a role for an artist included in multiple sectors of Council business. So, just as a matter of course, an artist's perspective and presence are included in planning or implementing, or challenging a problem." [415]

"Keep it local when sourcing artists for projects in Nillumbik, where so many artists live and understand the area." [416]

"Art work included in all Council new buildings." [417]

"Wherever an artists' work or a creative organisation's work is used by Council, their name is acknowledged."[418]

"Creative practitioners are recognised as professionals and paid appropriately. Refer to NAVA rates as a benchmark." [419]

"We also look forward to our artists and performers being included in projects throughout Nillumbik." [420]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

Image: *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Artists at Council Meetings & Events

Expand support of local artists by employing them to perform or speak regularly at Council events and meetings.

As part of the consultation process, a focus group for Councillors was held at the Council Chambers commencing with an acoustic recital by local artist Hana Zreikat. This performance changed the feeling in the room and set up the space for a more relaxed and focused engagement. Councillors showed great interest in Hana and in having more artists perform regularly at Council events.

Such a commitment would benefit both Council and the creative community; by providing a platform for paid performance and an opportunity for artists to get to know Council staff. It also lends a meeting or event a sense of occasion, and raises awareness within Council of the breadth of the arts offering in Nillumbik that might not be encountered otherwise.

Overall this initiative has great potential to initiate and strengthen positive relationships between Council and the creative community.

"There is a perceived loss of local art & history knowledge in Council. Create opportunities for creatives to present/perform to Councillors and Council staff, perhaps as a regular event at meetings; open meetings with live music or an artist speaking about an art piece or reading literature or poetry." [421]

"Participant Suggestions for Council Support: Council contracting performing artists for NSC events" [422]

Artist Residencies

Inspire creativity and build stronger connections to Nillumbik for artists though establishing artist residency programs in inspiring places.

Local artists feel the loss of the Laughing Waters residency program keenly and would like to see the heritage buildings preserved and the residency program reinstated, along with the Red Chair talks.

New residency programs, particularly live-in programs similar to Laughing Waters and Dunmoochin would be well received.

"Bring back the Laughing Waters Road artists in residency program asap." [423]

"The loss of the Red Chair Artist Talks and the artist residency program..." [424]

"I really miss the Studio Residencies and the Red Chair —they were a great opportunity to be inspired by other artists—and local artists need to be nurtured." [425]

"A multi-disciplinary residency or program to encourage collaborative projects or cross-pollination of ideas between different artistic disciplines (e.g. visual arts, literature, film making, performing arts)." [426]

"Create long residencies: 1–3 years at Dunmoochin has been successful." [427]

"Save Laughing Waters residency program." [428]

Festivals, Street Fairs & Events

Create a greater sense of joy and connection through unique festivals, street fairs and events that showcase the work of local artists, particularly musicians.

More events where people can come together are a recurrent request across the consultations: specifically for festivals based around the unique character of Nillumbik, street feasts featuring local produce and any events that celebrate our identity and cannot be replicated outside the Shire.

Live music and outdoor theatre are mentioned numerous times and are highly desired.

"Music and Festivals: At least 8 of the responses either celebrated the power of music and festivals to connect community, or spoke of a desire for more or better quality festivals, especially outdoors (6.5%). This also reflected a desire for the arts to be a visible and vibrant part of our community. Local festivals with a community feel to them were applauded. *'Festivals connect the community together and music allows everyone to speak and understand each other on a different level to normal conversations.'"* [429]

From Participate Nillumbik data:
When asked 'What supports would you most like to see provided for the performing arts sector in Nillumbik?'

80.65% (25 respondents) chose ***Opportunities to perform*** (public events etc)

70.97% (22 respondents) chose ***Financial support (performing arts grants etc)***

"I'd like to see a unique event in the area. I find most events in Australia are 99% the same as every other event. Places that have a real cultural personality or identity; they have some sort of unique event that people think of when they think of that area." [430]

"Festivals connect the community together and music allows everyone to speak and understand each other on a different level to normal conversations" [431]

"Festivals and outdoor theatre." [432]

"Music in the Park is a great opportunity to meet locals" [433]

"Encourage more music and arts events as Covid restrictions ease."[434]

"Restart local festivals. Develop local craft and farmers markets as social hubs as well as places of business" [435]

"Support for outdoor events involving collaboration between art forms—such as literature and jazz; more studio spaces and; more live performance opportunities." [436]

"Event/Venue Assistance:

- Free/low cost venues and events
- Facilitation of concerts/events that involve local community" [437]

"More outdoor theatre and music in Nillumbik." [438]

"White Night Nillumbik." [439]

"Add eating destinations and music to Nillumbik [Open] Cellars." [440]

"More festivals, great bars." [441]

"- Music live gigs
- Food trucks
- Festivals" [442]

"More music for young people." [443]

"Have different types of culture, art, flower, and other festivals to support local businesses." [444]

"Put on beer festival, plant shows, animal shows, music shows, outdoor cinema, so visitors come here to support local business." [445]

"A street performers buskers festival" [446]

"More local music festivals and more community gallery spaces for new and emerging artists." [447]

"Events, festivals and celebrations to bring community together." [448]

"Arts and cultural festivals." [449]

"Events, festivals, things that bring people together in an accessible way for all." [450]

"More festivals/markets." [451]

"Boring night-life." [452]

- "Cafés with music and entertainment
- Shows
- Night time entertainment
- Theatre
- More live music
- Local cinema
- More live stuff in townships
- Performing arts" [453]

"...requests for more theatre, public theatre outside, music in the parks and on the streets." [454]

"Provide outdoor cinema, festivals, funfairs, carousels, orchestra, music etc similar to events in Macleod." [455]

"More community engagement activities such as markets and festivals." [456]

"Events and festivals supporting creatives, musicians, artists and so on, engaging the youth in these events." [457]

"Festivals!!!! Food trucks!!! Markets!!" [458]

Requests for a higher quality of events and festivals that showcase our unique creative identity

Not enough...events (i.e. festivals that are specific to Nillumbik or with enough clout to attract people...) [459]

"Art festivals. On the Hill and Warrandyte festivals include arts and crafts but others are funfair, imported cheap market goods etc. are not reflective of our arts history and culture." [460]

"Relying on volunteers to direct the local festival content is also troublesome. I mean, yarn bombing is fine and all but I'd love to see some better quality, funded production. There is so much history and talent that better representation should just be a given." [461]

There is frustration with the current festival/grant model. The model needs to change in order to reduce the administration load on event organisers.

"Managers of festivals and events are frustrated with the lack of support from Council departments outside Arts and Culture. In some cases, they have to apply for a grant though Council, only to pay another department of Council with a significant part of the funds in order to run their event." [462]

"50% of a $5000 Council grant goes back to Council for venue hire and rubbish bins." [463]

"Courthouse poetry is over. All the admin and reapplying and acquitting the grant was too onerous, and the grant money mainly went back to Council for the venue hire." [464]

"Establish a partnership model for festivals and events where Council supplies infrastructure support (such as rubbish bins). There is frustration around applying for grants from Council that go to pay Council for venue hire, rubbish bins etc. The extra administration to apply and acquit grants falls on artists and community volunteers and is seen as unnecessary." [465]

Live Music

Connect a wider audience to the work of local musicians and non-mainstream music by sponsoring them to play in large festivals, such as the Eltham Town Fair.

Opportunities to hear live music are seen to be lacking. Events and festivals with a focus on music are consistently requested; particularly music unique to Nillumbik; local performers and performers creating non-mainstream music.

Live music is a desired addition in activating local venues, as a part of placemaking projects and as a vital element of a cultural centre. There needs to be more live music across the Shire that is easily accessible for residents of each of our townships.

"I don't see anything out there for professional musicians who aren't doing the mainstream stuff." [466]

"People are not dumb. They have the capacity and ability to enjoy all sorts of music if we give it to them." [467]

"Music in Hurstbridge was a great idea to get people out and together supporting local businesses." [468]

"More local music at local venues or public spaces would be awesome." [469]

"Music performance area in Hurstbridge." [470]

"Gigs in every bar/restaurant" [471]

"More live music everywhere" [472]

"Variety of art forms" [473]

"Where's the live music? We moved to Nillumbik from the inner north where we could see diverse musical acts—out here it seems mainly to be cover bands or acoustic artists" [474]

In regards to music, there is a strong indication that the Eltham Town Fair could be used to highlight local musicians (beyond young musicians who will play for free); as it has done in the past.

Professional musicians and the general public have expressed disappointment with the commercial nature of the Eltham Town Fair and its current lack of diverse and interesting musical offerings.

"Since Rotary have taken over the Eltham Town Fair and Diamond Creek Town Fair—all those sort of festivals, now they just get people to play for free, so all of a sudden its gone from such a varied musical offering... then the festivals become about the ice cream, the food and the rides." [475]

"The Eltham Rotary festival is so boring and predictable. When we first moved here the local artists got to perform at the Eltham Festival (19 years ago)." [476]

"Our Eltham festival is now so commercial and not like what it used to be. Junk being sold nothing much else." [477]

Professional Development program for artists

Increase the financial success and longevity of creative industries by expanding a professional development program for creatives to learn business and marketing skills.

Professional development in business, grant writing and marketing assists artists and creative industries to thrive financially. Many artists have called for more support in this area.

"Needs:

- Help with marketing as well as funding for art projects within the community.
- Website development skills.
- Help building a website on a platform that is unfamiliar to me...
- Work opportunities that are closer to home.
- Social media support—marketing myself.
- To learn more about how local government works—to reveal ways of engaging, participating, influencing my community." [478]

"I believe Nillumbik can make a big difference by finding ways to support artists write grants and get the funding to be able to be heard." [479]

"The importance placed by the Council on supporting, marketing and networking with artists." [480]

"Lead the community in understanding/knowledge, grant opportunities, community activations and spaces." [481]

"Promotion of Nillumbik as a place to start a business especially in the arts." [482]

"Training/Mentoring Ideas:

- Sales & business skills incl. digitising, marketing, social media
- Writing grants/other funding options
- Workshop facilitation
- Mentoring of emerging artists by established artists" [483]

Image: *Perky And Fiddle* by Kinetic Theatre at Edendale Community Environment Farm Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Professional Development program for businesses to work with artists

There is a lack of knowledge outside the creative industries of the merits of working with creative practitioners who are able to generate innovative solutions, create more positive and collaborative work environments or engage imaginatively with the community.

Similar to using socially engaged art practice to address social issues, there are a number of creative practitioners who can work creatively in a commercial environment; addressing business issues and improving client and community relationships. Education for business owners on how to work with these creative practitioners and incentives to do so could be a program designed by the creative community and facilitated by Council.

"Incentives to businesses, property developers and landlords to engage artists (E.g. Renew Australia)." [484]

"Fact Sheets & Guides: for businesses on how to engage an artist, includes a directory of local artists, fee schedule, sample contracts and IP clauses, best practice principles in working with artists." [485]

"Cross Sector Facilitation:

- Grants/subsidies to encourage businesses to employ artists (e.g. signage) [to] increase the presence of art in retail/industrial precincts
- Support landlords to consider pop-up events in vacant tenancies" [486]

"Council could look to increase the facilitation of cross-sector partnerships with the wider business network e.g. with pop-up creative initiatives in vacant tenancies." [487]

"...a reaching out to arts and future-oriented business to form partnerships." [488]

Mentoring for emerging artists

Strengthen connection within the creative community by establishing a mentoring program for emerging artists.

Connections between emerging and established artists are needed in order for our emerging artists to feel welcome and supported. There is scope to facilitate master classes and spaces where established and emerging artists can interact.

This is something to consider when looking at other initiatives set out in this Summary Report, such as establishing a creative precinct, having artists perform at Council events, artists involved in planning Council projects etc. All of these are openings for emerging and established artists to be bought together so the experience and knowledge of accomplished artists can be shared.

"It was suggested that young emerging artists would like to meet with mentors or peers and learn about the art business and be supported in a collective studio." [489]

"Master art workshops" [490]

"Objectively and through personal experience I have most felt the Eltham art community as a bit elite and not helpful for making inexperienced and emerging artists feel supported, welcome or included." [491]

"Set up a mentoring/guidance program connecting artists with other artists to support each other in their practice." [492]

In the *Participate Nillumbik* survey, the following question was asked: "What supports would you most like to see provided for the performing arts sector in Nillumbik?"

51.61% (16 respondents) asked for performance industry development opportunities (workshops etc)

79.31% (23 respondents) are interested in being contacted about forming a Nillumbik Performing Arts Forum to allow people in the performing arts sector to share knowledge, experience and support

“The provision of what I call ecologies of arts and creative business practice doesn’t seem to be there in a structured way—there’s no clear pathways, we don’t have the assets and the capabilities to take someone from the beginning and allow them to go on a bit of a journey from emerging through to mid-career or established artist. This is something we should be looking to offer as best we can.” [493]

Shared Resources

Improve support of art production by sharing resources/byproducts across departments for artists to use in artwork, such as timber from felled trees.

Promoting sustainability and the sharing of resources is important to artists and the general community Two suggestions came to light during the consultations; to re-purpose felled trees for use by artists who use wood in their practice, specifically wood carvers, drum makers and guitar makers; and also to support young bands by having a Council-owned mixing desk to loan out. There may be other similar initiatives to link up Council resources from various departments with local artists.

- Council to have a mixing desk to loan to young bands so they have a chance to perform without the need to hire equipment
- Have a wood register for artists that use wood in their work and a process though a local mill (there is one in Cottles Bridge) so that when trees are taken down by Council, they can be milled and sent to artists. Such artists include furniture makers, a drum and box maker and a chainsaw carver (who is interested in cypress.)

Compare to a recycle program. Are there any other assets artists can use? [494]

“...developing mechanisms for maximizing local assets, reuse, repair, share and trade systems to meet local needs, support sustainability and wellbeing..” [495]

“I’m a guitar builder (and teach people how to build their own guitars using Australian tonewoods)... I would like access to trees that have fallen either through a storm or removal to be used for arts rather than disappearing into wood-chips. Even if this means going through a 3rd party who can do transport and milling. This way you support another business, remove Council liability, reduce cost and support local arts.” [496]

“I would like to see Nillumbik explore opportunities to develop new ways of doing business underpinned by principles of sustainability and equality...” [497]

Image: *Angelic—Living Statue* by Kinetic Theatre, at Hurstbridge Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

There are a number of voices missing from our cultural life, and the community has expressed a longing for space in Nillumbik where those voices can be heard. Most absent are the voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung. Also lacking are voices from other cultures. We have no safe space for LGBTQIA+ creative expression. In addition, our focus on heritage and visual arts has left our more contemporary creative voices and our sound, movement, and language-based artforms without a strong and accessible platform.

SUB-THEME

3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

"Nillumbik isn't very culturally diverse really so it would be great to see more local/ indigenous history or events recognised" [498]

"I am saddened by the complete lack of acknowledgment of first peoples and multiculturalism that thrives in this area." [499]

"Nillumbik's heartbeat is a community of multiculturalism and Indigenous history and yet none of it is promoted." [500]

"...sense of community including recognition of indigenous and multicultural society." [501]

"Diversity of cultures, welcoming community." [502]

"Cultural diversity" [503]

"There is no variety in the types of art available or that is being funded. It would be wonderful to see more dance and sound-based practices, as opposed to only visual art, being funded." [504]

"Aboriginal heritage education" [505]

"I believe we need to support emerging and the less popular arts more. A bit more variety." [506]

"Art is limited and mundane in Nillumbik." [507]

"Aboriginal, Rainbow & Trans flags at Council buildings—be on the right side of history, don't be afraid to make a stand for inclusion." [508]

"Cultural diversity" +

"More cultural diversity and a welcome to new residents." [510]

"Specifically, more support for LGBTI youth" [511]

"A more diverse, inclusive and better informed community" [512]

"Being a positive and inclusive community" [513]

Responses from Our People, Our Place, Our Future wider Council consultation data that show a strong desire for more recognition and accessibility to other cultures and Indigenous culture.

What 3 things need to change
- To be more multicultural
- Acknowledgment of traditional owners
- Recognition of local Aboriginal heritage
- Improve cultural awareness
- Acknowledgment of Aboriginal culture
- Openness to culturally diverse communities
- Accessibility and creating a shire that holds space for disabled people, people of varying cultures and identifies
- Acknowledgment of First Nations
- Support LGBTI citizens
- Finding out more about the Wurundjeri Peoples and how we can utilise their knowledge for the better of the people of Nillumbik.
- Supporting all people so that it creates cohesiveness within the community.

Short Term Focus Areas
- Provide First Nations people with more of a voice and stop Australia Day celebrations
- Cultural diversity
- Invite cultural leaders to teach and influence all of us non-Indigenous
- Boldly create environments where the benefits of a diverse community are highlighted, especially by actively pursuing positive discrimination in employment,
- Work towards an eighth Councillor representing the traditional owners' voice.
- Empower First Nations voices
- Engage community leaders and local First Nations peoples.

What Should Council do?
- Have a First Nations advisory committee
- Stop Australia Day celebrations and take a stand with First Nation peoples
- Allocate resources to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan including active recruitment of Aboriginal staff members
- Form working groups with the Wurundjeri People.
- Work with Indigenous consultants

Long Term Focus Areas
- Develop a real recognition and knowledge of Aboriginal culture
- Indigenous culture
- Promote and foster a culture of inclusiveness for all.

What to do Long Term
- Recognise and support cultural diversity
- Continuing to include, consult, stay up to date with, and connect to our ever-evolving community to create space for equal opportunities across cultural, ability, and identity differences.
- Giving grants to local schools and preschools to do Indigenous Cultural education.
- Engage with the Indigenous community to give them a genuine voice (the first people's assembly is a good place to start)

Participate Nillumbik

91.47 % (234 respondents) classed ***access to a diverse range of arts and culture*** as important or very important.

16 respondents specifically mentioned wanting **greater visibility and understanding of Indigenous culture,** and 24 respondents specifically mentioned the **lack of diversity in culture and art forms.**

Art forms/culture seen as least accessible (includes ranking from the report):

Dance 1.67
Indigenous history & culture 1.67
Development & growth of creative industries 1.79
Socially engaged art 1.81
Creative economy & cultural tourism 1.82
Grants to enable artist-run initiatives 1.87
Advocacy for arts & culture 1.87
Live music venues 1.85
Theatre 1.9
Live music 1.91
Artist residencies 1.91
Literary arts 1.92
Performance venues 1.92

3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

It is important to the Nillumbik community to build and maintain cultural longevity through the education and sharing of our cultural and artistic heritage, creative skills and inspiration.

We also need to ensure we have a succession plan, supporting and educating our emerging artists, including emerging Indigenous Elders so Nillumbik remains a cultural centre well into the future.

There are a number of ways to foster cultural longevity in Nillumbik:

- Assist the creative community in becoming business and financially savvy. Ensure the creative community has access to business support, seed funding and opportunities for cross sector partnerships with businesses and Council.
- Upskill our artists, improving the standard and breadth of their creative output.
- Increase access to our history, particularly the deep history of the First People. This is important for Indigenous people as well as non-Indigenous people; Wurundjeri Elders must have a platform to pass on knowledge to their young people and emerging Elders.

Sharing cultural knowledge outside the creative community is also important, including introducing new Council staff members to significant cultural experiences in Nillumbik, introducing the general public to the Wurundjeri perspective on the natural environment, and sharing art practice with young people.

Access to contemporary artistic expression and a wide range of artistic practice is vital for our cultural life to flourish in Nillumbik. Theatre, dance, literature, fashion and music are some of the art forms that are currently seen as being under-supported in Nillumbik, despite the existence of a predisposed and expectant audience.

"More should be spent on education because young roots grow a strong tree and old roots tend to remain comfortably unaware of the crises we face today." [514]

Image: *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Art programs in small intimate spaces

Increase engagement with under-represented art forms, particularly music and performance art through supporting people to host creative events in intimate venues.

Small and intimate gatherings have been suggested as a new way of exploring new art forms, experimental work and challenging ideas: A 'soirée' program; unique, intimate with a high level of engagement, could potentially be held in private houses and underutilised spaces; particularly for under-represented art forms such as music, literature and the performing arts.

There is potential for Council to play a role by assisting in the setup of such a program, helping people understand any permits and obligations needed in hosting such an event and helping with promotion.

"These priceless little gems that are hiding everywhere around the Shire—maybe they could be linked up and become somewhere for house concerts." [515]

"A network of these hidden gems could really be a thing. Give it a name, give it a program, a bit like Open Studios... visiting these very interesting and idiosyncratic places..." [516]

"Activate unique venues such as St Andrews Church, halls etc. to cultivate a feeling of special magic unavailable anywhere else. Use unusual and underrepresented art forms to create interest." [517]

"What's appealing when we have our social and communal lives returned to us? Perhaps we are about smaller more intimate performances with a high level of engagement and uniqueness." [518]

"Close proximity to galleries and availability of shows, often in non-traditional venues. Festivals & music events. Public art (not necessarily shown in traditional spaces or sanctioned officially.)" [519]

"Productions that move you, words or art that makes you think or motivate you to be different in some way (to create, to do better, to invite someone else along). Something unusual, and a bit off beat is what my brain particularly likes. Intimate music events, tick. Amazing art in any medium, tick. Poetry in barns, tick. Set design that makes you want to remodel your house, tick." [520]

"If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the way we have constructed the world hasn't worked and now there's a fabulous opportunity to divine a different way of being together. All of the attributes, all of the resources, all of the skills are here, we just need to find a way to trust each other and create something remarkable and beautiful." [521]

"I like that the strong presence of the arts, including diversity and originality in some of our public and private buildings, contributes to a sense of outside the mainstream." [522]

"Stop trying only to create mainstream events, instead try niche events." [523]

Celebrate Literature

Increase awareness of Nillumbik writers through literary festivals and events.

We have many acclaimed and award winning authors in Nillumbik that are not known outside the events run by the Eltham Bookshop. Our literary culture need to be given more prominence. Literature is seen as one of the art forms that is under represented in Nillumbik.

"For writers, there is little support, and particularly by local libraries, which do not hold works by local writers in their collections. Nor are regular readings held and/or financed, nor do discussions of the work of local writers feature in the activities of local book clubs." [524]

"More is needed in recognising local writers in Nillumbik. The Eltham bookshop seems [to be] the only people who really promote the local writers." [525]

"No opportunity or support for local authors. Could the Open Studios include visits to author or illustrators houses too? Could jazz or other festivals and gallery in eltham library include literature aspect?" [526]

"Very little support for local writers, particularly by local libraries and book clubs." [527]

"The production of new, innovative and unique works that are well regarded both nationally and internationally. And connection to a larger cultural, and specifically literary, community." [528]

"...a woeful lack of support of ongoing vibrant literary activities." [529]

"Bring on a literary fest—books last the test of times." [530]

"Monthly writing festivals and workshops and invite well-known authors." [531]

"A literature festival would be fantastic! Perhaps focusing on children's and youth literature." [532]

"Courthouse poetry has left a big hole." [533]

Image: *Angelic—Living Statue* by Kinetic Theatre, at Hurstbridge Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Showcase diverse art forms through a similar model to Open Studios

Create more opportunities to engage with diverse art forms through a program based on Open Studios, but for non-visual art practitioners such as musicians, performers, writers and new media artists.

Open Studios is a widely recognised and appreciated event. There is a call to have a similar program that extends this experience beyond the visual arts to create a more holistic experience of Arts and Culture in Nillumbik; including artforms such as music, dance, theatre, fashion, textiles, literature and film among others.

Not only would this be seen as a way for people to experience other art forms, but it is a way to elevate the presence and reputation of artists that lack a public platform. It is also a way to connect these artists together and foster a sense of belonging to a wider artistic community.

"I want to know how we can build a community of artists outside of Visual Arts." [534]

"Being open to all kinds of the arts but for me with too much a focus on Visual arts." [535]

"I believe that the artbeat has been more about the visual arts in the past." [536]

"I feel like a lot of the art that I've seen in Nillumbik is very similar, from similar types of artists working with similar mediums. So, if I was trying to make the place a little bit more vibrant, I would probably fund artists or devote some portion of that funding to different artistic mediums." [537]

"Multi art forms, multi generation art events." [538]

"The diverse opportunities and events in Nillumbik. There are so many different ways to enjoy arts in the area, we're not known for just one thing." [539]

"As a visual artist I enjoy that there are many visual artists in the area, that there is a strong history of arts in the area and it's in general appreciated by the public. More widely I also appreciate that there are many other creatives in the area too, writers, film makers etc. The presence of these makers makes me feel part of a creative community." [540]

"Different visual arts, different theatre, different music for all ages." [541]

"I love the Cube Z in Diamond Creek, this showcases less known art forms, currently it is showing some of our local blacksmiths excellent work." [542]

"Involve musicians in Open Studios and galleries." [543]

"There is definitely a need for more fashion based art, as a fashion design student I find Nillumbik is lacking in the fashion culture area." [544]

"Support for digital mediums, including filmmaking and video production."[545]

"I'm a fine art photographer and this art form seems to be underrepresented in Nillumbik." [546]

Nillumbik Art Collection to include multicultural and Wurundjeri artworks

Increase access to art from other cultures by including Wurundjeri art/artifacts and art from different cultures in the Nillumbik Art Collection.

Acquiring Wurundjeri and multicultural art pieces for the Nillumbik Art Collection contributes to addressing the lack of diverse cultural visibility the community has identified.

"Visibility of Indigenous culture needs to be increased. Visibility of multicultural groups needs to be increased.

— Have a directive to acquire multicultural art in the Nillumbik Arts Collection" [547]

"Participant Suggestions for Council Support:

Council purchasing artwork is the *'best support ever.'*" [548]

Organised celebration of NAIDOC Week

Increase appreciation of Wurundjeri culture though an organised celebration of NAIDOC Week.

One way to bring more understanding and increased visibility of Wurundjeri culture to the community is for Council to have a formal acknowledgment of NAIDOC week. Working with Wurundjeri to use this annual event to promote their culture would be well received in the community.

"NAIDOC week should be openly celebrated; currently unplanned, unstructured and chaotic." [549]

"Emerging themes: Connection: use stories, art and heritage to create a shared connection." [550]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

Image: *Gathering Space,* with mural by Tom Civil, at Eltham North Adventure Playground, photographer Amanda Grant

Multicultural Advisory Panel

Establish multicultural representation and perspectives in Council projects by establishing a Multicultural Advisory Panel to inform all Council departments.

Great interest in seeing multicultural arts and festivals prompted a suggestion that Council forms a Multicultural Advisory Panel to ensure the various cultures in Nillumbik have representation.

"I would like to see our emerging multi-culturalism being celebrated with opportunities for new residents to tell their stories about how they came to be here and to share their stories in the form of exhibitions, concerts, feasts etc. and maybe even a booklet. I think this could be best facilitated by having a multicultural advisory committee." [551]

"A wish to cultivate a multi-cultural community. The possibilities of conversation classes, or a bi-lingual book club were put forward." [552]

"I would like to see more multicultural events." [553]

"There was an identified need for more multi-cultural arts and cultural activities that bring communities together, and reflect the growing diversity of the area. Suggestions related to this included art activities, food, and talks about different cultures including Aboriginal culture. *Boîte World Music* in the Pitt St Hall, Eltham was mentioned and applauded as a great cultural community event." [554]

"Perception that Nillumbik is not multi-cultural... many cultures represented during consultation/engagement with resident artists—Italian, South African communities, Japanese, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese." [555]

"Culturally diverse art exhibitions, need more Asian art and Asian artists working and demonstrating their art techniques and talking about Asian art" [556]

"Something (an event?) that can help make visible the cultural diversity in our community and enable people from diverse backgrounds to share the gifts, knowledge and history with the community." [557]

"More reggae—African music: More multi-cultural... two local reggae DJs [are] based in Nillumbik." [558]

"A community that, although is less diverse than other LGAs, shows more awareness and respect for underrepresented groups—especially people with a disability and the LGBTQIA+ community" [559]

"Being a positive and inclusive community." [560]

"I would also like to see more cultural diversity celebrations." [561]

"Being a socially and culturally inclusive place to live." [562]

"Valuing people from other cultures; promoting inclusion and equality for LGBTQIA." [563]

"Having events and festivals which provide opportunities to share different cultural backgrounds i.e. Chinese New Year, Greek festivals etc." [564]

Art programs for children and teenagers

Greater creative stimulation through art programs for children and teenagers.

Creative opportunities and art education for children and teenagers is important to the community as well as programs that encourage intergenerational experiences of the arts.

"Accessibility to the Arts/art classes for all ages: Art classes and opportunities for children and young people were strong themes, as was the availability of art classes for adults and making opportunities (and information about arts) accessible to many including seniors for whom transportation is an issue." [565]

"There is a desire for children's art classes and opportunities including mentorship for young people and support for emerging artists. Parents want accessible, affordable art opportunities for children and workshops for teenagers with diverse art options such as cartoons, animation, sketching. A passionate parent spoke of the importance of mentorship and support for young artists to help build their careers." [566]

"Welcoming an inclusive space that encourages interaction amongst all generations." [567]

"Inter-generational events" [568]

"Musical education classes for toddlers would be great." [569]

"More community events that bring together people of all ages." [570]

"Getting the elderly and youth together to experience each other." [571]

"I would like to see cultural orchestras and choirs world music options and opportunities to encourage youth and mature musicians to work together locally without immense cost." [572]

"Accessibility to the Arts is important—whether it is affordable art classes for children, opportunities and mentorships for young people, transport for seniors (i.e. to visit Open Studios) or simply a more effective way to inform residents about all the opportunities that are available." [573]

"A program that connects school age children with senior members of the community. Valuing the wisdom and life experience of the elderly and providing ways for that to be shared with all people." [574]

"Community activities in the public domain: Artistic and other public participatory opportunities for all ages." [575]

"Programs to connect retirees and the elderly with younger members of the community." [576]

Wurundjeri-led bushwalks

Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture and facilitate the passing on of cultural knowledge by contracting Wurundjeri Elders to run bushwalks and storytelling sessions for the general public and young Wurundjeri people.

There are established Aboriginal-led bushwalks in other Shires and there is an indication from both Wurundjeri and the broad community that such a program in Nillumbik would be very well received. Shared stories on Country, between cultures and generations would create the much-desired connections the Nillumbik community want with Wurundjeri people and their culture, as well as providing a platform for knowledge sharing within the Wurundjeri community.

"Awareness and respect of our First Nations people." [577]

"Greater interaction with first nations people to enhance and increase awareness of the local flora and fauna and sites of cultural significance" [578]

"Local Elders to further educate the community. Programs run by Elders" [579]

"A signed indigenous walk in Eltham Lower Park near wetlands." [580]

Stronger Wurundjeri engagement in the way our region is developed, with significant long-term financial support for Wurundjeri creative work and input into the way we plan and design our local areas." [581]

"A desire to have more opportunities to learn about and/or celebrate Indigenous history in the area, or to cultivate the kind of values that Indigenous culture embraces." [582]

"Elevate Indigenous voices in the community significantly more than is currently present. How do they see our local environment and the heritage of our region? How would they wish to see our region develop and look to the future?" [583]

"Some of these projects could involve Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Elders and younger members of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung community so that future Elders can be mentored on Country." [584]

"Creating opportunities for Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people to tell their own stories." [585]

"Initiate guided tours of trails with a Wurundjeri Elder, such as the tour that takes place at Pound Bend and Warrandyte." [586]

"Facilitate a mentorship between Elders and juniors members of Wurundjeri Corp on these tours to help preserve and spread knowledge." [587]

"Talk to people—explain what the land is about and how
to look after it properly." [588]

"It is important to us that our history and culture are preserved and presented properly in all parts of our Country." [589]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

Kangaroo Ground is important to Wurundjeri

Engage a wider audience with an understanding of Wurundjeri culture by establishing Kangaroo Ground Memorial Park as an information/storytelling space.

One opportunity identified in consultation with Wurundjeri was to present Wurundjeri cultural heritage through story (text), artwork and photographs on the history panels within the Moor-rul Viewing Platform which are currently vacant. The eight panels could tell the story of the land, of Wurundjeri and the history of the Memorial Tower.

The Moor-rul viewing platform could be established as a place of connection; where Wurundjeri and non-indigenous heritage and culture connect.

Another opportunity identified is to extend the native grasslands project at the Moor-rul Viewing Platform site, establishing the entire Kangaroo Ground Memorial Hill as a native garden/grasslands, a walk-around area with the theme of connection.

"Some of the places in the Nillumbik area we have been involved in are the Moor-rul viewing platform that looks over our ancestral lands and the Gawa Trail and Panton Hill Bushland Reserves trails, where people can learn about Wurundjeri Woiwurrung culture. Some of our artists have also performed and presented their works in Nillumbik.

In the coming years, as well as helping to maintain these places, we are looking forward to being involved in the development of a number of projects. These projects will help us realise our aspirations for Country. These might include: telling our story through the panels at the Moor-rul Viewing Platform, extending the native grasslands at the Moor-rul Viewing Platform site (with our Narrap Unit), and creating more trails with signage and/or other interactive mediums to tell our stories. We would welcome spaces that invite people to stop and experience Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country." [590]

Voices of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people

Image: *Gathering Space*, with mural by Tom Civil, at Eltham North Adventure Playground, photographer Amanda Grant

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ARTS AND
CULTURE

Nillumbik
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