

Community Engagement Findings Report

Draft Creative Infrastructure Framework

Prepared November 2023

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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

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.

Project background

The Creative Infrastructure Framework has been developed to guide Council's decision making on the delivery and development of creative spaces across the Shire for the next 10 years. Its purpose is to:

- Identify critical gaps in creative infrastructure across the municipality
- Identify key opportunities to upgrade/re-purpose existing infrastructure
- Identify strategic opportunities to guide the development of new creative infrastructure
- Identify opportunities for enhanced governance and advocacy arrangements to support improved creative outcomes across the municipality

Through a program of research and analysis, a series of key challenges were identified that are currently hindering the development of creative spaces across the municipality. These challenges include:

- Suitability of Council's existing arrangements and Council's role in supporting creativity
- The needs of all creatives are not being met
- Lack of exhibition spaces
- Support for contemporary and emerging art forms is limited
- Funding & resourcing challenges for creative infrastructure
- Need for more communication and advocacy from Council
- Greater representation & inclusion
- More diversity of spaces for creativity

The Framework has been developed to ensure that recommendations are provided that adequately address all of these challenges.

The framework represent a major milestone for the Arts scene in the shire, ensuring support for art programs that are inclusive, recognition of First Nations, and Highlight the Council Strength and its rich Heritage and artistic legacy.

The purpose of the Engagement was to:

- Outline agreement or concerns with key principles, strategies or actions
- Prioritisation of options presented in the framework
- Identify for further investigation any significant opportunities for creative spaces that have not already been included in the plan.
- Highlight any major gaps in the strategies or actions (these must relate to evidence-based needs that apply to more than one community group or individual)
- Outline any key considerations for the implementation of the actions already identified in the framework.

The Findings of the community engagement are outlined in this report.

How we engaged

The Arts team engaged with the creative community through the following methods:

Community feedback group sessions: (42 Attendance)

- Edendale Community Farm – Wednesday 18 October 2023 (13 Participants)
- Online Zoom Session 1 – Monday 23 October (4 Participants)
- Hurstbridge Community Hub – Tuesday 24 October 2023 (8 attendees)
- Wadambuk St. Andrews Community Centre – Thursday 26 October 2023 (10 Participants)
- Online Zoom Session 2 - Saturday 28 October 2023 (3 Participants)
- Diamond Creek Living and Learning Centre (5 participants)

Participate Nillumbik Page: (591 Visitor – 28 Contributions)

Email feedback: artsinfo@nillumbik.vic.gov.au (3 Participants - *Attachment: Public Submissions*)

1:1 Video session – by appointment: (1 booking)

Additional Engagements:

- Montsalvat Board of Governance
- Youth Council

Who we engaged with

The below information pertains to demographic data collected via the Participate Nillumbik survey. Demographic information was not collected during community, internal or stakeholder consultations.

Participate Nillumbik Survey

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

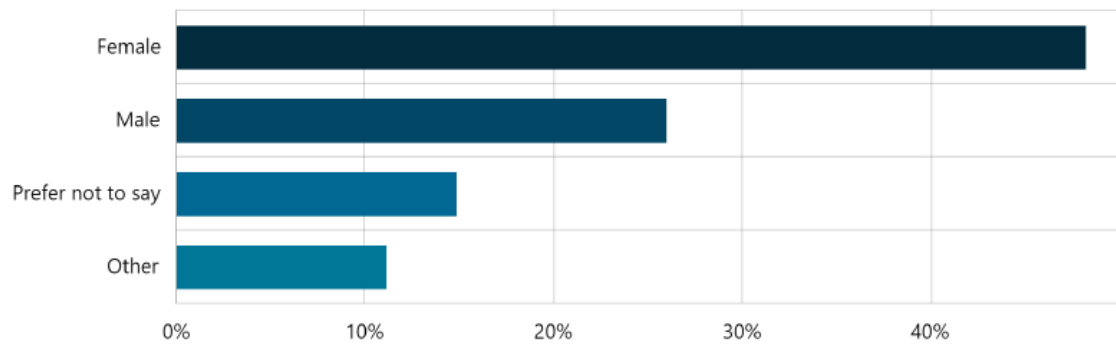


Figure 2: Age of Correspondents

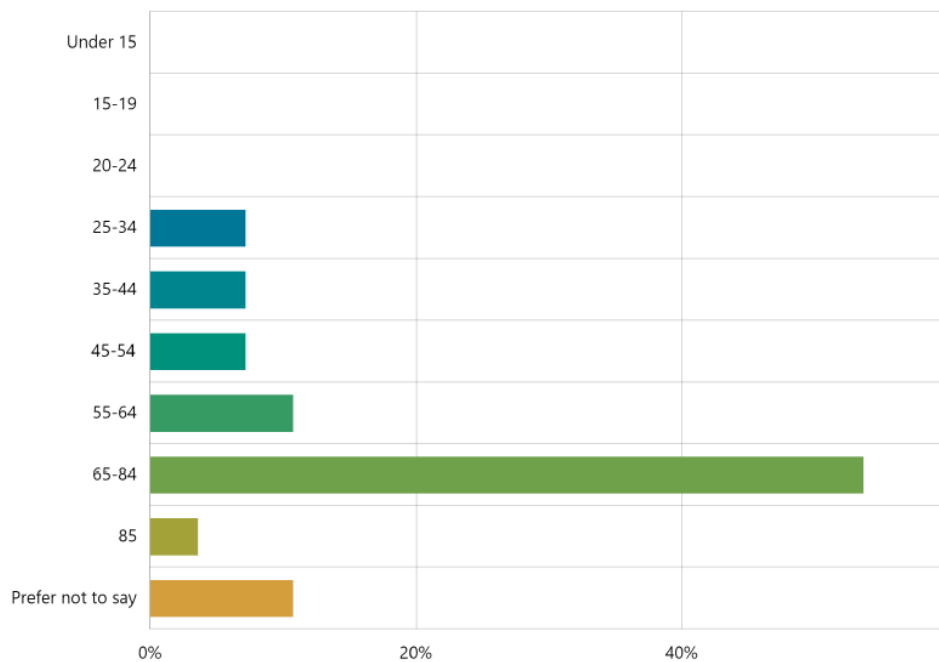


Figure 3: Township of Participants

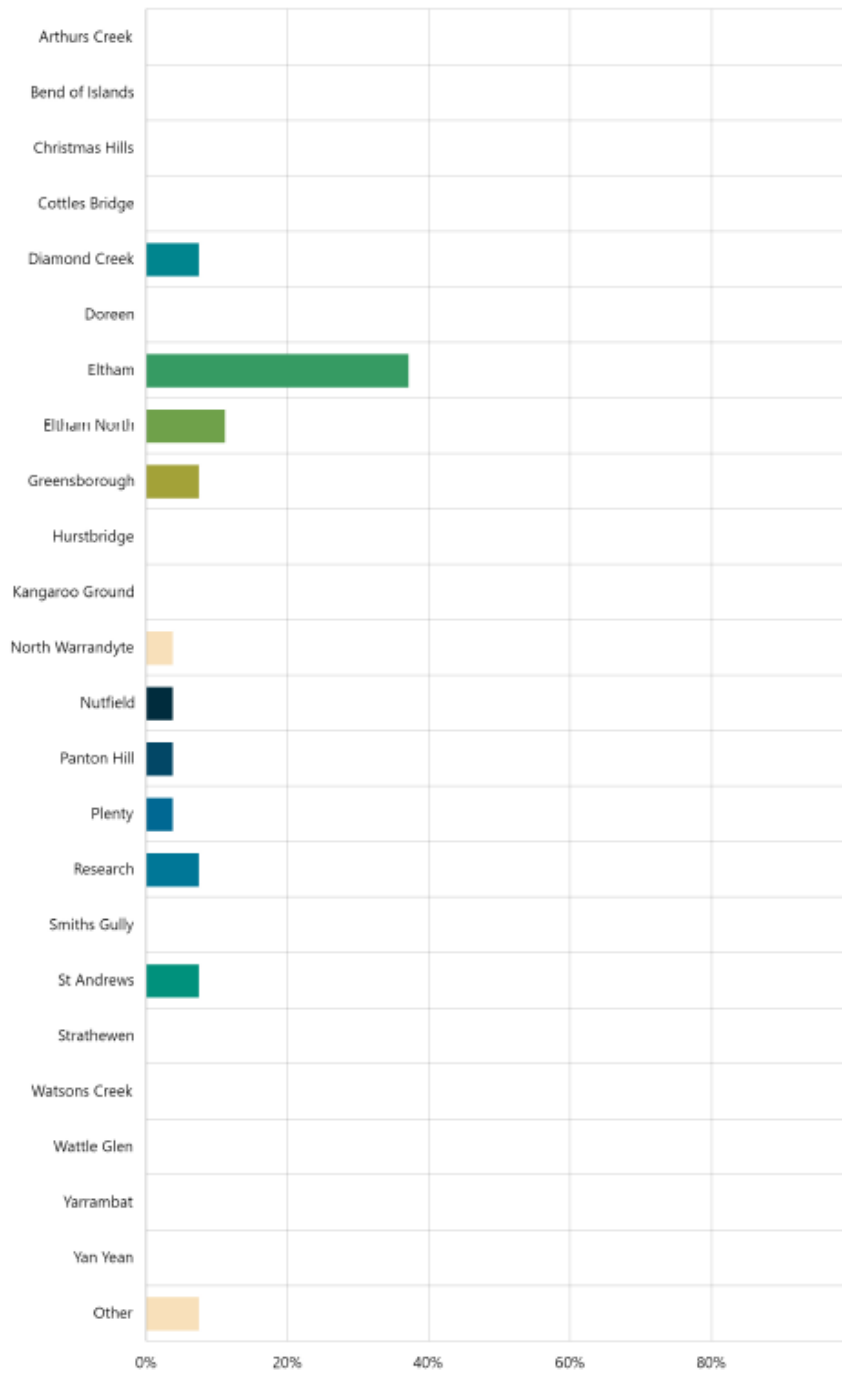


Figure 4: Creative Professions

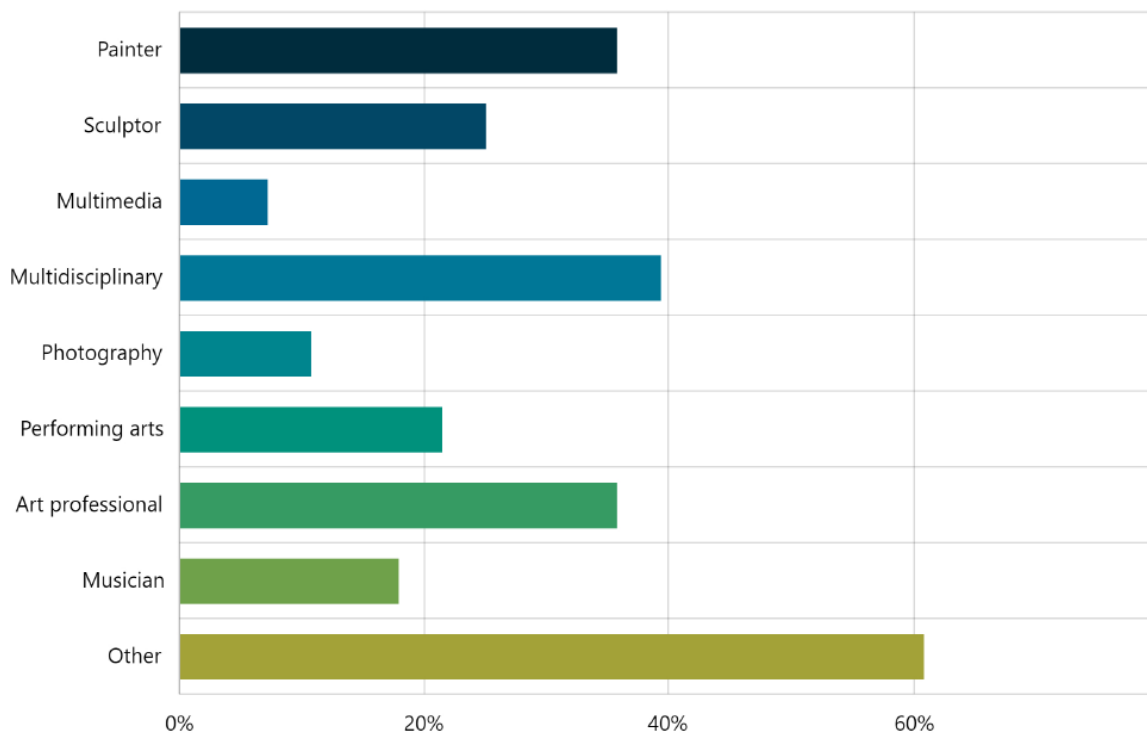


Figure 5: Representation of intersecting identities of respondents; 2 identified as a person with disability (inclusive of mental illness), 1 identified as LGBTIQ+, 2 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 2 identified as a person speaking English as a second language, 4 prefer not to say.

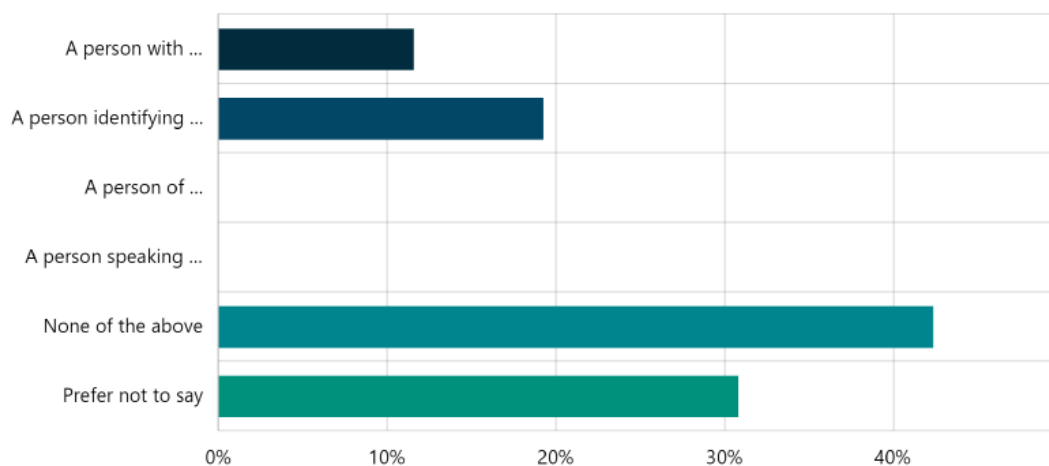
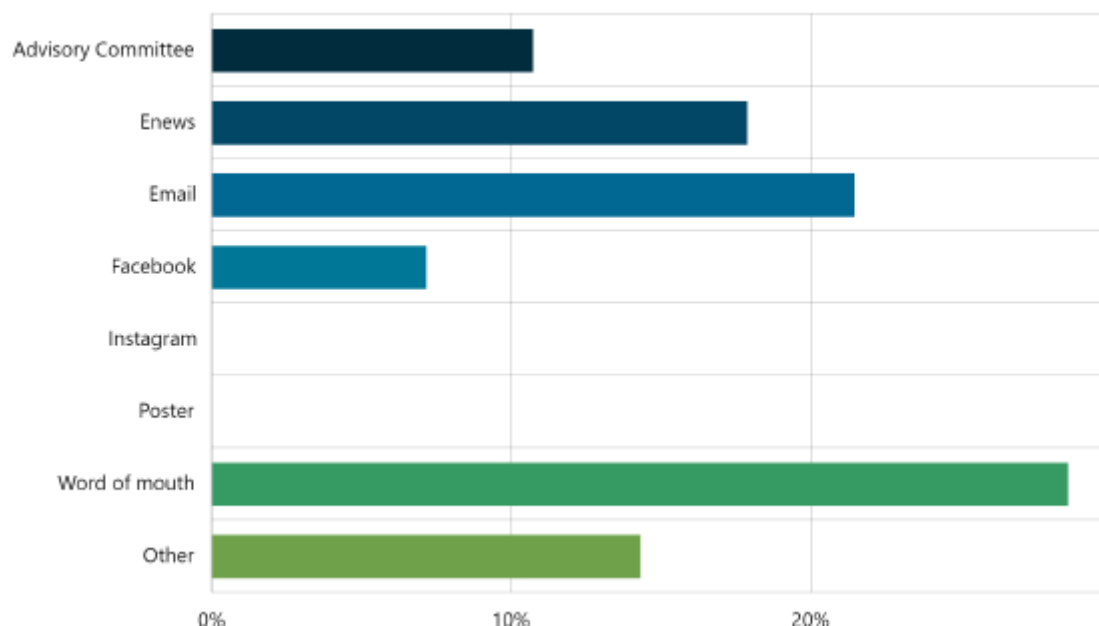


Figure 6: How Community heard about the Engagement



What we heard

The various engagement methods focused primarily on the Nillumbik creative sector, the two weeks engagement identified participation from various professions including:

- Art organisations (boards, staff, creative residence /affiliates)
- Artists residencies / colonies
- Individual local artists (painters, sculptures , photographers, video artists, contemporary)
- Musicians
- Writers
- Architects
- Arts suppliers and facilitators
- Researchers
- General public

Participate Nillumbik:

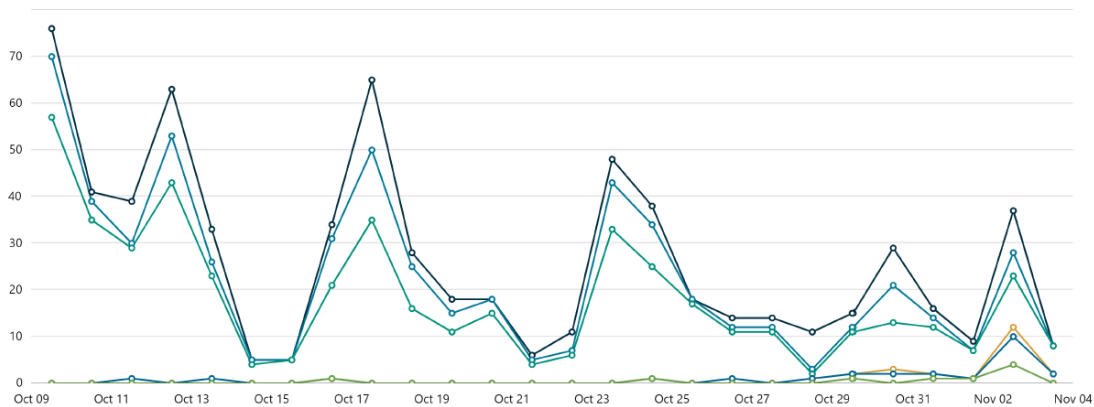
The participate Nillumbik Page launched on 09 October 2023 to 03 November 2023

Views:	699
Visits:	591
Visitors	358
Downloads	226
Contribution	28
Project Followers:	9

Figure 7: Performance Summary of engagement throughout the duration of the engagement:

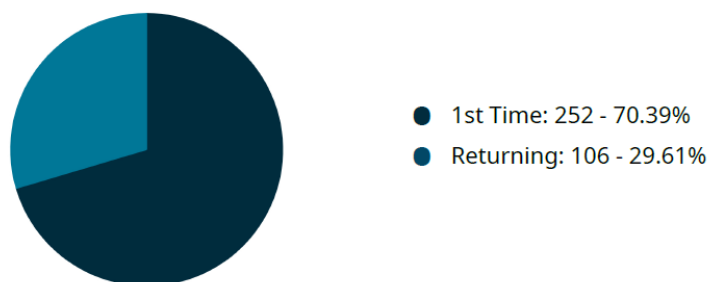
Performance Summary

Information regarding key visitation and utilisation metrics for your Site or projects.



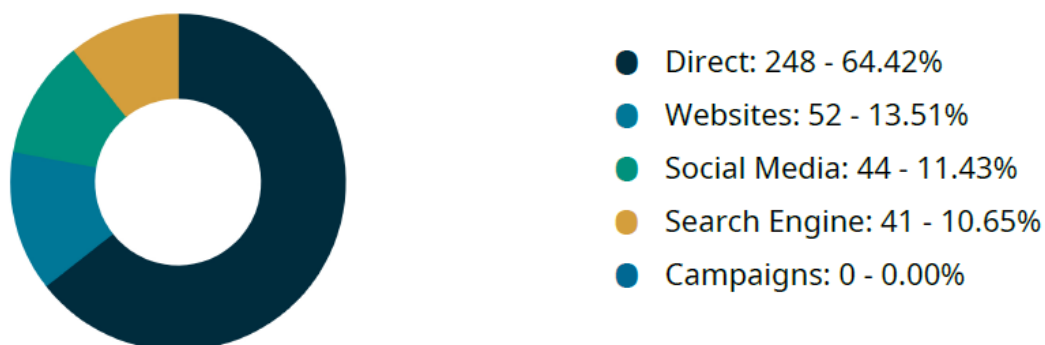
The above chart (*figure 7*) demonstrate how the Participate Nillumbik Page peaks during the group sessions showing a strong connection between the informative in person briefing that was carried out and its possible influence to encourage participation via the online method.

Figure 8: Comparison between new and returning visitors



The above (figure 8) demonstrate the relatively high percentage of approximately 30% returning visitors who showed greater interest in the framework reflecting the strong level of targeted engagement of art and creative professionals that took part in the framework as demonstrated in (figure 4: Arts & Creative Professions)

Figure 9: Referral Types



The above (figure 9) indicate that a large percentage of participants were engaged directly, this demonstrate the targeted approach through the Councils existing creative networks:

- Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee Network
- Arts E-News mailing list (over 800+ subscribers) mostly local creatives community.
- 6 group engagement sessions where Participate Nillumbik Page was promoted during each of the sessions.

Recommendations

The Community recommendations on Participate Nillumbik through the 28 submissions received can be categorised into the following:

- Comments on the Strategic Directions
- The 8 Challenges highlighted in the Creative Infrastructure Framework
- Forward Plan with 28 Action Items
- Other additional comments on the Framework

Strategic Directions Feedback	
Purpose built gallery space	9
Reference Nillumbik Regional Art Gallery Feasibility Study Report 5th June 2019 – 895 main road Eltham proposal	3
More inclusion needed	1
Need for quality spaces that accommodate for different forms of art	1
Improve accessibility for stored collection to allow for research and cross institutional collaborations	3
Support for creative in all of its forms	2
Improve the process of accessing venues for creatives	1
Reducing venue hire cost to encourage public participation	1
Purpose gallery space to be moved from long-term to med-term goals	1
Fully support for the strategic directions mentioned in the framework	3
The draft report helpful in realising creative aspiration	1
More attention required for performance venues	1
Focus on online platforms as a form of digital infrastructure	1
Rephrase Strategic Direction #3 “Celebrate Nillumbik Art Collection and curation” to be more inclusive of Media-neutral approach to arts	1
Support for the Framework strategic direction of an interconnected, visible, supported, diverse, resilient and distinctively creative community is necessary for Nillumbik creatives.	1
Focus on contemporary young emerging art is key to energising art in the area	1
Agreement on all four strategic directions	4
Include 5 th strategic direction on Art Education	4
Lack of exhibition spaces	3
Partnership with private and commercial sector	1
Unsuitability of existing council facilities	1
Ensure accessibility and affordability (inclusive venues)	1
Further engagement with diverse Nillumbik community who present strong connection with the broader art scene	1

The 8 Challenges highlighted in the Creative Infrastructure Framework	
Agreement on the 8 challenges presented in the Framework	3
The 8 challenges presented in the framework are important	1
Disproportional funding to sporting facilities in comparison to arts	1
Existing facilities lack appropriate safe storage, safe-keeping, security. Technical needs for fine and contemporary arts	3
The 8 challenges can be resolved by a purpose build gallery space	9
Council does well in providing opportunities for creative community particularly young and amateur artists	1
Importance to reach out and engage with non-artistic audience, example the pop-up ephemeral art	1
Lack of accessible exhibition spaces, more inclusive spaces required	1
More support needed for professional artists rather than craft and amateur art programs	2
Challenges in obtaining rehearsal and performance spaces	1
Continuing a two-way conversation to ensure constructive feedback and further development	1
Provide training opportunities for varied art forms	1
Importance of communication and advocacy	1
Need for greater representation and inclusion	4
Support Council's plans to expand and upgrade existing facilities	1
Continue to work with emerging arts sectors to identify how best to integrate into planned infrastructure for the arts sector. Given the diversity it is unlikely that one facility can adequately cater for all needs	1
Advocate for First Nations input and consultation in the Creative infrastructure Framework	1

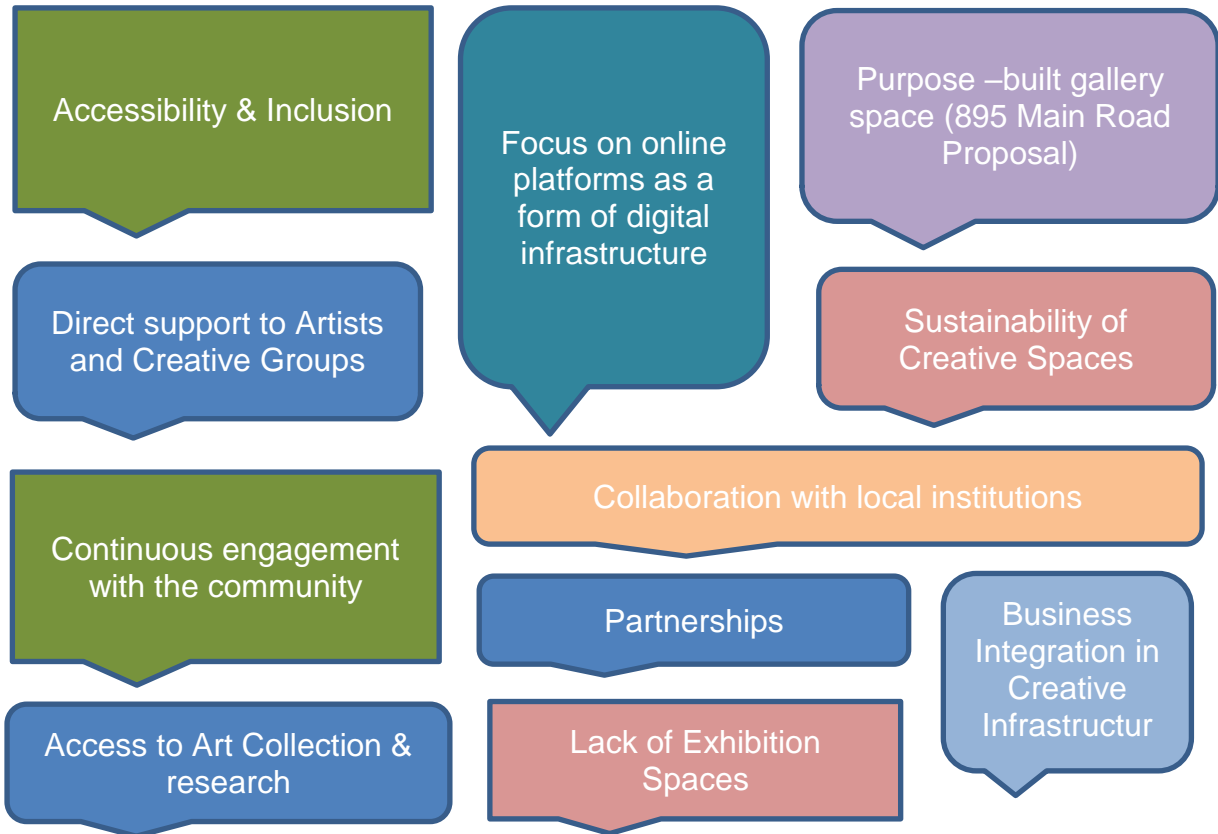
Forward Plan with 28 Action Items	
Support the forward plan and the suggested 28 action items	3
Focus on facilitation venues and opportunities for professional artists	2
Link creative program with other institutions in the area	1
Prioritise / Advocate for purpose -built gallery	8
Advocacy for shorter more focused action items	1
Important of public transport (accessibility) when proposing creative spaces	1
Focusing on unused spaces for residencies	1
creative networking – connection artist through social platform to encourage collaborations	1
The 10 year framework could be shortened	1
Accommodate for rehearsal spaces at ECRC	1
Action item 10: to include the significance of the local history of the facilities, or surrounding areas, being considered for upgrade.	1

Action item 3: Explore re-purposing 'or extending' one of the meeting rooms at Eltham Community and Reception Centre to provide a dedicated and affordable exhibition space for emerging artists	1
Request for more defined outcome and timeline for the action items	1
Prioritise Diamond Creek community Hub	1
Accessibility (Public Transport access)	1
Council to continue engagement throughout the implementation of the Framework	1
Action items to prioritise area, targeted groups, and develop methodologies to address each of the 28 action	1

Other additional comments on the Framework	
Prioritise / Advocate for purpose built gallery	10
Agreement on the 3 Key Principles	1
Overall support for the framework	3
Importance to focus on sustainability by integrating business element into creative spaces including café's and bars (similar to sports venues)	1
Council commitment to arts to match its financial commitment to sports considering the artistic legacy/profile of the shire	1
As a performance band we are enormously content with the size and quality of ECRC	1
Acknowledging Council's effort is to improve accessibility to existing venues	1
Encouraging and supporting the business of Art and Culture in Nillumbik can only have positive economic benefits to the area	1
Encouraging the inclusion and recognition of our local physical, social, creative and cultural history, as important considerations when developing this Creative Infrastructure Framework.	1
Support Pop up ephemeral art idea in Diamond Creek	1
Encourage support to creative groups, existing artist colonies societies	1
Support digital platforms as part of the Creative Infrastructure Framework	1
Support street art / outdoor gallery spaces	1
Support for more diversity and inclusion	3

Key Highlights:

The Below highlights key words and statements from the above Nillumbik Participate engagement:



Community Consultation Sessions:

The below Table is a summary of the different consultation conducted by the Nillumbik Shire Council as part of the Community Engagement Plan:

Date	Time	Location	Attendees
Wednesday 18 October	3.30 pm – 4.30 pm	Edendale Community Farm – Mummery Room	13
Monday 23 October	6.30 pm – 7.30pm	Online Creative Community Feedback Session. Zoom.	4
Tuesday, 24 October	11.30 am – 12.30 pm	Hurstbridge Community Hub – Frank Nankervis Room	8
Thursday, 26 October	12 noon – 1pm	Wadambuk - St. Andrews Community Centre	10
Saturday, 28 October	2pm – 3pm	Online Creative Community Session. Zoom.	2
Wednesday, 1 November	6.30 – 7.30pm	Diamond Creek Living & Learning Centre – Peppercorn Room	5

Summary

The community consultation sessions utilised information sharing, formal and informal conversation styles were structured to provide participants with:

- Outline agreement or concerns with key principles, strategies or actions
- Prioritisation of options presented in the framework
- Identify items for further investigation and any significant opportunities for creative spaces that have not already been included in the plan
- Highlight any major gaps in the strategies or actions (these must relate to evidence-based needs that apply to more than one community group or individual)
- Outline any key considerations for the implementation of the actions already identified in the framework

Recommendations:

Discussion: Edendale Community Farm – Mummery Room Wednesday 18 October 3:30pm-5:00pm	13
Need for theatre spaces.	3
Collaboration with Creative clusters	5
Performance art to be highlighted in the Framework	2
Ensuring the stored collection is accessible for researching to generate exhibitions and highlight its importance	10
Use of the undercroft at Civic Drive discussed, Highlight the risk and challenges.	5
Attendees very passionate about collection being on show for community and concern over the cost of storage offsite.	7
Site 895 Main Rd, Eltham identified in feasibility study but no action taken by Council. Attendees angry about this.	5
Lack of gallery space identified	6
Framework states purpose-built gallery will not be located within 800 meters of post office - this is incorrect if 895 Main Rd site can be considered. FORMAL REQUEST TO AMEND THIS IN THE FRAMEWORK REPORT.	3
Discuss the use of sustainable materials in creative infrastructures	5
Need to be more inclusive of different art forms not just visual art in terms of paintings, drawings and sculpture.	6
Discussion on the challenges / limitation of existing proposed spaces (the proposed buildings/venues only for example purpose and subject to full building accessibility and structural assessment)	1
Arts not advocated strongly enough in Council in comparison to sports.	4
Emphasis on partnership with public and private sectors to finance creative spaces	1
Highlight long term operational sustainability of Creative Infrastructure	5
Support for the Framework Principles	8

Discussion: Online Virtual Session 1 Monday 23 October 6:30pm – 7:30pm	4
Fast track some Action items related to building partnerships	2
Building trust with the Private sector to strengthen collaboration	2
Highlight institutional partnership: Unique to Nillumbik: Dunmoochin & Laughing Waters	1
Shane at Dunmoochin interested in partnering with other councils to display their collections and Dunmoochin's collection. Shires: Whittlesea, Mitchell, Murrindindi, and Nillumbik. Suggestion to partner with Northern councils wand could get gallery funding together. Amanda also noted Yarrambat as a growth area in Nillumbik as a location.	2
Support artists to exhibit at Montsalvat without the need to sell and without paying lease	1
Cost and can be a barrier for young contemporary artists	1
Limitation of existing spaces for contemporary artists	1

Discussion: Hurstbridge Community Hub – Frank Nankervis Room Tuesday 24 October 11:30am-12:30noon	8
Call for better representation of the entire shire	3
Request to include Hurstbridge as a Creative Cluster	7
Focus on digital platforms	2
Utilise public and open spaces for pop up exhibitions	3
Advocate for purpose-built gallery space.	7
improve access to stored collection	6
More planning methodology for short-term goals	4
Initiation of short-term Actions as soon as possible	3
Focus on philanthropy to fund creative infrastructure	4
Preservation of artists' studios across the NSC	3
The financial challenges of operating / sustaining art institutions	2
Long-term sustainability of Creative Gallery spaces	1

Discussion: Wadambuk Hall - St. Andrews Thursday 26 October 12:00noon – 1:00pm	13
Advocate for purpose-built gallery space	7
Tourism engagement in the creative framework	3
Currently spaces currently Inadequate	1
Proportion of investment in sports compared to arts	1
Combine the Dunmoochin Collection with the Council Visual Art Collection	1
Attracting art shows that engage audience beyond the shire, example the Elvis Exhibition in Bendigo	2
More defined actions 1-19 Actions (subject to resource allocation)	2
Encourage First Nations Engagement in art programs	4
Discussion around the Mornington Peninsula Gallery partnership with Archie Award to draw tourism	2

Discussion: Online Virtual Session 2 Saturday 28 October 2:00pm – 3:00pm	2
Potential upgrade / extension to the ECRC Eltham District Historical Society Report attached (<i>Attachment: Public Submissions</i>)	1
Importance of accessibility of the storage for research purposes	1
Importance to rotate visual artwork across the shire in a safe and professional way	1
Ability for ECRC to accommodate for multiple events and accommodate for diverse and board creative audience	2

Discussion: Peppercorn Room Diamond Creek Living & Learning Centre Wednesday 01 November 6:30pm-7:30	5
Advocate for purpose built Gallery Space	3
ECRC not adequate nor safe to house an art collection	2
Eltham Art Show need for a suitable gallery facility	1
Philanthropic support requirement for art spaces	2
Need to include emerging contemporary artists in the framework	1
Nillumbik has huge arts heritage value in Australia	1
More opportunities for Artist exhibition needed, apart from NPCA.	2
Local artists financial / logistical incentives to exhibit outside of Shire.	2
NPCA - open national prize is a good thing professionally. Prize has prestige.	2
Partnership with commercial business for pop up installation.	2
Opportunity for temporary or ephemeral art forms in open spaces	

ECRC could be good opportunity for exhibitions	2
Conservation of all Council art collections is a priority.	2
Laughing Waters and Dunmoochin Collections to be emphasised in the Framework	2
Council has DGR status so people can donate to gallery project if Council proceeded to pursue a public proposal,	2
Significant funds would be required to run/sustain a gallery. Much easier to find the funds build facility than run and maintain it.	2
Creative Hubs. Not just about the art spaces being sustainable on their own but should include paid businesses and subsidised art spaces. Sustainable economic model. Place for 'hanging out', social and engagement space. Doesn't need to be a big space.	1
Programming and Engagement very important.	2
Partnerships with boutique wineries. Council could broker agreement or program.	2
Warrandyte Pottery Expo as an example of commercial opportunities for artists	2

Montsalvat Engagement

In addition to the pre-planned community engagements listed above, the Council also engaged Montsalvat Board of Governance as part of the ongoing collaboration through an existing MOU between NSC and Montsalvat:

Montsalvat Engagement report attached (*Attachment: Public Submissions Report*)

Youth Council Engagement

The Arts Team also engaged the Youth Council who had an opportunity to review the Creative Infrastructure Framework Draft 10 Year Plan, reflect on their needs as creators and consumers of arts, and incorporate their current and long term aspiration within the Creative Framework Plan

Discussion: Youth Council Meeting – Civic Drive Offices Monday 06 November 2023 5:00pm-6:00pm	11
Limitation of creative spaces	3
Lack of current venues to cater for multimedia and audio visual art installations	3
Need for more exhibitions and creative spaces to cater for young and emerging artists	4

Next Steps

A Councillor Briefing is scheduled for February 2024 and a Planning and Consultation Committee meeting in March 2024. These meetings will be provide Councillors an opportunity to review and listen to the feedback from the community and incorporate changes/recommendations in the final Creative Infrastructure Framework. A Council meeting to endorse the Creative Infrastructure Framework is scheduled for April 2024.

The engagement undertaken was not only an opportunity to receive feedback on the Creative Infrastructure Framework Draft, it has presented an opportunity for Nillumbik Shire Council to engage with the creative community, listen to their feedback and engage in discussion on how to improve Council's support to the creative community.

Nillumbik Shire Council and the Arts and Cultural Development team will continue to work closely and engage with the creative community and the broader Nillumbik community throughout this process and beyond the development of the Creative Infrastructure Framework.