

**Motion 1: Strengthening Mental Health Services for Youth**

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to significantly enhance investment and increase support for youth mental health services, prioritising early intervention, accessible care, and school and community-based mental health programs. Despite existing initiatives, demand continues to outpace capacity, leaving community-based services under-resourced.

**Rationale for Motion**

Children and young people across Victoria are experiencing rising rates of mental health challenges. In areas such as Nillumbik, mental health conditions are more prevalent among young people aged 15–24, with rates surpassing Greater Melbourne averages (11.6 ASR vs. 10.6 ASR per 100).

However, being one of the most socioeconomically advantaged areas in Victoria, as reflected by the SEIFA Index, regions like Nillumbik are often overlooked for mental health services and funding. This creates significant service gaps, even though the community experiences higher rates of mental health conditions compared to the state average. Without adequate school and community-based support, these issues go unaddressed, further compounding the impact on students, families, and local health systems.

Local government plays a critical role in identifying and addressing these gaps through community programs, youth services, and partnerships with health providers. Schools also face increasing demand for on-site mental health support to address issues early and mitigate long-term impacts. Additionally, community health services are strained, requiring additional funding to ensure equitable access to care.

We call for State Government to fast track the implementation of reforms and launch its Statewide Wellbeing Strategy as well as accelerating the formation of Social Inclusion Action Groups in every LGA. While SIAGs have been successfully implemented in select regions, such as Brimbank, Greater Geelong, Whittlesea, Mildura, and Ballarat, a statewide rollout is essential to ensure all communities benefit from this initiative. Accelerating the formation of SIAGs in every LGA will empower local communities to collaboratively address mental health challenges, promote inclusivity, and develop tailored solutions that resonate with their unique needs.

By investing in mental health resources across schools, local councils, and healthcare providers, the State Government can ensure that communities in both advantaged and disadvantaged areas receive the support necessary to improve mental health outcomes. Investment may include:

- Increasing the availability of psychologists, counsellors, and mental health workers in schools, local government, and health services.
- Funding resilience-building and early intervention programs in educational, community, and healthcare settings.

Supporting partnerships between local councils, schools, and community mental health providers to deliver coordinated mental health services.

**Motion 2: Physical infrastructure – accessibility**

That the MAV advocates for the Victorian Government to establish a dedicated funding program aimed at supporting accessibility upgrades to ageing community facilities and open spaces in municipalities like Nillumbik Shire. This program should focus on:

- Ensuring compliance with the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 and universal design principles, including sensory considerations.
- Increasing the number of designated accessible parking spaces.
- Developing continuous accessible pathways, especially around community facilities, parks, trails, and public transport hubs.
- Enhancing social connection, participation, and mobility for people with disabilities.
- Fostering more inclusive communities.

**Rationale for Motion**

Approximately 20% of Victorians live with a disability, and the state's population is ageing. Ensuring that community infrastructure is accessible is vital for promoting social inclusion and upholding the rights of all residents.

Nillumbik Shire, characterized by its stable population and ageing infrastructure, faces challenges in upgrading facilities to meet contemporary accessibility standards.

The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 mandate that new and modified buildings provide adequate access for people with disabilities. Yet, many existing structures in Nillumbik predate these standards and require significant modifications to comply.

With financial constraints intensified by rate capping, councils like Nillumbik need additional support to upgrade ageing infrastructure. A dedicated state-funded program would enable necessary modifications, ensuring facilities are accessible and inclusive.

This motion aligns with the objectives of the Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan, aiming to create an inclusive, accessible, and safe state that celebrates diversity. By partnering with the Victorian Government, we can ensure that all residents, regardless of ability, have equitable access to community facilities, thereby enhancing social participation and community well-being.

**Motion 3: Equitable Funding of Community Facility Infrastructure**

That the MAV calls upon the Victorian Government to commit to a review and increased funding for ageing or non-existent infrastructure ensuring equitable access to essential community facilities especially libraries and pool across all municipalities.

**Rationale for Motion**

Equitable access to community facilities is fundamental to the health, well-being, and social fabric of all communities. Councils across the state irrespective of their growth rates, encounter unique challenges in providing and maintaining such infrastructure.

Nillumbik Shire boasts a vibrant and engaged community that heavily utilises its existing infrastructure, particularly libraries and aquatic centres. This high patronage underscores the essential role these facilities play in community engagement, education, and social connection.

However, many of these well-utilised facilities are ageing and require significant upgrades to continue meeting the community's needs effectively. For instance, the Diamond Creek Outdoor Pool, a seasonal facility, is one of many across the state that requires significant investment to ensure it meets current standards and is able to provide social connection, participation, and mobility for people at all ages and stages.

Nillumbik also has areas of the Shire with non-existing infrastructure and the current funding models often prioritise high-growth areas, inadvertently overlooking councils like Nillumbik, where the demand on existing infrastructure remains high despite stable population figures.

Investing in new, and/or the renewal and enhancement of Nillumbik's community facilities is not merely a response to infrastructure needs but a proactive measure to foster community well-being. Modern, accessible, and well-equipped libraries and aquatic centres serve as hubs for lifelong learning, health, and social interaction, contributing positively to the quality of life for all residents.

By advocating for equitable funding that recognises both usage intensity and infrastructure age, we can ensure that communities like Nillumbik continue to thrive. This approach aligns with the broader objective of fostering resilient, connected, and vibrant communities across all of Victoria.

Furthermore, by expanding and adequately funding programs with inclusive eligibility criteria, the Victorian Government can ensure that all outer Melbourne communities have access to the essential facilities they need to prosper. This motion seeks to strengthen partnerships with the Victorian Government, aiming for a collaborative approach that supports the diverse needs of all municipalities, thereby enhancing the well-being of communities across the state.