

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

to be held at the Council Chamber, 32 Civic Drive, Greensborough
on Tuesday 14 May 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

Agenda

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 9 May 2024

Distribution: Public

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Council Chamber Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting seating plan

Cr Peter Perkins
(Chairperson Planning Matters)
Ellis Ward

Cr Karen Egan
Bunjil Ward
(Deputy Mayor)

Cr Richard Stockman
Blue Lake Ward

Cr Ben Ramcharan
(Mayor)
Sugarloaf Ward

Cr Frances Eyre
Swipers Gully Ward

Cr Geoff Paine
Wingrove Ward

Katia Croce
Manager
Governance and Property

Blaga Naumoski
Director
Governance,
Communications
and Community
Safety

Cr Natalie Duffy
(Chairperson Consultation Matters)
Edendale Ward

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive
Officer

Nillumbik Shire Council

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Nillumbik Shire Council

**Agenda of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting to be held
Tuesday 14 May 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.**

1. Welcome by the Chair

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

2. Acknowledgement of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country to be read by the Chairperson

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

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

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

3. Apologies/Leave of Absence

Committee to note any apologies by Councillors not in attendance and or considers requests for any leave of absence submitted.

4. Declarations of conflict of interest

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

5. Confirmation of Minutes


COM.001/24 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 16 April 2024

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024.

Recommendation

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024 (**Attachment 1**).

Attachments

1.  Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024

6. Officers' reports

PCC.007/24 Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 consultation findings and verbal submissions

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Renae Ahern, Acting Director Planning, Environment and Strategy

Author: Leigh Northwood, Manager Strategic Planning and Environment

Summary

The draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 (**Attachment 1**) was on public exhibition from 1 February to 3 March 2024.

Community members are invited to provide verbal submissions on the draft Strategy at this Planning and Consultation (PCC) meeting.

This report provides an overview of the Stage 2 community feedback that has already been received from 112 participants. It is generally very positive, with suggestions also provided on aspects that people would like strengthened.

A consultation findings summary report is provided in **Attachment 2** and copies of verbatim feedback are provided in **Attachments 3 and 4 (redacted)** and **Attachments 5 and 6 (un-redacted-confidential)**.

The written and verbal community feedback will inform the refinement of the draft Biodiversity Strategy. The revised draft is scheduled to be presented at the July Council meeting for consideration for endorsement.

Recommendation





That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Acknowledges and consider the matters contained in the oral and written submissions during finalisation of the Draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 (**Attachment 1**).
2. Makes the 2024 Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 - Consultation Findings Report (**Attachment 2**) available to the public on Council's website.
3. Requests a further report to be presented at the July 2024 Council Meeting to consider adoption of the final version of the Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034.
4. Resolves that the confidential un-redacted copies of written submissions and survey responses to the exhibition of the public engagement for the Draft Biodiversity Strategy Phase 2 consultation (at **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*.
5. Thanks all submitters for providing Council with feedback on this important document.

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.007/24 Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 consultation findings and verbal submissions

Attachments

1.  Draft Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034
2.  Nillumbik Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 Consultation Findings Report
3.  Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Survey Responses (redacted)
4.  Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Written Submissions (redacted)
5. Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Survey Responses (un-redacted) - *CONFIDENTIAL*
6. Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Written Submissions (un-redacted) - *CONFIDENTIAL*

Discussion

1. The draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 (**Attachment 1**) was on public exhibition from 1 February to 3 March 2024.
2. Feedback was received from 112 participants: 95 submissions were received (82 via the online Participate Nillumbik survey and 13 freeform submissions); 12 people participated in a facilitated virtual workshop; and five people attended a drop-in session. This feedback will help to inform any required refinement of the draft Biodiversity Strategy.
3. A summary of the feedback is provided in the Nillumbik Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 Consultation Findings Report in **Attachment 2**.
4. The verbatim redacted survey response feedback is provided as **Attachment 3**, and the verbatim redacted freeform submissions are provided in **Attachment 4**. Un-redacted (confidential) submissions are provided in **Attachments 5** and **6**.
5. The community feedback has been generally very positive. Survey respondents expressed strong support for the goals, targets, indicators and objectives of the draft Strategy:
 - a. Goal 1 (*The biodiversity of Nillumbik is healthy*):
 - 84% support for Goal 1
 - 87% support for its target (*Achieve a net gain in the overall extent, connectivity and condition of habitat by 2034*)
 - 84% support for indicators.

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PCC.007/24 Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 consultation findings and verbal submissions

- b. Goal 2 (*Nillumbik's community values and cares for nature*):
 - 91% support for Goal 2
 - 77% support for its target (*That 70% of residents care for nature by 2034*)
 - 81% support for indicators.
 - c. Focus Area Objectives
 - 85% and above support for all objectives under each focus area.
6. Respondents were then asked what they'd like changed or added. Some of the most common themes/recommendations that emerged from the submissions and workshop included a perceived need for:
- a. Stronger and more measurable, specific goals and targets, indicators, objectives and strategies.
 - b. Stronger, more active words / desired outcomes.
 - c. More ambitious, higher targets to address the urgent need around biodiversity decline.
 - d. More data sources to be identified in the strategy and baseline data identified so progress towards goals and targets could be measured.
 - e. Goals, targets and indicators to be linked to and measure biodiversity health (including looking at indigenous species, small bird species, insects, fungi etc)
 - f. Clearer definition of key words in the goals like 'health biodiversity' and 'care for nature'.
 - g. Prioritisation of objectives and threats to drive actions.
 - h. More accountability and what action will be taken if goals and targets are not met.
 - i. Increased focus on indigenous species in the strategy.
 - j. The need for adequate budget and resources to ensure the strategy can be delivered.
7. Furthermore:
- a. A total of 22 'leadership and advocacy' ideas were provided for focus area 1.
 - b. A total of 22 'people and partnership' ideas were provided for focus area 2.
 - c. A total of 20 'species and habitat enhancement' ideas were provided for focus area 3.
 - d. A total of 30 'mitigating threatening processes and impacts' ideas were provided for focus area 4.
8. The feedback received will be considered over the coming weeks. Officers will prepare recommendations on what to change on the basis of this feedback (and the feedback that is yet to be received via the verbal submission process).

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PCC.007/24 Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 consultation findings and verbal submissions

Related Council decisions

9. On 23 May 2023, Council adopted its Annual Action Plan 2022-2023 which includes action 16 'Complete and adopt the new Biodiversity Strategy, including investigation into measures to establish and enhance the urban tree canopy and protect wildlife'.
10. On 6 June 2023, Councillors endorsed the Stage 1 community engagement process which commenced on 26 June 2023 and concluded on 30 July 2023.
11. On 12 December 2023, Councillors endorsed the draft Biodiversity Strategy for the purpose of Stage 2 community engagement, which commenced on 1 February 2024 and concluded on 3 March 2024.

Options

12. Consider the submissions received to inform the refinement of the draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034.
13. Consider the cost/resourcing of implementation of the Strategy in annual budget processes.

Council plans and policies

14. This report directly supports the achievement of the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategy:
 - We understand and value biodiversity and its importance to human health and wellbeing, and take action to protect and enhance biodiversity in Nillumbik.

Access, Equity and Inclusion

15. A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) has been applied to this project.
16. The community engagement process was designed to be accessible to, and collect feedback from, diverse community representation – including rural and urban voices, young people and adults, day time and evening feedback opportunities, and in-person and on-line feedback opportunities.

Sustainability implications

17. The finalised Biodiversity Strategy will provide strategic direction for Council to support positive environmental outcomes.

Community engagement

18. Engagement to inform the draft Biodiversity Strategy development has included the following:
 - a) Council engaged Chatterbox Consulting to conduct a Stage 1 consultation process in June/July 2023 to ascertain community views and values with regard to biodiversity. There were 350 respondents. A summary of the methodology and findings is available on Council's Participate Nillumbik website.
 - b) Discussions with Council's Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee and Youth Council.
 - c) Discussions with representatives of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung.

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- d) Consideration of feedback that relates to biodiversity matters collected via alternate consultations undertaken by Council over the past several years (including via Neighbourhood Character, Local Laws and Climate Action consultations).
- e) An almost five-week public exhibition / Stage 2 consultation period, from 1 February to 3 March 2024. Findings are summarised in **Attachment 2**:
 - i) Opportunities for involvement were promoted via Participate Nillumbik, Nillumbik News, Council e-newsletters, a media release, direct emails, and posters and postcards that were distributed across the Shire.
 - ii) The Participate Nillumbik project page received 566 visitors and 279 downloads of the draft Biodiversity Strategy.
 - iii) Submissions on the draft Strategy were invited via online survey or written submission. A total of 95 submissions were received, including 82 survey responses and 13 freeform written submissions.
 - iv) Council engaged Chatterbox Consultancy to facilitate three workshop sessions. Limited interest resulted in only one being held, with 12 participants.
 - v) Officers also hosted four drop-in sessions, with five participants in total.
- f) Verbal submissions are being heard at this Planning and Consultation Committee meeting (14 May 2024).

Innovation and continuous improvement

- 19. The Draft Biodiversity Strategy is being developed with continuous improvement as a guiding principle.

Collaboration

- 20. Local and regional professional stakeholders participated in a collaborative workshop to confirm regional-scale priorities that the Strategy can help to address (e.g. Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils and Trust for Nature).
- 21. The published strategies of the Nillumbik Landcare Network and the Eastern Region Pest Animal group have contributed to the development of the draft Strategy.
- 22. Partnerships and collaboration will play an integral role in the implementation of the Strategy.

Budget implications

- 23. The draft Biodiversity Strategy is a high-level strategic document and does not make specific budget commitments.
- 24. The cost of implementing the Strategy needs to be considered as it is being refined. In particular, there is an opportunity to review future budget allocations for roadside weed control, bushland reserve management, environmental volunteer programs and forest health monitoring.

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PCC.007/24 Draft Biodiversity Strategy - Stage 2 consultation findings and verbal submissions

25. Budget requirements will be considered via the formal annual budget setting process.

Relevant law

26. *Conservation and Land Management Act (CALP Act) 1994*

27. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) 1999*

28. *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG Act) 1988*

29. *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

Regional, state and national plans and policies

30. Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030

31. Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037

32. Eastern Region Pest Animal Strategy 2021

Conflicts of interest

33. All officers involved in the preparation of this report have made a declaration that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

- 7. Supplementary and urgent business**
- 8. Confidential reports**
- 9. Close of Meeting**