

Annual Report 2023-2024





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. 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 colonial 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.

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Cover image: Playing at the Eltham North Adventure Playground

Below: The previous four Nillumbik Shire Council Annual Reports have received Gold Awards in the Australasian Reporting Awards





Image: The Wurundjeri Garden at the Eltham North Adventure Playground

The Eltham North Adventure Playground has a new space for the community to gather and learn about the culture of the Wurundjeri people following the official opening of the seasonal garden “Djilak Djirri” in November 2023. Djilak Djirri means ‘play together’ in Woi wurrung, the language of the Wurundjeri people.

Led by the Eltham North Adventure Playground Community Reference Group and the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, the project was funded by the Victorian Government’s Pick My Project initiative. Council provided support in the project delivery.

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About our annual report

Nillumbik Shire Council is proud to present the annual report for the financial year to 30 June 2024.

This report is an important part of Council's commitment to open and accountable governance. The report informs our community and stakeholders – including residents, ratepayers, customers, businesses, prospective staff, government agencies and other interested groups – and reflects Council's commitment to making Nillumbik a better place for current and future generations.

The Annual Report is an overview of the Council's performance in the 2023-2024 financial year against the four themes set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025, along with the annual budget.

The report details Council's operations and performance during the financial year, including the State Government's Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) which can also be found at [knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au](https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au).

The report highlights achievements and challenges in key operational areas and provides comprehensive corporate governance information as well as audited financial statements. It includes issues impacting the sustainability of the Shire and our organisation, as well as our financial and sustainability performance.

Case studies are used throughout the report to provide practical, personal examples of the various Council projects and initiatives, and their impacts on, and benefits to the Nillumbik community.

The report also includes statutory reporting and legislative information and fulfils Council's statutory responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2020* and other legislation. Further detail on the Acts in operation can be found on page 192 of this report.

The structure of this report

This report is divided into five broad sections:

- An overview of the report, the Shire and Council performance (pages 3-73)
- An overview of our community and our organisation (pages 75-109)
- Our performance against the four themes of the Council Plan 2021-2025 (pages 111-165)
- Corporate governance and statutory reporting (pages 167-194)
- Financial and performance statements (pages 196).

How to obtain a copy of this Annual Report

Additional copies of this Annual Report can be obtained by:

- Visiting Council's website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/annual-report
- Telephoning Customer Service on 03 9433 3111
- Sending an email to nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au
- Writing to Nillumbik Shire Council, PO Box 476, Greensborough VIC 3088.

Council welcomes your feedback and ideas about this report. If you want to provide feedback or would like more information on any matters contained in this report, please contact Council's Business Performance team on 9433 3111 or email nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au.

If you would like this report in an alternative format, please contact Customer Service on 03 9433 3111.

An Easy English version of the report is available on our website. Easy English conveys key messages using simplified concepts and a specialised library of images. It is particularly beneficial for people with low English literacy, people with intellectual disability and people who speak English as a second language.



To access the Translator and Interpreter Service, visit tisnational.gov.au. If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to contact Council on 03 9433 3111.



National Relay Service

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact us through the National Relay Service. TTY dial 133 677 or Speak & Listen 1300 555 727 or relayservice.gov.au, then enter 03 9433 3111.

2023-2024 at a glance



Council Plan theme: Community and connection

Page 113

Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to progress development of Council's first Youth Hub to provide a dedicated space for the Shire's young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community consultation undertaken to inform development of Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan to progress reconciliation and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all Council services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of actions in the Health and Wellbeing Plan, including the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum held in May 2024, to collaborate with stakeholders on health and wellbeing initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of grant applications across 14 Council community grant programs were successfully granted to support local community groups and organisations to provide a range of services, programs and activities.
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council is still recovering from a reduction in volunteer numbers post COVID-19, and is working proactively with its partners to drive increased participation in Council programs and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's Early Years Services team continue to liaise with the Department of Education to work through the implications of the Best Start Best Life reforms for early years' services and infrastructure to provide the best early education opportunities for the Shire's children.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A funding diversion resulted in identified improvement works required at some of our community facilities to be delayed until 2024-2025. These works are primarily on community halls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise awareness and advocate for gender equality in the workplace and the community, to promote access, equity and inclusion in all Council services, programs and activities.
The year ahead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to Reconciliation Australia for endorsement and formally launch the RAP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host key events for older adults in the Shire, including a Seniors Housing Forum, Banyule and Nillumbik Ageing Well Expo and Seniors Festival.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement key Council documents including the Disability Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the community through our Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs.



Council Plan theme: Place and space

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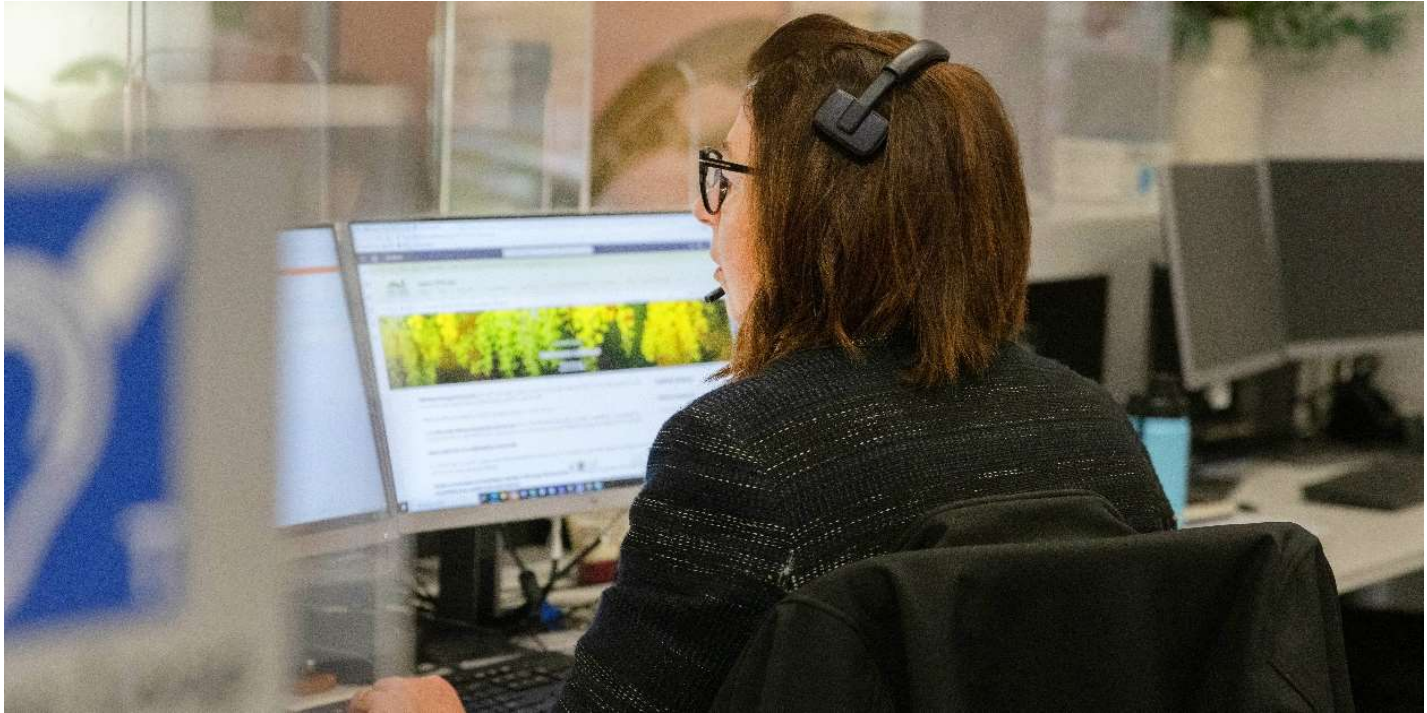
Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of Council's previous Biodiversity Strategy and Invasive Species Action Plan was completed, and the new draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 developed to help protect and enhance the Shire's unique and highly valued environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported and celebrated 20+ 'Friends of' groups whose volunteers donated 2,176 hours of their time to care for our bushland and wetland reserves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed development of a Creative Infrastructure Framework to explore existing opportunities and new projects for the delivery and development of creative spaces across the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted Council's new Neighbourhood Character Strategy to guide new development and ensure that it respects and responds to the existing or preferred valued features or character of the area.
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing pressure of threats such as climate change, illegal clearing and invasive species on our natural environment and the biodiversity within the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to effectively manage 100 bushland and wetland reserves, covering an area of around 500 hectares, and 1,200 km of roadsides, with existing resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic management and roads maintenance and repairs continue to be top issues of concern for Nillumbik residents, based on 2024 Annual Community Survey results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's budget restraints and subsequent reliance on external funding continues to impact our ability to implement and deliver infrastructure and amenity improvements identified in township and other strategic planning documents.
The year ahead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and adopt Council's new Biodiversity Strategy, and commence implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the adoption of Council's inaugural Urban Tree Canopy Strategy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the State Government's recently announced proposed housing targets, and where possible, progress the development of Council's Housing Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and adopt a new Integrated Transport Strategy for the Shire, and commence implementation.



Council Plan theme: Sustainable and resilient

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Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed key actions in Council's Climate Action Plan, which guides our response to the challenges posed by climate change and outlines a twofold response, involving mitigation and adaptation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Nillumbik businesses won awards at the 2023 Northern Business Achievement Awards. Naturally Goat was awarded the overall 'Business of the Year' and received the 'Sustainability and Environment' award. Local Fine Foods received the 'Best Start-Up or Microbusiness' award.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to explore options for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the Shire, to promote the environmental and economic benefits this generates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted the second Nillumbik Small Business Week in May 2024 for the Shire's local business community, providing them the opportunity to upskill and network with their business colleagues.
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's Climate Action Plan includes the ambitious target of achieving net-zero community emissions by 2035, 15 years sooner than the State Government's target for Victoria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively working with our community, First Nations people, partners and government agencies to ensure we are meeting their changing needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The economic climate is a challenging situation for residents and local businesses, particularly with current cost of living pressures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to effectively respond to emergency events, including bushfires, storms, floods and subsequent power outages.
The year ahead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement actions in key Council documents, including the Climate Action Plan and Economic Development Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore targeted placement opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations in the Shire.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a review of Council's Integrated Water Management Strategy to identify a more holistic and coordinated approach for integrated water management across the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to establish a climate action hub at Edendale Community Environment Farm to assist the community achieve net zero emissions targets as outlined in Council's Climate Action Plan.



Council Plan theme – Responsible and accountable

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Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council rated number 1 overall across a range of industry sectors (and out of over 208 organisations) in the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia's (CSBA) telephone mystery shopping program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted Council's Onsite Wastewater Management Plan, which outlines the responsibilities of landowners and occupiers and relevant management strategies, regulations and standards to effectively manage wastewater in the Shire.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's overall financial position remains sound, ensuring our ability to meet the future needs of the community and holistically maintain future sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure Council continues to meet current and future infrastructure needs across the Shire, Council completed 86% of its Capital Works Program, with the remaining projects to be completed later in 2024.
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council continues to respond to increasing cyber-security threats, resulting in strengthening our barriers and continuing to inform staff on the potential of, and impacts from attacks on Council systems and data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to source alternate funding streams to maintain Council's infrastructure and assets portfolio, to meet the future needs of the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring community readiness for potential bushfires and other emergencies, particularly over the summer period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver Council's capital works program in uncertain economic times, with increasing costs and labour and supply issues.
The year ahead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to advocate on key Council led advocacy activities for the best possible outcomes for our community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Council's 2024-2025 Capital Works Program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Council's Communications Strategy 2022-2025 to ensure we keep our community connected to, and informed about, our programs, services and decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2023-2026 to ensure customer experiences that are consistent, reliable, inclusive, easy to use, and meet the needs and expectations of our customers and our community.

Awards and recognition

Council received a number of awards during 2023-2024, including:

Award / Recognition	Summary
	<p>Customer Service Benchmarking Assessment Mystery Shopping</p> <p>Council continues to be a participant in the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia Pty Ltd (CSBA) Mystery Shopping Program, a national program measuring the quality of customer service phone call interaction.</p> <p>In 2023-2024, Council was rated as the top organisation overall for the first time (out of 208 organisations), as well as the best council in the local government sector.</p>
	<p>Local Government Professionals (LGPro) Customer Impact Award Finalist</p> <p>Council was a finalist in the 2024 LGPro Customer Impact Award. The award recognises individuals or teams that develop and implement innovations that deliver more engaging, meaningful, and relevant customer experiences.</p> <p>The award intends to promote innovation and leadership in the provision of customer experiences, while encouraging end-to-end thinking of service design and delivery from the customer's perspective.</p>
	<p>Victorian Sport Awards Finalist – Nillumbik Rainbow Golf Cup</p> <p>Council was a finalist in the 2023 Victorian Sport Awards Local Government Initiative of the Year. The Rainbow Golf Cup, delivered in partnership with Melbourne Rainbow Golfers, Belgravia Leisure (on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council), Yarrambat Park Golf Course, Golf Australia and Proud 2 Play, was Nillumbik's first official Midsumma Festival event.</p> <p>The 9-hole Ambrose format tournament, suitable for both beginners and experienced golfers, sold out with 72 LGBTQIA+ golfers and allies coming together to raise awareness of the barriers the rainbow community continue to experience when participating in sport and recreation.</p>
	<p>2024 ARA Gold Award – Australasian Reporting Awards (ARAs)</p> <p>Council received its fourth consecutive Gold Award in the Australasian Reporting Awards (ARAs) held in Sydney on 23 May 2024. The award was for the 2022-2023 Annual Report.</p> <p>The ARAs were introduced in 1950 to improve the quality of annual reporting and to raise public awareness of the purposes of organisations and their achievements. The ARA assists organisations to communicate more effectively to their stakeholders and recognises those organisations that achieve excellence in reporting.</p>



Image: Council's roads team repairing potholes in the Shire

Case study – Nillumbik doing well in wellbeing

Nillumbik rated highly in terms of happiness and wellbeing in a recent study of over 500 local government areas (LGAs) across Australia.

Conducted by public policy advisor SGS Economics and Planning, with results published on the ABC News website, the study analysed the LGAs on seven key indicators – economy; income and wealth; employment, knowledge and skills; housing; health; equality, community and work-life balance and environment.

Nillumbik ranked 19 out of 518 LGAs across Australia, and second in Victoria.

About Nillumbik

Nillumbik by numbers

- Land area by square kilometres: 432
- Estimated residential population: 63,264
- Female residents: 50.6%
- Male residents: 49.4%
- Forecasted population to 2036: Approximately 70,000
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population: 0.6%
- Overseas born: 16.4%
- Language spoken at home other than English: 10%
- Median age: 42 years
- Residents aged 0-17 years: 23%
- Residents aged 18-49 years: 37.7%
- Residents aged 50-69 years: 28.6%
- Residents aged 70-84 years: 9.3%
- Residents aged 85+: 1.4%
- Medium and high-density housing: 6.8%
- Median weekly household income: \$2,482
- Households with a mortgage: 47%
- Households renting: 9%
- University qualification: 32%
- Trade qualification (certificate): 19%
- Unemployment rate: 3.5%
- Travel to work by car (as a driver or passenger): 50%
- Public transport to work: 2.2%
- SEIFA index of disadvantage: 1093
- Volunteering: 16.9%
- 1,300 indigenous flora species
- 55 threatened indigenous flora species indigenous flora species
- 370+ indigenous fauna species
- 65 indigenous fauna species are threatened

Source: *Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 collated by .idcommunity Demographic Resources* (**Population highlights | Nillumbik Shire | Community profile (id.com.au)**)

Additional information about Nillumbik's native plants can be found at **nillumbik.vic.gov.au/native-plants**.

Additional information about Nillumbik's native animals can be found at **nillumbik.vic.gov.au/native-animals**.

About Nillumbik

History

The area now comprising the Shire of Nillumbik was inhabited for tens of thousands of years by the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people. Wurundjeri is the clan name, willam refers to a subsection of the clan associated with a specific land area recorded as the Yarra and Plenty. The Wurundjeri people called the region 'nillumbik', meaning shallow earth, a name later used by the Europeans who settled here.

European settlement of the Nillumbik area dates from the late 1830s, with land used mainly for grazing, timber cutting and viticulture. Despite this timber and agricultural activity, the area was slow to develop until the discovery of gold in the 1850s. Gold saw the establishment of townships such as Panton Hill, Research, Queenstown (now St Andrews) and Diamond Creek in the late 1850s and 1860s. From 1870 to 1900, orchards spread along the Diamond Valley, with the prosperity of the fruit-growing industry resulting in the townships of Arthurs Creek, Doreen, Plenty and Strathewen. A railway was built to Eltham and later Hurstbridge in the early 1900s supporting industry and residents.

Location

Renowned as “the Green Wedge Shire”, Nillumbik is located in Melbourne's north-east and provides our residents with easy access to Melbourne, its services, job opportunities and facilities; along with access to an abundance of open space, vibrant communities and unique environmental landscapes.

Nillumbik Shire's boundaries are the Kinglake National Park in the north, the Yarra escarpment in the east, the Yarra River in the south, and the Plenty River and Yan Yean Road in the west. Nillumbik's location on the urban fringe along with its unique environmental characteristics make the area prone to bushfire. Our community's strong sense of belonging and high levels of engagement has strengthened its ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from bushfires.

Community

Nillumbik has a population of approximately 63,260 people who enjoy a healthy, safe and family-friendly lifestyle. Nillumbik is a collection of townships and villages, each with its own unique identity and heritage.

Nillumbik offers residents and visitors distinctive village-style shopping, access to professional services, public transport and places to meet and socialise. Rural properties, rich agricultural land, shared trail networks, orchards and award-winning wineries complement the Shire's unique and diverse landscape. These social, economic and environmental features enhance quality of life and make it a desirable place to live, work and play.

Green Wedge

Melbourne has 12 Green Wedges, widely known as the “lungs of Melbourne”. The Nillumbik Green Wedge covers 91 per cent of the total area of the Shire and is host to a number of state and national parks. Approximately 15,665 residents which represents those living in both the Rural Green Wedge (12,639) and the Urban Green Wedge (3,026). Nillumbik's Green Wedge is highly valued locally and regionally because of its biodiversity, natural beauty, recreation opportunities, visitor experiences, mixed-use trails, grazing land and agriculture, and offers residents and visitors a unique rural environment of bushland, small farms, rivers and forest.

The productivity of Nillumbik's Green Wedge is important to the Shire's economy. There is a growing number of artisan food and beverage producers across the Green Wedge, and opportunities continue to grow for farm gate initiatives, paddock to plate experiences and food and beverage trails.

Environment

The Shire of Nillumbik contains an array of peri-urban areas, bushland, landscapes, open spaces, townships and communities. The Yarra River corridor is a special and defining element of the southern edge of the shire and flows around the special environmental living zone of the Bend of Islands, on to North Warrandyte, Research and Eltham.

A distinguishing feature of the municipality is its vast Green Wedge with the key purposes of conservation, agriculture, active lifestyles and tourism.

Much of Nillumbik is characterised by open grassy woodland, with relatively shallow soils dominated by long leaved and red box eucalypts, and with the fertile soils of an old volcano at Kangaroo Ground offering localised rich farming land. The Arthurs Creek and Strathewen areas have seen a long history of orchards and cattle farming, yet still retain many stands of ancient eucalypts. The tree canopy cover in Nillumbik is more extensive than the average for metropolitan areas with 30% tree canopy cover in Nillumbik compared with 16.2% for metropolitan areas.¹

¹ Nillumbik Shire Council (2021) Community Profile – Open Space and Sustainability, p.119.

The Shire is home to a vast array of indigenous flora and fauna species, including many that are listed significant and threatened species. Local fauna ranges from kangaroos, wombats, echidnas to a wonderful array of birds, and to rare Brush-tailed Phascogales, Eltham Copper Butterflies, Platypus, Powerful Owls and Southern Toadlets.

Active lifestyles

Nillumbik has a higher level of participation in sport and recreation activities than the state and national averages. Walking for recreation is the most popular activity, followed by cycling, swimming and running. Horse riding and bike riding are also common activities as residents and visitors utilise the expansive shared trail network on offer.

Residents' participation in structured sports such as tennis, golf, football and netball are all higher than the state and national averages, and the Shire is currently experiencing unprecedented growth in women's participation in sport.

Artistic and cultural identity

Nillumbik is an arts-rich environment. Residents and visitors value the rich local artistic heritage, as well as the Shire's history and culture, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The creative life of the community is highly valued and artistic practices are seen as varied, flourishing and reflecting the connection to the natural environment.

The strength of Nillumbik's artistic traditions, commencing with the early Australian Impressionist painters, the mudbrick movement and through to current practice in contemporary arts, is evident in Nillumbik's artist communities including Baldessin Press, Butterfly Studios, Dunmoochin and Montsalvat as well as the very popular Artists Open Studio weekends.

Nillumbik also has strong links to the performing arts and is proud to be home to acclaimed and emerging authors, photographers, filmmakers and musicians. Nillumbik's contribution to arts and culture is regularly showcased at local, regional and international forums.

Economy

Nillumbik has a diverse economy that generates \$2.5 billion in gross regional product with 37,330 employed residents. Our three largest industries by employment are Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance and Education and Training.

Our 6,400 businesses create 16,500 local jobs. Nillumbik's key employment areas are predominantly concentrated in Eltham and Diamond Creek. There are also neighbourhood centres such as Hurstbridge and the local centres of Greensborough, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully, St. Andrews, Wattle Glen, Research and Yarrambat.

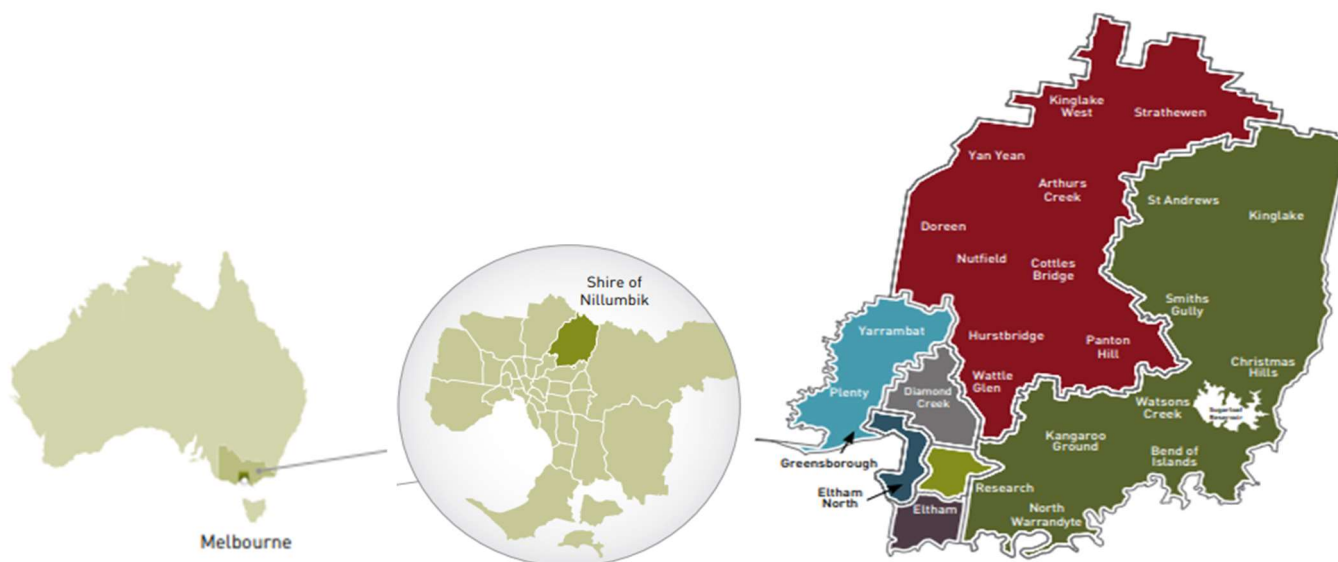
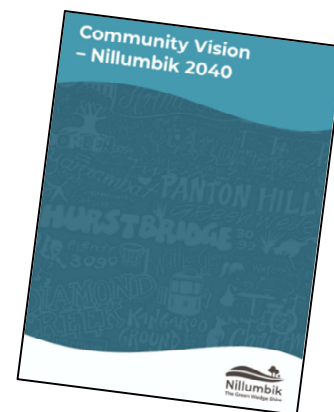


Image: Wimbi Reserve in Panton Hill



About Nillumbik

Our Vision Our Community Vision – Nillumbik 2040, adopted by Council in October 2021, includes the following vision statement:



Our People

Community is at the heart of the Shire of Nillumbik. We work to keep our community engaged, connected, active and supported in a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.

Our Place

Nillumbik's places and spaces make an important contribution to health, wellbeing, culture, the environment, biodiversity and economic success. We continue to strengthen the Shire's identity through reinforcing existing natural and built form, improving accessibility and connectivity, protecting the environment, and enhancing both the Green Wedge and tree canopy in urban areas.

Our Future

We acknowledge the pressures on liveability that in the future will likely challenge the way we live. We continue to strengthen Nillumbik's ability to manage and adapt to changing circumstances, to ensure the Shire and our community remain sustainable and resilient.

Our Council

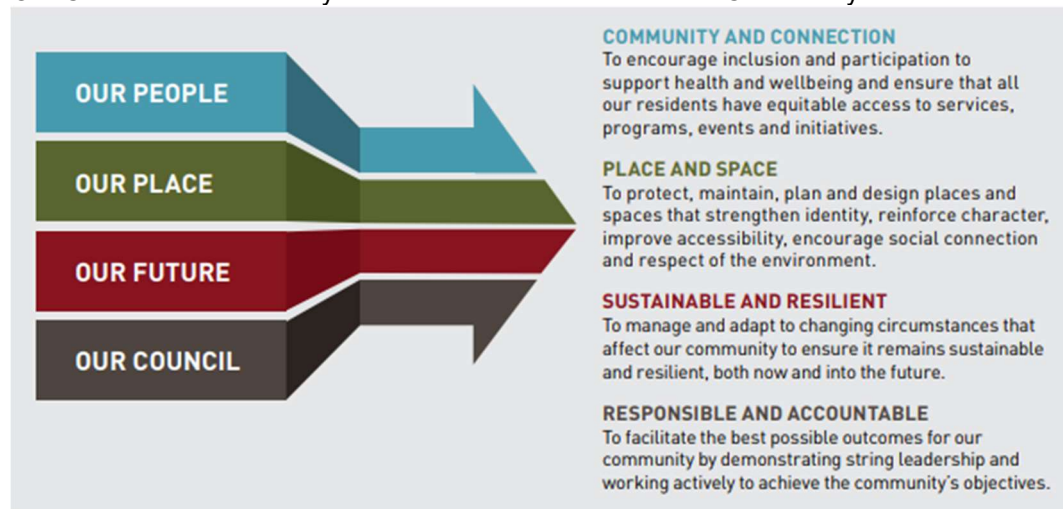
With the trust and support within our community, Council goes further to deliver fundamental services and innovative programs to facilitate the best possible community outcomes.

Our Mission Collaborate with our community for a thriving, sustainable future

Our Values Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Adaptability, Community

Reflecting our community's priorities and needs in the shorter term, the themes from our Community Vision – Nillumbik 2040 have been translated into our four-year Council Plan (as outlined in the image below).

Our Council Plan is our key mechanism to work towards the Community Vision over the next four years.



Read the Community Vision and Council Plan at our website: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/strategies-policies.

Image: Tree-lined streets
in Nillumbik



Our planning and accountability framework

The Council Plan 2021-2025 was the key strategic document guiding the direction of the Council during 2023-2024. The Council Plan plays a key role in setting the strategic direction of Council for the four-year Council term. It guides the organisation's work to deliver on the priorities of the Council and the community, and to manage and deliver services for the Nillumbik community.

Council Plan

Adopted by Council in October 2021, the Council Plan 2021-2025 is divided into four themes:

1. Community and connection
2. Place and space
3. Sustainable and resilient
4. Responsible and accountable.

Each theme has an objective, and a series of strategies and priority actions to meet that objective. Our progress in implementing these strategies is formally reported to Council on a quarterly basis. Each theme also has a set of strategic indicators that measure progress towards the objectives.

This annual report provides an update on progress of delivery of second year actions and strategies in the Council Plan 2021-2025. The Council Plan can be viewed on Council's website: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/council-plan.

Annual Action Plan

Council operationalises the Council Plan annually through an Annual Action Plan, which details the specific actions we commit to delivering each year to achieve the objectives and strategies across the four years. Progress against the Annual Action Plan 2023-2024 is detailed in this Annual Report, with project and service highlights reported to Council in a quarterly progress report.

Annual Budget

Council prepares an annual budget each financial year which seeks to balance the demand for services and infrastructure with the community's capacity to pay. The Budget includes information about the rates and charges to be levied, major initiative funding, borrowings, operating results, cash and investments, capital works, financial position and financial sustainability. The Budget can be viewed on Council's website: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/council-plan.

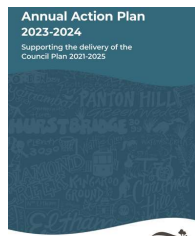
Department Business Plans

Department Business Plans are developed by managers and staff, alongside the budget process to ensure that the activities of the team, including Council Plan deliverables, major initiatives and continuous improvement in service delivery can be adequately funded, resourced and delivered.

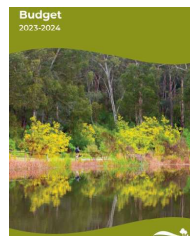
Nillumbik's Planning and Reporting Framework



Council Plan 2021-2025
4 year plan



Annual Action Plan 2023-2024
1 year plan



Annual Budget 2023-2024
1 year plan



Annual Report 2023-2024
1 year performance review

Read the Council Plan, Annual Budget, Annual Action Plan and our Annual Reports at our website: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/strategies-.

Mayor's message

On behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council, I'm pleased to present our Annual Report for 2023-2024, highlighting the achievements of this past year.

I'm incredibly proud of the progress we have made in collaboration with our community, and it's wonderful to see the outcomes of the Council Plan 2021-2025 being realised as we consolidate the work of the past three years.

Plan and strategy development

A key focus in 2023-2024 has been the finalisation of crucial strategies and plans, providing long-term strategic direction for our Shire. A highlight was Council's adoption of the Neighbourhood Character Strategy in December 2023, which will guide new development in Nillumbik, protecting the special character our community values about our unique townships and suburbs. This will work hand in hand with our Housing Strategy, the subject of robust community consultation this past year, and which will be refined in 2024-2025, following the release of the Victorian Government's final housing targets.

We're excited the Biodiversity Strategy is complete, providing a 10-year plan for caring for our precious natural environment. Nillumbik has the second-highest urban tree canopy cover in all of Melbourne and our first Urban Tree Canopy Strategy will help us protect and enhance this.

In a significant achievement, our first Reconciliation Action Plan is ready for adoption and is an important step in our journey of reconciliation and healing with Traditional Owners and First Nations People.

Climate Action

We're two years into our 10-year Climate Action Plan and making positive progress towards our target of net-zero Council emissions by 2030. We've also launched our new Energy and Sustainable Living Advisory Service, providing advice to support residents in reducing their emissions.

We've been driving change by building our electric vehicle (EV) fleet, purchasing three new EVs. Through our work with the Northern Councils Alliance, and the Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan, we are advocating for government funding to expand our fleet further.

Project delivery

We've seen shovels in the ground for a range of exciting capital works projects, including the Nillumbik Youth Hub in Diamond Creek. This service will provide critical support for young people.

We've started work on the Ryans Reserve rejuvenation, creating a wonderful new community park in Diamond Creek, while the Diamond Valley Library outdoor space refresh shows that libraries and learning are not only about books.

The new Diamond Hills Preschool in Greensborough has been completed, and is a state-of-the art learning facility for our youngest residents. We've raised the roof at the Diamond Creek Netball Courts – providing shelter over two of the courts to allow for all-weather competition and training.

Advocacy

We continue to advocate for government funding and policy reforms to improve the liveability for our residents. Our focus this year has included pushing for improved public and active transport connections and this work will continue with the adoption of our Integrated Transport Strategy. I was pleased to lead a delegation to Canberra for the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly where we called for support for the development of the nation's electrical grid network infrastructure and transition to renewable energy, as well as funding for councils to manage our asset responsibilities.

Thank you

With local government elections in October, this is the final annual report for this term of Council. It's been an honour to serve as Mayor these past two years. On behalf of my fellow Councillors, I would like to thank our community for your trust, support, and contributions. I'm proud of what we have achieved together and believe our work will have a positive impact for generations to come. I would also like thank CEO Carl Cowie and the hardworking team of Council staff and community volunteers.

I look forward to seeing our community thrive, while continuing to enjoy the amazing lifestyle here in our Green Wedge Shire.



Cr Ben Ramcharan **Mayor** [he/him]

CEO's message

This Annual Report outlines the outstanding depth and breadth of work Council has undertaken in 2023-2024 in service to our community.

It is with great pleasure I present to you this report providing a comprehensive overview of our performance, achievements and strategic initiatives. Council remains committed to providing outstanding service to our residents, ratepayers and key stakeholders.

Community satisfaction

I'm pleased to report that our independent Annual Community Survey saw overall satisfaction with Council's performance remaining steady at the highest level since the survey began in 2011.

Key aspects of Council's performance, including governance and leadership, customer service, planning services, animal management and fire prevention works all increased in the past 12 months. These are excellent results for our organisation and a testament to the commitment and hard work of our staff across all Council services.

Customer service

Providing excellent customer service is at the heart of everything we do. That's why I'm extremely proud our Customer Experience team has been ranked number one through an independent "mystery shopping" program, the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia (CSBA) quality assurance rankings. Not only did the team top the local government sector, but they were ranked number one overall out of more than 200 organisations.

The team was also a finalist in the LGPro Customer Impact Awards for their work in reducing the number of outstanding requests, thereby improving customer satisfaction and business efficiencies.

These outcomes highlight the success of our Customer First Strategy 2023-2026, which in its first year has seen the promotion of self-service platforms, improving customer-facing processes and complaint management. Our first point of contact resolution for phone enquiries has increased to 80 per cent – another impressive result.

Business transformation

We're continuing to implement a range of digital improvements to make our customers' online interactions with us quick, simple and effective. Our online booking system, Bookable, has been launched on our website, allowing customers to book Council venues for events. We've had positive feedback to our new rates payment option known as Payble, and the number of ratepayers opting into this service continues to grow.

Working at Nillumbik

We are progressing well in the implementation of our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). Our data shows that we have reduced the overall gender pay gap from 5 per cent in favour of men in 2021 to 1.4 per cent in favour of men in 2023, and I look forward to the day I get to report we have no gap.

Operations and capital works

We are pleased to have completed a number of major projects and upgrades this past financial year despite challenges that continue to face the construction sector. A marquee project, which will be completed later in 2024, is our first Youth Hub in Nillumbik.

Projects to start this coming year include the Diamond Creek Recreation Precinct BMX Park, the Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool upgrade, the Hurstbridge Community Shed, the Eltham Lower Park upgrades as well as improvements at the Diamond Creek and Panton Hill tennis courts to name just a few.

Advocacy to both levels of government continues to be an area of focus and an important component in continuing to assist in the overall delivery of our capital works projects.

The year ahead

We are looking forward to another busy year with a continued focus on maintaining and improving our core services as well as closing out the remaining actions of the Council Plan 2021-2025. We will be welcoming a new Councillor group following local government elections on 26 October, and work will start on the development of a new Council Plan that will guide our future direction.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our Executive Leadership Team and the organisation's staff who continue to work above and beyond for the people of Nillumbik.



Carl Cowie Chief Executive Officer [he/him]



Image: Happy faces at one of Council's Citizenship Ceremonies

Our performance: 2023–2024 – an overview

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Image: Council staff maintain trees and plants throughout the Shire



Our performance: 2023-2024 in summary

Council's performance for the 2023-2024 financial year has been reported against each theme of the Council Plan 2021-2025 to demonstrate how Council is performing in delivering on the Council Plan.

Key results achieved over the course of the 2023-2024 financial year included:

- Of the 37 priority actions in the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan, 92% were either completed or are on track to be completed within timeframes and budgets
- Of the 56 strategic performance indicators in the 2021-2025 Council Plan, 80% either improved or maintained performance against stated targets
- Council continued to maintain a strong financial position in terms of its cash balances, net assets and ability to cover short-term obligations
- Council delivered 86% of the 2023-2024 capital works program, despite ongoing industry troubles including labour and material supply shortages causing project delays
- Council recorded a minor improvement in community satisfaction, based on the results of the 2024 Annual Community Survey, with satisfaction at the highest level since the survey began in 2011.

Performance has been measured as follows:

- our financial results against the stated budget (pages 24-25)
- our major projects completed or underway as part of Council's capital works program (pages 26-33)
- our results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators in the Council Plan (pages 35-43)
- our progress towards achieving the strategies of the Council Plan through our priority actions (pages 44-57)
- our sustainability initiatives – both environmental and social (pages 59-73)
- our annual community survey (page 85)
- services funded in the budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided those services (pages 114, 130, 142 and 154)
- our governance and management checklist (pages 180-181)
- our results against the prescribed service performance indicators and measures under the State Government's Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) (pages 126-127, 138-139, 151 and 164-165).

2023-2024 at a glance...

Council Plan			
Strategic indicators (56)		Priority actions (37)	
Achieved	22	Completed	10
No change (within +/- 2% threshold)	23	On track	24
Not achieved	11	Minor issues	3

The overall financial outlook for 2023-2024 places Council in a position to continue operating in a financially sustainable manner.

2023-2024 summary	
Income	\$113.16m
Expenditure	\$121.46m
Net surplus	\$(8.30m)

Chief Operating Officer overview

Council continues to actively manage financial resources with sustainability at the forefront of decision making through the current economic climate which remains volatile and uncertain. The ongoing challenge remains securing alternate funding streams to maintain Council's infrastructure portfolio, and to ensure the future needs of the community continue to be met, while maintaining sustainability across all facets of Council.

Council continues to face numerous challenges, some of which continue to be intensified by the uncertain economic atmosphere. Navigating this atmosphere, while maintaining services levels and achieving outcomes in strategic plans will continue to be a focus, underpinned by maintaining overall financial stability.

While the financial sustainability indicators portray a sound financial position, there continues to be a challenge for all councils to effectively plan and utilise financial resources in order to maintain service levels which continue to meet local community needs.

Council has maintained a stable cash position at the end of 2023-2024 with \$50 million in cash balances. The funds are held in short and longer term investments in compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, \$40 million in cash and equivalents, and \$10 million in term deposits classified as other financial assets.

The overall debt position of Council continues to be monitored. New borrowings of \$8 million were taken out in 2023-2024, to fund the rehabilitation of the former landfill site at Kangaroo Ground and to facilitate co-contributions for significant grant-funded capital works. Council foresees no risk in its ability to service the loans.

The balance sheet illustrates a continuing strengthening financial position through the growth in net assets. This growth is largely promoted through the ongoing work undertaken on Council's extensive property and infrastructure portfolio, totalling \$1.03 billion. This has seen Council maintain, improve and expand facilities for the community.

The extensive property and infrastructure portfolio Council oversees demands a strong financial focus year-on-year to ensure assets remain fit for purpose and enjoyment. The continued progress on the capital works program demonstrates Council's commitment to deliver and maintain this portfolio to service community needs.

The stable financial position of Council at year end is reinforced when analysing the ability to meet short-term financial obligations. The liquidity ratio result indicates Council has sufficient levels of cash to cover short-term financial obligations and comparatively has strengthened over the past two years. This ratio is considered important in the assessment of Council being able to continue operations from a financial perspective.



Vincenzo Lombardi
Chief Operating Officer [he/him]

Where do your rates go?

The chart below provides an indication of how Council allocates its expenditure across the main services to be delivered. It shows how much is allocated to each service area for every \$100.00 of rates that Council collects.

- Waste and recycling - \$16.91
- Roads, footpaths and traffic - \$16.24
- Environment, parks and open space - \$10.68
- Customer service and corporate support - \$8.43
- Library, education and culture - \$7.90
- Family, children and community services – \$7.38
- Public safety, emergency management and risk - \$7.37
- Planning and development - \$6.76
- Governance and communications - \$5.85
- Recreation and leisure - \$5.07
- Building maintenance and assets - \$4.09
- Debt servicing - \$3.32

5-year summary: key financial results

	2023-2024 \$'000	2022-2023 \$'000	2021-2022 \$'000	2020-2021 \$'000	2019-2020 \$'000
Surplus	(8,298)	2,503	14,346	13,709	(14,912)
Cash	40,410	52,099	51,633	22,153	43,345
Debt	19,683	13,580	16,922	13,387	10,776
Net assets	1,025,903	920,358	917,854	960,175	943,908
Liquidity	1.84	1.71	1.72	1.45	1.71

Expenditure by themes of the Council Plan	Expenditure \$'000	Revenue \$'000	Net cost \$'000
Community and connection	\$14,490	\$4,043	\$10,447
Place and space	\$43,246	\$17,913	\$25,333
Sustainable and resilient	\$15,466	\$836	\$14,629
Responsible and accountable	\$22,991	\$6,113	\$16,878
TOTAL	\$96,192	\$28,905	\$67,287

Triple bottom line sustainability

Financial sustainability is addressed in the overview on pages 24-25.

A summary of Council's environmental sustainability initiatives is on pages 59-68 of this report.




A summary of Council's social sustainability initiatives is on pages 69-73 of this report.

Major capital works




Council delivered a significant capital works program in 2023-2024. Key projects and works undertaken in the program, as well as planned works for 2024-2025, are as follows:


Works completed in 2023-2024

Project name	Description	Budget	Status
Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program – Phase 3 Location Various 	<p>The LRCI program is a federally funded grant program for Local Road and Community Infrastructure Projects.</p> <p>The following projects have been delivered under Phase 3 of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Caretakers Cottage Restoration – \$144,400 • Trail Upgrades - \$200,000 • Sport Infrastructure Upgrades - \$100,000 • Public Open Space Improvements - \$100,000 • Ellis Cottage Car Park and Access Road Sealing - \$100,000 • Eltham and District Woodworkers Association Kitchen Extension - \$145,600 • Diamond Valley Sports Complex Landscaping - \$38,302 • Directional and Wayfinding Signage Upgrade - \$150,000 • Eltham Leisure Centre Plant Upgrade - \$90,000 • Eltham Leisure Centre Car Park Improvements - \$82,875 • Road Pavement Rehabilitation Works - \$167,125 • New Footpath Links - \$160,000 <p>All projects for Phase 3 of this program have now been delivered.</p>	<p>Total Budget: \$1,478,302</p> <p>Federal Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program: \$1,478,302</p>	<p>Phase 3 of the LRCI is now completed.</p>
Eltham Central Pavilion Rear Carpark Construction Location Eltham 	<p>Construction of the rear carpark including reconstructing the carriageway from Central Oval to Youth Road.</p> <p>This was the final stage of the Eltham Central Oval upgrade works completed under the Federal Government's Urban Congestion Fund.</p>	<p>Total Budget: \$321,900</p> <p>Urban Congestion Fund program: \$321,900</p>	<p>Works were completed in September 2023.</p>

Eltham Urban Congestion Fund – Road and Pedestrian Improvements Location Eltham 	<p>These programmed works are the result of extensive public consultation and were approved by Council in September 2021.</p> <p>The program is ongoing with some works completed and others to be delivered in 2024-2025.</p> <p>Works delivered in 2023-2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Street and Luck Street • Panther Place and York Street. 	<p>Total Budget: \$5,000,000</p> <p>Urban Congestion Fund Program: \$5,000,000</p>	<p>Diamond Street and Luck Street traffic improvement works were completed in November 2023.</p> <p>Panther Place and York Street works were completed in October 2023.</p>
Ironbark Road Blackspot Program Location Diamond Creek 	<p>This program is for traffic safety improvements at five sites along Ironbark Road.</p> <p>The program is ongoing with some works completed and others to be delivered in 2024-2025.</p> <p>Works delivered in 2023-2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Gully Road • Pioneer Road. 	<p>Total Budget: \$1,203,000</p> <p>Federal Blackspot Program: \$1,203,000</p>	<p>Site 2 – Pioneer Road and Ironbark Road works were completed March 2024.</p> <p>Site 4 – Black Gully Road and Ironbark Road works were completed April 2024.</p>
Eagles Nest Road Rehabilitation, Arthurs Creek Location Arthurs Creek 	<p>Rehabilitation of a section of Eagles Nest Road that had failed and partly eroded.</p>	<p>Total Budget: \$220,000</p> <p>Council: \$220,000 (Eligible for Disaster Recovery Relief)</p>	<p>Works were completed in May 2024.</p>
Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park Caretaker's Cottage Restoration Location Kangaroo Ground	<p>The full restoration of the original stone caretaker's cottage. The cottage is heritage listed and required significant works to restore it to its former glory.</p>	<p>Total Budget: \$295,000</p> <p>Council: \$155,000 Local Roads and Community Infrastructure – Phase 3: \$140,000</p>	<p>Works were completed in April 2024.</p>

Works in progress at end of 2023-2024

Project name	Description	Budget	Progress
Diamond Hills Preschool Re-development Project Location Greensborough 	The design and construction of a new building to replace the two onsite portable rooms. The new building will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New accessible amenities • New staff offices and amenities • New and improved learning areas for 3- and 4-year-old kinder • New kitchen area for staff and children • New storage space • New artwork in building façade • Landscaping and construction of a new outdoor space • New car parking (26 spaces and a disabled). 	Total Budget: \$4,665,347 Council: \$1,676,230 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$2,915,117 Diamond Hills Preschool: \$75,000	Preschool building completed and ready for use in June 2024. Landscaping work and completion of the new play space scheduled for August 2024.
Nillumbik Youth Hub Location Diamond Creek 	Redevelopment of the Diamond Creek Senior Citizen building with new accessible amenities, allied health consultation rooms, two activity rooms and outdoor social space for youth groups.	Total Budget: \$1,590,000 Council: \$1,135,000 Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Grant: \$155,000 State Government: \$300,000	Construction underway and due for completion in July 2024. Official opening scheduled for September 2024.
Diamond Valley Library Outdoor Space Rejuvenation Location Greensborough 	This project will allow the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a revitalised outdoor space to allow library services to expand outdoors • Enable outdoor learning opportunities and activities on nature and the health and wellbeing benefits of growing food, sustainability • Create a space that promotes equity, Inclusion and participation. 	Total Budget: \$679,000 Council: \$26,000 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$438,000 Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 4 - \$140,000 Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service - \$75,000.	Access and car parking works at the front of the library have been completed. Works in the enclosed outdoor yard are currently underway and are expected to be completed by the end of August 2024.

Alistair Knox Park Changing Places, Toilets and Universal Design Location Eltham	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of the existing toilets, including the disconnection of all services • Construct a new modular style toilet and registered changing places facility, including accessible toilets nearer the playground and car park area • Design and construct access paths, lighting, car parking and other key infrastructure to provide accessible connections to all key elements of the park in keeping with Universal Design principles • Connection of all required services. 	Total Budget: \$1,226,564 Council: \$813,133 Changing Places Funding Program 2022 – Changing Places: - \$180,000 Changing Places Funding Program 2022 – Universal Design: \$233,431	Works are underway and due for completion in October 2024. Construction was delayed due to contaminated soil on site. Further information can be found on Council's website.
Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program – Phase 4 (various locations) Location Various	The LRCI program is a federally funded grant program for Local Road and Community Infrastructure Projects. This year, the following projects are scheduled to be delivered under the program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Improvements – Diamond Creek Youth Hub and Diamond Valley Library - \$295,000 • Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club Carpark Upgrade - \$150,000 The following projects have been delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Creek Parkrun Shelter - \$37,000 • Road Pavement Rehabilitation - \$485,000 • Footpath Construction – Various locations - \$143,000. 	Total Budget: \$1,165,509 Federal Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program: \$1,165,509	Phase 4 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program extends into 2025. All assigned projects will be delivered in 2024-2025.
Kangaroo Ground Landfill Rehabilitation Location Kangaroo Ground	The project involves recapping the closed landfill at the end of Graham Road, Kangaroo Ground to comply with new EPA regulations for closed landfills.	Total Budget: (Year 4): \$3,541,220 Council: \$3,541,220	Construction is in progress and is scheduled for completion in 2026.
Diamond Creek Netball Court Roof Structure Location Diamond Creek 	Works include the construction of a roof over Courts 1 and 2 to improve useability throughout the year.	Total Budget: \$1,520,000 Council: \$520,000 State Government: \$1,000,000	Works are underway and due for completion in July 2024.

Ex-CFA Site Open Space Improvements, Plenty Location Plenty	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage improvements through site • Construction of new paths • Installation of park furniture • Planting and landscaping. 	Total Budget: \$130,000 Council: \$130,000	Works underway and due for completion in August 2024.
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Works scheduled for 2024-2025

Project name	Description	Budget	Progress
Diamond Creek Recreation Precinct (BMX Park) Location Diamond Creek	Construction of a new recreation precinct including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new BMX track • New carpark area • Public amenities • Interconnecting trails • Water Sensitive Urban Design features • Associated landscaping. 	Total Budget: \$2,813,424 Council: \$650,000 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$2,163,424	Detailed designs are being prepared. Works are due to be completed in early 2024 pending Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Planning approvals.
Graysharps Road Open Space Precinct Location Hurstbridge	Implementation of the Graysharps Road Open Space Masterplan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new nature play space • Construction of a new amphitheatre • Construction of shelters, furniture, and BBQ areas • Landscaping and planting of indigenous vegetation throughout • Reconstruction of the Hurstbridge Hub carpark with increased parking • Reconstruction of the netball courts with LED sports lighting. 	Total Budget: \$2,925,000 Council: \$925,000 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$2,000,000	Detailed designs are completed. Works are pending Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Planning approvals.
Ryans Reserve Rejuvenation Project, Diamond Creek Location Diamond Creek	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new shade sail over existing playground • Improvements to existing playground area • Construction of new public toilets and services connections • Construction of interconnecting paths • Installation of exercise equipment • Drainage improvements • Associated landscaping. 	Total Budget: \$1,190,837 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$1,190,837	Construction is due to commence in July 2024 pending Melbourne Water and Planning approvals.

Herberts Lane Play Space construction Location Diamond Creek	New linear play space near Herberts Lane – Junior and senior play areas, Parkour course, BBQ, shelter, water fountain and landscaping.	Total Budget: \$480,000 Developer Contributions: \$480,000	Designs and complete and a construction contractor will be engaged in August 2024. Works are due to commence in September 2024.
Hurstbridge Men's Shed construction Location Hurstbridge	Construction of a new Mens Shed with accessible amenities, workshop area and social space for members.	Total Budget: \$1,064,352 Council: \$600,000 Growing Suburbs Fund: \$364,000 Community Bank Hurstbridge: \$100,000	Detailed design is completed, and construction will commence in July 2024.
Diamond Creek Dog Park Upgrade Location Diamond Creek	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and improvements to the existing fencing • Extension of the dog park area • Installation of interconnecting paths • Construction of shelters. 	Total Budget: \$300,000 Grant Funded: \$300,000	Project planning underway. Works due to commence in late 2024.
Eltham North Adventure Playground Carpark Upgrade Location Eltham North	This project involves asphalt sealing of the existing gravel parking area, drainage improvements and line-marking.	Total Budget: \$239,000 Grant Funded: \$239,000	Detailed design completed. Works to commence in late 2024.
Eltham North Pavilion Carpark Expansion Location Eltham North	Works include the extension of the existing parking space near Eltham North Oval. Including drainage, signage and line-marking.	Total Budget: \$700,000 Council: \$700,000	Detailed design underway. Works to commence in early 2025.
Diamond Creek Tennis Court Resurfacing Location Diamond Creek	The resurfacing of two courts at Diamond Creek Tennis Club, including drainage improvements and fencing.	Total Budget: \$500,000 Council: \$200,000 Local Sport and Infrastructure Fund: \$300,000.	Works to commence in August 2024.
Panton Hill Tennis Court Upgrade Location Panton Hill	The reconstruction of the two courts at Panton Hill Tennis club. The new courts are to be acrylic surface with pickleball and tennis line marking.	Total Budget: \$628,000 Council: \$328,000 Local Sport and Infrastructure Fund: \$300,000	Detailed design underway. Works to commence in late 2024.

Plenty War Memorial Oval Lighting Upgrade Location Plenty	This project will upgrade the existing sports field lighting to LED.	Total Budget: \$385,000 Council: \$182,000 Local Sport and Infrastructure Fund: \$203,000	Works scheduled for early 2025.
Eltham Lower Park Precinct Improvements Location Eltham	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new dog park • Improvements to the Horse and Pony Club area • Improvements to the existing sports pavilion • Revegetation works. 	Total Budget: \$2,000,000 State Government: \$2,000,000	Works scheduled to start late 2024.
Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool Improvements Location Diamond Creek	Works include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility improvements • Construction of a new children's splash play area • Improvements to the change facilities • Redevelopment of the swim club rooms • Landscaping and beautification works. 	Total Budget: \$1,500,000 State Government: \$1,500,000	Works scheduled to start early 2025.

More information, including a comprehensive list of current and planned projects and works across the Shire, can be found on our website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/projects-and-works.



Image: Thumbs up from the kids at the Diamond Hills Preschool redevelopment



Image: Caretaker's cottage at Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park

Case study – Restoring the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Caretaker's Cottage

One of the more interesting recently completed projects was the restoration of the old stone caretaker's cottage at the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park on Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Kangaroo Ground.

With the War Memorial Tower construction completed in 1926 to commemorate all those from the Shire of Eltham that had fallen during the First World War, the 'rubble stone' caretaker's cottage was added in late 1927.

Along with the memorial tower, the original stone cottage is considered historically significant and as the cottage became structurally unsound over time, it was necessary to repair and fully restore the building as close as possible to its original condition.

With the guidance of experienced heritage focused architects and consultants, along with a suitably experienced builder, the footings and foundations were repaired and the stone walls and tiled roof carefully restored, reusing the original materials wherever possible.

Works were completed in early 2024, and the cottage has been fully restored and is once again an important historical feature of the park.

Image: Rolling hills and landscape in the Green Wedge



Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan 2021-2025, including the results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the Council Plan, along with priority actions for the year as set out in the Annual Action Plan for 2023-2024.

Strategic indicators

Strategic indicators help us measure how progress towards our Council Plan is evaluated. In 2023-2024, of the 56 strategic indicators in the Council Plan, 22 improved on the previous year, a further 23 measures recorded no significant change, and 11 measures decreased during the reporting period.

The results indicate that Council is meeting the majority of its performance targets in the Council Plan 2021-2025, with targets for 80% of indicators being met.

Council Plan theme: Community and connection

To encourage inclusion and participation to support health and wellbeing and ensure that all of our residents have equitable access to services, programs, events and initiatives.

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Importance for Council to address the needs of LGBTIQ+ residents	7.80	7.10	7.18	NA*	8.00	⬆️	⬆️
Community satisfaction with community services	7.94	7.62	7.81	7.80	7.80	⬆️	↔️
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey							

Strategic indicator	Year			Target	Result
	2020	2022	2024		
Percentage of people who think multiculturalism makes life in their area better (acceptance of diverse cultures)	53.7%	60.4%	60.4%	⬆️	↔️
Percentage of people who say they feel valued by society	53.0%	57.4%	57.4%	⬆️	↔️
Percentage of people engaged in assisting/helping a local group (volunteering)	24.5%	16.9%	16.9%	⬆️	↔️
Source: Victoria Population Health Survey – Nillumbik Local Government Area					

Key	⬆️	Increasing	⬇️	Decreasing	↔️	No change
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Image: Visitors at Edendale Community Environment Farm

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Number of reconciliation activities delivered	NM	NM	15	10	27	📈	📈
Number of Council volunteers	NM	360	316	306	327	📈	📈
Number of Council auspice "Friends of" groups	NM	21	21	20	20	📈	↔️
Number of total enrolments in programs at Living & Learning Nillumbik	1,821	1,196	1,708	2,242	3,372	📈	📈

Source: Council records

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Proportion of the municipal population that are active library members	28.2%	27.0%	25.2%	25.8%	45.7%	📈	📈
Annual immunisation coverage rate for children aged 0 to 5	95.8%	94.2%	98.9%	97.2%	92.5%	📈	📉
Participation in the maternal and child health service (percentage of the children enrolled, and those who attended the service at least once)	82.0%	81.7%	80.0%	79.6%	77.0%	📈	📉

Source: Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

Key	📈	Increasing	📉	Decreasing	↔️	No change
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Council Plan theme: Place and space

To protect, enhance, maintain, plan and design places and spaces that strengthen identity, reinforce character, improve accessibility, encourage social connection and enjoyment, support biodiversity and respect the environment.

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Community satisfaction with arts and cultural events, programs and activities	7.94	7.63	7.77	7.62	7.70	🟢	↔
Community satisfaction with the appearance and quality of newly constructed developments	7.49	6.85	7.01	7.36	7.20	🟢	🔴
Community satisfaction with provision and maintenance of parks and gardens	7.79	7.41	7.47	7.51	7.60	🟢	↔
Community satisfaction with aquatic and leisure centres	8.29	7.79	8.18	8.17	7.90	🟢	🔴
Community satisfaction with local traffic management	6.85	6.55	6.44	7.00	7.00	🟢	↔
Community satisfaction with grading of unsealed roads	6.96	6.39	6.21	6.95	6.70	🟢	🔴
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey	Scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)						
Community perception of public safety during:							
Day	8.93	9.01	8.95	9.03	8.80	🟢	🔴
Night	7.98	7.77	7.74	7.90	7.90	🟢	↔
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey	Scale from 0 (very unsafe) to 10 (very safe)						
Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Number of participants in arts and cultural programs and activities	83,192	61,912	96,900	189,248	259,189	🟢	🟢
Number of trees planted in streets and parks to maintain tree canopy	214	218	417	322	555	🟢	🟢
Number of Land Management Incentive Program grants provided to the community for control of noxious and environmental weeds	39	35	37	27	22	🟢	🔴
Number of dead animals collected by Council	NM	359	349	425	483	🟡	🔴
Number of infringements issued following investigation of littering or rubbish dumping	2	3	2	8	0	🟢	🟢
Percentage of capital works program delivered	NM	82%	96%	87%	86%	🟢	↔
Attendance at leisure and aquatic facilities	2,027,630	304,230	498,268	1,416,460	1,690,966	🟢	🟢
Source: Council records							



Image: The Yarra River runs along the south of the Shire

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Percentage of VCAT decisions upholding Council's determined position	65%	75%	64%	46%	49%	📈	📈
Percentage of planning applications determined within required timeframes	60.5%	66.1%	60.4%	56.0%	64.0%	📈	📈
Percentage of sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	94.0%	83.8%	95.1%	95.2%	95.5%	📈	↔
Source: Local Government Performance Reporting Framework							

Key	📈	Increasing	📉	Decreasing	↔	No change
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Council Plan theme: Sustainable and resilient

To manage and adapt to changing circumstances that affect our community to ensure it remains sustainable and resilient, both now and into the future.

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Community satisfaction with Council meeting responsibilities to the environment	7.09	6.72	6.90	7.32	7.30	📈	↔
Community satisfaction with environmental programs and facilities	8.14	8.30	8.16	8.25	7.90	📈	📉
Community satisfaction with regular waste collections	8.13	8.04	7.97	8.24	8.10	📈	↔
Community satisfaction with support for local business	7.52	7.23	7.35	7.71	7.40	📈	📉
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey		Scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)					

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Number of participants in environmental programs and events	1,004	1,003	2,469	2,162	2,723	📈	📈
Number of program participants and visitors at Edendale Community and Environment Farm	64,086	70,000	60,000	123,000	132,000	📈	📈
Percentage of contamination in waste bins:							
• Recycling	17.6%	15.8%	18.2%	28.1%	25.5%	📈	📈
• Organics	3.0%	1.9%	5.1%	5.9%	9.4%	📈	📉

Source: Council records

Strategic indicator	Year		Target	Result
	2021	2024		
Number of jobs available in the Shire	12,409	13,138	📈	📈
Number of local residents who work within the Shire	7,999	7,999	↔	↔
Gross Regional Product	\$2.28b	\$2.55b	📈	📈

Source: Census Data

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Percentage of kerbside waste collections diverted from landfill	59.6%	72.9%	72.7%	72.2%	70.6%	📈	📉

Source: Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

Key	📈	Increasing	📉	Decreasing	↔	No change
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Council Plan theme: Responsible and accountable

To facilitate the best possible outcomes for our community, by demonstrating strong leadership and working actively to achieve the community's objectives.



















Strategic indicator		Year					Target	Result
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Community satisfaction with Council making decisions in the best interests of the community		6.67	6.30	6.26	6.77	6.90		↔
Community satisfaction with Council's consultation and engagement		6.77	6.14	6.21	6.93	6.90		↔
Community satisfaction with Council's responsiveness to local community needs		6.77	6.32	6.20	6.83	6.90		↔
Community satisfaction with fire prevention works		6.88	6.68	6.22	7.07	7.30		
Community satisfaction with customer service		7.58	7.24	6.33	7.24	7.20		↔
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey		Scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)						
Strategic indicator				Year			Target	Result
				2020	2022	2024		
Percentage of people feeling they have the opportunity to have their say				72.0%	72.0%	72.0%		↔
Source: Victorian Population Health Survey – Nillumbik Local Government Area								
Strategic indicator		Year					Target	Result
		2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Percentage of fire prevention notices that resulted in compliance		98%	96%	99%	99%	99%		↔
Percentage of issued infringement notices expiated		86%	88%	74%	71%	90%		
Number of visitors to Council's website		281,240	309,000	358,618	359,233	443,945		
Number of followers on Council's social media channels		11,632	17,562	19,463	22,067	23,945		
Percentage of successful grants applications provided by Council		NM	NM	83%	67%	75%		
Source: Council records								
	Key		Increasing		Decreasing	↔	No change	



Image: Council's contracted waste collection service

Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Customer satisfaction score from direct customers	6.6	6.3	6.1	6.1	NM	📈	NM
Satisfaction score of customer visits to Council's website	NM	6.1	6.4	6.4	NM	📈	NM
Source: Biannual Customer Experience Survey	NM – survey not undertaken in 2023-2024 due to operational budget reduction						
Strategic indicator	Year					Target	Result
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024		
Time taken to action food complaints (days)	1.88	1.47	1.70	1.93	1.70	📈	📈
Percentage of animals reclaimed from the regional pound	83.7%	82.4%	78.7%	81.2%	66.8%	📈	📉
Source: Local Government Performance Reporting Framework							
	Key	📈	Increasing	📉	Decreasing	↔	No change

Note: A +/- 2% threshold has been applied to the indicator change results (i.e. if the % change falls within +/- 2%, the status is recorded as 'no change'). This is due to the diversity of data sources and measurement scales used across the 56 indicators.

Image: Enjoying the Diamond Valley
Miniature Railway at
Eltham Lower Park







Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – Measures and targets

For the first time in 2023-2024, performance against a number of Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) indicators was measured against stated targets. Targets were determined based on previous results for those measures.

The following table highlights Council's current and projected performance across a selection of targeted service and financial performance indicators. These indicators provide a useful analysis of Council's intentions and performance and should be interpreted in the context of the organisation's objectives.

The targeted performance indicators below are the prescribed financial performance indicators contained in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. Results against these indicators and targets are also reported in Council's Performance Statement included in this Annual Report.

Indicator	Measure	Actual	Target	Actual Result	Target Met
		2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024	
Governance Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement	Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council	69.3	69.7	69.7	
Roads Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	Number of kms of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kms of sealed local roads	95.28%	95.35%	95.47%	
Statutory planning Planning applications decided within required timeframes	Number of planning application decisions made within the relevant required time / Number of decisions made	56.0%	54.5%	64.0%	
Waste management Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill	Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins	72.24%	72.43%	70.60%	

Priority actions: Council Plan Annual Action Plan status summary

In 2023-2024, Council progressed delivery of 37 actions aligned to the Council Plan 2021-2025, as part of its Annual Action Plan 2023-2024. This is set out in the following table. Of these 37 actions, 10 actions were completed, a further 24 actions are still in progress and on track and three actions are experiencing minor issues affecting delivery.

The actions below also cover the major budget initiatives for Council in 2023-2024, as outlined in the 2023-2024 Annual Budget. A number of these actions will continue to be developed and implemented as part of the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan, which is available on Council's website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/council-plan.

Council Plan theme: Community and connection		
To encourage inclusion and participation to support health and wellbeing and ensure that all of our residents have equitable access to services, programs, events and initiatives		
Equity and Inclusion		
Action	Progress update	Status
Complete an Inclusive Sports and Facilities Framework	<p>Development of the Inclusive Sports and Facilities Framework has been completed. The framework aims to ensure that sports and facilities are provided and accessible to everyone in the Shire, improving their health and wellbeing regardless of age, gender, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, disability, income or location.</p> <p>A 10-year rolling implementation plan for sports pavilion facilities was developed and embedded into a sports clubs database. Capital Works for 2023-2024 have been approved, with completion of works now subject to grant funding.</p>	Completed
Continue to implement the Disability Action Plan 2020-2024	<p>The Disability Action Plan (DAP) provides the framework for Council to address disability and other access issues across all areas of operations and to support Council to meet its requirements under relevant legislation.</p> <p>Headlines in the delivery of the DAP this year has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with Edendale Community Environment Farm and the Aligned Leisure team at the Eltham Leisure Centre to pilot a new Accessible Work Experience program Established and managed a new Nillumbik Carer Services Network, where local and regional carer services share up-to-date information and resources about current funding and supports available to carers in Nillumbik Partnered with the Economic Development and Tourism team to promote the 'Nillumbik Good Access for Good Business' guide to help local businesses understand how being more accessible and inclusive is good for business Enhanced access information, supplied by 'Cérge' software, including an audio guide, a visual social story and detailed sensory information embedded on the Edendale Community Environment Farm and Eltham Leisure Centre websites Supported the successful delivery of activities and events to celebrate International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) Increasing the Disability Inclusion e-newsletter membership from 396 to 414. <p>Reporting on this action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

<p>Continue to implement the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025</p>	<p>The Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 (GEAP) outlines the actions Council will take to improve and measure progress towards greater gender equality in our workplace. Implementation of actions in the GEAP is progressing well. This was assessed by collecting workforce and employee experience data in 2023-2024, and comparing this information to the workplace gender audit data collected in 2021.</p> <p>Headlines in the delivery of the GEAP this year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall gender pay gap (mean total remuneration pay gap) has decreased from 5% in favour of men in 2021 to 1.4% in favour of men; • Over 400 Council staff have engaged in professional development intended to create a more inclusive workplace; • An increase in the percentage of female (5% increase) and male (10% increase) Council staff who agree or strongly agree that the organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language; • An increase in the percentage of female (4% increase) and male (2% increase) Council staff who agree or strongly agree that the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination; and • A key area to work on (improve) is that a small percentage of Council staff report experiencing sexual harassment at work (7% of women and 6% of men in 2021, compared to 7% of women and 8% of men in 2023). <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p>Develop a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, and continue to work towards reconciliation with the Wurundjeri and other First Nations communities</p>	<p>As part of Council's commitment to reconciliation, Council continues to develop its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP will be Council's formal commitment to support First Nations peoples' rights, culture, heritage, needs and aspirations, and will outline Council's approach to progress reconciliation and work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all Council services.</p> <p>The RAP is on track to be presented to Council before the 2024 local election caretaker period. Phase 2 of community engagement was undertaken in May 2024 to allow the public to provide comment and feedback on the draft RAP and RAP Vision Statement. Council engaged with the community through methods including community feedback drop-in sessions, Eltham Library Drop-in, Participate Nillumbik, email feedback to a dedicated email address, focus group sessions and consultation with three Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Corporation members.</p> <p>A Reconciliation Week Flag Raising event was held at the Civic Centre on 26 May 2024, with attendance and speeches from local primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>Three cultural consultation meetings were undertaken with agenda items including the Housing Strategy, RAP artwork, Edendale Community Environment Farm and Nillumbik Reconciliation Group updates.</p> <p>Elders were consulted on the development of a place-naming policy to inform how Woi-wurrung language is considered in place-naming.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	<p>On Track</p>

Health and Wellbeing		
Action	Progress update	Status
Implement annual actions in the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025	<p>The Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 outlines our commitment to address health and wellbeing priorities and reduce inequalities over the next four years. The plan reflects the priorities of our community, and our health and wellbeing partners.</p> <p>Implementation of the Year 3 Action Plan for the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 is complete. The Plan included 112 actions. Of these, 97 were complete and 11 are on track. Three actions are experiencing minor issues and one action is experiencing major issues. Relevant action is taking place to address these issues in order to progress towards completion in 2024-2025.</p> <p>Headlines in the delivery of the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan this year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 teams across all Directorates and 55 partner organisations contributed to the Year 3 Action Plan. Diversification of the teams reporting through to the Plan strengthens Council's ability to address the social, environmental and economic factors of health, and illustrates a genuine 'whole of Council' approach. • Two successful grant applications to reduce alcohol harm and gambling harm • Strong engagement in Spring Outdoors, Midsumma events and the Community Leaders program • Significant progress towards Nillumbik's first Reconciliation Action Plan and first Youth Hub. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Completed
Commit resources to and implement an expanded program of environmental volunteering	<p>Work undertaken to progress this action this year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Nillumbik's first Environmental Volunteers Expo • Facilitating the start of three new Friends of Groups, new Gardens for Wildlife volunteers, and new volunteers for the Fauna Monitoring program • Council engaged the community and promoted environmental volunteering participation through walks and events including the Eltham Copper Butterfly walk and talk and Moth Surveys at Fergusons Paddock • Volunteers have been actively involved in monitoring and survey of some of our significant species, including the Eltham Copper Butterfly and through our Fauna monitoring program • Our volunteer participants undertook an average of 2,964 hours across all programs. <p>Budget allocated for 2024-2025 is integral to advance established programs, processes and momentum now embedded into our environmental volunteering support. New funding is being allocated towards (among other matters) actively recruiting new volunteers; expanding volunteering opportunities (including for people with barriers to participating), increasing the accessibility and effectiveness of our program supports and resources, and continuing to facilitate networking opportunities across all volunteering programs.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Completed

Ages and Stages		
Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to implement the Youth Strategy 2022-2026 in partnership with our Youth Council	<p>Council's first Youth Strategy (2022-2026) is our strategic commitment to how we will support and respond to the needs of young people aged 12-25 who live, work, study, volunteer or play in Nillumbik.</p> <p>Headlines for the delivery of the Youth Strategy this year has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39 young people participated in the Nillumbik Youth Winter School Holiday Program, which included a climate change movie screening, drawing digitalisation workshop and a skate park activation at Diamond Creek Skate Park Q-Flex was piloted in April with 5 participants joining in the LGBTQIA+ exercise program run in partnership with Aligned Leisure - this program included the delivery of training to 15 staff members from Nillumbik Youth and Aligned Leisure on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport and exercise; The 2024 Youth Summit took place on 22 May 2024, with 60 young people attending from 7 local secondary schools. Participants put forward 19 recommendations for delivery over the next 2 years, including mental health first aid training, establishing an environmental youth group, and a range of opportunities identified for the Shire's new Youth Hub, such as job readiness sessions and mentorship programs Construction for the Nillumbik Youth Hub commenced, and is due for completion in early September 2024 (see action below) 2 Parenting workshops on Vaping and Neurodiversity, with 127 and 245 participants respectively 35 mentor drivers attended a recognition dinner delivered to acknowledge their commitment and dedication to the Nillumbik L2P Program, before the program delivery was transitioned to Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning Employment Network on 1 July 2024. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Progress the delivery of a dedicated youth space within the Shire	<p>A key action in the Youth Strategy 2022-2026 was to establish a dedicated space providing services, programs and support for young people in the Shire.</p> <p>Community engagement on the draft designs for the Youth Hub ran from 30 June to 25 July 2023 on Council's Participate Nillumbik website. Over 250 people engaged through an online survey and workshops held during the engagement period. Overall, there was overwhelming support for the draft concept designs for the Youth Hub.</p> <p>Feedback received during the engagement period was considered by Council at the August 2023 Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting, and where possible reflected in the final design for the Nillumbik Youth Hub.</p> <p>Construction on the redevelopment of 32-34 Elizabeth Street Diamond Creek into a dedicated, stand-alone youth hub commenced in early 2024. The refurbished building will feature a new kitchen and flooring, a large multi-purpose room and two smaller program rooms, an office space, two consulting rooms, and a new outdoor covered area with an amphitheatre, yarning circle, seating and landscaping.</p> <p>A Youth Hub Reference Group was established in late 2023, and is responsible for providing advice to ensure the effective planning, development, and operation of the youth hub in Diamond Creek, aligning with the diverse needs, views, and interests of young people and professionals in the community. The reference group includes Council staff, local young people aged between 15 to 25 years, representatives from partner agencies and other relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The official opening is scheduled for early September 2024.</p>	On Track

Complete an audit of facilities to identify opportunities to implement age-friendly improvements for community facilities	<p>In order to improve and provide inclusion and better access to community facilities for all ages in the Shire, this action provides for an audit of facilities to be undertaken to identify and implement improvements.</p> <p>The procurement process for the audit was delayed in 2023-2024 due to a redirection of funds for an urgent matter. Funding has now been confirmed, with the procurement to appoint an auditor completed and the audit to be completed by the end of Quarter 1, 2024-2025.</p> <p>The audit report will include a priority based works program to be implemented over the next 3 to 5 years.</p>	Minor Issues
Undertake community engagement to further understand community needs with respect to lifelong learning	<p>Council's Living & Learning centres aim to provide lifelong learning opportunities for the local community. Work undertaken to progress this action over the past year includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal consultations have nearly been completed with only a few teams still to be interviewed due to unavailability Preliminary mapping has commenced with follow-up consultations either completed or scheduled. This work is slightly behind planned target due to resourcing challenges and conflicting priorities. <p>This project is now scheduled to be completed in Quarter 2, 2024-2025, and further work in this space will occur in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Minor Issues

Council Plan theme: Place and space

To protect, enhance, maintain, plan and design places and spaces that strengthen identity, reinforce character, improve accessibility, encourage social connection and enjoyment, support biodiversity and respect the environment

Identity

Action	Progress update	Status
Progress the planning scheme amendment process to implement stage 1 and 2 sites of heritage significant via the Heritage Overlay into the planning scheme	<p>Council adopted the planning scheme amendment at the March 2024 Council Meeting, with changes recommended in the Planning Panel Report.</p> <p>Officers made the changes and lodged updated amendment material. This is now currently sitting with the Minister for Planning for consideration of approval of amendment. No timeframes have been advised from the Department of Transport and Planning with regard to a decision on the amendment.</p> <p>Upon approval, the Minister may require further changes to amendment material 'conditional approval', in which case officers will make the relevant changes prior to final approval.</p>	On Track
Implement annual actions in support of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2019	<p>Council's Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) brings together new actions and ongoing strategies to guide funding, resourcing and service delivery for the Green Wedge.</p> <p>Implementation of the GWMP represents a cross-organisational collaboration between teams within Council and aims to deliver all 56 key actions listed through to 2029. Many of the actions identified within the GWMP reference actions of other adopted strategies of Council or current initiatives, including implementation actions in the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan, Climate Action Plan and draft Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit an amendment to include the adopted Municipal Planning Strategy into the planning scheme	<p>In June 2023, Council formally adopted the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and also resolved to request the Minister for Planning to authorise the preparation and exhibition of an amendment to the Nillumbik Shire Planning Scheme.</p> <p>The future Planning Scheme Amendment is programmed to implement the Municipal Planning Strategy (adopted), Neighbourhood Character Strategy (adopted) and the future Housing Strategy into the planning scheme through one amendment.</p> <p>Subject to the future endorsement of a Housing Strategy, Council will seek authorisation from the Minister to prepare and exhibit amendment to implement the MPS, Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Strategy into the planning scheme.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Investigate creative infrastructure development opportunities through the development of a Creative Infrastructure Framework	<p>The Creative Infrastructure Framework was endorsed by Council at the April 2024 Council Meeting.</p> <p>The framework aims to pinpoint infrastructure gaps and explore existing opportunities and new projects for the delivery and development of creative spaces across the Shire.</p> <p>The next phase is feasibility / implementation plan development.</p>	Completed
Continue to implement annual actions in the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026	<p>The Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 outlines a range of actions to provide arts and cultural services, programs and activities in the Shire.</p> <p>Headlines in the delivery of the Arts and Culture Strategy undertaken this year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of Nillumbik History and Heritage Groups and the annual History and Heritage Grant Program • Delivery of the Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing award event and anthology launch • Delivery of the Nillumbik Artist in Residence Program 2024-2025 • Successful delivery of Local Remix: Still Life, our biennial Collections exhibition with 6 free workshops, 1 curator talk, a 40 page catalogue and 3 newly commissioned installations • Successful delivery of the Eltham Library Community Gallery program of exhibitions with additional workshops, talks and collaborations with Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service • New acquisitions to the Nillumbik Art Collection • Delivery of an artist networking event and panel on Creative Spaces for Business Week. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Natural Environment		
Action	Progress update	Status
Complete and adopt the new Biodiversity Strategy, including investigation into measures to establish and enhance the urban tree canopy and protect wildlife	<p>Council is developing a new Biodiversity Strategy to help protect and enhance the Shire's unique and highly valued environment.</p> <p>The strategy will identify actions that will prioritise the health of Nillumbik's natural environment and biodiversity and embed these actions into Council's decision making.</p> <p>The draft strategy has been updated following community consultation. A Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting was held in May 2024 with approximately 20 people making verbal submissions. The strategy is due to be considered for adoption at the July 2024 Council Meeting.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Complete a review of Council's tree management policy and supporting guidelines	<p>Council maintains more than 500,000 trees on Nillumbik reserves, roadsides and other Council-owned or managed properties, such as parks and early learning centres.</p> <p>A thorough review of Council's Tree Management Policy and its supporting guidelines has been completed and finalised.</p> <p>This comprehensive review ensures that our policies and guidelines are aligned with best practices and are designed to support our ongoing commitment to effective tree management.</p>	Completed
Open Space		
Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to implement the Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2022-2030	<p>The Recreation and Leisure Strategy seeks to support community participation in sport and active recreation, with a focus on well-planned facilities and environments.</p> <p>Actions undertaken to progress implementation of the strategy have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Play Well Participation Grant application – Nillumbik Youth Pop Tennis Open • Successful Local Sport Infrastructure Fund grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Panton Hill Tennis Court - Plenty War Memorial Park Lighting - Yarrambat Equestrian Club planning • Diamond Creek Dog Park Upgrade funding grant has been executed • The Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2022 endorsed by Council; and • Play Our Way Expression of Interest was submitted for Bridge Street oval upgrade. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Neighbourhood Character		
Action	Progress update	Status
Complete and adopt the new Neighbourhood Character Strategy	<p>The Neighbourhood Character Strategy was adopted at the December 2023 Council Meeting.</p> <p>The strategy covers all residential areas across the Shire including rural townships, and aims to guide new development, ensuring it respects and responds to the existing or preferred valued features or character of the area.</p>	Completed

Commence the development of a Housing Strategy for the Shire	<p>Work to progress a Housing Strategy has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 Council briefing – Presented draft Housing Strategy and public consultation process • April 2024 Planning and Consultation Committee – Council endorsement of the draft Housing Strategy to go out for public exhibition • April and May 2024 - Public exhibition process • June 2024 - Review of submissions from public exhibition process (at this time the release of State Government draft housing targets occurred) • July 2024 - Release of draft Plan for Victoria occurred. <p>Council will need to prepare a submission to the proposed housing targets and draft Plan for Victoria, noting the deadline for submissions of 30 August 2024. Officers will be seeking Council endorsement of a submission at the August 2024 Council Meeting. Given the high target proposed for Nillumbik in the context of our constraints, the housing targets have significant implications for the draft Housing Strategy. As a result, it has been recommended that the draft Housing Strategy be re-visited in early 2025, once final housing targets are known, for update and further engagement to be undertaken.</p> <p>State Government announcements have significantly changed the number of dwellings all Victorian housing strategies now must plan for. The draft Housing Strategy was on track for adoption as per this Council Plan action, however State Government policy changes in delivering its Housing Statement to build 2.4 million dwellings by 2051 (including 800,000 in the next 10 years) has impacted the strategic work of all Victorian councils - an unprecedented event in planning.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Continue to implement the adopted placemaking framework to support shared outcomes between community and Council	<p>The Nillumbik Placemaking Framework is designed to support staff, Council members, community members, traders, stakeholders, contractors and consultants to plan and deliver place-making projects in the Shire.</p> <p>Collaborative 'place' projects have been identified with Council's Environment and Recreation and Leisure teams.</p> <p>A business review of the 2022-2023 program has been conducted, with a new Placemaking Grant program for 2023-2024 developed to improve place-making outcomes. 15 place activation projects were supported and funded in 2023-2024.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Completed
Complete and adopt the Wattle Glen Public Realm Framework	<p>Council is working in partnership with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to identify strategic initiatives to improve the quality and safety of public spaces in the heart of Wattle Glen through the Wattle Glen Public Realm Framework. Actions undertaken to further development of the framework to date includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Council support to submit the draft framework to DTP and VicTrack was sought at an April 2024 Council briefing session • DTP endorsement of draft framework provided in May 2024 • Exhibition of the draft framework was undertaken in May and June 2024 • Planning and Consultation Committee heard from submitters on 16 July 2024 • Recommended changes and consideration of adoption of the draft framework is programmed for the August 2024 Council Meeting. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Movement and Place		
Action	Progress update	Status
Complete and adopt a new Integrated Transport Strategy	<p>Council's new Integrated Transport Strategy will guide transport planning and advocacy in Nillumbik over the next five years and provide a strategic framework that will guide Council to promote more sustainable transport outcomes. The strategy focuses on four main goals: promoting sustainable transport, creating safe and inclusive active transport networks, improving public transport, and planning for sustainable transport in new developments.</p> <p>Actions undertaken to progress development of a new strategy included development of an options and issues paper and community consultation being finalised. The draft strategy has been developed and is now scheduled for consideration at the August Council Meeting.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Progress the planning scheme amendment process to implement the Major Activity Centre structure plans for Diamond Creek and Eltham into the planning scheme	<p>Progress on this action this year has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 2024 - Received formal Authorisation for Planning Scheme Amendment C143 April 2024 - Received formal Authorisation for Planning Scheme Amendment C144, to allow for formal notification of both C143 and C144 June 2024 - Formal notification and exhibition of Planning Scheme Amendments C143 and C144 pursuant to the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>. <p>The State Government released its draft Housing Targets and Draft Plan for Victoria as part of its Housing Statement in June 2024. Council will need to prepare a submission to the proposed housing targets and draft Plan for Victoria noting deadline for submissions is 30 August 2024. Officers will be seeking Council endorsement of a submission at the August 2024 Council Meeting. Given the high target proposed for Nillumbik in the context of our constraints, the housing targets could have significant implications for the structure plan amendments. As a result, it has been recommended that the amendment be 'held' and be re-visited in early 2025 once we understand the final housing targets.</p> <p>A formal request will be made to the Minister for Planning to extend the statutory timeframes for the amendment given the State Government announcements.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Continue to develop a masterplan (phase B) for community facilities in Diamond Creek, including recreation and community precincts and buildings	<p>This action centres on developing a vision and masterplan for the future growth of the Diamond Creek Activity Centre. Work progressed on Phase B.2b (Needs Assessments Reports for Community Hub and Aquatic Facilities to inform Master Plan Design Brief) of this action, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2024 - Draft reports (x2) reported update to Council's Executive Leadership Team June 2024 - Reports finalised. <p>This completes Phase B.2a with all technical inputs completed, which will inform preparation of the master plan design brief which includes design, business case and cost plan. Further work for Year 3 (2024-2025) has been allocated. This will include preparation of the design brief and procurement of consultant group.</p> <p>The Phase B Diamond Creek Community Infrastructure Master Plan includes design, business case and cost plan (subject to confirmation of budget allocation). This phase of work is programmed over the next two financial years. Inputs from earlier work on the project will be used to inform the consultant brief. Updates will be made to Council's Participate Nillumbik website, identifying more detailed programming in September 2024 and opportunities for the community to be involved.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Council Plan theme: Sustainable and resilient

To manage and adapt to changing circumstances that affect our community to ensure it remains sustainable and resilient, both now and into the future

Climate Change

Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to implement annual actions in the Climate Action Plan 2022-2032	<p>Council's Climate Action Plan 2022-2023 guides our response to the challenges posed by climate change and outlines a twofold approach, involving mitigation and adaptation. The plan sets targets of achieving net-zero emissions in Council operations by 2030 and net-zero community emissions by 2035. Headlines in the delivery of the plan undertaken this year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a federal grant application to help fund essential energy infrastructure upgrades at Council's Operations Centre in Plenty. These upgrades will be required before Council can base any electric vehicles at the Operations Centre • Design brief for Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool issued including ESD principles • Roof installed over the Diamond Creek netball courts to provide enhanced rain and sun protection • Purchase of 3 new electric vehicles to replace petrol cars in our fleet • Newly contracted mowing service which allows for improved responses following heavy rainfall • Major energy efficiency lighting upgrade at Eltham Leisure Centre • Nillumbik preschool networking event with a focus on sustainability opportunities in early years services • Endorsement of the Northern Regional Trails Strategy, including three priority trails in Nillumbik. These trails support the increased use of active transport such as walking and cycling, and a reduction in vehicle emissions • Appointment of Council's new Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee for a two-year term, which includes a focus on climate action • Commenced participation in a multi-Council Circular Economy Leadership Management Program, aimed at building the knowledge of Council officers to help lead the transition of Council operations to a circular economy • Delivery of programs/events to support the community to reach Council's target of net-zero community emissions by 2035. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Sustainability

Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to participate at a regional level around placement opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations, while exploring targeted placement opportunities for electric charging stations in the Shire	<p>Discussions with the Northern Councils Alliance and Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action are ongoing about placement opportunities for public electric vehicle charging in the Shire.</p> <p>Officers have facilitated a process with the industry developer toward submitting a proposal to develop high-powered public electric vehicle charging in the Shire. Industry developers have applied for network power supply design and connection approval. Final designs are to be submitted to Council for assessment.</p> <p>The electric vehicle charging industry provider has been granted approval for power supply to proposed charge stations by network operator AusNet. Officers are awaiting final design proposal for assessment while the service provider is waiting for the final connection design from AusNet. This is required for inclusion in the final public electric vehicle charge station infrastructure development proposal for assessment. Anticipated timeline for submission of the final design for assessment by officers is August 2024.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Develop a roadmap regarding ESD principles into the planning scheme, subject to the State Government's impending changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions and subsequent review of such changes	<p>This action is awaiting State Government updates prior to proceeding further. The recent release of a draft Plan for Victoria by the State Government in early July 2024 provides an opportunity to advocate for this.</p> <p>Submissions are open until 30 August 2024 and officers will be preparing a submission for Council's endorsement at the August 2024 Council Meeting.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Minor Issues
Commence a review of the Integrated Water Management Plan	<p>The Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013 provided an opportunity to embrace a more holistic and coordinated approach for integrated water management across the Shire.</p> <p>In 2023, resources to conduct the review of the Plan were sought and funding allocated for resourcing from Melbourne Water.</p> <p>Resources to review the plan sit in Council's Infrastructure team (Drainage team) and will develop flood modelling for the Shire as the first part of the plan scope.</p> <p>Work in this space will be continued in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Business and Tourism		
Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to implement annual actions in the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030	<p>The Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030 aims to strengthen the local economy and facilitate job creation in the Shire. Headlines in the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy this year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nillumbik Small Business Week held with 5 business related events: Regenerative Agriculture; Creative Industries Networking; Artificial Intelligence for Small Business; Navigating Trends for Success and Elevating Customer Experience • The Shop in our Shire Winter season promotion commenced • The tourism industry learning project with William Angliss students undertaken with students providing experience ideas to Hurstbridge businesses • Visit Nillumbik social media continues to grow - followers to both channels have increased, with 2,600 on Instagram and 4,937 followers on Facebook • The Shire participated in the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Employers Forum • Three Business in Nillumbik e-newsletters distributed to over 1,600 businesses • Three businesses were nominated by the Shire for NorthLinks Northern Business Achievement Awards • The Small Business Bus visited Hurstbridge promoting Victorian Government business support services • Social media influencer @allyvintage visited businesses promoting a day trip experience in the Shire – her Instagram reel has over 62,000 visits. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

Council Plan theme: Responsible and Accountable

To facilitate the best possible outcomes for our community, by demonstrating strong leadership and working actively to achieve the community's objectives

Good Governance

Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to advocate on key issues in line with Council's Advocacy Plan	<p>Council's Advocacy Plan provides the framework for Council's advocacy, on behalf of the community, to all levels of government. It outlines Council's priorities in advocating for the best possible outcomes for our community.</p> <p>Council submitted three motions to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting in May 2024, providing an opportunity for Council to pursue its local advocacy priorities by positioning their importance and relevance to communities across the state. The motions called on the State Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with local councils, allocate funding to investigate and trial initiatives to reduce harm to wildlife and improve driver safety • Strengthen the powers of local councils to effectively enforce, and respond to breaches of, their Planning Schemes under the Victorian Planning Provisions, particularly in regards to illegal vegetation removal • Reimburse local councils the actual cost of maintaining State Government roadside reserves. <p>Motions were also submitted for the ALGA National General Assembly being held in July 2024, and for a second MAV State Council Meeting, to be held in August 2024. Council has also continued to partner with other northern councils to strengthen advocacy priorities for the northern region through the Northern Councils Alliance.</p> <p>Nillumbik hosted a couple of ministerial visits this quarter to mark the start of works on two major projects that have received external funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman and Member for Eltham Vicki Ward joined Councillors and local students to officially turn the first sod for the Diamond Creek Youth Hub • Member for Eltham Vicki Ward joined Councillors at Ryans Reserve in Diamond Creek to officially turn the first sod for the reserve rejuvenation. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track
Report quarterly on the annual budget	<p>The 30 June 2024 Financial Report will be presented to Council at the August 2024 Council Meeting and to Council's Audit and Risk Committee on 26 August 2024.</p> <p>Council's overall financial position at the end of the last quarter remains sound, however active monitoring of operating budgets will continue to be a focus for the financial year ahead.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	Completed

Risk Management		
Action	Progress update	Status
Commit resources in order to implement the new local law with respect to permit assessments for the removal of trees	<p>An additional funding commitment was provided in the 2022-2023 annual budget to support the implementation of the protection of Amenity Trees Local Law.</p> <p>The Protection of Amenity Trees Local Law provides protection for substantial trees in the urban and townships areas of the Shire. These additional resources have funded referrals to Council's consulting arborist to obtain expert technical advice about the trees proposed to be removed under the Amenity Tree Local Law.</p>	Completed
Finalise and adopt a new Domestic Wastewater Management Plan to enable Council to effectively manage the risk associated with domestic wastewater across the Shire	<p>The Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, now known as the On-site Wastewater Management Plan, was adopted in September 2023.</p> <p>The plan outlines the responsibilities of landowners and occupiers, and outlines wastewater management strategies, regulations and standards which allows Council to effectively manage wastewater in the Shire.</p>	Completed
Services and Programs		
Action	Progress update	Status
Continue to implement the Communications Strategy 2022-2025	<p>Council's Communications Strategy 2022-2025 continues our commitment to place our community at the centre of everything we do. The strategy provides a robust framework to guide Council in its central aim of keeping our community connected to, and informed about, our programs, services and decisions in ways that are relevant and wide-reaching.</p> <p>Headlines in the delivery of the strategy undertaken this year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage guidelines have been completed and are ready to hand over to the Capital Works team to implement as signs need replacing • Work has also progressed on the development of a Social Media Strategy, and update of an issues management communications plan and an internal Writing Style Guide. These actions will be carried over to later in 2024 for completion • An audit of Council's external communication channels has been undertaken, and findings will be used to inform any improvement opportunities following analysis of results from a communications survey that was recently undertaken • Video has continued to be used for many communication projects, including promotion of National Volunteer Week, where video interviews with local volunteers were published on Council's social media channels throughout the week. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	On Track

<p>Implement the Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2023-2026 through Council's operations</p>	<p>The Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2023-2026 defines how Council will design and deliver service experiences that are consistent, reliable, inclusive, easy to use, and meet the needs and expectations of our customers and our community. In the first year (2023-2024), delivery of the strategy has progressed well and has achieved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council rated number 1 overall across a range of industry sectors in the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia's (CSBA) telephone mystery shopping program • Improvement in overall customer satisfaction has been achieved – Council's performance has improved from 6.33 out of 10 in 2022 to 6.99 out of 10 in 2023 • Improvement in first point of contact resolution (phone channel) – from 73.5% in 2022 to 80% in 2023 • Increased effectiveness and customer usage in online channels - since 2020, website usage is up 3%, website views are up 5.6%, and user satisfaction with the website is up 6.3% • Improved staff engagement experienced in providing a great customer experience, resulting in a reduction in overdue requests of 98% in the last 18 months, and 100% staff attendance to our supported training programs in managing challenging customers. <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	<p>On Track</p>
<p>Continue to deliver our capital works program</p>	<p>The actual program completion at 30 June 2024 is 86%, which is consistent with the previous year.</p> <p>Larger projects continue to encounter delays, but overall performance has improved again this quarter. A number of large projects that did encounter delays are nearing completion early in Quarter 1, 2024-2025.</p> <p>This reporting action will continue in the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan.</p>	<p>On Track</p>



Image: Wildflowers in bloom at Meruka Park, Eltham

Sustainability initiatives

A summary of key climate action, environmental and social sustainability initiatives undertaken in 2023-2024 is provided below.

Climate action

Work is continuing to help achieve the goals and targets of Council's ambitious ten-year Climate Action Plan 2022-2032.

Council's endorsed climate emergency declaration is as follows:

"As a Green Wedge Shire, Nillumbik Shire Council is acutely aware of the multiple threats facing all communities and ecosystems as a result of climate change. This requires urgent action by all levels of government, including local government. Council therefore declares a Climate Emergency, commits to a climate emergency response, and will proactively integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into all Council actions."

Our goals focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation – for both Council operations and broader community action, and our eight focus areas for climate action are:

1. Strong climate leadership and culture
2. Having a climate resilient, adaptive and safe community
3. Having a climate-resilient natural environment
4. Having climate responsive Council services, facilities, buildings and infrastructure
5. Achieving Council and community zero-emissions energy use
6. Enhancing sustainable transport
7. Achieving a zero waste and circular economy
8. Integrated Water Management.

In July 2023, the Year 2 (2023-2024) Climate Action Implementation Plan was endorsed. The plan included 86 cross-Council initiatives that were led by a broad range of Council teams such as Sustainability, Environment, Community Partnerships, Capital Works, Infrastructure, Open Space, Strategic Planning, Leisure and Recreation, Fleet and Edendale Community Environment Farm. Of these:

- 92% (79 actions) are 'complete' or 'on track'
- 8% (7 actions) experienced delays/issues which are being considered.

Some highlights of the second year of implementation of the Climate Action Plan include:

- Progressive implementation of Council's Net-Zero Emissions Roadmap to help achieve our target of achieving net-zero operational emissions by 2030
- Initiatives to support and encourage our community to reduce their emissions
- Zero waste and circular economy initiatives such as the introduction of a kitchen caddy roll-out to support residents to separate food waste – around 4,500 kitchen caddies have been provided to residents so far; a reusable nappy program; and the delivery of a circular economy pilot program for 10 businesses in the Shire in partnership with Monash Business School
- Collection hubs for small e-waste and batteries continue to be provided in Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek, Eltham and Greensborough. The Recycling Centre continues to provide recycling options for garden waste, metal, e-waste, batteries, light globes, mobile phones, CDs/DVDs, motor oil, paper, tyres, mattresses, fridges/freezers/air conditioners and x-rays. This is supported by an on-site Reuse Shop
- Community climate adaptation and resilience initiatives such as a community bushfire safety expo, discussions and simulated emergency exercises with communities, emergency-preparedness drop-in sessions, heat health and fire danger communications
- Development of a new food growing garden at Edendale Community Environment Farm that demonstrates growing techniques that are adaptable in a changing climate
- A 'sectorisation project' which is examining opportunities to introduce efficiencies that will enable enhanced Council preparation and clean-up responses to extreme storm events
- Installation of a roof over the Diamond Creek netball courts to provide enhanced rain and sun protection
- Climate Action advocacy on matters such as the Federal Governments Inquiry into the transition to electric vehicles and the proposed First Nations Clean Energy Strategy; seeking ongoing Victorian government commitment to working effectively with local government to achieve emission reduction targets; and more
- Consideration of climate impacts in the drafting of Council's new Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Tree Canopy Strategy.



Image: The new roof on the Diamond Creek Netball courts

Case study – Diamond Creek Netball Courts lighting upgrade and all-weather roof

The Diamond Creek Netball Courts received major climate-action adaptation and mitigation upgrades this year.

A \$1.65 million Council and Victorian Government investment into a roof for courts one and two will provide all-weather facilities for Nillumbik's dedicated netball players and spectators, with enhanced rain and sun protection.

A \$330,000 LED lighting upgrade is providing brighter, more energy-efficient lighting for games and training. This upgrade was part of a broader initiative, with five sporting grounds across the Shire receiving lighting improvements, funded by \$1.5 million from the Victorian Government's Community Sports Infrastructure Stimulus Program and a \$150,000 contribution from the Council.

Progress in achieving our target of net-zero community emissions by 2035

Our Climate Action Plan includes the ambitious target of achieving net-zero community emissions by 2035. This is 15 years sooner than the State Government's community target for all of Victoria.

Due to a two-year time-lag in data being available to report on community emissions, Year 1 and 2 progress towards achieving this target is not able to be reported on yet.

To help our community reduce their carbon emissions, the following types of initiatives were delivered this year:

- Launch of a new Community Energy and Sustainable Living Advisory Service which has been held at rotating venues across the Shire. 21 sessions were held across ten locations. Tailored advice was provided on matters such as solar power, going electric, electric vehicles, heat pump hot water systems, split system air-conditioning, rebates, and building and renovation designs
- Council funded Clean Energy Nillumbik to deliver a program of events to help promote sustainable living and zero-emissions options for the community which included an Electric Vehicle Expo, Sustainable House Day and Eco Chats; and supported the Nillumbik Climate Action Team to deliver their Climate Action Month
- Edendale Community Environment Farm delivered or hosted over 50 sustainability orientated courses and workshops, reaching over 600 people
- Community tenancy lease agreements are being updated to incorporate reference to the Climate Action Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration, and updated sustainability clauses
- Worked with community groups to ascertain how best to support them and their members to take climate action.

Progress in achieving our target of net-zero Council emissions by 2030

Council energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions

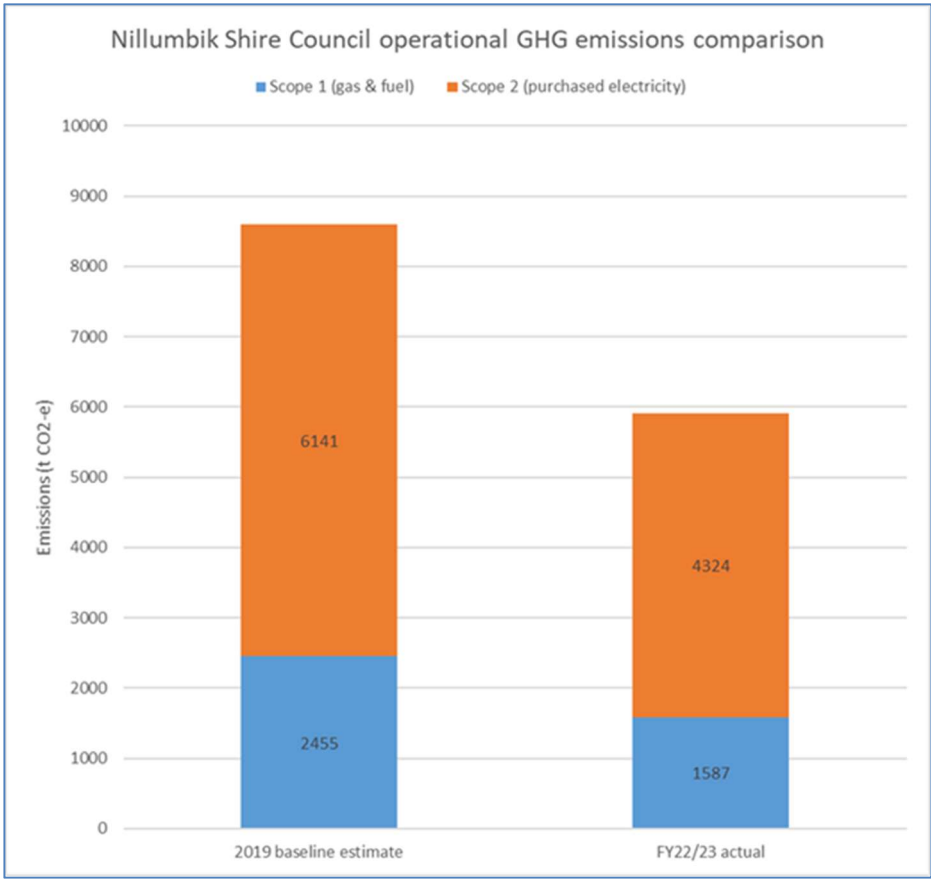
The largest sources of Council greenhouse gas emissions (scope 1 and 2)* are currently the Eltham Leisure Centre (38%), our street lights (20%), fuel for our fleet and plant (12%) and Civic Centre (8%).

To help reduce Council's energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions, the following types of initiatives were undertaken during 2023-2024:

- Our Net Zero Emissions Roadmap report is being referred to, to guide decision making on which works to prioritise, and in what order
- Work on a street light upgrade business case continued, and works are programmed to commence next year to replace our remaining mercury vapour street lighting with LED lighting
- Continued staged transition of Council's (Civic Centre based) passenger fleet, with new electric vehicle charging infrastructure options explored and three additional electric vehicles purchased.
- Feasibility studies were undertaken to assess the capacity of energy infrastructure at Council's Recycling and Operations Centre and at Edendale Community Environment Farm. The findings indicate that major upgrades are required before Council can host/charge electric fleet vehicles or increase rooftop solar generation capacity or transition off gas at either location.
- ESD principles were incorporated in the Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool and pavilion specifications, and the new Diamond Hills Preschool build
- Expansion of rooftop solar and battery installations to consist of 53 systems totalling 995kW solar PV and 255kWh battery storage
- Delivery of climate efficiency upgrades at 15 sites including: Edendale Community Environment Farm, Eltham Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs, Greensborough Civic Centre, Eltham Leisure Centre, Diamond Hills Preschool, Meruka child care, St Andrews Community Centre, Hurstbridge Hub, Eltham Library, Eltham Community Reception Centre, Council's Operations Centre, Eltham Bowls Club, Diamond Creek Pool, Greensborough Hockey Club, Strathewen Pavilion, Diamond Creek Baseball Club, St Andrews Tennis Club
- Works included a variety of building, electrification and lighting audits; replacing gas cooking with electric; installing efficient electric heat-pump hot water systems; gas abolishment's; additional rooftop solar; and commencement of a lighting efficiency upgrade at the Eltham Leisure Centre.

The figure below depicts emission reductions ('equivalent tonnes of carbon dioxide') between the 2019 baseline year and 2022-2023 (data is not yet available for 2023-2024). Insufficient data is available to report on scope 3* emissions yet.

Council is making positive progress in reaching its target of net-zero Council emissions by 2030, but there is much still to be done.



Council's Climate Action Plan includes indicators that assist in measuring progress over time, in reaching our net-zero emissions and other adopted targets. They include:

Climate Action Plan indicators	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Target	Result
Community satisfaction with Council's performance in delivering climate action leadership and initiatives	6.33 / 10	6.92 / 10	6.90 / 10	↑	↔
Percentage of Nillumbik residents that have made changes to their home or lifestyle to help reduce climate change and its impacts	64.7%	57.6%	58.0%	↑	↔
Nillumbik resident rating of their household's ability to cope with climate related risks and impacts (such as fire, drought, extreme heat and heavy rainfall)	6.95 / 10	7.45 / 10	7.20 / 10	↑	↓
Source: 2024 Annual Community Survey - Scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied)					

* Scope 1 emissions are “direct emissions” from sources that are owned or controlled by the entity (i.e fleet vehicles). Scope 2 emissions are the emissions released into the atmosphere from the use of purchased energy. These are called “indirect emissions” because the actual emissions are generated at another facility such as a power station. Scope 3 emissions include all other indirect emissions that occur across the value chain and are outside of the organisation’s direct control (i.e. employee travel to and from work).

Emissions indicators	2019 Baseline	2022-2023	2023-2024	Target	Result
Volume of annual greenhouse gas emissions emitted by Council facilities and operations (scope 1 & 2 emissions). Target net-zero by 2030	8,596 tonnes CO ₂ e	5,911 tonnes CO ₂ e	Not yet available*	↓	NM
Volume of greenhouse gas emissions emitted by Council fleet vehicles. Target zero emissions by 2030.	1,520 tonnes CO ₂ e	848 tonnes CO ₂ e	902.6 tonnes CO ₂ e	↓	X
Energy and water indicators	-	2022-2023	2023-2024	Target	Result
Percentage of Council's stationary energy use (gas & electricity) that is supplied via a renewable energy source. Target 100% by 2030.	-	23.35%	Not yet available*	↑	NM
Percentage of Council's electricity use that is supplied via a renewable energy source. Target 100% by 2030.	-	43.66%	Not yet available*	↑	NM
Number of Council facilities where climate efficiency projects/programs have been delivered	-	14	15	NA	NM
Reduction in Council's potable water use	-	52,848kL	Not yet available*	↓	NM
Percent of total area of active public open space supported by an alternative water source. Target 18% by 2030 and 50% by 2050.	-	18.10%	21.54%	↑	↑
Source: Council records					

* Results not available due to time-lag in receiving the data.

Read the Climate Action Plan 2022-2032, and updates on what is being implemented and achieved each year, on the Council website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/climate-action.

Case study – St Andrews is benefiting from energy resilience funding

Extreme weather events such as storms and bushfire have many impacts. The 2021 major storm events highlighted how storms can cause significant and lengthy power outages, and how reliant communities are on electricity for everyday essentials.

With climate change making such events more likely, Council has been working with communities to help support their emergency preparedness and resilience.

The township of St Andrews was fortunate to receive an 'Energy Resilience Solutions' State Government grant for additional solar panels, a generator and large back-up energy system which have been installed at Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre and Men's Shed.

It can supply up to 105 hours of valuable back-up power for the community in times of extended power outages, and as a bonus the system is reducing demand for grid-sourced electricity all year round, lowering energy costs and emissions.

Environmental sustainability

Council undertakes a range of activities that help enhance and protect the health of Nillumbik's environment. They are funded by Council budget and external grants.

The works include biodiversity protection; environmental and strategic planning and policy; land and invasive species management; education and awareness raising; advocacy; managing a native vegetation offset site; and facilitating landscape-scale conservation and land management across multiple land tenures.

In delivering these initiatives, Council partners with many organisations and the community to achieve the best outcomes. Some examples of recent initiatives are provided below.

A new Biodiversity Strategy and an Urban Tree Canopy Strategy are being developed

This year, Council continued the process of reviewing its Biodiversity Strategy 2015 and Invasive Species Action Plan 2012, and undertook research and consultation to help inform the development of a new strategy.

Two rounds of consultation were undertaken. Stage 1 sought to gather feedback to help inform the development of a draft new Biodiversity Strategy and Stage 2 provided the opportunity to consult on the draft itself. The ten-year strategy will be finalised next financial year. Over 98% of survey respondents told us that biodiversity is important to them.

Council is also developing its first ever Urban Tree Canopy Strategy (2024-2040). Consultation on the draft strategy has been undertaken and the strategy will be finalised in 2024-2025.

Managing Council's 100 conservation bushland reserves

Council's Environmental Works team looks after 100 bushland and wetland reserves, covering an area of around 500 hectares. In a fragmented urban and peri-urban landscape, these reserves provide an important refuge for Nillumbik's unique range of plants and animals. They are also places where residents can spend time in nature.

Council is responsible for conserving and enhancing the values of this land for future generations. Works include weed control, pest animal management, habitat enhancement, threatened species management, revegetation and fuel reduction. Additionally, volunteers from across the Shire work together on most weekends to help care for many of these reserves as part of a Friends Group.

Environmental volunteering

Council Environmental Works and Land Management team delivered Nillumbik's first Environmental Volunteers Expo, which showcased our environmental volunteers and provided information to our community on the breadth of environmental programs underway within the Shire and how to get involved.

Volunteers have been actively involved in monitoring and survey of some of our significant species, including the Eltham Copper Butterfly. Through our Fauna monitoring program, we delivered numerous training and education sessions to upskill our volunteers and offer community members a chance to join some of our volunteer programs, which has included supporting Nillumbik's many Landcare groups.

Landscape scale weed control

Council delivered and supported weed control in a variety of ways this year, including:

- Managing weeds on our own land, such as our parks, conservation reserves and road reserves
- Encouraging and providing advice to private landholders, as well as grants and other incentives, to support them to manage weeds on their property
- Advocating for and supporting landscape-scale weed control. These initiatives include Council's Rivers to Ranges project which is funded via the Peri-urban Weed Management Partnership program. This is a collaborative initiative between State and Local governments, aimed at safeguarding native plant and animal species from invasive weeds in the peri-urban fringe area of Melbourne. In 2022, Council was awarded a new three-year grant under this program, and is working together with Parks Victoria and other partners to increase weed control at sites within Plenty Gorge; Kinglake National Park; at Bunjil, Motschall and Long Gully reserves; along One Tree Hill Road and Long Gully Road; and in various Middle Yarra reserves at One Tree Hill, Rifle Range, Boomers, Morrisons, Fourth Hill, Yanakie Flora, and Ridge Block.

Supporting the community with deer control

Wild deer in the Shire are affecting biodiversity, water quality, public safety, agricultural assets and Aboriginal cultural heritage. As such, in 2022, the Victorian Government released its Peri-urban Deer Control Plan which is a plan to reduce the impact of deer across the peri-urban region east and north of Melbourne.

In January this year, Council was successful in securing funding of \$300,000, to continue to organise and fund deer control works on private property for another 18 months. Its aim is to help reduce local deer numbers and interrupt their southward spread - to reduce their geographic range and impacts.

During the period from July 2023 to June 2024, 281 deer were culled via this project. The deer control is targeted to multiple 'sectors' (groups of properties) within the project areas where:

- Safe shooting is possible
- Multiple and neighbouring properties express interest
- Productive shooting is possible
- There is good access
- There is evidence of deer impact
- There is strategic benefit.

Wildlife gardening

For several years, Council has been delivering the 'Nillumbik Gardens for Wildlife' program in partnership with dedicated community volunteers who help guide the program and who are amazing Garden Guides. This year, 59 local residents registered to participate in the program and 28 garden visits were undertaken. Five new volunteers were inducted, and two schools got involved.



Image: Council staff and volunteers work hand in hand to manage our Shire's biodiversity



Image: Council staff and partners at one of the three planting sites across the Shire

Case study – Safeguarding Nillumbik’s Charming Spider-orchid from extinction

Council and our Nillumbik Threatened Orchid Recovery Team partners have celebrated a major milestone in an on-going collaborative project to save the nationally critically endangered Charming Spider-orchid (*Caladenia amoena*) from extinction.

This dainty orchid, which grows to just 12 centimetres, is one of Australia’s most endangered plants, with less than 50 plants left in the wild.

The species relies on, and at the same time, supports a specific sub-soil mycorrhizal fungi and is pollinated by a native wasp.

Scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victorian Orchid Conservation Program successfully propagated the orchid from seeds, a process that took seven years; and together with our partners we planted 400 across three sites - in an effort to significantly increase their wild population.

In the long-term, it is hoped that these new plantings will form sustainable populations. For now, they will be very carefully monitored and cared for!

Supporting sustainable land management

Council provides advice, grants and rate rebates to private landholders and community groups to support and encourage sustainable land management.

The tables below summarise the land management incentives provided over the past five years, and the types of land management advice that is being provided. The advice is tailored, responding directly to the specific needs and circumstances of each landholder seeking assistance.

Incentive	Measure	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Land Management Incentive Program grants	Number of grants to individuals or community groups	39	35	37	27	22
	Value of grants	\$73,272	\$73,599	\$68,241	\$64,441	\$62,164
Sustainable Agriculture Rebate	Number of agricultural businesses receiving the rebate	44	40	40	40	39
	Value of rebate	\$38,719	\$35,204	\$35,204	\$35,204	\$34,803
Trust for Nature Covenant Rebate	Number of properties receiving the rebate	54	56	57	57	58
	Value of rebate	\$16,436	\$16,914	\$17,178	\$17,178	\$17,444

Land Management advice provided to landholders*					
Key topics	Number of landholders				
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Foxes	24	19	20	22	22
Rabbits	19	45	32	29	46
Deer	54	17	16	39	23
Queensland Fruit Fly		#	32	2	1
Weeds:					
• Blackberry	44	44	30	34	28
• Other weeds	42	40	48	59	31
Erosion	2	1	2	0	2
Revegetation	12	17	4	7	4
Pasture management	9	4	3	0	3
Sustainable Agriculture	5	6	2	2	4
Other (mixed advice on matters such as nest boxes, native animals, vegetation clearance, water, and Trust for Nature)		90	20	56	38
Total	211	273	209	250	202

*Advice provided via phone, email and at the landholder's property

Incorporated within 'other'

Environment and sustainability events and education

A varied program of environment and sustainability events and education sessions were hosted and/or funded this year, including at Edendale Community Environment Farm, Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs, libraries, within various parks and bushland reserves, and online - with topics covering sustainable living, nature connection and land management matters.

A list is provided in the table below. Over 2,700 participants took part in these events and programs. These events play an important part of Council's role in helping to raise awareness of climate-action that people can take, of ways to appreciate nature, and of how people can get involved in helping to protect and enhance our natural environment.

Environment and sustainability events and programs held in 2023-2024	
Summer fruit tree pruning	Rabbit control demonstration day
Introduction to horticulture	Home composting
Indigenous cultural walk along the Diamond Creek in Eltham	Food fibre medicine indigenous cultural walk at Bunjil Reserve
Burrowing crayfish webinar	Secret Life of Bees
Regenerative Agriculture Forum	Plant Me Instead talk
Reusable nappy workshops	Ecological vegetation classes of Nillumbik walk
Gardening with indigenous plants	No food-waste cooking workshop
Birds on farms	Bee a Pollinator workshop
Moth surveys with the Entomological Society of Victoria	Setting up a worm farm
Urban food gardening	Sustainable House Day
Forest therapy at Edendale Farm	Spotlighting walks
Fungi Foray	Expert ecological chats
Wicking bed workshops	National Tree Day planting
Weatherproofing workshops	Eltham Copper Butterfly walk
Environmental Volunteering Expo	Clean Up Australia Day
Electric Vehicle Expo	

Nillumbik's Native Vegetation Over-the-Counter Offset Program

Council is a native vegetation offset provider. Native vegetation offset credits can be purchased from our over-the-counter offset program, and the sales income will help to fund, in perpetuity, the management of the Chase Reserve in North Warrandyte. Information on quotes and sales generated via this program is provided below.

Year*	Quotes provided	Total sales	Internal Council project sales	Internal sales Income ex GST	External sales	External sales Income ex GST	NSC permit applicants	Other Council permit applicants	Credits sold
2019-2020	124	3	0	0	3	\$5,959.17	1	2	0.042 GHU
2020-2021	28	8	8	\$179,342.65	0	0	8	0	1.04 GHU
2021-2022	21	8	3	\$2,553.93	5	\$50,943.39	7	1	0.232 GHU 0.140 SHU
2022-2023	10	5	2	\$31,214.70	3	\$2,185.03	4	1	0.214 GHU
2023-2024	9	4	0	0	4	\$10,925.15	3	1	0.077 GHU

Note: GHU – General Habitat Units; and SHU - Species Habitat Units

Social sustainability

Nillumbik recognises the important role that local government plays in promoting access, equity and inclusion.

Gender equity

Key activities in the Gender Equity space in 2023-2024 included:

- Implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 and Gender Impact Assessments, as required by the *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- Submission of a two-year progress report on the Nillumbik Gender Equality Action Plan to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
- 15 Council staff completed Gender Impact Assessment training, facilitated by Women's Health in the North
- 37 Gender Impact Assessments were completed on policies, strategies, programs, services and projects
- The International Women's Day Dinner was held on 7 March 2024 at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre, which celebrated the Young Women Leader Award recipients, provided entertainment and keynote speaker George McEncroe
- Nillumbik Youth Council participation in the Week Without Violence 'Clothesline' campaign, and their t-shirts displayed across the Hurstbridge Hub, Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs and Eltham Library
- Council led the Shire in supporting the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a global campaign that runs from 25 November – 10 December annually. In 2023-2024, Council provided ten grants for community-led projects to promote gender equality, respectful relationships and the prevention of gender-based and family violence. The successful grants were distributed across Early Years services, libraries, local schools and Council's leisure facilities
- As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, Nillumbik Youth Council designed and led an Open Mic Night event in Eltham Town Square, providing paid performance opportunities to local young women and gender diverse people. The event also served as an opportunity to connect with local Youth Mental Health services and contribute to a collection of donations for community members experiencing family violence
- Council recognised 'Are you Safe at Home Day?' by facilitating a Gender Equity Guided Walking Tour activity at the Eltham Leisure Centre
- Council recognised World Elder Abuse Awareness Day with a series of information sessions for older adults, and lighting of the Eltham Gateway Sculpture in purple.

In the year ahead, Council will focus on the following gender equity related priorities:

- Implementation of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* requirements, including preparing a draft of the next Nillumbik Gender Equality Action Plan, due in October 2025
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence 2024 grants for community-led projects, Week Without Violence and 2025 International Women's Day activities and events
- Support projects and activities with teams across Council applying a gender and intersectionality lens
- Continue to raise awareness and advocates for gender equality in the workplace and community.



Image: Staff from the two schools involved in the 'Respect is 365' project

Case study – 16 Days of Activism – 'Respect is 365...'

Council is a proud supporter of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign. This global campaign aims to raise awareness and galvanise individuals and communities to address gender inequality, call out harmful gender stereotypes and create a safer and more equal society.

Our Lady Help of Christian's (OLHC) Primary School, Eltham and Sacred Heart Primary School, Diamond Creek, were successful recipients of the 2023 Nillumbik 16 Days of Activism grant. The two schools collaborated to deliver the 'Respect is 365...' project.

'Respect is 365...' saw students from Prep through to Grade 6 create original artworks responding to the theme, 'Respect is...'. The artworks were collated and transformed into calendars which were distributed to all families across the two school communities. Led by educators Norah Jacombs (OLHC) and Kerry Neilson (Sacred Heart), the project was an opportunity to create a resource which would prompt conversations about gender equity and respectful relationships, both at school and at home.

Norah and Kerry's hope is that more Nillumbik primary and secondary schools will join the campaign in years to come. "When the children do come together, outside of school, there will be a shared language, a shared experience and a shared expectation of respect – for everybody."

LGBTIQA+

2023-2024 saw a continued commitment from Council in the support and inclusion of the LGBTIQA+ community.

A range of internal and external initiatives were delivered over the past 12 months, including:

- Council established an internal Rainbow Working Group and undertook step 1 of the Rainbow Ready Roadmap, an audit and assessment tool designed by the Victorian Government to support Councils to assess LGBTIQA+ inclusion and identify opportunities for improvement
- Delivery of the Rainbow Youth Social Group, a monthly group for LGBTIQA+ young people aged 13 to 18 to socialise, make new friends, and participate in creative activities and workshops
- Delivery of the Rainbow Golf Cup, in partnership with Belgravia Leisure, Proud 2 Play, Golf Australia and Melbourne Rainbow Golfers. This annual event brought together 71 LGBTIQA+ golfers and their family, friends and allies to Yarrambat Golf Course for a 9-hole tournament that raised awareness of the barriers to participation in sport for the LGBTIQA+ community
- Council supported several events across the Shire in recognition of IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Intersex Discrimination) on 17 May 2024. Events included activities at Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries, a rainbow 'crafternoon' for the youth Rainbow Social Group, IDAHOBIT Bingo for the Commonwealth Home Support Program Social Support Group for Older Adults and guest speakers for staff
- Council ran LGBTIQA+ 101 training, with 10 community members participating
- Launch of the Eltham Library Community Gallery Midsumma Exhibition 2024: Celebrating LGBTIQA+ arts and culture, which exhibited the works of artist Ayman Kaake, 'In Their Names'. Various artists' talks and workshops were run throughout the exhibition in collaboration with Eltham Library and Many Coloured Sky. This was the first Midsumma art exhibition in Nillumbik
- Council proudly flew the LGBTIQA+ Pride Flag all year, as well as the Trans Flag on Trans days of significance
- Councillors and staff planned to represent Nillumbik at the Midsumma Pride March in St Kilda. Unfortunately, participation was cancelled due to extreme heat on the day.

In the year ahead, Council will focus on the following priorities in this area:

- Develop an LGBTIQA+ online training module to be rolled out to all staff
- Create an implementation plan for recommendations from the Rainbow Ready Roadmap audit
- Continue delivery of the Rainbow Youth Social Group
- Support the handover of the Rainbow Golf Cup to Yarrambat Golf Course
- Delivery of the Eltham Library Community Gallery: Midsumma Exhibition 2024: Celebrating LGBTIQA+ arts and culture
- Ongoing delivery of internal and external activities and events in recognition of cause days and significant dates, including but not limited to, the Midsumma Festival, IDAHOBIT and Wear It Purple Day.

Gender Impact Assessments

Council is now legislated under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service to undertake a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA). This includes gender disaggregated data and data about Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Below is a list of policies, programs and services which have had a GIA undertaken this year:

- Accessible Work Experience (AWE) Pilot Program
- Alcohol Harm Prevention
- Application Process for Nillumbik Advisory Committees
- Art Collection Policy & Guidelines
- Brand Writing Style Guide
- Business Networking Roadshow
- Children's Week 2024
- Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool Upgrade
- Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP)
- Edendale School Holiday Program
- Emergency Management (EM) Community Programming 2024
- Emergency Management Exercise (Yarrambat)
- Energy and Sustainable Living Advisory Service
- Enterprise Agreement (EA) #9
- Environment Community Programs & Events 2024
- Financial Matters Forum for Nillumbik Seniors
- Housing Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- International Day of People with a Disability (IDPwD) Grants
- Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club Carpark Upgrade
- Leasing and Licencing Policy
- Major Collection Exhibition - Montsalvat
- Nillumbik Community Fund (NCF) Grant
- Privacy Policy
- Nillumbik Pet Expo
- Nillumbik Emergency Relief Centre
- Nillumbik Festivals & Events Triennial Program
- Nillumbik Rainbow Golf Cup 2024
- Nillumbik Youth - 16 Days of Activism Open Mic Night Event
- Panton Hill Tennis Courts Redevelopment
- Place Activation Grants
- Plenty War Memorial Oval Sportsground Lighting Upgrade
- Public Art Collection Policy
- Urban Tree Canopy Strategy
- Women in Business Networking Event
- Young Women's Leadership Awards
- Youth Summit 2024

Disability, inclusion and access

Council's Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy outlines Council's commitment to accessible, equitable and inclusive practice across all Council activities. The policy was informed by legislation, evidence, local context, strategic commitments and best-practice, as well as community feedback.

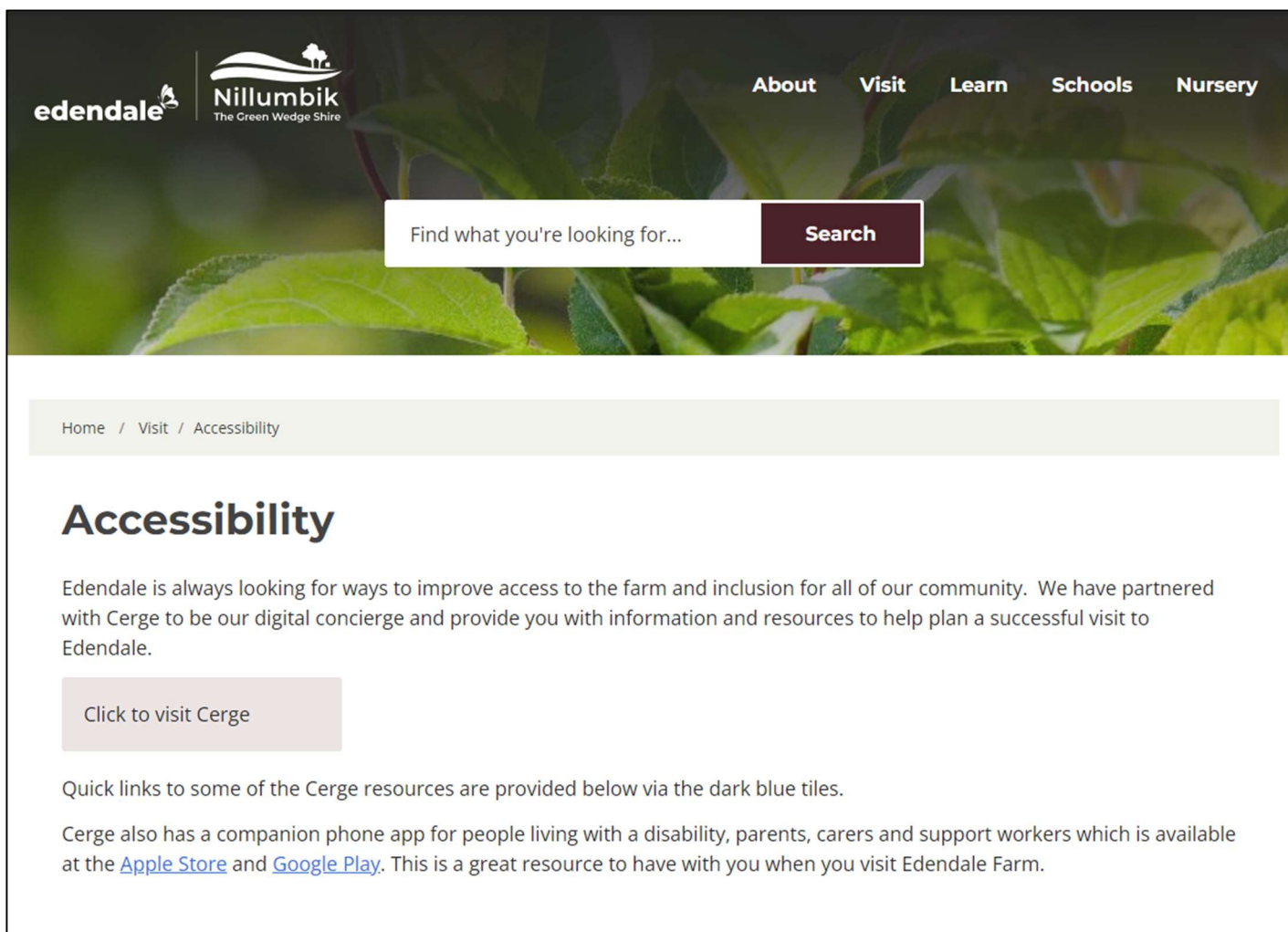
Council adopted this policy at the July 2022 Council Meeting. The policy includes:

- an Inclusion statement (to be used in Council publications alongside an Acknowledgement of Country and demonstrate our policy commitment)
- purpose, context and principles (leadership, community, equity, intersectionality, human rights and social justice)
- our policy commitments
- details on how the policy will be applied and implemented.

There are three phases identified to successfully embed access, equity and inclusion principles and policy commitments across Council:

- Phase 1: Initiate – establish our policy commitment and undertake community engagement to confirm opportunities and gaps
- Phase 2: Build capability, capacity and drive culture change – deliver training, upskill staff, engage champions, map opportunities based on community and staff consultation, pilot interventions and collect relevant data
- Phase 3: Sustain – longer-term systems and process changes, effective partnerships, monitoring, evaluation and learning to continue to build on strengths and address gaps.

Read the Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy on our website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/strategies-policies. An Easy English version of the policy is also available.



edendale | Nillumbik The Green Wedge Shire

About Visit Learn Schools Nursery

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Accessibility

Edendale is always looking for ways to improve access to the farm and inclusion for all of our community. We have partnered with Cerge to be our digital concierge and provide you with information and resources to help plan a successful visit to Edendale.

[Click to visit Cerge](#)

Quick links to some of the Cerge resources are provided below via the dark blue tiles.

Cerge also has a companion phone app for people living with a disability, parents, carers and support workers which is available at the [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#). This is a great resource to have with you when you visit Edendale Farm.

Case study – Improving accessibility at Edendale Community Environment Farm

Edendale Community Environment Farm is continually looking for ways to improve access and inclusion for all our community. Three initiatives developed this year included:

1. A new accessibility web page was launched on the farm's website, including setup of a quick link on the website's landing page for easy access and navigation. New resources have been developed including site specific accessibility information for different disabilities, accessible customer services and site infrastructure, tips on getting to Edendale and links to a new service called Cerge.
2. The farm has partnered with Cerge – digital concierge, to improve the resources available to people with a disability, their family and support workers so they can plan a successful visit to the farm. As part of this project, visual stories, sensory guides and a 360 virtual tour of the farm have been developed, as well as access and audio guides. Cerge is delivered to the community via both the farm's website and a phone app.
3. Development and piloting of an Accessible Work Experience (AWE) program to complement the existing personalised volunteer program for disabled people. The AWE program provides the opportunity for disabled people to participate for 3 hours a week, over 10 weeks, in a structured work experience program on the farm. The program is designed to recognise the individual's interests and capabilities and integrates into the operations of the farm. The AWE program can also be seen as a pathway into the farm's volunteer program



Image: The mural at the Civic Drive precinct in Greensborough
Untitled Artwork - 2023
Artist: Hayden Dewar

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Our communications and engagement

We are improving how Nillumbik's people are connected to the information they need and want about relevant Council programs, services and decisions to enable them to live supported, active, sustainable and connected lives within our community.

Council is committed to undertaking meaningful engagement with our community to help inform decision making on a range of services and programs.

Our stakeholders

In order to deliver fundamental services and innovative programs to our community, Council relies on its stakeholders to provide guidance, feedback, resourcing and information. Council engages with a broad range of stakeholders, in numerous ways, and for a variety of reasons.

Our stakeholders include:

Residents	We rely on residents to provide feedback and guidance on services and issues that matter to them.
Ratepayers	Our ratepayers provide funding to support the delivery of services and the provision of community infrastructure.
Community groups and volunteers	Nillumbik's numerous community groups and volunteers make a meaningful difference within the Shire by providing important services and fostering valued connections.
Customers	We consider all those who use our services and facilities to be our customers. Our customers provide valuable insights and feedback regarding the delivery of our services, the suitability of our facilities and the quality of the products we have on offer.
Partners	Partnering with other councils, organisations and groups allows Council and the Nillumbik community the opportunity to benefit from shared knowledge, networks, experiences and resources.
Government	State and federal governments provide Council with important funding opportunities along with guidance and direction through legislative and regulatory parameters.
Visitors	Nillumbik is renowned for its beautiful green wedge and rural townships. Visitors are drawn to the region to enjoy the wide range of activities and in doing so, also support the local economy.
Council staff	Our staff are responsible for providing advice, implementing Council's direction and taking action on Council decisions. Council officers also provide advice and expertise that inform policy decisions, deliver services and implement decisions.

Our communications

Council's Communications Strategy 2022-2025 is underpinned by four pillars of action: trust and transparency; identity; capability and reach.

This year, Council implemented a Year 2 action plan for the strategy, which included the following highlights:

- Improvements were made to the look and feel of the Participate Nillumbik quarterly e-newsletter, including the introduction of images and 'click to action' buttons, which saw an increase in open rates from 53% in the December 2022 edition to 60% in the December 2023 edition
- Greater focus was placed on monitoring and responding to social media comments, and providing information around why decisions were being made and how much activities were costing
- Planning pages on Council's website were reviewed and improved to make information about planning services easier to understand
- Signage guidelines were developed to improve the consistency of Council branding when replacing signs
- Council's communications incorporated more of a 'story telling' approach, which has helped increase engagement with our social media channels. Communications have included more stories about capital works projects, and featured community members and staff to help raise awareness about the breadth of services Council provides, while building a sense of pride around living in Nillumbik.
- 30 staff from across Council completed IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) Engagement Essentials training
- Website author training was held and a new e-newsletter for staff with website authoring responsibilities was established, to better support staff in keeping website content up to date and easy to read
- Video was used more to help increase engagement with Council communications, and to make topics including strategies more engaging and easier to understand
- The Communications and Engagement team attended community events including the Pet Expo, Wattle Festival, Diamond Creek Rotary Fair and Warrandyte Festival. Staff from other departments also joined the team at some of the events, speaking with community members about projects they were working on.

Much of our communication work over the past year was focused around promoting the development of a number of key Council strategies including the Housing Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy and Integrated Transport Strategy, as well as Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan. This included communications to let the community know about opportunities to provide feedback on these projects, as well as storytelling to help raise awareness about the importance of the strategies, including their intent and role in providing better outcomes for our community.

Communications were produced for a number of projects including Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art, the Nillumbik Youth Hub, Nillumbik Community Awards, the Youth Summit, Community Grants and Seniors Festival. Cause days including 16 Days of Activism, NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, Children's Week, IDAHOBIT Day, International Day of People with Disability and National Volunteer Week were also promoted.

Capital works were also featured in Council's communication channels, highlighting projects including a new toilet block at Alistair Knox Park, improvements to the Diamond Valley Library outdoor space, construction of the new community park at Ryans Reserve and construction of a new roof at the Diamond Creek netball courts.

Council's main communication channels include:

- Website
- Media releases
- Nillumbik News quarterly magazine
- Nillumbik eNews
- Social media including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Over the past year, more than 124 news releases were issued via our website, keeping the community up to date on the latest Council news and information. These releases were also sent out to local media and our media release subscriber base.

Nillumbik News is issued quarterly at the start of each season to more than 23,000 households across the Shire. The 2024 Annual Community Survey found that 34% of respondents regularly read the printed magazine. While this reflects a decrease from last year, it also aligns with the ongoing trend observed over the past five years.

More than 1,340 people subscribed to the new monthly e-newsletter Nillumbik eNews, which provides updates on Council decisions, programs, community engagement and major events. Around 20% of respondents to the Annual Community Survey indicated their preference for this method of communication.

Website

Council's website continues to offer a valuable source of information for the community. In 2023-2024, there were 443,945 users and 1,131,539 page views of Council's main website.

According to the 2024 Annual Community Survey, there was an increase this year in the proportion of people who visited Council’s website (56 per cent up from 52 per cent the previous year). The number of people who visited the website frequently increased from 8% to 18%, while the number of infrequent visitors dropped to 38% (down from 44% the previous year).

In 2023-2024, work was undertaken to improve the user experience in key sections of Council's main website.

A to Z of waste

Pages that host information about waste and recycling continue to attract high traffic. Guidance on the options for disposing of waste was published across a number of pages. Working closely with the Waste team, the Communications team worked to create a searchable directory of waste products, and the options for disposing of them. Launched in February, this one-stop-shop now appears in the top pages on the website.

Planning for success

Council secured a digital planning grant of \$110,000 from the Department of Transport and Planning (State Government). The grant enabled us to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to updating the planning web pages, and engaged a specialist website content agency to review the statutory planning pages on the website and improve the content for users.

The review found users who tried to complete their application online didn’t understand what was required in their application, which led to back and forth correspondence between the permit applicant and Council, and Council was seen to be a ‘barrier’.

Almost 80 web pages were rewritten. Technical jargon was replaced with information that is accurate, findable, consistent, accessible and written in plain English. The section of the site was also restructured to reflect the typical user journey.

To increase accessibility, content was made available in alternative formats, including video. Some existing videos were replaced with simpler, easy to understand versions. Two new videos were also created to address common but complex issues (such as what to do when you want to remove a tree on private land).

The Planning Services team received training in writing for the web, positioning them as not only topic experts, but arming them with an understanding of best practice and the ability to continue to manage the content after the project was delivered. This increased knowledge also transfers to customer interactions on the phone, in person and in written correspondence.

Positive feedback

These updates, and a continuous improvement approach to reviewing and updating website content (working closely with the Customer Experience team), has led to an improvement in feedback on the web pages. In 2022-2023, 20% of users found pages helpful. This increased to 35% in 2023-2024.

Key website figures
1,131,539 page views
738,604 sessions
443,945 users

Top five websites viewed in 2023-2024:

	Page	Page views
1.	Recycling Centre	38,916
2.	Careers	29,913
3.	Check my bin day	24,641
4.	Events calendar	18,611
5.	Book a hard waste collection	18,279

* Excluding the homepage and search pages



Image: A snapshot from our Biodiversity Strategy video promotion

Case study – Stories told through moving pictures

In 2023-2024, Council started using video more to help increase engagement with Council's communications, including the introduction of Mayor's video messages, and messages featuring community members and Council staff to promote events and initiatives and make topics including strategies more engaging and easier to understand.

This work has helped increase the number of followers of Council's social media channels. Our Instagram page saw a 13% increase in followers. Council's LinkedIn page also saw a 13% increase in followers, while Nillumbik's Facebook following grew by 6%.

Engagement rates for Council's social media pages have also increased, particularly on Facebook which saw a 33% increase in engagement compared to 2021 when Council's Communications Strategy was developed.

Some highlights included video interviews with volunteers from several community groups. These interviews were used to promote the amazing work of Nillumbik volunteers as part of National Volunteer Week, and to help promote the many volunteering opportunities available with community groups who are always looking for people to help.

Social media

The unique natural environment and creative community spirit that exists within Nillumbik provides a beautiful backdrop for digital imagery and has featured strongly in our social media content over the past year.

Guided by our Communications Strategy and goals around increasing reach and engagement with Council's online content, we invested more time in using video and storytelling to raise awareness about Council projects and services, including community engagement activities, and our work with local communities. The number of video views in 2023-2024 across Council's Facebook and Instagram pages was 127,995, compared with 67,770 in 2022-2023. These figures do not include a video of the steam train arriving at the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival, which went viral and was viewed by more than 500,000 people around the world on Facebook.

Facebook and Instagram posts regarding capital works projects were well received by the community and were the most successful in terms of reaching a large number of people and generating conversations.

The use of video also enabled us to tell more stories about the work of the many community groups in Nillumbik and the difference they make in our community. Highlights included a series of videos promoting National Volunteer Week. The videos featured people from a range of volunteer groups including Nillumbik Friends of Biodiversity, Hohnes Hill and Arthurs Creek Community Centre, providing an opportunity to celebrate and recognise their passion, commitment and generosity of time.

Key statistics from our social media platforms in 2023-2024 included:

Council social media pages:

Facebook	Followers	Instagram	Followers
Edendale Community Environment Farm	7,090	Visit Nillumbik	2,619
Visit Nillumbik	4,937	Nillumbik Arts	1,881
Living & Learning Nillumbik	2,438	Edendale Community Environment Farm	1,370
Hurstbridge Community Hub	2,404	Nillumbik Youth	1,317
Nillumbik Arts	2,365	Living & Learning Nillumbik	1,013
Nillumbik Youth	2,139		

Engagement rate:

Platform	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
Facebook	6.0%	9.1%	5.8%
Instagram	1.9%	2.2%	1.9%
LinkedIn	8.9%	10.4%	8.6%

Followers:

Platform	2023-2024	2022-2023	Increase on previous year
Facebook	12,555	10,655	6.95%
Instagram	3,309	2,896	14.26%
X/Twitter	2,644*	2,717	-2.69%
LinkedIn	6,596	5,799	13.74%
TOTAL	23,945	22,067	8.51%

*As at 30 June 2024

The Communications and Engagement team focused on building Instagram and LinkedIn audiences, rather than Facebook (where we already place a large focus) and X/Twitter in response to changes in that platform.

Community engagement

Community engagement is guided by Council's Community Engagement Policy, to ensure that everyone has a fair and reasonable opportunity to provide feedback.

Council is continuing to evolve and innovate its engagement activities to further enhance community satisfaction and create a more inclusive and collaborative decision-making process.

Engagement with our Participate Nillumbik online platform continues to grow with new and improved digital tools, making it easier for the community to learn about and submit their ideas on projects, plans and strategies.

In 2023-2024, 31,337 people visited the website (participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au). There are 2,681 registered members who receive regular updates via our quarterly Participate Nillumbik e-newsletter.

The 2024 Annual Community Survey found satisfaction with Council's community consultation and engagement remained stable this year at 6.9 out of 10, or a "good" level of satisfaction. This result was measurably above the long-term average satisfaction since 2015 of 6.5 out of 10.

A snapshot of some of the major community engagement projects undertaken in 2023-2024 is as follows:

Project	Dates	Description	Contributions	Outcomes
Fabbro Fields	29 June – 20 July 2023	The community were invited to have their say on the idea of operating an urban farm at 2 Bell Street, Eltham, known as Fabbro Fields.	1,038	The results were extremely close – just over 53% were generally in favour of the concept, while just over 46% were not, indicating support for the proposal was not overwhelming. Following consideration of feedback, Council voted not to support the proposal of an urban farm at this site. Councillors confirmed that it is not the appropriate parcel of land for an urban farm in the Shire.
Eltham Lower Dog Park	18 September – 15 October 2023	The community were consulted on the concept design for a dog park at Eltham Lower Park.	703	The community provided feedback on the concept design. This was consolidated and designs were revised to include changes such as separate spaces for dogs and horses.
Draft Integrated Transport Strategy	15 April – 27 May 2024	The community were asked to provide feedback on the strategy's issues and options paper as well as what they like about transport in Nillumbik and what needs improvement.	268	Feedback has been consolidated to present an Integrated Transport Strategy at the August 2024 Council Meeting for adoption.
Draft Housing Strategy	22 April – 27 May 2024	The community were invited to have a say on the draft Housing Strategy and the six priority areas.	91	Timelines for completion of the Housing Strategy are pending as the document will need to be updated to reflect the final housing targets being set by the State Government. These are expected to be released in late 2024 as part of the new Plan for Victoria. A further round of consultation is expected in 2025.

Advocacy

Council participated in a number of key advocacy events during 2023-2024, including MAV State Council, where we submitted three motions calling for funding and investigations to help reduce harm to wildlife and improve driver safety, improving powers for Local Government to respond to illegal vegetation removal, and reimbursement from the State Government for maintenance councils undertake on State Government roadside reserves.

A Nillumbik delegation also attended the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly in Canberra. Nillumbik submitted a motion calling on the Australian Government to establish legislation to support investment in the development of the nation's electrical grid network infrastructure and transition to renewable energy, and another calling for funding to support local councils with their asset management responsibilities.

Key advocacy campaigns for the 2023-2024 period included:

Local Area Bus Review – Metropolitan Transport Forum

A 'One Bus – One Hour' trip between Diamond Creek and Mernda highlighted opportunities to improve local bus services and make a difference to the lives of thousands of residents in Nillumbik and surrounding areas.

Support for plan to end kangaroo culling in the Shire

Nillumbik Shire Council backed a State Government proposal in November 2023 to remove the Shire from the Victorian Kangaroo Harvesting Program. The proposal followed a local community campaign which saw a petition of around 14,000 signatures submitted to Council in September calling for an end to the commercial killing of kangaroos in Nillumbik.

Northern Councils Alliance

Council continued to partner with other northern councils through the Northern Councils Alliance (NCA) to strengthen advocacy priorities for the northern region, supporting a number of NCA's key advocacy strategies during the 2023-2024 period, including:

- Regional Transport Advocacy and Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan
- Northern Regional Transport Strategy – Bus Network
- Northern Trails Strategy
- Melbourne's North Investment Attraction Strategy.

Ministerial visits

Council had the opportunity to welcome Members of Parliament to Nillumbik at a number of events, including:

- The Premier of Victoria's visit to Research Preschool to celebrate a \$400,000 State Government funding boost to contribute towards the renewal and expansion of the preschool
- Rob Mitchell, MP, Federal Labor Member for McEwen, visited Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool to discuss plans for the pool's \$1.5 million upgrade
- Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman and Member for Eltham Vicki Ward joined Councillors and local students to officially turn the first sod for the Diamond Creek Youth Hub.



Image: Advocating for improvements for better bus services throughout Nillumbik



Image: Council staff at the 2024 Warrandyte Festival

Case study – Building organisational capacity in best practice community engagement

Continuous improvement and building capacity of staff across Council to undertake successful community engagement was a key focus during the 2023-2024 period.

27 staff participated in International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) 'Essential Engagement' training to learn more about the principles of community engagement, and to build an understanding about the value of community feedback in informing Council's decision-making processes.

A further five staff completed the full IAP2 Certificate of Engagement, providing an in-depth understanding of best practice in community engagement.

A 'Community Engagement Champions' network was established, comprising staff from different areas of Council, meeting monthly to discuss the importance of genuine engagement, to share learnings from various engagement activities, and to develop and strengthen skills in community engagement principles and methods across the organisation. It has also provided an opportunity for staff to learn about *Local Government Act 2020* requirements around community engagement, including the need for Gender Impact Assessments when designing many engagement projects.

Attendance at meetings with community engagement officers from other councils has also been valuable in staying informed on best practice community engagement methods.

This approach has proven helpful in a busy year for community engagement, with several key Council projects and strategies requiring community input.

Image: Staff keeping Nillumbik roads clear and safe.



Our Annual Community Survey

The Annual Community Survey, which is designed to measure community satisfaction with a range of Council services, facilities and activities, was conducted in February 2024 by Metropolis Research.

Community satisfaction with Council services, facilities and activities remained steady over the past year, according to results from the 2024 Annual Community Survey.

The results show Council's overall performance remaining at a 'good' level in the 12 months to February 2024.

Independent research company Metropolis Research undertook the survey in February, measuring community satisfaction with a range of Council services, activities and facilities. Consisting of a representative sample of 500 residents across the Shire, Metropolis conducted mainly face-to-face interviews, with a small number of phone interviews undertaken in rural areas due to access and OHS issues.

Overall, community satisfaction with Council's performance was rated at 6.90 out of 10, an increase of 0.3% on the 2023 results. This increase and overall rating was similar to that recorded for metropolitan councils, including interface and northern councils.

The top five important issues in Nillumbik identified by survey respondents were:

- Roads maintenance and repairs
- Traffic management
- Parks, gardens and open space
- Council rates
- Bushfire management and prevention.

The survey provides rich information on service delivery performance, and Council teams use the data to guide their business planning.

The results are accessible in full on Council's website at **[Community Satisfaction Survey - Nillumbik Shire Council](#)**.

Many of the measures in the survey are strategic indicators in the Council Plan 2021-2025 and are reported on in the 'Performance against the Council Plan' section of this report (pages 35-43).

Some of the measures in the survey are performance measures required by the State Government and are made public on the Local Government Victoria website at **[knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au](https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au)**.



Image: Roads maintenance and repairs rated as the top issue for our residents in the Annual Community Survey

Our volunteers

Volunteering is at the heart of Nillumbik communities and is an essential pillar of individual and community wellbeing. Volunteers deliver important services and create invaluable benefit where it is needed most. Volunteering facilitates belonging and cohesion, improves social capital and career pathways, has proven health benefits for volunteers themselves, and provides formal opportunities for diverse community members to make a collective difference in their community.

While Nillumbik has long enjoyed high rates of volunteer participation, the COVID-19 pandemic took a heavy toll with a reduction from 24.5% of residents reporting that they volunteered in 2016 to just 16.9% according to the 2021 Census. This huge drop is on par with impacts nationwide. This said, 16.9% or 8,662 of our population reported voluntary work, compared with 12.1% for Greater Melbourne, so Nillumbik still enjoys higher than average volunteer participation rates.

Council contributed to the co-design of the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033. The ten-year strategy aims to inspire and enable more people to get involved and give back within their communities.

In Nillumbik, there are volunteering opportunities to suit people of all interests, capacities and backgrounds including:

- Caring for our natural places with Landcare or Friends of Reserves groups, improving biodiversity and habitat by becoming a Gardens for Wildlife guide, collecting ecological data onsite or online as a Flora/Fauna Monitor
- Contributing to community safety through the Country Fire Authority (CFA), State Emergency Services (SES) or local community fireguard group
- Supporting young people and families by mentoring learner drivers through the L2P Learner Driver Program through the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning Employment Network (BNLLEN), or providing support to young families via Council's In-Home Family Mentoring program
- Sharing knowledge and skills as a volunteer at one of Living & Learning Nillumbik's hubs
- Participating in our thriving arts community through a theatre group, music and culture events through FReeZA, or in a range of roles at Montsalvat
- Getting involved in community initiatives through groups such as the Food Collective, Rotary, Lions, Men's Shed, Big Group Hug or Welcome to Eltham
- Assisting older residents to attend appointments and activities with the Community Transport volunteer drivers, or supporting older people to use exercise equipment with the Seniors Exercise Champions.

These and more local volunteer opportunities can be explored at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/volunteering.



Image: A Senior Exercise Champion volunteer at Andrew Park in Eltham

Volunteering with Council

Council volunteers form a parallel workforce which supports, enriches and expands Council capacity.

Volunteers are supported by expert volunteer managers across ten Council teams, who work together to improve natural habitats and the environment, help families and young people, provide community transport, social support and positive ageing programs, and build community at Edendale Community Environment Farm and our three Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs.

The unpaid workforce of 300 formally inducted volunteers bring their dedication, expertise, diversity, ideas, and local knowledge to Council programs and facilities.

Celebrating volunteer impact is an important part of supporting strong volunteer involvement. Nillumbik celebrates volunteer impact with a Celebration Event during National Volunteer Week, and with ongoing recognition throughout the year with a focus on improved data in line with the Nillumbik Volunteer Framework.

National Volunteer Week

The diversity of Nillumbik's volunteering community was celebrated on 30 May 2024 at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre.

Aligned with National Volunteer Week and with the theme 'Something for Everyone', the special dinner welcomed volunteers from groups and programs across the Shire, enabling connection and shared stories of impact and enrichment.

This popular annual event is a highlight of the calendar and receives pleasing reviews from attendee surveys year on year.



Image: Guest speakers at the 2024 Volunteer Recognition Evening 'Something for Everyone', Nicola Naylor from the Dementia Friendly Alliance and Janine Klein from Arthurs Creek Community Centre

Our community grants

Each year, Council provides grant funding to support local community groups and organisations to provide a range of services, programs and activities. Grants provided in 2023-2024 are listed below.

Grant Description	2023-2024 Summary
Community Triennial Events Funding provided annually over a three-year period, to deliver and support large-scale community festivals in Nillumbik.	Applications funded: 9 Funding allocated: \$320,000 Estimated project value: \$482,140
Nillumbik Community Fund Grants up to \$5,000 to support community groups, organisations, clubs, and artists who live, work, study, volunteer or play in Nillumbik to deliver projects, activities and events that strengthen, enhance and benefit Nillumbik communities.	Applications received: 50 ↑ 79% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 28 Funding allocated: \$115,000 Estimated project value: \$511,200
Quick Response Grants up to \$1,000 to support community groups and not-for-profit organisations with emerging or unexpected needs or assist in the delivery of one-off activities to support community initiatives that will benefit and engage the Nillumbik community.	Applications received: 48 ↑ 55% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 32 Funding allocated: \$26,300 Estimated project value: \$71,050
Place-making Grants up to \$4,500 to assist community groups and residents in the delivery of place-making activities across Nillumbik, to enhance the user experience within public places and spaces.	Applications received: 9 Launched: September 2023 Applications funded: 8 Funding allocated: \$24,999 Estimated project value: \$40,273
Festive Fund Grants up to \$2,000 to support community projects, programs and activities that will encourage community to celebrate the festive season in Nillumbik.	Applications received: 24 ↑ 50% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 19 Funding allocated: \$20,000 Estimated project value: \$74,558
Connecting Over 55s - Social Connection Grants up to \$1,500 to support to facilitate community initiatives and events that will reduce isolation, empower, foster harmony and boost the wellbeing of older people in Nillumbik.	Applications received: 16 ↑ 45% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 15 Funding allocated: \$15,760 Estimated project value: \$20,770
Reconciliation Grants up to \$1,000 to support community-led projects that promote truth-telling, recognition, community connection, cultural and social inclusion and access and participation for First Nations People.	Applications received: 14 ↑ 56% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 10 Funding allocated: \$9,561 Estimated project value: \$18,230

International Day of People with Disability Grants up to \$1,000 to support events and activities celebrating and promoting disability inclusion in Nillumbik held between November 2023 and January 2024, in celebration of International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD), held on 3 December each year, to recognise the contributions and achievements of people with disabilities, both visible and invisible.	Applications received: 6 ↓ 33% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 6 Funding allocated: \$5,502 Estimated project value: \$14,240
16 Days of Activism Grants up to \$500 for community-led activities to support awareness raising in the Nillumbik community that will be undertaken during the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.	Applications received: 12 ↑ 33% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 10 Funding allocated: \$5,000 Estimated project value: \$5,955
History and Heritage Grants up to \$600 to support history and/or heritage activities in the Shire that provide opportunities for community to engage with our local history and heritage as part of an active and creative lifestyle.	Applications received: 7 ↓ 22% from 2022-2023 Applications funded: 7 Funding allocated: \$4,021 Estimated project value: \$5,700
Connected St Andrews Organisation Project Grants up to \$5,000 allocated to Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre, St Andrews Men's Shed, St Andrews Primary School and St Andrews CFA Brigade as per the initial Connected St Andrews project plan.	Limited term targeted grant Supported by Safer Together VicGov Applications funded: 5 Funding allocated: \$32,930
Connected St Andrews Community Project Grants of up to \$5,000 to kick-start community-led projects that work towards building strong community connections and relationships and achieve ongoing benefits for St Andrews and surrounding communities.	Limited term targeted grant Supported by Safer Together VicGov Applications funded: 6 Funding allocated: \$29,000
St Andrews Community Centre Future Growth and Sustainability St Andrews Community Centre received a \$25,000 grant on behalf of the St Andrews Festival Committee as part of the Connected St Andrews project, which was funded by an Emergency Management Victoria Risk and Resilience Grant. These funds will be used to implement its Future Growth and Sustainability Plan over the two-year life of the project.	Limited term targeted grant Supported by Safer Together VicGov Funding allocated: \$25,000
Neighbourhood Connection Grants up to \$250 for community-led one-off events that encourage neighbours to come together and connect and strengthen relationships within local neighbourhoods.	Limited term targeted grant Supported by Safer Together VicGov Applications funded: 10 Funding allocated: \$4,800



Image: A resident and pre-schoolers interacting at Ferguson Park Preschool

Case study – Connecting Over 55s and children at Ferguson Park Preschool

Ferguson Park Preschool in Hurstbridge was a successful applicant of the Connecting Over 55s Grants program in 2023-2024. The preschool was funded to run an intergenerational program with a local aged care facility and their residents.



The first phase of this program was completed in June 2024. Estia Health Aged Care visited the Wombat and Kangaroo Groups at the preschool on two separate days. The Estia residents brought their newly developed book, *The White Kangaroo*, they read the book to the preschool group, answered questions and signed copies for each child.





The mornings were filled with many smiles, laughs and overall fun.

Estia and Ferguson Park will continue this program with an 'Olympics Day' where the residents and children will take part in modified sporting activities.

Our events and festivals

Council facilitated or participated in a number of community events and festivals in 2023-2024.

When	What	Summary
August 2023	Hurstbridge Wattle Festival 	A vibrant celebration of the local community and the iconic wattle flower, featuring live music, arts and crafts stalls, and family-friendly activities. The festival brought together residents and visitors to enjoy the beauty of Hurstbridge and connect with local culture.
September 2023	Diamond Creek Town Fair	A lively town fair showcasing local businesses, food vendors, and entertainment. The fair offered a range of activities including live performances, market stalls, and community games, creating a festive atmosphere for all ages.
October 2023	Nillumbik Pet Expo 	<p>This Diamond Creek event aims to promote responsible pet ownership and the services and activities relating to pets in the Shire and beyond.</p> <p>This vibrant expo celebrated our furry and feathered companions and has plenty on offer to keep them happy and healthy including displays and demonstrations, nutritional and grooming advice, obedience training, education and much more.</p>
	Open Cellars	A popular event that invited attendees to explore local wineries and sample a variety of wines across the Shire's Green Wedge. The event provided an opportunity for wine enthusiasts to engage with winemakers, enjoy guided tastings, and learn about the wine-making process.
November 2023	Night on the Hill Festival	An enchanting evening event set against the backdrop of a scenic hill, featuring live music, food and drink stalls, and a range of family-friendly activities. This Panton Hill event celebrated the community spirit with a relaxed and enjoyable night out.
December 2023	Eltham Rotary Festival	Renamed for 2023 as the Eltham Christmas Concert, this festive event featured holiday-themed performances, food stalls, and community activities. The concert brought the community together to celebrate the Christmas season with joy and cheer.

February 2024	Eltham Jazz, Food and Wine Festival 	<p>A sophisticated festival combining live jazz music with gourmet food and fine wines. Attendees enjoyed performances by talented jazz musicians, sampled diverse food offerings, and explored a range of wine selections.</p>
	St Andrews Festival	<p>A vibrant community festival celebrating the unique character of St Andrews with a range of activities including live entertainment, local food vendors, and artisan markets. The festival aimed to highlight the local community's creativity and spirit.</p>
March 2024	International Women's Day Event 	<p>Attendees at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre particularly enjoyed the keynote speeches and panel discussions, praising the insightful discussions and positive atmosphere. The entertainment and cultural activities received high ratings, with participants appreciating the diverse performances. The Young Women Leaders Awards were well received, with attendees commending the recognition of girls and women making significant contributions to society.</p>
April 2024	Warrandyte Festival 	<p>The introduction of evening events brought a delightful twist to the traditional favourites, offering a fresh experience for attendees, especially the kids. The riverbank's vibrant atmosphere, the illuminated giant snails, and the lively performances across both stages truly highlighted the festival's diverse appeal. It is evident that the festival provided a unique and engaging experience for all attendees.</p>
May 2024	Open Studios	<p>A showcase of local artists and their creative processes. Visitors had the chance to tour artist studios from across the Shire, view works in progress, and purchase unique pieces of art, providing a platform for artists to connect with the community.</p>
June 2024	National Reconciliation Week: Flag Raising Ceremony 	<p>A flag raising ceremony was held at the Civic Centre in Greensborough to commemorate the beginning of National Reconciliation Week. It is a time to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.</p>

Through the Event Permit process, Council’s Events team supported over 70 events with an estimated attendance of 64,125.

As we see growth in this area, we are continuously improving our processes and systems to provide even more support for new events in our Shire.

Total events	Attendance total	Suburbs	Events per township
74	64,125	Hurstbridge	8
		Diamond Creek	20
		St Andrews	3
		Eltham	30
		Smiths Gully	2
		Yarrambat	1
		Plenty	1
		Panton Hill	2
		Greensborough	4
		Warrandyte	1
		Kangaroo Ground	2



Image: The community at work on National Tree Day

Image: Diamond Creek Regional Playspace



Our organisation

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Image: Nillumbik Councillors 2020-2024 2020-2024



About Council

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Council's role is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. Council has an obligation to achieve the most benefits from all available resources for its community and has pledged to do this in a sustainable manner.

How councils operate

In Victoria, there are 79 councils representing around 6.8 million people (ABS 3101.0, June 2023). Councils consist of an elected arm (between 5 and 12 councillors elected by the community) and an operational arm (Council staff).

An elected council sets the overall direction for the municipality through long-term planning. It adopts a strategic view of the future it wishes to achieve for its community and makes plans and policies to achieve this.

A council then ensures this is achieved through its monitoring and reporting processes. The operational or administrative arm is responsible for implementing council decisions.

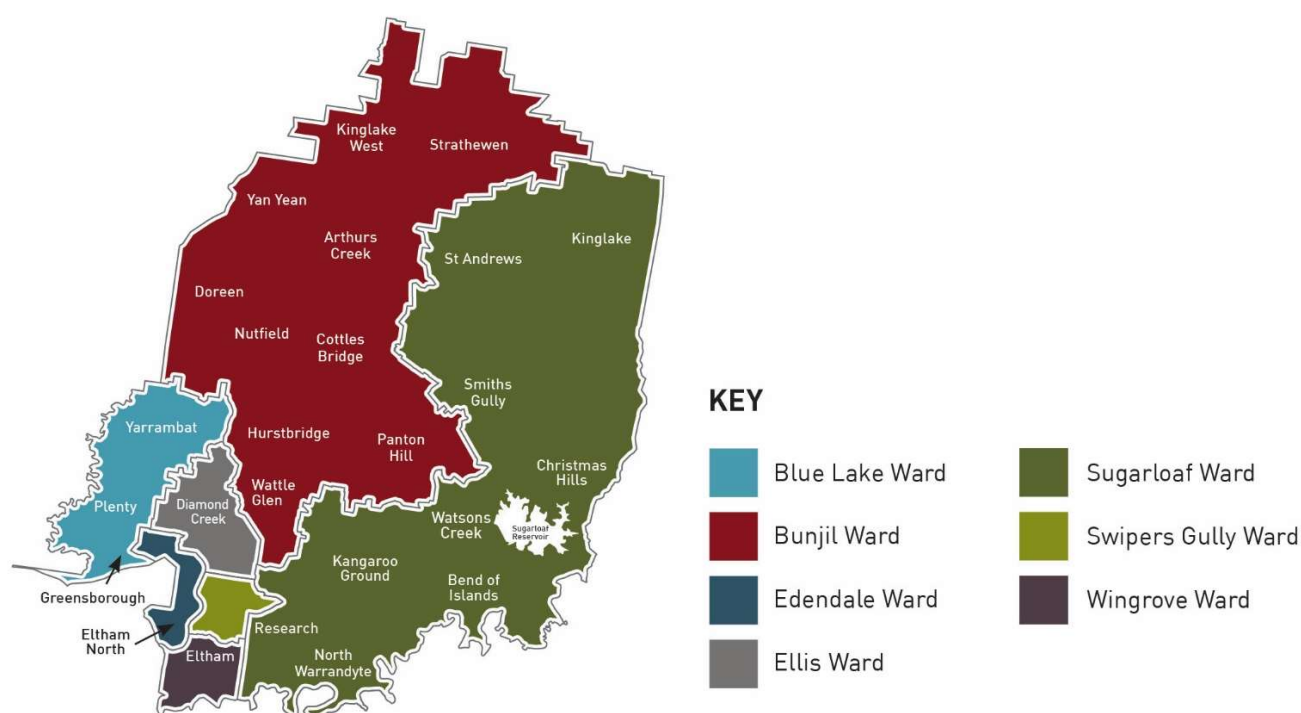
Council staff also provide advice and expertise that help a council to form policy decisions, deliver services, and implement and manage systems. For all these functions, they are accountable to the Council through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

About councillors

In Victoria, councillors are elected every four years to represent their communities. They receive an allowance to assist them to exercise their responsibilities and are expected to behave in accordance with the council's Code of Conduct.





In accordance with the Act, Council's role is to provide good governance and leadership for the Nillumbik community through advocacy, decision-making and action. To assist in achieving this role, Council is committed to provide community leadership and guidance in accordance with the overarching governance principles and support principles as outlined in the Act.

Nillumbik Shire Council is divided into seven wards, with a Councillor representing each ward.



Our Councillors

The Nillumbik Councillors as at 30 June 2024 were:

<p>Councillor Ben Ramcharan Mayor [he/him] Sugarloaf Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2020. Elected Deputy Mayor 2021. Elected Mayor 2022 and 2023. 0476 175 359 Ben.Ramcharan@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Cr Ramcharan has been a North Warrandyte resident for 17 years and brings a background of strong community involvement.</p> <p>He is committed to protecting Nillumbik's Green Wedge, neighbourhood character, improving road safety – for people and wildlife – and addressing the Climate Emergency.</p> <p>He believes that Council has a critical role to play in helping the community, and aims to ensure that community input is valued and respected in all Council decisions.</p> <p>Cr Ramcharan works as a web developer in a not-for-profit organisation and wants to bring his technical understanding to his role as Councillor.</p> <p>He enjoys bike riding and getting back to nature by spending time in the outdoors.</p>
<p>Councillor Karen Egan Deputy Mayor Bunjil Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2016, 2020. Elected Mayor 2018, 2019. Elected Deputy Mayor 2023. 0438 341 595 Karen.Egan@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>A resident in Nillumbik for more than 30 years, Cr Egan joined Council to represent landowners in the rural parts of the Shire, as well as urban areas, with honesty, transparency, proper consultation, with a focus on fire mitigation.</p> <p>Cr Egan lives on a rural property, and as such, she is determined to resolve community concerns around adequate fire preparation and mitigation.</p> <p>Working to achieve further road safety outcomes as well as minimising the impacts of deer and other pests in the Shire is an increasing priority. As a councillor, she enjoys working closely with the community.</p> <p>Cr Egan has five children, enjoys her horses and dachshunds, and is a professional photographer and small business owner.</p>
<p>Councillor Richard Stockman [he/him] Blue Lake Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2020. 0438 143 678 Richard.Stockman@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Cr Stockman brings a diversity of professional experience, including having served in the Royal Australian Navy, as an Air Traffic Controller and over 30 years in business and media.</p> <p>He sees infrastructure – in his Ward and throughout the Shire – as one of the major challenges and issues that must be addressed, and would like to see greater investment in local roads, trails, sport and recreational areas, while being mindful of keeping rates reasonable.</p> <p>Cr Stockman is a strong believer in the benefits of inclusion, productivity, positivity and working to ensure we get the best out of people. He is also a strong believer in the strength of community, and believes people who run for Council are generally good people with a passion. He has discovered several passions to pursue while in Council, including recreational trails and housing.</p>
<p>Councillor Natalie Duffy [she/her] Edendale Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2020. 0466 043 493 Natalie.Duffy@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Eltham North is home to Cr Duffy and her family and she brings a strong belief that community must be at the heart of all that Council does. She has a background in business coupled with active community involvement in local schools, sports clubs and the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group. Fostering respect and meaningful community engagement for all who live, learn, work and play in Nillumbik is another priority.</p> <p>Cr Duffy wants Council to be nimble and creative in supporting the community with practical solutions to make life more enjoyable and connected for everyone.</p> <p>Locals must have a real voice in planning for the future, local business and education must be supported, climate change addressed and our Green Wedge protected.</p>




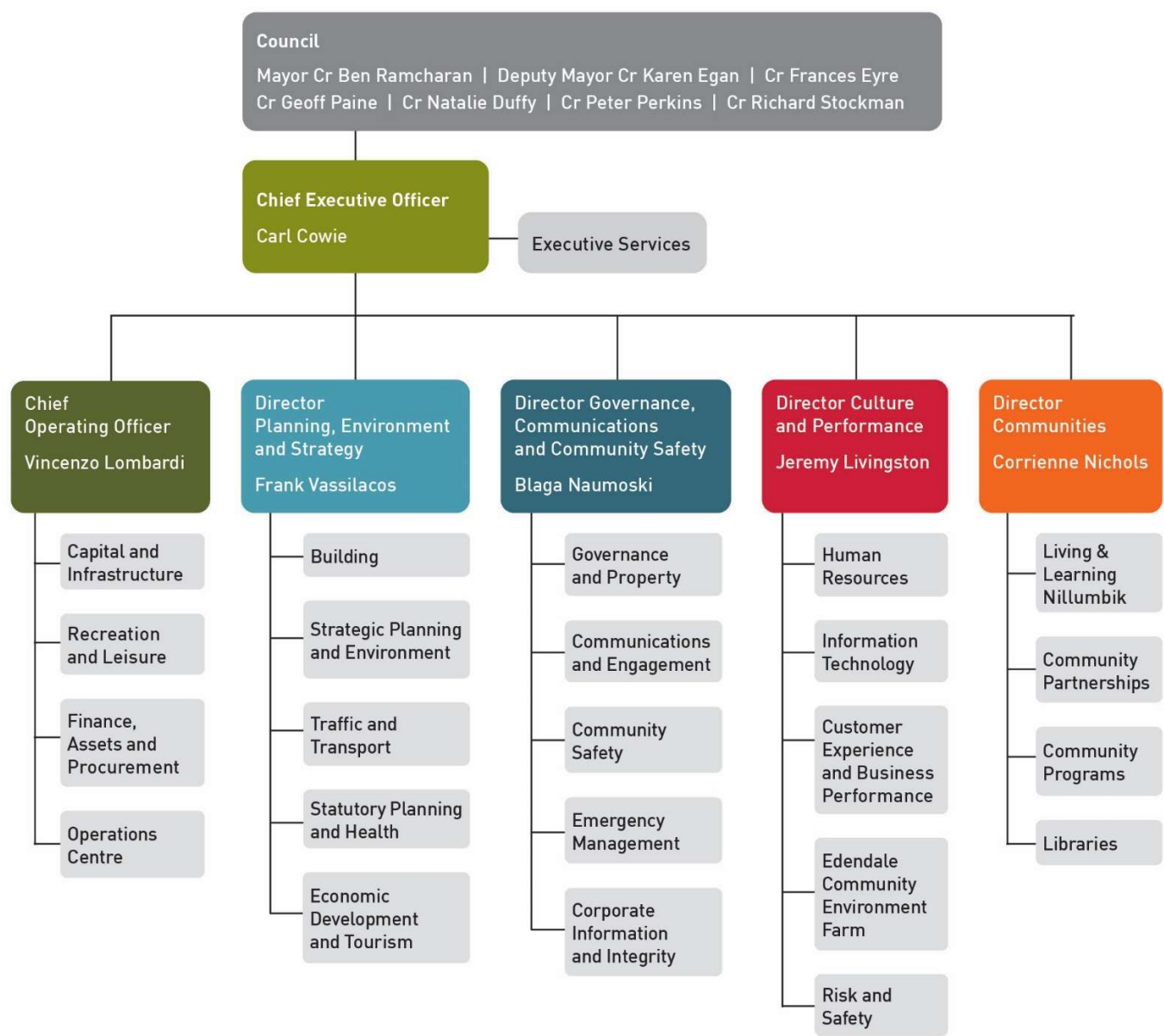
<p>Councillor Peter Perkins Ellis Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2010, 2012, 2016 and 2020. Elected Mayor 2012, 2020. 0437 455 064 Peter.Perkins@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>While Cr Perkins has delivered for Diamond Creek over the past 14 years as a Councillor, he believes that there is still much more to do.</p> <p>Projects and improvements currently underway include a new BMX park, an upgrade to the outdoor pool, Nillumbik's first Youth Hub, new courts for the Diamond Creek Tennis Club and a rejuvenation of Ryans Reserve Playspace.</p> <p>He is working hard for other new facilities and upgrades in his ward. He aims to ensure that Council processes put the community at the centre of decision-making, and its changing needs be at the top of Council's agenda.</p> <p>Cr Perkins served on the board of the Municipal Association of Victoria from 2016-2020 and remains the Council delegate for the peak body. He has been a long-serving volunteer member of the Diamond Creek CFA, was the Officer in Charge for 10 years and is now a life member after 30 years of service.</p> <p>He joined the MFB (now FRV) as a career firefighter in 2003 where he currently works.</p>
<p>Councillor Frances Eyre [she/her] Swipers Gully Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2020. Elected to Mayor 2021. 0466 049 798 Frances.Eyre@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Cr Eyre is dedicated to the Nillumbik Community and brings a thoughtful, strategic approach to her role as a councillor, always keeping the best interests of her community at the forefront of her decision-making.</p> <p>With a background in community development, she has a deep understanding of the issues facing her community.</p> <p>She actively seeks out opportunities to listen to the concerns of residents and work towards innovative solutions. She is known for her collaborative approach, fostering strong relationships and partnerships with fellow councillors, community and government officials.</p> <p>Cr Eyre has championed various initiatives and sits on many of Council's Advisory Committees and boards aimed at enhancing access to essential services, fostering an inclusive and resilient community and improving local infrastructure.</p> <p>Youth engagement, mental health, positive ageing, protection of the Green Wedge and the environment, and enhancement of neighbourhood character are among her priorities.</p> <p>She is committed to being a voice for her community to create positive change.</p> <p>Cr Eyre is proud to live in Swipers Gully Ward with her family and Cavoodle, enjoying the beautiful trails and reserves that are on offer.</p>
<p>Councillor Geoff Paine Wingrove Ward</p>  <p>Elected to Council 2020. Elected Deputy Mayor 2022. 0438 148 283 Geoff.Paine@nillumbik.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Cr Paine moved to Eltham in 2003 with his wife and two children, making a 'tree-change' from the city and loving what the Green Wedge Shire has to offer.</p> <p>His background in the arts as an actor, writer and video producer has made him a team player and problem solver, holding to the motto 'none of us is as smart as all of us'.</p> <p>For him, the wealth of this area is not just the natural environment, it is the strong sense of community also.</p> <p>His time on Council has been a steep learning curve, facing the challenges of increased development, rate caps and the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Cr Paine works in communications at Monash University and is active in sharing information and consulting with the wider community.</p>

Image: The Civic Centre in Greensborough






Our organisational structure







Our executive

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. Five Directors and the CEO form the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) who lead the organisation.

Details of the CEO and the EMT are set out below.

<p>Carl Cowie Chief Executive Officer [he/him]</p> 	<p>Carl was first appointed Council's CEO in October 2018 and was reappointed in 2023. He has compiled a lengthy and successful career in the private sector and local government, most recently as CEO of Mornington Peninsula Shire Council prior to joining Nillumbik.</p> <p>Born in Scotland, Carl has completed his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with qualifications in economics and finance, is an Australia Institute of Company Directors Graduate and Graduate Executive Colloquium, Cranlana Centre for Ethical Leadership. His international experience ranges from healthcare, facilities management, transport, manufacturing and construction project management, to managing large diverse workforces and budgets.</p> <p>He has considerable experience in the management of green wedge issues, the complexities around bushfire mitigation and a range of other issues facing interface councils.</p>
<p>Vincenzo Lombardi Chief Operating Officer [he/him]</p> 	<p>Vincenzo is an executive with more than 20 years' experience across public, private and not-for-profit sectors leading large teams.</p> <p>He has led national finance teams and worked across Europe, and brings a wealth of expertise to Council with particular strengths in process improvement, financial strategy, long-term budgetary oversight and a focus on improving organisational culture.</p> <p>Vincenzo has completed a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with Griffith University, is a fully qualified member with the Australian Institute of Company Directors, is a Chartered Accountant, has held a membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand since 2007, and holds Bachelor Degrees in Commerce and Arts.</p>
<p>Frank Vassilacos Director Planning, Environment and Strategy [he/him]</p> 	<p>Frank is an experienced people leader, strong collaborator and passionate planning strategist with over 15 years' experience in land use and environmental planning, policy development, transport mobility and infrastructure delivery.</p> <p>He has extensive knowledge and experience within the local government and private sectors, having led multi-disciplinary teams to achieve integrated and pragmatic outcomes.</p> <p>Frank is particularly experienced in the fields of statutory and strategic planning, transport and water infrastructure delivery, economic development, activity centre development and place-making.</p> <p>With a strong focus on community engagement and effective communication, he is passionate about establishing and fostering positive stakeholder relationships to develop strategic opportunities to protect and enhance the highly sensitive environment of the Green Wedge.</p> <p>He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Science (Planning), with additional studies in Community Engagement and Planning Public Transport Services.</p>

<p>Blaga Naumoski Director Governance, Communications and Community Safety [she/her]</p> 	<p>With over 18 years' experience in local and state government, Blaga has led teams across diverse disciplines, including corporate governance, compliance, legal services, public policy, communications, and operational service management.</p> <p>Since joining Nillumbik Shire Council in February 2018, she has continued to diversify her role and expertise, focusing on continuous improvement and developing strong governance practices to ensure transparency, accountability, and positive community outcomes.</p> <p>Committed to mentoring, Blaga actively supports the growth and development of young leaders.</p> <p>She holds a Bachelor of Business (Commercial Law), is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and in 2022 was recognised as one of the IPAA Top 50 Public Sector Women Emerging Leaders.</p>
<p>Jeremy Livingston Director Culture and Performance [he/him]</p> 	<p>With over 25 years' experience in local government, Jeremy is an experienced executive who has diverse management experience in both strategic and operational roles. Joining Nillumbik Shire Council in 2004, he held management roles in planning, building and health before spreading into the management of a number of Council's corporate service functions.</p> <p>Jeremy demonstrates a passion for continuous improvement and positive community outcomes. He works collaboratively across organisations to drive sustainable improvements and outcomes that have real customer impact. He also brings strengths in fostering team cultures that are results driven, while promoting purpose, growth and inclusivity.</p> <p>Jeremy holds a Bachelor of Applied Science (Planning), Diploma in Business (Leadership), is a graduate of the Australian Institute Company of Directors, and is a certified Prosci change management practitioner.</p>
<p>Corrienne Nichols Director Communities [she/her]</p> 	<p>Corrienne is a purposeful, professional and energetic executive leader with more than 22 years' experience within the local government sector. She is passionate about working with organisations and stakeholders to make a positive difference for communities.</p> <p>A future focused, strategically minded and values driven leader, Corrienne takes an open and collaborative approach to leading multi-disciplinary, high functioning and empowered teams that work together to develop and achieve individual, team and organisational goals.</p> <p>Corrienne's strong understanding of the local government sector, combined with her political and financial acumen, has seen her successfully lead teams across diverse disciplines, functions and projects.</p> <p>She holds a Masters of Business Leadership and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.</p>

 <p>Rosa Zouzoulas [she/her]</p>	<p>There was one change in personnel to the Executive Leadership Team in 2023-2024.</p> <p>After 4.5 years of service, Rosa Zouzoulas, Director Planning, Environment and Strategy, resigned from the role, finishing on 9 February 2024. Renae Ahern was Acting Director from 12 February 2024.</p> <p>Frank Vassilacos commenced as the Director Planning, Environment and Strategy on 22 July 2024.</p>
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Our people and culture

A flexible, dynamic and progressive workforce

Council prides itself on being recognised as a Best Place to Work (Australian Financial Review and BOSS Magazine), and a 5-Star Employer of Choice (Human Resources Director Magazine).

Our Human Resource team continues to help shape our current and future workforce needs through:

- Enabling and empowering people to be high performing
- Driving equality, diversity of opportunity and an overall inclusive culture
- Strengthening leadership and coaching leaders
- Protecting and connecting through a supportive working environment
- Embedding a culture of workplace wellbeing
- Fostering a sustainable organisation, being a completely paperless function.

Since regaining the ability to return to our primary place of work following the COVID-19 pandemic, Council has explored individualised opportunities to support its people to work flexibly through varied forms. Currently 84% of our employees have a formalised Flexible Working Arrangement in place, supporting them to balance their work with their life commitments.

While flexible working has its benefits, there are also challenges having regard to the breadth of services that Council delivers to the community, and the diverse nature of roles across the organisation.

Another challenge is working in a financially constrained environment, which is being driven by State Government rate capping and being a low growth municipality (resulting in minor increases in rateable properties). This contributes to an ongoing challenge of Council continuing to deliver in line with increasing community expectations, while balancing what can be sustainably delivered – both operationally and safely – by our people.

We are progressing well with our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). This is measured by collecting workforce and employee experience data and comparing this information to the workplace gender audit data collected in 2021.

Headlines on our progress against the GEAP are as follows:

- The overall gender pay gap (mean total remuneration pay gap) has decreased from 5% in favour of men in 2021 to 1.4% in favour of men in 2023
- 418 Council staff have engaged in professional development intended to create a more inclusive workplace
- An increase in the percentage of female (5% increase) and male (10% increase) staff who agree or strongly agree that the organisation uses inclusive and respectful images and language
- An increase in the percentage of female (4% increase) and male (2% increase) Council staff who agree or strongly agree that the organisation takes steps to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination
- A key area to work on (improve) is that a small percentage of Council staff report experiencing sexual harassment at work (7% of women and 6% of men in 2021, compared to 7% of women and 8% of men in 2023).

Women in Leadership program

In early 2024, four emerging women leaders from Council were sponsored to participate in the NORTH Link and Leadership Women in Business Leadership (WIBL) Training Program.

The highly regarded program, now in its third year, has empowered over 50 women leaders in Melbourne's north to develop their leadership skills, build their confidence, acquire new strategies, and foster a supportive network of peers.

Feedback regarding the program was overwhelmingly positive, with two participants commenting:

"I am grateful to have been nominated to participate in the North Link Women in Business Leadership Training Program. Throughout this comprehensive program, I gained valuable knowledge and leadership skills in which will undoubtedly enhance my career and professional development. Looking ahead, I eagerly anticipate applying these newfound skills and insights to my work and future endeavours. I am confident that this experience will have a lasting impact on my professional development, enabling me to learn, adapt and evolve as a professional leader."

"The recent WIBL program aligned perfectly with the 2024 theme of "Accelerating Change", and provided a great deal of knowledge and resources on adaptive and strength-based leadership styles, resilience building, and the opportunity to network with other female leaders. The insights shared by speakers during the course have been incredibly valuable, and I'm already implementing actionable strategies in my daily practice. I feel more confident, empowered, and equipped in my own leadership journey and am sure a similar sentiment is held by my fellow NSC colleagues and attendees."

Commitment to health and wellbeing

Council is committed to fostering a physically and mentally fit workforce. To achieve this, Council offers a diverse range of health and wellbeing initiatives, supporting our employees' physical, emotional, mental, and social needs. These initiatives are thoughtfully aligned with the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, ensuring a holistic approach to our organisational wellbeing.

Our Code of Conduct outlines a number of policies related to health and wellbeing, and Council provides a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all staff and volunteers.

Our workforce has continued to operate within a hybrid working model over the past year. To encourage face-to-face connection and relationship building, while maintaining accessibility for all, Council responded with offering a diverse range of relevant health and wellbeing initiatives to our workforce.

The internal Health and Wellbeing Program for staff delivered throughout 2023-2024 featured initiatives including:

Staff events:

- Access to Council's fitness centres
- Flu vaccinations
- Financial fitness and super sessions and webinars
- Mental health and wellbeing resources and education sessions
- Nutrition and cooking demonstrations
- Quarterly bring your dog to work day
- Ride to Work Day
- The 15 Minute Challenge.

Profiling awareness and inclusiveness:

- Breast cancer awareness session
- Celebrating diversity and inclusivity with IDAHOBIT with Jac Tomlinson
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence with Jeremy Macvean from the Father Hood
- Wear it Purple Day with Delsi Moleta.



Image: IDAHOBIT event for Council staff at the Civic Centre in Greensborough

Designated Mental Health First Aiders

Council is committed to investing in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training and support for our workforce. Much like our designated First Aid Officers throughout the organisation, designated MHFA Officers are formally appointed to provide MHFA to employees.

Designated MHFA Officers have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to a co-worker who may be experiencing a mental health problem, are willing and able to offer initial mental health support and provide referral to other supports, if required.

Our Mental Health First Aiders follow an action plan when responding to someone asking for help or displaying symptoms of mental illness or crisis.

Our MHFA team positively supports workplace culture and supports the organisation in identifying and appropriately responding to signs of psychosocial risk factors. In 2023, a review of our MHFA workforce was undertaken to ensure that Council is providing a diverse group of MHFAs with various backgrounds; lived experience or specialist knowledge, and gender.

Recognising our people

In 2023-2024, Council recognised and acknowledged the continuous service of 28 staff from across the organisation.

Years of service milestones	Number of employees
10 years	8
15 years	11
20 years	8
25 years	0
35 years	1



Image: Council staff with their years of service awards

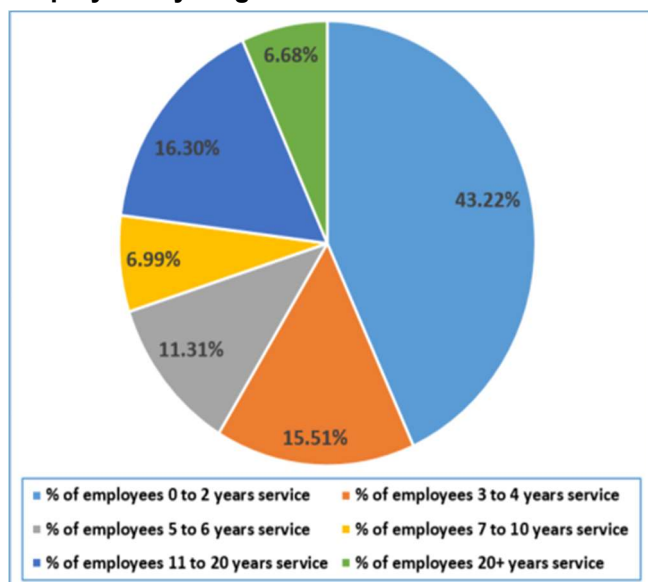
Our workforce

As at 30 June 2024, our workforce comprised of 336 equivalent full-time positions, with a total headcount of 404. Of note, these total figures fluctuate at 30 June of each year, depending on backfilled positions due to staff leave and current vacancies at that time.

Equivalent full-time positions: 30 June 2024

Employment type/gender	Culture and Performance	Planning, Environment & Strategy	Executive Services	Operations	Governance, Communications & Community Safety	Communities	Total
	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT
Permanent Full Time - Female	12.00	27.00	3.00	31.00	24.00	19.00	116.00
Permanent Full Time - Male	14.00	23.00	1.00	71.00	5.00	6.00	120.00
Permanent Full time - Gender diverse	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00
Permanent Part Time - Female	7.60	5.65	0.00	2.94	10.87	25.55	52.61
Permanent Part Time - Male	3.70	1.97	0.00	1.60	5.90	0.00	13.17
Temporary Full Time - Female	1.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	11.00
Temporary Full Time - Male	0.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	7.00
Temporary Full Time - Gender diverse	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Temporary Part Time - Female	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.20	0.98	8.33	12.01
Temporary Part Time - Male	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
Casual - Female	0.17	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.14	0.23	0.57
Casual - Male	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.07	0.00	0.14
Total	38.53	64.64	4.00	112.76	51.96	64.11	336.00

Employees by length of service: 30 June 2024



Employment type and gender: 30 June 2024

Employment Classification	Female	Male	Gender diverse	Total
	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT
Band Not Applicable	28.83	29.00	0.00	57.83
Band 1	4.82	5.08	0.00	9.90
Band 2	0.79	1.00	0.00	1.79
Band 3	4.15	35.04	0.00	39.19
Band 4	23.66	8.97	0.00	32.63
Band 5	39.61	16.62	1.00	57.23
Band 6	54.89	26.29	2.00	83.18
Band 7	24.58	16.80	0.00	41.38
Band 8	3.00	2.01	0.00	5.01
Nurses	7.86	0.00	0.00	7.86
Total	192.19	140.81	3.00	336.00

Staff turnover

In 2023-2024, staff turnover was 18.2%. This compares to 15.9% in 2022-2023 and 16.7% in 2021-2022.

Staff turnover is currently at the sector's average of 18%.

Safety, health and wellbeing

Council recognises that it has a legal duty of care under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for employees, Councillors, contractors, customers and visitors.

In addition, Council is committed to ensuring that operations undertaken by Council do not place the community at undue risk of injury or illness. With a focus on continuous improvement with respect to all areas of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Council sees employee health and wellbeing as a key driver in having an engaged, resilient and productive workforce that is capable of performing their roles safely, and effectively in order to achieve organisational outcomes.

Safety management system

After introducing a new online incident reporting system (QuickSafe) in 2014, Council has continued to improve incident reporting, management and monitoring. This has enabled consolidation of information and data into one reporting mechanism. This approach has led to better incident management, and ultimately, resulting in reducing and preventing the likelihood of injuries.

Safety training

Safety training modules offered to staff in 2023-2024 included:

Equal opportunity	Health and Safety Representatives
Ergonomics for desk-based staff	Manual handling
Dangerous goods and hazardous chemicals	Mental Health First Aid
Fire Wardens and fire extinguishers	Psychosocial safety management
First Aid and CPR	Safety for managers and supervisors



Image: Council staff at the Operations Centre in Plenty

Incident and injury reporting

During 2023-2024:

- There were 88 OHS incidents recorded
- 47 of these incidents (53%) resulted in an injury, up from 46% in 2022-2023
- There was one notifiable incidents reported to WorkSafe
- No external audits of OHS processes and practices were undertaken.

The 88 incidents recorded this year is slightly lower than the 95 reported incidents during 2022-2023.

The 47 incidents resulting in injury compares to 44 recorded (from 95 incidents) in 2022-2023.

OHS incidents	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
OHS incidents	47	69	48	55	+7
OHS hazards	25	11	15	6	-9
OHS near miss	12	9	32	27	-5
Total OHS incidents	84	89	95	88	-7

OHS incidents by directorate	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Communities	5	12	9	12	+3
Culture and Performance	5	2	7	15	+8
Governance, Communications and Community Safety	5	3	4	18	+14
Operations	40	46	54	38	-16
Planning, Environment and Strategy	29	26	21	5	-16
Total OHS incidents	84	89	95	88	-7

OHS injuries by directorate	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Communities	3	4	2	11	+9
Culture and Performance	0	1	2	8	+6
Governance, Communications and Community Safety	2	0	3	6	+3
Operations	27	21	30	18	-12
Planning, Environment and Strategy	4	8	7	4	-3
Total OHS injuries	36	34	44	47	+3

WorkCover

Council has a strong commitment to the health and safety of its employees and to ensure that the management of claims and return to work programs meets legislative requirements.

In 2023-2024, our focus has been and will continue to be on proactive preventative measures and supporting injured workers to return to work. Two (2 standard and 0 minor) claims were made by Council staff in 2023-2024.

There has been a reduction in all key performance indicators compared to 2022-2023 and previous years.

Key Performance Indicator	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change
Number of lost time injuries	14	9	8	2	-6
Number of lost time days	324.95	712.00	764.28	429	-335.28
Number of staff on alternate duties >10 Days*	17	13	14	10	-4
Lost time injury duration rate**	23.21	79.11	95.54	214.50	+118.97
Number of standard claims	6	5	11	2	-9
Number of minor claims***	10	6	5	NA	-5

* Total are average number of staff on alternative duties or modified duties per annum

** Lost time injury duration rate is number of days lost/number of lost time injuries

*** A minor claim does not exceed \$763 or 10 days lost.

Image: Enjoying Edendale Community Environment Farm



Our performance

Community and connection	113
Place and space	129
Sustainable and resilient	141
Responsible and accountable	153



Image: Nillumbik provides a great environment for many creative industries and pursuits

Council Plan theme: Community and connection

To encourage inclusion and participation to support health and wellbeing and ensure that all our residents have equitable access to services, programs and initiatives

Strategy themes

- Equity and inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- Ages and stages

At a glance...

Strategic indicators (12)		Priority actions (10)		Budget (\$'000)
Achieved	5	Completed	3	Expenditure: \$14,490
No change (within +/-2% threshold)	5	On track	5	Revenue: \$4,043
Not achieved	2	Minor Issues	2	Net cost: \$10,447

Interesting facts

- 545 birth notifications (same as last year)
- 208 first time parents (23 less than last year (-9%))
- 115 children utilise Council's two playhouses each week
- Nillumbik administers the registrations for the 15 standalone sessional preschools within the Shire
- Nillumbik continues to have one of the highest pre-school participation rates of 94% participation of all Victorian Local Government Areas (LGAs), with the State average being 92%
- 87 Learner drivers supported as part of the Learners to Probation (L2P) program
- Awarded six local young women with Young Women Leaders of Nillumbik Awards
- Three young people aged 15 to 25 years recruited to join the Nillumbik Youth Council 2023-2025
- 221 grant applications received across 14 Council community grant programs
- 60 volunteers attended the three Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs each week
- 165 enrolments into pre-accredited and fee for service training courses at Living & Learning Nillumbik's Skills Hub
- 240 local carers registered in the Living & Learning Nillumbik Carers Hub's, of which 102 participated in free and subsidised programs and activities offered through Living & Learning Nillumbik
- 2,705 community bus trips (down from 3,271 from last year) and 546 one-way volunteer car trips delivered by the Community Transport team
- 12 community members participated in the inaugural Nillumbik Leaders community leadership program

Budget funded services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023-2024 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Expenditure Revenue Net cost (\$'000)
Community Development	Provides services for the whole community, such as festivals and events, grants for community groups, services and programs for youth, and community development.	1,640 1 1,639
Community Support Services	Promotes and supports Nillumbik's ageing community with a focus on the overall health, wellbeing and independence of individuals, families and community groups.	2,523 752 1,771
Disability, inclusion and volunteering	Drives systemic change, advocates, educates, and raises awareness about inclusion so that the needs of people with a disability, volunteers and their families/carers are considered across all Council activities. Also supports Council's volunteer program managers and their volunteers.	430 8 422
Early Years	Provides support and training to families with young children and services delivering early years' education and care programs.	551 248 303
Libraries and Community Education	This service provides facilities and programs for the whole community, including libraries, Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs and Edendale Community Environment Farm.	6,645 1,840 4,805
Maternal and Child Health	This function provides services for new babies and parents in the Shire, including maternal and child health and immunisation services.	1,836 810 1,026
School Crossings	This service funds the provision of school crossing supervisors for school children across the Shire.	865 385 480

Community and connection

Achievements

Equity and inclusion

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nillumbik Rainbow Golf Cup was recognised as a finalist in Victorian Sport Awards for 'Local Government Initiative of the Year', demonstrating Council's commitment to ensuring access and inclusion for all in participation in sport and wellbeing activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a Reconciliation Working Group including representation from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Corporation, First Nations community members, community and stakeholders to guide the development of Council's first Reconciliation Action Plan. Community consultation was also undertaken to inform the draft Reconciliation Action Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Equity packs were delivered to all Nillumbik Early Years services as part of the 2023 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration between Council, Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, the Aborigines Advancement League and Gurwidj Neighbourhood House resulted in successful NAIDOC events, which continue to raise awareness of local culture and heritage.

Health and wellbeing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful Tier 2 Alcohol Harm Reduction Grant (\$40K from VicHealth) was received, with work to begin to implement the cross-Council Alcohol Harm Reduction Action Plan to address a key issue causing social harm and impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful Commercial Determinants of Health Grant (\$50K from VicHealth) was received, with work to begin to implement the cross-Council Gambling Harm Reduction Action Plan to address a key issue causing social harm and impact.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum 2024 to collaborate with stakeholders on health and wellbeing initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to implement actions in Council's first Youth Strategy (2022-2026) to support and respond to the needs of young people aged 12 to 25 who live, work, study, volunteer or play in Nillumbik.

Ages and stages

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council hosted a Financial Matters Forum, providing current information on financial matters important to seniors such as Power of Attorney; Planning for Retirement; Working with an Aged Care Specialist (My Aged Care); Accommodation options; and Aged Pension option in retirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressed the development of the Youth Hub in Diamond Creek, to provide a dedicated space for the Shire's young people. The hub will be completed and is scheduled to open in September 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aged Care Navigation and Advocacy service for older adults provided advice and assistance to 268 individuals on navigating the Aged Care Service system and programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nillumbik continues to have one of the highest pre-school participation rates of 94% participation of all Victorian Local Government Areas (LGAs), with the State average being 92%.



Image: The award winners from the inaugural Nillumbik Community Awards

Case study – Celebrating Nillumbik’s community champions

The Shire’s “community champions” were celebrated at the inaugural Nillumbik Community Awards in August 2023.

The awards, announced at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre, were presented to individuals and groups across seven categories for their contributions and achievements in the Nillumbik community:

Volunteer of the Year: Lisal O’Brien

Community Group of the Year: Diamond Valley Lions Club

Nillumbik Young Citizen of the Year: Eden Beveridge-Wood

Contribution of the Year – Arts Culture and Heritage: Ona Henderson and Syd Tunn

Contribution of the Year – Diversity and Inclusion: Sandra Verdam

Contribution of the Year – Environment & Sustainability: Nillumbik Repair Café

Contribution of the Year – Reconciliation: Nillumbik Reconciliation Group Lisal O’Brien initiated the Arthurs Creek Strathewen Bushfire Education Partnership (BEP) and is an active contributor to community bushfire resilience.

The Diamond Valley Lions Club has funded park facilities and supported events such as the Diamond Creek Blue Light Disco and twilight market, and made innumerable contributions to the community.

Eden Beveridge-Wood has shown dedication to organising events, empowering others, promoting inclusion, challenging stereotypes and helping develop a positive school culture.

Our Contribution of the Year award recipients have all helped advance a cause that strengthens the community. Ona Henderson and Syd Tunn (Arts Culture and Heritage) have been active in the Nillumbik arts community for more than three decades, advocating for the arts and mentoring other artists. Sandra Verdam (Diversity and Inclusion) is a member of Council’s Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and led the formation of the Nillumbik Dementia Friendly Alliance. The Nillumbik Repair Café (Environment & Sustainability) is a community-driven project that has repaired more than 550 items, reducing waste and helping visitors save money. The Nillumbik Reconciliation Group (Reconciliation), formed in 1998, recently organised a community event, ‘25 years of Reconciliation’. Attended by 300 people, the event showcased past achievements and ongoing efforts.

For further information on the awards, visit nillumbik.vic.gov.au/community-awards

If you’d like to get more involved in the community, a great place to start is nillumbik.vic.gov.au/volunteer-info

Challenges

Equity and inclusion

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further progress equity and inclusion and meet internal aspirations and obligations, Council continues to review endorsed projects and activities, ensuring these are aligned with gender equity principles and apply an intersectional lens. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and social cohesion has declined, while financial stress, inequality and racism have increased due to factors such as the cost of living crisis, global instability and war, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. |
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Health and wellbeing

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While Nillumbik has long enjoyed high rates of volunteer participation, Council is still recovering from a reduction in volunteer numbers post COVID-19 and is working proactively with its partners to drive increased participation in Council programs and services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner organisations and stakeholders continue to have reduced capacity to partner and deliver community health and wellbeing services and support, due to challenging funding environments and budget cuts. |
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Ages and stages

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A funding diversion resulted in identified improvement works required at some of our community facilities to be delayed until 2024-2025. These works are primarily on community halls. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's Early Years Services team continue to liaise with the Department of Education to understand the implications of the Best Start Best Life reforms for early years' services and infrastructure. |
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The year ahead

Equity and inclusion

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to Reconciliation Australia for endorsement and formally launch the RAP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement actions from key Council documents including the Disability Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan. |
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Health and wellbeing

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committing resources to, and implementing an expanded program of environmental volunteering in the Shire, to provide more opportunities for participation and connection in the Shire. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide lifelong learning opportunities to the community through our Living & Learning Nillumbik hubs, ensuring people of all ages can access and learn key skills and resources. |
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Ages and stages

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver key Older Adults services and activities such as the Seniors Housing Forum; Banyule & Nillumbik Ageing Well Expo (October 2024); Seniors Festival (October 2024); Young Mentors – digital literacy intergenerational program; and Mental Health support program for older people in collaboration with United Minds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of the Nillumbik Youth Hub in Diamond Creek, to provide a dedicated space and services, programs and activities for the Shire's young people. |
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Image: Participants from the Nillumbik Leaders Program 2023

Case study – A new program that celebrates diversity in Nillumbik leaders

The new Nillumbik Leaders Program is designed to inspire, support and upskill Nillumbik community members to become effective leaders and catalysts for positive change.

The inaugural 2023 program was delivered from August to December and consisted of eight sessions held at Hurstbridge Community Hub, fortnightly on Wednesday evenings from 6pm to 9pm.

Twelve emerging community leaders participated in the program, where they explored various aspects of leadership, including understanding the inner workings of local government, breaking barriers to inclusive leadership, effective communication and conflict resolution, collective action and advocacy, and project planning and implementation.



Image: Participants at the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum

Case study – Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum

The annual Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum was held on 28 May 2024 at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre. The forum brought together more than 40 stakeholders representing 14 organisations, including the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee members.

The main aims of the forum are to strengthen existing relationships with health and wellbeing stakeholders and develop collaboration projects to be incorporated into the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

The forum included a presentation regarding public health approaches and the benefits of partnership and collaboration, networking activities and group exercises, to develop collaboration projects that align to Nillumbik's Health and Wellbeing priority areas.

Many stakeholders commented on how useful the forum was, including comments about how unique it is for a council to bring partners together in this way, and to meaningfully and genuinely collaborate on the Health and Wellbeing Plan. Partners highly valued and appreciated this opportunity and approach.

Maternal and Child Health

Over the past year, the Nillumbik Maternal Child Health (MCH) service has played an important role in enhancing the health and development of local children and families.

By providing services such as Key Age and Stage assessments, developmental screenings, and support for new parents, the MCH service facilitates early detection of developmental issues and promotes both physical health and mental wellbeing. Through community engagement and New Parent Groups, MCH educates and empowers Nillumbik's parents, fostering supportive networks.

This year, Nillumbik's birth rate remained stable at 545 births, contrasting with Victoria's broader birth rate decline. There had been a decline in birth notices received from 599 to 545 in 2022-2023. There has been a decrease in first-time parents, declining from 231 to 208, which comprises over 38% of Nillumbik's total births.

The MCH service continues its pivotal role providing ongoing health and developmental assessments for infants and young children.

Overall, the achievements of the MCH service highlight its unwavering dedication to promoting the health and wellbeing of Nillumbik's children and families, adapting effectively to community needs and contributing positively to the community's overall welfare.

Additionally, the MCH service facilitates various groups and programs including New Parent Groups, Lactation Support, Welcome to Nillumbik Groups, Pram walks, and an Intergenerational Group, fostering education and social bonds. A Sleep and Settling program offer targeted assistance for families facing sleep challenges, utilising phone consultations, group sessions, and personalised in-home support. These efforts collectively strengthen family resilience and wellbeing across the community.

Enhanced Maternal Child Health

The Enhanced Maternal Child Health (EMCH) service has been pivotal in supporting families experiencing vulnerability, engaging 70 families (a 9% increase) over the past year as an extension of Victoria's Universal Maternal and Child Health (UMCH) program.

This program provides tailored actions and interventions to address specific needs, recognising that some families require additional support to help to prevent adverse outcomes. Some participants are further assisted through referrals to the In-Home Family Mentoring Program, enhancing their parenting skills and early learning opportunities for children. This increase in EMCH service was done to meet the growing need in the community.

The Smalltalk Parenting Support Program remains an integral part of the MCH service, fostering social connections and early childhood development through evidence-based strategies. Two Supported Playgroups are offered each week in the Shire using Smalltalk resources to enrich parental understanding of child learning and development, with some families receiving in-home support.

Immunisation

Banyule City Council Health Services has completed its eighth year of the contract for the provision of childhood immunisation services on behalf of Nillumbik Shire Council. The total number of clients that attended the public sessions was 1,682, with a total of 3,795 vaccines being given. Some 855 students were seen through the Year 7 and 10 School Immunisation Programs.

Immunisation coverage rates in 2023-2024 in Nillumbik continue to be comparable to Victorian and national averages. Further education of the benefits of childhood immunisation continues to be promoted with families. Free flu vaccine for children under five years of age as well as the option of additional vaccinations at a cost, continue to be discussed with families at Maternal Child Health and immunisation appointments.

	Nillumbik 2023-2024	Victorian 2023-2024	Australian 2023-2024	Nillumbik 2022-2023
July-September 2023				
12-<15 months	92.02	93.70	93.00	89.01
24-<27 months	92.22	91.80	91.40	93.67
60-<63 months	92.06	94.90	93.80	94.36
October-December 2023				
12-<15 months	93.28	93.80	93.20	93.25
24-<27 months	92.17	91.80	91.40	89.57
60-<63 months	92.55	95.10	93.90	91.80
January-March 2024				
12-<15 months	88.89	93.10	92.80	90.06
24-<27 months	90.96	91.90	91.20	90.78
60-<63 months	96.13	94.80	94.00	95.31
April-June 2024				
12-<15 months	87.69	92.90	92.20	91.10
24-<27 months	92.31	91.20	90.40	91.80
60-<63 months	97.47	94.50	93.60	95.71

Case study – Welcoming our new families to the Shire

The Maternal Child Health team have been implementing Welcome to Nillumbik sessions twice per school term in Eltham and Diamond Creek.

This group offers a single two-hour session to families who are new to area or seeking social connection with other families. The program began with the focus of inviting families who were new to the Shire, to give them information on the MCH program, immunisations and other Early Years services as well as building social bonds with other families seeking connection. This was to also include families who may want to connect with other families in the area.

The sessions have been well received by attendees who have come and had the opportunity to receive the information that they required as well as meeting other local families. The sessions have been a resounding success, collectively strengthening family resilience and well-being across the community.

Families have met in these sessions who now regularly catch up with other participants, building friendships over time. We have been advised of participants who have noted feeling less isolated and offering a sense of connection for families who may not have attended online new parent's groups during COVID-19 lockdowns or may just want to meet other young families in their local area.

Living & Learning Nillumbik

Living & Learning Nillumbik (L&LN) provides the Nillumbik community with a wide range of activities that support wellbeing, social connection and lifelong learning. L&LN oversees three Living & Learning Hubs, a Skills Hub and a Carers Hub.

The Living & Learning Hubs (Diamond Creek, Eltham and Panton Hill) offer neighbourhood house programs that reflect the identity, preferences and changing needs of their local communities. Each Hub is supported by local volunteers and an Advisory Committee and is strengthened by experienced local tutors who share their knowledge and skills.

In 2023-2024, Diamond Creek Living & Learning Hub expanded its range of social groups (including creative writing groups, board game groups, social singing, storytelling and acting plus walking groups); Eltham continued to offer a wide range of studio arts including leadlight, pottery and arts for health courses and welcomed a new paper craft group and table tennis social group. For Panton Hill, the community garden has been a priority with an expansion including new raised garden beds and a small orchard. The garden continues to contribute to the Panton Hill community pantry, providing food for community members in need.

All L&LN Hubs offer MakerSpaces where community members can join a creative group for a low annual fee. This year's MakerSpaces included studio arts, clay, mosaics, sewing and repurposing, paper crafts, knitting and crochet. The Hubs also continued to develop activities for children including pre-schoolers and teens, and to offer school holiday activities including jewellery making, nature-based craft and cup cake decorating.

Through the Skills Hub, L&LN provides low cost and subsidised courses and pre-employment pathways which are developed in response to community need. Popular new courses across 2023-2024 included Introduction to Floristry and Introduction to Horticulture #2. A new partnership with a local Registered Training Organisation (RTO) enabled the Skills Hub to also offer accredited courses in Responsible Service of Alcohol and First Aid.

The Carers Hub has continued to support local carers with resources, information sessions and free carer wellbeing activities including yoga, cooking, gardening, terrarium and kokedama making. 2023 included a first L&LN Carer Wellbeing Day – a day of free activities, massages, coffee and lunch for carers during National Carers Week. Across 2024 the Carers Hub has continued to seek input from local carers via a Carers Survey providing an opportunity to share what kinds of information session and activities carers would like on offer. Local carers also have the opportunity to book a one-on-one discussions with the Carers Hub facilitator to gain support in accessing appropriate resources and activities.

Highlights for L&LN this year included a record number of submissions for diversARTy, L&LN's annual exhibition held at the Eltham Community Library Gallery. The exhibition celebrates the diversity of activities, abilities and people who come together to share, learn and connect in L&LN art programs. Neighbourhood House Week 2024 also saw each Living & Learning Hub welcome new participants to free one-off activities including an Edible Weeds tour (Eltham), Fence Weaving (Diamond Creek) and Watercolour for Beginners (Panton Hill).

2024 has seen the implementation of a new online booking platform for L&LN. Community feedback on L&LN's previous online booking system indicated a need for a clearer, more user-friendly option. In response, L&LN sought out a new booking platform developed specifically for neighbourhood houses and community-based programs. Feedback on the new system continues to be positive.

Across 2024, Living & Learning Nillumbik have also commenced the development of a Lifelong Learning Action Plan. Once completed, this Plan will identify and respond to existing and emerging opportunities and will strengthen local learning options for the Nillumbik community.

Visit our website livinglearningnillumbik.vic.gov.au, call 9433 3744 or email info.livinglearning@nillumbik.vic.gov.au to find out more.



Image: A participant at Living & Learning Nillumbik's Neighbourhood House

Case study – Neighbourhood House Week 2024 – Stronger Together

Neighbourhood House Week is an annual national celebration recognising the important contribution neighbourhood houses make in local communities across Australia. In 2024, Neighbourhood House Week ran from 13 to 19 May, and the theme was 'Stronger Together'.

Living & Learning Nillumbik celebrated by hosting more than 16 free and low-cost events across our three Living & Learning Hubs (Diamond Creek, Eltham and Panton Hill).

Events were designed to showcase what is on offer at the Hubs, and to appeal to a range of age groups and areas of interest. Children's activities included pre-school story time with local author Penny Harrison as well as colourful fence weaving enjoyed by the local Playhouse. Other activities included a very popular Edible Weeds Tour and a photography session exploring how to make the most of phone cameras. A Sunday evening song writing session with local musician Hana Zreikat and a Crafty Cats market stall were also highlights.

The community response was fantastic with many events booking out. Across the week, community members shared what they love about Living & Learning Nillumbik. Here are some comments from participants this year:

- "They offer so many wonderful workshops, and the people are so welcoming and inclusive"
- "I have made some of my best friends here"
- "It is a very special part of Eltham, and I am glad it is still vibrant, creative and popular".

The Living & Learning Nillumbik team are already planning for next year, and look forward to celebrating and sharing the joy of Neighbourhood House Week with the community again in 2025.

Did you know? There are over 1,000 Neighbourhood Houses across Australia, and more than 400 of them are in Victoria. Neighbourhood Houses are also called Neighbourhood Centres, Community Houses, Living & Learning Centres, Community Hubs and more.



Image: The new Youth Hub site in Diamond Creek

Case study – A new space for the youth in our Shire

Council's Youth Development team partners with our young people aged 12 to 25 who live, work, study, volunteer or play in Nillumbik on a number of programs and activities. A key Council Plan action this year was to progress the delivery of a dedicated youth space within the Shire.

The Shire's first Youth Hub, to be located at Elizabeth Street, Diamond Creek, will help deliver essential services and programs to support young people aged 12 to 25.

Announced in 2022-2023 and with works underway in 2023-2024, the refurbished building will feature a new kitchen and flooring, a large multi-purpose room and two smaller program rooms, an office space, two consulting rooms, and a new outdoor covered area with an amphitheatre, yarning circle, seating and landscaping.

The final Community Engagement Report for the Youth Hub project was developed and distributed in October 2023, with 97% of respondents in support of the concept designs. 71% of the 181 respondents were young people. Where possible, feedback from the report has been reflected in the final design for the Nillumbik Youth Hub.

The application for Tender for the construction works opened in October 2023 and the contract was awarded at the December 2023 Council Meeting. Works on the project commenced in early 2024 and are on track to be completed in July 2024, with the new hub set to open later in 2024.

Located in the heart of Diamond Creek and nearby public transport, the Nillumbik Youth Hub will be conveniently located for the Shire's young people, whether they walk, drive, cycle or catch the train.

The youth hub will be a fun, safe and inclusive space for young people to engage in programs and access support and local services, while building their skills, social connection, and participating in new opportunities.



Image: A Senior Citizens' information session held on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Case study – Acknowledging World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

A series of information sessions were held to educate and empower residents on Elder Abuse. Topics covered included 'Money, Ageing and Family'; an overview of different types of elder abuse; strategies to keep yourself safe and where to get further support.

Three sessions were held across the Shire, including a Mandarin specific session run at the Eltham Chinese Senior Citizen's group.

56 people attended the events which were run in partnership with Seniors Rights Victoria, Housing for the Aged Action Group and the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria.

In addition to the information sessions, participants could take part in the 'Warm, Safe Home' art project, highlighting the importance of feeling safe and secure in your home.

The Eltham Gateway sculpture was illuminated purple in recognition of and to raise awareness of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Service performance indicators and measures

Community and connection

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, including explanation of material variations.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Libraries						
Utilisation <i>Library collection usage</i> [Number of library collection item loans / Number of library collection items]	7.76	4.26	6.72	8.45	10.91	An increase in the total number of collection loans compared to previous years has been achieved. Our collections respond well to community needs as evidenced by this increase.
Resource standard <i>Standard of library collection</i> [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100	87.27%	85.01%	91.83%	91.14%	80.52%	There were fewer purchases of new library stock in 2023-2024 due to CPI and other cost increases. More of the older collection was retained to ensure a wide collection remained for borrowers to choose from.
Participation <i>Active library members</i> [Number of active library members / Municipal population] x100	28.19%	27.03%	25.24%	25.83%	45.75%	The number of registered library members has remained steady throughout the year with a recent data clean-up of our online memberships resulting in the increased accuracy of our registered borrowers for the Nillumbik branch libraries.
Maternal and child health						
Satisfaction <i>Participation in first Maternal and Child Health (MCH) home visit</i> [Number of first MCH home visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100	97.50%	94.22%	98.98%	97.02%	94.50%	<p>The first home visit of a newborn baby is the commencement of the ten Key Age and Stage (KAS) consultations that are performed as regular health checks within the MCH service. The focus of the KAS visits is on early intervention and preventative care.</p> <p>The participation rates in Maternal Child Health programs have remained consistently high in 2023-2024. This demonstrates the number of families who elected to engage in the service. An influx of birth notices received in the final week of the financial year were yet to be seen.</p>

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Service standard <i>Infant enrolments in the MCH service</i> [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100	101.60%	100.80%	101.87%	101.12%	100.00%	The high-service standard for infant enrolments in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service is measured by the ratio of infants enrolled (from birth notifications received) to the total number of birth notifications received.
Service cost <i>Cost of the MCH service</i> [Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]	\$77.45	\$78.36	\$73.74	\$72.22	\$70.84	The cost of service has remained steady in 2023-2024, consistent with recent years.
Participation <i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	81.95%	81.65%	80.08%	79.87%	77.43%	High participation in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service is determined by the ratio of the number of children who attend the service at least once in a year to the total number of children enrolled in the MCH service. This indicator reflects the level of engagement and utilisation of the MCH service. There has been a decline in participation. This has been attributed to parents returning to work earlier in the first year following birth.
Participation <i>Participation in the MCH service by First Nations children</i> [Number of First Nations children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of First Nations children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	76.32%	85.11%	81.63%	73.17%	87.23%	Participation in MCH services by First Nations children has increased by 14.06% since the last financial year. Addressing barriers such as cultural sensitivity, geographic isolation, and historical distrust has improved participation and ensured equitable healthcare for First Nations children.



Image: Eltham Leisure Centre is one of Council's most visited facilities

Place and space

To protect, enhance, maintain, plan and design places and spaces that strengthen identity, reinforce character, improve accessibility, encourage social connection and enjoyment, support biodiversity and respect the environment

Strategy themes

- Identity
- Natural environment
- Open spaces
- Neighbourhood character
- Movement and place

At a glance...

Strategic indicators (18)		Priority actions (15)		Budget (\$'000)
Achieved	6	Completed	4	Expenditure: \$43,246
No change (within +/- 2% threshold)	7	On track	11	Revenue: \$17,913
Not achieved	5	Minor Issues	0	Net cost: \$25,333

Interesting facts

- 353,986 participants in Council arts and cultural activities (a 42.8% increase on last year)
- 550 entries into the Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing, the highest number of entries yet
- 23 sports fields across Nillumbik. Key structured activities on Council ovals include football, cricket, lacrosse, rugby, baseball and soccer. The ovals may also be used for school athletics or other interschool sports, filming, horse riding events, dog training, the Eltham Town Fair and Diamond Creek Fair
- 1,690,966 visits to Council's leisure and aquatic facilities (up from 1,416,460 last year)
- 512 decisions made on planning applications – permits and amendments (67 more than last year)
- 1,163 total planning decisions made (165 more than last year)
- 93.8% of planning applications approved (0.4% less than last year)
- 142 building permit applications assessed (12 more than last year)
- 681 building inspections conducted (97 more than last year)
- 109 swimming pool registrations processed, 46 pool barrier inspections and 12 decommissioned pools inspected
- 301 kilometres of unsealed roads, 488 kilometres of sealed roads and 298 kilometres of footpaths maintained
- 10,998 signs maintained

Budget funded services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023-2024 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Expenditure Revenue Net cost (\$'000)
Arts and Culture	This service is responsible for the cultural vitality and community engagement in the arts across the Shire. The team's mission is to enable participation in the cultural life of the community and enjoyment of the arts by providing diverse and innovative opportunities for active lifestyles and artistic expression.	728 6 722
Building Safety and Regulation	Building Services is responsible for administration and enforcement of certain parts of the <i>Building Act 1993</i> and Regulations.	1019 613 406
Infrastructure Design, Construction and Transport	This function provides services for the whole community including design for capital works projects; roads; bridges; drainage; landscape; traffic treatments; coordination of capital works; procurement and construction; engineering assessment of planning applications and approval of subdivision works; traffic control; road safety; advocacy on public transport and main roads and street lighting.	3,112 178 2,934
Leisure Facilities and Services	This program is responsible for the provision of leisure facilities and services, such as leisure centres, sportsgrounds, recreation trails and playgrounds, for the whole community.	15,679 14,434 1,245
Local Laws and Parking	This function administers local laws, car parking regulation and amenity protection for the whole Nillumbik community.	649 557 92
Parks and Reserves Maintenance	This service maintains parks, sportsgrounds, conservation reserves, street trees and roadsides across the Shire.	7,961 756 7,205
Property, Fleet and Asset Management	This service provides infrastructure asset management and planning, building maintenance and fencing, as well as property management, fleet management, community centres and halls network management.	3,648 390 3,258
Road and Drainage Maintenance	This service provides maintenance of local roads and bridges, pedestrian bridges, bus shelters, footpaths, trails, drains for the whole community. It also incorporates Council's response to deceased animal collection, street cleansing and roadside litter collection.	5,742 49 5,693
Statutory Planning	This service processes planning applications and subdivision applications, conducts planning investigations and promotes compliance with the Nillumbik Planning Scheme and permit conditions.	3,522 931 2,591
Strategic Planning	This service provides land use planning and policy, planning scheme management, activity centre planning and heritage protection across the Shire.	1,187 0 1,187



Image: Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower

Case study – Preserving our Shire’s history and heritage

Several new installations at Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park and Strathewen Community Bushfire Memorial demonstrate our ongoing efforts to enhance public spaces and honour our community’s rich history.

These additions provide enriching and educational experiences for visitors, offering insights into the stories and heritage that shape our region.

Visitors to Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park will now find several new interpretive signs thoughtfully placed throughout the park. Each sign provides detailed descriptions of key features, shedding light on the park’s rich history and natural beauty. Whether you’re a history enthusiast or simply enjoy a peaceful day outdoors, these signs offer fascinating information about the park’s significance.

Council is also proud to announce the restoration of several commemorative plaques within the park. Additional names have been added to some of the previous plaques, thanks to the amazing work undertaken by local historian, Terry Phillips. The plaques honour the bravery and sacrifice of local war enlistees, ensuring that their contributions will be remembered and respected by future generations.

One of the most exciting new features at Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park is our new Listening Post. This innovative installation allows visitors to hear the poignant and inspiring stories of war enlistees and other significant individuals from the region. By simply pressing a button, you can learn about the lives and experiences of individuals from the old Shire of Eltham. This audio experience brings history to life, creating a powerful connection between the past and the present.

Place and space

Achievements	
Identity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed development of a Creative Infrastructure Framework to explore existing opportunities and new projects for the delivery and development of creative spaces across the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 550 entries into the Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing, the highest number of entries yet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 353,986 participants in Council arts and cultural activities – a 42.8% increase on last year, providing our residents with a wide range of options for participation in arts and culture across the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement activities and actions in support of the Green Wedge Management Plan to guide funding, resourcing and service delivery for the Green Wedge.
Natural environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of Council's previous Biodiversity Strategy and Invasive Species Action Plan was completed, and the new draft Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2034 was developed to help protect and enhance the Shire's unique and highly valued environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nillumbik Deer Control Project continued, which is helping private property owners to reduce deer numbers and help manage local habitat and vegetation. An additional 281 deer were removed from the landscape this year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6,817 indigenous plants were planted in our bushland reserves by Friends Group volunteers, and 1,000 were planted by volunteers on National Tree Day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planted some 400 Charming Spider-orchids (<i>Caladenia amoena</i>) to help save this critically endangered species from extinction.
Open spaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported and celebrated 20+ 'Friends of' groups whose volunteers donated 2,176 hours of their time to care for our bushland and wetland reserves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to implement actions in Council's Recreation and Leisure Strategy to support community participation in sport and active recreation, with a focus on well-planned facilities and environments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,690,966 visits to Council's leisure and aquatic facilities – up from 1,416,460 last year. These centres provide a range of health and wellbeing options and benefits for the Shire's residents and visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,282 local volunteers involved in Clean Up Australia Day activities across the Shire, to assist in keeping our local environment and surrounds clean and beautiful.
Neighbourhood character	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's new Neighbourhood Character Strategy was adopted by Council in December 2023. This strategy will guide new development, ensuring it respects and responds to the existing or preferred valued features or character of the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a new Place-making Grant program 2023-2024 to improve place-making outcomes across the Shire.
Movement and place	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to develop Council's Integrated Transport Strategy to guide transport planning and advocacy in Nillumbik over the next five years, and provide a strategic framework to promote more sustainable transport outcomes in the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained 301 kilometres of unsealed roads, 488 kilometres of sealed roads, 298 kilometres of footpaths and 10,998 signs across the Shire.



Image: The opening of Local Remix: Still Life

Case study – Local Remix: Biennial Nillumbik Art Collection Exhibition

The successful delivery of the biennial Nillumbik Art Collection Exhibition, Local Remix, centred on the theme still life. The exhibition highlighted 46 works from Council's collection, promoting engagement with and recognition of Nillumbik Shire's significant art collection.

The free exhibition, presented at Montsalvat in May and June 2024, supported engagement with art as an everyday experience within our community. Some recent acquisitions to the collection were presented in this exhibition, including five paintings by Alan Martin, who was a significant local artist and art teacher.

Featured alongside the collection were three commissioned installations by renowned contemporary artists Kenny Pittock, First Nations artist Tricia 'Vandal' Van Der-Kuyp, and Nillumbik local artist Nusra Latif Qureshi.

These artists, who have national and international profiles, also presented six free community workshops for adults and children throughout the duration of the exhibition, providing an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and create new artworks.

Community workshops held as part of Local Remix included:

- Still Life: Drawing and Zine Workshop for Adults with Kenny Pittock
- Still Life: Drawing and Zine Workshop for Kids with Kenny Pittock (two sessions)
- Kids create an Imaginary Zoo-scape with Nusra Latif Qureshi
- Unpack the history of objects through visual narratives with Nusra Latif Qureshi
- Kids Crafty Paper Quilting workshop with Vandal.

The 8-week exhibition and its associated community programs engaged over 5,122 visitors and participants, hosted at Montsalvat as part of a Memorandum of Understanding for Arts and Cultural Collaboration between Council and Montsalvat.

Challenges

Identity

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While many actions in the Green Wedge Management Plan have been integrated into usual business within Council, many other initiatives are still subject to funding (likely external sources). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Government announcements have significantly changed the number of dwellings all local government areas must plan for. The draft Housing Strategy was on track for adoption as per our Council Plan, however the announcement to build 2.4 million dwellings by 2051 (including 800,000 in the next 10 years) has impacted the strategic work of all Victorian councils - an unprecedented event in planning. |
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Natural environment

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing pressure of threats such as climate change, illegal clearing and invasive species on our natural environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to effectively manage 100 bushland and wetland reserves, covering an area of around 500 hectares, and 1,200 km of roadsides, with existing resources. |
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Open spaces

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in labour and material costs and increasing timeframes for supply chains impacting on our ability to deliver key projects and works in a timely manner and within allocated budgets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council continues to monitor unauthorised and makeshift BMX jumps and tracks being built on public land across the Shire, which can impact on our environment and community safety. |
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Neighbourhood character

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council continues to advocate to the State Government to strengthen the powers of local councils to effectively enforce, and respond to breaches of the planning scheme, particularly in regards to illegal vegetation removal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's budget restraints and subsequent reliance on external funding continues to impact our ability to implement and deliver infrastructure and amenity improvements identified in township and other strategic planning documents. |
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Movement and place

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic management and road maintenance and repairs continue to be the top issues identified by the Shire's residents in our Annual Community Survey. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council continues to advocate to other levels of government for better public and private transport options and solutions for residents in the Shire. |
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The year ahead

Identity

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement actions under the Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2026 to provide opportunities and access to a range of services, programs and activities in the creative and cultural spaces. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement actions as part of the Green Wedge Management Plan 2019 to guide funding, resourcing and service delivery for the Green Wedge. |
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Natural environment

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the adoption of Council's new Biodiversity Strategy and commence implementation to continue to protect and enhance the Shire's unique and highly valued environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the adoption of Council's inaugural Urban Tree Canopy Strategy to assist in caring for and enhancing the tree canopy in the Shire – the second highest urban tree canopy cover in metropolitan Melbourne. |
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Open spaces

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement actions under Council's Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2022-2030, to support community participation in sport and active recreation, with a focus on well-planned facilities and environments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop and implement the Wattle Glen Public Realm Framework, to identify strategic initiatives to improve the quality and safety of public spaces in the heart of Wattle Glen. |
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Neighbourhood character

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement Council's place-making framework, to support shared outcomes with the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Urban Tree Canopy Strategy 2024-2040 will be finalised and considered for adoption later in 2024. |
|--|---|

Movement and place

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will continue to actively advocate for funding for traffic congestion and safety and road maintenance and improvements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue development of, and implement, the new Council Integrated Transport Strategy, to guide transport planning and advocacy in Nillumbik over the next five years and provide a strategic framework that will guide Council to promote more sustainable transport outcomes. |
|---|---|



Image: The Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool

Case study – Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool turns 40

The Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool celebrated its 40th anniversary in December 2023, with a range of celebrations and activities to commemorate the occasion.

The current pool was built by the former Shire of Diamond Valley in 1983. However, there has been a pool on the site since 1935. The popular venue will undergo a \$1.5 million upgrade, funded through the Federal Government's 'Investing in our Community' Program.

Feedback on the proposed designs was positive, which included a new kids' splash area, accessible toilets and change rooms, covered viewing areas, upgraded plant equipment and swimming club rooms.

Work is scheduled to commence in early 2025.



Image: Champions of Change at the Women in Sport Breakfast

Case study – Providing fair access to Council’s sports facilities

Through implementing the six fair access principles in the State Government’s Fair Access Policy in 2023-2024, Council demonstrated its commitment to supporting gender equitable access to, and use of community sports infrastructure in Victoria.

The Fair Access Policy seeks to address known barriers experienced by women, girls and gender diverse people in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

The policy aims to progressively build Council’s capacity and capabilities in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.

Key activities and initiatives undertaken by Council in 2023-2024 in this space included:

- All sports clubs within Nillumbik were sent a survey in October 2023 to determine if/what initiatives they were already undertaking with regards to Fair Access and to identify what support each club needs
- Council hosted the second Women in Sport Breakfast in December 2023 – this was in conjunction with the launch of the 16 Days of Activism campaign
- Council produced a Fair Access Video highlighting three local sports clubs that are actively practicing the Fair Access Principles. The video was launched at the Women in Sport Breakfast and then posted on Council social media pages
- Sharing success stories from local sports clubs via the fortnightly e-newsletter to over 120 subscribers
- Supported our local clubs to apply for the Change our Game grants which aim to improve participation for women and girls. Three Nillumbik sporting clubs were successful in their grant applications
- Working with clubs to assist them in implementing their own Fair Access Action Plan
- Actively researching and applying for grant opportunities that will improve current sports infrastructure to have greater inclusivity and accessibility for women and girls.

Council will continue to implement the policy in 2024-2025 through the Fair Access Action Plan.

Service performance indicators and measures

Place and space

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, including explanation of material variances.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Aquatic facilities						
Service standard <i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]	-	2	2	2	2	Microbiological testing was performed at Eltham Leisure Centre and Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool in 2023-2024.
Service cost <i>Cost of aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of indoor aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to indoor aquatic facilities]	-\$0.43	-\$3.11	-\$2.82	-\$0.44	1.25	Visitation numbers are returning to pre-COVID-19 levels as the community are becoming more comfortable to return to their local leisure facilities. This has resulted in a \$1.4 million increase in income on the previous year, driven by an increase in health and wellbeing memberships and casual attendance, stadium bookings and cafe sales.
Utilisation <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	8.93	4.11	5.20	11.22	12.47	Visits have increased from prior year due to strong program and services offerings across all leisure facilities. Improved access technology has been implemented to capture attendance data.
Roads						
Satisfaction of use <i>Sealed local road requests</i> [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	112.61	86.24	73.44	57.91	46.10	There are 488km of sealed local roads in the Shire. There were 225 customer requests logged in relation to sealed local roads in 2023-2024.
Condition <i>Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	94.00%	83.80%	95.10%	95.28%	95.47%	Of the 488km of sealed local roads in the Shire, 466km are maintained within condition standards.
Service cost <i>Cost of sealed local road reconstruction</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]	\$0	\$177.90	\$132.70	\$166.73	\$134.30	Works in 2023-2024 included mostly smaller road patching pavement rehabilitation jobs.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Service Cost <i>Cost of sealed local road resealing</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	\$11.10	\$9.67	\$10.70	\$14.90	\$14.99	Costs of raw materials and labour continues to fluctuate, resulting in increased cost of reconstruction works. This service cost includes a mixture of approximately 50% of spray seals and asphalt resurfacing works.
Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	69.90	63.00	60.00	68.50	66.00	Satisfaction with sealed local roads decreased by 2.5% in 2023-2024. Road maintenance and repairs rated as the top issue for Community Survey respondents.
Statutory planning						
Timeliness <i>Time taken to decide planning applications</i> [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	101	92	100	102	91	Council is committed to improving decision timeframes. Over the 12-month period, Council has reduced processing times even though there were several staffing gaps and absences within the team. There has also been a strong focus on determining applications with higher gross days.
Service standard <i>Planning applications decided within required time frames</i> [(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	60.49%	66.10%	60.36%	55.99%	64.02%	Council is committed to improving decision timeframes. Over the 12-month period, Council has improved the timeliness of decisions even with staffing gaps and absences within the team. There has also been a strong focus on determining applications with higher gross days.
Service cost <i>Cost of statutory planning service</i> [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$2,517.21	\$2,885.45	\$2,989.05	\$2,788.89	\$2,590.96	The cost of service remained steady compared to previous years.
Decision making <i>Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i> [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100	65.00%	75.00%	64.00%	46.15%	48.75%	This measure increased slightly from the 2022-2023 result. Of the 24 decisions referred to VCAT, 8 were upheld, 7 were consented or withdrawn and 9 were not upheld.



Image: Council continues to look for electric vehicle charging infrastructure opportunities in the Shire

Council Plan theme: Sustainable and resilient

To manage and adapt to changing circumstances that affect our community to ensure it remains sustainable and resilient, both now and into the future

Strategy themes

- Climate action
- Sustainability
- Resilience and recovery
- Business and tourism

At a glance...

Strategic indicators (11)		Priority actions (5)		Budget (\$'000)
Achieved	5	Completed	0	Expenditure: \$15,466
No change (within +/- 2% threshold)	3	On track	4	Revenue: \$837
Not achieved	3	Minor Issues	1	Net cost: \$14,629

Interesting facts

- 70.6% of kerbside waste diverted from landfill (result slightly lower than last year - 72.2%)
- 2,723 participants in environmental programs and events (up from 2,162 from last year)
- 22 Land Management Incentive Program grants provided to individuals and groups (down from 27 last year)
- 58% of Nillumbik residents have made changes to their home or lifestyle to help reduce climate change impacts (up 0.4% from last year)
- 2,600 visitors to the Visit Nillumbik Instagram page
- 4,937 followers on the Visit Nillumbik Facebook page
- Over 1,600 businesses subscribe to the Business e-Newsletter
- Annual program of business events saw more than 460 businesses participate in events such as the Home-Based Business Forum, Women in Business event, Nillumbik Small Business Week and business workshops

Budget funded services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023-2024 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Expenditure Revenue Net cost (\$'000)
Environment and Conservation	This function provides environment and conservation services and programs for the whole Nillumbik community, such as environmental planning and policy; education and events; water quality and conservation; biodiversity protection; land management advice and energy efficiency programs.	1,124 15 1,109
Recycling and Waste Services	This service provides collection of household waste, recycling, green waste, hard waste, waste education and landfill rehabilitation for the whole Nillumbik community.	13,228 800 12,428
Tourism and Business Support	This service focuses on growing the local economy through providing support to local business networks, traders associations and individual businesses; delivering business events and training and supporting tourism development and promotion for the Nillumbik region.	1,114 22 1,092



Image: Nillumbik's Green Wedge - looking towards the Melbourne CBD from Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park

Sustainable and resilient

Achievements	
Climate action	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to implement actions in Council's Climate Action Plan. The strategy guides our response and emphasises collaboration with the community to achieve key climate action aims, and outlines a twofold approach, involving mitigation and adaptation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council commenced the establishment of a climate action hub at Edendale Community Environment Farm to support the community achieve net zero targets. Adopting a lead, learn and connect model, farm activities are being refocussed based on climate action.
Sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council purchased 3 new electric vehicles for Council's fleet, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to sustainability and reducing our carbon emissions and footprint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to participate at a regional level around placement opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations, including targeted placement opportunities within the Shire.
Resilience and recovery	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to deliver long-term, ongoing actions in the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 related to community resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to support the community to be healthy, safe and enabled participation in relief and recovery processes arising from emergencies.
Business and tourism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second annual Nillumbik Small Business Week in May 2024 hosted the Shire's local business community, providing them the opportunity to upskill and network with their business colleagues. Event topics included Regenerative Agriculture, Creative Industries, Navigating Trends, Artificial Intelligence for Small Business and Elevating Customer Experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Nillumbik businesses won awards at the 2023 Northern Business Achievement Awards, Naturally Goat was awarded the overall, 'Business of the Year' and received the 'Sustainability and Environment' award. Local Fine Foods received the 'Best Start-Up or Microbusiness' award.

Edendale Community Environment Farm

Edendale Community Environment Farm is a small working farm on 7 hectares of land adjacent to the Diamond Creek in Eltham.

The farm's emphasis on environmental education and a hands-on experience fosters a deeper appreciation of sustainability and ecological connections within the community.

The farm offers:

- Preschool, school and adult education programs
- Community sustainability workshops
- A local native plant nursery
- Family activities and events (including interactions with farm animals)
- Cafe Eden and spaces for picnics
- Volunteer opportunities.

Edendale Community Environment Farm is celebrated as an invaluable educational asset for individuals of all ages within the Shire.



Image: The nursery at Edendale Community Environment Farm

Case study – Pollinator Gardens Program at Edendale Farm

There are 26 schools within the Shire, and as part of Edendale's goal to become a climate action hub for the community, a number of pilot programs to support Nillumbik schools to become more climate resilient were undertaken in 2023-2024.

One such program was the Pollinator Gardens in Schools program, with four schools within the Shire taking part, including Apollo Parkways Primary School, Eltham Primary School, Plenty Valley Christian College and the Learning Co-Operative Primary School in Cottles Bridge.

Split into five phases and running until 2025, pollinator gardens in schools provides many benefits, including:

- Offer students emotional, academic and physical benefits of gardens while also introducing them to deeper environmental concepts and concerns
- Sustaining biodiversity in urban areas
- Wildflowers will provide bees, butterflies and other pollinators with habitat throughout the year, including food, water, shelter and places to raise young
- Increases pollination of their vegetable gardens and or fruit trees on the school grounds.



Image: The Climate Action for Kids Conference at Edendale Community Environment Farm

Case study – Nillumbik/Banyule Climate Action for Kids Conference

The 12th annual Nillumbik/Banyule Kids Teaching Kids Conference took place on 31 August 2023 at Edendale Community Environment Farm. The 2023 theme was “Climate Action for Kids”. It was a hugely successful event. In 2022, the first conference post-COVID, only 5 schools attended. In 2023, we had 88 students and 12 teachers from 11 different local schools from Nillumbik and Banyule (7 primary and 4 secondary). For the first time ever, our Master of Ceremonies was a secondary student from Catholic Ladies College and students from Kangaroo Ground Primary School led the Acknowledgement of Country.

Kobe and Tom from Junkyard Beats kicked off the conference with lots of rhythm and energy with their repurposed waste percussion instruments and Roberto from The Connies entertained and educated the students about biodiversity in the breaks.

Kids became teachers for the day, promoting positive student wellbeing and building resilience in young people.

A selection of students from each of the participating schools presented on a wide range of environmental topics including the impact of climate change on frogs, the benefits of pollinator gardens, future of food, giving new life to fast fashion, setting up worm farms and worm towers and focusing on recycled materials.

This annual conference helps to raise awareness and drive local action on environmental issues, bringing communities together to solve common challenges. It also helps to build the next generation of leaders who will take collective responsibility for our future.

Challenges	
Climate action	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The electricity infrastructure and grid-capacity at locations such as Council's Operations Centre and at Edendale Community Environment Farm require major upgrades in order to enable the transition to an electric fleet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's Climate Action Plan includes the ambitious target of achieving net-zero community emissions by 2035 and net-zero Council emissions by 2030, 15 to 20 years sooner than the State Government's target for Victoria.
Sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a delay at State Government level in releasing updated Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles for application within council planning schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work in developing an Integrated Water Management Plan requires updated flood modelling.
Resilience and recovery	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively working with our community, First Nations people, partners and government agencies to ensure we are meeting their changing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to effectively respond to emergency events, including bushfires, storms, floods and subsequent power outages.
Business and tourism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses have advised that increased cost of living pressures, including supply costs, lack of access to staff and limited household discretionary income is directly affecting their ongoing viability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited light industrial sites available for new and existing business development and growth.

The year ahead	
Climate action	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement actions as part of Council's Climate Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to establish a climate action hub at Edendale Community Environment Farm.
Sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to participate at a regional level around targeted placement opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a review of the Integrated Water Management Strategy.
Resilience and recovery	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to support the community to be healthy, safe and enabled to participate in emergency relief and recovery processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of longer term actions in the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.
Business and tourism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement actions as part of the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to partner with Yarra Ranges Tourism to market the region to visitors and development of the Destination Management Plan.



Image: Council has provided residents with free kitchen caddies

Case study - Food waste composting initiative

Nillumbik was one of the first Victorian councils to accept food scraps in the green waste bin. Over the past 20 years, Council has collected more than 150,000 tonnes of garden and food waste, which is recycled into compost for farms and community gardens across Victoria – a great achievement.

However, our audits show most food waste is still needlessly going into the landfill bin. Keeping food waste out of landfill is a simple step to reduce carbon emissions. When food breaks down in landfill, it releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas.

By placing food scraps in the green waste bin instead, households are helping to create valuable compost. To make this easier, Council provided residents with free kitchen caddies as part of a broader education program.

Almost 4,500 residents have picked up a caddy from various Council locations and pop-up events throughout Nillumbik. Follow-up surveys show that 86% of these residents who previously used their landfill bin for food waste have successfully shifted to composting.



Image: One of many happy Nillumbik business owners at the Women in Business Networking Event

Case study – Women in Business networking event

More than 160 attendees gathered at the Eltham Community and Reception Centre in March 2024 as part of the Women in Business Networking Event.

Keynote presenter, local business owner and internationally renowned leadership expert Fabian Dattner shared her experience and knowledge on the important relationships between purpose, value and connection.

Attendees also enjoyed a networking lunch supplied by local businesses including Piccolo Grazing, High Vibes and Apted Orchards.

One attendee posted on their LinkedIn page that 'Fabian Dattner's keynote speech left me truly inspired. Her message 'everything you want is at your fingertips, you simply have to ask for it' deeply resonated with me. I commend the women in that room, each navigating the current market with their own businesses'.



Image: Local business owner Tracy Bradley recording her podcast episode

Case study – Your Business is our Business Podcast series

A successful project delivered as part of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030 was the Your Business was our Business Sustainability Edition podcast series.

One episode of the series focused on sustainability, supporting local business owners to champion climate change. Embracing sustainable resources and implementing innovative recycling and waste reduction measures has environmental benefits, but it can also enhance both the profitability and reputation of local businesses.

Other episodes include 'Navigating Sustainable Business Strategies', with the principles discussed in the podcasts able to be adapted and applied to various business types.

Service performance indicators and measures

Sustainable and resilient

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, including explanation of material variances.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Waste collection						
Satisfaction <i>Kerbside bin collection requests</i> Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1,000	190.09	207.08	147.63	136.34	NA	This measure is no longer reported as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.
Service standard <i>Kerbside collection bins missed</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000	13.32	7.37	6.46	4.56	4.11	There has been an increase in the number of scheduled collections, while the number of reported missed bins has remained similar to the previous year. Nillumbik continues to work with our service provider to reduce the number of missed bins.
Service cost <i>Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$79.68	\$76.31	\$103.21	\$96.96	\$91.04	There has been a decrease in the cost of the service per bin due to dividing the cost by the actual number of bins serviced rather than by the number of households (as previously reported).
Service cost <i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$63.09	\$98.48	\$100.35	\$102.52	\$75.85	There has been a decrease in the cost of the service per bin due to lower recycling processing costs, lower recycling tonnes and a change to dividing the cost by the actual number of bins serviced rather than by the number of households (as previously reported).
Waste diversion <i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	59.60%	72.80%	72.69%	72.24%	70.61%	Nillumbik residents diverted 16,000 tonnes of recycling and green waste from landfill in 2023-2024. The diversion rate is slightly lower than the previous three years, primarily due to lower recycling and green waste tonnes, along with a small increase in landfill tonnes. Overall, the total amount of material collected through the household bin service has decreased. While recycling tonnes have continued to trend downward since 2020-21, another contributing factor is the introduction of Victoria's container deposit scheme in November 2023.

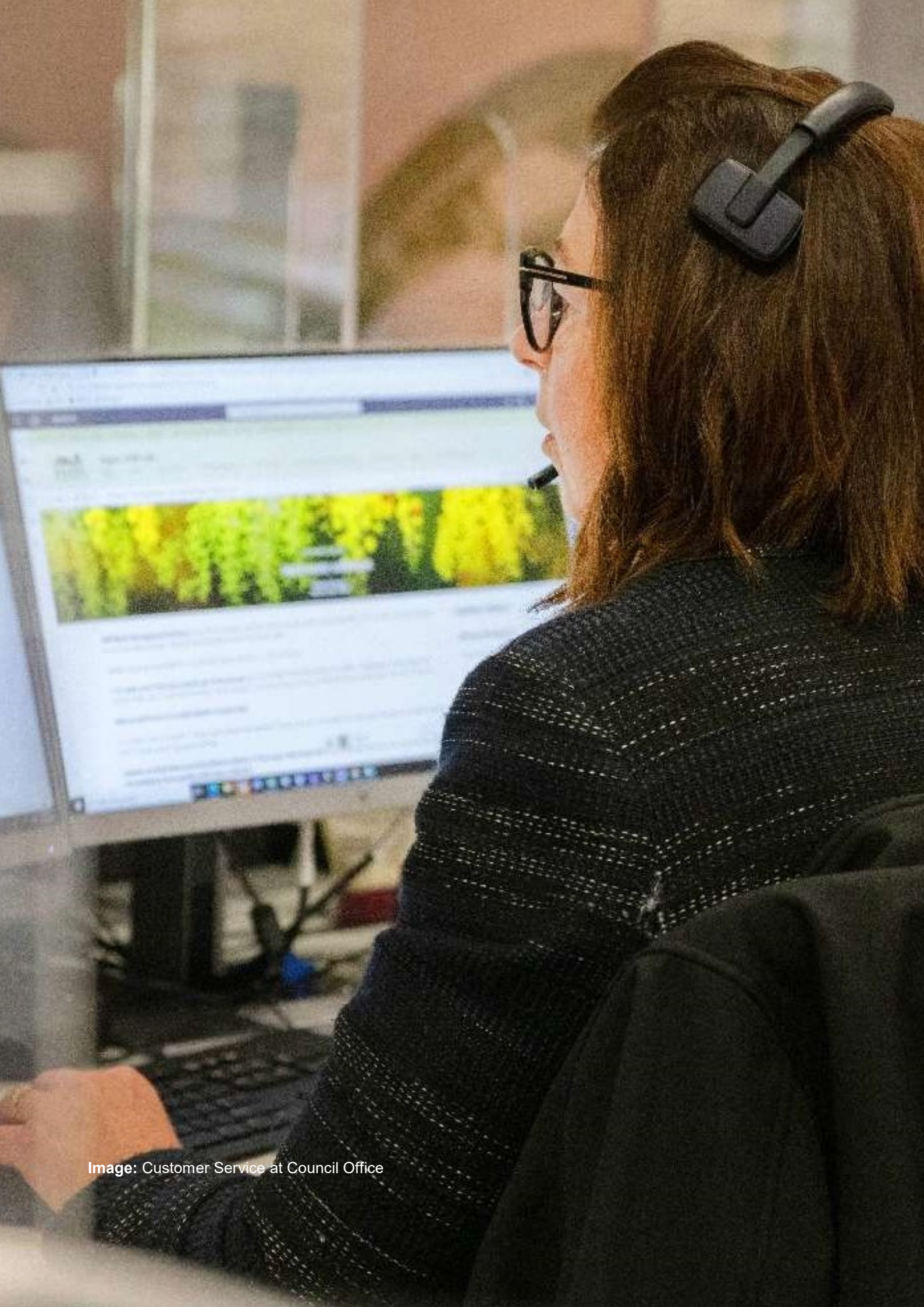


Image: Customer Service at Council Office

Council Plan theme:

Responsible and accountable

To facilitate the best possible outcomes for our community, by demonstrating strong leadership and working actively to achieve the community's objectives.

Strategy themes

- Good governance
- Risk management
- Services and programs

At a glance...

Strategic indicators (15)		Priority actions (7)		Budget (\$'000)
Achieved	6	Completed	3	Expenditure: \$22,991
No change (within +/- 2% threshold)	8	On track	4	Revenue: \$6,113
Not achieved	1	Minor issues	0	Net cost: \$16,878

Interesting facts

- 2,681 total members, and 593 new members this year to Participate Nillumbik – Council's online community engagement platform
- 31,337 visits to Participate Nillumbik
- 24,136 rates notice assessments sent (78 more than last year)
- 6,109 (25.3%) rates notice assessments sent digitally (23.2% last year)
- 12,059 animal registrations (239 less than last year)
- 9,337 dogs registered (209 less than last year)
- 2,722 cats registered (30 less than last year)
- 223 animals impounded (33 less than last year)
- 149 animals reclaimed (59 less than last year)
- 789 inspections of 402 registered food/health premises (204 more inspections than last year)
- 54 registered food/health premises closed and 42 new premises registered
- 121 tobacco education visits and inspections conducted (12 more than last year)
- 20 permits to alter or install a septic system (19 fewer than last year)
- 36 permits to use a septic system issued
- 90 Council media releases issued and 129 website news stories
- 443,945 website users (up 74,400 on last year)
- 1,461,240 web pages viewed across Council's main website, as well as Youth, Living & Learning Nillumbik and Edendale Community Environment Farm 'sub-sites' (up from 1,427,310 in 2022-2023)
- 6.9%, 14.3% and 13.7% increases in Nillumbik Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn followers respectively
- 32,513 phone calls (compared to 35,734 last year) – a decrease of 3,221 calls (9.9%) on last year
- 6,662 front counter visits (up from 5,861 in 2022-2023)
- 26,877 customer requests (down from 28,847 last year – a 7.3% decrease)
- 24.9 seconds is the average speed of answering customer enquiries (down from 37.9 seconds last year)
- 15 overdue service requests at 30 June 2024 (compared to 30 the same time last year, and 271 at 30 June 2022)

Budget funded services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023-2024 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Expenditure Revenue Net cost (\$'000)
Animal Management	The Animal Management service works under the required legislative framework to protect the welfare of animals and the community. It also manages animal regulation and the municipal pound.	867 934 (67)
Business Performance	This function provides Council with service delivery in the areas of strategy and planning, performance reporting and improvement, occupational health and safety, risk management and insurance, and business transformation projects and initiatives.	2,699 95 2,604
Communications	The Communications function assists both the Council and the organisation to communicate its decisions, services, activities and events to Nillumbik residents and the wider community through print and electronic communication channels, and to promote local government sector, local and regional advocacy.	1,143 0 1,143
Customer Service	This service provides frontline customer service, cashier and reception services for Council for the benefit of all residents, ratepayers and visitors. The team is also responsible for driving key changes in behaviour and delivering programs of value to the community in achieving customer experience improvements.	967 0 967
Emergency Management	Working in partnership with stakeholders and the community, this service contributes to the development of a disaster-resilient community that is better able to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.	1,922 444 1,478
Food Safety and Public Health	This function provides services to the community including food safety and health premises regulation, septic tank regulation, public health protection and amenity and noise regulation.	673 310 363
Finance	This function provides internal service delivery in finance, budgeting and procurement services, rates and property valuations.	5,312 4,207 1,105
Governance	This service manages Council's overall governance matters, including coordination of council meetings; elections; civic functions and legislative requirements; legal services; records management and Mayor and Councillor resources and support services.	3,722 34 3,688
Human Resources	This function provides Council with key service delivery in the areas of recruitment and selection, staff learning and development and employee and industrial relations.	1,966 89 1,877
Information Technology	This service provides information technology services and solutions, online services and telecommunications.	3,720 0 3,720

Responsible and accountable

Achievements	
Good governance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's overall financial position remains sound, however active monitoring of operating budgets will continue to be a focus for the financial year ahead. • Council continued to pursue its local advocacy priorities in line with its Advocacy Plan, focusing on the key issues and priorities for our community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council implemented actions under Council's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in support of Council's obligations under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>, including completion of 37 Gender Impact Assessments on Council services, programs and activities.
Risk management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented the Protection of Amenity Trees Local Law to provide protection for substantial trees in the urban and townships areas of the Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted Council's Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029 to address wastewater issues in the Shire.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has partnered with a digital forensics and incident response organisation that supports Council with technical skills, risk mitigation and improvement of Council's security posture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Nillumbik Municipal Fire Management Plan was endorsed by the Nillumbik Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee in August 2023, which aligns with amended legislation.
Services and programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council was rated number 1 overall across a range of industry sectors in the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia's (CSBA) telephone mystery shopping program (out of over 200 organisations). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed 86% of Council's Capital Works Program, with the remaining projects to be completed in early 2024-2025.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at 30 June 2024, there were 15 overdue requests (outside of stated service levels), compared to 30 at the same time last year, and 271 at 30 June 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to deliver Council's Customer First Strategy 2023-2026 and Communications Strategy 2022-2025.

Challenges	
Good governance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to source alternate funding streams to maintain Council's infrastructure and assets portfolio, to meet the future needs of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring statutory compliance in the face of increasing legislation and regulatory changes imposed by other levels of government, and impacting many facets of the organisation.
Risk management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to ensure community preparedness for bushfires and other emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council continues to carefully manage its insurance portfolio by balancing risk exposure and trends with significant annual increases in insurance costs.
Services and programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to respond to increasing cyber-security threats, resulting in strengthening our barriers and continuing to inform our staff on potential attacks on Council data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to deliver Council's capital works program in uncertain economic times with increasing costs and labour and supply issues.

The year ahead	
Good governance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to advocate for the best possible outcomes for our community on key issues in line with Council's Advocacy Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue planning for the 2024 Council general elections, including induction of a new Council and development of the 2025-2029 Council Plan.
Risk management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued review of Council's Business Continuity Framework, including consideration of changes to work practices and behaviours resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the natural environment, topography and vegetation in the Shire, ensuring community readiness in the face of potential bushfires over the summer period.
Services and programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement key Council strategies including the Communications Strategy 2022-2025 and the Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2023-2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the 2024-2025 Capital Works program, including the Diamond Creek Recreation Precinct (BMX Park); Graysharps Road Open Space Precinct, Hurstbridge; Ryans Reserve Rejuvenation Project, Diamond Creek; Eltham Lower Park Precinct Improvements, Eltham; and Plenty War Memorial Oval Lighting Upgrade, Plenty.



Image: Council has introduced 'Payble', a new, easy way to make Council rates payments

Case study – A new easy way to pay Council rates

Council introduced a new convenient and flexible way to make Council rates payments in 2023-2024.

The free, easy-to-use service, called Payble, allows you to set up a payment schedule that best suits you. Payments can be spread across the financial year until 31 May, and can be direct-debited weekly, fortnightly or monthly from your bank account, debit or credit card.

An Auto Pay option also allows residents to pay by four quarterly instalments due each year on 30 September, 30 November, 28 February and 31 May.

Residents can check their balance, or update and change their payment schedule and method anytime as needed, or as circumstances change. They can also set SMS reminders to stay on track.

The new service has been established in response to community feedback and in recognition of the recent cost of living pressures.

Many ratepayers have already signed up and the feedback has been positive:

- "Love this! So convenient and flexible"
- "I have been asking for this option for years, very happy it is finally set up"
- "This is fantastic, have been wanting something like this for a while"

Residents can scan the QR code on their rates notice to find out more about Payble, or go to our website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/residents which has step-by-step instructions on how to set up the service.



Image: Happy pets and children at the Nillumbik Pet Expo

Case study – Nillumbik Pet Expo a big hit with the local community

Despite the wet and windy weather on Sunday 22 October 2023, the annual Nillumbik Pet Expo at Marngrook Oval in Diamond Creek was a big hit with the community.

This vibrant event celebrates our furry and feathered companions and has plenty on offer to keep them happy and healthy including displays and demonstrations, nutritional and grooming advice, obedience training, education, fun activities, pet competitions and much more.

The expo promotes responsible pet ownership and the services and activities relating to pets in the Shire and beyond.

Attendees had the opportunity to liaise with Council staff and find out more about a range of services and activities, as well as taking part in a variety of competitions. 28 dogs and one cat were also registered on the day.



Image: Council works with our partners to provide co-ordinated emergency management planning

Case study – Nillumbik Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2023-2026

The Municipal Emergency Management Plan is Nillumbik Council's overarching emergency management document. The plan addresses the prevention of, response to and recovery from emergencies in the Shire.

In late 2020, the *Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Act 2018* amended the *Emergency Management Act 2013* to provide for new, integrated arrangements for emergency management planning in Victoria at the state, regional and municipal levels. Under the revised legislation, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee becomes the peak planning body for emergency management in each municipal district.

The committee is the forum for government and non-government agencies to develop policies, procedures, strategies and frameworks to support co-ordinated emergency management planning.

The shift from a Council-owned document to a collaborative, multi-agency approach means that the plan transforms from one containing largely Council operational information to one that guides and directs emergency management activities across all control and support agencies within the Shire.

The new plan, endorsed by the Nillumbik Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee in August 2023, replaces Council's Bushfire Mitigation Strategy which was completed in 2023.

Bushfire mitigation program works

Council manages only a small percentage of land in Nillumbik, and works in partnership with other public landholders and private property owners to prepare for each fire season.

Council has a program of bushfire prevention and preparation works throughout the year to:

- reduce fuel loads in our parks and reserves and on our roadsides
- help keep roads and fire tracks clear and accessible
- maintain and provide access to water tanks for emergency services
- prevent vegetation coming in contact with electric lines.

The purpose of the works is to mitigate (reduce) the threat to life, property and the environment, including native wildlife and endangered species.

Council's Bushfire Mitigation (Fire Prevention) Works Program is reviewed and developed each year in consultation with the Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee and includes planned work on roadsides and in Council reserves.

In 2023-2024, the program included:

- fuel reduction, brush cutting and mowing across Council parks, bushland reserves and open spaces
- roadside mowing
- box clearance (removing vegetation from the required clear zone of the road)
- assessment of tree hazards along roadsides and resulting pruning and removal
- ongoing maintenance to roadside trees affected by the 2009 bushfires
- planned traditional burns
- fire track maintenance
- water tank maintenance
- clearing vegetation from around electric lines.

All of the program works were completed in 2023-2024, with the exception of one planned burn. A summary of the program works undertaken in 2023-2024 is outlined on the next page.

For further information on how Council prepares for bushfires and other emergencies, visit:

nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Residents/Fire-flood-and-emergencies



Image: Council undertakes a range of works to mitigate bushfire risk in the Shire

2023–2024 Bushfire mitigation works program: summary

Mowing and works

This work aims to provide adequate clearance and sightlines, reduce fuel load and ensure access/egress

	No.of sites	Sites completed	% completed
Reserves	17	17	100
Roadside	11	11	100
Slashing	9	9	100
Total	37	37	100

Summary: All 37 sites (100%) were completed, covering 27.4 kms.

Trees

This work aims to reduce hazards and risk of failure (trees and/or limbs falling causing harm/damage)

Hazard Assessment	38	38	100
Road length	Target (kms)	Actual (kms)	
	97.54	97.54	100

Summary: All 38 sites (100%) have been assessed and works undertaken where required. This covers an area of 97.54 km.

Fire access

Works include grading, Tree management, Box Clearance and road surfacing to ensure access and egress

Box Clearance	15	15	100
Road surfacing	15	15	100
Slashing/weeds	15	15	100
Total	15	15	100

Summary: Of 15 fire access tracks, 100% of works have been undertaken, covering 8.66km.

Fire area

This work involves Verge Arm Mowing, growth management and dead heading to reduce fuel load

Sites	25	25	100
Length (km)	51	51	100

Summary: Of 25 sites covering an area of 51km, all works have been undertaken.

Planned burns

Planned burns aim to reduce fuel load, manage vegetation and meet ecological objectives

Sites	2	1	50%
Length (ha)		1.09	

Summary: Of 2 planned burning sites, 1 planned burn was undertaken.

Water tank maintenance

Works include vegetation clearance and brush cutting to ensure easy access to water supplies

Sites	56	56	100
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Summary: All 56 water tanks have been assessed and maintained.

Customer service

The Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2023-2026 is an important document that outlines Council's journey to support the delivery of outstanding customer service to our community every time they interact with us.

Our Nillumbik Customer First vision is:

"Council's services are easy to use and we will ensure they will be customer focussed at all times in an environment where all customers will be treated with care and respect".

Our customer commitments are:

 Empathetic we listen to our customers, understand their needs and concerns and we put ourselves in their shoes.	 Effective we understand our key customer journeys, we design and deliver our services to deliver quality outcomes and reduce duplication and repetition.
 Consistent our customers are provided with accurate information and consistent experiences across all customer channels, by knowledgeable and supportive staff.	 Simple all customer processes, information and contact channels are easy to follow, are seamless and require as little time and effort from the customer.

Key focus areas of the strategy to further improve the customer experience for our community members relate to:

- Effective channel choice – providing a number of options for our customers to contact us
- Data enhancement - using customer insights, as well as our own corporate data, to better understand our customers' needs and our own performance in serving our customers
- Complaints handling and continuous improvement - understanding our customer needs and satisfaction, ensuring our processes flow smoothly, removing effort and are effective, regardless of the service delivered.

Other key aspects of the Responsible and Accountable theme outlined in this report include:

- Our communications and engagement – pages 76-93
- Our people – pages 101-109
- Democratic governance – pages 170-175
- Corporate governance – pages 176-181
- Statutory information – pages 182-194.



Image: A Customer Experience Officer at the Civic Centre in Greensborough

Case study – Our Customer Experience number 1 again

Supporting our Nillumbik Customer First Strategy, Council continues to engage with an independent mystery shopping program to independently measure the quality of Council's interactions with the community via our phone channel.

In 2023-2024, our Council's Customer Experience team not only maintained its position as the best in the Local Government sector, but also achieved the No.1 overall ranking out of 208 organisations in the Customer Service Benchmarking Australia (CSBA) Quality Assurance rankings.

This prestigious recognition came through a rigorous mystery shopping program, where calls were meticulously evaluated based on various service quality factors.

Council has been a participant in this mystery shopping program for four years, consistently securing the top spot in the Local Government sector. This year marks a historic achievement as we also attained the highest overall rank for the first time.

The team's dedication to providing exceptional service daily has been instrumental in this success reflecting our commitment to delivering unparalleled value to our community.

Service performance indicators and measures

Responsible and accountable

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, including explanation of material variations.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Animal management						
Timeliness <i>Time taken to action animal management requests</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]	1	1	1	1	1	Time taken to action animal management requests remains steady. There were 461 animal management requests in 2023-2024, which on average were responded to within one business day of receipt.
Service standard <i>Animals reclaimed</i> [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100	83.72%	82.40%	78.70%	81.25%	66.80%	Of the 223 animals impounded in 2023-2024, 149 were reclaimed. An increase in surrendered animals to Council has been observed.
Service cost <i>Cost of animal management service per population</i> [Direct cost of the animal management service / Municipal population]	\$10.25	\$11.33	\$17.30	\$14.25	\$13.71	The cost of service for 2023-2024 decreased slightly compared to the previous year.
Health and safety <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions]	1.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	There were no animal management prosecutions in 2023-2024. As a result of community education around responsible pet ownership, matters have been resolved without the requirement to refer to court for further prosecution.
Food safety						
Timeliness <i>Time taken to action food complaints</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	1.88	1.47	1.68	1.93	1.70	A continued focus on implementing new procedures since 2018 has seen the time taken to action food-related complaints maintained.
Service standard <i>Food safety assessments</i> [Number of registered Class 1 food premises and Class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the <i>Food Act 1984</i> / Number of registered Class 1 food premises and Class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the <i>Food Act 1984</i>] x100	100%	98.41%	98.83%	100%	100%	100% of Class 1 and 2 premises received a food safety assessment in the 2023 reporting period.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations and comments
Service cost <i>Cost of food safety service</i> [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the <i>Food Act 1984</i>]	\$524.40	\$484.22	\$461.55	\$208.94	\$224.78	The cost of service per premise remained steady compared to last year.
Health and safety <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	98.68%	90.63%	94.44%	100%	100%	100% of critical and major non-compliant inspection outcomes were followed up within the reporting period.
Governance						
Transparency <i>Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public</i> [Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors] x100	16.82%	6.69%	2.33%	1.98%	2.84%	Council made 211 resolutions at 20 Council and Delegated Committee meetings, of which six were made in a meeting closed to the public under section 66(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . As required by the Act, the reasons why a meeting was closed to the public are recorded in the public version of the minutes.
Consultation and engagement <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]	67.70	61.40	62.10	69.30	69.30	Satisfaction with Council's community consultation and engagement remained stable in 2023-2024.
Attendance <i>Councillor attendance at Council meetings</i> [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100	100%	96.10%	95.24%	89.29%	100%	Council held 11 Council meetings and one Extraordinary Council meeting in 2023-2024. No absences were recorded throughout the year against a possible 84 attendances.
Service cost <i>Cost of governance</i> [Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$42,170.00	\$40,330.86	\$53,468.00	\$51,175.19	\$60,788.49	The cost of governance includes training, conference and seminar costs, travel, mayoral vehicle, mobile, internet, Councillor allowances and other miscellaneous expenditure.
Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with Council decisions</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]	66.70	63.00	62.60	67.70	69.00	Satisfaction with Council decisions increased by 1.3% in 2023-2024, the second consecutive increase for this measure.

Image: Extraordinary Council Meeting held at Civic Drive in November 2023



Our governance

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Image: The Diamond Creek in Eltham

The Local Government Acts - 2020 and 1989

The *Local Government Act 2020* and the earlier *Local Government Act 1989* (which has some ongoing operating clauses) are the key pieces of legislation that governs how councils operate and require that councils ensure transparency and accountability in council decision-making.

This section of the report is divided into two sections:

- Democratic governance
- Corporate governance.

Democratic governance is how elected governments govern, make decisions, distribute and exercise authority for and on behalf of their constituents and the community as a whole. Council works to develop an inclusive community, encouraging participation in the decision-making through community consultation, public forums and making submissions to delegated committees of Council.

Corporate governance is a set of mechanisms, processes and relations by which a corporate body is controlled and directed. The structures and frameworks in place at Council contribute to good governance, including in the areas of risk management, integrity and business continuity. This ensures Council achieves high levels of compliance with all relevant laws, codes and directions, while meeting community expectations and having regard to elements of probity, accountability, transparency and the public interest.



Image: The Chief Executive Officer chairs the commencement of the Extraordinary Council Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Democratic governance

Decision-making

Councils have a significant function in the law-making process as they make decisions on many matters of importance to their local communities. They are empowered by the Act and Council's Governance Rules to make decisions in formally constituted council and delegated committee meetings, or under delegations approved by the Council.

Council meetings are all led by elected councillors who set the vision and direction of Council. Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) outlines the obligations of councils to adopt Governance Rules governing the conduct of council meetings and delegated committees.

At Council, decisions are made in one of two ways:

- by resolution at Council meetings and delegated committees of Council; or
- by Council officers under delegated authority.

Council is empowered under a number of pieces of legislation to undertake a range of duties and functions. To enable Council to actually undertake these duties and functions, it is necessary for Council to delegate many of its relevant powers to the CEO.

The power to delegate is conferred on Council by section 11 of the Act which enables Council, by instrument of delegation, to delegate to a member of Council staff any power, duty or function of Council under the Act or any other Act, other than certain specific powers.

Council policies, strategies and plans adopted in 2023-2024

Policy, Strategy or Plan	Date Adopted
Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2024-2029	26 September 2023
Neighbourhood Character Strategy	12 December 2023
Creative Infrastructure Framework	30 April 2024
Northern Regional Trails Strategy	30 April 2024
Visual Arts Policy 2023 – 2026	28 May 2024
Public Arts Policy 2023 – 2026	28 May 2024
Governance Rule – Election Period Policy	28 May 2024
Audit and Risk Committee Charter	25 June 2024
Unsealed Roads Improvement Prioritisation Policy	25 June 2024
Special Rate and Special Charge Policy and Guidelines	25 June 2024

Conflict of interest

Sections 130 and 131 of the Act place strict obligations on councillors to disclose any conflict of interest they may have in a matter which is to be, or is likely to be, considered or discussed at council and delegated committee meetings.

Council has a comprehensive procedure in place to accommodate the disclosure of a conflict of interest. Councillors are required to disclose any general or material conflict of interest on any item to be discussed at a Council or delegated committee meeting and must leave the Council Chamber before the discussion of, and voting on, an item. The requirement to disclose conflicts of interest extends to Informal Meetings of Councillors and are reported to Council as part of the written record of the Informal Meeting.

Declaration of a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all Council and Committee meetings. Council officers with delegated powers must also disclose any conflict of interest they may have in a matter where they are executing their delegated authority.

Councillors meet their legislative requirements by disclosing their conflict of interest. Conflict of interest disclosures are transparent with the disclosure being noted in the meeting minutes and a conflicts of interest register maintained and available for public inspection. During 2023-2024, there were eight conflicts of interest declared at Council and Committee meetings.

Informal Meeting of Councillors Record

In addition to formal meetings of Council, a number of Informal Meeting of Councillors meetings were held during the year. An Informal Meeting of Councillors is defined in Item 19 of Council's Governance Rule – Meeting Procedure.

Information reported as part of the written record includes a summary of matters discussed at an Advisory Committee of Council at which at least one Councillor is present, or at a planned or scheduled meeting of at least half of the Councillors and one member of Council staff. Such a meeting considers matters that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision or subject to the exercise of a delegated function, duty or power must be completed.

During 2023-2024, 84 Informal Meetings of Councillors were reported to Council.

Meetings of Council

Council and delegated committee meetings are generally held on a Tuesday evening in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre in Civic Drive, Greensborough and are advertised via social media and on Council's website.

Council and Committee Meetings are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Governance Rule – Meeting Procedures which was adopted on 25 July 2023 and can be held in person, hybrid format or fully virtual in accordance with the Governance Rule – Meeting Procedures. This change, allowing for hybrid and virtual meetings, recognises the importance of the decision-making process while offering flexible and accessible participation in meetings for Councillors and the community.

Council Meetings are held monthly. In addition to the Council Meetings, one Extraordinary Meeting was held in 2023-2024 for the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Nillumbik has one delegated committee established in accordance with section 63 of the Act. Council established the Planning and Consultation Committee (PCC) as a delegated committee effective from 11 March 2021. All seven Councillors sit on this Committee. Responsibilities of the delegate committee include all matters in relation to planning and community consultation.

Council continues to livestream Council and Committee meetings. The livestream has meant that the community can tune in and watch the meeting at any time, providing greater access to Council debate and the decision-making process.

Recorded meetings can be accessed via our website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/watch-council-meeting.

Council is committed to open and transparent decision making and conducts its business through open meetings. Meetings are only closed when reports being considered are deemed to be confidential in line with section 66(2) of the Act.

During 2023-2024, six Council reports were considered to be confidential matters.

Reports on the meeting agenda for consideration are prepared independently by Council staff and include recommended actions. The agenda is available on Council's website on the Thursday prior to each meeting. Agenda papers are also available at each meeting for interested members of the public. Council records resolutions carried at each Council and Committee meeting and publishes them as part of the minutes of each meeting.

Minutes are confirmed at the following Council or Committee meeting. During 2023-2024, Council passed 211 resolutions at Council and Committee meetings.

Minutes are available on Council's website for the current year and the preceding 12 months as required by the Act: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/minutes-and-agendas.

In addition to considering reports at Council meetings, the community is invited to submit questions and make submissions. In 2023-2024, 52 questions were submitted during Council Meetings and 84 submissions were heard at Council's Planning and Consultation Committee.



Image: A Youth Council Meeting

Council and Committee Meetings 2023-2024

Meeting	Purpose	Number of meetings	Resolutions	Public questions/submissions heard
Planning and Consultation Committee	Considers all matters within the two portfolio areas, submissions made under section 223 of the 1989 Act or any other Act, or where the public have made an application to speak to an item	8	29	86
Council Meeting	Considers the general business of Council and provides community members with the opportunity to ask questions of Council	11	176	52
Extraordinary Council Meeting	Convened for a specific purpose and only the matters listed on the agenda may be dealt with	1	6	Nil

Attendance

The record of Councillor attendance at Council, Delegated Committee and Extraordinary Council meetings held during 2023-2024 is shown in the tables below.

Councillor	Council (11)	Extraordinary Council (1)	Planning and Consultation Committee (8)
Cr Natalie Duffy	11/11	1/1	6/8
Cr Karen Egan	11/11	1/1	6/8
Cr Francis Eyre	11/11	1/1	7/8
Cr Geoff Paine	11/11	1/1	7/8
Cr Peter Perkins	11/11	1/1	8/8
Cr Ben Ramcharan	11/11	1/1	8/8
Cr Richard Stockman	11/11	1/1	7/8

Allowances and expenses

Allowances paid to the Mayor and Councillors are established under section 39 of the Act which includes a superannuation guarantee contribution.

The Victorian Government sets the upper and lower limits for allowances. There are three categories of councils (small, medium and large) and the categories are based on population and revenue.

Nillumbik is included in Category 2 (medium-sized councils). Each council has discretion to determine its position within the relevant limits for its category. Once determined by the council following each annual election, the level of allowances within the band is fixed for the balance of that council's four-year term.

The Mayoral and Councillor allowances were set in June 2021 for the four-year term of the newly elected Council. This was superseded by Determination No. 01/2022. Under this Determination, a base allowance is determined for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors starting on 18 December 2021 until 17 December 2025 with annual indexation.

Under this Determination, the Mayoral base allowance is currently set at \$109,114, the Deputy Mayoral is \$54,558 and the Councillors is \$34,028 per annum, for the period 1 July 2024 until 17 December 2024.

Council reimburses reasonable costs associated with the formal duty of representing Council for the Mayor and Councillors and their respective partners in accordance with Council's Councillor Expense Policy adopted 25 August 2020 and section 40 of the Act.

The 2023-2024 expenses for each Councillor are outlined below.

Councillor	Travel and car mileage	Mobile phone	Internet	Conferences, training and seminars	Other expenses	Total
Cr Ben Ramcharan ¹	\$384.05	\$703.60	\$190.80	\$8,896.35	\$345.10	\$10,519.90
Cr Geoff Paine	\$74.25	\$703.60	\$190.80	\$1,429.75	\$283.90	\$2,682.30
Cr Natalie Duffy	\$27.50	\$703.60	\$382.40	\$12,775.60	\$1,198.30	\$15,087.40
Cr Karen Egan	\$950.65	\$660.00	\$382.40	\$4,934.60	\$184.90	\$7,112.55
Cr Frances Eyre	\$52.80	\$703.60	\$382.40	\$3,194.05	\$692.75	\$5,025.60
Cr Peter Perkins	\$759.85	\$703.60	\$382.40	\$2,850.40	\$298.45	\$4,994.70
Cr Richard Stockman	-	\$703.60	\$382.40	-	\$343.95	\$1,429.95
Total	\$2,249.10	\$4,881.60	\$2,293.60	\$34,080.75	\$3,347.35	\$46,852.40

¹ The Mayor is entitled to higher expenditure on conferences, training and seminars in recognition of the additional responsibilities of Mayor.

Advisory committees and external groups

Councillors also represent Council on a number of advisory committees and external groups.

Advisory Committee	Purpose	Meeting Frequency	Councillor(s) appointed
Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee	Provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders and seek specialist advice and community participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of arts and culture in the Shire.	Quarterly	Cr Geoff Paine (Chair)
Audit and Risk Committee	Assists Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for financial reporting, risk management, internal controls and facilitating good and ethical governance.	Quarterly	Cr Ben Ramcharan Cr Karen Egan
Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters Committee	Advises Council on all contractual matters relating to the CEO's employment.	Bi-annually	All Councillors
Economic Development Advisory Committee	Provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in all matters relating to economic development and tourism in Nillumbik.	Quarterly	Cr Natalie Duffy (Chair)
Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee	Provides an opportunity for Council to work with representatives of the community in developing and implementing environment and sustainability policies, strategies and plans. Members can influence Council's direction on environment and sustainability matters by recommending action for Council consideration.	Bi-monthly	Cr Ben Ramcharan (Chair) Cr Geoff Paine
Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee	Provides knowledge, information and advice, whilst overseeing, planning and implementation, to promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the Shire and to enable Council to be a collaborative governing body for the Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.	Bi-annually	Cr Richard Stockman (Chair) Cr Frances Eyre
Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee	Provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in the implementation of the Disability Action Plan, as well as current and future planning to promote inclusion, including people with disability.	Bi-monthly	Cr Peter Perkins (Chair)
Living & Learning Nillumbik Advisory Committee	Provides a mechanism by which community representatives can discuss and advise on Living & Learning Nillumbik program offerings, opportunities and challenges.	Monthly	Cr Geoff Paine
Panton Hill Bushland Reserves System (PHBRS) User Group Advisory Committee	Facilitates community engagement, including volunteer activities, to protect the values of the PHBRS and help manage user impacts.	Three times a year	Cr Karen Egan (Chair)
Positive Ageing Advisory Committee	Provides a mechanism in which community representatives can discuss, advise on and action ideas around opportunities and challenges related to positive ageing in the Shire.	Bi-monthly	Cr Frances Eyre (Chair)
Recreation Trails Advisory Committee	Provides a formal mechanism for Council to consult with key stakeholders, seek specialist advice and enable community participation in the development and review of new and existing recreation trails within the Shire.	Three times a year	Cr Richard Stockman (Chair) Cr Karen Egan
Nillumbik Youth Council	Provides a formal platform for young people to have their say on issues, needs and aspirations important to them and relevant to Nillumbik.	Monthly	Cr Ben Ramcharan Youth Mayor chairs the meetings

External organisation	Councillor(s)
Banyule/Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network Inc. Board	Appointment of Cr Frances Eyre was resolved by Council on 26 April 2023 <i>A new Councillor representative to this organisation is to be made at the 2024 Extraordinary Meeting following the appointment of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor</i>
Diamond Creek Traders' Association	Cr Peter Perkins
Eltham Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Cr Frances Eyre
Hurstbridge Traders' Association	Cr Karen Egan Economic Development and Tourism Lead (Proxy)
Interface Councils Group	Mayor Cr Ben Ramcharan (Mayor of the day) Deputy Mayor Cr Karen Egan (Deputy Mayor) (Proxy)
Metropolitan Transport Forum Inc.	Cr Richard Stockman
Municipal Association of Victoria	Cr Peter Perkins Cr Karen Egan (Proxy)
Nillumbik Reconciliation Group	Cr Natalie Duffy Manager Community Partnerships (Proxy)
Nillumbik Tourism and Business	No Councillor appointed
Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action	Cr Geoff Paine
Northern Council Alliance	Cr Ben Ramcharan (Mayor of the day) Cr Karen Egan (Deputy Mayor) (Proxy)
Victorian Local Governance Association	Cr Natalie Duffy Cr Frances Eyre (Proxy)
Yarra Plenty Regional Library Board	Cr Peter Perkins Cr Karen Egan Director Communities (Proxy)

Corporate governance

Having strong governance and management frameworks leads to better decision making by Council.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to undertake an assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist and include this in its report of operations. Council's Governance and Management Checklist results for 2023-2024 are set out on pages 180-181 of this annual report.

The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee's function is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for financial reporting, management of risk, maintaining a reliable system of internal controls and facilitating good and ethical governance.

The Committee consists of three independent members - John Watson (Chair), Greg Rimmer-Hollyman and Chris Eddy (who stepped down as Committee Member in August 2023), with Jonathan Kyvelidis joining the Committee in November 2023. The two Councillors members are currently Mayor Ben Ramcharan and Deputy Mayor Karen Egan. Independent members are appointed for up to three by three-year terms. The Chair is elected from among the independent members.

The Audit and Risk Committee meets four times a year. The Internal Auditor, CEO and Chief Operating Officer (COO) attend all Audit and Risk Committee meetings. Other management representatives attend as required to present reports. The external auditors attend in May and August each year to present the audit plan and independent audit report.

In 2023-2024, three meetings were held at Civic Drive, and four meetings were held virtually. The minutes of each Audit and Risk Committee meeting are reported to the next Council Meeting.

Beyond the routine matters presented, other reports and documents considered by the Committee this year included:

- Edendale Operational Update Report
- Business Function Risk Assurance Map
- Annual Procurement Report
- Councillor and Staff Gift Registers
- Internal Audit Plan.



Internal audit

Council has an annual internal audit program undertaken by our internal auditors. This program provides independent, objective assurance designed to add value and improve the organisation's operations by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Informed by a three-year, risk based Internal Audit Plan which is revised annually to ensure resources remain focussed on appropriate areas, the following services were audited in 2023-2024:

Service	Audit scope	Service	Audit scope
Building Safety and Regulation	Building and Pool Safety Compliance Internal Audit Report	Finance, Procurement and Assets	Procurement Internal Audit Report
Statutory Planning	Planning Scheme Enforcement Internal Audit Report	Operations Centre	Operations Centre Internal Audit Report

On receipt of the audit reports and findings, Council's management implements actions to address the findings. In 2023-2024, 21 actions were brought forward from 2022-2023, and 51 new actions were recommended by the internal auditors. As at 30 June 2024, a total of 7 actions remained in progress.

External audit

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). In 2023-2024, the annual external audit of Council's Financial Statements and Performance Statements was conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's representative. Council officers presented the audited documents to the Audit and Risk Committee prior to 'in principle' adoption by Council and sign-off by VAGO.

The external auditors attend the June and August Audit and Risk Committee meetings to present the annual audit plan and independent audit report. The external audit management letter and responses are also provided to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Risk management

Council is committed to risk management as an integral part of its corporate governance, operations and development of plans and strategies to minimise risk. Council is similarly committed to establishing an organisational culture that ensures that effective risk management is embedded in all activities and business processes. This applies to all staff, contractors, consultants, suppliers and volunteers.

Our commitment to risk management is detailed in Council's Risk Management Policy 2022 and Risk Management Framework 2022. These documents align with the Australian Standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines.

The policy and framework consider the fact that local government presents a distinct risk character and profile, with a broad range of risks in varied situations that need to be considered when considering local government. Some risks are extreme, while other risks are low or even insignificant, however if not managed, risks may prevent us from meeting our strategic objectives, daily operations and projects.

Council continues to focus on the value of risk management as a tool to drive success against its strategic objectives, operations and projects, and will initiate further steps to foster and embed a risk aware culture which empowers all staff to raise risk issues. Our policy and framework promote a standard approach to risk management throughout the organisation and ensures risks are identified, assessed and treated at an acceptable level.

Strategic risk register

Strategic risks are internal and external events that impact an organisation in achieving their objectives and strategic goals. Council's strategic risk register was reviewed by the parent company of Council's insurance brokers in 2021. Council's updated strategic risk register includes the following:

1. Changing environmental conditions and climate change impacting Council's infrastructure, operations and services	2. Changes in Federal and State government policy impacting Council's strategic objectives	3. Strategic focus, infrastructure, service delivery and projects not aligned with community expectations	4. A disruption event impacting Council's service delivery	5. Failure to meet Council's emergency management obligations
6. IT disruption and cyber security attacks including data breach, fraud or theft, data loss and data privacy	7. Failure to maintain a sustainable long term financial position	8. Major failure of Council infrastructure	9. Council not delivering on major projects, eroding reputation and influencing potential future funding opportunities	10. Failure of good governance

The Strategic Risk Register includes residual risk ratings, risk appetite, tolerance, a risk acceptance statement and the identification of detective, corrective and preventative controls to help mitigate these risks.

Claims against Council

'Under excess' claims for compensation are managed by Council's contracted claims manager. Claims increased from 33 in 2022-2023 to 42 in 2023-2024. These claims most commonly related to tree falls, tree root damage, trips and falls due to uneven surfaces, and damage to motor vehicles. Claim costs decreased overall by 2% compared to the previous three-year average.

'Over excess' claims, are managed by Council's insurer and typically relate to personal injury claims. In 2023-2024, there was one new claim lodged with Council's insurer, however there were two claims related to incidents or events from previous years. Council's cost in each of these claims is the excess amount of \$20,000.

Incident Summary

Incidents by Type	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change (2022-2023 to 2023-2024)
Motor Vehicle	67	40	38	43	45	+2
Occupational Health and Safety	80	84	89	95	88	-7
Professional Indemnity	1	5	2	2	1	-1
Property	62	60	25	18	19	+1
Public Liability	255	187	138	162	129	-33
Total All Incidents	465	376	292	320	282	-38

Incidents by Directorate	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Change (2022-2023 to 2023-2024)
Communities	30	16	17	31	28	-3
Culture and Performance	16	3	2	9	31	+22
Governance, Communications and Community Safety	0	6	3	5	22	+17
Operations	389	309	233	248	193	-55
Planning, Environment and Strategy	30	42	37	27	8	-19
Total	465	376	292	320	282	-38

Integrity

Earning and maintaining community trust (as individuals and as an organisation) is essential for us to deliver the services that our community rely on and value.

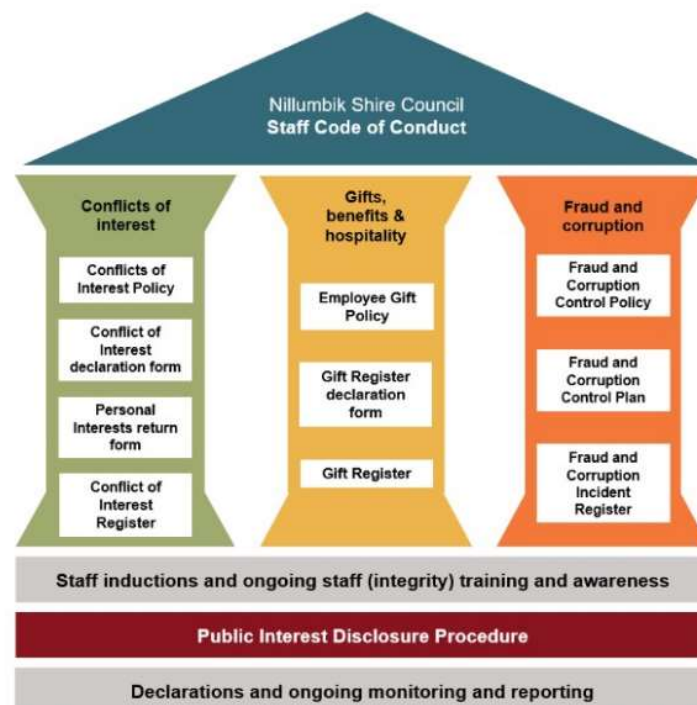
Integrity is one of Council's five core values. Council staff, volunteers or contractors must always act in the best interests of the community and uphold the principles of honesty, integrity and transparency.

Operating with integrity means:

- acting with honesty and transparency
- making reasoned decisions without bias by the following fair and objective processes
- preventing and addressing improper conduct
- disclosing facts without hiding or distorting them
- safeguarding the public resources for which we are responsible
- not allowing decisions or actions to be influenced by personal or private interests.

Council's integrity framework identifies the policies, mechanisms and responsibilities that help Council staff, volunteer and contractors to deliver services, projects and initiatives to our community through high levels of honesty, objectivity, ethics and accountability.

This framework helps to guide staff induction, ongoing awareness, and training across these key areas of integrity.



Business continuity

Council's Business Continuity Policy and Business Continuity Framework were adopted in September 2018, and describe our commitment to business continuity. These documents are currently being reviewed and scheduled for completion in early 2024-2025.

The 2023-2024 update has taken into account learnings and corporate changes to systems and processes and experiences from the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and incorporates working from home arrangements. The framework includes a smaller and focus-driven response team, and fewer plans when Information Technology (IT) can be managed, however there is a heavy organisational reliance on IT disaster recovery plans.

Council business continuity framework draws upon the international standard ISO22301:2017 – Business Continuity Management Systems – Requirements to deliver key services during an event that has the capacity to create an interruption to business delivery.

Governance and management checklist

The following are the results in the prescribed form of Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist as outlined in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF).

Governance and management Items	Assessment
1. Community Engagement Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Policy Date of operation of current policy: 23 February 2021
2. Community Engagement Guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Guidelines Date of operation of current guidelines: 26 June 2023
3. Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next four financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> Date of adoption: 26 October 2021
4. Annual Budget (plan under section 94 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)	Adopted in accordance with section 94 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> Date of adoption: 28 May 2024
5. Asset Plan 2022-2032 (provides a high level strategic and financial view of how Council intends to manage its transport, building, drainage and open space assets)	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> Date of adoption: 28 June 2022
5. Rating Strategy (strategy setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Strategy Date of adoption of current strategy: 26 October 2021
6. Risk Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Policy Date of adoption of current policy: 31 May 2022
7. Fraud and Corruption Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Policy Date of adoption: 17 May 2023
8. Municipal Emergency Management Plan (plan under section 77 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i> for emergency prevention, response and recovery)	Plan prepared and maintained in accordance with section 77 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 2013</i> Date of adoption: 31 May 2023
9. Procurement Policy (policy under section 108 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> outlining the matters, practices and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works)	Policy Date of adoption: 29 June 2021
10. Business Continuity Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation: 01 July 2019
11. IT Disaster Recovery Plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation: 27 February 2024
12. Complaints Policy (policy under section 107 of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints)	Policy Date of adoption: 4 December 2021
13. Workforce Plan (plan outlining Council's commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements of the organisation)	Plan Date of operation: 10 January 2022
14. Payment of Rates and Charges Hardship Policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying their rates)	Policy Date of operation: 1 June 2021

Governance and management Items		Assessment
15. Risk Management Framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)		Framework Date of operation: 31 May 2022
16. Audit Committee (a committee established under section 53 of the Act whose functions and responsibilities include monitoring compliance of Council's policies and procedures, monitor Council financial performance and reporting, monitor and provide advice on risk and fraud prevention and oversee internal and external audit functions)		Committee established: 23 June 2020 The committee is referred to as the Audit and Risk Committee Charter of the Committee was endorsed on 25 June 2024
17. Internal audit (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)		Internal auditor engaged: May 2019
18. Performance Reporting Framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)		Framework Date of operation: 24 October 2023
19. Council Plan reporting (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)		Report Date of reports: 22 August 2023, 28 November 2023, 27 February 2024, 28 May 2024
20. Financial reporting (quarterly statements to Council under section 97 of the Act comparing budgeted revenue and expenditure with actual revenue and expenditure)	Reports Date of reports: Quarter ended 30 June 2023 reported on 24 October 2023 Quarter ended 30 September 2023 reported on 28 November 2023 Quarter ended 31 December 2023 reported on 27 February 2024 Quarter ended 31 March 2024 reported on 30 April 2024	
21. Risk reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)		Reports Date of reports: 26 September 2023 12 December 2023 26 March 2024 25 June 2024
22. Performance reporting (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)		Reports Date of reports: 24 October 2023 27 February 2024
23. Annual Report (annual report under sections 98 and 99 of the Act to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial performance statements)		Report presented: 24 October 2023
24. Councillor Code of Conduct (code under section 139 of the Act setting out the conduct principles and the dispute resolution processes to be followed by Councillors)		Code of Conduct reviewed and adopted: 27 January 2021
25. Delegations (a document setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)		Delegations reviewed and adopted: Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer – 26 March 2024 Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council Staff – 26 March 2024
26. Meeting procedures (a local law governing the conduct of meetings of Council and special committees)		Governance Rule – Meeting Procedure adopted 26 July 2023

Certification of Governance and Management Checklist

I certify that this information presents fairly the status of the Council's governance and management arrangements.

Cr Ben Ramcharan
Mayor

Carl Cowie
Chief Executive Officer

Statutory information

The following information is provided in accordance with legislative and other requirements applying to Council.

Documents available for public inspection

Council's Governance – Public Transparency Policy, adopted by Council on 25 August 2020, outlines the information that Council will make publicly available, in addition to any other legislative requirement.

The information includes but is not limited to...

Documents such as:

- Plans and reports adopted by Council
- Policies
- eProject and service plans
- Grant application, tenders and tender evaluation material
- Service agreements, contracts, leases and licences
- Council leases, permits and notices of building and occupancy
- Relevant technical reports and / or research that informs decision making.

Process information such as:

- Practice notes and operating procedures
- Application processes for approvals, permits, grants, access to Council services
- Decision making processes
- Guidelines and manuals
- Community engagement processes
- Complaints handling processes.

Council records will, at a minimum, be available on Council's website:

- Council meeting agendas
- Reporting to Council
- Minutes of Council meetings
- Reporting from Advisory Committees to Council through reporting to Council
- Audit and Risk Committee Performance Reporting
- Terms of reference or charters for Advisory Committees
- Registers of gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to Councillors or Council Staff
- Registers of travel undertaken by Councillors or Council Staff
- Registers of Conflicts of Interest disclosed by Councillors or Council Staff
- Submissions made by Council
- Registers of donations and grants made by Council
- Registers of leases entered into by Council, as lessor and lessee
- Register of Delegations
- Register of Authorised officers
- Register of Election campaign donations
- Summary of Personal Interests
- Any other Registers or Records required by legislation or determined to be in the public interest
- Summary of Personal Interests
- Submissions received under section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* or received through a community engagement process undertaken by Council.

Carers recognition

The *Carers Recognition Act 2012* formally recognises and values the role of carers and the importance of care relationships in the Victorian community. The Act formally acknowledges the important contribution that people in care relationships make to our community and the unique knowledge that carers hold about the person in their care.

The Act is taken into consideration when developing and reviewing relevant policies, procedures and promotion of supports within Council. This is reflected in Council's:

- Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Carer focus on activities, supports and information in the Disability Inclusion e-newsletter
- Carers Hub at Living & Learning Nillumbik and newsletter
- Disability Action Plan 2020-2024
- Employee Experience: lifecycle from hire to retire
- Flexible Working Policy
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025
- Internal Carer Services Network
- Internal Volunteering Framework for Council programs
- Maternal Child Health Enterprise Agreement 3
- Monthly pathways for carers walk
- Nillumbik Carer Collective support group
- Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Participation in the Open Minds Dementia Friendly Alliance.
- Support for carers through the Nillumbik Parenting Hub
- Transition to Retirement Procedure.

Charter of Human Rights

The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* protects the human rights of all people in Victoria. All public authorities and their employees are obliged to act in accordance with the Charter.

The Charter seeks to increase transparency in decision making affecting people's rights and assure the public that their rights are being taken into account. It protects civil and political rights and some cultural rights into Victorian law while promoting and protecting principles of freedom, respect, equality and dignity. At Council, we consider the 20 human rights established by the Charter when delivering our services, developing our policies or implementing our plans.

As reflected in Council's new Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy, 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.

No human rights complaints were received by Council during 2023-2024.



Image: Council engages with the community on a wide range of projects, activities and services

Child safety

Council is committed to being a child safe organisation where every child and young person has the right to be and feel safe, valued and heard. We all have a shared responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, neglect and abuse.

As Council provide services and facilities for children and young people, we have a legal obligation to implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Standards aim to promote the safety of children, prevent child abuse, and ensure organisations have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

To meet our commitment and obligations to child safety and the standards, we have taken proactive steps to understand and enhance our level of commitment and compliance.

In 2023, Council undertook internal risk assessments of 33 teams across Council to determine the risk of exposure to child safety. Council continues to action its Child Safety and Wellbeing Improvement Plan. This plan outlines key deliverables across the Council to ensure we not only meet Child Safety Standards, but also work towards creating a culture of child safety in everything we do.

To support and drive the implementation of the improvement plan's key initiatives, a dedicated Child Safety and Wellbeing Advisor was appointed on a fixed-term basis until mid-2025.

Key actions from the Improvement Plan that have been completed or are currently underway include:

- Review of induction and engagement processes for all paid and unpaid positions in Council to incorporate child safety considerations
- Stakeholder testing of the online child incident report form by the Youth Council
- Establishment of a cross-organisational working group to champion the achievement of the Improvement Plan actions across all Directorates
- Review of current organisational policies and practices.

Our commitment to child safety is unwavering, and we will continue to strive towards creating a safe and nurturing environment for all children in our community.

Complaints

Council encourages customers who are not satisfied with a service provided or action taken by one of our staff to lodge a complaint. Complaints are also an opportunity for Council to receive 'free feedback' from our customers and community.

In December 2021, Council reviewed and adopted its Complaint Handling Policy in accordance with the requirements of section 107 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Complaint Handling Policy outlines Council's processes for:

- dealing with complaints made to Council
- reviewing any action, decision or service in respect of which the complaint is made
- exercising discretion for the Council to refuse to deal with a complaint
- undertaking an internal review of a complaint made to Council.

Council's Complaint Handling Policy can be accessed at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/complaints.

In 2023-2024, there were 628 complaints logged, compared to 531 in 2022-2023 – an increase of 18.3%.

The main complaint type was the way we deliver our service (62% of complaints). The main activities driving the complaints include road surfaces, bins not emptied, planning services, leisure services, preschools and tree inspections.

Our process mapping tool, Promapp, is enabling us to review and improve Council processes. This is allowing our processes to be more effective, by driving process consistency, identify errors and reducing risks. Priority is now being given to improving processes that are aligned to our customer complaints data.

Contracts and procurement

Council has a Procurement Policy in accordance with section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Act defines procurement policy to mean the principles, processes and procedures that apply to the purchases of goods, services and works by Council.

Council reviewed and adopted its Procurement Policy and associated guidelines on 29 June 2021. The policy seeks to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money. The policy applies to all procurement and contracting activities of Council and is binding on Council officers, outsourced contractors and consultants while engaged by, and / or representing Council.

Council's Procurement Policy can be accessed at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/strategies-policies.

In 2023-2024, Council did not enter into any contracts valued at \$300,000 or more for goods, services or works without first engaging in a competitive public tender process where required as per Procurement Policy.

Council memberships

Council is a member of a number of groups and organisations, including the following key memberships:

- Australian Local Government Women's Association
- Local Government Professionals.
- Metropolitan Transport Forum
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action
- Northern Councils Alliance
- Victorian Local Governance Association.



Image: Council is a member of the Northern Councils Alliance, advocating on key priorities for our region

Disability Action Plan 2020-2024

In accordance with section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*, Council's Disability Action Plan 2020-2024 provides the framework to address disability inclusion and access issues across all areas of planning and operations, ensuring Council meets its requirements under federal, state and local government legislation.

The Disability Action Plan has four priorities for action:

- reducing barriers to people with a disability accessing Council goods, services and facilities
- reducing barriers to employment and training for people with a disability
- promoting inclusion and participation in the community
- achieving tangible changes in attitude and practices that discriminate against people with a disability.

The Disability Action Plan reflects the critical need for all areas of Council to work together in a coordinated manner to improve access and promote inclusion.

Year 4 highlights of the Disability Action Plan included:

- Council's Disability Inclusion team partnered with Edendale Community Environment Farm and the Aligned Leisure team at the Eltham Leisure Centre to pilot a new disability work experience program - the Accessible Work Experience (AWE) program. Adults with disability complete a 10-week work experience program, supported by the NDIS Employment team at local disability service St John of God Accord. Set up costs including staff resourcing to create easy read task lists and other adapted resources have been funded by an MAV/NDIS grant of \$20,000 awarded to Council to pilot a work experience program.
- Council's Disability Inclusion team established and managed a new Nillumbik Carer Services Network, where local and regional carer services share up to date information and resources about current funding and supports available to Carers in Nillumbik.
- Council's Disability Inclusion team partnered with the Economic Development and Tourism team to promote the Nillumbik Good Access for Good Business guide to help local business owners understand how being more accessible, welcoming and inclusive is good for business. A number of free one on one session with an accredited Access Consultant are being offered to small business owners to discuss individual access concerns.
- Council's Disability Inclusion team partnered with Edendale Farm to support the inclusion of accessibility information on the Edendale Farm website at edendale.vic.gov.au/Visit/Accessibility
- Enhanced access information embedded on the Edendale website, supplied by 'Cérge' software, include an audio guide, a visual social story and detailed sensory information. A 360-degree virtual tour of the farm is also available, with a measuring tool that enables people with mobility aids to map their journey through the farm.
- Aligned Leisure have also added the Cerge app to their Eltham Leisure Centre website, featuring the visual story and sensory information from cerge.app/visualstory/Eltham-Leisure-Centre
- Council's Disability Inclusion team supported the successful delivery of activities and events to celebrate International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD). Activities funded by Council's annual IDPwD grant included:
 - Two sell out live theatre events and an art market at the Eltham Little Theatre, featuring performers and artists with disability based at local disability service Araluen
 - A music and dance concert at local disability service St John of God Accord
 - Two extremely well attended Farm tours by the social enterprise The Veggie Empire - an urban farm in Nillumbik founded by two farmers with intellectual disability
 - An Open Minds Dementia Alliance information day
 - An 'Around the World Autistic Ball' hosted by autism peer support group Different Journeys
 - A sensory friendly Unified Basketball clinic run by the Eltham Wildcats - including purchase of sensory friendly equipment.
 - An autism awareness guest speaker at the Wadambuk St Andrews AGM - the biggest event of the year at the community centre.

Nillumbik's first Changing Places facility (for people with high support needs and their carers) is currently under construction at Alistair Knox Park, as are other universal access improvements in and around that area.

Council's commitment to Universal Access Principles is further demonstrated by the engagement of an Accredited Access Consultant for the following projects:

- Alistair Knox Park Changing Places and Universal Access Project in Eltham
- Civic Drive, Greensborough Audit (building and surrounds)
- Diamond Valley Library outdoor re-development in Greensborough

- MCH Diamond Creek access improvements
- Herberts Lane Playground in Diamond Creek
- Nillumbik Youth Hub in Diamond Creek
- Ryans Reserve Playground in Diamond Creek.

Disability inclusion e-newsletter

Council's Disability Inclusion e-newsletter highlights local events, programs and opportunities for people in the Shire with disability, their carers and supports.

The newsletter continues to provide up to date and disability-specific information.

E-newsletter membership continued to slowly increase from 396 to 414 in the 2023-2024 year, despite high staff turnover across disability specific services. Network members are keen to find out about local activities and opportunities for social connection as well as online information and support sessions.

Network members include:

- Aged care centres
- Carers of all ages
- Community members with disability
- Disability advocates
- Disability Inclusion teams at neighbouring councils.
- Disability services in Nillumbik and regionally
- Disability support groups
- Local secondary schools, Melbourne Polytechnic, and childcare centres
- The NDIS Local Area Coordination team locally and regionally.

Mailchimp data shows that Disability Inclusion e-newsletters are forwarded throughout schools and services up to 50 times, indicating that the newsletter has a wide reach.



Image: Enjoying the Diamond Creek Trail

Domestic animal management plan

In accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Council must develop and adopt a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years. Council is required to review the Plan annually and report achievements to the community through the annual report.

Council adopted the 2021-2025 DAMP in December 2021. The DAMP promotes responsible pet ownership in the community.

Key achievements within the DAMP in 2023-2024 include:

- Officer training to maintain industry standard skills and knowledge and include training of handling animals and aggressive dogs
- Educational program encouraging responsible pet ownership facilitated by Community Safety Officers at parks and reserves within the Shire during business hours and after hours, including weekdays and weekends
- Information sessions at local community centres, retirement villages, schools, sporting grounds and other relevant groups on educating and promoting all aspects of responsible pet ownership
- The Annual Nillumbik Pet Expo at Marngrook Oval in Diamond Creek was successfully delivered in October 2023
- Videos established to promote various animal related Local Laws
- Established Pet Tales initiative promoting fortnightly dedicated animal posts on social media
- Council hosted pop-ups promoting responsible pet ownership at events throughout the Shire, with representation at events held in Diamond Creek and Eltham
- Legislative agreements (under section 84Y of the Domestic Animals Act 1994) have been established with 12 animal rescues including Yarrambat Veterinary Hospital, Save-A-Dog-Scheme, Second Chance Animal Rescue and the Cat Protection Society
- In conjunction with Animal Welfare Victoria, responsible pet ownership packs are provided to owners upon first registering their pets with Council
- Transport of un-microchipped pets to Yarrambat Veterinary Hospital for microchipping to enable registration before release as legislatively required
- An increase of patrols in parks and reserves to monitor compliance with off leash areas
- Regular maintenance of our dedicated webpage for responsible pet ownership, updated with new legislation and promotions.

Council recently completed consultation for the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 review. This will assist in establishing a draft plan, with further engagement in early 2025 followed by further consultation and endorsement of Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 to be in effect by October 2025.

Food Act Ministerial directions

In accordance with section 7E of the *Food Act 1984*, Council is required to publish a summary of any ministerial directions received during the financial year in its annual report.

No such ministerial directions were received by Council during the 2023-2024 financial year.

Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) provides the community with a general right of access to information held by Council. Access may be limited by exceptions and exemptions that have been prescribed to protect public interests and the private and business affairs of people about whom Council holds information.

Requests for access to information under the FOI Act need to be made in writing, specifying the particular documents being sought, to the Freedom of Information Officer and accompanied by the appropriate fee.

Part II of the FOI Act requires Council to publish a range of information about our functions and procedures, the type of documents we keep, reports and publications, and Freedom of Information arrangements. This information is set out on Council's website.

The Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) plays an important role in promoting the operation of the FOI Act. A request can be made to OVIC to have a decision reviewed if an applicant is refused access to documents or is not satisfied with the action or decision taken by Council in relation to their request.

As of 1 July 2018, the Information Commissioner publishes decisions made under section 49P of the FOI Act (Review on Decision) on OVIC's website and the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) website.

For further information or to access Council's Part II Statement, visit Council's website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information.

Freedom of Information	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Total number of requests	20	21	15	11	10
Access granted in full	7	5	6	5	3
Access granted in part	6	5	3	5	7
No documents available	0	0	1	0	0
Documents provided outside of FOI	0	2	10	3	1
Access denied in full	2	0	1	1	0
Requests withdrawn or not proceeded with	1	1	11	9	6
Requests in progress at end of financial year	4	8	3	0	1
Total application fees collected	\$634.80	\$642.60	\$420.90	\$325.60	\$266.40
Total other charges collected	\$1,409.75	\$598.07	\$90.10	\$112.80	\$247.77

Council received a total of 48 applications under the FOI Act in 2023-2024.

Of those, 20 applications became valid under section 17 of the FOI Act and were processed. Their outcomes are listed in the table above.

The remaining 28 applications received in 2023-2024 had the following status or outcome as at 30 June 2024:

- 22 applications were resolved through the provision of documents/information outside the FOI Act or by directing the applicant to an alternative access option
- 3 applications did not pay the application fee required under section 17(2A) of the FOI Act
- 3 applications did not provide clear enough terms to identify the documents being sought as required under section 17(2) of the FOI Act.

Information privacy and health records

Council believes the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy.

Accordingly, Council is committed to full compliance with its obligations under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

Council has implemented policies and procedures to ensure responsible collection, handling and disposal of all personal and health information. Copies of Council's Information Privacy Policy are available from the Civic Centre and Council's website.

Our community and stakeholders have the right to access and correct their personal information held by Council. These can usually be done through normal administrative processes. However, there can be instances where there will be a need to submit a formal written request to access or correct personal information. Formal requests need to be sent, with proof of identity, to the Privacy Officer. Formal requests may be processed under the FOI Act.

Any person who feels aggrieved by Council's handling of their personal information may make a complaint to Council's Privacy Officer at privacy@nillumbik.vic.gov.au, or phone enquiries to 9433 3271.

OVIC may receive complaints about possible breaches of the Information Privacy Principles, however the Deputy Commissioner may decline to hear the complaint if the complainant has not first made a complaint to Council.

Council received three privacy complaints in 2023-2024. All complaints were resolved internally by Council.

Further information on Council's Privacy policy is available on the Council's website at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Infrastructure and development contributions

In accordance with section 46GM and 46QD of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, a council that is a collecting or development agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on infrastructure and development contributions including levies and works in kind. The report must be published in the council's annual report.

For the 2023-2024 financial year, the following information about infrastructure and development contributions is disclosed.



Image: Footpath maintenance and repairs

Table 1 – Total Development Contributions Plan (DCP) levies received in 2023-2024

DCP name and year approved	Levies received: 2023-2024 (\$)
DCP01 – Development Contributions Plan for Area A DP1, August 2003	\$0
DCP02 – Area B: Diamond Creek North Development Contributions Plan – Area 2, February 2012	\$0
DCP04 – Area 4: Plenty Low Density Area Development Contributions Plan, December 2012	\$0
Total	\$0

Table 2 – DCP land, works, services or facilities accepted as works-in-kind in 2023-2024

DCP name and year approved	Project ID	Project description	Item purpose	Project value (\$)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total				Nil

Table 3 – Total DCP contributions received and expended to date (for DCPs approved after 1 June 2016)

DCP name and year approved	Total levies received (\$)	Total levies expended (\$)	Total works-in-kind accepted (\$)	Total DCP contributions received (levies and works-in-kind) (\$)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total				

Table 4 – Land, works, services or facilities delivered in 2023-2024 from DCP levies collected

Project description	Project ID	DCP name and year approved	DCP fund expended (\$)	Works-in-kind accepted (\$)	Council's contribution (\$)	Other contributions (\$)	Total project expenditure (\$)	Percentage of item delivered
DCP2 – Public Open Space Improvement	PG015	DCP02 – Area B: Diamond Creek North 2012	\$18,160	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$99,832	4%
DCP2 – Bellbird Road /Broad Gully Road Upgrade	R004	DCP02 – Area B: Diamond Creek North 2012	\$23,316	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29,498	5%
Shared Pathway Area B	S013	DCP02 – Area B: Diamond Creek North 2012	\$18,964	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,964	2%
Total			\$60,440	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,440	

Legislation impacting Council

Council undertakes a broad range of activities and services and conducts its activities under a highly regulated environment.

In Victoria, councils have responsibilities under more than 120 different Victorian pieces of legislation, as well as responsibilities under Commonwealth legislation.

Many acts and regulations, including those below, have a direct impact on Council and require significant compliance, contain specific provisions relevant to Council, have some form of indirect influence, or require specific knowledge by staff carrying out their duties.

- *Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth)*
- *Building Act 1993*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)*
- *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Act 2006*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Emergency Management Act 2013*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958*
- *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012*
- *Food Act 1984*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*
- *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*
- *Housing Act 1983*
- *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*
- *Land Act 1958*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*
- *Public Records Act 1973*
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Sex Work Act 1994*
- *Subdivision Act 1988*
- *Summary Offences Act 1966*
- *Tobacco Act 1987*
- *Valuation of Land Act 1960*

Local laws

Nillumbik General Local Law 1 was adopted by Council on 13 December 2022 and came into effect on 22 December 2022.

The objective of this local law is to:

- provide for the peace order and good governance of the Nillumbik Shire Council
- promote a physical and social environment free from hazards to health, in which the residents of the municipal district can enjoy a quality of life that meets the general expectations of the community
- prevent and suppress nuisances which may adversely affect the enjoyment of life or the health, safety, and welfare of persons
- prohibit, regulate, and control activities which may be dangerous or unsafe or detrimental to the quality of life and the environment
- prohibit, regulate, and control access to and behaviour in and on Council land
- prohibit, regulate, and control the use of Council Land; and protect public assets vested in Council from damage, accelerated deterioration or abuse during the building process or at other times
- provide a physical environment which aims to minimise hazards to health and safety of persons attending building sites and those adjacent, opposite, or passing building sites
- prohibit, regulate, and control the presence of and disposal of builders' refuse, rubbish, and soil on and from building sites within the municipal district, particularly litter and storm-water pollution to protect receiving waterways
- provide for the consistent administration and enforcement of this Local Law.

National competition policy

Council has in place the necessary procurement processes and controls to ensure that Council's commercial dealings are honest and comply with the requirements of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

Councillors and Council officers are also covered by a Councillors and Officers Liability Policy.

Public interest disclosures

Council supports the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (PID) and encourages employees, contractors and members of the public to report known or suspected instances of corrupt or improper conduct.

The PID facilitates disclosures of improper conduct by the Council or its employees and provides protection for people who make disclosures. Council encourages the disclosure of wrongdoing within the organisation and where a potential disclosure under the PID is identified, ensures effective action is taken, including investigation by the appropriate entities.

The procedures adopted by Council establish a system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by Council, its employees or Councillors. These procedures enable disclosure relating to Council or its employees may be made to either Council's Protected Disclosure Coordinator or directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), the Victorian Ombudsman.

A disclosure about a Councillor must be made to IBAC or the Ombudsman. Disclosures may be made by Council employees, Councillors, councils or the public.

Council is committed to the PID's aims and objectives. Accordingly, Council:

- does not tolerate improper or corrupt conduct by its employees, officers or Councillors
- supports disclosures being made that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, and conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment
- will protect people who make disclosures from reprisals and give natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure.

During 2023-2024, there were no disclosures made to Council that were required to be reported to IBAC, pursuant to the provisions of the PID.

Road Management Act 2004 ministerial directions

Council is responsible for the management of approximately 789 kilometres of road (of which 301 kilometres are unsealed), 397 kilometres of underground drainage, approximately 20,000 stormwater pits and 343 kilometres of footpaths.

The Road Management Plan forms the basis of Council's management of its road and road related assets and provides details of how Council will inspect, maintain and respond to road and road related assets. The Road Management Plan was reviewed and amended in June 2021, in accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Council, as a road authority, is required under section 22 of the Act to publish a copy or summary of any direction received from the Minister in its annual report. No directions were received from the Minister in 2023-2024.



Image: The sculpture at the Eltham Gateway

Our financials

The annual financial and performance statements are a separate reporting item as part of the meeting agenda to Council's 10 September 2024 Extraordinary Council Meeting.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Advocacy	The act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing.
Business continuity	The planning and preparation of an organisation to make sure it overcomes serious incidents or disasters and resumes its normal operations within a reasonably short period.
Capital works	Building and engineering works that create an asset, as well as constructing or installing facilities and fixtures associated with, and forming an integral part of, those works.
Community engagement	A way of ensuring that <i>community</i> members have access to valued social settings and activities, feel that they can contribute meaningfully to those activities, and develop functional capabilities that enable them to participate fully.
Corporate governance	The mechanisms, processes and relations by which a corporate body is controlled and directed.
Customer experience	The ongoing interaction between an organisation and a customer over the duration of their relationship.
Financial performance indicators	A prescribed set of indicators and associated measures in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework that gauge financial management performance, including operating position, liquidity, obligations, stability and efficiency.
Green Wedge	The non-urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne that sit outside the Urban Growth Boundary and were first identified in the 1960s.
Major initiatives	Significant initiatives that directly contribute to the achievement of the Council Plan during the financial year and have a major focus in the budget.
Mystery shopping	A tool used externally by market research companies, watchdog organisations, or internally by companies themselves to measure quality of service, or compliance with regulation, or to gather specific information about products and services.
Participate Nillumbik	Council's online community engagement site. This is where you can help inform Council's decision-making by sharing your ideas or feedback on a variety of projects. You can also get updates on projects and hear about how your input has contributed to Council's decisions.
Performance statement	A statement that includes the audited results of a selection of service performance indicators, financial performance indicators and sustainable capacity indicators for the financial year and reported in the annual report.
Planning and Consultation Committee	A Special Committee made up of all seven Nillumbik Councillors. The committee agenda is structured into planning related or consultation items.
Report of operations	A report on the operations of Council during the financial year and included in the annual report.

Term	Definition
Risk management	A process in which organisations identify, assess and treat risks that could affect their operations.
Services	Assistance, support, advice and action undertaken by a council for the benefit of the local community.
Strategic indicators	Indicators developed for monitoring the achievement of the objectives specified in the council plan.
Strategic objectives	The outcomes a council is seeking to achieve over the next four years and included in the council plan.
Sustainability	Meeting present day needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Sustainable capacity indicators	A prescribed set of indicators in the Local Government Reporting Framework that measure whether councils have the capacity to meet the agreed service and infrastructure needs of the local community and absorb foreseeable changes and unexpected shocks into the future.
Wards	Subdivisions of the Shire into sections with an elected Councillor to represent the different sections.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BNLLEN	Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CSBA	Customer Service Benchmarking Australia
DAMP	Domestic Animal Management Plan
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EFT	Equivalent Full Time
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EV	Electric Vehicle
FOI	Freedom of Information
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GIA	Gender Impact Assessment
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission
IDAHOBIT	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia
L&LN	Living & Learning Nillumbik
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual)
LGPRF	Local Government Performance Reporting Framework
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
MPS	Municipal Planning Strategy
NCA	Northern Councils Alliance
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OVIC	Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
PCC	Planning and Consultation Committee
PID	Public Interest Disclosures Act
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	State Emergency Service
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

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Image: Cycling on the Diamond Creek Trail



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Eltham Community and Reception Centre

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Hurstbridge Hub

50 Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge 3099
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Nillumbik Operations Centre

290-304 Yan Yean Road, Plenty 3090
9433 3500

Living & Learning Nillumbik

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Eltham: 739 Main Road, Eltham 3095

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