

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

to be held at the Civic Centre, Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Tuesday 12 July 2022 commencing at 7:00pm.

Attachments

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 7 July 2022

Distribution: Public

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Nillumbik Shire Council

Attachments

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Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

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

Minutes

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Friday 17 June 2022

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088
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Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes
Nillumbik Shire Council

14 June 2022

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Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

Nillumbik Shire Council

**Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held
Tuesday 14 June 2022. The meeting commenced at 7:00pm.**

Councillors present:

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

Officers in attendance:

Carl Cowie	Chief Executive Officer
Vince Lombardi	Chief Financial Officer
Hjalmar Philipp	Director Operations and Infrastructure
Blaga Naumoski	Executive Manager Governance, Communications and Engagement
Corrienne Nichols	Executive Manager Communities
Rosa Zouzoulas	Executive Manager Planning and Community Safety
Leigh Northwood	Strategic Planning Lead
Sally Johnson	Corporate Information Lead
Licardo Prince	Communications and Advocacy Lead
Katia Croce	Governance Lead

1. Welcome by the Chair

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country was read by the Chairperson, Cr Geoff Paine.

3. Apologies

Nil.

4. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

Nil

5. Confirmation of Minutes

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

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Peter Perkins

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

6. Officers' reports

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

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Rosa Zouzoulas, Executive Manager Planning and Community Safety

Author:

Leigh Northwood, Strategic Planning Lead

Summary

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

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

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

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

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

The following people addressed the Committee with respect to this item:

1. *Tim Phillips*
2. *Tim Phillips on behalf of Sue Dyet*
3. *Graham Fildes*
4. *Carlota Quinlan on behalf of Eltham Community Action Group*
5. *Carlota Quinlan*
6. *Anne Nielsen*
7. *Karen Olsen on behalf of Clean Energy Nillumbik.*

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

6. Consultation Matters

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

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Natalie Duffy

SECONDED: Cr Ben Ramcharan

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

6. Officers' reports

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

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

Author: Licardo Prince, Communications and Advocacy Lead

Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following person addressed the Committee with respect to his item:

1. *Jim Connor.*

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Recommendation

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

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

Motion

MOVED: Cr Ben Ramcharan

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

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

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

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

PCC.021/22 Draft Communications Strategy 2022-2025

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Ben Ramcharan

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

14 June 2022

6. Officers' reports

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

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

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

Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins

SECONDED: Cr Frances Eyre

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

14 June 2022

7. Supplementary and urgent business

The Chairperson, Cr Geoff Paine sought to admit the following item of urgent business:

1. Appointment of Sub Delegate to 24 June 2022 Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Ben Ramcharan

That Council, in accordance with Clause 57 of the Governance Rule Meeting Procedure, admit the item of urgent business relating to the appointment of Sub Delegate to 24 June 2022 Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

14 June 2022

**PCC.023/22 Urgent Business - Appointment of Sub Delegate to 24 June 2022
Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting**

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

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

Author: Katia Croce, Governance Lead

Summary

Council's appointed sub delegate to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is Cr Frances Eyre.

In the event that the delegate is unable to attend the MAV State Council Annual Meeting, Council is required to appoint by resolution a sub delegate to ensure that Council has a proxy available.

This report requests that the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) formally appoints Cr Ben Ramcharan as the substitute representative to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for the MAV State Council Annual Meeting to be held Friday 24 June 2022.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Frances Eyre

SECONDED: Cr Ben Ramcharan

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) appoints Cr Ben Ramcharan as the substitute representative to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for the MAV State Council Annual Meeting to be held Friday 24 June 2022.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

14 June 2022

- 8. Confidential reports**
- 9. Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 8:05pm.

Confirmed: _____
Cr Geoff Paine, Chairperson Consultation Matters

Draft Arts & Culture Strategy

2022 – 2026



ARTS AND
CULTURE



Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

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Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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

Statement from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Corporation.

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 Woi wurrung*, 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 Woi-wurrung people.

Some of our Elders and representatives were asked about Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung arts and culture in Nillumbik and this is what they said:

Art is intrinsic to Wurundjeri culture and heritage and cannot be separated into different art forms. It is embedded in all parts of the Wurundjeri culture.

Every artwork tells its own story and is as important as culture or language.

Paintings are like a corroboree; connecting, bringing families together and they are intimately connected to the land.

Ceremony and ritual are very important – storytelling.

Art is all part of family and connection to country – this *is* Wurundjeri culture. Wurundjeri connect through artwork.

The story of Wurundjeri can be told through art.

Talk to people - explain what the land is about and how to look after it properly.

We have heard that the people of Nillumbik would like Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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 Woi-wurrung Country is important.

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 Woi-wurrung 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 Woi-wurrung 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 Woi-wurrung Country, culture and history in Nillumbik.

Authors: Aunty Gail Smith, Aunty Georgina Nicholson, Aunty Julianne Axford, Uncle Tony Garvey, Tarlina Gardiner, Ash Firebrace, Klara Hansen, Delta Freedman.

Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

Access, Equity and Inclusion

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community, where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are addressed and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some people and individuals experience more barriers than others.

We walk alongside First Nations Elders, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, and broader communities of artists, partners and collaborators in our interconnected community.

Over the next four years, we will continue to engage with ideas and creativity, and champion diverse cultural practices for people of all ages and genders, people living with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and support local artists to develop and showcase their work.

Council statement

[Text to be added]

Introduction

[Short statement to be added]

[Communications: Infographic page – where venues are, where creative work happens. Supporting creative communities, arts and cultural facilities, heritage, creative places and spaces.]

Culture, arts, and heritage are integral to the health, prosperity and the vitality of our communities. They bring us together, help us enjoy our environment and to flourish personally. They foster creativity and innovation, provide employment and celebrate our unique heritage. The scope of arts and culture in Nillumbik encompasses First Nations arts, literature, music in all forms, theatre, dance in all forms, other performing arts such as circus, comedy and puppetry, screen based arts, festivals and events, visual arts and craft, and emerging and experimental arts.

“The arts have the potential to bridge our worlds, harness the wisdom of our different views, engage our imagination to explore new ways of thinking and create experiences that can be shared by all people in our community”.
Creative Victoria.¹

Our Artistic and Cultural Heritage.

Council understands the importance of acknowledging and celebrating the Shire’s artistic and cultural heritage whilst embracing the next wave of contemporary arts and culture. Arts and culture is constantly evolving; a fluid and reflective means to explore and capture societal influences through time.

Nillumbik has long been renowned for, and continues to foster, its deep connections to the arts. Our cultural heritage begins with the first people of Nillumbik, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. This rich and enduring culture continues to inspire and educate us today.

Our artistic roots stem from the early 1900s, with the Heidelberg School artists who lived and painted locally; with Australia’s oldest artist commune, Montsalvat, founded in the 1930s; and with the unique ‘Eltham Style’ properties that showcase the earth building movement of the 1940s and continue today with award-winning contemporary mud-brick architecture.

Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

The collaborative efforts of artists in and around Nillumbik has been significant with the establishment of artistic cooperatives, collaborative studios and public programs such as The Potters Cottage Co-operative, the Dunmoochin Artists Co-operative, the Baldessin Press & Studio and the Nillumbik Artists Open Studios program. The Shire also has a vibrant community-led festival scene.

Nillumbik has a strong history in literary arts that is supported today through the Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing. The Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art similarly supports visual arts of all mediums and acquires new artworks that build on the legacy of the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection. In October of 2019, Council adopted a percent for art on major infrastructure development paving the way for a contemporary public art program that will continue to build on the impressive Public Art Collection across the Shire.

Nillumbik is committed to creativity. Activities offered by Council through its arts and culture programming add to the rich tapestry of opportunities for our community to engage with Nillumbik's arts and culture, past, present and future.

Building on this rich tradition, the depth and breadth of our programs and venues reflect our commitment to creativity in Nillumbik:

- The Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing is awarded every two years and builds on the Shire's strong tradition of supporting contemporary Australian writing.
- The Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art is awarded every two years and is open to emerging and established artists working in any medium across Australia. The winning artworks become part of the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection.
- The Nillumbik Shire Art Collection includes works by historically significant local artists such as Walter Withers, Clifton Pugh and George Baldessin, as well as works by contemporary artists such as Peter Wegner, Dale Cox, Deborah Halpern and Jessie Imam.
- The Eltham Library Community Gallery is an important platform for emerging artists that provides entry into professional practice. The gallery space offers a diverse exhibition program that showcases both traditional forms of art-making and new methods of art production, along with themes and ideas that are relevant to our times.
- The Nillumbik Public Art Collection has major artworks integrated into public spaces, parks and public facilities around the Shire. It enables the community to engage with art as an everyday experience and creates a sense of place.
- Nillumbik Artist in Residence Program offers opportunities for local artists to explore their professional practice and engage with local community.
- Nillumbik Community Fund provides grants to support a range of initiatives to strengthen, enhance and benefit Nillumbik communities.
- The Nillumbik Heritage Guide has been created in collaboration with historic societies, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, Yarra Plenty Regional Library and dozens of other contributors. The guide showcases the rich history of Nillumbik.
- History and Heritage annual grants fund community programs and projects connected to our history and/or heritage.
- The Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of Arts and Culture.

The arts and culture team at Nillumbik also connect with and refer to a range of external stakeholders who are important for the national and state development of arts, culture and creative industries, such as the Australia Council for the Arts; Creative Victoria and its major cultural policy Creative State; the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria); the Public Records Office Victoria; Public Galleries Association of Victoria; the National Association of Visual Artists, and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

Development of the Strategy

Our Arts and Culture Strategy is a living document, a planning tool providing Council with a clear set of priorities for the enrichment of arts and culture facilities and programs across the Shire over the next four years.

Arts and Culture links directly to Council's four key themes, as follows:

Community and Connection

How arts and culture encourage inclusion and participation to support health and well-being and equitable access to services, programs events and initiatives.

Place and Space

How arts and culture can strengthen identity, reinforce local character, improve accessibility, encourage social connections and enjoyment, and respect for the environment.

Sustainable and Resilient

How arts and culture can contribute now and into the future to community adaptation to changing circumstances that affect our community: climate change; environmental sustainability; resilience and recovery; and supporting a vibrant economy.

Responsible and Accountable

How arts and culture can demonstrate strong leadership and strategic work for the community through the development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of this strategy.

Our strategy

- Acknowledges the centrality of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to Nillumbik's arts and culture.
- Illustrates how arts and culture can sit alongside and impact on other public policy domains.
- Is based on community values and a diverse spread of community needs and aspirations.
- Is evidence based.
- Highlights the value of arts and cultural activities and the role they play in the Shire's rich culture.
- Tells the story of the potential and contribution of our creative community.
- Supports and empowers our creative community.
- Enriches the development and growth of our region through cultural and financial investment.
- Activates mechanisms for evaluation and measurement.
- Contributes to good governance and strong leadership in the Arts and Culture sector.

Methodology

In addition to Council's indicators for measuring success in quantitative terms, we work with the planning framework and measurable cultural outcomes developed by the Cultural Development Network (CDN).

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.

It has been constructed in the context of key national and international policy agendas with particular reference to the United Cities and Local Government 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.

We will focus on measurable outcomes for each of our goals, always in the cultural domain, and include others in the social, economic, environmental and governance domains where relevant, to clearly identify how arts and culture impacts upon and integrates with other public policy domains.

Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

Using these outcomes helps us to assess what difference our work makes to those who receive it. We allow outcomes and evidence to guide our future activities, and activate mechanisms for evaluation and measurements.

Consultation

To discover what is most important to the community for arts and culture now and in the future, we conducted the most extensive consultation ever undertaken in Nillumbik for arts and cultural planning from December 2020 through to 31 July 2021. The consultation program included a comprehensive range of digital and in-person engagements. Digital engagements involved online surveys, online focus groups including targeted consultation with cultural and special interest groups, and individual feedback through emails and online meetings. In-person engagements comprised 23 pop-up roving performance engagements in public spaces, a 6 day interactive exhibition at the Eltham Community Library Gallery and in-person focus group discussions with performances.

2216 residents from all corners of Nillumbik participated in the engagement, and their histories, cultural journeys, personal experiences, hopes, dreams and visions for the future have been collated into a significant research and consultation document, the *What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Report*. It provides the strongest possible evidence base for the development of our Strategy.

The common key values that emerged from the community consultations form the basis of our strategy's goals and express the desired long term future for arts and culture in Nillumbik.

What we heard:

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. New important things have emerged from our consultations: our interconnectedness, our desire to produce contemporary and challenging work, the value of our artists in a broader community context, and Nillumbik as a distinct and desirable cultural destination that celebrates diversity of cultural expression and artistic practice.

Three distinct themes emerged from analysis of the consultation documents, expressing the values and aspirations of the Nillumbik community. These, in alignment with the four themes of the Council plan, underpin the strategic plan and will inform all decisions regarding arts and culture:

Interconnectedness

Our distinctive feature and the foundation of our identity, 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.

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, where art is produced and people are inspired. We develop and grow our creative industries.

Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

We ensure respectful representation of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung 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.

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Arts and Culture Goals

We have developed four goals underpinned by our planning framework and informed by the extensive consultation process for the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 and the strong themes that emerged from it, as outlined above.

Our Arts and Culture goals are clearly aligned to Council's themes, articulated in detail in each goal below, and aim for measurable outcomes across several policy domains that will be evaluated during the life of the strategy.

For all our goals, we are looking for cultural activities that:

- spark imagination and creativity encouraging creative expression;
- stimulate sensory experiences that are outside the everyday – joy, beauty, wonder;
- encourage creative thinking and deeper understanding;
- promote the value of diverse cultural life experiences in our community; and
- deepen the sense of belonging to shared histories and heritages.

Goal 1: An Interconnected and Creative Community

Aligns with Council Theme: Community and Connection

Community and Connection encourages inclusion and participation to support health and well-being and equitable access to services, programs events and initiatives. Arts and Culture can contribute to this theme in many ways.

We know that interconnectedness is a distinctive feature of our creative identity in Nillumbik; a bond between the creative community, our artistic heritage and natural environment. We use creative expression to foster connection and partnerships, to build creative and social capital and create a sense of belonging. We know that cultural activity plays a pivotal role in connecting communities and encourages inclusion to support health and wellbeing and can be a vehicle for recovery.

We will therefore:

- build an interconnected creative ecology through physical spaces for connection and creation;
- demonstrate the value of arts and culture in the community; and
- enhance connections with our heritage, and champion socially engaged practice.

We will look for cultural activities in the social domain that:

- empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests;
- strengthen understanding between people of different social identities; and
- encourage a sense of self-worth when an individual's achievements are recognised by family, friends and people who are important to them.

What our community told us in relation to this goal:

- Create and co-locating infrastructure to enable creative practice.
- Stronger connection with Wurundjeri heritage and culture.
- More information about what's on.
- More support for under-represented art forms – writing, theatre, dance,
- Smaller townships feel under-served.
- More heritage information and support for historical societies.

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What we already know about an interconnected creative community:

- Connectedness to each other and community was classed as important or very important by 92% of respondents from the community online survey. 2
- 4 in 5 Australians agree that indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture. 3
- Interconnectedness is fostered by having physical spaces for creative people to meet and be inspired by new ideas and practices. 4
- Welcoming physical spaces with inclusive programs can increase participation from emerging creators. 5
- Involvement in arts can increase social connections, promote a sense of well-being and help to deal with anxiety and stress. 6
- Arts and cultural activity and engagement bring many direct and sometimes immediate benefits to society, also value to individuals and society by creating conditions for change, spaces for experimentation, risk-taking, reflection about personal community and societal challenges. 7
- Socially engaged practice describes art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work. 8
- Supporting people to come together and find a shared interest and purpose are key drivers of enhancing wellbeing. 9
- Arts provide opportunities for individuals and groups to generate civic pride and support communities to form a strong and distinct shared identity.
- Hubs can increase useful connections between local arts practitioners / organisations and local businesses. 10
- Libraries are places of cultural meaning and significance, gathering places, important for social outcomes, as incubators of creativity, as cultural connectors, as supporters of multiculturalism, and as nurturers of the spoken and written word. 11

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We currently support our community's interconnectedness through:

- Safe, best practice art spaces in venues for performance, exhibition and creation.
- Attracting local community and visitors to our creative spaces with contemporary programming, exhibitions and activities.
- Provision of post-COVID recovery programs.
- Provision of exhibition space.
- Commissions, engagements and employment of artists into programs.
- Arts and culture grant programs, events and festivals.

Considerations towards supporting an interconnected creative community:

- Creative space/s that includes studio and rehearsal space, exhibition and performance space.
- Inclusive creative participation across all townships.
- Prioritise support for under-represented art forms – live music, literature, and dance.
- Involve next generation of artists in repositioning artistic heritage for the future.
- Engage a wider audience with a shared experience of Country in partnership with local First Nations artists.
- Encourage collaboration with the library service as exhibition and events space.
- Art that addresses social issues.

[These quotes are intended to be slotted in to this goal in relevant spaces depending on the layout:]

“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.” Grant, A. (2021). Arts & Culture Focus Group Consultation Report.

“Art connects us. It gives us a sense of shared identity. It helps us belong.” Bromley, E. and Mooney, L. (2021). Artbeat of Nillumbik at Eltham Library Community Gallery 19–24, January Artist Report.

“Creative networks date back through our artistic heritage and are embedded in the way creative practitioners live and work together in Nillumbik today.” Grant, A. (2021). Arts & Culture Focus Group Consultation Report.

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Goal 2: A Visible and Supported Creative Community

Aligns with Council Theme: Sustainable and Resilient

We know that if we nurture the support of our creative businesses and individual practitioners, we seed fertile soil for our creative community to grow and flourish. Our creative industries can make positive contributions to a vibrant local economy and cultural tourism.

We will therefore:

- encourage strong collaborative relationships between creators, Council, businesses and community organisations to build trust and elevate the reputation of the creative community in the non-cultural arena,
- support our creative practitioners with programs to enhance skills for growth
- celebrate Nillumbik as a creative centre through proactive promotion and marketing of our cultural programs and activities.

We will look for social outcomes that:

- empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests;
- strengthen understanding between people of different social identities; and
- encourage a sense of self-worth when an individual's achievements are recognised by family, friends and people who are important to them.

We will look for economic outcomes that:

- increase knowledge and experience to inform creative practice leading to increased productivity and efficiency;
- develop skills to gain employment;
- increase economic wellbeing and resources to meet living costs; and
- support our local economy to gain direct and indirect benefit from cultural activities.

We will look for environmental outcomes that:

- enhance our value of the natural world,
- illuminate the meaning of our natural and built environments and how we interact with and value them; and
- increase a sense of responsibility to care for our environment.

What our community told us in relation to this theme:

- Better promoted and advertised activities, opportunities and events
- More Council visibility in the arts community.
- More live music and outdoor events.
- Help with business and marketing skills.
- More artist residency opportunities.
- Council facilities can be difficult to access and expensive to hire for creative outcomes.

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What we know about a visible and supported creative community:

- Talent and creativity are essential for a culturally ambitious vision of our future, so it is important to address how we value our creative community through support structures, protections and remunerations.¹²
- Creative industries make up an important economic sector.¹³
- Arts and culture activity can strengthen local businesses and attract visitors and new residents. ¹⁴
- Artists can be supported through collaborations with non-cultural sectors.¹⁵
- Artist residencies inspire creativity and connection, nurture experimentation and new ideas and support research and development ¹⁶
- The world of work in the future will require skills inherent in the creative community; empathy, creativity, collaboration and leadership.¹⁷

We currently support our creative community through:

- Arts and culture grant programs, events and festivals.
- Nationally recognised Art Prizes that offer local representation.
- Art, civic and public art collections of significance.
- Exhibition programs.
- A community representative committee.
- Commissions, engagements and employment of artists into programs.
- Dedicated public art and visual art commissions and acquisitions programs.
- COVID-19 recovery programs for the creative community.

Considerations towards a visible and supported creative community:

- A centralised digital online hub covering a calendar of cultural events in the Shire, a list of venues available for events, and a directory of creative practitioners and industries.
- Greater visibility of Council Arts and Cultural Development officers in the community.
- Prioritise cultural value over tourism and economic value in Council arts and culture language and communication.
- Artist residency programs in inspiring places
- Professional development programs for artists.
- Street fairs, festivals and events that showcase local artists, particularly musicians.
- A program designed for business owners on the benefits of working with creative practitioners.
- Encourage affordable pop-up spaces in vacant tenancies.
- Streamline Council venue hire processes.

Quotes:

“Artists’ skills and capabilities are considered to be among those least likely to be automated and increasingly sought in the workforces of the future. It is predicted that time spent engaging with people, solving strategic problems and thinking creatively will increase for all jobs. Accelerated change is likely to prioritise transferable skills, diverse perspectives, and lifelong learning for adapting skills and building new capabilities - all embodied in artists’ working lives and professional practice.” Making Art Work, Australia Council for the Arts 2017.

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“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.” Nillumbik Shire Council, Evaluation of Arts Recovery Industry Event (2021)

“It is becoming increasingly clear that creativity itself is an essential ingredient in a community’s prosperity.” Benefactor Group 2021, Building Creative Capital, Benefactor Group—Giving Institute, viewed 24 September 2021
<https://benefactorgroup.com/building-creative-capital/>.

Arts Recovery in response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of our whole community, our nation and our world. Participating in and viewing art of all kinds during the pandemic has provided comfort and inspiration, connection and engagement in challenging and uncertain times. For many people, gaining access to art has never been easier, and has inspired many to explore their own creativity.

However, the creative industries are facing significant ongoing challenges as the impacts of the pandemic become clearer; the difficulties of sustaining practice has become apparent, particularly for disciplines that rely on live audiences, and under-employment is an issue for many creative practitioners. As Creative Victoria has said in their current strategy *Creative State 2025*: “New approaches and investments are required to ensure a timely recovery, to retain and develop our creative talent, to reactivate and reinforce our creative industries, and to reconnect and re-energise our communities”

Arts recovery is front of mind in our strategy, The Nillumbik Community Pandemic Recovery Plan 2021-22 recognised that arts and culture will require a longer term recovery plan, and has made provision for opportunities to sustain/support local businesses, which will benefit our creative practitioners in the future.

Council led the way early in the pandemic by providing an immediate commission based employment program for artists, Art in the Time of COVID-19, which employed 163 creative professionals. This was followed by further support programs including the Nillumbik Artist in Own Residence Program, Arts and Culture Grants and the Local Arts Recovery Industry Report.

Council will make every effort to ensure that the findings of the *What We Know Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Community Consultation Report* are supported so that local artists and creative businesses can return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, and beyond.

Goal 3: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community

Aligns with Council Theme: Sustainable and Resilient.

Arts and culture can assist in ensuring our community remains sustainable and resilient, by supporting our First Nations people, encouraging diversity of people and practice, developing and supporting our creative industries to be adaptive and flexible.

We know that the community wants to learn from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

We need to ensure that our arts and culture spaces are welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people regardless of age living with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTQIA+ communities.

We will therefore:

- collaborate with our Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Corporation and local First Nations people to share truth-telling stories with the wider community.
- recognise and support diversity,
- support emerging artists, and
- ensure that Nillumbik develops cultural longevity for the future.

We are looking for social outcomes that:

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- empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests;
- contribute to a sense of safety in the community;
- strengthen understanding between people of different social identities;
- enhance bonds between people who share common characteristics and interests; and
- encourage a sense of self-worth when an individual's achievements are recognised by family, friends and people who are important to them.

We are looking for environmental outcomes that:

- enhance our value of the natural world;
- illuminate the meaning of our natural and built environments and how we interact with and value them;
- increase our understanding of sustainability and the impact of environmental issues; and
- increase a sense of responsibility to care for our environment.

What the community told us in relation to this theme:

- Better visibility of Wurundjeri people, culture and truth-telling stories.
- More representation for multi-cultural communities.
- Inclusion and equality for LGBTQIA+
- A call for under-represented art forms such as theatre, dance, fashion, music and literature.
- Support the development of artists from under-represented art forms.
- Support needed for creative events in more intimate venues.
- Better support for writers.
- Children's art classes.
- Linkages between seniors and young people.

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What we know about a diverse and resilient community:

- Supporting new and emerging creators will ensure that Nillumbik has a succession plan and remains a cultural centre well into the future.¹⁹
- Introducing audiences to non-visual arts will create a more holistic experience of arts and culture in Nillumbik, elevating the presence and reputation of artists that lack a public platform and encouraging connection and greater cohesion. ²⁰
- When indigenous and non-indigenous communities are brought together, it provides opportunities for people to reflect on their individual and shared experiences. This can reduce isolation and strengthen ties between the Aboriginal community and other cultural and social groups.
- Participation in the arts benefits indigenous communities, including improved physical and mental health and well-being; increased social inclusion and cohesion; some improvements in school retention and attitudes towards learning, increased connection to culture, improved social and cognitive skills.²¹
- Creating a safe place through arts activities, and building trust, enables participants to work through challenges and potential community and personal change without fear of retribution or stigma.²²
- Supporting and creating opportunities for young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to meaningfully participate in community can build a strong sense of agency and belonging.²³

We currently support a diverse and resilient community through:

- Festivals and events, arts and culture grants.
- Recovery programs.
- Exhibition programs.
- A Community representative committee.
- Commissions, engagements and employment of artists into programs.
- Art, civic and public art collections of significance.

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Considerations towards a diverse and resilient community:

- Partnerships with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung for outdoor cultural programs.
- Ensure major cultural art events have a traditional ceremony by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Greater diversity in commissioned and acquired work.
- Ensure diversity on our advisory panels.
- Specific arts and culture celebrations during NAIDOC Week.
- Acknowledge the important of Kangaroo Ground to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
- Celebrate literature.
- Safe and supportive space for LGBTQIA+ arts and cultural expression.
- Activate non-traditional spaces across the Shire.
- Support an open studio model for under-represented art forms.
- More art programs for young people.
- Mentorships for new generation artists.

Commitment from Nillumbik Shire Council to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Arts and Culture

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to:

- Retaining and protecting Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage and sharing this knowledge with the communities living on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land.
- Recognising, supporting and acknowledging, that land and waterways are intrinsic to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture and that art is the expression of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture and identity.
- Creating opportunities for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people to tell their own stories.
- Having Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people supply any Woi-wurrung language that is to be used.
- Considering Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung artists when art is produced for places on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land such as: permanent paintings and other imagery on site, sculpture, design and other permanent public artworks.

Quotes:

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

“Connectedness to others makes you feel like you belong. Promoting tolerance, accepting of difference, and a sense of belonging is important in our towns.” Nillumbik Shire Council: Our People Our Places Our Future Engagement Summary (2021)

“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.” Bromley, E. and Mooney, L. (2021). Artbeat of Nillumbik at Eltham Library Community Gallery 19–24 January Artist Report

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“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.” Nillumbik Shire Council: Participate Nillumbik (2021)

Goal 4: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community

Aligns with Council Themes: Place and Space

Place and Space is about strengthening identity, reinforcing character, improving accessibility, encouraging social connections and enjoyment, and respecting the environment.

In Arts and Culture, we want to establish Nillumbik as a creative destination with its own unique flavour, where inspiring art is produced and consumed, which sparks civic pride in our community. A place where we create a mutually supportive ecology between artists, Council and community.

We will therefore:

- celebrate and enhance local character,
- champion art in everyday life,
- encourage closer connections between Council and the creative community.

We are looking for social outcomes that:

- empower our community, form bonds between people who share common interests;
- strengthen understanding between people of different social identities; and
- encourage a sense of self-worth when an individual's achievements are recognised by family, friends and people who are important to them.

We are looking for environmental outcomes that:

- enhance our value of our natural world,
- illuminate the meaning of our natural and built environments and how we interact with and value them;
- increase our understanding of sustainability and the impact of environmental issues; and
- increase a sense of responsibility to care for our environment.

What the community told us in relation to this theme:

- Nillumbik to be recognised as a quintessential arts destination.
- Stronger connections between creative community and Council.
- Inclusion of artists in Council projects; integrate art into processes from the beginning.
- Increased visibility of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.
- Make Nillumbik art, civic and public art collections more visible to everyone
- Better support for local art and history knowledge in Council.
- More inclusion of Council-run art and cultural activities and creative infrastructure development.
- Distinguish Nillumbik Shire as a cultural destination through more public art commissions.
- Create 'vibrant villages' theme.
- Support a sharing resource scheme, e.g., artists given felled trees to use in practice.
- More collaboration with local produce producers at art events.
- A Maker Space for art, craft and produce.
- Better quality events Shire wide.

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- Evaluation through community, social and cultural lens instead of purely economic.
- Connect new residents with the creative community via Welcome Packs.

What we know about a Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community:

- Nillumbik is well placed to capitalise on its strong cultural heritage, local character and broad range of artistic practice to create a unique environment for cultural excellence.²⁴
- 'If creative capital is not a luxury but rather is vital to personal and community well-being, then the traditional method of consumption...needs to give way, to many more opportunities to produce and participate actively ... a will to take part, engage and leave a legacy'²⁵
- Creative place making and public art can encompass not only traditional methods of artmaking such as murals, music, sculpture, lighting, but also more general creative work, such as creatively engaging stakeholders and residents by using space in novel ways. It can also improve community safety by promoting empathy and understanding, influencing policy, providing employment, supporting well-being and advancing the quality of built environments.²⁶
- There is great value in incorporating local artists, their work and ideas into early stages of projects and developments, so that creativity is manifest throughout the life of a project from design and community engagement to activation and promotion ²⁷

We currently support a distinctively Nillumbik creative community through:

- Dedicated public art and visual art commission and acquisition programs.
- Art, civic and public art collections of significance.
- Commissions, engagements and employment of artists into programs.
- Attracting local community and visitors to our creative spaces with diverse programming, exhibitions and activities.
- Art and culture grants programs, events and festivals.
- Nationally recognised Art Prizes that offer local representation.
- Percent for Art scheme.

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Considerations towards a distinctly Nillumbik creative community:

- Embed this Strategy as a whole-of-Council document, so that the cultural domain is equally recognised with social, economic, environment and governance domains within all Council plans.
- Inclusion of artists in Council projects, Council meetings and events.
- Evaluate major Council projects through Cultural Impact Statements
- Placemaking that celebrates and enhances local character.
- Continue to work to the adopted public art policy and percent for art.
- Inclusion of First Nations artists in public art and as a defining character of Nillumbik.
- Resource sharing.
- Nillumbik Art Collection online.
- Quality events showcasing unique Nillumbik identity.
- Inclusion of produce growers and producers to events.
- Welcome new residents to creative Nillumbik.

Quotes:

“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.” Bromley, E. and Mooney, L. (2021). Artbeat of Nillumbik at Eltham Library Community Gallery 19–24 January Artist Report

“A place that encourages the arts to flourish” Nillumbik Shire Council: Our People, Our Places, Our Future Survey Responses (2021, Share your big ideas)

“Recognition that Nillumbik is different to other areas and as such be protected ...” Nillumbik Shire Council: Our People, Our Places, Our Future Survey Responses (2021 Top 3 Things)

“A shire of vibrant villages” Nillumbik Shire Council: Our People, Our Places, Our Future Survey Responses (2021, Share your big ideas)

“Nillumbik is unique: our places have cultural, environmental and community importance”. Nillumbik Shire Council: Our People, Our Places, Our Future Survey Responses (2021, Our People Ideas)

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Implementation and Evaluation.

An Annual Implementation Plan will outline how Council will deliver activities that contribute to outcomes, with timeframes, areas of responsibility and any partners. An annual review and summary report will be shared with Councillors and key stakeholders.

The Arts and Culture Strategy includes evaluation consistently as part of the normal work process. Evaluation findings are used to inform future decision-making ongoing during the strategy.

The strategy will be evaluated for its efficacy and contribution to the operations of the Council. Assessing the success of the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 and improving its next iteration is essential to building the capability, increased productivity and value of cultural development activities to the Council.

In addition to Council's indicators for measuring success in quantitative terms, the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 will work with the planning framework and measurable cultural outcomes developed by the Cultural Development Network (CDN).

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Appendix 1: Cultural Development Network (CDN)

The Cultural Development Network has developed six essential steps that enable us to undertake outcome focussed planning and evaluation.

These essential steps are:

- Based on values
- Directed towards goals
- Focused on outcomes
- Informed by evidence
- Underpinned by a theory of change
- Respondent to evaluation

Based on values

The plan responds to the collective values of the community that underpin the strategy. Gained from existing documents and supplementary consultations to complete information or test assumptions. Values will be evident in the council's stated goals (vision, purpose, mission etc.).

Directed towards goals

The plan is directed towards goals, the desired long-term futures determined by the council and articulated in the Council's strategic plan. The existing six guiding principles of Councils are set to enable specific measurable achievement towards the goals.

Focussed on outcomes

The plan is focussed on outcomes, that is, the difference our work will make to those we are responsible to serve, rather than the activity undertaken to get there. Measurable outcomes help us determine whether objectives were met, and therefore addressing the goals.

Informed by evidence

The plan will articulate decisions informed by evidence. This includes practice knowledge, published research or data that provides information about the local context, the issues being identified that will help or hinder the way forward, and approaches to reaching the intended outcomes.

Underpinned by a theory of change

The plan uses a theory of change to assist and explain choices of activities. Theory of change is the reason why we do what we do. It can be represented by this short summary:

We are looking for . . . (this strategic objective), and we know . . . (this evidence), therefore, we will do . . . (these activities)

This section is where the previous four sections come together to form the 'plan' into strategic objectives which are unique to the organisation, given the context above.

Measurable Outcomes

The schema of measurable outcomes of cultural engagement is based on the premise that cultural products and activities do not hold intrinsic value in and of themselves. Value is generated or experienced as humans engage with the artwork or experience, with different individuals perceiving or receiving this value in different ways. Therefore, the outcomes are not assessing 'quality' or 'excellence' of the cultural experience, but the impact on the person who engages with it.

Evaluation

Evaluation will determine the effectiveness of this Arts and Culture Strategy. The evaluation process should occur at different times throughout the life of the strategy: from when it is just written; as it is being used; and as it reaches key thresholds.

Takso Outcomes Planning Platform is an option for planning, recording and evaluating the activities identified in the plan.

Takso is a new platform developed for the arts sector that until now has not had a consistent method for measuring the impact of its activities. The framework that underpins this strategy is also used at the activity level and every activity of Council can be recorded in a consistent method, contributing to a larger community of interest including other councils large and small, artists and producers, arts and cultural organisations

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Appendix 2: Document Review:

An analysis of relevant, pre-existing data and feedback from the following documents was undertaken in the development of this strategy:

Nillumbik Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

Community Vision – Nillumbik 2040.

What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy Report 2022-26

Youth Strategy 2022-2026

Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Nillumbik Community Pandemic Recovery Plan

Nillumbik Shire Art Collection Policy

Nillumbik Shire Art Collection Curatorial Guidelines.

Nillumbik Shire Public Art Policy

Nillumbik Shire Public Art Implementation Guidelines.

Nillumbik Health and Well Being Plan 2021-2025.

Digital Nillumbik Heritage Guide.

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Appendix 3: References

1. The Arts Ripple Effect: Valuing the Arts in Communities, Creative Victoria.
2. Participate Nillumbik Arts & Culture Online Survey. Nillumbik Shire Council, 2021.
- 3 Arts in Daily Life: Australian participation in the Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, 2014.
- 4 What We Know Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation Summary Report, Nillumbik Shire Council, 2021.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 The arts and creative industries in health promotion: An Evidence Check rapid review by the Sax Institute for The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, March 2020.
- 7 Understanding the value of arts and culture – The AHRC Cultural Value Project 2016 – Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kazynska
- 8 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/sociallyengaged-practice>.
- 9 Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life Age UK 2018
https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/rb_apr18_creative_and_cultural_activities_wellbeing.pdf
- 10 Workspaces: Why People Thrive in Co-Working Spaces. Harvard Business Review, Gretchen Spreitzer, Peter Bacivice, Lyndon Garrett, September 2015.
- 11 CREATIVE COMMUNITIES The cultural benefits of Victoria’s public libraries Summary Report, State Library of Victoria.
- 12 Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, Australia Council for the Arts, 2017.
- 13 Creative State 2025. Creative Victoria 2021.
- 14 Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Yarra City Council. Also see City of Melbourne Creative Strategy 2018-28 for discussion on arts and culture activates economy.
- 15 What We Know Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26 Community Consultation SUMMARY REPORT, Nillumbik Shire Council 2021.
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- 17 Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, Australia Council for the Arts, 2017.
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Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026

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Nillumbik Shire Council 2021.

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What We Know

Arts and Culture Strategy 2022–26
Community Consultation

SUMMARY REPORT



ARTS AND
CULTURE





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 through 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

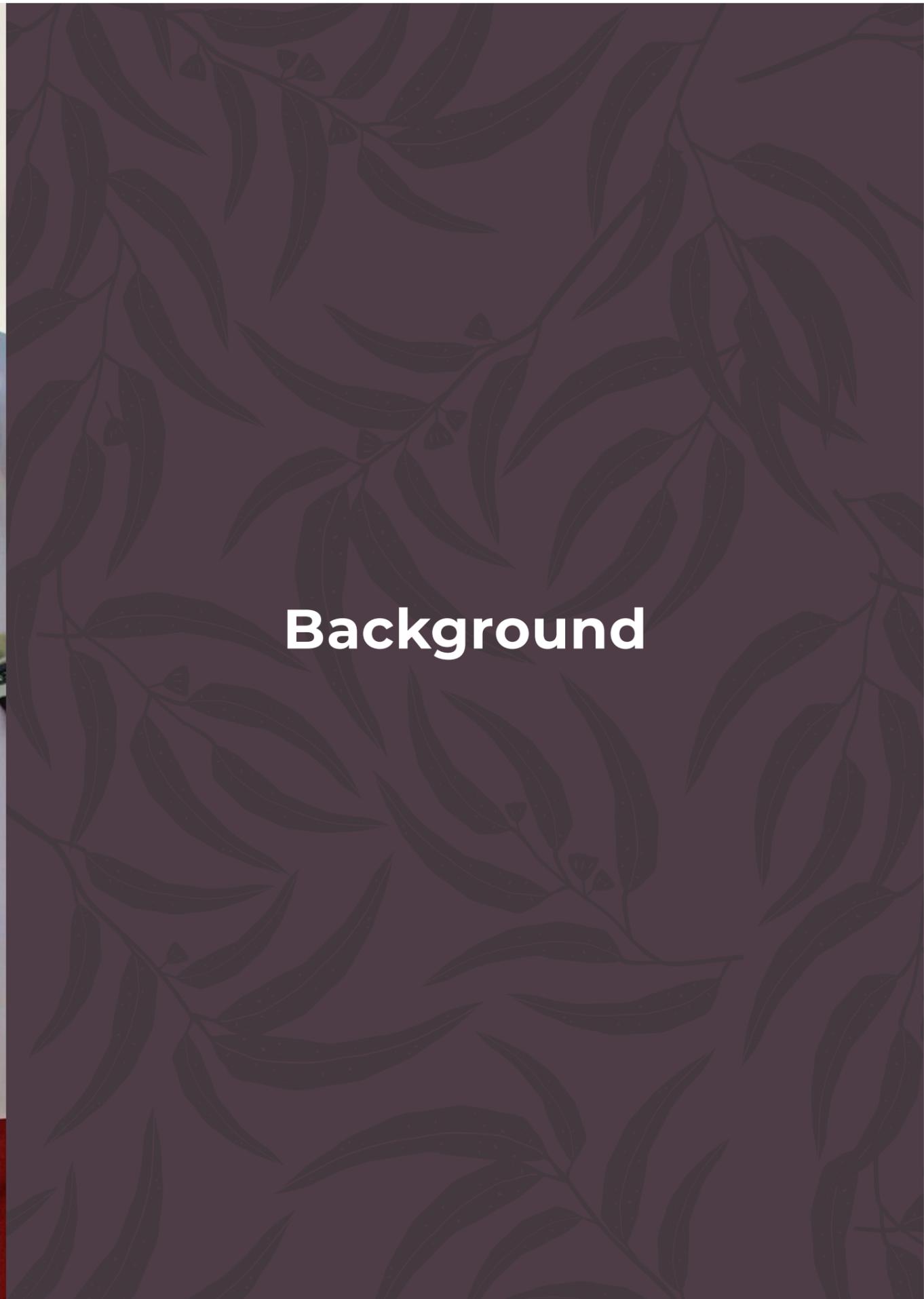
3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

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 Policyperson* 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*.

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





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.

At

Methodology

Process from Consultation to Key Findings

CONSULTATION METHODS

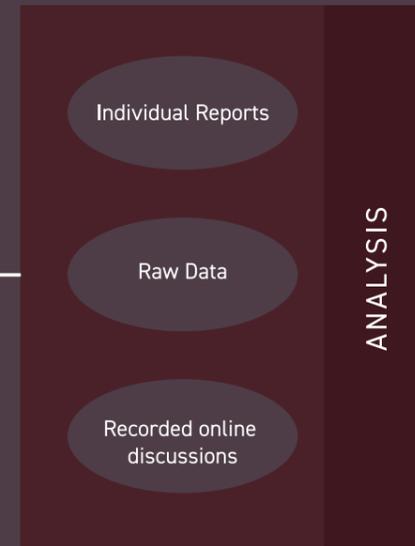
- Artists Engaging with the Community
- In-person Surveys
- Online Surveys
- Invitation for Individual Feedback
- Focused Discussions with smaller groups (in-person and online)

ENGAGEMENTS

- Pop Up Roving Performances
- Our People, Our Place, Our Future Consultation
- Artbeat of Nillumbik Engagement Activity
- Participate Nillumbik Arts and Culture Online Survey
- Individual Submissions
- Focus Group Discussions
- Artopia Focus Group
- Arts Recovery Event
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Focus Group Discussion

WHO WAS CONSULTED

- General Public
- Public with an interest in the Arts
- Local Food Connect
- Nillumbik Councillors
- Nillumbik Shire Council Staff
- Historical Societies
- Artists & other Creative Practitioners
- Representatives of the Wurundjeri people



KEY FINDINGS

- ### 1 Interconnectedness

 - 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
- ### 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

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; through 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 through 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 through 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 through 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 through 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 through 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.

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

“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

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 through 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.

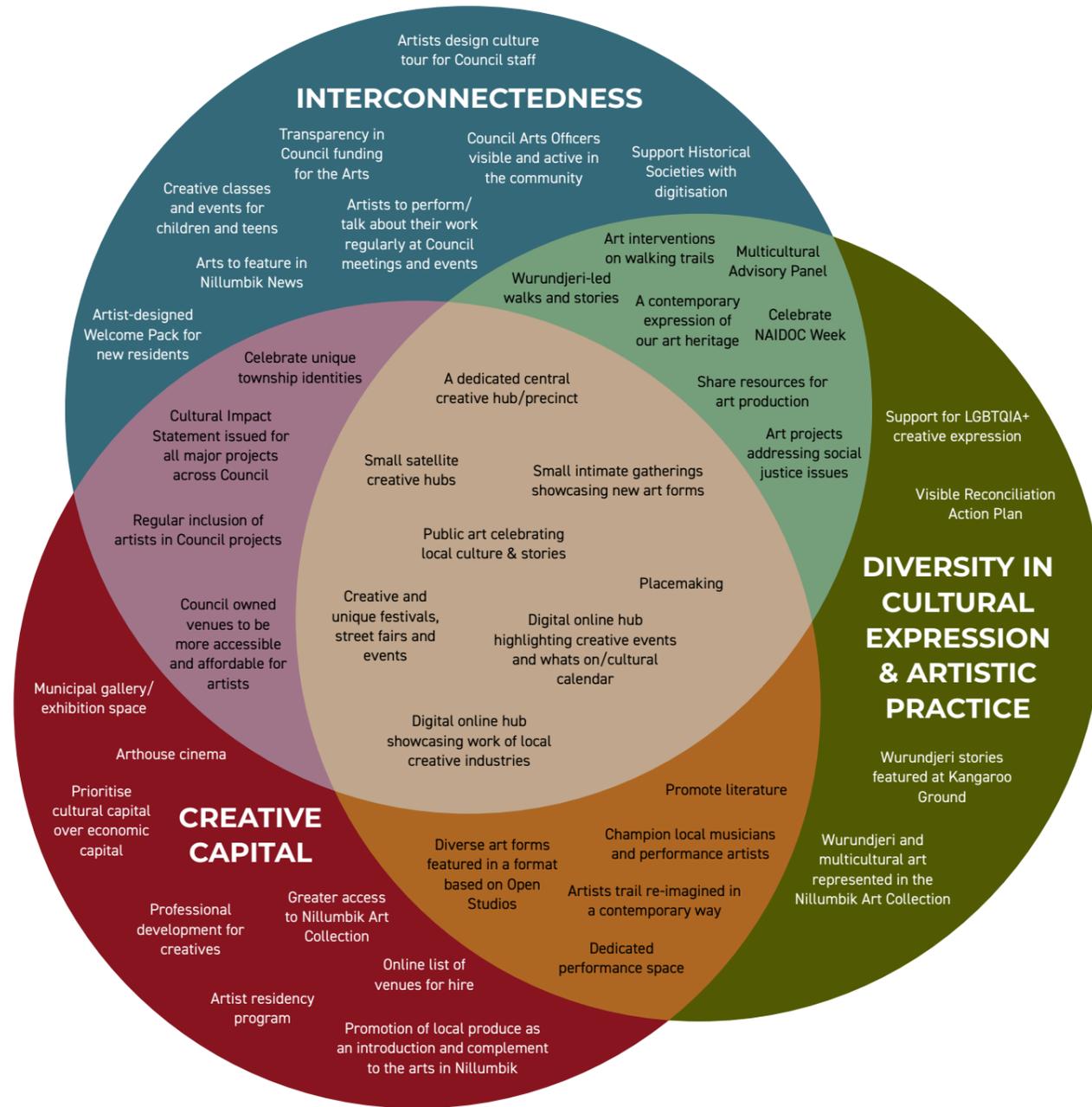
“We have heard that the people of Nillumbik would like Wurundjeri Woiwurrung arts and culture to be more visible and present in the area. We agree, Wurundjeri arts and culture should be part of everyday life and accessible to all.

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness
SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

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.

- 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.

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.

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness
 SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

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 it 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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness
 SUB-THEME: 1.1 Physical Spaces for Connection and Creation

“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

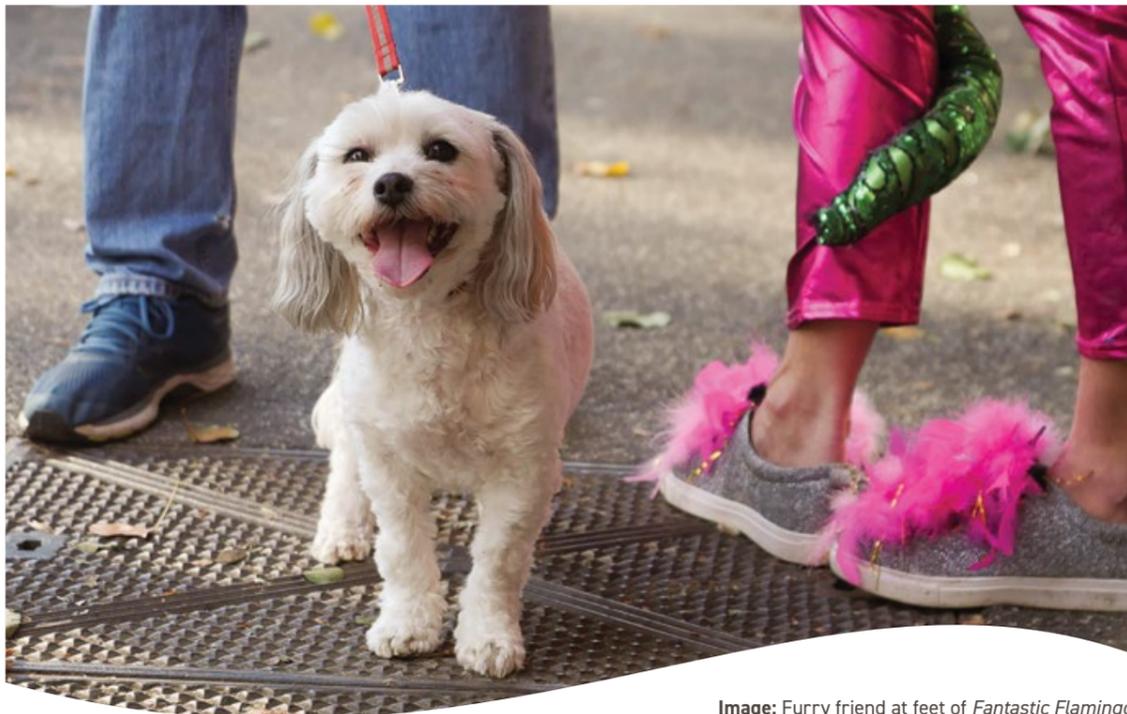


Image: Furry friend at feet of *Fantastic Flamingo* by New Heights Circus at Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness
 SUB-THEME: 1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

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 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

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.

Council visible and active in the Creative Community

“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

“[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.

“We’ve finally met people within Council who were at arts events. Previously, Council had a closed door policy.” ¹⁵⁶



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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

Funding and Transparency in Communication around Funding

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

“...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

“...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

“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

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

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.

“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

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

“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

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

“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

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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.2 Demonstrating the value of Arts & Culture in the community

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 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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

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 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

Reposition our artistic heritage for a contemporary audience

“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 Trail 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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

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 Pantom 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

THEME: 1. Interconnectedness

SUB-THEME: 1.3 Connecting to our heritage in engaging and contemporary ways

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 through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

"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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

"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

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

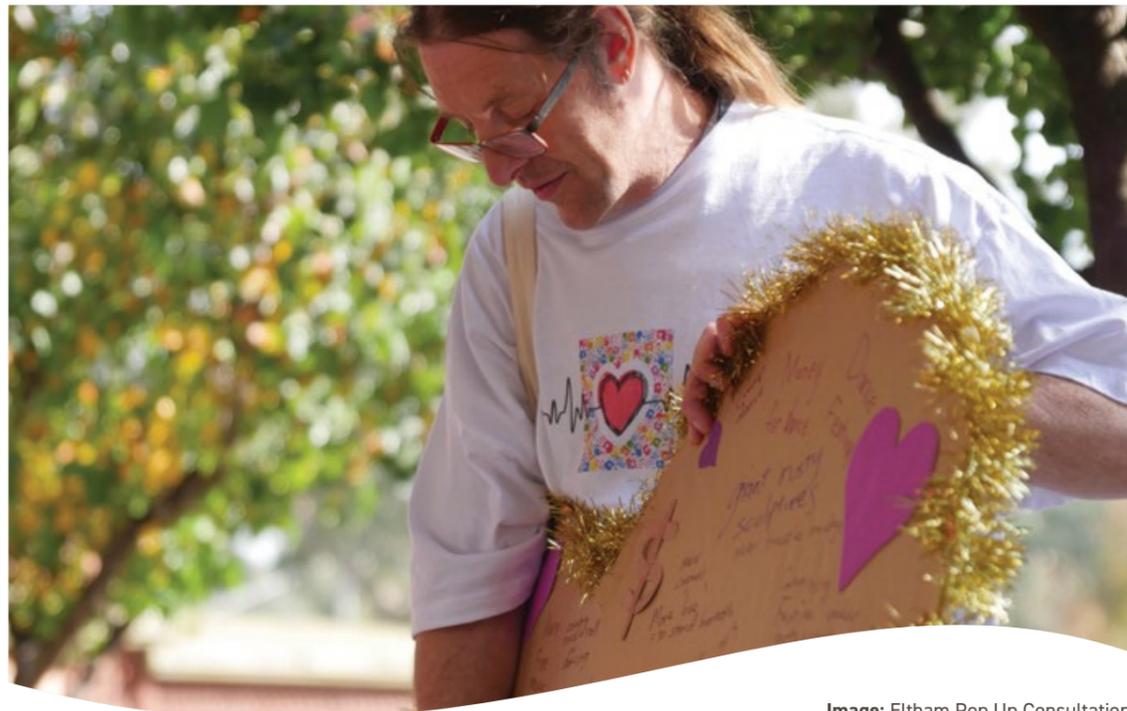


Image: Eltham Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

“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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

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

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

“Large sculptures to reflect our passion for the arts...”³⁴⁹

“More public art.” ³⁵⁹

“More public sculpture, we’re meant to be an arts area, where is the art?” ³⁵⁰

More outdoor public art—visually welcome markers.”³⁶⁰

“Something that thousands can connect with everyday, art that you can see whilst walking, driving.” ³⁵¹

“There were requests for more Public Art...” ³⁶¹

“More visible public art.” ³⁵²

“More public art.” ³⁶²

“Want big striking permanent art like decorated benches that fits in with the area.” ³⁵³

“Art in parks, gardens, and homes and in the streets to happen upon.” ³⁶³

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

“Great public art projects.” ³⁶⁴

“Would like to see more Public Art around the communities/street.” ³⁵⁵

“A commissioned public sculpture.” ³⁶⁵

“Improving the built environment with public art and celebrating artistic heritage.” ³⁵⁶

“Outdoor sculptures and installations... murals and art in public spaces.” ³⁶⁶

“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

“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

“I think Council needs to build up its art collection and display it in public places.” ³⁷²

“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 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 through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.1 Celebration of the unique identity of Nillumbik

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 through 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 Policyperson by Stiltwalkers Australia at Diamond Creek Pop Up Consultation, photographer Jamie Robertson

Digital Online Hub

Extend engagement with the arts through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

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 what’s 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 through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

Inclusion of Artists in Council Projects

Strengthen cultural awareness and expression through 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 through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

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 through 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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

Professional Development program for artists

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

THEME: 2. Creative Capital

SUB-THEME: 2.2 Promoting and supporting our artists and creative industries

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

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 brought 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

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

“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 through 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.)

“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

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

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

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



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

THEME: 3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice

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

THEME: 3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice
 SUB-THEME: 3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

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

THEME: 3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice
 SUB-THEME: 3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

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 through 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

THEME: 3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice
SUB-THEME: 3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

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 Woivurrung Elders and younger members of the Wurundjeri Woivurrung community so that future Elders can be mentored on Country." 584

"Creating opportunities for Wurundjeri Woivurrung 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 Woivurrung people

THEME: 3. Diversity in cultural expression and artistic practice
SUB-THEME: 3.1 Share creative skills, understanding and a sense of delight

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



**ARTS AND
CULTURE**



**PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS – Draft Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-26
 Engagement 2 - 22 May 2022**

Contribution ID	Summary of Submission	Officer Response
20662	<p>Do you agree with Goal One: An Interconnected Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal One Opportunities to connect and collaborate are essential for working artists. Artists intersect with all levels of our community and are uniquely placed to share stories and new perspectives on who we are and who we want to be.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Two: A Visible and Supported Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Two Placing the Arts in pride of place as a cultural, economic, and social asset will help on many fronts - Visibility and accessibility of arts projects encourage community participation and activate public space in a positive proactive way. Support in the form of regular and meaningful grants, procurement of local artists for events and arts initiatives, fostering community and networking for local artists, and supporting youth arts and music are all crucial areas for local government.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Three: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Three Diversity is important. You can't be what you can't see right!? However local govt shouldn't try to enforce quotas or tick boxes in every area for every project. This becomes tokenism and may diffuse the power of affirmative action. Instead Arts projects should have clear aims and focus on certain areas of diversity eg. Youth, inter generational, addressing gender inequality, and fostering cultural diverse perspectives. The merit and quality of the artists should be taken into account alongside diversity goals. Resilience will come with regular supported opportunities both paid and informal through access to spaces and networks.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Four: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community? Somewhat agree Any additional comments on Goal Four It is good to foster local artists, however Nillumbik has many artistic communities across visual, performing, digital, and media arts. Saying one particular style or medium is distinctly Nillumbik overly narrow. Encouraging artists to create, respond, and engage with the landscape, communities, history and culture is a better way to foster diverse artistic practice in the area.</p> <p>Any additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026? Artists will be recovering from the impacts of COVID for a number of years. Supporting the arts through council sponsored events, funding, and opportunities will benefit the artists, their families, as well as the broader community through the positive effects of Arts on public spaces, mental health, and belonging.</p>	<p>No changes to Strategy recommended. Submitter in support of the draft Strategy.</p> <p>The additional comments under each goal are noted and appreciated. These sentiments have been captured in the <i>What We Know: Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Community Consultation Summary Report</i> and have contributed to the development of the goals in the Strategy.</p> <p>Goal Four additional comment. Where the strategy refers to artists in general, this encompasses practitioners/creatives of all art forms.</p>
20661	<p>Do you agree with Goal One: An Interconnected Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal One No additional comments.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Two: A Visible and Supported Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Two We would like more publicity of local events such as markets etc.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Three: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Three No additional comments.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Four: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Four No additional comments.</p> <p>Any additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026? No additional comments.</p>	<p>No changes to Strategy recommended. Submitter in support of the draft Strategy.</p>
20660	<p>Do you agree with Goal One: An Interconnected Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal One No additional comments.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Two: A Visible and Supported Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Two No additional comments.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Three: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Three No additional comments.</p> <p>Do you agree with Goal Four: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Four No additional comments.</p> <p>Any additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026? Actually enjoyed reading this strategy .. not the norm for local government documents. Reads well. Hope it will include lots of images too. Good clear goals developed with community. We understand what the plan is in terms of the goals. The cultural outcome information academic but interesting.</p>	<p>No changes to Strategy recommended. Submitter in support of the draft Strategy.</p> <p>Additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Noted and appreciated. The final design of the Strategy will include images and graphics to enhance the publication and strengthen the messaging provided in text format.</p>

<p>20659</p>	<p>Do you agree with Goal One: An Interconnected Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal One No additional comments. Do you agree with Goal Two: A Visible and Supported Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Two No additional comments. Do you agree with Goal Three: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Three No additional comments. Do you agree with Goal Four: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Four No additional comments. Any additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026? No additional comments.</p>	<p>No changes to Strategy recommended. Submitter in support of the draft Strategy.</p>
<p>20658</p>	<p>Do you agree with Goal One: An Interconnected Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal One Perfect goal as the first. Do you agree with Goal Two: A Visible and Supported Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Two No additional comments. Do you agree with Goal Three: A Diverse and Resilient Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Three No additional comments. Do you agree with Goal Four: A Distinctively Nillumbik Creative Community? Agree Any additional comments on Goal Four No additional comments. Any additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026? I like that you went out to ask people what they wanted and listened to them. There were lots of opportunities to get involved and the performers at the markets were great. thank you</p>	<p>No changes to Strategy recommended. Submitter in support of the draft Strategy.</p> <p>Additional comments on the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 Noted and appreciated.</p>

Draft Access Equity and Inclusion Policy – March 2022

DRAFT



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If you require the Access Equity and Inclusion Policy in an alternative format, please email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or call 9433 3111.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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

Inclusion statement

The following statement is intended to be a short version of our Policy commitment for use after the Acknowledgement of Country in Council publications:

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are reduced and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some groups and individuals experience more barriers than others.



- Council can be contacted through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS). The NRS is available as a phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. All calls are confidential. Users must be registered via www.relayservice.gov.au to make and receive calls:
- TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for Council on 9433 3111.
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech) users phone 1300 555 727, then ask for Council on 9433 3111.
- A Hearing loop is located at the Civic Drive Customer Service Counter, Civic Centre, Civic Drive Greensborough
- Communication boards are available at the Civic Drive Customer Service Counter, Civic Centre, Civic Drive Greensborough.
- Interpreting services are available.

Purpose

This Nillumbik Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy outlines Councils commitment to equitable and inclusive practice across all council activities. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Demonstrate leadership
- Apply a lens over all council services
- Inform council decision making and investment
- Identify when and how we advocate
- Identify and consider unique and intersecting needs of priority groups
- Commit to strengthening relationships with partners, local service providers, organisation and community.

Context

The role of local government

Local government plays an important role in promoting access, equity and inclusion. As a public authority, Council must act in accordance with legislation that outlines the role of local government in creating equal and inclusive communities including:

- The *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* emphasises the role of local government in community engagement and consideration of the needs of the community in decision making. It also requires that councils provide accessible and equitable services that are responsive to the diverse needs of the community.
- The *Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020* formalises the critical role local government plays in creating more equal and inclusive communities.
- The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* recognises the significant role of councils in improving the health and wellbeing of people in their municipality. It also requires councils to support the implementation of state priorities which include a focus on priority groups to reduce health inequalities and achieve a fair and equal society.
- The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires Councils to give proper consideration to human rights when delivering services, developing policies and projects, managing risks, making decisions and managing complaints. This includes the right to:
 - Respect – encouraging a culture of respect and responsibility that celebrates diversity and encourages participation
 - Equality – encouraging innovation in how we respect, promote and protect access, equity and inclusion
 - Freedom – promoting freedom of violence, harassment and bullying by ensuring human rights protections are in place
 - Dignity – our decisions will be informed by the varying needs of people within the community at different life stages and abilities.
- The *Victorian Disability Act 2006* requires local governments to develop a Disability Plan that focuses on reducing barriers to accessing facilities and employment, promoting inclusion and changing attitudes and practices towards people with a disability.
- The *Climate Change Act 2017* outlines the role of local government in supporting vulnerable communities and promoting social justice and

intergenerational equity. It also includes principles of equity and community engagement to inform decision making.

Achieving a fair and inclusive community requires more than compliance with legislation and the law. It requires a culture where shared attitudes, values and behaviours that influence the decision making, service provision, and operational practices of our organisation uphold the human rights and principles of equity and inclusion. It also relies on the use of evidence to inform decision making and collaboration from community and partners with local experience and expertise.

Community context

Resilient communities and individuals bounce back better from adversity, disaster, pressure and stress. The Nillumbik community has demonstrated its resilience and resourcefulness through experiences such as bushfire and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although everyone in the community is affected by these events, some people and groups are more vulnerable to the effects of these disasters.

The nature of disadvantage and inequality continues to evolve. In the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, many people are experiencing crisis and accessing support services for the first time. Other experiences that can lead to barriers or discrimination that will be considered when applying this policy include:

- Chronic disease or disability
- Disaster, emergency or extreme weather event
- Family violence
- Financial insecurity
- Homelessness or housing insecurity
- Loneliness and social isolation
- Mental illness
- Unemployment or under-employment.

Priority groups

For some people living in our community, there may be additional challenges in feeling included, accessing places, spaces, resources and opportunities. We recognise that some groups have been disadvantaged by inequality and discrimination, meaning that these groups may need additional assistance to reduce the barriers to access and participation. In supporting these groups, Council's focus is on achieving equality of outcomes for people by providing additional support to ensure that these groups are able to access the same opportunities as everyone else. Priority groups in Nillumbik include:

- First Nations People
- LGBTIQ+ people
- People of low socio-economic status
- Older people
- People from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People who live rurally or are geographically isolated
- People with a disability and/or chronic disease
- Refugees and people seeking asylum

- Women

Principles

The following principles represent values that will inform the application of this policy.

Leadership

Leadership is being accountable and transparent to the community. It involves modelling best practice within the community, in our decision making and our organisational culture. Demonstrating leadership means taking chances and advocating with and for the community to achieve fair and equitable outcomes.

Community

Everybody has a role in creating a more equal society. We value collective experience and knowledge of the community and will work together to ensure people can make decisions that impact them and take action on issues that are important to them. Collaboration with community will be achieved through partnerships, participation and deliberative community engagement approaches.

Equity

Equity is the commitment to apply a fair and just approach to Council practices. Equity recognises that all groups and individuals are different and some experience intersecting lifestyle, health, identity and social factors that create more barriers to positive outcomes than others.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality describes how systems and structures interact on multiple and intersecting levels to create overlapping barriers and discrimination based on characteristics. Customised responses are required in order for everyone to achieve a fair outcome appropriate with their rights and needs. Intersecting identities include characteristics such as:

- ability
- age
- faith
- gender expression
- language
- location
- mental health
- nationality
- race
- sexual orientation
- socio-economic status

Human rights and social justice

“Social justice and human rights both highlight the importance of equality, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion. And

both place the concept of “justice” front and center in efforts to forge a more stable and equitable world.”¹

Respect for human rights and social justice is the cornerstone of strong communities in which everyone can make a contribution and be included. Progressing human rights and social justice requires strong advocacy, no tolerance for discrimination and proactive action to tackle structural and systemic discrimination, oppression, power and privilege.

Council has adopted a social justice and human rights based approach which:

- regards human rights as an opportunity to improve our decision making
- makes human rights a part of our everyday work
- treats everyone as contributing to a human rights culture
- allows us to monitor progress over time in reducing inequality and discrimination.

These strategies aim to ensure the participation of people affected by policy interventions, with a view to empowering all members of our community.

Our commitment

We will:

- Consider access, equity and inclusion in all decision making.
- Use evidence to inform deliberate and meaningful advocacy.
- Demonstrate Council’s values to protect and enhance inclusion in the community.
- Empower community to meaningfully shape decisions that impact their lives and stand up for themselves and each other.
- Celebrate the diversity of our community and actively work to reduce inequalities.
- Model inclusive and flexible workplace culture and practice.
- Invest in Councillor, employee and volunteer development to increase knowledge and practices that promote access, equity and inclusion.
- Provide accessible and adaptive information and communications that are representative of the community, regardless of physical, social and cultural barriers.
- Foster democratic representation and meaningful community engagement.
- Champion equity, participation and inclusion as we work to eliminate barriers and reduce discrimination.
- Design and deliver services that meet the diverse and future needs of our community and reduce barriers to access and inclusion.

¹ United Nations (2009) Launch of the World Day of Social Justice, February 10 Highlights from Panel Discussion. Available at:
https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlJustice/launch10Feb09/highlights_panel.pdf

- Plan, design and maintain places and spaces that are welcoming, safe, accessible and inclusive of the needs of all community members.
- Celebrate, embrace and be informed by our unique identity and acknowledge our changing community.

Application

This policy applies to the delivery of Council services, programs and activities as well as the design, provision and management of facilities, infrastructure and open spaces.

All Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors carrying out work on behalf of Council are required to comply with this policy.

Implementation and review

This policy is supported by strategies, plans and programs across Council to ensure that Council's commitments are implemented and maintained. Progress will be monitored and outcomes will be reported regularly to the community through Council's annual report.

This policy will be reviewed every four years following the adoption of the four-year Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan. A review will consider how effectively principles and policy commitments have been embedded across the organisation, strength of partnerships and community impact.

Opportunities to improve access, equity and inclusion are also identified and monitored through Gender Impact Assessments which are undertaken when developing new policies, programs and service reviews.

Complaints

We are committed to enabling members of our community to raise their concerns about Council with ease and confidence and managing these complaints fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

A complaint is a way for members of our community to let Council know that they are dissatisfied with:

- the quality of an action, decision made, facility or service provided by a Council or a contractor engaged by Council
- the delay by Council or contractor engaged by Council in taking action, making a decision or providing a service
- policy decision made by Council or contractor engaged by Council.

Complaints provide Council with important information about its services, our customers' experiences, and can create an opportunity to address customer concerns, build greater community advocacy for Council and its services, as well as identify areas of service that need improvement.

Complaints can be made in accordance with Nillumbik Shire Council's Complaints Handling Policy. For additional information or including our Complaints Handling Policy, please visit [Making a complaint - Nillumbik Shire Council](#)

Supporting Council policies, strategies and plans

- Arts and Culture Strategy (under development)
- Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019 – 2022
- Climate Action Plan (under development)
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Vision – Nillumbik 2040
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Council Plan 2022 – 2025
- Customer First Strategy
- Disability Action Plan 2020 – 2024
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025
- Housing Strategy (to be developed)
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Municipal Planning Strategy
- Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025
- Nillumbik Placemaking Framework
- Open Space Strategy (to be developed)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (to be developed)
- Reconciliation Charter
- Recreation and Leisure Strategy (under development)
- Youth Strategy 2022 – 2026

Supporting legislation

Commonwealth

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

State

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Climate Change Act 2017*
- *Crimes Act 2005*
- *Disability Act 2006*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Mental Health Act 1986*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985*

- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*

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Glossary

Class is a system of structured inequality based on unequal distributions of power, education, wealth and income that determine social position and status.

Diversity is what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences.

Disadvantage is a term that is often used to describe inequity faced by people of lower social position. It is socially constructed, imposed on people and limits their opportunities in life or health.

Equality is the state of affairs that prevails when all individuals and/or groups of people are given equal treatment, regardless of need or outcome.

Equity is the state of affairs that prevails when support or resources are distributed according to need, the purpose being to ensure more equal outcomes for all.

Family violence is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members.

Gender is the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.

Human rights are basic entitlements that belong to every one of us, regardless of our background, where we live, what we look like, what we think or what we believe.

Inclusion occurs when people feel, and are, valued and respected. Regardless of their personal characteristic or circumstance.

Intersectionality describes how systems and structures interact on multiple and intersecting levels to create overlapping barriers and discrimination based on characteristics.

Sex is the biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female.

Social inclusion is about people being able to participate in society and creating conditions for equal opportunities for all. Social inclusion requires that all individuals be able to 'secure a job; access services; connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; deal with personal crisis; and have their voices heard.

Social justice seeks to create equal political, economic, and social rights for all people.

Vulnerability refers to the inability of people, organisations, and societies to withstand adverse impacts from multiple stressors to which they are exposed.



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Submissions and officer recommendations - Draft Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy

No.	Submitter	Submission	Officer recommendation
1.	25/03/2022 [Redacted]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any priority groups missing? young people I wonder if the community context bit could be a bit more reflective of makeup of Nillumbik - including our relatively high (or is it low?!) SEIFA index, meaning people with little financial resources may experience a bigger gap between their lifestyle options and the bulk of people around them and including our geography and impact of little public transport. ? Strengthen statement re internal workforce issues - including addressing barriers to recruitment ? more recognition of impact of colonisation ongoing racism and bias for Aboriginal people and Nillumbik need to prioritise local recognition of this and reconciliation actions ? commitment to supporting universal service delivery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy change recommended. Add young people to priority groups. Policy change recommended. Add local narrative, data and community profile information to policy community context section. Policy change recommended. Strengthen commitment related to workplace flexibility to more broadly reflect strategies and actions outlined in the Gender Equality Action Plan. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. This will be addressed through development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan in consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, stakeholders and community. No policy change recommended. Universal service delivery is critical for some services delivered by Council such as early education services, but for others the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy promotes targeted service delivery to reduce inequalities.
2.	28/03/2022 [Redacted]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree with the commitments outlined in the Policy? Agree What does a fair and inclusive Nillumbik look like to you? Equitable access to all stakeholders. Where all stakeholders are treated equitably. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No policy change recommended. Noted. No policy change recommended. Noted.
3.	30/03/2022 [Redacted]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What does a fair and inclusive Nillumbik look like to you? To employ staff & provide opportunities based solely on ability & suitability not gender, race or sexuality. Can we change women to 'women and girls'? This would emphasize that barriers to community participation can exist at all ages (e.g. access to sport, education etc). Perhaps consider rewording "barriers are reduced" in the policy statement - maybe barriers are 'addressed' or 'removed' is more appropriate? It may be worth having a short paragraph at the beginning of the strategy explaining the difference between equity and equality? Assisting with an understanding that the reason the identified groups are receiving targeted support, more resourcing etc. is because they are already disadvantaged in various aspects. Perhaps this fits well under the Principles section? In the section regarding 'Community Context' - perhaps consider retitling the paragraph to something different? It might be construed as this strategy only being brought about due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is not the only context in which the strategy exists In the principles section under community, I think it would be worthwhile outlining the importance of both formal and informal partnerships In the commitment statement, 'we will consider access, equity and inclusion in all decision making' sounds a little bit non-committal. Could stronger language be used? E.g. "Access, equity and inclusion will be at the forefront of all decision making" Include LGBTQIA+ in the glossary for anyone who may not understand the acronym. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative already in place through the Gender Equality Action Plan. Policy change recommended. Add girls to priority groups listed. Policy change recommended. Change reduce barriers to address barriers. Policy change recommended. Add explanation of the differences between equity and equality into the equity paragraph in principles section. Policy change recommended. Additional community context to be included. Policy change recommended. Add informal and formal partnerships to community principle. Policy change recommended. Strengthen policy commitment number 1 to: Access, equity and inclusion will be at the forefront of all decision making. Policy change recommended. Add LGBTQIA+ to glossary.
4. 5.	07/04/2022 05/04/2022 [Redacted]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I think there could be more emphasis on accessibility and the needs of people living with a disability. How will this policy support Wurundjeri Woi wurrung community with truth telling and sharing their stories? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy change recommended. Add to community context section. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. This will be addressed through development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action

No.	Submitter	Submission	Officer recommendation
		<p>3. I wanted to know what actions would occur based on the policy.</p> <p>4. Will the Council be organising official Welcome to Country & Smoking ceremonies for key council events, such as festivals, celebrations etc?</p> <p>5. How can Nillumbik Council be a more inclusive and welcoming Council. Can all Customer Service centres (Leisure services, Community centres and Council customer service) have Wurundjeri Language, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag and a Rainbow flag?</p> <p>6. How can we ensure that vulnerable communities voices are consulted? Does Council ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, CALD community, LGBTQIA+ community and people living with a disability are employed by council, on the advisory panels, and are Council using contractors who are from these communities?</p> <p>7. This policy doesn't touch on racism, unconscious bias, it would be healthy to discuss these issues as this is a massive barrier for diverse communities.</p> <p>8. Would Council consider doing an Access Audit for all Council Buildings? How can we make sure that Council buildings are accessible for all. What can we do to improve these sites? There are always improvements to be made.</p> <p>9. Education is an important part of progress and change. What training can be provided to councillors and council staff. What topics can we discuss as a community to help instigate change?</p> <p>10. Could Council start a programme where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees are introduced to entry level jobs at Council to help make Council more inclusive and provide opportunities for Aboriginal people.</p> <p>11. Could Council have a festival or event that celebrates these underrepresented groups through food and music.</p> <p>12. When inviting speakers to speak at Council events can Council approach people from underrepresented groups.</p> <p>13. When promoting Council, can Council use more inclusive imagery, with people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.</p> <p>14. Can Council celebrate and start to have discussions on significant dates such as: NAIDOC week, IDAHOBIT, National Reconciliation Week, Harmony Day, Cultural Diversity Week, Trans Day of Visibility, Human Rights Day, Melbourne Pride, National Close The Gap Day, World Down Syndrome Day, World Autism Awareness Day, Lesbian Visibility Day, National Sorry Day, Mabo Day, World Refugee Day etc.</p> <p>15. Can Council start to discuss what the 26th of January can mean for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians?</p>	<p>Plan in consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, stakeholders and community.</p> <p>3. No policy change recommended. Access, Equity and Inclusion actions that arise from the Policy will be identified visually in a number of Council action plans outlined in the supporting Council policies, strategies and plans section of the policy. This policy will be reviewed every four years following the adoption of the four-year Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan. A review will consider how effectively principles and policy commitments have been embedded across the organisation, strength of partnerships and community impact.</p> <p>4. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Council will establish Welcome to Country budget and protocols through development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan in consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, stakeholders and community.</p> <p>5. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative recommended. Council is currently undertaking training for staff on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and will undertake Rainbow Ready Mapping for services to determine actions LGBTQIA+ inclusion this includes consideration of signage such as Rainbow Flags. Council has undertaken a cultural competency survey with regards to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency to determine organisational training needs and is working in partnership with Indigenous Employment Partners to address these needs through development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan has begun with an aim to be finalised and endorsed in 2023. In developing the Reconciliation Action Plan consideration will be given to Acknowledgement of Country, Woi-wurrung language, signage, flags and symbols at Council and community facilities in Nillumbik.</p> <p>6. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative already in place. Actions in the Gender Equity Action Plan and Draft Communications Strategy aim to strengthen Council's commitment to engaging with priority groups and communities.</p> <p>7. Policy change recommended. Strengthen commitment to addressing racism and unconscious bias within policy commitments and community context.</p> <p>8. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Actions are outside of the scope of the policy. Access audits are conducted on all facilities from a disability perspective and gender, access, equity and inclusion are considered when starting all new projects and developing or upgrading facilities through the Gender Impact Assessment process.</p> <p>9. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative already in place. Actions are outside of the scope of the policy. Work is underway in this space with the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 committing to build organisational capacity and deliver training to create a more inclusive workplace with a focus on: gender; sexual orientation; age; ethnicity; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status; disability; and, class. This is also supported through the community training calendar which responds to local needs and reflects Council strategic priorities.</p> <p>10. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Development of an Aboriginal Employment Strategy is an action that organisations need to commit to when developing their first Reconciliation Action Plan in order to gain Reconciliation Australia endorsement. Development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan has begun with an aim to be finalised and endorsed in 2023.</p> <p>11. No change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Actions are outside the scope of the policy. Community festivals are currently funded through</p>

No.	Submitter	Submission	Officer recommendation
			<p>Council funding agreements and responsive grants. Council will be reviewing events funding and give consideration to the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy commitments.</p> <p>12. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Actions are outside the scope of the policy. Priority is being given to diverse speakers at Council events and events processes and procedures are being reviewed so this is considered.</p> <p>13. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative already in place. This has been identified as an action area through the Gender Equality Action Plan and undertaking Gender Impact Assessments and work is being undertaken to establish a photo library for communications with more diverse representation for use in communications.</p> <p>14. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative is already underway. This aligns with policy commitment number 5. Work is underway to coordinate cause days that are celebrated and supported each year by Council to ensure they align with the Community Vision and other strategic commitments including the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy and Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. Council is committed to acknowledging, celebrating and/or partnering on: NAIDOC week, IDAHOBIT, Reconciliation Week, Trans Day of Visibility, Midsumma Festival including Pride and National Sorry Day. Council is not currently resourced to lead activities related to Harmony Day or Cultural Diversity week, Lesbian Visibility Day, Mabo Day, World Down Syndrome Day, World Autism Awareness Day and World Refugee Day but supports community events through grants, communications and provision of facilities and open space.</p> <p>15. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. January 26 will be discussed further through development of Nillumbik Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan in consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, stakeholders and community.</p>
6.	19/04/2022 [Redacted]	<p>1. I would like to see the policy also refer to budget planning to enable the policy items to be actioned in a sustainable manner. There are currently some service shortfalls in Nillumbik related to people in crisis and that are related to 'human rights' needs. Although this is may be considered operational issues, if the budget doesn't take into account the policy needs and hence doesn't allocate funds for the provision of an essential service then the group affected will still be excluded.</p> <p>2. I would also like to see some form of continuous improvement mechanism be mentioned so that the council in all their strategic and operational planning are taking into consideration if a service is even available to its residents. It is all good that no-one is discriminated against or excluded, but if no-one has access to an essential service that needs to be taken into account at planning. At the moment the reviews are via the council annual report and every four year reviews. It would be good if any short falling in service planning (even if the policy is taken into account) could be captured in the process and then improved on for future plans.</p>	<p>1. No policy change recommended. Budget is available to support delivery of this policy across Council. Council's role is to work closely with partners to understand service needs and gaps and partner to advocate for funding/service provision from other agencies, where these gaps exist. Council will work closely with the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and Local Services Network to understand and address needs.</p> <p>2. No policy change recommended. Council's role is to work closely with partners to understand service needs and gaps and partner to advocate for funding/service provision from other agencies, where these gaps exist. Council will work closely with the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and Local Services Network to understand and address needs.</p>
7.	24/04/2022 [Redacted] Victorian Pride Lobby	<p>Full submission available in Appendix 1.</p> <p>1. the characteristics or intersecting identities in the section 'Intersectionality' should include 'gender identity and gender expression' as well as 'sex and sex characteristics', to better capture trans, gender diverse and intersex people; and</p> <p>2. the definition of 'gender' and 'sex' in the section 'Glossary' should be updated in line with the Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide, to better capture non-binary and intersex people.</p>	<p>1. Policy change recommended. Add gender identity and sex and sex characteristics to the Intersectionality section on page 7 of the policy.</p> <p>2. Policy change recommended. Update definitions of gender and sex in Glossary to reflect the Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide.</p> <p>3. No policy change recommended. Actions are outside of the scope of the policy. Actions that arise from the Policy will be identified visually in a number of Council action plans outlined in the supporting Council policies, strategies and plans section of the policy. Community engagement will inform if/when Council develops an LGBTIQ+ action plan.</p>

No.	Submitter	Submission	Officer recommendation
		<p>3. We further recommend that the Draft Policy include a commitment to develop an LGBTIQ+ action plan to reduce inequalities among LGBTIQ+ people in Nillumbik, as well as a commitment to achieve - or, at least, investigate - Rainbow Tick accreditation for Council services to ensure that they are culturally safe for and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people.</p> <p>4. we recommend that Council also consider an annual LGBTIQ+ community focus group for community members and organisations that can explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the areas of greatest importance to LGBTIQ+ people who live in Nillumbik; • what role Council can play in partnership with LGBTIQ+ people and organisations to • achieve positive outcomes; and • what a meaningful relationship between Council and LGBTIQ+ people might look like. 	<p>Council is committed to undertaking the Victorian Government Rainbow Ready Mapping for services to determine actions LGBTIQ+ inclusion.</p> <p>4. No policy change recommended. Implementation initiative will be considered. Actions are outside of the scope of the policy. Council is committed to building on extensive consultation undertaken with LGBTQIA+ young people in Nillumbik and an ongoing LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiative will be included in the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan - Year 2 Action Plan which will be presented to Council in September 2022.</p>

**Appendix 1. Submission to Draft Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy from Victorian
Pride Lobby**

24 April 2022



To: nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Re: Nillumbik Draft Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy

The Victorian Pride Lobby welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the Nillumbik Draft Access, Enquiry and Inclusion Policy.

The Victorian Pride Lobby is a community based advocacy group that represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and same gender attracted Victorians, including those who live, work and recreate in Nillumbik. Approximately 4.6% of Nillumbik residents are LGBTIQ+, whom we represent. We are delighted that LGBTIQ+ people have been listed as a priority group within the Draft Policy.

We recommend some simple changes to the Draft Policy to better include LGBTIQ+ people:

- the characteristics or intersecting identities in the section 'Intersectionality' should include 'gender identity and gender expression' as well as 'sex and sex characteristics', to better capture trans, gender diverse and intersex people; and
- the definition of 'gender' and 'sex' in the section 'Glossary' should be updated in line with the [Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide](#), to better capture non-binary and intersex people.

We further recommend that the Draft Policy include a commitment to develop an LGBTIQ+ action plan to reduce inequalities among LGBTIQ+ people in Nillumbik, as well as a commitment to achieve - or, at least, investigate - Rainbow Tick accreditation for Council services to ensure that they are culturally safe for and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people.

We are aware that Council has an LGBTIQ+ e-network and has identified a number of LGBTIQ+ partnership opportunities. The 2020 annual community survey also showed that the community has significantly increased the importance of Council addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

In light of this, we recommend that Council also consider an annual LGBTIQ+ community focus group for community members and organisations that can explore:

- the areas of greatest importance to LGBTIQ+ people who live in Nillumbik;
- what role Council can play in partnership with LGBTIQ+ people and organisations to achieve positive outcomes; and
- what a meaningful relationship between Council and LGBTIQ+ people might look like

We stand ready to work with the Council on implementing these actions. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or would like any support.

Yours faithfully,

Nevena Spirovska and Evie Potter
Co-Convenors, Victorian Pride Lobby

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Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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



Introduction

Nillumbik Shire Council is currently developing their Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy. To help ensure the policy meets the needs of the community, a broad engagement exercise was undertaken to collect feedback and ideas for enhancing the document. The following document provides a summary of the feedback received from March to April in 2022.

Previous consultation

Our People, Our Place, Our Future

Nillumbik Shire Council developed the Our People, Our Place, Our Future (OPOPOF) engagement program to capture the views and priorities of the Nillumbik community to inform the development of key strategic planning documents in line with legislative and regulatory requirements.

During the engagement period, Council engaged with over 2,000 voices through survey responses, community pop-ups, workshops, written submissions, online workshops, phone calls, visits to the website, and emails. These activities were monitored and adapted to ensure that these were accessible and responsive to the needs and wants of the community.

These results of the OPOPOF program were used to inform the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. Issues and actions relating to access, equity and inclusion have been embedded across all three documents. Additionally, these results were also used to inform the development of the draft Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

The findings of the OPOPOF program indicated that our community 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. Further, increasing representation of and participation for priority communities was identified as an important role for Council.

Under the banner of 'inclusion' OPOPOF survey respondents identified the following as their 'top three issues' for Council to address –

Inclusion – Top 3 issues	
1. Opportunities for all	28% of respondents
2. Accessible community and health services	17% of respondents
3. Support for children and families	15% of respondents

With this in mind the draft Policy was developed to facilitate opportunities for all members of Nillumbik's community to participate and be heard. Additionally, the draft Policy represents high level commitment that sets the foundation for culture change within the organisation to support Council in delivering inclusive community and health services for people all abilities, ages, cultural identities, gender identities, geographic locations, religions, sexualities, and socio-economic backgrounds.

OPOPOF Key findings

Of the 722 general survey participants, 5% identified as Culturally or Linguistically Diverse (CALD), 4.4% identified as LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer,



Intersex, Asexual +), 2.4% identified as a person with a disability, and 0.4% identified as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

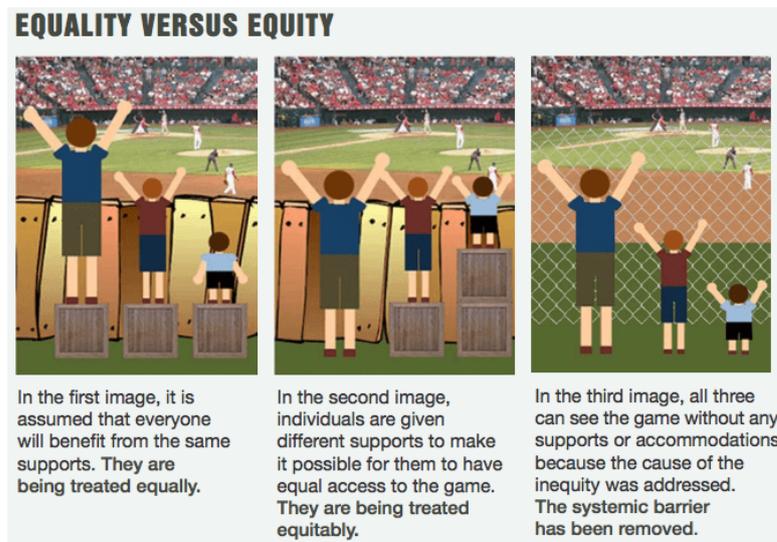
- We engaged with a higher proportion of people who identify as LGBTQIA+ (4.4% of participants compared to 2% of households, as per 2016 Census).
- We engaged with a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (0.4%, the same amount as the 2016 Census).
- We engaged with a higher proportion of people who were born overseas (22.4% compared to 16% from the 2016 Census).

An outline of the coverage of this engagement and relevant quotes can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendations

The comprehensive engagement process received feedback from approximately 129 individuals. The feedback provided was varied, with few stand-out themes for consideration, with many of the comments for alterations falling within the scope of the next stages of the process (e.g. implementation/action planning). However, there were some specific suggestions that may assist in fine-tuning the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy:

- Expand the scope of the policy document to cover the specific needs of young people and children as well as adults. This may involve some terminology updates to refer to 'women and girls'.
- Enhance clarity of the process to show how the policy will integrate with budgeting and how the action planning will occur / link back to the policy.
- Greater emphasis on inclusion for Wurundjeri Woi wurrung community, specifically relating to storytelling and welcome to country at events.
- Include LGBTQIA+ in the glossary, and ensure the policy covers inclusion for Intersex as well as other components of this acronym.
- Expand the community context section to include a broader range of items that may impact on access and inclusion, including geography, SEIFA, poor public transport etc.
- Make it clearer why some groups get additional help (rather than all residents getting the same supports). E.g.



- Add Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030 and forthcoming Events Strategy to list of Council strategies and plans.
- Include Councillor role in implementation.
- Develop a simple and clear inclusion (vision) statement that can be used across Council documents.
- Consider including mental health in disability / chronic disease.
- The characteristics or intersecting identities in the section 'Intersectionality' should include 'gender identity and gender expression' as well as 'sex and sex characteristics', to better capture trans, gender diverse and intersex people.



- The definition of ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ in the section ‘Glossary’ should be updated in line with the Victorian Government’s LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide, to better capture non-binary and intersex people.

Methodology

A wide range of engagement activities were undertaken to ensure broad coverage of key stakeholders, and give all community members the chance to provide input (see table 1). Further detail about social media and postcard distribution are provided at the end of this document.

Overall, 129 individuals provided input into the engagement.

Table 1 Engagement activities

Activity	Dates	Sample size
Participate form – Commitment questions	25 March – 19 April	7
Participate form – Visioning	28 March – 23 April	7
Youth and Community development meeting	24 March	6
Arts and cultural development team meeting	10 March	4
Postcards (1,000, 13 locations)	28 March	1
Sports development workshop	28 March	9
Youth Council	4 March	13
Staff forum	7 March	16
Local services network	12 March	20
Children’s activities	Throughout	15
Environment and Sustainable Advisory Committee	20 April	5
Access and Inclusion advisory committee	22 April	9
Positive Ageing Advisory Committee	1 April	11
Individual submissions	Various	2
Recreation and leisure team	13 April	5



Key findings

Policy commitments

Question	Do you agree with the commitments outlined in the Policy?
Source	Participate form
Sample Size	n = 7

All seven people who completed the participate form agreed with the commitments outlined in the policy.

Missing priority groups

Question	Are there any priority groups missing? (If yes, please specify)
Source	Participate form Youth and Community Development Meeting Arts and Cultural Development Team Meeting Staff Forum Environment and Sustainable Advisory Committee
Sample Size	n = 38

Three of the seven respondents in the participate form said that the policy was missing priority groups, specifically:

- Young people (4 mentions).
- Children (2 mentions) – “Can we change women to ‘women and girls’? This would emphasize that barriers to community participation can exist at all ages (e.g. access to sport, education etc)”
- Include mental health (2 mentions) in disability / chronic disease.
- The accessibility needs of people living with a disability
- Carers.
- Those with digital access issues



Fair and inclusive Nillumbik	
Question	What does a fair and inclusive Nillumbik mean to you?
Source	Participate form Children’s activity Sports club development workshop Positive ageing advisory committee Youth Council Local Services network Environment and Sustainable advisory committee Access and Inclusion advisory committee Postcard
Sample Size	n = 75 adults and n = 15 children aged 2-4
Notes	Question for children's activity adapted to: "What does it mean to be included"

When asked to define a ‘fair and inclusive Nillumbik’ almost every comment made was different, with very few themes coming through. This highlights the complexities of the topic, as it means something different to everyone. The broad range of topics put forth can be broadly categorised as follows:

Access and services

Ensuring that all residents have access to the services they need. This includes physical access into buildings, transport access, as well as financial access. This needs to cover people at all ages, stages and abilities, across both rural and urban areas of the municipality.

- All residents have access.
- Convenient services and shops.
- Access to buildings and transport.
- Better housing options.
- Inclusive health services
- Better communication of what is available (2 mentions), particularly with youth services, or through a ‘new residents pack’.
- Mental health support in every school.
- Better ways to access programs.
- Financial access (no further information provided to clarify this).
- Same opportunities and access for everyone.
- Better disability access for services in rural areas.
- Walking and bike path in St Andrews.
- Equal opportunities and access – no one gets left behind.
- Free activities.



Council responsibilities

Some responses focussed on the responsibilities of Council, specific to being inclusive with funding, programs and services, and staffing.

- Council provides all essential services needed by residents.
- More inclusive funding for services and community groups.
- Council staff employment based on skills rather than inclusion parameters / quotas.
- Stakeholders treated equitably (no further information provided to clarify what this means).
- Learning programs in schools to make them feel welcome (no further information provided to explain what this means).
- Staff and service provider training on how to support community members with additional access needs.

Sense of community

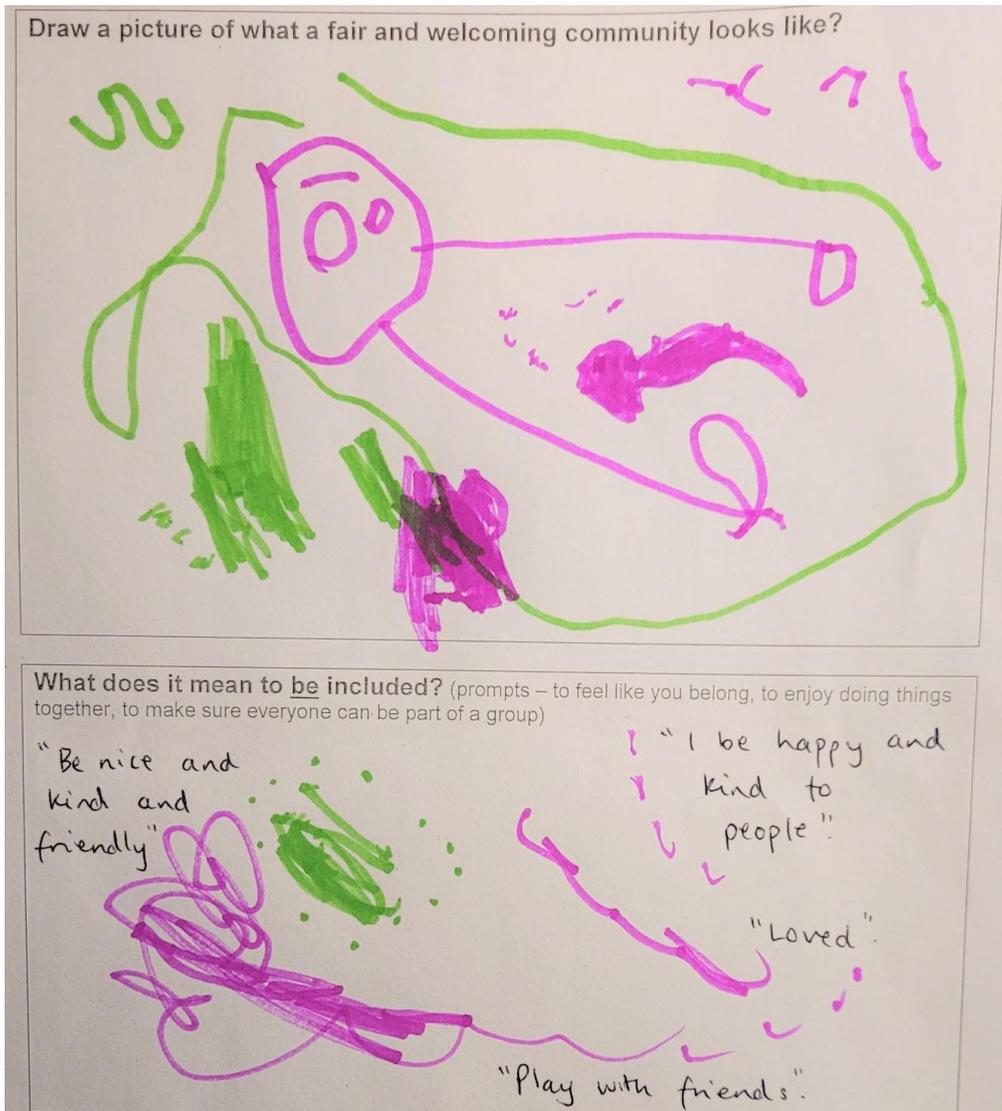
For many, sense of community is central to their definition of fair and inclusive, with a focus on respect, feeling safe, empathy and diversity.

- Respect (3 mentions).
- Safe (2 mentions).
- Diversity (2 mentions).
- Empathy (2 mentions).
- Good place to live for older people.
- Friendly neighbourhoods.
- Fair treatment for everyone.
- Acceptance of differences / no judgement.
- Reduce the divide between rural and urban.
- Remove language barriers.
- Ensure all voices are heard.
- Vibrant spaces.
- Multicultural.
- Socially inclusive.
- Harmony.
- More green spaces to help the environment.

Amongst the children the key focus was on playing with friends (7 comments) and asking people if they are OK / what is wrong (4 comments).

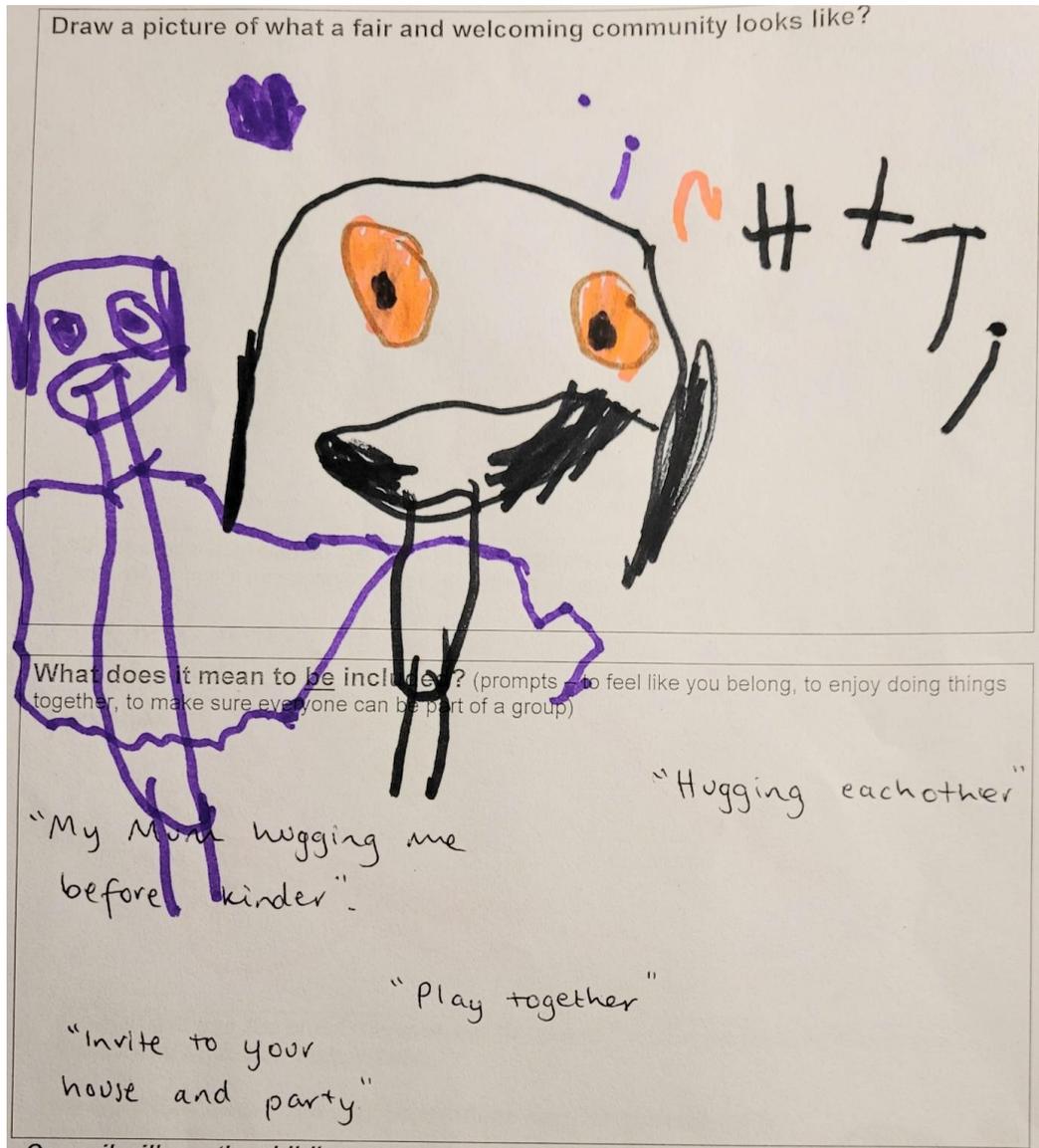
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Example 1 children's responses:



DRAFT

Example 2 of children's response:





Comments on policy	
Question	Any comments on the policy?
Source	Participate form Youth and Community Development Meeting Sports club development workshop Youth Council Staff forum Recreation and leisure team Environment and sustainability advisory committee Access and inclusion advisory committee
Sample Size	n = 71

A broad range of suggestions were made for potential improvements to the policy document, with very few repeated suggestions. Feedback can be broadly grouped into wording / terminology, scope, and action planning / next steps.

Wording / terminology

A number of very specific wording and terminology suggestions were put forth. It is recommended that these be considered for the final version of the document.

- Clearer explanation of difference between equity and equality (perhaps in principles section). The need for this is demonstrated through one of the comments in the visioning activity, which was “don’t single out minority groups for preferential treatment”. It may be necessary to make it clearer why this is necessary.
- Change terminology from “barriers are reduced” to “barriers are addressed” (no further detail given as to why)
- Community > Principles section: mention the importance of both informal and formal partnerships.
- Strengthen the commitment statement wording; ‘consider’ seems non-committal. It is suggested this reads: "Access, equity and inclusion will be at the forefront of all decision making".
- Include LGBTQIA+ in the glossary.
- Broaden context to cover ‘Councillor, employee, volunteer and community development’.
- Develop an inclusion / vision statement to be used across the organisation.
- Better articulate ‘Consider unconscious bias’.
- Consider updating terminology for ‘low status’ (no suggestion given).
- The characteristics or intersecting identities in the section ‘Intersectionality’ should include ‘gender identity and gender expression’ as well as ‘sex and sex characteristics’, to better capture trans, gender diverse and intersex people.
- The definition of ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ in the section ‘Glossary’ should be updated in line with the Victorian Government’s LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide, to better capture non-binary and intersex people.



Scope

With regards to scope, it was felt by some that there were opportunities for the document to provide better coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs, an enhanced assessment of demographic and geographic needs and variations, and greater organisational buy-in / responsibility.

- Need to include a continuous improvement mechanism.
- Greater emphasis on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung community, with particular reference to sharing their stories and welcome to country for events and festivals. Also consider a stronger local commitment to reconciliation.
- The Community Context section gives the impression that the policy only exists because of COVID, which is not the case. Either rename the section or expand the content. Suggested content inclusions are SEIFA, geography, and lack of public transport.
- Internal workforce issues
 - Strengthen this section, including barriers to recruitment (no further information provided)
 - Staff training to increase knowledge and practices that promote access, equity and inclusion
- Commitment to universal service delivery.
- Include intersex in LGBTIQ+ supports.
- Support for the emphasis on financially disadvantaged people.
- Add Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030 and forthcoming Events strategy to list of Council strategies and plans.
- Don't avoid issues of racism and unconscious bias. Foster a culture of respect and tolerance.
- Include Councillor role in how it will be implemented.
- Include neuro-divergent groups (Autism, different ways of seeing the world).
- Needs to have whole-of-organisation buy-in, including leadership. Show how it links to all parts of Council.
- Rural lens is needed.

Implementation / Action Planning / next steps

Many of the suggestions actually fell within the next steps, namely budgeting, action planning and implementation. The policy document may need to be clearer about differentiating where different components lie within the planning framework.

- What procedures have been developed to ensure these commitments are actively pursued? For example, does Council have diversity, especially within their Communications and HR teams.
- Want to see a list of actions (2 mentions) – may need to make it clearer that the action planning is a separate step of the process.
- Include budget planning to demonstrate how the policy can be implemented in a sustainable manner.
- Ensure service shortfalls are identified and integrated into future planning.
- Clearer visual displays of inclusion commitment (e.g. stickers with the rainbow flag or indigenous statements on Council buildings).
- Consider privacy when collecting consistent demographics.
- Council communications need to be more inclusive (culture change?).
- Affordable upskilling and employment programs for young people (so it is affordable without parental help).
- Activities for young people that don't rely on their parents driving them.



- Solutions-focussed approach.
- Aboriginal liaison officer.
- Open conversations and educating people.
- Review and report on committee demographics.
- Foster spaces where young people feel safe to speak up.
- Help the broader community understand the topic.
- Develop an LGBTIQA+ action plan to reduce inequalities among LGBTIQA+ people in Nillumbik
- Commit to achieve - or, at least, investigate - Rainbow Tick accreditation for Council services to ensure that they are culturally safe for and inclusive of LGBTIQA+ people.
- Undertake an annual LGBTIQA+ community focus group for community members and organisations that can explore:
 - The areas of greatest importance to LGBTIQA+ people who live in Nillumbik;
 - What role Council can play in partnership with LGBTIQA+ people and organisations to achieve positive outcomes; and
 - What a meaningful relationship between Council and LGBTIQA+ people might look like

In terms of positive feedback (given although not requested), one person said they liked how it was simple and succinct and another said it was well written.

Opportunities to work together

Question	Are there opportunities to work together?
Source	Local services network
Sample Size	n = 20

A number of participants suggested that fostering opportunities to work together would be reliant on appropriate funding to do so.

The key opportunities for working together with stakeholders are:

- Communicating policy meaning to the community (simple terms, explaining implementation impacts on each group) (3 mentions);
- When developing actions;
- Developing an understanding of local needs;
- Work with organisations who support community members in need;
- Co-design with community members;
- Enhance community knowledge and capacity, particularly with regards to supporting mental health; and
- Providing a safe space for community input.



Staff practices	
Question	How can you change practice in your role to create a fair and inclusive Nillumbik?
Source	Staff forum
Sample Size	n = 16

Staff recognise the opportunity for improved practices through uniform data collection, templates and assessments:

- Collecting data in a more consistent, representative and inclusive manner (2 mentions).
- More accessible document templates (easy English (2 mentions), fonts).
- Gender impact assessments (2 mentions)
- Improve grant accessibility (2 mentions) including for those on low incomes and offering a broader variety of application formats.
- More diversity in employment (2 mentions).
- Leadership buy-in.
- Advisory panel EOIs encouraging diversity.
- Ensuring Discrimination Disability Act (DDA) compliance.
- Be mindful of using inclusive language.
- Educate staff on statistics.
- More internal advocacy.
- Educate stakeholders through workshops.
- Using the statement.



Support	
Question	What support do you need to help implement the policy?
Source	Youth and Community Development Meeting Staff Forum Recreation and Leisure Team
Sample Size	n = 27

The main support required is through standards and templates to ensure consistency and inclusive coverage.

- One-page cheat sheet with tick-boxes of what needs to be included (2 mentions) (not enough information provided to clarify what this means).
- Include inclusion parameters in project management templates so that it is embedded from the start (2 mentions).
- Template for collecting demographic information for forms such as grant applications.
- Provide feedback on wording and distribution of communications to ensure accessibility and inclusion.
- Definition of what makes an event 'accessible' (who, what, how).
- Council leadership providing ongoing dialogue on the topic.
- Education and resources for staff (not enough information provided to clarify).
- Dedicated team members (not enough information provided to clarify).
- Staff commitment to implement change.
- Better distribution of grant opportunities.
- Resourcing (budgets).



Appendix 1 - Survey Distribution

The Participate Nillumbik survey was promoted through Facebook as follows. Throughout the fieldwork period the Participate page had 220 unique visitors and 15 contributors.

	Date	Type	Reach	Engage- ment	Link clicks	Likes	Shares
Facebook	24 March	GIF video	539	23		5	2
	30 March	Cartoon image	4869	149		7	1
	10 April	GIF video	875	39	3	0	2
	17 April	Cartoon image	2354	46	7	3	1
	23 April	Link only	654	6	4	1	1
Instagram	24 March	GIF video		49			
	30 March	Cartoon image				5	
	17 April	Cartoon image				4	
	23 April	Cartoon Image				2	
Twitter	30 March	Cartoon image					
	17 April	Cartoon image				1	2
	23 April	Cartoon image					
LinkedIn	24 March	GIF video		325		4	
	30 March	Cartoon image		128		1	
	23 April	Link only		248		7	

Shared by:

- Hurstbridge Hub
- Nillumbik Arts
- Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Private accounts (4)

Creative used was as follows:

DRAFT



What does a fair and inclusive Nillumbik look like to you?
Help inform the draft Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/inclusive-nillumbik



Nillumbik
The Green Wedge Shire





Postcards were distributed at:

Location	Number
Panton Hill post office	250
St Andrews post office	200
Hurstbridge hub	50
Living and Learning – Panton hill	50
Living and Learning – Diamond Creek	50
Living and Learning – Eltham	50
Eltham Library	50
Diamond Valley Library	50
Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness	50
Eltham Leisure Centre	50
Edendale	50
Seniors lunch	25
Vaccine pop-up	25



Appendix 2 - OPOPOF engagement

OPOPOF Coverage

Of the 722 general survey participants in the Our People, Our Place, Our Future engagement program

"I want to see the promotion of equity, inclusion of all and opportunities for people to learn how to bridge difference."

"Support for minority groups; valuing people from other cultures; promoting inclusion and equality for LGBTQIA+; making services available to people with disabilities."

"Consulting with disabled community in Nillumbik directly, through groups that cater to disabled people, and through online surveys with disabled people, taking into account invisible disabilities too. A conscious effort to include disabled voices in council event planning, administration, events planning, and structuring of group activities going forward."

"Inclusion awareness training for Councillors; Councillors and Council Officers to be a united front; more proactive steps to promote inclusion."

"Put policy and procedure in place to support diversity and inclusion."

"Support for gender equality and all things related to access, equity and inclusion for the whole community."

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Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy



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If you require the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy in an alternative format, please email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au or call 9433 3111.

Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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

Inclusion statement

The following statement is intended to be a short version of our Policy commitment for use after the Acknowledgement of Country in Council publications:

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are addressed and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some groups and individuals experience more barriers than others.



- Council can be contacted through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS). The NRS is available as a phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. All calls are confidential. Users must be registered via www.relayservice.gov.au to make and receive calls:
- TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for Council on 9433 3111.
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech) users phone 1300 555 727, then ask for Council on 9433 3111.
- A Hearing loop is located at the Civic Drive Customer Service Counter, Civic Centre, Civic Drive Greensborough
- Communication boards are available at the Civic Drive Customer Service Counter, Civic Centre, Civic Drive Greensborough.
- Interpreting services are available.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to create meaningful change and ensure that access, equity and inclusion is embedded into everything we do.

This Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy outlines Councils commitment to equitable and inclusive practice across all council activities. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Demonstrate leadership
- Apply an access, equity and inclusion lens over all council services
- Inform council decision making and investment
- Identify when and how we advocate
- Identify and consider unique and intersecting needs of priority groups
- Commit to strengthening relationships with partners, local service providers, organisations and community.

Context

The role of local government

Local government plays an important role in promoting access, equity and inclusion. As a public authority, Council must act in accordance with legislation that outlines the role of local government in creating equal and inclusive communities including:

- The *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* emphasises the role of local government in community engagement and consideration of the needs of the community in decision making. It also requires that councils provide accessible and equitable services that are responsive to the diverse needs of the community.
- The *Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020* formalises the critical role local government plays in creating more equal and inclusive communities.
- The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* recognises the significant role of councils in improving the health and wellbeing of people in their municipality. It also requires councils to support the implementation of state priorities which include a focus on priority groups to reduce health inequalities and achieve a fair and equal society.
- The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires councils to give proper consideration to human rights when delivering services, developing policies and projects, managing risks, making decisions and managing complaints. This includes the right to:
 - Respect – encouraging a culture of respect and responsibility that celebrates diversity and encourages participation
 - Equality – encouraging innovation in how we respect, promote and protect access, equity and inclusion
 - Freedom – promoting freedom of violence, harassment and bullying by ensuring human rights protections are in place
 - Dignity – our decisions will be informed by the varying needs of people within the community at different life stages and abilities.
- The *Victorian Disability Act 2006* requires local governments to develop a Disability Plan that focuses on reducing barriers to accessing facilities and

employment, promoting inclusion and changing attitudes and practices towards people with a disability.

- The *Climate Change Act 2017* outlines the role of local government in supporting vulnerable communities and promoting social justice and intergenerational equity. It also includes principles of equity and community engagement to inform decision making.

Achieving a fair and inclusive community requires more than compliance with legislation and the law. It requires a culture where shared attitudes, values and behaviours that influence the decision making, service provision, and operational practices of our organisation uphold the human rights and principles of equity and inclusion. It also relies on the use of evidence to inform decision making and collaboration from community and partners with local experience and expertise.

The Nillumbik Community

- Population now 65,370, forecast to reach 70,000 by 2036. Nillumbik has a lower than average growth rate compared to neighboring councilsⁱ
 - 13% children (0-17)
 - 19% young people (12-24)
 - 30% older people (55+)
 - 32,909 females (50.34%)
 - 32,460 males (49.66%)
- 230 people (0.4%) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanderⁱⁱ
- 1 in 5 people are estimated to have a disability, which is forecast to increase by 67% by 2026. 1 in 2 people over 65 years have a disabilityⁱⁱⁱ
- 13% reported providing unpaid care, help or assistance to a person with a disability^{iv}
- 16% of people were born overseas^v
- 9% of people in Nillumbik speak a language other than English^{vi}
- 14.3% of households are occupied by a lone person (VIC 24.7%)^{vii}
- 29% of people had a university qualification (VIC 17%)^{viii}
- 38% of residents live within 400m of public transport^{ix}, 9.7% of employed people used public transport to get to work^x
- 90% of dwellings have an internet connection^{xi}
- SEIFA score of 1093 – SEIFA is a score of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The higher the SEIFA score, the more advantaged the area. Any score above 1000 indicates the area is more advantaged than the average. In 2016, Nillumbik was ranked 76 highest SEIFA score out of 79 local government areas in Victoria^{xii}
- 56% of 15+ year olds are in the workforce^{xiii}
- 55% of employed women work part-time compared to 20% of men^{xiv}
- Unemployment rate: 2.2% (VIC 7%)^{xv}
- 47% of households earn over \$2000/week, Median household income \$2098.
^{xvi}

Community context

The nature of disadvantage and inequality continues to evolve within the Nillumbik community. We know that more equal communities bounce back better from adversity, disaster, pressure and stress.

The Nillumbik community has demonstrated its resilience and resourcefulness through experiences such as bushfire and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although everyone in the community is affected by these events, some people and groups are more vulnerable to the effects of these disasters.

In the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, many people are experiencing crisis and accessing support services for the first time. Other experiences that can lead to barriers or discrimination that will be considered when applying this policy include:

- Chronic disease, disability or mental illness
- Disaster, emergency or extreme weather event
- Family violence
- Financial insecurity
- Homelessness or housing insecurity
- Loneliness and social isolation
- People with caring responsibilities
- Unemployment or under-employment.

Priority groups

For some people living in our community, there may be additional challenges in feeling included, accessing places, spaces, resources and opportunities. We recognise that some groups have been disadvantaged by inequality and discrimination, meaning that these groups may need additional assistance to address the barriers to access and participation. In supporting these groups, Council's focus is on achieving equality of outcomes for people by providing additional support to ensure that these groups are able to access the same opportunities as everyone else. Priority groups in Nillumbik include:

- Carers
- Children and young people
- Cultural and linguistically diverse people
- First Nations People
- LGBTIQ+ communities
- Gender diverse people
- Older people
- People experiencing financial insecurity
- People who live rurally or are geographically isolated
- People with a disability, chronic disease and/or mental illness
- Refugees and people seeking asylum
- Women and girls

Principles

The following principles represent values that will inform the application of this policy.

Leadership

Leadership is being accountable and transparent to the community. It involves modelling best practice within the community, in our decision making and our

organisational culture. Demonstrating leadership means taking chances and advocating with and for the community to achieve fair and equitable outcomes.

Community

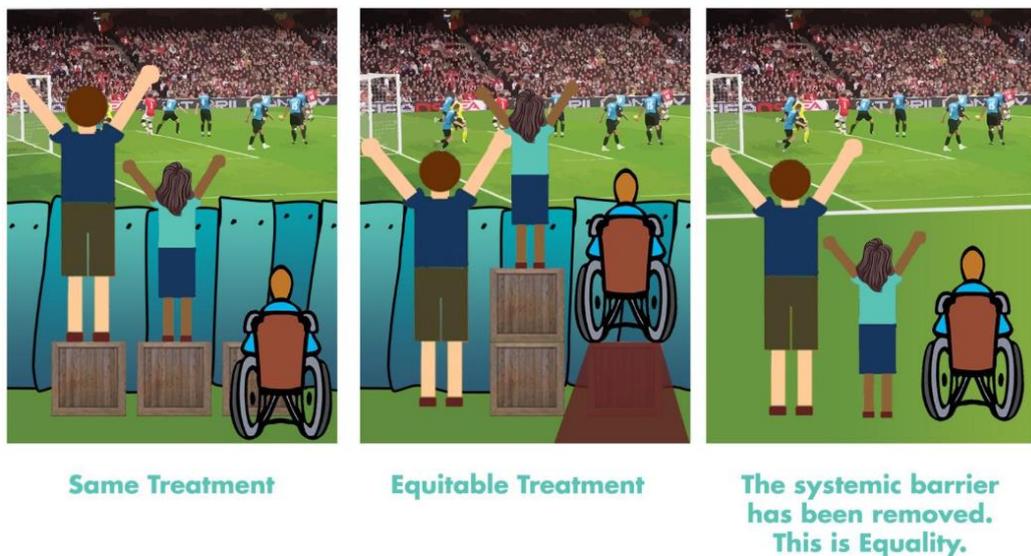
Everybody has a role in creating a more equal society. We value collective experience and knowledge of the community and will work together to ensure people can make decisions that impact them and take action on issues that are important to them. Collaboration with community will be achieved through informal and formal partnerships, participation and deliberative community engagement approaches.

Equity

Equity is the commitment to apply a fair and just approach to Council practices. Equity recognises that all groups and individuals are different and some experience intersecting lifestyle, health, identity and social factors that create more barriers to positive outcomes than others.

Figure 1 illustrates the difference between equity and equality. Equity is a process that emphasises fairness and ensures that people have access to equal opportunities. When equity is applied, equality can be achieved.

Figure 1. Equity versus Equality¹



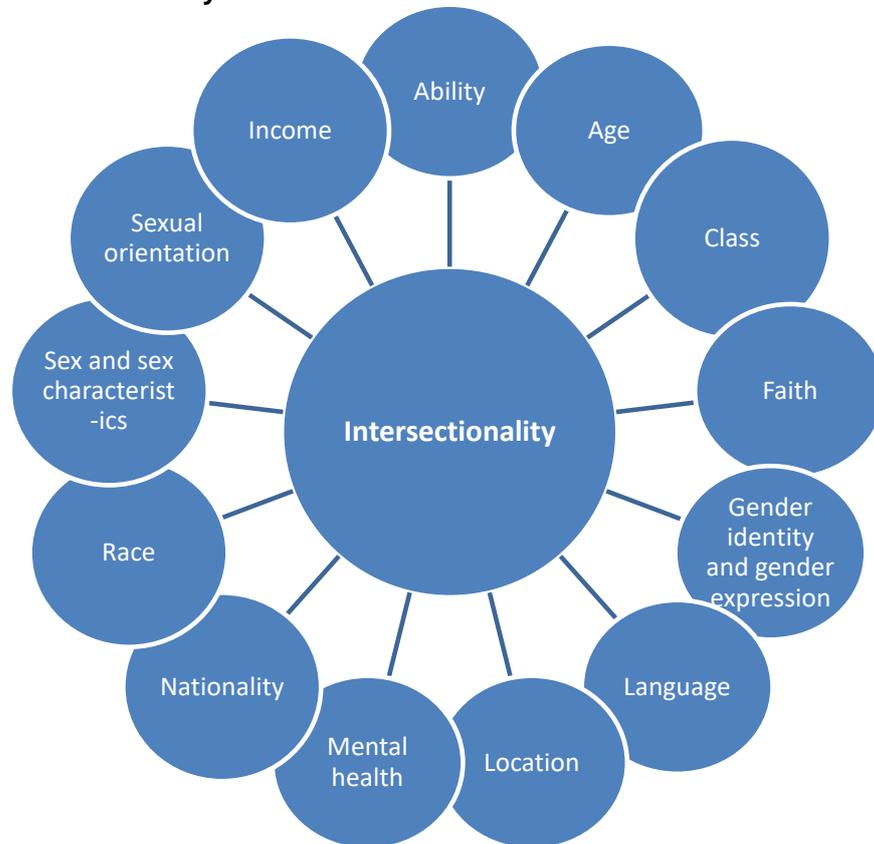
Intersectionality

Intersectionality describes how systems and structures interact on multiple and intersecting levels to create overlapping barriers and discrimination based on characteristics. Customised responses are required in order for everyone to achieve

¹ Hawranik, M, Equity or Equality? What's the difference between Equity and Equality?, January 20, 2021, Canadian Equality Consulting. Available at: <http://www.canadianequality.ca/equity-or-equality/>

a fair outcome appropriate with their rights and needs. Figure 2 outlines how intersecting identities include multiple characteristics and can intersect to form oppression, discrimination or privilege.

Figure 2. Intersectionality



Human rights and social justice

“Social justice and human rights both highlight the importance of equality, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion. And both place the concept of “justice” front and center in efforts to forge a more stable and equitable world.”²

Respect for human rights and social justice is the cornerstone of strong communities in which everyone can make a contribution and be included. Progressing human rights and social justice requires strong advocacy, no tolerance for discrimination and proactive action to tackle structural and systemic discrimination, oppression, power and privilege.

Council has adopted a social justice and human rights based approach which:

² United Nations (2009) Launch of the World Day of Social Justice, February 10 Highlights from Panel Discussion. Available at:

https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntJustice/launch10Feb09/highlights_panel.pdf

- regards human rights as an opportunity to improve our decision making
- makes human rights a part of our everyday work
- treats everyone as contributing to a human rights culture
- allows us to monitor progress over time in reducing inequality and discrimination.

These strategies aim to ensure the participation of people affected by policy interventions, with a view to empowering all members of our community.

Our commitment

We will:

1. Ensure access, equity and inclusion is at the forefront of all decision making.
2. Celebrate Australian First Nations People as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet, and address inequities between First Nations People and other Australians.
3. Celebrate the diversity of our community and actively work to reduce inequalities.
4. Celebrate, embrace and be informed by our unique identity and acknowledge our changing community.
5. Champion equity, participation and inclusion as we work to eliminate systemic barriers and reduce discrimination.
6. Demonstrate Council's values to protect and enhance inclusion in the community.
7. Design and deliver services that meet the diverse and future needs of our community and reduce address barriers to access and inclusion.
8. Empower community to meaningfully shape decisions that impact their lives and stand up for themselves and each other.
9. Foster democratic representation and meaningful community engagement.
10. Invest in Councillor, employee and volunteer development to increase knowledge and practices that promote access, equity and inclusion.
11. Model inclusive and flexible workplace culture and practice.
12. Plan, design and maintain places and spaces that are welcoming, safe, accessible and inclusive of the needs of all community members.
13. Provide accessible and adaptive information and communications that are representative of the community, regardless of physical, social and cultural barriers.
14. Use evidence to inform deliberate and meaningful advocacy.

Application

This policy applies to the delivery of Council services, programs and activities as well as the design, provision and management of facilities, infrastructure and open spaces.

All Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors carrying out work on behalf of Council are required to comply with this policy.

Implementation and review

This policy is supported by strategies, plans and programs across Council to ensure that Council's commitments are implemented and maintained. Progress will be monitored and outcomes will be reported regularly to the community through Council's annual report.

There are three phases we will take to embed access, equity and inclusion principles and policy commitments across Council:

1. **Initiate** – establish our policy commitment and undertake community engagement to confirm opportunities and gaps.
2. **Build capacity, capability and drive culture change** – allocate resources for effective implementation, deliver training, upskill community, Councillors, Council officers, identify champions, implement pilot programs and collect relevant information.
3. **Sustain** – measured through effective partnerships, longer-term systems and process changes, monitoring, evaluation and learning to continue to build on strengths and address gaps.

This policy will be reviewed every four years following the adoption of the four-year Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan and access, equity and inclusion actions will be easily identifiable. A review will consider how effectively principles and policy commitments have been embedded across the organisation, strength of partnerships and community impact.

Opportunities to improve access, equity and inclusion are also identified and monitored through Gender Impact Assessments which are undertaken when developing new policies, programs and service reviews.

Complaints

We are committed to enabling members of our community to raise their concerns about Council with ease and confidence and managing these complaints fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

Complaints can be made in accordance with Nillumbik Shire Council's Complaints Handling Policy.

This policy provides a framework to ensure Council:

- handles complaints effectively, ensuring our customers can raise their complaints about Council with ease and confidence
- listens to our customers concerns, and being responsive
- manages received complaints fairly, objectively and in a timely manner.

A complaint is a way for members of our community to let Council know that they are dissatisfied with:

- the quality of an action, decision made, facility or service provided by a Council or a contractor engaged by Council

- the delay by Council or contractor engaged by Council in taking action, making a decision or providing a service
- a policy decision made by Council or contractor engaged by Council.

Complaints provide Council with important information about its services, our customers' experiences, and can create an opportunity to address customer concerns, build greater community advocacy for Council and its services, as well as identify areas of service that need improvement.

For additional information or including our Complaints Handling Policy, please visit [Making a complaint - Nillumbik Shire Council](#)

Supporting Council policies, strategies and plans

- Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019 – 2022
- Arts and Culture Strategy (under development)
- Climate Action Plan 2022-2032
- Community Engagement Policy 2021
- Community Vision – Nillumbik 2040
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Council Plan 2022 – 2025
- Customer First Strategy
- Disability Action Plan 2020 – 2024
- Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030
- Events Policy (to be developed)
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025
- Housing Strategy (to be developed)
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Municipal Planning Strategy
- Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025
- Nillumbik Placemaking Framework 2021
- Open Space Strategy 2005 (to be reviewed)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (to be developed)
- Reconciliation Charter
- Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2022-2030
- Youth Strategy 2022 – 2026

Supporting legislation

Commonwealth

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

State

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Climate Change Act 2017*
- *Crimes Act 2005*
- *Disability Act 2006*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Mental Health Act 1986*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*

Glossary

Class is a system of structured inequality based on unequal distributions of power, education, wealth and income that determine social position and status.

Diversity is what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective and our approach. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences.

Disadvantage is a term that is often used to describe inequity faced by people of lower social position. It is socially constructed, imposed on people and limits their opportunities in life or health.

Equality is the state of affairs that prevails when all individuals and/or groups of people are given equal treatment, regardless of need or outcome.

Equity is the state of affairs that prevails when support or resources are distributed according to need, the purpose being to ensure more equal outcomes for all.

Family violence is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members.

Gender is part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being female or male. Some people understand their gender as a combination of these or neither. Gender can be expressed in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

Human rights are basic entitlements that belong to every one of us, regardless of our background, where we live, what we look like, what we think or what we believe.

Inclusion occurs when people feel, and are, valued and respected. Regardless of their personal characteristic or circumstance.

Intersectionality describes how systems and structures interact on multiple and intersecting levels to create overlapping barriers and discrimination based on characteristics.

LGBTIQA+ terminology is diverse and constantly evolving. The acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer or Questioning, Asexual, and the + sign is generally used to represent genders and sexualities outside of the letters LGBTIQA, including people who are questioning their gender or sexuality.

Sex refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics.

Sexuality or sexual orientation describes a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others.

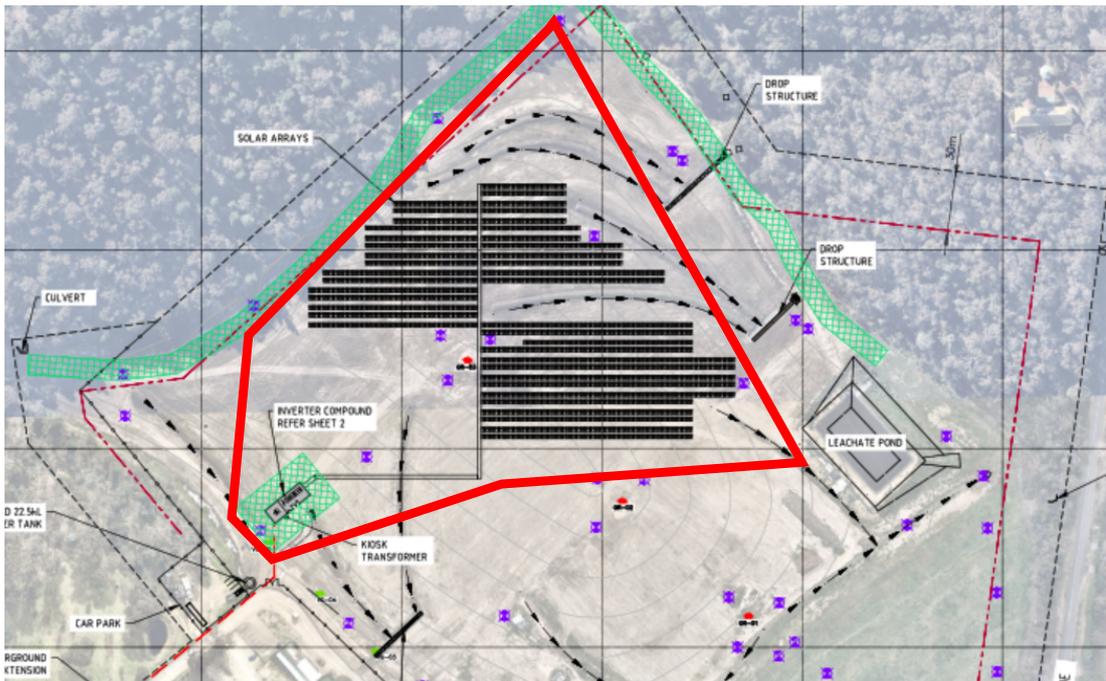
Social inclusion is about people being able to participate in society and creating conditions for equal opportunities for all. Social inclusion requires that all individuals be able to 'secure a job; access services; connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; deal with personal crisis; and have their voices heard.

Social justice seeks to create equal political, economic, and social rights for all people.



Plan of Land
Lease with LMS Energy P/L in respect of
part of Council owned land at 290-304 Yan Yean Road
and 193-213 Heard Avenue, Plenty, known as part of the
Plenty landfill site

Leased Area - shown outlined red
This is subject to final design

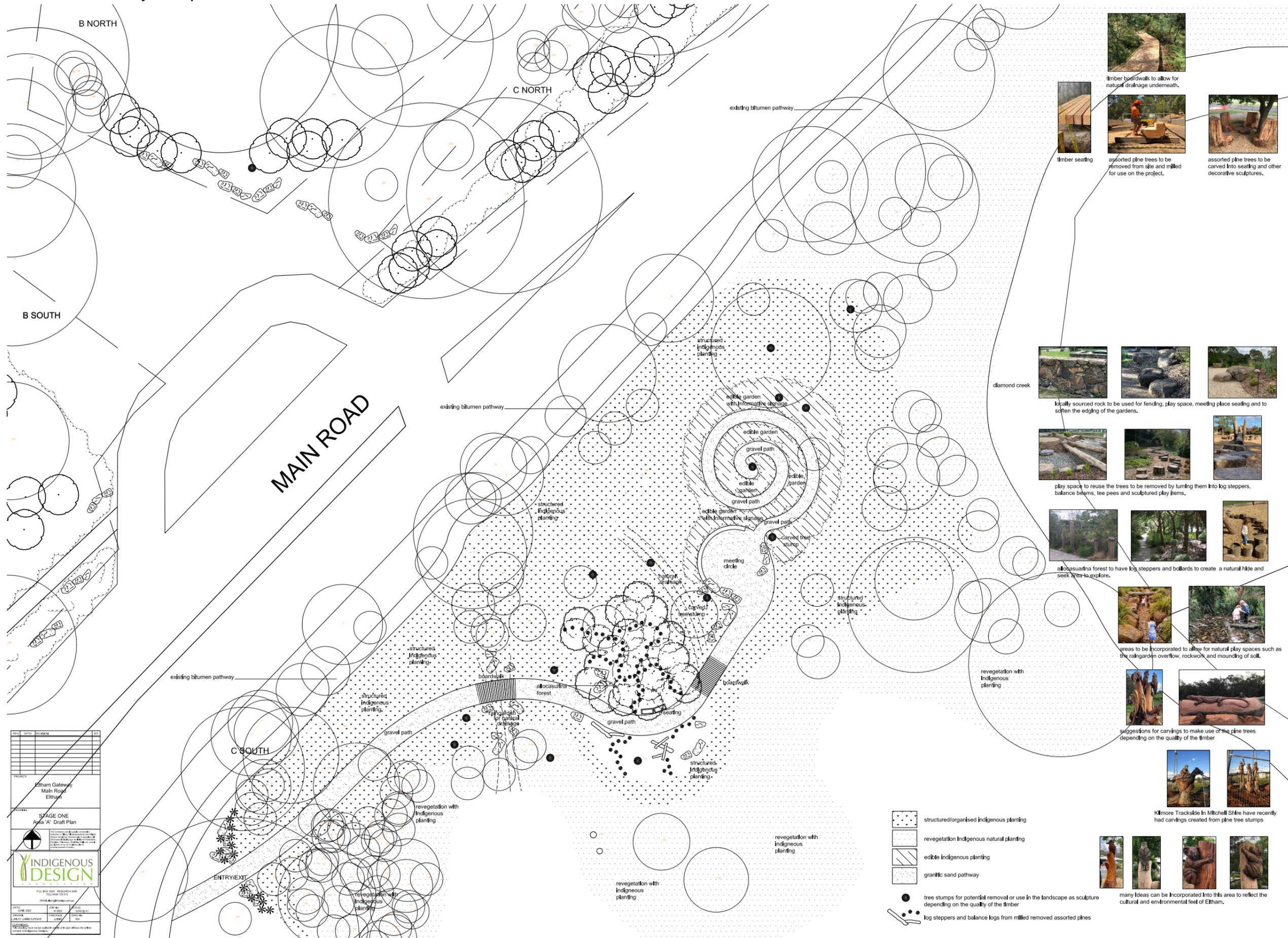


Attachment 2

Submissions - Community Engagement Findings: Solar Farm Proposed Lease
 Consultation Dates: 27 May- 19 June 2022

Contribution ID	Do you support or object to the lease proposal between Nillumbik Shire Council and LMS Energy Pty Ltd for Council owned land at the Plenty landfill site shown on the Plan to operate a solar farm? (Please tick one)		Please specify your reasons for this
	Support	Do not support	
20704		Do not support	The rent amount - I do not understand why Nillumbik is leasing the land for a ridiculously low fee of \$2000.00 year plus GST. I understand and agree with the importance of having a solar farm however, LMS energy will be making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year and a measly sum of \$2000.00 per year is ridiculously low. There is no commercial sense as to why we should agree to this when our own community/residents pay way more to rent a council hall or other facility. Why are we putting the interests of a commercial business above that of our own community? Nillumbik council is there to serve and support the community, not corporate business!
20702		Do not support	I need more information. (1) You have not advised what cost you are paying for the electricity (this would be via a PPA). (2) You should advise the residents what costs you are paying for the 3,300 solar panels. Is the price you are paying been benchmarked - is it reasonable? (3) The amount you pay should only cover the cost of the capital once? Not for the project life of 25 years? (4) Operating costs seem to be a pass through - why aren't you also limiting these to CPI? (5) A lease term of 25 years seems excessive to me. You should limit to 15 with +5 x 3 options; At council option (6) It is also confusing when you state this will reduce the council's power requirements for street lighting. This is not certain - so is a mis-representation; (7) You have not provided any insights into the development capability of LMS? How many farms have they done before? What is their track record of delivering on a budget? You have given us no comfort here. (8) Are you locking LMS into a 'turn key' price? If not, why not? (9) Who is responsible for the dismantle/clean-up at the end of the lease? What provisions have you built into the agreement so the abandonment cost is placed into a trust prior to the end of the terms to ensure the residents are not liable? (10) And dismantle/abandonment cost is not a residents cost - when you have paid them a return on the development? Just some initial thoughts. I'll revert with more in due course. Regards
20674	Support		Great use of an area which is difficult to use.
20671	Support		I have lived on land abutting the Plenty landfill site for 36 years. I was not happy that the landfill was still operational for more than half of that time and worried that the site might be developed when it closed. I think the proposed solar farm is the perfect use for the land, especially as it is so close to the high voltage power lines. I can forgive them in my view if they are being fed by renewable power sources. I want a sustainable future so am pro renewables in all ways. I have an electric car on order so envisage using the solar powered charging station. I strongly support the proposed solar farm.
20670		Do not support	The duration of lease and the cost per annum for the area concerned would seem to be low based on property prices in the local area. How was the \$2000 per year developed and the increase per annum based on CPI does not align with increase in property prices. In the next 25 years there will be many new technologies that might make solar power redundant but this land will be tied up. A 10 year contract seems reasonable.

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timber boardwalk to allow for natural drainage underneath.



timber seating



assorted pine trees to be removed from site and milled for use on the project.



assorted pine trees to be carved into seating and other decorative sculptures.



diamond creek



locally sourced rock to be used for fencing, play space, meeting place seating and to soften the edging of the gardens.



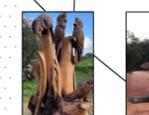
play space to reuse the trees to be removed by turning them into log steppers, balance beams, tee pees and sculptured play items.



occasional forest to have log steppers and bollards to create a natural hide and seek area to explore.



areas to be incorporated to allow for natural play spaces such as the rain garden overflow, rockwork and mounding of soil.



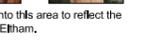
suggestions for carvings to make use of the pine trees depending on the quality of the timber



Kilmore Trackside in Mitchell Shire have recently had carvings created from pine tree stumps



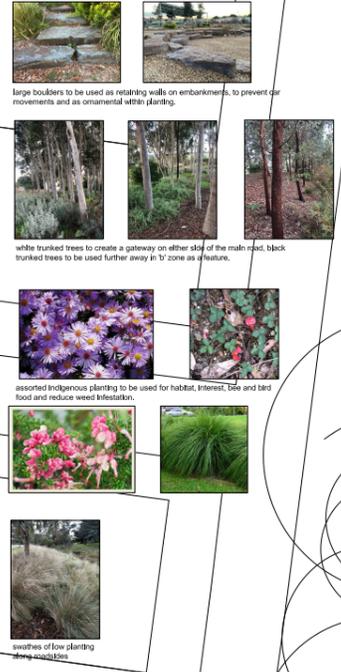
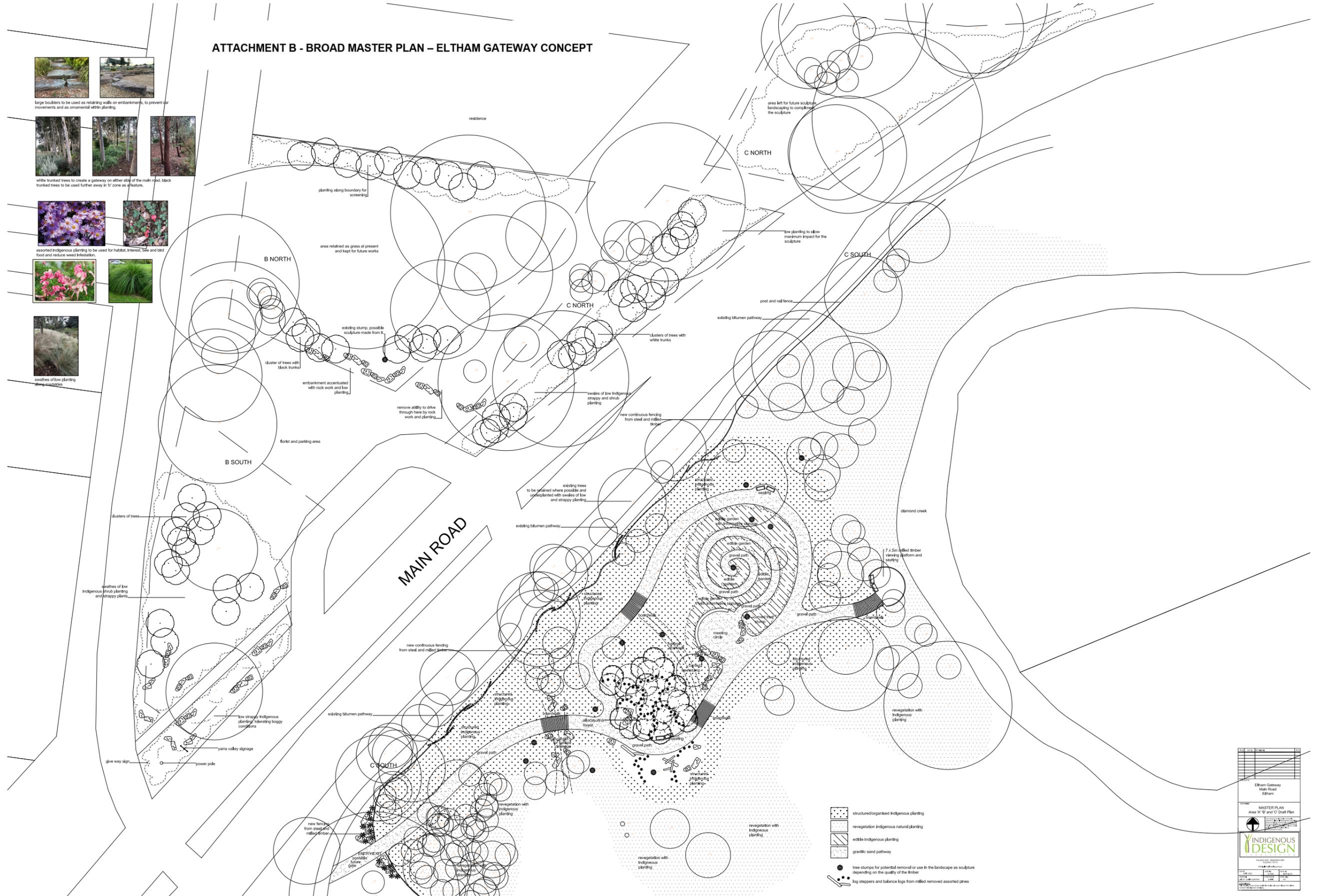
many ideas can be incorporated into this area to reflect the cultural and environmental feel of Eltham.



-  structured/organised indigenous planting
-  revegetation indigenous natural planting
-  edible indigenous planting
-  granitic sand pathway
-  tree stumps for potential removal or use in the landscape as sculpture depending on the quality of the timber
-  log steppers and balance logs from milled removed assorted pines

PROJECT	Eltham Gateway Main Road Eltham
STAGE	STAGE ONE Area 'A' Draft Plan
DATE	JUNE 2022
DESIGNER	INDIGENOUS DESIGN
CLIENT	ELTHAM CITY COUNCIL
LOCATION	ELTHAM GATEWAY OPEN SPACE
SCALE	1:1000
PROJECT NO.	2022-001
DATE	JUNE 2022
DESIGNER	INDIGENOUS DESIGN
CLIENT	ELTHAM CITY COUNCIL
LOCATION	ELTHAM GATEWAY OPEN SPACE
SCALE	1:1000
PROJECT NO.	2022-001

ATTACHMENT B - BROAD MASTER PLAN – ELTHAM GATEWAY CONCEPT



large boulders to be used as retaining walls on embankments, to prevent car movements and as ornamental white planting

white trunked trees to create a gateway on either side of the main road, black trunked trees to be used further away in 'V' zone as a feature.

assorted indigenous planting to be used for habitat, interest, low and bird food and reduce weed life span.

swathes of low planting

swathes of low planting

