

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.

Attachments

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 9 May 2024

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough
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Nillumbik Shire Council

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- COM.001/24 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 16 April 2024
- Attachment 1. Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting

held virtually on Tuesday 16 April 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

Minutes

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Friday 19 April 2024

Distribution: Public

Civic Drive, Greensborough
PO Box 476, Greensborough 3088
Telephone 9433 3111
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COM.001/24 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 16 April 2024

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

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

16 April 2024

Nillumbik Shire Council

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

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

Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

16 April 2024

Nillumbik Shire Council

Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 16 April 2024. The meeting commenced at 7:02pm.

Councillors present:

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

Officers in attendance:

Carl Cowie	Chief Executive Officer
Vince Lombardi	Chief Operating Officer
Bлага Naumoski	Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety
Renaë Ahern	Acting Director Planning, Environment and Strategy
Jeremy Livingston	Director Culture and Performance
Leigh Northwood	Manager Strategic Planning and Environment
Tracey Varley	Manager Communications and Engagement
Daniel Tarquinio	Manager Information Technology
Katia Croce	Manager Governance and Property

1. Welcome by the Chair

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country was read by the Chairperson Consultation Matters Cr Natalie Duffy.

3. Apologies/Leave of Absence

An apology was received from Cr Frances Eyre.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Karen Egan

SECONDED: Cr Peter Perkins

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council) notes the apology from Cr Frances Eyre.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Declarations of conflict of interest

Nil

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

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

Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

16 April 2024

5. Confirmation of Minutes

COM.001/24 Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 12 March 2024

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Karen Egan

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 12 March 2024 (**Attachment 1**).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Officers' reports

PCC.003/24 Draft Housing Strategy Consideration of Endorsement for Community Engagement

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

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

Author: Leigh Northwood, Manager Strategic Planning and Environment

Summary

This report provides a draft of the Nillumbik Housing Strategy (**Attachment 1**) and recommends Council endorse the draft Housing Strategy for community engagement to run for four weeks from late April to late May.

The development of both a new Housing Strategy (HS) and a new Neighbourhood Character Strategy (NCS) are priority actions in the current Council Plan.

When planning to accommodate projected population and housing change, local governments are required by State planning policy to effectively plan for this change by considering relevant environmental, social and economic factors, and where conflict arises, balance competing objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development.

The draft Strategy has been prepared by officers in-house. The draft has been prepared with input from a Community Reference Group, particularly in informing the vision and themes present in the draft Strategy.

The draft Strategy accounts for 15 years (to 2041). Nillumbik Shire's residential areas are forecast to increase from 60,118 persons in 2021 to 66,257 persons by 2041, an increase of 6,139 persons (10.2%) and modest in the context of Metropolitan Melbourne. Our forecasts suggest that we will need an additional 3,233 new dwellings by 2041 to accommodate our forecast growth.

The Housing Strategy must respond to evidenced data and demographic forecasts; be consistent with State planning policy settings (requirements that Council must align to in accordance with the Victorian Planning Provisions); and set objectives and actions within the context or broader 'macro' settings that Council has no control over (e.g. Federal/State level policy settings around taxation and immigration; construction/material and supply chain issues; State/Federal level infrastructure plans/spending).

Nillumbik's Housing Strategy is being drafted at a time of unprecedented planning policy change specific to housing, not only in Victoria but Australia-wide, predominantly driven by the decline of supply and housing affordability. Officers however are relatively confident that any future initiatives by the State government (e.g. Plan Victoria) can be effectively accommodated in our planning for housing, given our analysis shows we can accommodate not only our projected 2041 growth, but have a significant capacity over and above this.

It is particularly emphasised, drafting of the Housing Strategy is also timely in ensuring Nillumbik's unique neighbourhood character settings are retained during this time of unprecedented change in housing policy by the State government.

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6. Consultation Matters

PCC.003/24 Draft Housing Strategy Consideration of Endorsement for Community Engagement

On this, the draft Housing Strategy is embedding key recommendations of the adopted Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2023 (and uses the Neighbourhood Character Strategy as part of the methodology in applying change areas) which underwent three robust rounds of engagement. Further, the amendment process to implement the Neighbourhood Character Strategy and the Housing Strategy into the planning scheme will have its own extensive round of consultation and right of review, in accordance with the statutory process set down by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

As per the project program, a report is scheduled to be presented to Council's Planning and Consultation Committee in July where submitters to the draft Housing Strategy will be invited to speak to their submissions.

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

1 *David Pincheira - Reflection outreach Director (Virtual)*

The Chairperson read following submissions on behalf of:

2 *Gila Schnapp*

3 *Adjungbilly Pty Ltd*

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins

SECONDED: Cr Geoff Paine

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council)

1. Notes the draft Nillumbik Housing Strategy, which is provided as **Attachment 1**;
2. Notes the 'What We've Heard About Housing' Summary Paper at **Attachment 2**;
3. Endorses the draft Nillumbik Housing Strategy and for public engagement to occur from late April to late May (for 4 weeks);
4. Endorses the 'What We've Heard About Housing' Summary Paper and requests officers make the paper available on the Participate Nillumbik page in support of community engagement on the draft Nillumbik Housing Strategy; and
5. Notes that a report is scheduled to be presented to Council's Planning and Consultation Committee in July where submitters to the draft Nillumbik Housing Strategy will be invited to speak to their submissions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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6. Officers' reports

PCC.004/24 Draft Budget 2024-2025 Submissions

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Vince Lombardi, Chief Operating Officer

Author: Melika Sukunda, Manager Finance, Assets and Procurement

Summary

This report considers submissions received from the public regarding the Draft Budget 2024-2025 (**Attachment 1**).

Council adopted the Draft Budget 2024-2025 at the Council Meeting on 27 February 2024 for the purpose of community consultation. The Draft Budget was exhibited for 28 days with 7 submissions being received. These submissions are attached to this report (**Attachment 1**).

It is proposed that the Committee considers the submissions on the Draft Budget 2024-2025 and that the matter then be considered by Council on 28 May 2024.

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

- 1 Neil McCoy - Eltham Men's Shed Incorporated Treasurer (Virtual)
- 2 Anne Bailey - Eltham Junior Football Club – Treasurer (Virtual)

The Chairperson read following submissions on behalf of:

- 3 Dale Anstis
- 4 Mary Salce-Morabito
- 5 John F Smith - The Eltham Club - Facility & Grounds Manager
- 6 Rebekha Naim

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Geoff Paine

SECONDED: Cr Peter Perkins

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Receives and notes the submissions received in respect of the Draft Budget 2024-2025, (**Attachments 1 and 2**) in accordance with the section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
2. Considers the matters contained in the submissions and the Committee's report during finalisation of the Budget.
3. Acknowledges presentations made to the Committee.
4. Resolves that the confidential un-redacted submissions contained in (**Attachment 2**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in Section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

16 April 2024

6. Consultation Matters

PCC.004/24 Draft Budget 2024-2025 Submissions

-
5. Recommends the adoption of the 2024-2025 Budget at the 28 May 2024 Council Meeting.

CARRIED

For: Crs Natalie Duffy, Karen Egan, Geoff Paine, Peter Perkins and Ben Ramcharan

Against: Cr Richard Stockman

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Planning and Consultation Committee Minutes

16 April 2024

6. Officers' reports

PCC.005/24 Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2024 - Nillumbik Shire Council Motions

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety

Author: Tracey Varley, Manager Communications and Engagement

Summary

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) provides the opportunity for Councils throughout Australia to contribute to the development of national local government policy and receive updates on the major policy issues facing the local government sector.

The 30th NGA will be held in Canberra from 2 - 4 July 2024, featuring the theme 'Building Community Trust'. The Assembly is a major event and typically attracts more than 600 Mayors, Councillors and senior officers from Councils across Australia.

The NGA is an opportunity for individual Councils to identify matters of national relevance to the sector, influence the future direction of our Council and our community, and submit notices of motion to seek support for these matters to be considered by NGA as national policy.

Motions must be submitted no later than 11.59pm on Tuesday, 30 April 2024. Motions that are carried by the NGA become resolutions, which are then considered by the ALGA Board when setting national local government policy, while also feeding into the Australian Council of Local Government processes.

This report seeks endorsement of the Nillumbik Motions (Attachment 2) to be put forward to the ALGA NGA in July 2024. Motions submitted will be reviewed by a committee of the ALGA Board as well as by State and Territory Local Government Associations to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers. When reviewing motions, the committee considers the importance and relevance of the issue to Local Government.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Karen Egan

SECONDED: Cr Peter Perkins

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Adopts and lodges the following motions to the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly, to be held in Canberra from 2 - 4 July 2024:

- i. *The Australian Local Government Association calls on the Australian Government to provide targeted investment in the development of Australia's electrical grid network infrastructure to equitably distribute large-scale renewable energy generation.*

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6. Consultation Matters

PCC.005/24 Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2024 - Nillumbik Shire Council Motions

-
- ii. *The Australian Local Government Association calls on the Australian Government to establish a funding stream that supports local councils in managing asset renewal responsibilities.*

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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6. Officers' reports

PCC.006/24 Review of the Governance Rule - Election Period Policy - Hearing of Submissions

Item: Consultation Matter

Distribution: Public

Manager: Blaga Naumoski, Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety

Author: Katia Croce, Manager Governance and Property

Summary

This report provides Council with the feedback of the community engagement undertaken in relation to the draft Governance Rule – Election Period Policy (Election Period Policy) (**Attachment 1**).

Following endorsement for public consultation at the 27 February 2024 Council Meeting, the draft Election Period Policy was open for community consultation for the period 1 March 2024 to 24 March 2024. This report provides a summary of the feedback received from the community during the public exhibition period.

One submission was received and is contained in **Attachments 2 and 3**.

Officers will review the draft Election Period Policy taking into account the written submission and any verbal submissions before presenting the Governance Rule - Election Period Policy for endorsement at the Council Meeting on 28 May 2024.

Committee Resolution

MOVED: Cr Peter Perkins

SECONDED: Cr Karen Egan

That the Committee (acting under delegation from Council):

1. Acknowledges and notes the one submission from the community who provided feedback on the draft Governance Rule – Election Period Policy.
2. Considers the feedback contained in the submission and any presentations made to the Committee during the finalisation of the Governance Rule – Election Period Policy.
3. Receives a report at the 28 May 2024 Council Meeting to consider endorsing the Governance Rule – Election Period Policy.
4. Resolves the confidential un-redacted copy of the written submissions to the Draft General Local Law (**Attachment 3**) remain confidential on the grounds specified in the definition of confidential information in section 3(1)(f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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6. Consultation Matters

PCC.006/24 Review of the Governance Rule - Election Period Policy - Hearing of Submissions

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Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting Minutes

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7. Supplementary and urgent business

Nil

8. Confidential reports

Nil

9. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8:27pm.

Confirmed: _____

Cr Natalie Duffy, Chairperson Consultation Matters

COM.001/24 **Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held Tuesday 16 April 2024**
Attachment 1. **Confirmation of Minutes Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024**

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NGH

Prepared for Nillumbik Shire Council

Nillumbik Shire Council

Draft Biodiversity Strategy

November 2023

Project Number: 220657



nghconsulting.com.au

Nillumbik Shire Council
Draft Biodiversity Strategy



Document verification

Project Title: Draft Biodiversity Strategy

Project Number: 220657

Project File Name: 220657 Nillumbik Shire Council Draft Biodiversity Strategy DR4

Revision	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
Draft V4	29/09/2023	Emily Hatfield	Jonathan Lamb	Emily Hatfield
Draft V2	20/10/2023	Emily Hatfield	Jonathan Lamb	Emily Hatfield
Draft V3	30/10/2023	Kirsten Reedy Nillumbik Shire Council Warren Tomlinson Nillumbik Shire Council		
Draft 3.1	2/11/2023	Emily Hatfield	Jonathan Lamb	Emily Hatfield
Draft 4	27/11/2023	Kirsten Reedy Nillumbik Shire Council Warren Tomlinson Nillumbik Shire Council	Emily Hatfield	Jonathan Lamb

Nillumbik Shire Council
Draft Biodiversity Strategy



Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which Nillumbik is located. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all First Nations People. We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people hold a deep and ongoing connection to this place. We value the contribution their Care for Country makes to the lands, waterways, plants, wildlife and people of the Shire of Nillumbik; acknowledge their beliefs, customs and values; and are committed to collaborating around how we think, work and act in relation to climate change and caring for our environment.

DRAFT

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Nillumbik Shire Council
Draft Biodiversity Strategy



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Acronyms, abbreviations and glossary of terms

ASN	Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030
biodiversity	the variety of all life forms on earth - the different plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems of which they are a part
Biodiversity 2037	Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037
Bushland reserves	Council owned or managed land which are primarily managed for their biodiversity values or function
CaLP	<i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (Vic)</i>
CAP	Nillumbik Climate Action Plan 2022-2032
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Council	Nillumbik Shire Council
Cwth	Commonwealth
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Cwth)
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Vic) (formed 1/01/23)
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Vic) (2015-2022)
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)</i>
EVC	ecological vegetation classes
ESO	environmental significance overlay
FFG	<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)</i>
GBF	global biodiversity framework
green infrastructure	the network of green spaces, trees and water systems that connect and provide vital life support for all of us and the other species within our urban environments
ha	hectares
indicators	measures that will help to track the progress and outcomes of the Biodiversity Strategy's goals and targets
km	kilometres
LGA	local government area
LMIP	Land Management Incentive Program
MPS	Municipal Planning Strategy

natural capital	is the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people, including ecosystems, freshwater, land, minerals, air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions
natural environment	encompasses climate, atmosphere, natural resources, water, land, ecosystems and biodiversity.
objective	an approach that will contribute to achieving the goals of the strategy.
Reserves	Council owned or managed land, including those managed by Parks, Open Space or Bushland Reserves
SBV	strategic biodiversity values
SHL	strategic habitat links
stepping stones	relatively small patches of native vegetation in the landscape that contribute to connectivity for a variety of species
supporting strategies	the types of actions that will be implemented in order to achieve the Biodiversity Strategy's goals and objectives.
the Strategy	Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy
UGB	urban growth boundary

1. Introduction

The Shire of Nillumbik, also known as The Green Wedge Shire, is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people.

Our biodiversity and its character are strongly valued by Council and by the community:

- Our native flora and fauna are precious and are in our safekeeping.
- Our natural environment is at the very heart of our lifestyle and is fundamental to the beauty of our landscape, our neighbourhood character, our economy, culture and our health and wellbeing.

Supporting a diverse array of flora and fauna, Nillumbik is around 43,000 hectares (ha) in size, 91 per cent of which is outside of Melbourne's urban growth boundary.

Most land is privately owned (61 per cent), and majority of the rest is managed by Parks Victoria, DEECA, Melbourne Water and Council (39 per cent):

- 61 per cent is private land
- 24 per cent is national parks/reserves
- 8 per cent is other crown land
- 5 per cent is Melbourne Water
- 2 per cent is Council owned

As such, this Biodiversity Strategy considers biodiversity action in urban and rural contexts; and it provides the strategic direction to support Council's work in helping to protect and enhance biodiversity across public and private land over the next ten years.

Its goals are that:

Goal 1 - The biodiversity of Nillumbik is healthy

Goal 2 - Nillumbik's community values and cares for nature.

Ambitious targets are proposed, including:

- Achieve a net gain in the extent, connectivity and condition of habitat by 2034
- 70 per cent of Nillumbik's residents are acting to protect our natural environment by 2034.

The Strategy:

- Considers threats and opportunities, setting objectives that seek to protect our current biodiversity; improve its condition; and help restore and enhance connectivity where it's fragmented, over time.
- Seeks to connect people with nature – so that they can enjoy the outdoors and thrive from its intrinsic health and wellbeing benefits; and to help build their appreciation of biodiversity and interest in taking action to care for it.
- Seeks to enable action that will guide conservation where it is needed the most; and improve the resilience of our natural environment to cope with climate change.
- Recognises that harnessing a collective effort is instrumental - Council, private landholders, environmental volunteer groups, the general community, Traditional Owners and entities such as Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water all have an important role to play in sustaining a healthy biodiversity and a community that values nature.

A detailed implementation plan will be prepared annually which will list the specific actions that will be undertaken that year.

Our four focus areas for action are: Leadership and advocacy; People and partnerships; Species and habitat enhancement; and Mitigating threatening processes and impacts.

Biodiversity encompasses all components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including fungi and micro-organisms, across our land, rivers, coast and ocean. It includes the diversity of their genetic information, the habitats and ecosystems within which they live, and their connections with other life forms and the natural world (DELWP, 2017a)

1.1. Why Council has a Biodiversity Strategy

Biodiversity is fundamentally important; it is essential for the processes that support all life. It creates balance, with every lifeform playing a part in maintaining that balance; and it provides environmental, social, wellbeing and economic benefits.

Globally however, biodiversity is declining. Climate change is bringing new and challenging threats to biodiversity which need to be addressed; and in Australia - over the last 200 years - human activity, weeds and pest animals have greatly impacted biodiversity, resulting in the loss of many native species and habitats. This needs to be halted.

The importance of biodiversity and the factors that are contributing to its decline are why Council has a Biodiversity Strategy.

Recognising that it is complex, we need to do our best to help protect and enhance biodiversity locally in Nillumbik; and to contribute to state, national and global strategic action.

1.2. The steps taken to develop the Strategy

In developing this Strategy, we were guided by international conventions, the objectives of the Victorian State Government's *Protecting Victoria's Environment, Biodiversity 2037* (Biodiversity 2037) strategy, and other national, state, regional and local policy considerations.

- **Phase 1** - We reviewed the outcomes of our *Biodiversity Strategy 2012* and *Invasive Species Action Plan 2015*.
- **Phase 2** - We researched legislative requirements, policy, publicly available biodiversity data, and best practice management. This included specific consideration of matters such as baseline data, wildlife protection options, and native vegetation offset site and management options.
- **Phase 3** - We asked the community what their priorities are. We received feedback from 350 people, which included 184 survey respondents plus people who attended workshops and pop-up consultations.
- **Phase 4** - We consulted with Councillors, Council advisory committees, Traditional Owners and partners.
- **Phase 5** - The draft strategy is currently on public exhibition so that the community and other stakeholders can provide further feedback.

Considering community views

Amongst many relevant findings, community survey respondents indicated that:

- Biodiversity is very important or important (98 per cent of survey respondents).

They perceive that the five biggest threats to biodiversity in Nillumbik include:

1. Habitat / vegetation loss
2. Subdivision and development of land
3. Climate change impacts
4. Pest animals such as foxes, deer, rabbits and feral cats
5. Tree canopy loss in urban areas.

They believe that the five most important actions for Council to take to protect and enhance biodiversity in Nillumbik are:

1. "Greater use and enforcement of planning rules and other regulatory tools to protect trees/native vegetation and other biodiversity on private land"
2. "Embed consideration of nature and biodiversity into all Council decision making"
3. "Advocate to state and federal governments to take biodiversity supportive action"
4. "Community education and awareness raising about protecting and enhancing biodiversity"
5. "Manage pest animals on Council land".

2. Nillumbik's biodiversity and threats

2.1. Our biodiversity

Across Australia, more than 1.75 million species of plants, animals and other organisms have been identified so far, and there are likely to be many more. Our biodiversity is unlike any other in the world, with nearly half of our birds and more than half of our mammals unique to Australia.

Nillumbik alone supports a wonderfully diverse array of species and their habitats, spanning the riparian forests along the Yarra River and woodlands along the Plenty River, to the gullies and hills leading up to the Kinglake Plateau of the Great Dividing Range.

In comparison with Victoria's other metropolitan and peri urban areas, we have a very diverse and relatively healthy biodiversity, and a large extent of remnant vegetation. In the last 30 years, 44% of Melbourne's indigenous terrestrial flora species and 33% of terrestrial fauna species have been observed in Nillumbik (ALA, 2023).

Our landscape includes a mix of urban, peri-urban and rural areas across various land tenures; with national and state parks, dry forests and woodlands, wet and damp forests, waterways and wetlands, and rural land.

We are one of the 12 green wedges of metropolitan Melbourne.

Nillumbik's Bioregions and Ecological Vegetation Classes

Bioregions are a landscape-scale approach to classifying the environment using a range of attributes such as climate, geomorphology, geology, soils and vegetation (DEECA 2023). There are 28 bioregions within Victoria, and Nillumbik is primarily located in the *Highlands - Southern Fall bioregion* on the southerly aspect of the Great Dividing Range. There is also a small area of the *Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion* in the west of the Shire.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are a term that classifies different native vegetation types across Victoria. Each EVC has a Bioregional Conservation Status (BCS) rating that is based on the level of depletion in each bioregion. Different EVCs will typically support or provide habitat to different plants (flora) and animals (fauna).

A total of 20 EVCs are found in Nillumbik, covering 29,438 ha (DELWP 2017). The most commonly occurring EVCs in the Shire and their bioregional conservation status, in order of extent, are:

- Grassy Dry Forest (Least Concern) (8,249 ha)

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- Valley Grassy Forest (Vulnerable) (5,603 ha)
- Herb-rich Foothill Forest (Least Concern) (4,475 ha)
- Heathy Dry Forest (Least Concern) (2,185 ha)
- Riparian Forest (Least Concern) (1,652 ha)
- Box-Ironbark Forest (Vulnerable) (1,141 ha).

EVCs that occur widely within the Shire’s parks and other public land reserves are provided a high level of security and protection into the future.

However, there are also locally present EVCs which have little representation in these protected areas. These include: Plains Grassy Woodland (Endangered) (225ha); Creekline Herb-rich Woodland (Vulnerable) (1,802ha); and Valley Grassy Forest (Vulnerable) (5,603 ha). For example, 83 per cent of vulnerable Valley Grassy Forest extent within the Shire is located on private land.

Over the past decade, native vegetation removal within the Shire has most severely impacted upon Grassy Dry Forest (Least Concern), Valley Grassy Forest (Vulnerable) and Swampy Riparian Complex (Endangered).

The extent of Nillumbik’s EVCs are depicted in a pie graph in Figure 7-1 and mapped in Figure 7-2 in Appendix A.

Nillumbik’s vegetation extent

Nillumbik is fortunate to retain a high cover of native vegetation across the Shire. While indigenous native vegetation is preferable and offers greater habitat value, most vegetation can be of some biodiversity value.

Table 2-1 Native vegetation and tree canopy extent by land tenure

Cover	Council managed (ha)	Govt/ Public controlled (ha)	Private land (ha)	Total (ha)	% of cover on Council land	% of cover on Public controlled	% of cover on Private land	Total % cover of Shire
Native vegetation¹	479	8,551	20,256	29,296	2%	29%	69%	68%
Tree canopy 2m+ (native & exotic)²	437	7,909	13,615	21,962	2%	36%	62%	51%

¹ – Native vegetation extent is derived from Landsat data mapped at 30 meter spatial resolution, includes native grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees. Source: DELWP 2017, based on the 2017 Native Vegetation Regulation Extent mapping.

² – Tree canopy extent includes native and exotic species, trees and shrubs 2 meters + in height, Lidar data mapped at 21cm spatial resolution. Source: DELWP 2021, based on Vic Map 2019/20 vegetation tree extent mapping.

Native vegetation extent (totalling 29,296 ha in Nillumbik) includes all native vegetation shrublands, grasslands and herblands. This Strategy includes a target of achieving a net gain in native vegetation extent over the coming decade.

Table 1-1 above provides a breakdown of the native vegetation extent as it occurs on tenure type. It highlights that over two-thirds of Nillumbik’s native vegetation is located on private land. The largest areas of native vegetation on public land include:

- Kinglake National Park in the northeast of the Shire, managed by Parks Victoria
- Warrandyte - Kinglake Nature Conservation Reserve, managed by Parks Victoria
- Plenty Gorge Parklands, managed by Parks Victoria
- Over 100 bushland reserves (totalling around 500 ha) which are located across the Shire, managed by Council.

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Tree canopy, defined as woody vegetation (both native and exotic species) greater than approximately two metres in height, is estimated to cover 21,962 ha or 51 per cent of the Shire.

Figure 7-3 in Appendix B maps the presence and absence of tree canopy cover in Nillumbik, derived from statewide aerial photography.

A relatively small percentage of Nillumbik’s tree extent is exotic (not native) including pine plantations, ornamental trees and even environmental weeds (objectives to reduce weed presence are covered in this Strategy).

This Strategy includes a target to maintain this tree canopy extent at 51 percent. There are many challenges to this, which are discussed under ‘threats’ and responded to within the objectives of this Strategy.

Nillumbik’s plant and animal species

The Shire supports a large array of native plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms. Over 990 indigenous flora (plant species), including 54 species that are considered threatened at a national or state level have been recorded. There are also around 400 native fauna (animal species), including 83 species that are classified as threatened.

Table 2-2 and Table 2-3 provide a summary of species records and threatened species data.

Table 2-2 Species records across the Shire

Taxon Group	Total number of species	Number of records
Plants (native)	992	52,943
Fungi (may include some exotic species)	381	6,430
Birds (native)	307	529,683
Mammals (native)	41	5,533
Frogs (native)	18	170,464
Reptiles (native)	33	1,653
Insects (native)	1,831	12,635
Fish (native)	18	913

Source: (ALA, 2023; VBA 2023)

Table 2-3 Number of threatened flora and fauna in Nillumbik, listed under federal and state legislation

Status:	EPBC-listed species (Federal)		FFG-listed species (State)	
	Flora	Fauna	Flora	Fauna
Critically endangered	1	4	11	12
Endangered	4	8	31	28
Vulnerable	5	14	7	26
Total*	10	27	49	67

Source: Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) and Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG Act)

*Some species are listed at both a federal and state level (i.e. in both the EPBC and FFG Acts).

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The recent *Australia State of the Environment Report* identified that between 2017 and 2021 there was an 8 per cent increase in the number of species listed as threatened, or reassessed as meeting criteria for a higher level of risk of extinction (e.g. moved from Vulnerable to Endangered to Critically Endangered), across Australia.

A list of the threatened species that are present in Nillumbik (as per the Federal EPBC Act and the Victorian FFG Act), is provided in Appendix C. Absence of monitoring and data collection for most threatened species at the state and local level means that it is difficult to determine species-specific improvement or decline for most species occurring in Nillumbik.

Nillumbik's habitat corridors

Habitat corridors seek to connect areas of habitat to allow movement for both flora and fauna species. A habitat corridor can vary in size, connecting regions, down to corridors on properties. There are a number of regional and district habitat corridors across public and private land in Nillumbik. A map depicting the links/corridors is provided in Appendix D.

- Regional habitat corridors include the Yarra River and the catchments of its major tributaries (Plenty River, Arthurs Creek, Diamond Creek and Watsons Creek). They are considered critical to the maintenance of faunal/habitat significance at the regional level. Native vegetation corridors along waterways, or often along roadsides, support the passage of wildlife between natural areas.
- Local habitat corridors and 'stepping stones', including those in urban areas, provide essential connectivity where fragmentation of important populations of species, such as the Eltham Copper Butterfly (*Paralucia pyrodiscus lucida*), are at risk from genetic isolation.
- Shelterbelts and windbreaks act as local habitat corridors in rural areas, provided they are wide enough.

Action to protect, enhance and further connect these corridors, particularly in strategically important locations, is a desired outcome to help support the goals of this strategy.

Case Study – Phascogales and habitat corridors

The benefits of wildlife corridors can be evidenced in examples such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*). The Nillumbik area remains an important stronghold for phascogales, which forage over great distances in their home range: 30-60 ha for females and 100 ha for males, nesting in about 30 different sites each year. For such species, habitat corridors that link core habitat areas (which have native vegetation, large hollow bearing trees, logs, stumps for shelter etc) are vital as they enable animals to move from one area of bushland to another.

2.2. Threats to the health of biodiversity in Nillumbik

The threatening processes impacting biodiversity within the Shire, and the challenges associated with achieving a community that values nature and acts to care for it, are many and varied. This Strategy seeks to provide strategic direction to better understand and respond to these threats and challenges.

Some of the threats to biodiversity within Nillumbik are:

- climate change
- habitat loss and fragmentation
- urbanisation and associated impacts
- land use changes
- weeds, pest animals and pathogens
- poisons such as rodenticides and pesticides
- loss of soil health, such as erosion and compaction
- bushfire and altered fire regimes
- declining waterway quality and catchment condition
- habitat degradation, for example from over-grazing; riding of bikes or horses off formal tracks in reserves; etc
- lack of understanding of ecological processes, and lack of comprehensive, robust biodiversity data to help inform and direct targeted action
- insufficient resourcing.

Case studies - The causes and consequences of threats to biodiversity vary, for example:

- Climate change in south-eastern Australia is creating warmer days and more heatwaves, as well as declining cool season rainfall, exacerbating drought and fire conditions. In the Nillumbik region, by 2050, it is predicted that days over 35°C will double, while annual rainfall will concurrently decline by 8 per cent (DEWLP, 2019). This poses a threat to the health and persistence of biodiversity.
- Land-use changes within the Shire have led to habitat loss and fragmentation, causing reduced connectivity of animal and plant populations. Reduced connectivity impairs essential ecological processes and functions such as pollination, natural regeneration, and the distribution, migration, breeding and re-colonisation of fauna in response to environmental changes. If species are restricted to small, isolated islands of habitat, biodiversity becomes less resilient and is vulnerable to threats such as invasive species, inappropriate fire regimes and the effects of climate change. Reduced populations and genetics ultimately lead to declining biodiversity.
- Infrastructure including roads and rail, can form barriers to wildlife movement, severing habitat connectivity and isolating populations. Wildlife vehicle collisions cause serious injury and death to numerous species; over 3,500 animals were recorded by Wildlife Victoria as 'hit by vehicle' within and immediately surrounding Nillumbik between 2012 and 2022 (the majority of which were Eastern Grey Kangaroos). Higher levels of road vehicle collisions are associated with vehicle speed, traffic volume and presence of roadside vegetation cover.
- There are a variety of habitat / vegetation loss causes that are threats to biodiversity. Permitted and non-permitted native vegetation removal is an obvious contributor, which requires ongoing education and enforcement responses.
- The quality of vegetation and habitats on public and private land is under sustained pressure from herbivores. Their movement through the landscape and over grazing can contribute to changes in the structure, diversity and composition of native vegetation communities; erosion and compaction of soil; damage to waterways and water quality; spread of diseases, pathogens and weed seeds;

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and has led to a gradual decline in the presence and abundance of a number of flora and fauna species.

- Predatory pest animals have led to the extinction of a wide variety of native animals across Australia and significantly impact on populations of many local fauna species.
- Weeds can include woody, grasses or bulbous plants. Weeds impact on our native plants and animals by reducing habitat quality, out competing native flora species, harbouring pest animals, changing ecosystem composition, structure and function and hybridising with locally indigenous plants.
- Invasive pathogens can include diseases, fungi and parasites which can, for example, spread through natural bushland affecting the health and resilience of native vegetation or impact specific species such as frogs. They include Cinnamon Fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) and Chytrid fungus.
- A widespread under-appreciation of biodiversity and disconnection from nature may prevent action to protect and enhance it.

Successful mitigation of such threats requires targeted action with consistent and ongoing resourcing.

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3. Previous biodiversity action that we're building upon

Council and our partners have implemented a wide variety of programs and actions which have contributed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the Shire.

These projects and programs have been (and continue to be) undertaken collaboratively where possible; with other levels of government, agencies and neighbouring councils, landholders and community groups.

Biodiversity action by Council

This Strategy builds upon decades of action that Council has undertaken.

There are many ways that Council invests in biodiversity and invasive species action, these broadly include:

- Managing Council owned land, including 100 bushland and wetland conservation reserves and 1,200km of roadsides. (Allocation of biodiversity and invasive species resources is managed to achieve best possible outcomes, but there are gaps).
- Raising awareness and educating our community about biodiversity and sustainable land management. Including through advice, events, publications and awards.
- Providing incentives for positive land management and conservation (grants and rate rebates).
- Edendale's Community Environment Farm's education program and indigenous plant nursery.
- Advocacy for change that will support biodiversity outcomes, including through legislative reviews, parliamentary inquiries, and policy and budget submissions.
- Implementing Council's regulatory system via our planning scheme and local laws which guide permissible land use, and which include a focus on achieving positive biodiversity outcomes.
- Supporting Landcare, Friends of and other community groups and volunteers to act for the local environment.
- Facilitating partnership projects to enable more effective projects across multiple land tenures, often at a landscape scale, including obtaining grants to leverage and provide more cost-effective results.

Some examples of specific Council projects delivered collaboratively include:

- The Nillumbik Gardens for Wildlife program, established in partnership with the community
- Land Management Incentive grant Program
- Nillumbik Forest Health Monitoring Program, which monitors over 21 indicator species associated with wet and dry forest communities
- Nillumbik Deer Control Project
- The Collaborative Community Deer Action Project
- Eltham Copper Butterfly monitoring
- Involvement in the development of the Eastern Region Pest Animal Strategy 2020 – 2030 which seeks to “work together to minimise the impacts of pest animals across the region”, focusing on controlling deer, fox, rabbits, Indian mynas and cats.
- Sugarloaf Link Project (deer, foxes and weeds)
- Rivers to Ranges Project (peri-urban landscape scale weed control)
- Conservation Futures Project, focusing on threatened flora and fauna species
- Southern Toadlets and other frogs in Nillumbik
- Operation and high standard of management of several native vegetation offset sites, including Chase Reserve in North Warrandyte.

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Whilst much has been done, there is more to focus on over the coming years.

Biodiversity action in the community

We are very fortunate that so many people in the Nillumbik community value and care for biodiversity in all its forms. Council values these people who are making significant contributions to protecting and improving biodiversity, both in formal volunteer capacities and in their day-to-day lives.

A highly motivated network of individuals and community groups focus on the environment, undertaking on-ground works, advocacy, lobbying and communication to encourage and support positive and collaborative action. For example:

- Twelve Landcare groups operate across the Shire, supported by many in their local communities, the Nillumbik Landcare Network, and a state funded Landcare Facilitator.
- 20 Friends of Groups undertake important habitat restoration and revegetation works, largely in Council's bushland reserves; and additional Friends of Groups support the biodiversity of local Parks Victoria reserves.
- Land for Wildlife is voluntary conservation program supporting landholders to protect native plants and animals on their property.
- Several volunteer-based wildlife rescue groups and shelters operate locally, supporting injured wildlife.
- Various community groups who want to support biodiversity to thrive actively engage with others to inspire, encourage and support action.
- Through Citizen Science our community is supporting initiatives such as BirdLife Australia's 'Birds in Backyards', iNaturalist BioBlitzes, DeerScan, Frog census and PlatypuSpot.
- Individuals are planting wildlife gardens at home and managing their properties sustainably (including some who, through Trust for Nature covenants, are protecting properties for biodiversity in perpetuity).

The action that individual people and community groups are undertaking is incredibly important. Council hopes that over the life of this strategy that even more people in our community value and help to act for nature.

Biodiversity action by agencies and Government

State and federal government provide a variety of legislative and policy tools to protect biodiversity. These are discussed in Appendix E.

They have invested in various programs that support on-ground action to achieve biodiversity improvements across Nillumbik, many of which have been listed. In addition, this includes work delivered by Melbourne Water along waterways on private and public land, and Parks Victoria in Kinglake National Park, Plenty Gorge and the numerous reserves that form the Warrandyte-Kinglake Nature Reserve. These agencies partner with each other and with Council.

4. What we will do

4.1. Guiding principles

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to working actively and collaboratively to undertake biodiversity action.

This Strategy has been developed under the guidance of the following principles and in alignment with the state government's *Biodiversity 2037* priorities:

1. Council values the Shire's biodiversity and appreciates its intrinsic importance and its interconnections with the health and wellbeing of our community.
2. We acknowledge that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung have an ongoing connection to the lands, water, plants and animals of Nillumbik; they have knowledge of Country and cultural obligations that their traditional lands and waters are managed to keep Country healthy.
3. Protecting biodiversity is an essential tool in fighting the climate emergency.
4. We seek to protect, maintain and improve the quality and extent of native vegetation cover, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitats.
5. We take a biosecurity approach to pest plants, animals, diseases and pathogens which threaten environment and economic values in Nillumbik.
6. We apply adaptive management practices using the best available information. Spatially explicit data and information about biodiversity values and threats is needed to make evidence-based decisions about where resources and investment should be directed.
7. Partners and community volunteers are valued, supported and celebrated, to galvanize transformative action through broad participation, enabling actions and capacity building.
8. We take a collaborative and landscape-scale approach to biodiversity management so that all knowledge systems, including Indigenous knowledge, are included in decision making.
9. Key implementation actions and indicators to track progress will be reported on annually and will help inform Council planning and resourcing considerations, subject to annual Council Plan and budget processes.

These principles underpin and guide the implementation of the Strategy.

4.2. Our overarching goals, targets and indicators

We have two overarching goals and ambitious associated targets guiding Council's investment and focus:

Goal 1 – Biodiversity in Nillumbik is healthy

Nillumbik has functioning plant and animal populations, improved habitats and resilient ecosystems.

Target: Achieve a net gain in the overall extent, connectivity and condition of habitat by 2034

Indicators include:

- Extent of tree canopy cover (2 metres+ in height) - Baseline extent is 51%. Measured every 5 years. Target: No net loss.
- Extent of native vegetation (based on EVCs) – Baseline extent is 67%. Measured by DEECA approximately every 10 years. Target: net gain.
- Number of new local extinctions. Target: zero (i.e. safeguard the persistence of threatened species such as Eltham Copper Butterfly, Southern Toadlet and Rosella Spider Orchid).
- Scored condition of habitat in Council bushland reserves. Target: Improved condition.

- Number of trees planted and removed on Council land. Target: Net gain.
- Number of partners working collaboratively to support biodiversity gain.
- Other indicators are being developed.

Goal 2 – Nillumbik's community values and cares for nature

Nillumbik's community understand the importance of biodiversity and value nature, and as a result are more likely to help care for it. Caring (and acting to protect) refers to activities that directly protect or enhance biodiversity such as environmental volunteering, planting native gardens, protecting local waterways, placing a conservation covenant on their land, controlling pest species, revegetating, purchasing green products, and/or getting involved in citizen science monitoring.

Target: That 70% of Nillumbik residents care for nature by 2034

Indicators include:

- Number of people acting to protect Nillumbik's natural environment. (Source: new question in council's Annual community survey)
- Number of nature/biodiversity/environment programs delivered and number of attendees.
- Number of properties supported by Council to undertake biodiversity actions.
- Number and size of permanently protected areas of private land (Trust for Nature covenants)
- Number of indigenous plants sold by Edendale Indigenous Plant Nursery.
- Other indicators are being developed.

Indicators

We've included indicators to help track our progress towards achieving our overarching goals and targets. Some are listed above, and other key performance indicators are being developed.

Over the life of the Strategy, we may need to review and update our indicators, if or when improved and more cost-effective data options emerge.

Key focus areas

This Strategy aims to achieve the overarching goals over a ten-year period - through numerous objectives under four key focus areas:

1. Leadership and Advocacy (LA)
2. People and Partnerships (PP)
3. Species and Habitat Enhancement (SH)
4. Mitigating Threatening Processes and Impacts (MI)

Each focus area includes objectives and associated supporting strategies to help achieve them.

Some objectives within this Strategy will inevitably overlap each of the focus areas, delivering multiple benefits.

5. Key Focus Areas

5.1. Focus Area 1 - Leadership and Advocacy

Council is committed to taking decisive action that protects and enhances the biodiversity of Nillumbik.

We lead by example, and advocate for action by:

- Requiring our staff to consider biodiversity in their day-to-day roles and as part of decision making.
- Adopting a low-risk appetite for any activities which may impact on the environment or the achievement of Council's environmental objectives.
- Caring for and improving condition of biodiversity on land and assets owned or managed by Council, e.g. our bushland reserves and roadsides.
- Administering a planning system that has core objectives around protecting biodiversity across all land tenures.
- Seeking opportunities to enhance our natural capital (i.e. the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people).
- Taking a leadership role in coordinating cross-tenure landscape scale approaches that help to manage invasive species and protect indigenous flora and fauna.
- Partnering and collaborating.
- Advocating strongly to state and federal government for action and support to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Actively pursuing funding opportunities.

Council recognises that achieving our environmental objectives may involve a degree of risk and has a high-risk appetite for strategies that respond to our sense of urgency and current climate emergency.

With often limited available resources, our actions need to be strategic, collaborative, evidence based, prioritised and cost-effective.

5.1.1. Objectives and supporting strategies

Objective	Goal 1	Goal 2	Supporting strategies
1.1 Consider biodiversity impacts and opportunities in day-to-day operations and when making Council decisions	✓	✓	A. Embed delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy within the CEO's contract / performance plan. B. Embed consideration of biodiversity protection and enhancement within Council's decision-making processes, and into new Council policies, strategies and plans. C. Support all Council staff and contractors to be adequately informed on biodiversity matters, including biodiversity targets and legislative obligations. D. Implement and enforce Council's regulatory tools that support biodiversity protection. E. Allocate time, resources and training to staff charged with delivering biodiversity programs and other works that help achieve the goals and targets of this Strategy.

Objective	Goal 1	Goal 2	Supporting strategies
1.2 Demonstrate leadership by improving the biodiversity values of Council-owned and managed land	✓		<p>A. Actively avoid and minimise the impact of Council operations (such as capital works projects and maintenance activity) on native vegetation and biodiversity.</p> <p>B. Increase the conservation values (e.g. restoration and improved connectivity) of Council’s reserves, wetlands and roadsides.</p> <p>C. Consider opportunities to apply ‘nature-based solutions’ such as green infrastructure, biodiversity sensitive urban design (BSUD), water sensitive urban design (WSUD), carbon sequestration etc.</p> <p>D. Determine where there are opportunities for new or replacement planting in parks, reserves, activity centres and along urban streets; and implement a long-term planting program.</p>
1.3 Advocate for action by state and federal government that will facilitate positive biodiversity outcomes	✓		<p>A. Advocate for broad and urgent biodiversity action by state and federal government to protect and enhance biodiversity, including legislation, policy, enforcement mechanisms, programs, environmental impact assessments on infrastructure projects, and resourcing.</p> <p>B. Advocate for the state government to continue to coordinate, and further improve, an accessible and regularly updated biodiversity data ‘decision support tool’ to inform evidence-based decision making at the state and local scale.</p>
1.4 Pursue external funding for biodiversity management.	✓	✓	<p>A. Seek investment and commitment from all levels of government and other funding bodies to help protect and enhance the Shire’s biodiversity.</p> <p>B. Investigate opportunities for co-investment in restoration and revegetation from businesses seeking to meet environment and social governance objectives such as the nature repair market, natural capital and net-zero commitments.</p>

5.2. Focus Area 2 - People and Partnerships

Safeguarding biodiversity values across a vast landscape with various land uses and land tenures is challenging. We all share a responsibility in improving and enhancing the region’s biodiversity and finding ways to reduce our impacts on the environment.

Council plays an important role in helping to facilitate partnerships and build community awareness, willingness and ability for positive biodiversity action to be undertaken. We continuously explore opportunities to encourage and support people and organisations to get involved.

We also help to collaboratively deliver on a range of policy such as the Burndap Birrarung Burndap Umarkoo Yarra Strategic Plan 2022-2032 for the Yarra River corridor.

Sharing biodiversity values and knowledge learned through collaboration benefits our environment and the health and wellbeing of our community.

Our partners regularly evolve and diversify, and include Traditional Owners, all levels of government, land and water management agencies, businesses, research institutions, environmental volunteer groups and our broader community – including residents, landholders, farmers, businesses, youth, community groups and others.

Council gratefully acknowledges the many individuals, volunteers and organisations contributing to positive biodiversity outcomes in our Shire.

5.2.1. Objectives and supporting strategies

Objective	Goal 1	Goal 2	Supporting strategies
2.1 Incorporate Traditional Owner knowledge within biodiversity management	✓	✓	A. Traditional Owners help inform Caring for Country and recovery activities for threatened species and ecological communities. B. Identify opportunities for Council and the community to participate in training, programs and initiatives that Care for Country and build cultural awareness with Traditional Owners. C. Work with Traditional Owners and partners to explore options for cultural burning or ecological burning.
2.2 Foster partnerships to achieve landscape-scale biodiversity outcomes	✓	✓	A. Connect and collaborate with private landholders, community groups, Traditional Owners, researchers, and organisations such as Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and neighbouring councils. B. Expand partner types to incorporate a variety of industry, businesses and academic institutions that seek to deliver on natural capital projects or Environmental and Social Governance obligations. C. Support and help to further build the capacity of Nillumbik environmental volunteer groups such as Landcare, Friends of Groups, wildlife volunteers and others; and celebrate these environmental volunteers.

Objective	Goal 1	Goal 2	Supporting strategies
			<p>D. Participate in opportunities to contribute to/ comment on plans and policies that may have environmental impacts and/or gains.</p> <p>E. Work collaboratively to support the persistence of threatened species across all land tenures in Nillumbik.</p> <p>F. Upload data (including spatial data) on Council’s management actions towards threatened species and invasive species into the state government’s Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) to help inform collaborative decision making by all partners.</p> <p>G. Identify opportunities to support and encourage individuals and volunteer groups to upload biodiversity data into the VBA, or similar, so that a comprehensive range of data informs our knowledge and decision making.</p> <p>H. Network, share knowledge and learn about latest research and decision support tools available.</p>
<p>2.3 Increase people’s understanding of the environment and support them to protect and enhance biodiversity</p>	✓	✓	<p>A. Provide targeted education and communication to help people understand, appreciate, value and care for our environment.</p> <p>B. Launch and operate a <i>Nillumbik Environment and Climate Action Hub</i> (NECAH) at our Edendale Community Environment Farm.</p> <p>C. Support young people to learn about biodiversity and sustainability, including via the <i>Edendale Schools Environmental Education Program</i>.</p> <p>D. Deliver and support programs that promote and encourage habitat gardening in home gardens, properties and schools.</p> <p>E. Propagate and sell indigenous plants, and provide planting guidance, through the Edendale Indigenous Plant Nursery.</p> <p>F. Provide sustainable land management advice.</p> <p>G. Support and promote citizen science projects and platforms, and the associated monitoring of ecological values.</p> <p>H. Identify less engaged demographics/groups and the barriers to them taking action.</p>
<p>2.4 Provide opportunities for residents to regularly connect with nature</p>	✓	✓	<p>A. Promote and encourage people to visit Nillumbik’s reserves, parks and trails.</p> <p>B. Provide safe and welcoming access for visitors to Council’s reserves and Edendale, including through maintained trails, wayfinding and interpretive signage.</p> <p>C. Support people to view their backyards as places where they can appreciate nature.</p>

Objective	Goal 1	Goal 2	Supporting strategies
			D. Host and support events/activities that provide opportunities for a diverse range of people to experience nature. E. Encourage and educate people to treat nature/biodiversity with respect and to avoid causing damage. F. Establish reliable baseline information about Nillumbik resident's current connection with the natural environment.

Case Study – Working collaboratively to save threatened orchids

Nillumbik is home to a wonderfully diverse array of native Orchids, over 90 species have been observed. Many of these orchids have unique relationships with fungi, pollinating insects and habitat types - making them more susceptible to local extinctions and being threatened across their range.

Over the past 10 years, to protect and increase the numbers of threatened orchids in Nillumbik, Council staff have been working with partners including Parks Victoria, DEECA, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (RBG), Australian Native Orchid Society, research institutions, and volunteers, community groups and private landholders. Together, we comprise the 'Nillumbik Threatened Orchid Recovery Team'.

This partnership, focused on Nillumbik's most threatened orchids, has worked to increase the numbers of species such as the Charming Spider-orchid *Caladenia amoena*, which is only known to exist in three locations, all in Nillumbik; is below 100 plants in the wild; and is considered by the Federal government to be one of Australia's most endangered plants.

Through our collaborative action, there has been a small increase in numbers over the past several years. More are being grown by experts at the Royal Botanical Gardens, funded through a grant from DEECA, which – if they thrive - will be planted to bolster existing populations and also to create new locations, to help guard against potential catastrophic events.

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