



Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

Volume 3

Participate Nillumbik submissions with attachments

250 - 280



nillumbik.vic.gov.au

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Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Protection and enhancement of our native environment and biodiversity should be at the heart of the vision - the draft plan does not state this strongly enough. Protection of the biodiversity of our Green Wedge is critical to our future, as is made plain by the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES): "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide." They also state that it is not too late to make a difference, if we start now "at every level from local to global". The Vision does not reflect the communities strong support for the maintenance, protection and enhancement of the high environmental values of the Green Wedge, expressed through the initial engagement process and by the majority report of the Community Panel. It also doesn't acknowledge the importance of our Green Wedge to the whole of Melbourne, given it is the most environmentally intact of Melbourne's Green Wedges The Vision should also address climate change issues which have become

more critical not less. It should recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play by actively seeking local solutions to global problems.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Disagree

Key Move 2 - Disagree

Key Move 3 - Disagree

Key Move 4 - Disagree

Key Move 5 - Disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

The draft plan needs to describe in much greater detail the ACTIONS to be taken, and each of these must prioritise best environmental practice, ensuring the protection of ALL native vegetation and fauna across the Shire. Every descriptor needs to clearly indicate how it will contribute to the protection and reinvigoration of biodiversity for the long term. The current GWMP 2010 - 2025 describes in much greater detail (than the new draft) the ways Council and community will ensure the protection of the green wedge and yet there has been consistent net loss of vegetation. Any new plan must therefore be STRONGER and CLEARER about the actions which will be taken to reverse this ongoing decline. There are no commitments to actually addressing the environmental issues of Climate change and Biodiversity which featured as action in the last GWMP.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Disagree

Aboriginal voice - Disagree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Disagree

Manage change for future benefit - Disagree

Collaboration and connectedness - Disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Disagree

Social equity - Disagree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Disagree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Disagree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Disagree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Each Principle is a very broad statement and it is unclear how they will be

interpreted and applied while ensuring care for the environment. The Principles need to reflect the community's commitment to protecting the Green Wedge. The plan must describe how the values of the Green Wedge will be prioritised in keeping with the State Government's policies Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 and Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037, which is 'Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for.' The outlined Principles contain potentially useful ideas but there needs to be greater emphasis on the protection of the environment. For example, the principle that says, 'The green wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its values and with a focus on long-term stewardship.' could read, "The green wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its biodiversity and environmental values and with a focus on long-term stewardship." These Principles almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) An additional principle should be added, at the top of the list, as follows – Preservation of Environment and Biodiversity The decline in biodiversity must be reversed and the effects of Climate Change must be addressed so that we maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. The 'Sustainability and the precautionary principle' has been taken from the previous GWMP and then watered down. The principle from the previous GWMP should be reinstated as supported by the Community Panel.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

The thrust of Goal 1, to engage the community, is important but needs to be explained in the context of the environmental protection aims. The importance of the role of the community for stewardship of the land needs to be clearly stated and emphasised. 'How can we maintain and improve the environment', not 'What can we get out of the land'. For example, Objective O1.1 could be: Enable our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge, to ensure that we enhance biodiversity and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) The tone and wording of parts of the Goal 1 are too ambiguous and can be interpreted as an opportunity to ignore, water-down or override the environmental protection responsibilities of those who live in the GW. The vast majority of the stated objectives and key actions are applicable to a well thought out plan for 'any rural municipality'. Whilst they are obviously required for Nillumbik's rural areas, they do not specifically relate to the special aspects associated with the GW. The mixing of the 'general rural' and 'specific GW' issues makes the GWMP draft complex and confused. In some instances, it could be interpreted that the GW is being blamed for many problems that are common to most rural communities. Achieving community engagement by playing down or ignoring the GW residents' responsibilities for environmental protection is self-defeating. This will result in a diminished GW that does not meet the aspirations of the majority of the local community or Victoria's desired planning outcomes for the Green Wedges. The tone of 'how can we change the GW planning provisions' should be refocused to 'how can we develop smart solutions, consistent with the current GW planning provisions and boundary'. A1.6 is a good example of this. A1.7 needs a similar approach to solve the problem without diminishing the GW or its boundary. Objectives O1.3, O1.6 & O1.7 and Actions A1.4, A1.5, A1.8, A1.9, A1.10 & A1.11 apply to any rural area, whether it is a GW or not. They certainly should be in the Council Plan, but don't need to be specifically

spelt out 'part of' the GWMP, other than as a reference to acknowledge that they apply to the GW.

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) Studies show that the natural environment, "the bush", has a positive influence on the mental and physical health for regular visitors to, and residents of, the bush. This needs (with the evidence) to be reflected in the Key Actions. In order to better manage the natural environment of the Shire, greater dialogue must be generated and maintained with the Traditional Custodians of the area. This is vital for the health of the whole community and the environment in which we live. A Key Action of Goal 2 must focus on this. The preamble finishes with a paragraph on the iconic nature of mudbrick dwellings to Nillumbik and laments that the number of new such dwellings has 'fallen away'. Doing something about this needs to be a Key action if Council is sincere about their comments of importance. People are important and a healthy environment helps people to be healthy, but the natural environment should not be compromised.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

The GWMP needs to more strongly acknowledge the importance of ALL indigenous vegetation and address the urgent need to conserve it THROUGHOUT the Shire, on private and public land. Goal 3 repeatedly uses the language of 'balance', and this needs to be amended as it indicates that our thinking is oppositional. It implies that there is a need to trade-off environmental health against other considerations,

while international, national, and state government reports indicate that we must prioritise the health of our environment. The use of stocktakes and studies [see A3.1, p32] that describe some areas of vegetation as more significant or valuable than others is alarming as it can lead to greater degradation of the environment which is already under pressure. An additional Action must be to undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, the value of ecosystems, care for natural landscapes, bushfire risk reduction through understanding the ancient role of fire in the landscape, the significance of the Green Wedge, climate change and their interdependence. It is important to consider vital faunal corridors, which may or may not be currently vegetated OR may support less “valuable” (read: less intact or degraded) habitats. We need to acknowledge that our natural environment is already highly fragmented, so these important corridors may exist, or need to be created, across landscapes that do not contain so-called “valuable” biodiversity and habitats. (A3.12) Amenity has no place when considering waterway health. This is not an area in which “balance” is appropriate and wording for this should be “Review current water extraction and diversion practices, including use of dams and bores, in light of inadequate environmental flows due to reduced rain fall and climate change impacts”.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

This section must clearly focus on overall environmental protection. Economic activities must be assessed and altered in response to latest science and the urgent need for environmental protections. This must be reflected in the title of the Goal, the Actions, and throughout the plan, for example, ‘A prosperous eco-friendly Green Wedge economy’. Support for local agriculture is important but must always provide for the continuing health of the environment. New systems that respect and promote regenerative farming, Indigenous knowledge, and value indigenous flora and fauna must be encouraged. The draft suggests that to start farming in the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) no permit should be required if the land has been previously cleared and used for farming. This definition of ‘cleared land’ needs greater detail. This draft must mention the fact that tourism developments in the Green Wedge need to be “in conjunction” with agricultural uses, as stated in

Section 55 of the planning scheme. This clause of the planning scheme decreases the likelihood of inappropriate development. Horses and other hard-hoofed animals have a negative impact on the environment – none of Australia’s native animals have hard hooves. Impacts on habitats include erosion, water quality degradation, damage to flora, and spreading of weeds. Actions must be implemented to prevent these impacts. These must include education of the equine sector and other graziers. There needs to be greater understanding and responsible ownership of animals, ensuring that animals do not enter waterways and are not allowed to graze in the bush. This focus on environmental care must also be reflected in the proposed Nillumbik Equine Strategy. Change the goal to: “A prosperous Green Wedge economy”. The goal was designed for the whole of Nillumbik in the Council Plan, so that the wording throughout this section is very general and needs to be re-focused to what is specific to the GW in terms of environmental context and eco-friendly economic activities. The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) Economic activities must have a net positive impact on the Green Wedge natural environment. Economic activities in the Green Wedge must be compatible with the Vision of the GWMP: “to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.” Rather than the GW environment being an afterthought this plan should learn from the first GWMP: “The GWMP supports economic activity suited to the Green Wedge: activity that does not have a negative impact on its environmental values and characteristic landscapes. This is in accordance with the Council Plan 2009–2013 and Melbourne 2030.”

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

This draft plan suggests the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) is too restrictive of farming practices and this zoning should only be applied to land with higher conservation values. This suggestion puts at serious risk flora and fauna across a significant proportion of the Shire, whether as single trees in paddocks or scattered

pockets of remnant bush. These are all vital and in need of greater care and protection, not less. This Goal in its entirety must place much greater emphasis on the need to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.’ (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050). Key Action A5.6 and A5.7 [page 40 of the draft] propose changes to how land within the Green Wedge can be used. This has the potential to erode the values of the Green Wedge and effectively increase the spread of residential and commercial development outside the Urban Growth Boundary. The UGB must be treated as a hard boundary. The UGB is a hard boundary and should be kept that way as. A5.7 may lead to a push for a buffer zone on the rural side of the UGB. This should be rejected. The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) Council first says it will work with ‘both sides’, but it should first reference the science and government policy on the values and threats to agriculture and the environment and the ideal way that they can coexist for the betterment of both. Nillumbik leaders should explain that “the right to farm” comes with an obligation on the owner to not degrade the land during his/her brief period of stewardship. Stewardship simply means that after an owner’s (brief) tenure the land and its waterways will be passed on in a better state. Council should call on advice of experts in related fields and the requirements of relevant state policies such as Practice Note 31 and the recent DELWP report on Protecting Melbourne’s strategic agricultural land. Responsible Leadership would have a separate section dealing with climate change mitigation in accordance with the precautionary principle. The Victorian Green Wedge Planning Zones are aimed at conserving the natural environment of the Green Wedge and this GWMP draft should be supporting the zones not trying to undermine the RCZ and its conservation responsibilities as this draft does. (A5.6 and A5.7)

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Rather than having an exemplar GWMP for other Councils to follow, Nillumbik now

has a Draft GWMP with little or no priority for enhancing biodiversity or the natural environment of the Green Wedge. The strongest message from the initial community consultation and the Panel Report is that Nillumbik residents and the population of wider Melbourne cherish the high environmental values of the Green Wedge and want it to be maintained, protected and reinvigorated. This message must lay the foundation for any new GWMP. The current draft does not achieve this. There is a worrying lack of detail throughout the document regarding the protection and enhancement of the Shire's biodiversity in all its forms and varying quality. Clearly defined actions need to be included which will address this problem to ensure the long-term health of the Green Wedge. The impact of invasive species – flora and fauna – is significant and this must be better addressed. The Green Wedge Management Plan must reaffirm the Shire's conservation role. The draft speaks of polarised and diverse views and how conversations must be respectful and robust. It is vital that this is the case, and is supported by current science, particularly in relation to the need for environmental repair and preservation. It is necessary that we uphold the highest of professional standards throughout the Shire and its Leadership. The vast majority of the stated objectives and key actions are applicable to a well thought out plan for any 'rural municipality'. Whilst they are obviously required for Nillumbik's rural areas, they do not specifically relate to the special aspects associated with the GW. The mixing of the 'general rural' and 'specific GW' issues makes the GWMP draft complex and confused. It could be interpreted the GW is being blamed for many problems that are common to most rural communities. The last GWMP had positive Environment Strategies that have disappeared from this Council plan and should be reinstated: Environment Strategies from the previous 2010-2025 GWMP (for reference/use)

1. Identify and manage biodiversity at a landscape scale for conservation.
2. Support the participation of rural landholders and communities in conserving biodiversity.
3. Discourage further rural residential development of undersized allotments in the Green Wedge.
4. Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.
5. Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.
6. Conserve biodiversity by implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management.
7. Minimise the impact of pest plants and animals.
8. Identify, document and protect the character of the diverse landscapes of the Green Wedge.
9. Adopt best practice on a local basis to address climate change.

You can upload your submission here.

[REDACTED]

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Submission on Council's Draft GWMP

I am a resident of the Bend of Islands and a member of the Bend of Islands Conservation Association (BICA).

The draft GWMP is not acceptable in its present form. It totally downplays the environmental protection and actions of the last GWMP, while advocating undermining of the current conservation zones.

I consider that it is particularly important that there is a general revision of the draft to incorporate the following issues.

Introduction

- The Draft GWMP has a consistent serious deficiency, running throughout the whole of the document, that means it will not achieve the **Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Desired planning outcomes for green wedges and peri-urban areas**.

The **Plan Melbourne 2017-2050** defines its 1st desired outcome as **Environmental and biodiversity assets**, including *forests and grasslands* and clearly calls for the protection and enhancement of these. This is obviously the highest priority of **Plan Melbourne 2017-2050**, and shows that the green wedges should have strong environmental protection to preserve and enhance their natural environments for the benefit of all Melbournians into the future.

The stated aim of this outcome is *'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.'*

There is a worrying lack of emphasis on the protection and enhancement of the **Environmental and biodiversity assets** in the current Draft GWMP and a major rewrite is required to ensure that this outcome is clearly articulated, emphasised and supported.

- The current declines in biodiversity to critical levels, and the need for strong environmental action by all levels of government and society, has recently come to the fore on many fronts:
 -
 - **The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**
 - *"The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide."*
 - *"it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global".*
 - **The 2018 State of the Environment report for Victoria**
 - 26% of Biodiversity indicators are in poor condition and will remain so without intervention.

The current Draft GWMP opens the way for Nillumbik to do the opposite and allow the further decline of its natural environment, the very asset that make it so suitable for a green wedge.

- The main overriding message from the Panel Report is that Nillumbik residents cherish the high environmental values of the GW and they want it to be maintained, protected and enhanced. This strong message is not carried through in any way in the current GWMP draft.

Vision

- Environmental protection and reinvigoration must be central to the Vision for the Green Wedge. The draft does not state this clearly enough. Appendix 1 of Council's draft quotes the State Government's 'Plan Melbourne 2017-2050', where the first priority for the Green Wedge is to ***'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.'***
- Council's initial community engagement clearly demonstrated that the large majority of Nillumbik residents cherish the high environmental values of the Green Wedge and want it maintained, protected and enhanced. This view was also expressed by the majority report of the Community Panel. Council's draft does not reflect strong enough support for the Community's position.

- To be consistent with the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy this GWMP should be aiming to make Nillumbik's rural landscapes healthier. ie "By 2037 Nillumbik's natural environment is healthy"

- The last GWMP Vision included the following and they should be reinstated into this draft GWMP without all the current compromises and contradictions:

"In 2030, management of the Nillumbik Green Wedge will lead the way in economic, environmental and social sustainability.

The Green Wedge will be secure and will be valued by the local and wider Melbourne community for its natural and cultural values. The future of the Nillumbik Green Wedge is one in which:

- natural and cultural values are conserved and enhanced
- bush and rural landscapes are conserved and enhanced
- the economic future is sound
- communities are strong, connected and supported and are knowledgeable about the Nillumbik Green Wedge
- local identity and diversity are respected and nurtured."
- Since the last GWMP was written Climate Change and Biodiversity issues have become more critical, not less, eg: bees, Nillumbik orchids and frogs, but this draft has no actual initiatives to improve.
- The Victorian Green Wedge Planning Zones are aimed at conserving the natural environment of the Green Wedge and this plan should be supporting the zones not trying to undermine the RCZ and its conservation responsibilities as this draft does.
- The GWMP needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play; that we can be part of the solution - actively seeking local solutions to global problems. We're a relatively affluent population. Nillumbik really is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, when and where else?

Five Key Moves.

- Each of the 'Five Key Moves' contain potentially useful ideas depending on how they are applied, and there needs to be much greater emphasis on the care of the natural environment.
- The document needs to describe in much greater detail the ACTIONS to be taken, and each of these must prioritise best environmental practice, ensuring the protection of ALL native vegetation and fauna across the Shire.
- Every descriptor needs to clearly indicate how it will contribute to the protection and reinvigoration of biodiversity for the long term.
- The current GWMP 2010 - 2025 describes in much greater detail (than the new draft) the ways Council and community will ensure the protection of the green wedge. However, there has been consistent net loss of vegetation. This demonstrates that any new plan must be stronger and clearer about the actions which will be taken to reverse this ongoing decline. The draft GWMP does not achieve this.
- Certainly, Key Move 2 should be deleted in its entirety as it has the completely wrong sets of priorities and emphases.
- There are no commitments to actually addressing the environmental issues of Climate change and Biodiversity which featured as action in the last GWMP.
 - **Manningham Council**, in their GWMP background said, "*The main focus of the Green Wedge Strategy 2004 was the protection of biodiversity, sustainable management of public and private land, environmental education and community engagement and empowerment.*" And, that was 15 years ago! Nothing like this for Nillumbik.

- In the *Four Theme Approach of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021*... “Part 2 of this plan has been grouped into the four themes of the *Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy* (PPWCMA 2004) – Land, Biodiversity, Water and People.” Nothing like this for Nillumbik.
- **Mornington Peninsula Green Wedge Management Plan** 1 April 2019
“*Highlights the relationship between the Green Wedge Management Plan and the State Biodiversity Strategy with particular emphasis on increasing habitat areas and biolinks.*”
Nothing like this in Nillumbik draft plan.
- Rather than having an exemplar GWMP for other Councils to follow, Nillumbik now has a Draft GWMP with little or no priority for enhancing biodiversity or the natural environment of the Green Wedge

Principles

- Each Principle is a very broad statement and it is unclear how they will be interpreted and applied while ensuring care for the environment.
- The Principles need to reflect the community’s commitment to protecting the Green Wedge. The plan must describe how the values of the Green Wedge will be prioritised in keeping with the State Government’s policies *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and *Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, which is ‘Victoria’s plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for.’
- The outlined Principles contain potentially useful ideas but there needs to be greater emphasis on the protection of the environment. For example, the principle that says, ‘The green wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its values and with a focus on long-term stewardship.’ could read, “The green wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its **biodiversity and environmental** values and with a focus on long-term stewardship.”
- These Principles almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to ‘*Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.*’ (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)
- The problem is not what is written in the GWMP draft, but what is omitted.
- An additional principle should be added, at the top of the list, as follows –
Preservation of Environment and Biodiversity
The decline in biodiversity must be reversed and the effects of Climate Change must be addressed so that we maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.
- The ‘**Sustainability and the precautionary principle**’ has been taken from the previous GWMP and then watered down. The principle from the previous GWMP should be reinstated as supported by the Community Panel.

Goal 1

- The thrust of Goal 1, to engage the community, is important but must be framed in the context of the environmental protection aim as stated in 1994 when the Local Government Review Board declared that the new Shire of Nillumbik was to be a **conservation Shire with the Green Wedge as its strategic focus.**
- The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to ‘*Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.*’ (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)

- The tone and wording of parts of the Goal 1 are too ambiguous and can be interpreted as an opportunity to ignore, water-down or override the environmental protection responsibilities of those who live in the GW.
- The vast majority of the stated objectives and key actions are applicable to a well thought out plan for 'any rural municipality'. Whilst they are obviously required for Nillumbik's rural areas, they do not specifically relate to the special aspects associated with the GW. The mixing of the 'general rural' and 'specific GW' issues makes the GWMP draft complex and confused. In some instances, it could be interpreted that the GW is being blamed for many problems that are common to most rural communities.
- The thrust of Goal 1, to engage the community, is important but needs to be explained in the context of the environmental protection aims. The importance of the role of the community for stewardship of the land needs to be clearly stated and emphasised. 'How can we maintain and improve the environment', not 'What can we get out of the land'.

For example, Objective 01.1 could be: -

Enable our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge, to ensure that we enhance biodiversity and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.

- Achieving community engagement by playing down or ignoring the GW residents' responsibilities for environmental protection is self-defeating. This will result in a diminished GW that does not meet the aspirations of the majority of the local community or Victoria's desired planning outcomes for the Green Wedges.
- The tone of 'how can we change the GW planning provisions' should be refocused to 'how can we develop smart solutions, consistent with the current GW planning provisions and boundary'. A1.6 is a good example of this. A1.7 needs a similar approach to solve the problem without diminishing the GW or its boundary.
- Comments on specific points:
Objectives O1.3, O1.6 & O1.7 and Actions A1.4, A1.5, A1.8, A1.9, A1.10 & A1.11 apply to any rural area, whether it is a GW or not. They certainly should be in the Council Plan, but don't need to be specifically spelt out 'part of' the GWMP, other than as a reference to acknowledge that they apply to the GW.

Goal 2

- In order to better manage the natural environment of the Shire, greater dialogue must be generated and maintained with the Traditional Custodians of the area. This is vital for the health of the whole community and the environment in which we live. A Key Action of Goal 2 must focus on this.
- The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to '*Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.*' (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)
- Studies show that the natural environment, "the bush", has a positive influence on the mental and physical health for regular visitors to, and residents of, the bush. This needs (with the evidence) to be reflected in the Key Actions.
- The preamble finishes with a paragraph on the iconic nature of mudbrick dwellings to Nillumbik and laments that the number of new such dwellings has 'fallen away'. Doing something about this needs to be a **Key action** if Council is sincere about their comments of importance.
- Why no mention of Council Open Studios and Artisan Hills providing opportunities in the Green Wedge?
- People are important and a healthy environment helps people to be healthy, but the natural environment should not be compromised.

Goal 3

- The GWMP needs to more strongly acknowledge the importance of ALL indigenous vegetation and address the urgent need to conserve it THROUGHOUT the Shire, on private and public land. The community must work together to focus on increasing habitat for wildlife and connectivity; preserving biodiversity; valuing what ecosystems provide; developing a 'systems view' (that ALL is interdependent); address the climate change and extinction crises, and the need to transform to an ecologically sustainable society. This must become the underpinning ethos that guides the Actions and all other aspects of the plan, without compromise.
- Goal 3 repeatedly uses the language of 'balance', and this needs to be amended as it indicates that our thinking is oppositional. It implies that there is a need to trade-off environmental health against other considerations, while international, national, and state government reports indicate that we must prioritise the health of our environment. For example, A3.12, p 33, speaks of balancing amenity, environmental considerations, private water extraction and community considerations. What needs to take place is a prioritisation of environmental considerations, as without optimal environmental health, all other activity and considerations will be constrained.
- The use of stocktakes and studies [see A3.1, p32] that describe some areas of vegetation as more significant or valuable than others is alarming as it can lead to greater degradation of the environment which is already under pressure. The majority of the Shire's ecosystems are already 'disturbed' because of mismanagement, and this means we must change our ways. Every Objective and Action ought to aim for preservation and reinvigoration of the environment. One of the greatest threats to the Shire is 'death by a thousand cuts', where bit by bit land clearing and grazing leave our flora and fauna vulnerable to ever increasing stress and disappearance. In turn this also places greater pressure on our community's overall well-being.
- An additional Action must be to undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, the value of ecosystems, care for natural landscapes, bushfire risk reduction through understanding the ancient role of fire in the landscape, the significance of the Green Wedge, climate change and their interdependence.
- It is inappropriate to clump biodiversity with other seemingly conflicting/opposing activities. Biodiversity protection is paramount and clearly an intention of the Green Wedge Management Plan process, thus, Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement should be a Goal of its own.
- In an appendix to THIS draft plan (Appendix 1), Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, which provides the desired planning outcomes for Green Wedges and peri-urban areas, has the directive to "Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species, and achieve a Net Gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation." This draft plan does not provide sufficient emphasis on biodiversity protection, which should be the primary Objective of this Draft Plan.
- (O3.1) While it is important to protect our "valuable" biodiversity and habitats, this skirts around the importance of "less valuable" or, more accurately, "less intact or disturbed" habitats that make up the entire biodiversity map for the shire. For example, the "vulnerable" Ecological Vegetation Class - Valley Grassy Forest is often degraded within Nillumbik due to its grassy understory lending itself to being readily-available grazing land. This does NOT negate the importance of these otherwise "less valuable" habitats.
- It is important to consider vital faunal corridors, which may or may not be currently vegetated OR may support less "valuable" (read: less intact or degraded) habitats. We need to acknowledge that our natural environment is already highly fragmented, so these important corridors may exist, or need to be created, across landscapes that do not contain so-called "valuable" biodiversity and habitats.

- (A3.12) Amenity has no place when considering waterway health. This is not an area in which “balance” is appropriate and wording for this should be “Review current water extraction and diversion practices, including use of dams and bores, in light of inadequate environmental flows due to reduced rain fall and climate change impacts”.
- It makes environmental sense to extend and improve the Green Wedge ESOs and the GWMP must say that is the intent of the ‘review’ (A3.2)
- Waterways, particularly Nillumbik rivers and creeks that feed the Yarra, must have water. It is not a balance; it is a priority (A3.12)
- The GWMP should undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, ecosystem services, natural landscapes, the Green Wedge, climate change and their interdependences

Goal 4

- This section must clearly focus on overall environmental protection. Economic activities must be assessed and altered in response to latest science and the urgent need for environmental protections. This must be reflected in the title of the Goal, the Actions, and throughout the plan, for example, ‘A prosperous **eco-friendly Green Wedge** economy’.
- Support for local agriculture is important but must always provide for the continuing health of the environment. New systems that respect and promote regenerative farming, Indigenous knowledge, and value indigenous flora and fauna must be encouraged.
- The draft suggests that to start farming in the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) no permit should be required if the land has been previously cleared and used for farming. This definition of ‘cleared land’ needs greater detail – much of Nillumbik has been cleared at some stage, but thanks to regeneration it holds significant environmental qualities. Permits are essential as they can ensure any agricultural activities respect the land. It also means that residents will be informed about the piggery etc proposed for next door.
- This draft must mention the fact that tourism developments in the Green Wedge need to be “in conjunction” with agricultural uses, as stated in Section 55 of the planning scheme. This clause of the planning scheme decreases the likelihood of inappropriate development.
- Horses and other hard-hoofed animals have a negative impact on the environment – none of Australia’s native animals have hard hooves. Impacts on habitats include erosion, water quality degradation, damage to flora, and spreading of weeds. Actions must be implemented to prevent these impacts. These must include education of the equine sector and other graziers. There needs to be greater understanding and responsible ownership of animals, ensuring that animals do not enter waterways and are not allowed to graze in the bush. This focus on environmental care must also be reflected in the proposed Nillumbik Equine Strategy.
- Change the goal to: “A prosperous **Green Wedge** economy”
The goal was designed for the whole of Nillumbik in the Council Plan, so that the wording throughout this section is very general and needs to be re-focused to what is specific to the GW in terms of environmental context and eco-friendly economic activities.
- The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to *‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.* (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)
- Economic activities must have a net positive impact on the Green Wedge natural environment.
- Economic activities in the Green Wedge must be compatible with the Vision of the GWMP: “to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.”

- Rather than the GW environment being an afterthought this plan should learn from the first GWMP: *“The GWMP supports economic activity suited to the Green Wedge: activity that does not have a negative impact on its environmental values and characteristic landscapes. This is in accordance with the Council Plan 2009–2013 and Melbourne 2030.”*

Goal 5

- This draft plan suggests the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) is too restrictive of farming practices and this zoning should only be applied to land with higher conservation values. This suggestion puts at serious risk flora and fauna across a significant proportion of the Shire, whether as single trees in paddocks or scattered pockets of remnant bush. These are all vital and in need of greater care and protection, not less.
- This Goal in its entirety must place much greater emphasis on the need to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.’ (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050).
- Key Action A5.6 and A5.7 [page 40 of the draft] propose changes to how land within the Green Wedge can be used. This has the potential to erode the values of the Green Wedge and effectively increase the spread of residential and commercial development outside the Urban Growth Boundary. The UGB must be treated as a hard boundary.
- The GWMP needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play; that we can be part of the solution, acting locally to address global problems. We're a relatively affluent population. Nillumbik is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, where and when?
- The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to *‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.* (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)
- This Goal title, ‘Responsible leadership’ is taken from the Council Plan that covers the whole shire, to take these Goal names and apply them to GWMP, for one part of the shire, makes no sense.
- Council first says it will work with ‘both sides’, but it should first reference the science and government policy on the values and threats to agriculture and the environment and the ideal way that they can coexist for the betterment of both.
- Nillumbik leaders should explain that “the right to farm” comes with an obligation on the owner to not degrade the land during his/her brief period of stewardship. Stewardship simply means that after an owner’s (brief) tenure the land and its waterways will be passed on in a better state. For agricultural land this means with soil erosion and pest invasion controlled; for bush properties, biodiversity has been improved. Nillumbik Landcare Network have produced a document on the Culture of Community Custodianship of Land which explains this concept.
- Council should call on advice of experts in related fields and the requirements of relevant state policies such as Practice Note 31 and the recent DELWP report on Protecting Melbourne’s strategic agricultural land.
- Responsible Leadership would have a separate section dealing with climate change mitigation in accordance with the precautionary principle.
- The UGB is a hard boundary and should be kept that way as. A5.7 may lead to a push for a buffer zone on the rural side of the UGB. This should be rejected.
- The Victorian Green Wedge Planning Zones are aimed at conserving the natural environment of the Green Wedge and this GWMP draft should be supporting the zones not trying to undermine the RCZ and its conservation responsibilities as this draft does. (A5.6 and A5.7)
- With the scenario of polarised views coming from landowners/stewards ‘responsible’ Council Leadership would have listed and described the landowners’ frustrations. Eg: A list of

practices beneficial to farming that it is claimed to have been thwarted by the current zoning. This would enable some appreciation by others of Council's GWMP main plan change.

Other Comments


- The strongest message from the initial community consultation and the Panel Report is that Nillumbik residents and the population of wider Melbourne cherish the high environmental values of the Green Wedge and want it to be maintained, protected and reinvigorated. This message must lay the foundation for any new GWMP. The current draft does not achieve this.
- There is a worrying lack of detail throughout the document regarding the protection and enhancement of the Shire's biodiversity in all its forms and varying quality. Clearly defined actions need to be included which will address this problem to ensure the long-term health of the Green Wedge.
- Declines in biodiversity are at critical levels, and there is urgent need for action by all levels of government and society. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) states that, "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. It is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global".
- The impact of invasive species – flora and fauna – is significant and this must be better addressed.
- The Green Wedge Management Plan must reaffirm the Shire's conservation role.
- The draft speaks of polarised and diverse views and how conversations must be respectful and robust. It is vital that this is the case, and is supported by current science, particularly in relation to the need for environmental repair and preservation. It is necessary that we uphold the highest of professional standards throughout the Shire and its Leadership.
- The vast majority of the stated objectives and key actions are applicable to a well thought out plan for any 'rural municipality'. Whilst they are obviously required for Nillumbik's rural areas, they do not specifically relate to the special aspects associated with the GW. The mixing of the 'general rural' and 'specific GW' issues makes the GWMP draft complex and confused. It could be interpreted the GW is being blamed for many problems that are common to most rural communities.
- The last GWMP had positive Environment Strategies that have disappeared from this Council plan and should be reinstated:

Environment Strategies from the previous 2010-2025 GWMP (for reference/use)

1. Identify and manage biodiversity at a landscape scale for conservation.
2. Support the participation of rural landholders and communities in conserving biodiversity.
3. Discourage further rural residential development of undersized allotments in the Green Wedge.
4. Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.
5. Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.
6. Conserve biodiversity by implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management.
7. Minimise the impact of pest plants and animals.
8. Identify, document and protect the character of the diverse landscapes of the Green Wedge.
9. Adopt best practice on a local basis to address climate change.

I request that Council considers these issues and revises the Draft GWMP to included appropriate emphasis on the value of the environment and its biodiversity in the Green Wedge.

Regards,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Note: I wish my submission to be 'anonymous' if it is published.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

It's not inspiring or purposeful or clear; 'Management' sounds dreary, Nillumbik is not a diverse community (isn't it ethnically one of the most Anglo in Melbourne?), and 'environmental, social and economic sustainability' could mean almost anything. Could rephrase as 'We want to create a shire second to none in sustainability, with a vibrant and resilient community' or 'We aim to support a vibrant, resilient and respectful community, living in a thriving natural environment' or.... Perhaps more fundamentally, the vision is not linked to a clear assessment of resources and challenges, or a strong statement of purpose. See document attached at end for more on this.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Strongly agree

Key Move 2 - Strongly agree

Key Move 3 - Strongly agree

Key Move 4 - Strongly agree

Key Move 5 - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Nothing wrong with these - they all sound useful if executed well. But as per commentary attached, I would like to see a clearer link to fundamental principles or to the mission statement, a clearer rationale as to why these five particular things were chosen and a clearer separation between them (e.g 1 and 5 overlap, so do 2 and 3). Also: Why is Key Move 1 the first in the list (number 5 is arguably more broad-ranging and crucial), and what are the 'trends and outcomes' mentioned? Is this mostly about weeds and pests? This is not clear. Why does Key Move 2 talk only of resilience and response, not to carbon reduction? Shouldn't the topics listed in Key Move 2 ('difficult conversations...') actually appear under the Green Wedge conversations in Key Move 3, or are the GW conversations really between professionals - farmers, rangers, etc. - rather than general public? And why include asides about seeking government funding? Also, the articulation of these 'key moves' could be more succinct. For example (keeping to the order given) one could recast something like this (this is only rough, as such a lot is not clear): Create a comprehensive landowners' information and support service for land use and management, including annual reporting to show how the service is used and what difference it makes, e.g. to weed and pest control. Implement a whole of organisation approach to community resilience addressing climate change, emergency management and bushfires, water catchment planning. This will include difficult conversations on environmental and biodiversity values, economic development, agriculture, people's well-being and safety. Create a Green Wedge

Conversations program to provide local communities with a forum to discuss resilience, leadership and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation and bushfire mitigation. Create a comprehensive planning service for the townships to strengthen their identities and make them attractive places to live in and for tourists to visit. Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets that need to be protected into the future and collect information on pests and weeds that need to be managed.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Agree

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Strongly agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Strongly agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

There are too many! It would have much more impact if there were three or four. Some things are already covered, and some are already implied in others. And they could be stated much more succinctly. Leadership - could just list the first three words, without going into further detail Ab voice - sounds nice but do we have any Indigenous locals who actually have knowledge about caring for country? Whole of Shire/Metro - why mix these two different things? for future benefit - good Collab and connect - yes, but these are inherent in the leadership statement above Celebrate etc. - yes, but do you need to say it? Social equity - good Safety etc. - yes but this has already been mentioned quite a bit Conserve and enhance - pretty much inherent in managing for future benefit Sustainability and prec. principle - fine

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

3.6 In conjunction with key stakeholders, review Council's approach to climate change to develop a best practice response. What does this mean???? Need something much, much stronger, not just fulfilling 'statutory requirements'. A3.11 Investigate opportunities to support community-based renewable energy solutions. Feeble! How about 'Go all out to make Nillumbik a zero-emissions shire' instead.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

4.3 has already appeared twice in the document, and it doesn't really make sense e.g. what needs to be protected presumably = env. assets, not hobby farming 4.10 One sentence has a word missing? manage and avoid detrimental on sensitive environmental areas This set of objectives/actions is much more precise than most of the others - good!

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

A set of motherhood statements; I don't see the need for this if you have already said in Principles what kind of leadership you aim for. Actions 1-5 are straight

repetition of Key Moves early in the document, and 5.5 is the fourth iteration of this (badly worded) intention. Most of the others don't add much.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

This document has a few nuggets of good ideas scattered in it, but is repetitive and not clearly organised. Just as one example: it is not clear that the Key Moves are the most wide-ranging, fundamental or the most needed actions - in fact one finds that they are lifted straight from the actions set out under Goal 5. Why are they judged to be 'key'? More important are the things left out or treated tangentially, and overall the lack of underlying consistency of purpose. I realise that the shire has multiple responsibilities but leadership means singling out the most important challenge or challenges and devising inspiring action programs that will clearly provide good answers. See document attached.

You can upload your submission here.

[Green Wedge Management Plan August 2019 comments.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Green Wedge Management Plan, Nillumbik

draft for comment July-August 2019

GENERAL COMMENTS

There are some good things in here, but to my mind the document lacks force because it is trying to cram in everything anyone has ever thought, **without any sense of what is key, or any bold statement of principle**. It is so full of abstract nouns and motherhood statements that one's eyes glaze over quite quickly and concentration sags well before the end (though the compression of material on page 14 is well done). What could you say if someone asked you to summarise its main drift? I long for a document displaying bravery and a sense of purpose. This would give a clearer chain of logical thought. For example, if the aim was to be the greenest green wedge in Melbourne, that might determine what kinds of agriculture and tourism were supported, what transport and energy policies were favoured, and so on.

In other words, I would have liked to see an outline of context, and a crisp statement of priorities. Key to the context is climate change, which is not just an accelerant of bushfire risk (though that is hugely important) but threatens food and water security, and could overturn human civilisation. Yet it is mentioned only as one factor among many, on a par with XXX. And the few references to it in the document talk only of adaptation; **where is Council's plan to eliminate carbon emissions?** Similarly, the looming threat of **city expansion** is mentioned only in passing, yet surely is fundamental to planning for the 2020s, with Melbourne gaining 100 000-plus new residents each year.

ONE WAY OF REORGANISING THE DOCUMENT

Contextual information

So I would begin with a strong statement about

- climate change and
- urban expansion

as the two major threats (perhaps there are others of equal magnitude, but these two would surely be foremost? – others would fall into place as subsets of these, so bushfire risk could be listed as a consequence of climate change, etc.

I would add some clarification about

- the original purpose of the green wedges
- how the other 11 GWs are faring

to the information on the state planning context p9.

Key information about the current state of play (as per pp16-17) would be helpful to have earlier in the document:

- information about the makeup of the shire (household types, age distribution, occupations & industries, etc .), and the distribution of town vs rural populations;
- upfront acknowledgement of Nillumbik's dilemma as a large and far-flung shire with lowish rate income.

Perhaps this could be framed as a statement of strengths and weaknesses, or resources and needs?

Statement of values and priorities and purpose

As outlined above (re greenest green wedge), **a statement of intention or purpose could be an inspirational rallying point** and a valuable reference point in council debates on policies, clarify spending decisions, and help residents to feel ownership of council activities. Should we aim to be the first Melbourne municipality to go off-grid? That's a purpose residents could throw themselves into...

A statement of purpose might also help in shaping conflict resolution. There are occasional references in the document to the need for 'robust conversations' and the different points of view held by different groups in the shire but it is very difficult to work out where Council would take a stand - to talk about 'the need for balance' is to duck the challenge. So I would like to see a paragraph acknowledging

- what specifically might be the points of conflict between different uses and different groups (and perhaps examples of conflicts resolved), and ideally
- some general indication of which values Council would likely put first in the event of conflict.
As an example: in my book, anything that contributes to climate mitigation should have priority, hence improving public transport might win out over something that favoured car owners (if I had decision-making power).

Finally, I would like to see **a shorter list** of potential actions that might attach to the GW review. At present we have a kitchen-sink approach, and one can't help feeling that few of these objectives will be met because no organisation could do so many different things. **I would also like to see the actions much more clearly linked to specific opportunities or threats, and as specific as possible.** At present there is a lot of variability in the amount of detail – some actions are clear and precise, others extremely fuzzy.

I realise the above is a root-and-branch rethink and difficult to take on board from a single resident with no particular standing. As a smaller revision, what about changing the way the document is organised to make it easier to assimilate? I suggest this because a) the so-called Key Moves are actually a repetition of specific actions set out under one of the five goals, they are not overarching BIG moves at all, and b) the Objectives and Actions are often quite similar to each other.

I would take out the Key Moves and list the five goals early in the document instead, and mostly leave out Objectives or move them into the lists of actions instead if they seemed important or useful. Thus two layers are removed from the document without much loss of content. Further, as noted in the survey, I would reduce the number of Principles –four should be enough, surely?

So you would have:

- **a vision** for the future of Nillumbik's Green Wedge
- **five goals** for the Shire that describe desired overall outcomes for the community
- **principles** that informed the creation of this plan and will guide its execution
- **key actions** in support of the goals

SARAH BRENAN, [REDACTED]

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

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A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

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- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP Draft 2019 - WGRA Submission.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

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01/08/2019

Submission for Nillumbik Council Draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP)

Geographically Wattle Glen straddles Melbourne' s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and as

such Wattle Glen could be seen as a 'Gateway to the Green Wedge'.

While most of the township' s population is in the Residential Zoned (RZ) urban area,

geographically, the majority of the Wattle Glen 3096 postcode is in the Green Wedge' s Rural

Conservation Zone (RCZ). Wattle Glen' s part of the UGB, as a border between urban and

rural, has not changed since the inception of the Victorian Planning scheme in the 1970s.

Council's Draft GWMP does go to the question of 'what sort of a shire do we want to be?'.

Extrapolated questions would be: do we want more urban creep, or do we want to get serious about conservation and try turn around the continuing decline of our environmental values?

In Wattle Glen we are very concerned that Council' s Draft GWMP will lead to the

undermining of the zoning uses. The Draft GWMP is pushing for a 'buffer' along the rural side

of the UGB. One of the UGB' s specific intents is to douse speculation, so why is Council

enflaming it? Specifically we have two sites where the would-be developers will be

encouraged by this GWMP to the detriment of the Wattle Glen community, the Wattle Glen

rural landscapes and the whole Green Wedge environment.

1. The vacant 15ha, Rural Conservation Zoned land between Mannish Rd and Clarke

Ave, of which the current owner has requested residential subdivision from the State

Government, and the current ward councillor has touted as being ideal for the development of a nursing home. We re-iterate that 8ha blocks are the preferred minimum subdivision size for that land in the Planning Scheme.

2. The vacant 45ha, heavily treed, Rural Conservation Zoned land in Wattle Glen west

of the Diamond Creek and adjacent (on the north side of) the residentially-zoned area

currently being developed, we emphasise that as per the Planning Scheme, only one

dwelling per 8ha block on this rural land should remain permissible without any changes

in land use as suggested in the Draft.

Therefore the Land Use discussion and action items for land along the UGB should be taken

out of the draft GWMP if the plan is to have any credibility in the Wattle Glen community. Specifically remove the related parts of Goal 1 discussion on page 11 and action A1.7 as well as Goal 5 discussion on page 40 and action A5.7.

2

Council's Draft is also a massive failure in anticipating climate change and biodiversity

extinction – and in that context, the great potential for Nillumbik to play a combating role.

The Friends of Watery Gully (FoWG) is a very active volunteer group who have been holding

monthly working bees of a Sunday morning for 27 years in an effort at improving the

indigenous flora and hence habitat and biodiversity along the waterway and on the

township's public open space.

FoWG is a sub-committee of the WGRA and as such our Association is very aware of the

importance of effective Council support for the natural environment which, however, is sadly

missing from this Council draft GWMP.

1. Council's Draft plan's framing subverts the needs of the natural environment and the

Green Wedge:

By failing to place centrally in the GWMP the intrinsic values of the environment

(biodiversity and ecosystems services) and their restoration.

By being in denial of locally declining environmental values and the global biodiversity

extinction crisis; and rather than prioritising the restoration of our natural environment, Council treats it as an opportunity to "actively" encourage economic

development to the detriment of the natural environment.

By viewing the impact of climate change solely in terms of bushfires (no mention of

the impact on biodiversity), and the natural environment becomes foremostly viewed

as a bushfire threat rather than habitat for wildlife. As such, not only is continued

environmental decline assured, it will accelerate and the environment of Wattle Glen

as the Gateway to the Green Wedge will suffer.

2. The GWMP needs to properly discuss the values and needs of the environment, such as

the importance of indigenous vegetation, habitat for wildlife and connectivity,

biodiversity, ecosystem services, a 'systems view' (that all is interdependent), the global

biodiversity crisis, and climate change dynamics; the need to transform to an ecologically

sustainable society.

3. The GWMP needs to recognise, prioritise and (formulate appropriate actions to) actively

help turn around:

The continuing decline of our local environmental values (address the causes and threats).

The findings of the 2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report – painting a bleak outlook for the state’s native plants and animals; concerning the impact on biodiversity of horses, grazing and bushfire protection on private land; that more

private land needs to be conserved; and the two global crises of climate change and biodiversity extinction.

3

4. Being naturally a carbon sink and endowed with a rich array of biodiversity, it needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play; that we can be part of the solution –

actively seeking local solutions to global problems. Nillumbik has a relatively affluent

population. Nillumbik really is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here

and now, when and where else?

5. The Draft, its vision and principles almost totally ignore what should be the major

objective of the GWMP - to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native

vegetation’ . (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of the draft GWMP – Plan Melbourne 2017–2050.)

6. Looking from a Wattle Glen perspective, the Vision for Nillumbik’s Green Wedge should:

Be consistent with the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy; and this GWMP should be aiming to make Nillumbik’s rural landscapes healthier; ie:

“By 2037 Nillumbik’s natural environment is healthy”.

Reinstate the following elements from the last GWMP Vision, without all the current

compromises and contradictions:

“In 2030, management of the Nillumbik Green Wedge will lead the way in economic, environmental and social sustainability.”

“The Green Wedge will be secure and will be valued by the local and wider Melbourne community for its natural and cultural values. The future of the Nillumbik Green Wedge is one in which:

o natural and cultural values are conserved and enhanced

o bush and rural landscapes are conserved and enhanced

o the economic future is sound

o communities are strong, connected and supported and are knowledgeable about the Nillumbik Green Wedge

o local identity and diversity is respected and nurtured.”

7. Since the last GWMP was written climate change and biodiversity issues have become

more critical, not less (eg: the alarming decline in the populations of bees, Nillumbik's

orchids and frogs), but this Draft seems oblivious as it has no actual initiatives to improve.

The GWMP needs to reaffirm the Shire's conservation role and the new GWMP should be a means for us to get real about turning around the local and global crises/emergencies of continuous environmental decline, climate change and biodiversity extinction. It needs to include a goal purely dedicated to the environment, and properly discuss all above points. We need a GWMP that is fit for the 21st century environmental challenges facing us.

4

More specifically, the GWMP also needs to include the following environmental actions (in

purple) which were included in the previous GWMP.

□ Environment Strategies

1. Identify and manage biodiversity at a landscape scale for conservation.

While the Council Draft GWMP mentions the word 'biodiversity' there is no proposal by Council for how conservation actions are to occur. With the continued decline of local environmental values and the ever-pressing global climate change and biodiversity extinction crises, clearly greater efforts need to

be prioritised; and we suggest including the re-adoption of the following amended

action into the draft:

Identify, manage and enhance biodiversity at a landscape, water catchment and bio-regional scale for conservation.

Additionally, the GWMP needs to reaffirm the importance of indigenous vegetation and strengthen protection and encouragement of lower and medium storey indigenous vegetation.

These need to be added in Goal 3.

2. Support the participation of rural landholders and communities in conserving biodiversity.

Hopefully Council support for volunteer groups such as FoWG will continue; but the draft GWMP is lacking when it comes to any new initiatives (regulation and incentives) for landholders regarding the need to conserve biodiversity, let alone

aiming to help landholders improve biodiversity.

This needs to be added in Goal 3.

3. Discourage further rural residential development of undersized allotments in the Green Wedge.

The Nillumbik Planning Scheme had very positive actions for meeting this strategy, however this Council had them removed (Clauses 22.02 & 03 – via Nillumbik Planning Scheme ('Tidy Up') Amendment C115. Surely this Draft GWMP should have actions within Goal 3 to have the old GWMP action reintroduced and

related planning scheme clauses strengthened. As described above on page 1 this

is a huge issue within Wattle Glen as we strive to protect the environmental biodiversity from fragmentation and would-be developers.

These 'Green Wedge small lot needs to prevent fragmentation and overdevelopment' should be added in Goal 3.

4. Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.

5

The 2015/16 introduction for increases in the local Environmental Significant Overlays (ESOs) across parts of Wattle Glen were to be a great fillip for improving

our natural environment. The new Draft does mention ESO' s but there is no indication as to whether this reference is an indication to improving or decreasing

the ESO cover.

A proposal for improved ESO cover needs, including (as per 17Nov18 GWMPR Community Panel "Biodiversity" recommendation) the aim to "Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat and ensure that these areas are protected" to be added in Goal 3.

IE:

Topic Name: Biodiversity

Recommendation

A. Develop a broad-scale land management plan to undertake regular review of biodiversity values to protect and enhance remnant vegetation, water resources, fauna and flora, and habitat corridors, and to guide landholders on biodiversity management practices.

B. Review the placement of the Environmental Significance Overlays on private land, and appropriately fill schedules to ensure all areas of significant biodiversity are protected. These reviews should be conducted by appropriately qualified independent contractors.

C. Review Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy to bring into line with recently revised state environment policy.

Rationale

- Arrest the loss of native vegetation (habitat and biodiversity) on public and private land

- Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat and ensure that these areas are protected

- Ensure that biodiversity data and information is current and credible.

5. Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.

Wattle Glen includes the confluence of the Diamond and Watery Gully Creeks. In the draft there is little mention (including of any affirmative actions) for Nillumbik' s hugely important waterways that feed into the Yarra River in Eltham.

Since last summer both the Diamond and Watery Gully Creeks ceased flowing, yet incredibly this draft GWMP still talks about landowners being able to take water by "extraction and diversion" (A3.12). The Draft frames the water crises in

terms of the needs of agriculture, economic viability, fire-fighting and rural living

(eg. p.32); whereas it needs to be framed foremostly in terms of the ecological

impacts, including climate change impacts.

Much stronger commitments concerning the environmental protection and improvement needs for waterways (without any 'balancing attitudes') needs to be added in Goal 3.

6

6. Conserve biodiversity by implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management.

Given the huge efforts 'Friends of' and Landcare groups are doing, and both of

these environmental networks (including FoWG) attract government grants for their revegetation works, why does this Draft not explicitly say that a goal of the

GWMP is supporting conservation and improvement of biodiversity on private land and will help landowners to this end (eg. Devise landowner incentives that

encourage ecologically sustainable land management practices such as regenerative farming; or earning of carbon or biodiversity credits.)?

Positive comments and actions to this end need to go into the community and the environment sections of the GWMP.

7. Minimise the impact of pest plants and animals.

While the FoWG do a lot of weeding on Council land, over the fence, on private land the blackberry, boneseed and other weeds run riot without any apparent community support by Council when approached.

More pro-environment enforcement actions need to be added in Goal 3.

8. Identify, document and protect the character of the diverse landscapes of the Green Wedge.

Most of Wattle Glen's urban area has Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO), but

not the Green Wedge part. This Draft GWMP should be aiming for reintroducing the Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO) for the Green Wedge. There seems to be

plenty of support within the document for Green Wedge 'Landscapes', but no actions anywhere as good as introducing the SLO which did not go ahead in 2015/16 for political reasons.

Positive actions to protect the Green Wedge natural landscapes need to be included in the GWMP.

Council mis-characterises the Green Wedge as a 'treed landscape and open space'. This is anti biodiversity and denies the Shire's, including Wattle Glen's, rich

variety of flora and fauna. The characterisation demonstrates a fundamental lack

of an 'ecosystems' view and environmental/ecological understanding, and of the importance of low and medium storey (indigenous) vegetation. It undermines the Shire's primary 'conservation' objective.

The GWMP needs to be reworded to appropriately characterise the Green Wedge that reflects the above-described values.

9. Undertake a massive public environmental education campaign.

The GWMP needs to incorporate a commitment to undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, ecosystems, natural landscapes, the Green Wedge, climate change, their interdependences, and Nillumbik's increasing role.

7

10. Adopt best practice on a local basis to address the two global crises of climate change and biodiversity extinction.

WGRA and FoWG efforts are just one little part of people making efforts to address climate change and biodiversity protection, but given we are the 'Green Wedge Shire' Nillumbik Council's GWMP should be leading the way with specific actions.

A positive attitude to conserving and hopefully improving biodiversity needs to be added in Goal 3.

11. Recognise the negative impact of recreational horses and grazing on biodiversity.

The GWMP needs to recognise the 2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report's findings that recreational horses and grazing have a negative impact on biodiversity; and the problem of proliferating horse properties across the Shire.

Due to being hard-hoofed and their tendency to cause much erosion, land and water degradation and to spread weeds, their land-use needs to be restricted, especially near water courses, on steep slopes and on bush blocks.

Whilst within Wattle Glen there are horse properties that are on non-bush areas,

well managed, showing care to the horses and the waterways, there are some that are not and need a good Council GWMP.

A property management plan and a land capability study are needed when a planning application concerns the Environmental Significance Overlay or hoofed grazing domestic animals to protect watercourses, bush blocks and steep slopes against inappropriate land use and erosion, and to encourage indigenous vegetation and habitat for wildlife.

Given that there is no mention of the above issues in the draft we suggest delete

Objective 04.4 concerning Council's Equestrian Strategy at least until proper Council environmental scrutiny is included.

12. Reinstate the old sustainability and the precautionary principles.

Compared to the old GWMP, especially the Draft's 'Sustainability and the precautionary principles' have been severely watered down to be rendered ineffective. The previous GWMP should be reinstated as supported by Council's own

Community Panel.

From GWMP 2010-2025:

Sustainability: social, environmental, economic.

Sustainability is something we work towards. Council and the community must manage the Nillumbik Green Wedge in ways that:

- demonstrate exemplary sustainable practices
- conserve and enhance natural and cultural values

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP_MJP_RESPONSE.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

██

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

SUBMISSION to Nillumbik Shire Council on the **Draft Green Wedge Management Plan**

from Max Parsons

Please find detailed below my response to the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan. The response addresses the points as listed in the on-line council survey.

PRELIMINARY

The primary concern in relation to the draft GWMP is that the final document should NOT, in any way, shape or form, give rise to the potential for a re-incarnation of disgraced planning scheme amendments C81 and C101.

Whilst it is entirely appropriate for the GWMP to revisit existing planning controls, overlays and regulations, as it does, it should be conducted in such a way as to deliver:

- fit for purpose zoning,
- simplification of requirements,
- reduction in Applicant costs and time frames,
- reduction in the number and complexity of overlays,
- formalizing "as of right" provisions to existing enterprises and rebuilding of dwellings and infrastructure following destruction by fire (see detail below).

Under no circumstances should any review result in more regulation, more overlays, more control, higher cost or longer time frames.

I have a major concern in relation to the draft GWMP regarding the issue of the "as of right" provision to rebuild your home/infrastructure following the loss due to a bushfire or, I presume, other natural disaster.

The principle that council must understand is the moral obligation and duty of care that is incumbent on Council to minimize the stress and trauma that such a loss can impose on the people, both directly and indirectly affected.

It is not good enough to say "Council supports the premise that people should be able to rebuild" but then require affected persons to immerse themselves in the same excessive planning framework which inflicts an incredibly stressful, harsh, expensive and extremely lengthy bureaucratic process onto applicants with no guarantee of a successful outcome.

No council has a right to inflict this type of prohibitive, negative and counter-productive regime onto any applicant, let alone any that have just survived the un-imaginable trauma and stress of losing their loved ones, home, infrastructure, animals and livelihoods to a bushfire.

To require an Applicant in this circumstance to apply for a planning permit **is not an "as of right to rebuild"**. The requirement for a planning permit is purely an internal bureaucratic response from council that has failed to show compassion and empathy.

To suggest that "the planning and building controls are in place so that the design and siting of replacement buildings reduce future risks to the occupants, not repeat them. This may mean that another location on the property is a better option to address fire risk" is unacceptable.

To suggest that the planning controls must be applied to "protect" applicants from repeating the same mistakes that council had approved for the original dwelling and infrastructure is manifestly unjust.

When a person seeks to rebuild their life by, in part, rebuilding their home and council planners force the person to build elsewhere on their property so that it will "reduce future risks to the occupants, not repeat them" represents an unmitigated arrogance and an inappropriate use of

the Victorian Planning Provisions. In who's opinion is the "other location" better? What right does a planner have to force a survivor to build elsewhere?

The "as of right to rebuild" terminology should guarantee a right to rebuild without bureaucratic interference. The provisions and requirements to obtain a building permit controls and requires applicants to satisfy relevant building codes, BAL ratings, building composition and materials, orientation and defensible space. It is unjust for council planners in any context to force a planning permit to rebuild, unless the Applicant chooses the option of rebuilding elsewhere on the property themselves.

Council have a moral obligation to traumatised people and assist them to rebuild, rather than forcing them into a planning permit application process that could cost up to \$300,000 and take easily up to 36 months to get to a point where the person may, or may not, get a notice of determination.

Even at that point it would be more than likely that vexatious objectors would drag the application to VCAT, thereby adding up to another 12 months and \$50,000 - \$60,000 to defend, even then with no guarantee of success. This all occurs before even starting the construction process.

The requirement for a planning permit also introduces the applicant to the Government sanctioned extortion of cash in relation to vegetation offsets which would be automatically included into permit conditions, thereby adding \$10,000 - \$100,000 to their costs, irrespective of the fact that their entire property may have just been ravaged by fire.

This situation could have a devastating and irreversible effect on a person's decision to "leave early" or "stay and defend", knowing the almost certain bureaucratic nightmare that would follow if there was no effort to save the house and infrastructure from being razed to the ground.

Council could conceivably be held accountable as any consequential loss of life could be regarded as being directly attributable to the negligence of council by unnecessarily forcing a decision to stay onto the landowner or occupant that they may otherwise not have made if genuine "as of right to rebuild" provisions applied.

Council must incorporate into the GWMP strong advocacy to Government to amend the VPP to incorporate true "as of right" provisions to allow landowners and residents to rebuild following destruction by fire without the need for a planning permit.

However, there are also existing mechanisms within the VPP that can give extenuating consideration through the waiving of permit requirements where they are considered to be unnecessary. These mechanisms should be incorporated into the GWMP.

The "as of right to rebuild" was universally adopted as a recommendation of the community panel and the minority report, as well as being very well and often documented through every stage of community consultation. There is a clear mandate for council to act as well as a clear expectation that they do so. Council should uphold the principle, not default to bureaucratic opinion.

Notwithstanding the above, there are many factors that feed into final GWMP document and the flawed and poorly conducted community panel process delivered a series of biased recommendations from the community panel that council were never bound to accept, or reject, irrespective of whether they were valid (very few) or biased and irrelevant (very many). The Minority Report that was finally and most appropriately re-included into the GWMP documentation delivered a clearly superior and far more professional report than the main panel recommendations. However, all of the above provided only one source from which the council could draw inspiration in its formulation of a GWMP. This was made abundantly clear by council at the outset and at many stages throughout the flawed process.

- An acceptable GWMP must adopt a balanced approach inclusive of all of the individual components that combine to deliver a vibrant green wedge.
- A successful GWMP balances differing views as long as those views are relevant, factual, truthful and not based on emotive or misleading information.
- An improved GWMP places green activist views in their proper perspective, being of no greater relevance or importance than the views of landowners who wish to deliver good outcomes. In fact, green activists do not like the draft plan because it is too good in comparison to the inferior document (authored almost exclusively by green activists) it is set to replace.
- A new GWMP must dismember the monopolization of input and delivery that activist groups have enjoyed for the last 40 years.
- The draft GWMP mostly achieves these outcomes and sits as a clearly superior document to the previous GWMP.
- There are positive signs that the implementation of a new invigorated GWMP can deliver good outcomes to landowners and the community generally, as well as the environment, as long as it is properly managed, assessed against bench marks and delivered with honesty and integrity.

The reduction in bureaucratic red tape has not been addressed in the draft GWMP. This is an important issue that has direct and immediate applications throughout the GWMP as well as the associated planning scheme provisions.

Red tape reduction can be applied without changes to the VPP and the GWMP should contain ongoing and continual KPI's in this regard throughout the implementation phase.

Survey questions

A vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

Do you agree with the vision?

YES

Comments

- This provides a very strong, broad and all-inclusive vision which is consistent with the State Government requirements for a GWMP.
- Council has a clear obligation to appropriately consider all of the factors, that when combined, ensure the future of a healthy and robust landscape.

Five Key Moves

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the GW Management Plan?

STRONGLY AGREE

Comments

- Landowner information service is a worthwhile initiative provided it does not become a means to log and or control landowner uses or works.
- A whole of organization approach is also worthwhile provided council officers comply with the strategic direction of the GWMP and its implementation.
- A program that engages the community on an ongoing basis is also worthwhile provided there is an appropriate balance of participants with proper oversight, accurate reporting and relevant input.
- The strengthening of township character must be universally supported. I cannot imagine why green activists disagree with this move.
- Stock takes of all activities that currently operate within the green wedge must surely be a direct and ongoing obligation that council has to its constituents. As above, I cannot imagine why green activists object to this initiative.

Principles

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

STRONGLY AGREE (subject to the comments below)

Comments

Leadership

- **Respect** Fundamental to any successful GWMP. An acknowledgement that all views should be considered unlike the green activist view that only their view should be considered.
- **Collaboration** Necessary component to deliver good outcomes, unlike the green activist view that only their position and viewpoints are worthy.
- **Integrity** Landowners are the main contributors that act with integrity by relying only on facts and truths and not misleading information and false accusations.
- **Adaptability** A successful green wedge, like its inhabitants, has to be adaptable and flexible and conducive to a changing environment.
- **Community** Essential to establish a sense of community which can only be achieved with realistic goals and community inclusion.

Aboriginal voice

There is indeed much to be learned from the indigenous people, particularly in relation to land management and land fit for purpose.

Whole of shire approach

The urban community should not control what rural residents do on their land. Rural landowners are responsible stewards of the landscape and this must be acknowledged and, within the framework of a successful GWMP, be supported through proper inclusion, targeting and delivery.

Manage change

The green wedge is in a perpetual state of change and challenges must be dealt with in a responsible way. The pathway to manage change is to acknowledge all those that contribute and value participation which results in a healthy landscape into the future.

This does not currently occur as green activists assume the only way is to reject and hold back change and adaptability by the irresponsible policies of locking up the land and removing the human footprint.

Collaboration

The draft GWMP is absolutely accurate here and I fully support this initiative.

Celebrate local identity and landscape

I fully support this principle. There is much to love about our existing landscape, which has been delivering a successful green wedge to the community for generations. When combined with strong local identity the result is a much-loved area on the fringe of suburban Melbourne. The main danger here is the divisive, misleading and inaccurate opinions and misinformation broadcast by ill-informed green activists which seek to destroy what we have held dear for generations, a sense of a great place to live and of living within a great landscape.

Social Equity

Supported.

Safety, Wellbeing

The key to resilience is to maintain a healthy landscape which provides the best ongoing opportunity for the landscape to survive. The solution to resilience is not to lock up the land, remove human involvement and let "nature take its course". This is a very short road which leads directly to the next bushfire disaster.

Conserve and enhance our heritage

I fully support this principle.

Conservation involves human input as this provides the only pathway to long term survival.

Embrace human input and interaction with the landscape. Exclusion equals extinction.

Sustainability and precautionary principle

The key factor to sustainability is a healthy landscape that incorporates all of the differing components that when added together, deliver the best overall green wedge.

Remove all reference to the precautionary principle as the term and its application has been abused for decades as an inappropriate catch-all phrase to refuse permits when all else fails.

There are a great number of highly qualified experts, Agencies and consultants that can provide detailed and methodical analysis for any given situation. Let the experts determine what is acceptable and remove ill-informed and unqualified planners and activists the ability to refuse or reject on no valid grounds or the wishful motherhood principle of refusal based on the "you might be held accountable if something adverse happens or some-one dies".

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

STRONGLY SUPPORT (subject to comments below)

Comments

- Implementation is the key. Without strong and continuing engagement delivered through the implementation phase the GWMP will fail.
- Landowners must be valued, included and recognized. Landowners already make a huge contribution to the living landscape and receive no assistance in delivering the face of the Nillumbik green wedge to the community.
- To date the only contribution council makes to landowners is to punish, pursue and penalize. This must change if the GWMP is to be successful.
- Establish lawful authority for landowners to undertake bushfire mitigation works on their own properties, as well as along the road verges adjacent to their properties, without the need for a planning permit.
- Current zoning (RCZ) is not fit for purpose as applied to existing properties, infrastructure and enterprises. The RCZ was introduced to satisfy green activist groups who, improperly, dictate Government policy. The Nillumbik RCZ is not consistent with the principles of a green wedge and is the only application of an RCZ within a green wedge in Victoria.
- The GWMP should advocate and pursue a planning scheme amendment to change the current RCZ to the fit for purpose Green Wedge Zone (GWZ). A GWZ still satisfies all of the requirements that currently exist in relation to a successful green wedge and a healthy landscape, but properly incorporates a more realistic understanding that people should and do legitimately live within the green wedge and within the landscape.
- The GWMP should acknowledge that the term "small lots" is inappropriate, misleading and not applicable for any existing title. Any application to council for any purpose should not be assessed on its area, rather it should be assessed on its merits irrespective of the land area.
- No policy position has been espoused in the draft GWMP with respect to the above issue. The final GWMP should either, state that it forms no position, or, that the term, in isolation, is irrelevant and will not be used as a means of refusal.
- I do not advocate for any change to the Urban Growth Boundary and I acknowledge and agree that within the GWMP council does not either. In any advent, it is the sole responsibility of State Government to determine any matters that relate to this issue, not council.
- There should be a discussion with Government in relation to the concept of buffer zones, but I have no immediate position on the positives or negatives.
- Improved mobile coverage and elimination of black spots should be a high priority. It is unimaginable that, within the most fire prone area on Earth, Nillumbik still contains these black spots. This a damning indictment on Government (from either side of politics).

Goal 2: Active and Creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

STRONGLY SUPPORT

Comments

All of the facets that make up a healthy landscape are important contributors to community wellbeing.

Goal 3: Safe and Healthy Environment

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

STRONGLY SUPPORT (Subject to comments below)

Comments

- • A safe environment includes proper works and management of public places.
- • A healthy environment is determined by a healthy landscape.
- • The proper and balanced approach to vegetation needs to combine the importance of environmentally significant areas with the existing rural landscapes, both of which join to give us the green wedge we all enjoy now.
- • It is noted that, despite the misinformation circulated by green activist groups, vegetation cover has significantly increased since the initial green wedge was created. This is despite the increased number of dwellings and enterprises. This is supported by historical aerial photography, as well as the empirical evidence from local CFA brigades and Government Agencies who all attest that ground fuel and vegetation cover once again exceed the levels from pre 2009 Black Saturday fires.
- • As a consequence of the above, a healthy environment requires realistic fire mitigation and the importance of the Nillumbik Bushfire Mitigation Strategy is crucial to the success of the GWMP. The BMS should take precedence over the GWMP and this needs to be defined in the GWMP.
- • The proposed stock takes of assets may be worthwhile but has the potential to be used as a repository for information against landowners. Given the current council planning and environmental officer attitudes towards landowners when making permit applications, this type of information library could deliver an increased opportunity for invasive and irrelevant application assessment and be used as a means to impose more excessive controls and requirements.
- • As of right to rebuild – see comments at the head of this response.
- • Planning provisions – see comments at the head of this response.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

STRONGLY SUPPORT (Subject to comments below)

Comments

The GWMP will not be successful unless there is a prosperous economy supporting the community that lives within the green wedge.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

The Vision does not bear any connection to the extensive and lengthy period and work done involving so many people in the community over so many months beforehand. It appears that this report has been written with no understanding or appreciation of the views of the community. It badly reflects on the communities belief in the governance and fairness of the Council and Shire Officers involved.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.

5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

My views are fully covered by the Wattle Glen Residents Association submission. From what appeared to be a good involvement of the community the output is a travesty of the views of the vast majority of the review group.

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP_Submission.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

████████████████████

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Submission for Nillumbik Council Draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP)

Geographically Wattle Glen straddles Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and as such Wattle Glen could be seen as a '**Gateway to the Green Wedge**'.

While most of the township's population is in the Residential Zoned (RZ) urban area, geographically, the majority of the Wattle Glen 3096 postcode is in the Green Wedge's Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ). Wattle Glen's part of the UGB, as a border between urban and rural, has not changed since the inception of the Victorian Planning scheme in the 1970s.

Council's Draft GWMP does go to the question of 'what sort of a shire do we want to be? Extrapolated questions would be: do we want more urban creep, or do we want to get serious about conservation and try turn around the continuing decline of our environmental values?

In Wattle Glen we are very concerned that Council's Draft GWMP will lead to the undermining of the zoning uses. The Draft GWMP is pushing for a 'buffer' along the rural side of the UGB. One of the UGB's specific intents is to *douche* speculation, so why is council enflaming it? Specifically we have two sites where the would-be developers will be encouraged by this GWMP to the detriment of the Wattle Glen community, the Wattle Glen rural landscapes and the whole Green Wedge environment.

1. The vacant 15ha, Rural Conservation Zoned (RCZ) land between Mannish Rd and Clarke Ave, of which the current owner has requested residential subdivision from the State Government, and the current ward councillor has touted as being ideal for the development of a nursing home. We re-iterate-that 8ha blocks are the preferred minimum subdivision size for that land in the Planning Scheme.
2. The vacant 45ha, heavily treed, Rural Conservation Zoned land in Wattle Glen west of the Diamond Creek and adjacent (on the north side of) the residentially-zoned area currently being developed, we emphasise that as per the Planning Scheme, only one dwelling per 8ha block on this rural land should remain permissible without any changes in land use as suggested in the draft.

Therefore the Land Use discussion and action items for land along the UGB should be taken out of the draft GWMP if the plan is to have any credibility in the Wattle Glen community. Specifically remove the related parts of Goal 1 discussion on page 11 and action A1.7 as well as Goal 5 discussion on page 40 and action A5.7

Council's Draft is also a massive failure in anticipating climate change and biodiversity extinction - and in that context, the great potential for Nillumbik to play a combating role.

The **Friends of Watery Gully** (FoWG) is a very active volunteer group who have been holding monthly working bees of a Sunday morning for 27 years in an effort at improving the indigenous flora and hence habitat and biodiversity along the waterway and on the township's public open space.

Because of this (FoWG) sub-committee of the WGRA, our association is very aware of the importance of effective Council support for the natural environment, which however, is sadly missing from this Council draft GWMP.

1. Council's draft plan's framing subverts the needs of the natural environment and the Green Wedge:
 - By failing to place centrally in the GWMP the intrinsic values of the environment (biodiversity and ecosystems services) and their restoration.
 - By being in denial of locally declining environmental values and the global biodiversity extinction crisis; and rather than prioritising the restoration of our natural environment, Council treats it as an opportunity to "actively" encourage economic development to the detriment of the natural environment.
 - By viewing the impact of climate change solely in terms of bushfires (no mention of the impact on biodiversity), and the natural environment becomes fore-mostly viewed as a bushfire threat rather than habitat for wildlife. As such, not only is continued environmental decline assured, it will accelerate and the environment of Wattle Glen at the Gateway to the Green Wedge will suffer.
2. The GWMP needs to properly discuss the values and needs of the environment, such as the importance of indigenous vegetation, habitat for wildlife and connectivity, biodiversity, ecosystem services, a 'systems view' (that all is interdependent), the global biodiversity crisis, and climate change dynamics; the need to transform to an ecologically sustainable society.
3. The GWMP needs to recognise, prioritise and (formulate appropriate actions to) actively help turn around:
 - The continuing decline of our local environmental values (address the causes and threats).
 - The findings of the *2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report* - painting a bleak outlook for the state's native plants and animals; concerning the impact on biodiversity of horses, grazing and bushfire protection on private land; that more private land needs to be conserved; and the two global crises of climate change and biodiversity extinction.

The GWMP needs to reaffirm the shire's conservation role.

4. Being naturally a carbon sink and endowed with a rich array of biodiversity, it needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play; that we can be part of the solution - actively seeking local solutions to global problems. Nillumbik has a relatively affluent population. Nillumbik really is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, when and where else?
5. The Draft, its vision and principles almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of the draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)
6. Looking from a Wattle Glen perspective, the Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge should:
 - Be consistent with the *Victorian Biodiversity Strategy*; and this GWMP should be aiming to make Nillumbik's rural landscapes healthier; ie:
"By 2037 Nillumbik's natural environment is healthy".
 - Reinstate the following elements from the last GWMP Vision, without all the current compromises and contradictions:

- *"In 2030, management of the Nillumbik Green Wedge will lead the way in economic, environmental and social sustainability."*
 - *"The Green Wedge will be secure and will be valued by the local and wider Melbourne community for its natural and cultural values. The future of the Nillumbik Green Wedge is one in which:*
 - *natural and cultural values are conserved and enhanced*
 - *bush and rural landscapes are conserved and enhanced*
 - *the economic future is sound*
 - *communities are strong, connected and supported and are knowledgeable about the Nillumbik Green Wedge*
 - *local identity and diversity is respected and nurtured."*
 - If we wish to be a responsible community Council's Vision must not be ignoring the environmental issues of 2019.
7. Since the last GWMP was written climate change and biodiversity issues have become more critical, not less (eg: the alarming decline in the populations of bees, Nillumbik's orchids and frogs), but this Draft seems oblivious as it has no actual initiatives to improve.

The new GWMP should be a means for us to get real about turning around the local and global crises/emergencies of continuous environmental decline, climate change and biodiversity extinction. It needs to include a goal purely dedicated to the environment, and properly discuss all above points. We need a GWMP that is fit for the 21st century environmental challenges facing us.

More specifically, the GWMP also needs to include the following environmental actions (in purple) which were included in the previous GWMP.

- ***Environment Strategies***

1. ***Identify and manage biodiversity at a landscape scale for conservation.***

While the Council draft GWMP mentions the word 'biodiversity' there is no proposal by Council for how conservation actions are to occur. With the continued decline of local environmental values and the ever-pressing global climate change and biodiversity extinction crises, clearly greater efforts need to be prioritised; and we suggest including the re-adoption of the following amended action into the draft:

Identify, manage and enhance biodiversity at a landscape, water catchment and bio-regional scale for conservation.

Additionally, the GWMP needs to reaffirm the importance of indigenous vegetation, and strengthen protection and encouragement of lower and medium storey indigenous vegetation.

These need to be added in Goal 3.

2. ***Support the participation of rural landholders and communities in conserving biodiversity.***

Hopefully the previous Council support for volunteer groups such as FoWG will continue; but the draft GWMP is lacking when it comes to any new initiatives

(regulation and incentives) for landholders regarding the need to conserve biodiversity, let alone aiming to help landholders improve biodiversity.

This needs to be added in Goal 3.

3. Discourage further rural residential development of undersized allotments in the Green Wedge.

The Nillumbik Planning Scheme had very positive actions for meeting this strategy, however this Council had them removed (Clauses 22.02 & 03 - via Nillumbik Planning Scheme ('Tidy Up') Amendment C115. Surely this draft GWMP should have actions within Goal 3 to have the old GWMP action reintroduced and related planning scheme clauses strengthened. As described above on page 1 this is a huge issue within Wattle Glen as we strive to protect the environmental biodiversity from fragmentation and would-be developers.

These 'Green Wedge small lot needs to prevent fragmentation and over-development' should be added in Goal 3.

4. Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.

The 2015/16 introduction for increases in the local Environmental Significant Overlays (ESOs) across parts of Wattle Glen were to be a great fillip for improving our natural environment. The new draft does mention ESO's but there is no indication as to whether this reference is an indication to improving or decreasing the ESO cover.

A proposal for improved ESO cover needs, including (as per 17Nov18 GWMPR Community Panel "Biodiversity" recommendation) the aim to "*Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat and ensure that these areas are protected*" to be added in Goal 3.

IE:

Topic Name: Biodiversity

Recommendation

A. Develop a broad-scale land management plan to undertake regular review of biodiversity values to protect and enhance remnant vegetation, water resources, fauna and flora, and habitat corridors, and to guide landholders on biodiversity management practices.

B. Review the placement of the Environmental Significance Overlays on private land, and appropriately fill schedules to ensure all areas of significant biodiversity are protected. These reviews should be conducted by appropriately qualified independent contractors.

C. Review Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy to bring into line with recently revised state environment policy.

Rationale

- Arrest the loss of native vegetation (habitat and biodiversity) on public and private land
- Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat and ensure that these areas are protected
- Ensure that biodiversity data and information is current and credible.

5. Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.

Wattle Glen includes the confluence of the Diamond and Watery Gully Creeks. In the draft there is little mention (including of any affirmative actions) for Nillumbik's hugely important waterways that feed into the Yarra River in Eltham. Since last summer both the Diamond and Watery Gully Creeks ceased flowing, yet incredulously this draft GWMP still talks about landowners being able to take water by "extraction and diversion" (A3.12). The Draft frames the water crises in terms of the needs of agriculture, economic viability, fire-fighting and rural living (eg. p.32); whereas it needs to be framed foremostly in terms of the ecological impacts, including climate change impacts.

Much stronger commitments concerning the environmental protection and improvement needs for waterways (without any 'balancing attitudes') needs to be added in Goal 3.

6. Conserve biodiversity by implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management.

Given the huge efforts 'Friends of' and Landcare groups are doing, and both of these environmental networks (including FoWG) attract government grants for their revegetation works, why does this plan not blatantly say that a goal of the GWMP is supporting conservation and improvement of biodiversity on private land and will help landowners to this end (eg. Devise landowner incentives that encourage ecologically sustainable land management practices (eg. regenerative farming; or earning of carbon or biodiversity credits)?

Positive comments and actions to this end need to go into the community and the environment sections of the GWMP.

7. Minimise the impact of pest plants and animals.

While the FoWG do a lot of weeding on council land, over the fence, on private land the blackberry, boneseed and other weeds run riot without any apparent community support by Council when approached.

More pro-environment enforcement actions need to be added in Goal 3.

8. Identify, document and protect the character of the diverse landscapes of the Green Wedge.

Most of Wattle Glen's urban area has Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO), but not the Green Wedge part. This draft GWMP should be aiming for reintroducing the Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO) for the Green Wedge. There seems to be plenty of support within the document for Green Wedge 'Landscapes', but no actions anywhere as good as introducing the SLO which did not go ahead in 2015/16 for political reasons.

Positive actions to protect the Green Wedge natural landscapes need to be included in the GWMP.

Council mis-characterises the Green Wedge as a 'treed landscape and open space'. This is anti biodiversity and denies the shire's, including Wattle Glen's, rich variety of flora and fauna. The characterisation demonstrates a fundamental lack of an 'ecosystems' view and environmental/ecological understanding, and of the importance of low and medium storey (indigenous) vegetation. It undermines the shire's primary 'conservation' objective.

The GWMP needs to be reworded to appropriately characterise the Green Wedge that reflects the above-described values.

9. Undertake a massive public environmental education campaign.

The GWMP needs to incorporate a commitment to undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, ecosystems, natural landscapes, the Green Wedge, climate change, their interdependences, and Nillumbik's increasing role.

10. Adopt best practice on a local basis to address the two global crises of climate change and biodiversity extinction.

WGRA and FoWG efforts are just one little part of people making efforts to address climate change and biodiversity protection, but given we are the 'Green Wedge Shire' Nillumbik Council's GWMP should be leading the way with specific actions.

A positive attitude to conserving and hopefully improving biodiversity needs to be added in Goal 3.

11. Recognise the negative impact of recreational horses and grazing on biodiversity.

The GWMP needs to recognise the *2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report's* findings that recreational horses and grazing have a negative impact on biodiversity; and the problem of proliferating horse properties across the shire. Due to being hard-hoofed and their tendency to cause much erosion, land and water degradation and to spread weeds, their land-use needs to be restricted, especially near water courses, on steep slopes and on bush blocks.

Whilst within Wattle Glen there are horse properties that are on non-bush areas, well managed, showing care to the horses and the waterways, there are some that are not and need a good Council GWMP.

A property management plan and a land capability study are needed when a planning application concerns the *Environmental Significance Overlay* or hooved grazing domestic animals to protect eg. watercourses, bush blocks, and steep slopes against inappropriate land use and erosion, and to encourage indigenous vegetation and habitat for wildlife.

Given that there is no mention of the above issues in the draft we suggest delete Objective O4.4 concerning Council's Equestrian Strategy at least until proper Council environmental scrutiny is included.

9. Reinstate the old sustainability and the precautionary principles.

Compared to the old GWMP, especially the Draft's 'Sustainability and the precautionary principles' have been severely watered down to be rendered ineffective. The previous GWMP should be reinstated as supported by Council's own Community Panel.

From GWMP 2010-2025:

Sustainability: social, environmental, economic.

Sustainability is something we work towards. Council and the community must manage the Nillumbik Green Wedge in ways that:

- demonstrate exemplary sustainable practices
- conserve and enhance natural and cultural values
- contribute to a diverse local economy that does not impact negatively on Green Wedge values
- connect and support communities

- encourage sustainable living and take account of the 'ecological footprint' of human activity.

Precautionary principle

Management needs to anticipate the possibility of detrimental social, health or environmental outcomes from any action. In general, the precautionary principle involves acting to avoid serious or irreversible harm, even when full scientific certainty about the likelihood of such harm is lacking.

Whilst our submission is based on a Wattle Glen view, if similar views are held throughout the community then we would argue that as a summary of the above:

"Because Council's Draft advocates the undermining of the current Rural Conservation Zone, and totally downplays the environmental protection and actions of the last GWMP, the Draft GWMP is not acceptable in its present form."

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

STRONGLY SUPPORT (Subject to comments below)

Comments

- Governance and Engagement

The principles and objectives are supported. However, unless council can demonstrate that council officers can genuinely work with landowners and not against them, the effects of good governance and engagement will have very limited success. Regulations and enforcement actions (including penalties) are not the way forward for landowners, irrespective of the situation, as this line of action will only increase mistrust and will not deliver improved council / community relationships.

- Land Use Planning

The current zoning of RCZ across the green wedge is not fit for purpose. The GWMP should advocate strongly to rezone the green wedge as a GWZ – as is the situation with every other green wedge in the State.

I have no issue with the Special Use Zone for Bend of Isles, in fact a Special Use Zone should also be applied to the Christmas Hills area to protect existing uses across the Melbourne Water Land. Land zoned GWZ retains the ability to properly protect environmentally sensitive areas, whilst being more realistic in relation to existing dwellings and infrastructure as well as enterprise. A GWZ is fit for purpose, but does not involve any change to the existing controls in relation to minimum lot sizes for subdivision. However, a GWZ recognizes and acknowledges a greater range of uses befitting the rural part of the Nillumbik Shire being the land within the green wedge.

Rather than fiddle around the edges of the existing RCZ in an attempt to protect the "right to farm", micro applied to specific areas only, a rezoning to GWZ is a superior general fit for purpose, whilst simultaneously protecting sensitive vegetation areas. A GWZ does not diminish the protection offered to environmentally sensitive areas, but does offer a more comprehensive, appropriate zoning which also covers the farming, agricultural, hobby farming and micro-enterprise businesses that either exist or may be proposed into the future.

I support the Objectives and Key Actions listed for Goal 5 in the draft GWMP

From: no-reply@harvestdp.com
To: [gwmp](#)
Subject: Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission
Date: Tuesday, 6 August 2019 10:15:18 AM

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Saying that this GWMP should focus on 'people' not the Green Wedge environment is playing with words – presumable to pander to a small section of landowners – is not a 'Vision'

.A responsible Council does not deny the importance of the future of Nillumbik Green Wedge natural environment to the people of Nillumbik and Council's responsibility to Melbourne's Green Wedges as this draft does.

It is essential GWMP Vision of the "Green Wedge" Shire needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik Council can play is protecting and promoting the natural environment and biodiversity of the Shire's Green Wedge. The Vision should reflect this and include:
1 Any words in the Vision must be backed up with environmental positive action items in the Goals otherwise the Vision is just a PR exercise.

2 Since the last GWMP was written Climate Change and Biodiversity issues have become more critical, not less, eg: Nillumbik orchids and frogs, but this draft does not seem to have noticed as it has no actual commitment of actions to improve biodiversity. So the Vision has very little credibility.

3 The last GWMP Vision included the following and the dot points of that GWMP should be reinstated into this draft GWMP without all the current compromises and contradictions inserted by whoever wrote this draft: So suggest Council put the following back in the Vision:

“In 2030, management of the Nillumbik Green Wedge will lead the way in economic, environmental and social sustainability.

The Green Wedge will be secure and will be valued by the local and wider Melbourne community for its natural and cultural values. The future of the Nillumbik Green Wedge is one in which:

-natural and cultural values are conserved and enhanced

- bush and rural landscapes are conserved and enhanced

- the economic future is sound

- communities are strong, connected and supported and are knowledgeable about the Nillumbik Green Wedge

-local identity and diversity is respected and nurtured.”

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Disagree

Key Move 2 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 3 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 4 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 5 - Disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

1 Rather than having an exemplar GWMP for other Councils to follow, Nillumbik now has a Draft GWMP with little or no action priority for enhancing biodiversity or the natural

environment of the Green Wedge. For example:

Yarra Ranges Shire Council in their GWMP adopted in 2010 say;

The shared vision for the Yarra Ranges Green Wedge is: The Yarra Ranges community will encourage and support sustainable farming, a healthy biodiversity, and valued landscapes in its Green Wedge. These are the primary green wedge values and are what make it attractive for other activities such as tourism, recreation, and rural living. Council will work with the community and other stakeholders to protect and enhance these primary values. Other activities will only be accommodated if they positively contribute to the primary values.

Note that the Nillumbik Council draft GWMP will no longer be the exemplar!

Manningham Council, in their GWMP background said, “The main focus of the Green Wedge Strategy 2004 was the protection of biodiversity, sustainable management of public and private land, environmental education and community engagement and empowerment.” And, that was 15 years ago!

Nothing like this for Nillumbik.

In the Four Theme Approach of the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021. “Part 2 of this plan has been grouped into the four themes of the Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Catchment Strategy (PPWCMA 2004) – Land, Biodiversity, Water and People.”

Nothing like this for Nillumbik.

Mornington Peninsula Green Wedge Management Plan 1 April 2019

“Highlights the relationship between the Green Wedge Management Plan and the State Biodiversity Strategy with particular emphasis on increasing habitat areas and biolinks.”

Nothing like this in Nillumbik draft plan.

2 Seems that the “five Key moves” are, providing landowners with information, organising “robust conversations” on all aspects of GWMP, creating a “Green Wedge Conversations program”, providing “townships with planning and place management service” and Council will “undertake stock takes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices.”

3 Whilst some of these ‘Key Moves’ may have some creditable intent they totally miss the priority of actually supporting improvement of biodiversity and the natural environment. There is no direction to the intent of the conversations, The GWMP needs to reaffirm the shire's conservation role. The council “Business as Usual” approach is not good enough and denies Council’s potential role in guiding the

environment issues of the Green Wedge

4 Certainly Key Move 2 should be deleted in its entirety as it has the completely wrong sets of priorities and emphasises for a Melbourne Green Wedge.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Strongly disagree

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Strongly disagree

Manage change for future benefit - Disagree

Collaboration and connectedness - Disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Disagree

Social equity - Strongly disagree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Disagree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

1 This draft GWMP has appendix 1 which is quoting Plan Melbourne 2017-2050. Recognizing Plan Melbourne is a responsible approach by the writer of this draft GWMP as Council must work with the State government for the future of the Green Wedge. However, These Principles almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to “Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native

vegetation.” (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP - Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)

2 An additional Principle that focuses on Preservation of Environment and Biodiversity, and describes the urgent need to reverse the decline of biodiversity and effects of climate change should be added to the GWMP. Biodiversity Protection should also be given the status of a Goal in the Plan.

3 The problem is not what is written in the GWMP draft, but what is omitted.

The writer of the draft GWMP should stop denying the importance of the Green Wedge to the whole Nillumbik community rather than the pecuniary interest of a few.

4 An additional principle should be added, at the top of the list, as follows –

“Preservation of Environment and Biodiversity

The decline in biodiversity must be reversed and the effects of Climate Change must be addressed so that we maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.”

5 As an example of how the document needs to be revised to emphasise the focus,

‘Manage change for future benefit’ could be amended as follows: -

“The Green Wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its biodiversity and environmental values and with a focus on long-term stewardship.”

6 The ‘Sustainability and the precautionary principle’ has been taken from the previous GWMP and then really watered down as if the importance of the Precautionary Principle is not appreciated. The principle from the previous GWMP should be reinstated as supported by the Community Panel.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

1 The thrust of Goal 1, to engage the community, is important but needs to also be explained in the context of the environmental protection aims. The importance of the role of the community for stewardship of the land needs to be clearly stated and emphasised.

For example, Objective 01.1 could be: -

Enable our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge, to ensure that we enhance biodiversity and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.

2 The new plan presents an opportunity to highlight and expand the role of the whole community in stewardship of the land. This needs to be clearly stated and emphasised, as we ask ourselves, 'How can we maintain and reinvigorate the environment?', rather than 'What can we get out of the land?'

3 The tone of 'how can we change the GW planning provisions' should be refocused to 'how can we develop smart solutions, consistent with the current Green Wedge planning provisions Urban Growth boundary and each township boundary'.

A1.6 is a good example of this. A1.7 needs a similar approach to solve the problem without diminishing the Green Wedge or affecting the boundaries mentioned.

4 At my local area level Council (and councillors) will be seen as not caring for the Wattle Glen community if the notion of a buffer zone along the UGB and/or changed RCZ uses along the UGB ((Page 23 & A1.7) are kept in the draft GWMP. The main two issues with a huge effect on Wattle Glen residents are the vacant 15ha between Mannish Rd and Clarke Ave that sits on the UGB and is owned by a land speculator and on the west side of the Diamond Creek where only the UGB separates Wattle Glen treed land from the last bit of Area B residential land in the Diamond Creek township.

5 Early this year Council asked the Minister to take out mention of Small Lots from the Nillumbik Planning Scheme via C115 – a tidying up amendment. Surely the draft GWMP is the way to now investigate whether the bably was thrown out with the bath water. Through the draft GWMP is where Council can ascertain which parts of this removal should now be added back into the planning scheme given that the two sections removed very much helped maintain the integrity of the Green Wedge.

6 As part of the draft GWMP adding in investigation of re-introduction of "Small Lots" into the planning scheme this should include: lot consolidation, preventing boundary realignments as a way to increase the number of dwellings in the Green Wedge, lot size considerations being valid, restrictions on indigenous vegetation removal and use of tenement controls for new applications,

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

1 In the Council's Arts Policy the background surveys show that one of the top three priorities of the shire's 'creative people' is the natural environment. This needs to be recognized in this draft GWMP.

2 From our shire environment Officers we know that studies show that the natural environment, "the bush", has a positive influence on the mental and physical health for regular visitors to, and residents of, the bush areas. This needs (with the evidence) to be reflected in the Key Actions for Goals 2 and 3.)

3 The preamble for this Goal finishes with a paragraph on the iconic nature of mudbrick dwellings to Nillumbik and laments that the number of new such dwellings has 'fallen away'. Doing something about this needs to be a Key action if Council is sincere about their comments of importance.

4 Why no mention of Council Open Studios and Artisan Hills providing opportunities worth nurturing in the Green Wedge or is the draft GWMP writer just paying lip service to "Active and creative people"? in the Green Wedge?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

1 It is inappropriate to clump biodiversity with other seemingly conflicting/opposing activities. Biodiversity protection is paramount and clearly an intention of the Green Wedge Management Plan process, thus, Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement should be a Goal of its own.

2 People are important and a healthy environment helps people to be healthy, but the future of the natural environment should not be compromised in the process.

3 From our shire environment Officers we know that studies show that the natural environment, "the bush", has a positive influence on the mental and physical health for regular visitors to, and residents of, the bush. This needs (with the evidence) to be reflected in the Key Actions for Goals 2 and 3.)

4 (O3.1) While it is important to protect our “valuable” biodiversity and habitats, this skirts around the importance of “less valuable” or, more accurately, “less intact or disturbed” habitats that make up the entire biodiversity map for the shire. For example, the “vulnerable” Ecological Vegetation Class - Valley Grassy Forest is often degraded within Nillumbik due to its grassy understory lending itself to being readily-available grazing land. This does NOT negate the importance of these otherwise “less valuable” habitats.

5 It makes environmental sense to extend and improve the Green Wedge ESOs, but the GWMP must say that this is the intent of the ‘review’ (A3.2) ie. It should not be interpreted as yet another anti ESO initiative of Council.

6 Amenity has no place when considering waterway health. This is not an area in which “balance” is appropriate and wording for this should be “Review current water extraction and diversion practices, including use of dams and bores, in light of inadequate environmental flows due to reduced rain fall and climate change impacts”. Again (A3.12) fails the environment test.

Council should also be checking that by encouraging landowners to ‘extract’ and “divert’ creek water that the draft GWMP is not contradicting Melbourne Water legislation as I suspect the draft does.

7 It is important to consider vital faunal corridors, which may or may not be currently vegetated OR may support less “valuable” (read: less intact or degraded) habitats. The draft GWMP needs to acknowledge that our natural environment is already highly fragmented, so these important corridors may exist, or need to be created, across landscapes that do not contain so-called “valuable” biodiversity and habitats.

8 Why is the Goal described a in the plural instead of just the Green Wedge ‘environment’? This heading may have served a purpose for the council Plan, but for the GWMP it reeks of officer ineptitude in understanding of the purpose of a Green Wedge.

9 While the draft GWMP talks about the need resident information and education when it comes to detailed protecting and enhance environment education it goes missing. The GWMP should undertake a massive public education campaign about biodiversity, ecosystem services, natural landscapes, the Green Wedge, climate change and their interdependences. This environment supporting campaign by Council needs to be mentioned within Goal 3 of draft GWMP.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

By Council (officers) decision to take the goal headings from the Council Plan and try to make them fit the Green Wedge Management Plan Goal 4 emphasis “Economy” rather than “Eco-friendly Green Wedge Economy”. So the wording throughout Goal 4 is very general and needs to be re-focused to what is specific to the GW in terms of environmental context and eco-friendly economic activities. EG:

1 Economic activities must have a net positive impact on the Green Wedge natural environment or otherwise Green wedge will lose its tourist (economic) charm.

2 Economic activities in the Green Wedge must be compatible with the Vision of the GWMP: “to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.”

3 The preamble, objectives and actions of this goal almost totally ignore what should be the major objective of the GWMP – to ‘Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation. (Refer 1st item in Appendix 1 of draft GWMP- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)

4 The draft suggests that to start farming in the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) no permit should be required. However, the RCZ is a primarily conservation zone not a farming zone. Yes farming is supported in the RCZ and so it should be, but it must be farming that does not impinge on the conservation zone and it must be farming that does not have detrimental impacts on the close neighbouring rural residents. There should always be permits with third person rights as there is now in the RCZ

5 As with section 55 of the planning scheme any development on properties in the Green Wedge should be “in conjunction” with the farming on the land. This draft GWMP makes no mention of “in conjunction” and it should so that new landowners know what is possible for door sales, cellar sales, restaurants, etc, particularly RCZ. This is also another example where the writer of the draft is pushing arguments against the State Planning Scheme rather than supporting the Stat section of the Planning Scheme to protect the Green wedge environment. Why? This needs to be changed in the draft GWMP.

6 The 2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report states that recreational horses and grazing can have a negative impact on biodiversity. Due to being hard-hoofed and their tendency to cause much erosion and water degradation and their land-use needs to be restricted away from bush blocks and away from water courses. While this draft promotes the “Equine Community” there are no words to say the GWMP will find ways to protect natural environment. Why is this, given other Council’s with Green Wedges are aware in their GWMPs?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

1 Is the “Responsible Leadership” just a dumping Goal for justifying allowing landowner pecuniary interest to be more important than proper planning and ongoing protection for the natural environment and in particular the Green Wedge biodiversity? IE - A5.7 should be removed.

2 The UGB is a hard boundary and should be kept that way as. A5.7 may lead to a push for a buffer zone on the rural side of the UGB. This should be rejected.

3 At the local area level Council (and councillors) will be seen as not caring for the Wattle Glen community if the notion of a buffer zone along the UGB and/or changed RCZ uses along the UGB ((Page 40 & A5.7) are kept in the draft GWMP. The same goes for Page 40 discussion of the consolidation of township boundaries – inviting landowners next to the township boundary to have their land ‘consolidated’ into the township is bad news for all the Green Wedge Townships, including - Wattle Glen’s Township Strategy.

The main two issues with a huge effect on Wattle Glen residents are the vacant 15ha between Mannish Rd and Clarke Ave that sits on the UGB and is owned by a land speculator and on the west side of the Diamond Creek where only the UGB separates Wattle Glen treed land from the last bit of Area B residential land in the Diamond Creek township.

4. The Victorian Green Wedge Planning Zones are aimed at conserving the natural environment of the Green Wedge and this GWMP draft should be supporting the zones not trying to undermine the RCZ and its conservation responsibilities as this draft does. (A5.6 and A5.7)

5 This Goal title, “Responsible leadership’ is taken from the Council Plan that covers the whole shire, to take these Goal names and apply them to GWMP, for one part of the shire, makes no sense, and is very poor ‘Leadership.’

6 Nillumbik leaders should explain that “the right to farm” comes with an obligation on the owner to not degrade the land during his/her brief period of stewardship.

Stewardship simply means that after an owner’s (brief) tenure the land and its waterways will be passed on in a better state than how they found it. For agricultural land this means with soil erosion and pest invasion controlled; for bush properties, biodiversity has been improved. The Nillumbik Landcare Network has produced a document on the Culture of Community Custodianship of Land which explains this concept. Why is it not referred to in this Nillumbik GWMP?

7 The GWMP needs to recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play; that we can

be part of the solution, acting locally to address global problems. We're a relatively affluent population. Nillumbik is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, where and when? This would earn a council Guernsey for "Responsible Leadership."

8. In one pro-development submission I read it said: "... serious consideration has to be given to the needs of senior people retiring off their acreage. To allow them to remain in their community there needs to be retirement options in their community centre, such as Arthurs Creek, Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill." I expect officers will receive a number of copied submissions from people wanting residential development outside of the township zones or in the "buffer zones" saying this to justify their pecuniary interest without any concern for the Green Wedge.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

The Draft GWMP has a consistent serious deficiency, running throughout the whole of the document that means it will not achieve the Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Desired planning outcomes for green wedges and peri-urban areas.

The Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 defines its 1st desired outcome as Environmental and biodiversity assets, including forests and grasslands and clearly calls for the protection and enhancement of these. This is obviously the highest priority of Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, and shows that the green wedges have strong environmental protection to preserve and enhance their natural environments for the benefit of all Melbournians into the future.

The stated aim of this outcome is 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.'

There is a worrying lack of emphasis on the protection and enhancement of the Environmental and biodiversity assets in the current Draft GWMP and a major rewrite is required to ensure that this outcome is clearly articulated, emphasised and supported. The current declines in biodiversity to critical levels, and the need for strong environmental action by all levels of government and society, has recently come to the fore on many fronts:

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

- "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide."

- "it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global".

1 The main overriding message from the Panel Report is that Nillumbik residents cherish the high environmental values of the GW and they want it to be maintained, protected and enhanced. This strong message is not carried through in any way in the current GWMP draft.

2 The main overriding message from Council's own Community Panel Report is that Nillumbik residents cherish the high environmental values of the GW and they want it to be maintained, protected and enhanced.

This strong message is not carried through in any way in the current GWMP draft.

3 The GWMP needs to properly discuss the values and needs of the environment, such as the importance of indigenous vegetation; habitat for wildlife and connectivity; biodiversity; ecosystem services; a 'systems view' (that all is interdependent); the global climate change and biodiversity extinction crisis; the need to transform to an ecologically sustainable society.

4 The last GWMP had positive Environment Strategies that have disappeared from this Council draft GWMP and should be reinstated.

5 My submission continues with an upload of wider bracing comments that are strong enough arguments that Council and councillors should appreciate that there is no evidence supported reason why Council and Councillors should pursue this style of non-environmental GWMP.

Please see my upload "A dozen potential draft GWMP show stoppers.docx".

You can upload your file here.

[A_dozen_potential_draft_GWMP_show_stoppers.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

This is not SPAM. You are receiving this message because you have submitted feedback or signed up to Participate Nillumbik.

From my submission based on the Council GWMP Feedback Proforma and as part of my submission below I succinctly detail a dozen Draft GWMP arguments that I believe to be real **Show Stoppers for officers and councillors wanting to continue with this version of a draft GWMP.**

They are strongly written reasons for why the process and resulting draft GWMP is so questionably as to require a strong decision of a majority of Councillors to abandon the draft rather than pretending to patch it up.

1. Because this draft GWMP has lost the confidence of the 80% majority of Council's GWMP Review Community Panel and the majority of concerned residents in most, if not all wards, councillors should consider openly acknowledging that whoever wrote the draft GWMP got it wrong.

As they did with the 17 Reserves motion, Councillors should save face, bite the bullet and withdraw the draft GWMP asap.

Perhaps a Councillor motion something like:

From the reading of the draft GWMP submission it is clear that the Community Panel and resident opinion does not support the draft. Because the Draft advocates the undermining of the current Rural Conservation Zone, and totally downplays the environmental protection and actions of the last GWMP, the Draft GWMP is not acceptable in its present form and is withdrawn.

As an interim measure the previous GWMP 2010-25 will be reinstated to meet state government requirements."

As a bonus it may mean that there will be no need for the multiple Future Nillumbik meetings that the Councillors and residents had to endure for the 17 Reserves issue.:-)

2. In late 2018 a GWMP Review progress report by Council officers said: **"Council engaged Wayfarer Consulting to report on the outcome of the engagement process. Wayfarer reported that the majority of respondents like the sense of space, peace and tranquillity afforded by living in the Green Wedge and the natural environment and biodiversity were key attributes."** This statement of the process that included 1000 residents is also consistent with the GWMP Review Panel recommendations supported by at least 80% of the Panel. Given this information was collect by Council and the randomly selected Community Panel was established by Council as an innovative and apparently fair method ascertain resident opinion, **councillors should be listening.**

Given that the actual draft GWMP continuously modifies and undermines this overwhelming resident opinion, I assume that Council will never have the confidence of residents to again run such a process. Is that how individual Councillors want to be seen by history and at election time?

3. I wonder if it is the influence from some of her Nillumbik Green Wedge landowner neighbours that Australian journalist and social philosopher **Anne Manne** is thinking of when writing in her recent book "The Life of I":

"Evidence shows that as people get more affluent, they can become more entitled, ... meaner and less charitable ... the asshole effect ... the rich are way more likely to prioritise their own self-interests above the interests of other people. They are more likely to exhibit characteristics we would stereotypically associate with, say, assholes. ... The role of the libertarian ideology centred on the untrammelled rights of the individual, and greed. The neoliberal ideal does not really account for care The old religious

interdicts gave way to greed and selfishness ... the new doctrine of selfishness overturned the deep traditions ... We have become richer and meaner. As the writer David Foster observed of America : "We've changed the way we think of ourselves as citizens. We don't think of ourselves as in the old sense of being small parts of something larger and infinitely more important to which we have serious responsibilities We think of ourselves now as eaters of the [American] pies"

I then wonder, if in the name of "balance" the writer(s) of the draft GWMP have set out to appease these very same Green Wedge landowners or is it just a coincidence?

4. In Appendix 1 of Council's own draft GWMP is a quote from Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, for the first priority for the Green Wedge: **'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.'**

Having this draft GWMP ignoring its own Appendix which clearly says the State Government **first priority** is almost totally at odds to Council draft GWMP to my mind says something about the politics of whoever wrote the draft.

5. At the local area level through this draft GWMP Council (and councillors) will be seen as not caring for the Nillumbik communities along the UGB. Page 23 & A1.7 as well as Page 40 & A5 .7 which are aimed at giving the landowners with pecuniary interest ways to campaign for planning changes to zones and/or land uses along the rural side of the UGB . The same applies to Page 40 discussion of township boundaries – bad news for Green Wedge Townships because "township consolidation" now means listening to the pecuniary interest of adjacent rural landowners to the detriment of the township community. Most of the Nillumbik communities that I know do not want Nillumbik Council to undermine Melbourne's main environmental Green Wedge. They want Council to support the state Planning Scheme as it applies to Green Wedges and Councillors who do not support these residents do so at their own political peril.

[Councillors realised this not long ago when they agreed to not continue with the Yarrambat Township Plan rezoning. A proposed rezoning that was not supported by the overwhelming community opinion of Yarrambat residents and councillors listened to the Yarrambat community.]

6. Cr Brooker made the point in council debate that by changing the Council format for the draft GWMP makes it very difficult for residents to understand the differences. Why not compare apples with apples so Council is open and transparent?
This is particularly true as council's Community Panel 80% supported the previous GWMP as their default position. Add to this the laborious amount of reading and time needed to properly understand the vague wording of so many actions in the draft GWMP and then to properly answer the huge Council Feedback Proforma, suggests that Council did not want any critical analysis from residents.
Trying to write a GWMP using Council Plan arguments at the expense of actually caring about our Green Wedge's environmental future, just does not make any sense. It looks far more as if the officer's convoluted narrative in the draft GWMP is aimed at producing a Council cover-up of a different agenda.
7. I have checked four other Councils with Green Wedges: **Manningham, Mornington, Whittlesea and Yarra Ranges**. They all emphasise the enhancement of the natural environment and promoting biodiversity as a priority as shown in my submission. Taking Yarra Ranges SC as an example below the Nillumbik draft GWMP will put Nillumbik Shire back at least a decade. How embarrassing.

Yarra Ranges Shire Council in their GWMP adopted in 2010 say;

*“The shared vision for the Yarra Ranges Green Wedge is: The Yarra Ranges community will encourage and support sustainable farming, a healthy biodiversity, and valued landscapes in its Green Wedge. These are the primary green wedge values and are what make it attractive for other activities such as tourism, recreation, and rural living. Council will work with the community and other stakeholders to protect and enhance these primary values. **Other activities will only be accommodated if they positively contribute to the primary values.**”*

8. Concern with the GWMP Process.

Although initially striving for a transparent and arms length approach, Council must now recognise that there have been biased anomalies in the Council GWMP Review process, making the choice to accept two Minority Reports; a dossier accepted before submissions were called for, imposing an ‘expert’ speaker who was anything but an expert onto the Community Panel, and unofficial involvement of a Councillor during the Panel process muddied the waters.

The actual Panel selection process appeared to be arms length and done fairly, however the draft GWMP then included lots of items that were contrary to Community Panel recommendations. Hypocrisy?

9. In a letter from the Manager of DELWP services he says in relation to Nillumbik’s GWMP and Practice Note 31: *“Should the Council adopt the GWMP and commence a planning scheme amendment to implement the GWMP, DELWP will review whether the plan aligns with state policy in deciding on any future request for authorisation to prepare and exhibit an amendment.”*

So, what games are being played in the draft GWMP that proposes changes to RCZ uses along the UGB and around Green Wedge townships that need State Government approval, without any agreement with DELWP officers as per Practice Note 31?

10. To have in the draft GWMP: **“A2.5 Investigate the establishment of a regional art gallery.”** implies it has something to do with the Green Wedge. So, at the same time as residents are considering the draft GWMP, for Council to announce that their current preferred site for the Regional Art Gallery is suburban Eltham reeks of **pure hypocrisy**. Yes, artists in the Green Wedge may be assisted by having an Art Gallery, but so will all the other artists in the Region. A ‘Regional Gallery’ is for all residents in the regional councils, not only those in Nillumbik’s Green Wedge.

I acknowledge that if Council is to be spending money on this dream then it should be in the Council Plan, but to be in a GWMP is just PR to engineer some resident support for the GWMP. The same strategy was used when councillors tried to sell off 17 parcels of public land and asked sporting clubs for support as they would get money from the sales. It didn’t work then and artists, like sporting clubs, will not fall for it now.

- 11. We need a Green Wedge Management Plan that places the Green Wedge environment, biodiversity, and their restoration as the main priority in a way that fits the 21st century challenges facing us, for our children, and our children's children.**

Council's Draft GWMP is so poorly framed, and thoroughly fails the basics of what's required, that the GWMP 2010-2025 with all its objectives and actions, needs to be reinstated.

- 12. Should a majority of Councillors vote for this GWMP then in October 2020 the new council will have the choice of keeping it or reverting to the previous GWMP that was designed to last until 2025 and has already been shown to confirm to all of the state government Planning Scheme requirements. So, how Councillors vote now may well be telling residents how they will vote in October 2020 new Council should they be elected.**

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Yes

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

See written submission attached

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of

the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Neutral

Key Move 2 - Agree

Key Move 3 - Agree

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Refer to written submission Success (or otherwise) about the Conversations program is dependent on resourcing, balance and the quality of participants - if it is a debacle like the panel it will fail - spectacularly Landowner info and support service depends on changes to the planning scheme to ensure we are safe, protected and supported - otherwise it will continue to be what it has always been, and that is council officers setting out to punish landowners for living in the green wedge - and it will fail spectacularly

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation

of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Agree

Aboriginal voice - Agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

see written submission - principles only matter when the detail is clear and this plan is short on detail

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

see written submission

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

see written submission

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

see written submission

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

see written submission

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

see written submission

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

It does not address any of the main issues in the Shire It is much more friendly than

the previous plan Please see written submission

You can upload your file here.

No file specified

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>



Feedback on the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the draft plan. This draft plan is a very different plan to the previous plan. Council is to be congratulated for:

- considering social, economic and environmental factors pertinent to living in and managing the green wedge. The previous plan failed to do this
- attempting to make recommendations aimed at achieving a shared vision and community cohesion in the future management of the green wedge for mutual benefit. The previous plan failed to do this.
- committing to undertaking a stocktake of biodiversity assets. This is long overdue and may serve to inform the prioritisation of scarce green wedge resources into the future. Changes as a result of this work can be expected to include council prioritisation of actions, resources, programs, behaviours and proposed changes to and reduction in regulation through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme in future and
- recognising that the primary supporters and providers of resources that manage the private landholdings across the green wedge are the landowners and land managers who own it. Working with us is important. This is very welcome, as is the positive recognition of the equestrian community locally. The previous plan failed to do this.

There are two changes I commend to the attention of council in considering finalising the draft plan. These are:

1. Specifically including an action to change the Nillumbik Planning Scheme to reduce the risks currently held by green wedge landowners and residents associated with rural living to address housing insecurity and improve the security and viability of green wedge private landholding assets; and
2. Include the development of a charter of appropriate engagement with the community of Nillumbik into the future.

A description of these changes is provided in the following two pages. I commend these changes to your attention in finalising the plan.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Regards

Narelle Campbell

1. Specifically including an action to change the Nillumbik Planning Scheme (the Scheme) to reduce the risks currently held by green wedge landowners and residents associated with rural living and to address housing insecurity

The draft plan fails to address the failure of law that creates a housing insecurity risk to green wedge landowners and residents. This risk can only be mitigated by changing the Scheme. Changes to the Scheme will provide exemptions to landowners and residents to the Scheme requirements in the event of home loss in an emergency or disaster event (for example a bushfire). Some examples of changes include (but are not limited to):

- Clause 21.03 – reasonably significant amendments to the Municipal Strategic Statement to recognise the actual rather than ideological use of landholdings across the rural Nillumbik area
- Clause 35.06 – including Schedules 1 through 5 – to ensure all homes across the green wedge sit on properties consistent with the zoning imposed on them (currently more than 70 per cent are not)
- Clause 63 – existing uses – excluding time limitations in the current clause
- Clause 63.01 – exclude the 15-year existing use time period to include all green wedge homes
- Clause 63.06 – exclude the limitation of 2 years of continuous use as few (if any) council permits on green wedge lands provide for re-establishment within a 2-year period
- Clause 63.10 – include the 50 per cent rule for building compliance purposes including the bushfire management overlay requirements – but exclude any other requirement of the Scheme
- Clause 63.12 – decision guidelines - exclude council's ability to consider the Scheme compliance generally as this encourages additional time/cost/requirements
- Clause 65.01 – approval of an application – exclude consideration of these requirements by the responsible authority (council)

These (and other) changes to the Scheme will ensure the scheme:

- is fit for purpose
- mitigates the existing risks for the owners and residents of green wedge properties
- reduces mischievous/vexatious objections currently received by council and VCAT to green wedge permit applications
- improves and simplifies the permit application process for green wedge properties
- reduces the time and cost of permit application processes across the green wedge
- reduces the number of permit applications that end up in VCAT and
- makes the bureaucratic process associated with living in the green wedge easier.

This change has no impact on any other party or purpose, it simply **reduces risk currently held by owners and residents of green wedge properties**. It is these people who are tasked with the responsibility of resourcing most actions associated with managing the green wedge. These residents and owners should be supported by law to do so. A Council that does not support lawful tenancy and protections for residents and landowners becomes irrelevant.

2. Include the development of a charter of appropriate engagement for the community of Nillumbik into the future.

Appropriate community engagement is fundamental in the development of government policy, strategy, plans and actions in a capitalist democracy. It builds consensus, respect, community and harmony. It is important to the sustainability of the green wedge.

Appropriate engagement has been noticeably absent from the community engagement program for this plan. The engagement process used for this plan has been demonstrated to:

- support bureaucratic passivity in the presence of ideology and extremism, fanaticism and obsession over and above informed, reasoned, evidence-based education, information and engagement.
- encourage anti-social behaviour, bullying, harassment, intimidation, incivility and misinformation that is profoundly corrosive and divisive.
- Result in the expression of beliefs, recommendations and claims that have no basis in fact and are inconsistent with our democracy and rule of law including that:
 - economic decline is desirable for the green wedge (but not urban areas)
 - housing security is an ideology (rather than a human right)
 - only the “right type” of people should be permitted to live in the green wedge (instead of apparently those who already do live here)
 - there is no bushfire risk to residents and properties and no mitigation activities should be progressed

Some behaviours evidenced throughout this program appear as pre-cursors to issue-oriented violence and terrorism.

Council must change its process and do better. Making a clear statement in the plan to this effect is appropriate. An appropriate charter of engagement supports a change in the form of engagement used. I recommend council consider two functional changes. These are:

1. Educate and inform using policy, evidence, facts, issues, options and analysis – most of our community are intelligent but we are not all well informed on all issues – provide details - give us the opportunity to learn and have informed discussions based on evidence – we might surprise you (eventually); and
2. Directly target engagement questions towards the tangible and away from ideological – this may take the form of personal impact, effect, and actual interest statement so that impact of proposals on individuals can be understood and acted on by council – *“describe how will this affect **you**” “the impact of this on me and my family is....”*.

The green wedge is not an ideology or a concept. It is a place and people own it, live in it and manage it and live in it. It needs to be actively managed to promote, protect and preserve her now and into the future and for the most part, landowners and residents are the ones who do this. We must be supported to do so, or council, and any plan they develop, is irrelevant.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

The Plan's Vision should foremost highlight the values of the Nillumbik Green Wedge (NGW) in being the most intact of Melbourne's Green Wedges and being the paramount example amongst them for conserving natural & cultural values. Let's keep it that way.

We are blessed that those before us designated the area as a Green Wedge and that our community proceeded to preserve it to the extent that we can enjoy today. The highest-level goal of the Plan should be that we pass the area on to future generations in better condition than we inherited. This means ensuring we support ideas that improve the status quo and prevent those that degrade it.

Economic activity in keeping with Nillumbik Green Wedge values should be encouraged. For example, those with artisan, artistic and sustainability credentials. A prime example being regenerative agriculture

However, the opening statement that the Green Wedge should "enhance" the economic sustainability of the Shire" should be deleted. It is not the priority of the NGW to support the Nillumbik economy. Its value is much greater and much broader. It is an island of beauty, nature and calm on the edge of a world which is widely being consumed by increasing population and the work of the bulldozer. The

NGW is a resource that offers some relief to the wider Melbourne population from the tyranny of progress. The NGW should first be preserved and marketed only as a secondary aim and in a manner that is subservient to the first.

The broader value of the NGW, and its existence as a directive of State Government should be reason for the State Government to provide financial support rather than relying on the generosity of Nillumbik rate payers.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Agree

Key Move 2 - Agree

Key Move 3 - Neutral

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Suggest that item 5 (stock takes of environmental and agricultural assets) be raised to item 1.

A stock take would be a good start to understanding both what we are preserving and what opportunities there might be to do better.

In terms of agriculture the stock take should consider 3 items:

- what is being done now?
- what was done in the past?
- what could be done in the future? Taking climate change, water availability and

emerging techniques into account

The objective being to make Nillumbik agriculture more productive and, in a manner, that co-exists with NGW environmental values. I.e. use of previously cleared land, sustainable and regenerative farming practices that do not use potentially harmful chemicals.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Strongly agree

Aboriginal voice - Agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Strongly agree
Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

P21

Shouldn't (column 2 line 2) "revealed" be confirmed? These values have been very apparent in all manner of previous surveys and the "Picture Nillumbik" process etc.

P22

Para 1 –Mechanisms to link property owners with young farmers looking for land could be an option for finding help to maintain GW land.

Paras 3-5 - This section appears confused in relation to population growth. Para three says "only small incremental changes are anticipated" yet the wording later in paras 3 & 4 could indicate an interest in much more ambitious development. My understanding is that the clear intent is that State Government does not expect the NGW to be part of its "growth policy".

In terms of preserving the Green Wedge for future generations avoiding any significant increase in population is essential. The Plan should make this clearer.

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

P27

Heritage could be broadened to also embrace early settler activities – eg. farming and mining.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

P29

This page should be strengthened to increase the commitment to biodiversity.

We have a great asset and should aim to improve how our ecosystems function at a landscape level and avoid any deterioration.

P30

Climate change will greatly impact agriculture. The agricultural audit should include the issues of climate change and access to water.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

P36

Much more could be made of the potential for food growing in the Green Wedge.

The last words on P36 are “.... the growing importance placed on fresh and sustainable production”. Fresh & sustainable produce is not only of growing public interest it also sits well with the environmental/artisan branding of the Shire. Council should strongly support and facilitate the use of Green Wedge land to grow food in a sustainable and regenerative manner. Our proximity to Melbourne is a big plus both for getting produce to market and for attracting gourmet visitations.

We have a population that is strongly interested in this topic (as are many in Melbourne). We have a landscape that because of its small acreages is more suited to artisan production.

The Green Wedge Management Plan should promote environmentally sensitive agriculture. This means growing without potentially harmful chemical and promoting the Shire's GM free status.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

P40

RCZ. The draft states that agriculture is permitted with a planning permit. Can Council make it a priority to design a process whereby planning permits can be expedited for agricultural projects that meet environmental and sustainability benchmarks?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Relating to the introduction:

P7

The Plan should explain the anticipated budget and resource implications for Council over the next 10 years in adopting this Plan and contrast this with the actual expenditure in the past 10 years. This should be an important matter for the introduction and explained in detail in an appendix.

Several references in the Plan point to a move to "Leadership & empowerment" P11 and delegating to "green Wedge Conversations" P13 but also indicate that this is subject to State Government providing finance. Are these substitutes for current services? What happens if State Government funds are not provided?

Please can Council include a detailed annual breakdown of the resources and budget applied to Green Wedge management since 2010 when the first Plan commenced and then projections for how resources and budget are expected to be

applied over the next 10 years. Expenditure in both periods should clearly indicate whether funding is by NSC or State Government.

I understand that Council will establish budgets on an annual basis but the community has a right to understand council's budgetary forecasts and the information will be valuable in more clearly understanding what changes might be expected to the way Council delivers its services.

P10. Managing what is valuable to us

"Our people value.....the productive ability of the Green Wedge". Was there sufficient input to merit the priority given to this statement? Intuitively I feel that this statement would be of much lesser importance to most people than the NGW's role in preserving biodiversity. This is far more worthy of a mention.

P11

First sentence – move the word "retain". It would be stronger to say:

Managing the landscape to mitigate bushfire risk, promote agriculture; tourism; and biodiversity values; and retain rural living

Can the following sentence be made clearer?

Costs for individuals living in the green wedge and the importance of finding funding options from other levels of governments, to reduce the financial pressure on local residents of maintaining the green wedge.

Two thoughts:

1. "The costs to individuals living in the Green Wedge" might need explaining. What is meant by individual costs? Are these costs what is necessarily incurred in choosing to live in the area in exchange for its other benefits?

2. The term "local residents" should be changed to Nillumbik ratepayers

The plan for a "move towards leadership and empowerment" is a real concern as there will be some members of the community who view "what is valuable" through self-interested glasses. Council must take a strong role in ensuring rules are adhered to.

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[GWMP Notes CC.pdf](#)

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[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to

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Yes

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The Plan's Vision should foremost highlight the values of the Nillumbik Green Wedge (NGW) in being the most intact of Melbourne's Green Wedges and being the paramount example amongst them for conserving natural & cultural values. Let's keep it that way.

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P14. Plan on a page

Principles

- Conserve & enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

These two items should be at the top of the list.

5 Key Moves

5. Stock takes of environmental assets and agricultural practices

This item should be number 1 as per comment on P13.

P19 Principles

The last two paragraphs on Conservation & Sustainability should be elevated.

The conservation and heritage paragraph should be made the first one. The Plan's responsibilities are above the interests of Nillumbik alone. The Green Wedge is being preserved for all of Melbourne and beyond.

Sustainability sits better as point 3 under Leadership.

P21

Shouldn't (column 2 line 2) "revealed" be *confirmed*? These values have been very apparent in all manner of previous surveys and the "Picture Nillumbik" process etc.

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Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

See attached response

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Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

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- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[LFC_GWMP_DRAFT_RESPONSE.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

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Local Food Connect

"Creating a vibrant local food culture for health, environment and community"

9th August 2019

Response by Local Food Connect Inc to

Nillumbik Shire Council's Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

INTRODUCTION

Local Food Connect (LFC) is a community group with a broad membership of articulate and committed individuals who are engaged with the local food system at all levels.

LFC operates the VFMA accredited Eltham Farmers' Market which hosts 40 - 50 stallholders each week (40% of whom are from Nillumbik or adjoining municipalities). Our weekly market attracts around 2,500 shoppers who come because they recognise the many benefits of buying fresh local produce.

LFC also publishes a well-respected weekly newsletter on local food matters which has 2,237 subscribers and maintains a much valued and visited local food web site.

In these and other ways LFC is closely connected to the food community: Green Wedge farmers, local families, chefs, community gardeners, food activists, urban planners, foodies and many others who recognise the value of sustainably grown local produce. These people demand a sustainable food system that is responsive to climate change and supports: clean nutrient rich food, transparent regenerative small scale farm practices and their basic human right to access a healthy diet.

It is through this lens of a sustainable food system that we submit our comments to the DGWMP consultation.

SUMMARY

The Draft Green Wedge Management Plan's (DGWMP) vision should first and foremost state that the Nillumbik Green Wedge is the most intact of Melbourne's green wedges and is paramount amongst them for long term conservation of natural and cultural values.

Our Green Wedge continues to be vehemently preserved and protected by an engaged and galvanised community many whom also support the values and ideals of Local Food Connect. The collective impact of people engaged with the food & environment movements should not be underestimated as these groups are making significant gains in the uptake of issues and policies at National, State and Local government level.

The DGWMP has breathtaking & sweeping goals but falls disappointingly short in many of the actions. We would like to see much greater commitment to real action as opposed to motherhood statements.

We particularly highlight our deep concern relating to the lack of commitment to actions for continued preservation of biodiversity throughout the entire DGWMP

and

We express our disappointment and concern with the very poorly executed Agriculture section (Goal 4) The section on agriculture including all objectives and goals relating to agriculture should be completely revised

When reviewing the agricultural component of the GWMP we would refer council to the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report, *Climate Change & Lands*. The IPCC is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations, dedicated to providing the world with an objective, scientific view of climate change, its natural, political and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options.

The IPCC report calls for an urgent overhaul of food production and land management with systemic changes to agriculture to reverse soil erosion, rehabilitate degraded lands, minimise water and fertiliser use and increase carbon capture and storage.

The report confirms many of the points made in our submission. We encourage Council to consider the reports findings and incorporate them in the GWMP.

More information:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-08-08/ipcc-report-climate-change-land-use/11391180>

The most pressing issues relating to agriculture in the Green Wedge are completely absent. The people of Nillumbik expect much more and Council should not go forward with a plan for agriculture in the Green Wedge based on outdated & incorrect interpretations, inconsistencies, muddled assumptions and an absence of vision.

The value of the Green Wedge is immeasurable but it is increasingly under threat from all sides. We are concerned that the DGWMP is fragmented and lacking strength to face the critical challenges of the future, particularly relating to climate change and urban growth pressures.

Conventional farming has been and remains a threat to the Green Wedge but the DGWMP does little to indicate that there will be a thorough examination to understand Green Wedge agro-ecological systems and how to restore them. The absence in the agriculture actions summary of references relating to healthy natural systems, soil biodiversity, enabling regenerative agriculture & carbon sequestration indicates a lack of commitment and/or poor understanding of the current changes in agriculture within the food system.

In contrast, on the same page Council endorses with recognition and support a *Nilumbik Sustainable Equine Strategy*. We believe that a Green Wedge Sustainable Food Strategy should be of a higher priority but instead it has been completely overlooked.

There is a pressing need for a “Green Wedge Food Strategy” to guide decisions about food production and the systems and policies to support it in the Green Wedge. It needs to be a robust strategy that is not hidden in the Climate Change Plan or the Health & Well-being Plan but can stand alone to do the heavy lifting needed to navigate the challenges the Green Wedge will encounter in the future.

If it is intended as stated that the GWMP is “to be one of the most important in Council’s strategic planning hierarchy and will be intrinsic to its way of doing business” (p43) then the absence of a Green Wedge Sustainable Food Strategy which includes a comprehensive agriculture element will leave a gaping hole in the way Council undertakes the business of stewardship of the Green Wedge.

GOAL 1: Engaged Connected Communities

Key Actions

A1.4 Better utilise multi-use community spaces to create community hubs in townships.

Response: EDENDALE FARM GREEN WEDGE HUB

'Grow the growers' that we need to protect the biodiversity of the GW.

The survival and future of the Green Wedge is intrinsically linked to the health of the soil and regenerative farming practices are based in improving soil health.

- Create a stewardship hub of "best practice" regenerative farmer/grower training and mentoring for the new generation of urban farmers and artisanal producers at Edendale Farm in Eltham.
- Aim to lead by skilling young small-scale growers who will farm in our Green Wedge using conservation & soil rehabilitation approaches.
- Partner with Farmer Incubator to find young growers.
- Partner with private landholders & mentors to use cleared private land in the Green Wedge for incubator farmers to practice & develop their skills.
- Seek funding through the State, partnerships and philanthropic support.

HURSTBRIDGE GREEN WEDGE HUB

Provide additional support and expand the fledgling food & sustainability elements of this community hub.

Hurstbridge is one of the Green Wedge towns under significant pressure from urban expansion and is a gateway town to the expansive intact RCZ. Hurstbridge's history as an agricultural/market town and its proximity to RCZ places it in a position to be an example of best practice in continuing to preserve the inherent values and management of the landscape. Hurstbridge Hub could include space for Green Wedge innovation and ideas incubation addressing climate change impacts with a whole agro-eco systems approach (biodiversity, soil, water), as well as food security & sovereignty.

A food hub similar to the emerging Alphington Food Hub may be feasible. The Alphington Hub is also a place of innovation and an incubator for new ideas in the food system with start up non-soil based growers experimenting with new growing methods based here.

The Alphington Hub which has partnerships with government & funders is an example that could inform ideas on the increased use of the Hurstbridge Hub for the benefit of the local community & innovation for the continued preservation of the Green Wedge.

A1.8 Encourage volunteer and community groups to support ageing landowners with land management, where needed

Response: AGING IN PLACE

Determine the viability of a land lease arrangement on large properties for ageing landholders wanting assistance to age in place on rural land and identify barriers that may exist in the current planning scheme.

Lease arrangements on already cleared private land could provide opportunity for small scale artisan growers. These growers would be required to use best practice sustainable or preferably regenerative practices.

The cost of purchasing land, tools etc for regenerative growing is one of the roadblocks for young and incubator farmers wanting to grow food & land leasing is a common arrangement in the expanding urban farmer sector.

One of the benefits of this arrangement is older landholders, where feasible, act as mentors.

Access to land for growing is critical for improving access to healthy and appropriate food & low carbon production & reduction of food miles helps mitigate the impacts of climate change on food production?" (Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 pg 20)

GOAL 2: Active and Creative People

Objectives

02.4 Support,celebrate and enable public access to Nillumbik's rich tradition of local artists and makers

Response: ENABLING PUBLIC ACCESS (RCZ)

Also enable public access to artisan food makers,innovative growers and creative RCZ rural gardens on private land.

Local Food Connect (LFC) conduct many private garden tours throughout the year, these popular small group tours are advertised and ticketed (typically limiting numbers to 10-20 attendees).

LFC has been prohibited from conducting ticketed garden tours on private property within RCZ as the activity is classified as “a place of assembly.” This means that public access to some of the most beautiful private rural gardens in the Green Wedge (RCZ) is being denied.

The irony of this planning law is that ticketing is used as a method for controlling numbers of attendees. This should also mean that advertised & ticketed Victorian Open Garden Scheme events will also fall foul of this interpretation of “place of assembly” Although these events are occurring “under the radar” in RCZ, we understand that organisers face significant fines if Council chooses to demand compliance.

Nillumbik's interpretation of these RCZ planning laws needs to be clarified as it appears, they can be applied by Council in reactionary and inconsistent ways.

GOAL 3: Safe and Healthy Environments

Objectives:

03.1 Identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats

Response: STRENGTHEN & ELEVATE BIODIVERSITY

This objective should be the guiding principle that drives management of the Green Wedge. It should be the first objective of each of the 5 Goals.

It should be the question that is asked before any key action is implemented

Does this action identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats?

Key Actions

A3.1 Undertake stock takes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices.....

Response: Stocktakes and data collection are valuable and necessary and A3.2 indicates that a review of the Environmental Significance Overlay will occur but there needs stronger action and policy development to ensure that protection of biodiversity conservation is implemented “on the ground” not just on paper.

These policies should be robust enough to deal with the numerous challenges to the protection of biodiversity that will inevitably arise during the term of this GWMP.

An agricultural stocktake should at least consider the following:

- + What is being done now
- + What was done in the past
- + What could be done in the future (taking into account: climate change, water availability & emerging new farming practices)

A3.3- lower to A3.7

Insert new A3.3 as follows “Develop a Green Wedge Sustainable Food Strategy that includes a whole systems approach with a focus on agro-eco systems (soil, water, biodiversity) A strategy with goals, actions and measurable outcomes that prioritises transitioning to smaller scale regenerative agricultural practices that build soil biodiversity and enable higher production of nutrient dense food in smaller spaces. A strategy that speaks of stewards of the land and artisan growers who embrace the environment rather than fight it.

A3.5 - In partnership with relevant government agencies, encourage biodiversity conservation and responsible land management on public and private land by....

Response: “encourage biodiversity conservation..” Encourage is not a strong enough commitment to biodiversity conservation. Replace with “put in place policies that ensure the protection of biodiversity conservation and responsible land management”

GOAL 4: A Prosperous Economy

General

The report needs much more consideration of the particular and very special strengths and weaknesses of the Green Wedge economy. The GWMP needs an economic vision that is compatible with its iconic environmental status. The “branding” needs to focus on its natural, clean and uncontaminated image.

These characteristics can become the strengths of each of the industry sectors cited in the DGWMP whether around food, professional services or the visitor economy:

- Food offers many opportunities as explored below;
- Professional services should be developed around environmental and regenerative agricultural practices;
- Tourism opportunities should focus on the GW brand strengths including farm gate sales and food tourism where local produce is featured at local restaurants.

The current words are too much like quotes from a convenient text book rather than a real consideration of the unique environment of the Nillumbik Green Wedge. For example: “through improved economic productivity” and “supply chain efficiencies”. Let us replace that style of terminology with “artisan products”, “innovative environmental solutions”, “regenerative agriculture”, “health & wellbeing”, “niche marketing to a local population that is increasingly health and environmentally aware”

The section on agriculture including all objectives and goals relating to agriculture should be completely revised.

Reading like an economics lesson in supply and demand it is poorly executed, lack lustre and contains outdated interpretations, inconsistencies, muddled assumptions and an absence of vision.

The most pressing issues relating to agriculture in the Green Wedge are completely absent.

Response: Agriculture - Climate Change

Agriculture and urbanisation are the largest environmental threats to the Green Wedge. Clearing of land contributes to changes in the water table, decreases carbon in the soils and the potential for vegetation to continue sequestering carbon.

Urbanisation leads to habitat & biodiversity destruction but also reduces the land that is available to feed the population. The Green Wedge has historically played a role in feeding Melbourne. With the city fringe pushing the urban boundary with alarming force on the outskirts of suburbs like Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge there needs to be a very clear plan to ensure that historically cleared land degraded by conventional agricultural practices isn't handed to the developers. Conventional agriculture practices in the Green Wedge continue to degrade soil and there needs to be a plan to help farmers transition to more regenerative practices.

Given the nature of the Green Wedge it is never going to be an area of large scale agriculture and it shouldn't be. The small size and limitations on farming make it ideally suited to artisan small scale regenerative farm practices that protect and enhance biodiversity. The regenerative farming/growing approach views healthy ecological function as fundamental to

agriculture, it prioritises diverse integrated systems with attention to soil nutrient cycling and landscape hydration.

‘a local food production system that mitigates and adapts to the health impacts of climate change?’(Nillumbik Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 pg 21)

The changes occurring in small scale agriculture (e.g regenerative agriculture) to deal with the impacts of climate change and soil degradation such as carbon sequestration are not highlighted in the agriculture section. Some of the initiatives occurring on small scale farms and market gardens are moving beyond sustainable agriculture to regenerative practices that meet climate change head on while there is still time. This is being largely driven by passionate younger community members who are part of engaged and galvanised climate and food movements who will continue to apply pressure to Council to act on climate change in all areas of governance (Climate Crisis Strike Melbourne Sept 20 www.350.org)

Agriculture is transitioning from a sustainable position of giving back what you take and maintaining/marginally improving what already has been degraded by overgrazing or conventional practices. This “holding position” only partially addresses the long term challenge of climate change. Regenerative agriculture uses an agro-ecological approach to revitalise soil through restoring carbon through practices such as conservation tillage, crop rotation, composting, beneficial insect pest control, cover crops, mobile animal shelters, all to improve topsoil and increase and protect biodiversity on small plots of land. This is the agriculture that should be transitioned, supported and incentivised in the Green Wedge.

Response: Agriculture - The Absence of a Food Strategy

The impact of not having a Sustainable Food Strategy for the Green Wedge is nowhere more obvious than in the Agriculture section of the DGWMP. The suggestion that “agriculture needs to co-exist comfortably with nature conservation” is a narrow and outdated view of agriculture. The interpretation of “comfortably” is open to a multitude of interpretations but an example was provided, “livestock should not be grazed where they might damage areas with high biodiversity values”. Such lightweight statements have no place in a Council document purporting to be protecting the Green Wedge.

Viable and diverse enterprises throughout the food system are critical to resilience and barriers to producing food for local consumption should be reviewed. A number of Green Wedge chefs and the Eltham Farmers Market source local sustainably produced food. Green Wedge producers are a preferred source but the demand currently far outweighs supply.

The Green Wedge can contribute to feeding and improving the health and well being of the people of Nillumbik. Efforts need to be concentrated on building a local food system that supports the production of affordable local nutrient dense food. The cost of food is reduced, the local economy benefits & the market is more secure for local growers.

Communities living closer to fresh, local produce outlets have healthier eating habits and lower risk of diet related disease (Nillumbik Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 p20)

Most local governments try to build resilience into their food systems through food strategies that concentrate on efforts that support growers in their municipality and to partially negate the external market forces driven by large supermarkets that put pressure on growers and in turn consumers.

And yet one of the single biggest obstacles facing food and growing it on an artisan or micro scale in the Green Wedge is the freedom to sell and the freedom to buy locally grown food. *Not freedom for just anything but freedom for something - for integrity at all levels of the food system, for that is what changes the face of food and the way land is farmed* (from *Food Choice: A Basic Human Right* by Joel Salatin p110 in *Dumbo Feather* 58 2019)

Much more could have been made of the potential to grow food in the Green Wedge and the impact of not having a Sustainable Green Wedge Food Strategy is nowhere more obvious than in this disappointing Agriculture section.

Response: Agriculture - Feeding Nillumbik

Food is a limited yet renewable resource and is essential for human existence & yet this most basic human need has been commodified. The system that feeds the majority of people has turned **eaters** into **consumers** and the most important non economic quality of food - *nutrition* has been compromised.

Consideration should be given to develop a planning permit process for **artisan** and **small scale** agricultural projects that meet environmental, regenerative & maximum land size benchmarks. These could be small enterprise “Food Bowl Farms” growing nutrient dense fresh produce primarily to feed the people of the Shire of Nillumbik but also selling into the suburbs of Melbourne. While these “Food Bowl Farms” are using regenerative methods to grow food, the soil will be regenerated, biodiversity protected and the nutritional quality of the food produced will be high.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of this approach it is suggested that several regenerative or sustainable “pilot plots” in the field are evaluated over a full year cycle to determine the feasibility of this approach. Council are encouraged to seek funding to undertake this project. ***..the growth of a more sustainable & socially inclusive food system?”***(Nillumbik Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020 page 21)

Contact

Chris Chapple
President
Local Food Connect Inc.



The following articles were referenced in the preparation of this paper:

Sustainable Food Systems - Philanthropy Briefing for the Environmental Grantmakers Network 2019 prepared by Kirsten Larsen, Jennifer Sheridan and Serenity Hill

Sheridan, J., Larsen, K and Carey, R. (2015) Melbourne's Foodbowl: now and at 7 million. Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab, The University of Melbourne

Project Drawdown <https://www.drawdown.org.au>

Hoey, L., Shapiro, L., & Bielaczyc, N. (2018). *Put on your mask before helping someone else* *The capacity of food hubs to build equitable food access*. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*, 8(3) 41-60.

Sheridan, J. (2016) *Civil Society advocacy towards sustainable food systems policy in Victoria*, Melbourne, University of Melbourne

Food Choice: A Basic Human Right by Joel Salatin p110 in *Dumbo Feather* 58 2019

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Refer to our attached submission.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.

4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Disagree

Key Move 2 - Disagree

Key Move 3 - Disagree

Key Move 4 - Agree

Key Move 5 - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Refer to our attached submission.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience

- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Neutral

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Strongly agree

Manage change for future benefit - Agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Neutral

Social equity - Neutral

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Neutral

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Refer to our attached submission.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Refer to our attached submission.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Refer to our attached submission.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Refer to our attached submission.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Refer to our attached submission.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Refer to our attached submission.

You can upload your file here.

[DGAP GWMP Submission 09 08 2019 Final.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

██

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

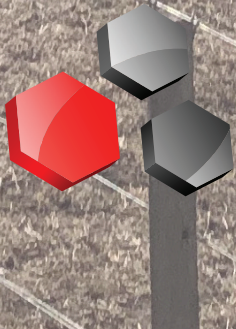
<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Submission to:

*Nillumbik Shire's Draft Green
Wedge Management Plan Review*

Doreen Growth Area Precinct Landowners

9 August 2019



Dominion Property Group



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Executive Summary

This submission has been prepared to provide feedback to the Nillumbik Shire Council on the draft Green Wedge Management Plan in respect to a group of landowners collectively known as the Doreen Growth Area Precinct (DGAP).

This submission confirms that land in the DGAP is unviable and uneconomic for agricultural land uses due to the highly constrained productive capacity of the land and the significant urban / rural land use conflict that exists in this area.

Additionally, our submission outlines the DGAP landholdings present Council with an opportunity for urban development in the precinct whilst delivering green wedge management principles on its eastern interface.

Our submission confirms:

- That the DGAP landholdings present an opportunity for an urban development outcome which will assist Council to better manage the green wedge interface with and amended UGB and the Doreen growth corridor;
- That the use and development of the DGAP for ongoing agricultural activities is not sustainable; and
- The natural constraints to intensive agriculture mean the site does not meet the criteria for “strategic agricultural land”.



1. Introduction

This submission has been prepared on behalf of the DGAP landholders in response to Nillumbik Shire Councils request for feedback on their draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) released in June 2019. We understand the draft GWMP is a strategic Council document that *“will inform future versions of the Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement. Its objectives will also inform key shire-wide strategies such as those relating to economic development, housing, agriculture, positive ageing, bushfire mitigation, arts and culture, biodiversity, climate change adaption and recreation”*.

The DGAP landholdings are located in the Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) and Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) which immediately abut the Doreen growth corridor and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The DGAP landholdings are significant and contain approximately 200 hectares (ha) across seven (7) landholders which are bounded by Yan Yean Road, Chapel Lane, Middle Hut Road and Doctors Gully Road.

Noting the opportunity to make submissions, Dominion Property Group Pty Ltd (DPG) has been approached by the DGAP landowners on the basis that:

- The land in question is located within the Nillumbik green wedge but proximate to the UGB;
- The land contains and is adjacent to major growth area infrastructure including urban services and proposed major road upgrades; and
- The productive use of the land is currently restricted to agricultural purposes which are considered unviable due to the productive capability of the land in this location.

The DGAP landowners have also undertaken Agricultural Land Assessments for their individual properties which confirmed:

- That the use and development of land within the DGAP for ongoing agricultural activities is not sustainable; and
- The natural constraints to intensive agriculture mean the site does not meet the criteria for “strategic agricultural land”.

Further, our submission outlines that the DGAP landholdings present an opportunity for Council to facilitate urban development in this area which better manages the urban interface with the Doreen growth corridor, whilst delivering green wedge management principles on its eastern interface.

2. Subject Land & Surrounds

2.1 Physical Location

The DGAP landholdings consist of seven landowners/ land parcels in Doreen located approximately 35 kilometers to the north of the Melbourne CBD. The DGAP landholdings contain an approximate area of approximately 200 hectares (ha).

The following Cadastre Plan confirms the boundaries of the DGAP landholdings.

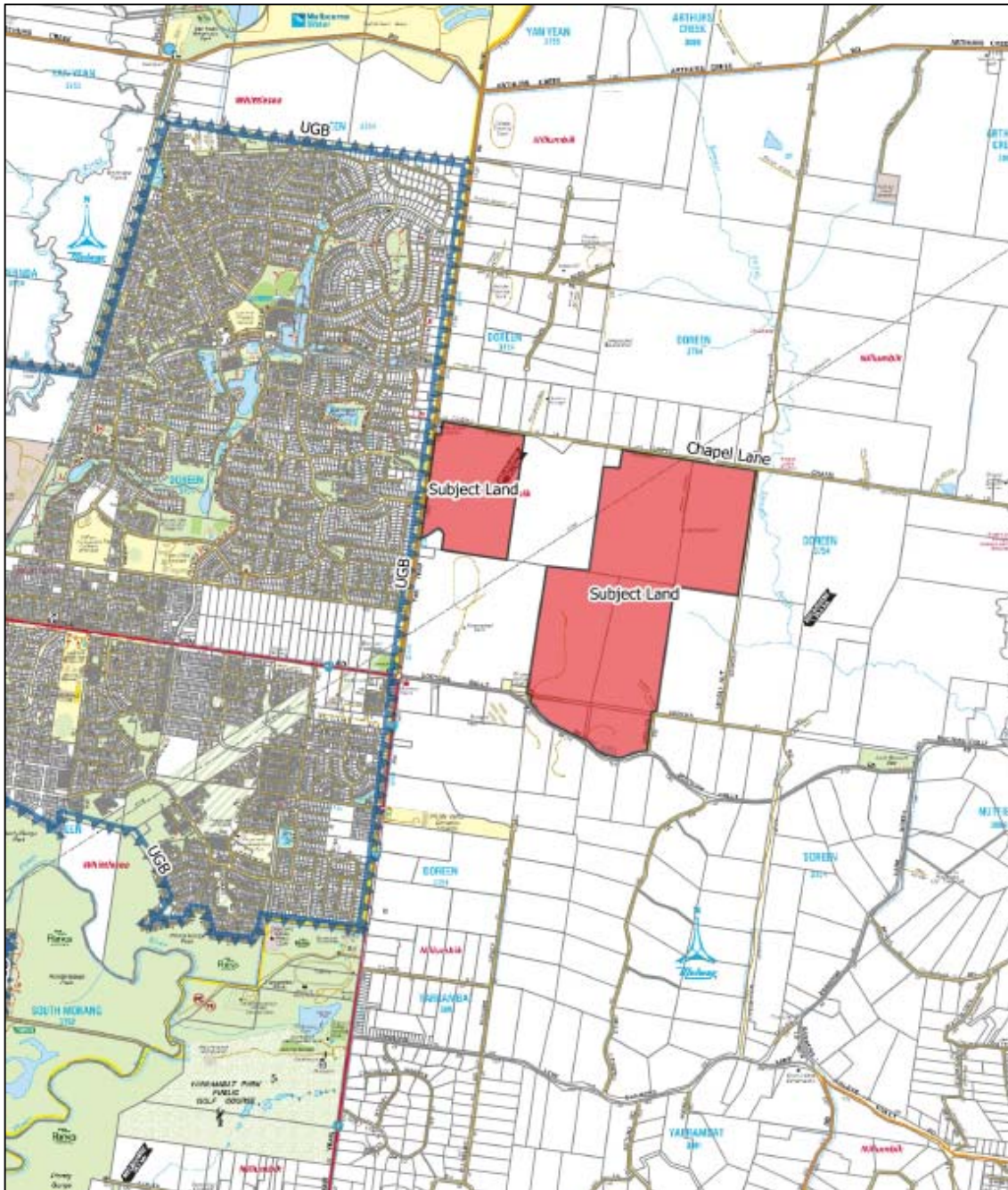


Figure 1: Cadastre Plan

2.2 Existing and Surrounding Land Uses

Existing Land Uses

Land in the DGAP is bounded by Yan Yean Road, Doctors Gully Road, Middle Hut Road and Chapel Lane and consists of large non-fragmented individually owned lots of between 30-40 ha which are generally used for agricultural, lifestyle and hobby farm purposes. The Doreen Primary School, which is located on Doctors Gully Road, is the only non-rural land use located in this area.

Surrounding Land Uses

The DGAP land is located within a broader area known as the Doreen growth corridor with high density urban residential development located immediately to the west. Yan Yean Reservoir is located approximately 3.5 kms to the north and the settlements of Hurstbridge, Cottles Bridge and St Andrews are located to the east and south-east.

Yan Yean Road is a local arterial road (Road Zone, Category 2) which transitions to a VicRoads arterial road (Road Zone, Category 1) at the intersection of Doctors Gully Road and Bridge Inn Road (also a Road Zone, Category 1). In turn Bridge Inn Road connects with Plenty Road, the major north-south arterial road in this region.

The adjacent Doreen growth corridor has significantly developed over the last 15 years and lot supply is currently nearing exhaustion which we note presents potential for new redevelopment opportunities to be explored, in particular in the DGAP.

The following photographs document the DGAP from various locations.



Photo 1: Looking south-west towards Doctors Gully Road from the farm dwelling at [REDACTED]



Photo 2: Looking north-west from [REDACTED]



Photo 3: Looking east towards Brocks Road from [REDACTED].



Photo 4: Hi-voltage transmission lines and towers which bisect the property at [REDACTED].



Photo 5: Taken from [REDACTED] showing the lack of transitional zoning between urban and rural land uses.



Photo 6: Dumped rubbish on roadsides creates additional pressures for green wedge farmers. This photo is taken on Chapel Lane approximately 400-500 metres from the site at [REDACTED].



Photos 7 – 10: Photos taken along Doctors Gully Road and Brocks Road showing urban litter on roadsides (note: plastics blowing onto properties on a regular basis creates significant danger to livestock through potential ingestion).

2.3 Planning Scheme Controls

The subject site is located within the Nillumbik Shire Council and in-turn the following zone and overlay controls apply:

- Green Wedge Zone (GWZ);
- Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ); and
- Environmental Significance Overlay, Schedule 1 (ESO1), 'Sites Of Faunal Habitat Significance'.

Figure 2 below depicts these zoning and overlay controls.

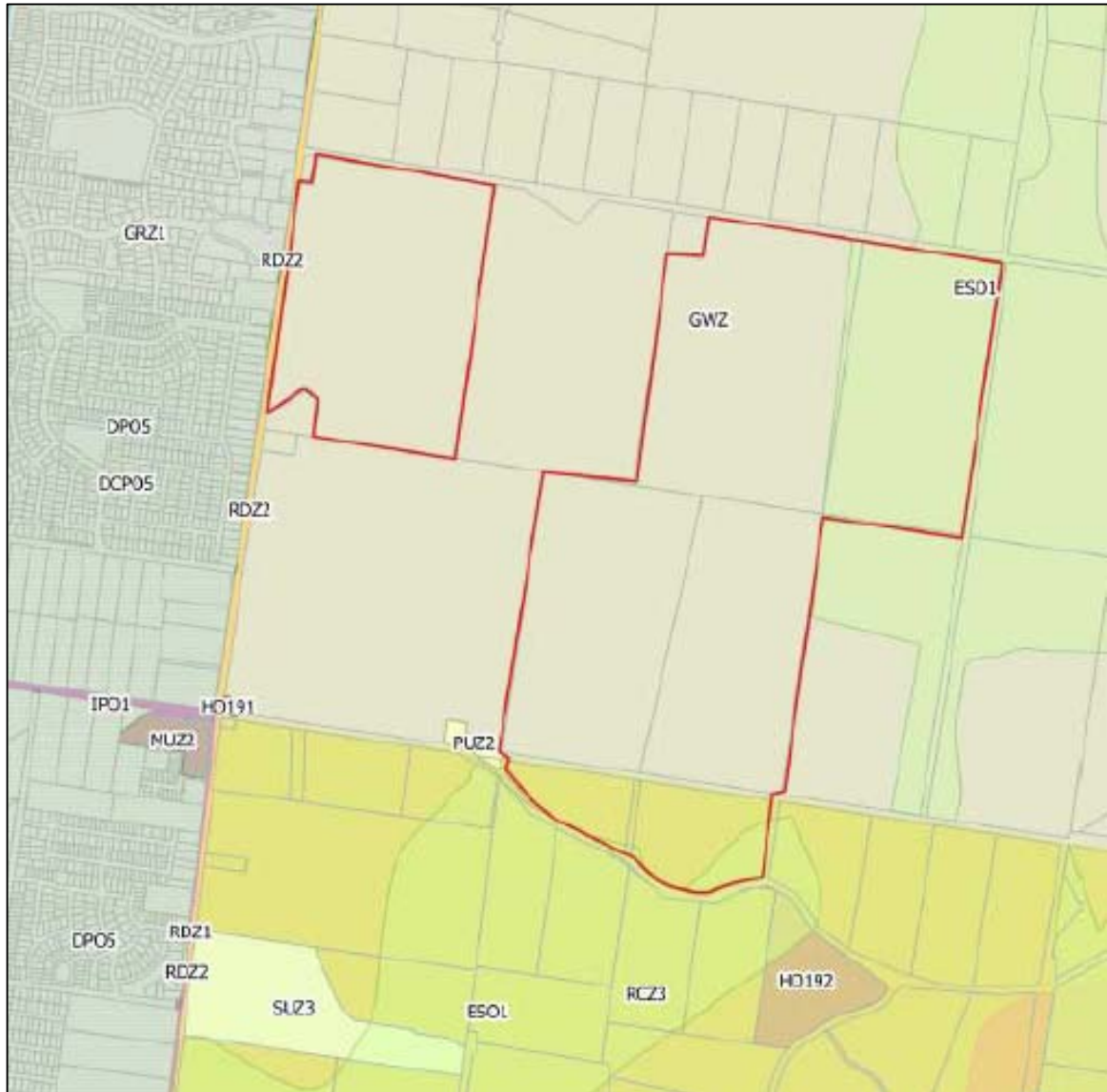


Figure 2: Zoning Map

3. Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

We recognise the importance of protecting Melbourne's Green Wedge land and consider that a significant challenge for managing agricultural land in Nillumbik Shire's green wedge areas, and around Melbourne's urban fringe, is that farmers trying to undertake legitimate and viable agricultural activities experience significant disruption from urban population pressures. These pressures exist as physical population pressures and also economic pressures that make the viability of agricultural activities in proximity to high-density urban growth areas (i.e. the UGB) unworkable.

We provide further detail on direct pressures experienced by DGAP landowners below in Section 4.

Councils draft GWMP acknowledges the issues of population pressure from metropolitan Melbourne and the challenge of managing the rural / urban interface adjacent to the UGB. We provide the following extracts from Councils draft GWMP that expressly highlight these concerns:

- *'Nillumbik is undergoing limited population growth; growing annually by only 0.4 per cent compared to an average 2.4 per cent growth rate across metropolitan Melbourne. It is however, experiencing the impacts of proximity to population growth in the adjacent northern growth corridor, particularly in relation to demands on community infrastructure and the transport network;*
- *The Nillumbik economy continues to transition from a traditional rural and gold mining past into one that is heavily influenced by proximity to metropolitan Melbourne;*
- *Council has identified that a new housing strategy is required for the whole of the Shire. The development of a small number of related key Council strategies, including economic development and community infrastructure, will combine to inform an integrated approach toward settlement planning;*
- *Further examination is warranted to determine whether the current application of zones to private land hinders any of the objectives of this plan, particularly in relation to the promotion of agriculture and tourism, the consolidation of population around townships and the management of the rural areas on the fringe of the urban growth boundary; and*
- *The Victorian Government is currently reviewing the impact of planning controls on strategic agriculture in Melbourne's green wedge and peri-urban areas'.*

With regard to the last point we note that DELWP are currently undertaking a review of all Strategic Agricultural Land (SAL) within 100 kms of Melbourne as part of their "Protecting Melbourne's strategic agricultural land process", which includes all of Nillumbik Shire and the DGAP landholdings. We note that all DGAP landowners have lodged submissions to this process, including having undertaken individual Agricultural Land Assessments of their landholdings.

Councils draft GWMP acknowledges population and urban interface pressures as key issues in the northern growth corridor. What is not recognised is the potential to leverage off the proximity to growth area infrastructure this interface provides to achieve beneficial outcomes for Nillumbik Shire.

In particular for the Doreen growth corridor, the DGAP landholdings east of Yan Yean Road offer a **logical inclusion** to leverage the locational advantage this urban interface provides, including the opportunity to assist Nillumbik Shire in graduating from urban to rural densities at the interface with an amended UGB.

With this in mind, the sections below further expand upon the agricultural and urban interface conflict experienced by DGAP landowners. The benefits that a graduated zoning transition may provide to better manage the green wedge interface further to the east is also outlined.

4. DGAP Landholdings – Key Issues

The following key issues for the DGAP landholdings are discussed in further detail below:

- Agricultural Viability;
- Natural Constraints;
- Land Capability;
- Urban Interface;
- Economic Pressures;
- Land Use Restrictions; and
- Infrastructure and Servicing.

Agricultural Viability

As part of the DELWP's Strategic Agricultural Land (SAL) submissions process, DGAP landowners undertook individual Agricultural Land Assessments (ALA's), which included an assessment of land capability for their properties. As part of the ALA's, DGAP landowners identified to the agricultural consultant their primary land uses and highlighted the significant constraints they experienced from the adjacent urban population in undertaking their rural pursuits.

These constraints included, but are not limited to:

- Trespassing;
 - People trespassing onto properties to collect mushrooms, catch rabbits and yabbies';
 - People trespassing onto properties into areas where cattle and horses are grazing. Trespassers disturb stock and sometimes leave gates open;
- Illegal shooting – there have been instances of shooters entering properties to shoot rabbits and kangaroos;
- Rubbish dumping is a problem. It is not only unsightly but is putting livestock at risk. Animal deaths or injury could occur if cattle ingest toxic plant cuttings or other poisons;
- Increasing urban populations have little understanding of agriculture which creates constant hazards and nuisance;
- Weed Management;
 - Windblown soil from nearby urban development increases the spread of weeds on agricultural properties which is costly to manage and eradicate;
 - Many properties contain uncontrolled weeds, which are spreading. As time progresses fewer property owners have land management experience and as a consequence pest and weed control and fencing maintenance are neglected, creating problems for neighbouring farms;
- Biosecurity – all livestock need to be fully traceable to allow a fast and efficient response to disease outbreaks or food safety incidents along the supply chain, including on and off farm. In practice this requires farmers to know who is on their property and potentially in contact with their cattle. This is very difficult as it is not possible to control trespassers;
- Animal security and safety is a major and increasing issue; and
- Stock are at greater risk of theft or interference as the urban population grows.

The issues raised above clearly occur due to the ungraduated nature of the urban / rural interface that is experienced in immediate proximity to the northern growth corridor, in particular the eastern and western sides of Yan Yean Road.

Natural Constraints

Further to the above, the ALA's completed for individual properties provided an assessment of climatic conditions and natural constraints applying to the individual properties and the surrounding area.

From a precinct wide perspective, and regarding agricultural viability, the following conclusions were drawn about climatic and soil conditions:

- *“According to data on the Bureau of Meteorology website, climate uncertainty has increased since at least 1990 and the drying trend in climate has had a material effect on the capability of the land to produce;*
- *Since 1990 annual rainfall in SE Australia has been below average 21 years of 28 years and Autumn breaks have been more uncertain with 24 years of Autumn seasons being below average;*
- *During the previous 30 years from 1960 below average annual rainfall occurred in only 13 years and below average Autumn seasons occurred in 18 years;*
- *Due to lower rainfall the soils are not producing the pasture production that agronomic inputs should provide. Low rainfall together with changing weather patterns is making cattle production a huge challenge both physically and economically;*
- *The low land capability and agricultural versatility of this land restricts it to extensive agricultural enterprises. It is unsuited to alternative higher value farming enterprises;*
- *The results for both Agriculture Victoria's land capability assessment and the Deakin University's agricultural suitability assessment are consistent. Both assessments indicate low land capability and land suitability for this land under both current and future climate conditions;*
- *The combined soil, water, landscape and climate features of the Doreen area were not assessed as possessing the most suitable conditions and greatest versatility for future productive agriculture in the Green Wedge;*
- *The land has major natural constraints that limit its present and future versatility to support a wider range of commodities other than those produced in broad acre agriculture; and*
- *Climate is a key element in land capability and suitability assessment and under a hotter and drier climate land with low agricultural capability and suitability agricultural production and economics will be severely tested as its capability becomes even more limiting”.*

Land Capability

The ALA's for individual DGAP landowners returned almost identical results regarding land capability. The land capability class on all properties was classified as either Class 4 or Class 5 land, the lowest two land classifications available on a scale of 1-5. Key reasons identified for poor land capability classification included:

- Poor quality and shallow soil types;
- Erosion risk;
- Climatic conditions (referenced above); and

- Steepness greater than 10% for some areas.

The land capability classification as Class 4 and 5 land means that by definition (according to DELWP's "Protecting Melbourne's strategic agricultural land" assessment process) this land is not considered "Strategic Agricultural Land".

Urban Interface

The DGAP landholdings bounded by Yan Yean Road, Chapel Lane, Middle Hut Road and Doctors Gully Road are subject to urban constraints which heavily restrict farming and agricultural pursuits.

The DGAP land has been rendered unworkable for productive farming and agricultural pursuits and therefore land use change within the precinct is likely to follow as a result of the need to identify future urban growth areas which are proximate to urban infrastructure and services.

The potential exists for the rezoning and redevelopment of the DGAP land to better protect green wedge land further east by implementing a zoning regime that graduates densities and creates an appropriate transition between urban to rural areas.

ALA's have been undertaken for individual DGAP properties and have collectively made the following statements about the viability of farming near the UGB, including:

- Farming near the UGB clearly has enormous challenges, most of which cannot be resolved under the current planning zone conditions;
- Given the constraints due to urbanisation, inability to expand the property due to high land prices, the low agricultural capability and versatility of the land and the warming and drying climate it is reasonable to conclude that farming in this area is totally compromised for long term commercial agricultural production;
- A reasonable alternative zoning could allow for subdivision of farms in the Green Wedge to acceptable minimum lot sizes and farmers who wish to leave farming in the Green Wedge would then be able to fairly realise on their land asset;
- Residential development, particularly rural living causes land use conflicts between urban and rural. Normal farm practices that may involve dust, noise and odour are a cause for complaint from the urban population;
- The incidence in dumping of rubbish, theft and dog attacks on livestock, cause inconvenience and cost to land holders;
- The DGAP properties lie within the Green Wedge Zone and Rural Conservation Zone where the current planning controls do not effectively protect and support commercial farming; and
- The Green Wedge Zone and Rural Conservation Zone are mixed-use zones which encourage uses incompatible with farming systems based on the management of natural resources.

Further to the above, we highlight the significant urban population on western side of Yan Yean Road creates an amenity conflict between urban and non-urban land as the zoning boundary between urban and rural/ agricultural land uses is ungraduated. This makes daily activities, including the movement of stock and machinery on and between agricultural properties east of Yan Yean road challenging and conflicted from viable economic pursuit.

Economic Pressures

Economic pressures outlined by the Agricultural Land Assessments included the following:

- *"The present size of most farms in the Green Wedge, is now too small to produce sufficient income from grazing to support a farm family. Due to the reduced terms of trade over the last few decades the family farm size has increased to 1200 – 2000 hectares. As a consequence*

there are very few farmers in the Green Wedge in the Shire of Nillumbik who survive without off farm income (i.e. two or more jobs). This statement was validated by DGAP landowners who supplement their income with off-farm employment;

- *Land prices in Melbourne's peri-urban fringe no longer reflect agricultural land values, but more on rural lifestyle values and land banking. This makes it impossible to expand the area of a farm business locally; and*
- *Council rates based on valuation bear no relationship to returns from farming."*

Land Use Restrictions

The restrictive nature of the GWZ and RCZ that apply to DGAP landholdings, and Councils unwillingness to approve planning permit applications for discretionary uses and development that would generate viable income streams for landowners in these zones, further adds to the unprofitability of this land.

Examples identified by DGAP landowners of land uses that are either un-permissible under the present zoning, or not considered suitable by Council, include; function centre, gymnasium, rural industry and tourism and related uses.

We conclude this leaves landowners with little viable options for their land as agricultural pursuits are uneconomic and more urban or commercial related uses are mostly prohibited or are unwilling to be considered for approval by Council.

4.1 Infrastructure and Servicing

Road and Rail

Bridge Inn Road and Yan Yean Road are the two arterial roads that service the eastern side of the Doreen growth corridor. Chapel Lane is accessed off Yan Yean Road and the extension (and future duplication) of Bridge Inn Road provides access to Doctors Gully Road beyond the intersection with Yan Yean Road.

The Mernda railway station is located on Bridge Inn Road approximately 3.3 km from the of the DGAP and provides direct public transport access to the Melbourne CBD.

Road Duplications:

The Stage 1 upgrade of Yan Yean Road is currently underway to the south between Diamond Creek Road and Kurrak Road. Works are anticipated to be complete this year and Stage 2 upgrades between Diamond Creek Road and Bridge Inn Road are currently going through a planning and environmental approvals process with work to commence in the coming years.

Additionally, Bridge Inn Road is proposed to be upgraded as part of the Suburban Roads Upgrade package of projects and it is currently in the planning phase.

These projects will duplicate both roads in the coming years to accommodate significant additional traffic volumes for the urban population of the Doreen growth corridor. It is considered these upgrades allowing for additional carrying capacity on these roads will consolidate this area as being heavily urbanised.

Doreen Primary School

The Doreen Primary School is located on Doctors Gully Road on the southern boundary of the DGAP. The school has existed for more than 150 years and is itself experiencing population pressures from the significant urban population located immediately to the west. Between 2010 and 2017, the enrolled student population of Doreen Primary School has increased by more than 300% from 50 to

155 students.

The location of this existing primary school at the southern edge of the DGAP is considered a substantial benefit to potential future rezoning and redevelopment opportunities for this area.

Service Infrastructure

In addition to nearby road and rail infrastructure, we emphasise the significant number of urban infrastructure services that are available to the DGAP landholdings, specifically:

- Reticulated water is available to the precinct;
- Reticulated sewer is located along Yan Yean Road and is easily accessible to the precinct;
- Gas pipeline infrastructure bisects several properties within the precinct;
- Several telecommunication towers are located at the topographic highpoint closest to Chapel Lane and Yan Yean Road;
- A high-voltage electricity transmission lines and easement bisects several DGAP properties running from the south-west to north-east through the precinct.

Due to its location proximate to a major growth corridor, the DGAP landholdings have full access to urban infrastructure services. From an agricultural perspective the pipelines and easements that apply to the land represent a significant encumbrance to the agricultural viability of the individual properties in the precinct. However, from a development perspective, the accessibility to these services is considered a major positive for the precinct and highlights the opportunity for this land to be considered as a logical urban infill opportunity.

Commercial Development

A newly developing mixed use precinct is located adjacent to the south-western corner of the DGAP at the intersection of Yan Yean and Bridge Inn Roads. Whilst not fully developed this mixed-use precinct already offers the following services:

- Service station;
- Car wash;
- Multiple convenience restaurants including; McDonald's, KFC, Pizza, Pie Face, Doreen Noodle Bar and Captains Cove fish and chips; and
- A Bridgestone tire service centre.

An early learning centre and Plenty Valley Christian College are located a short distance to the south on Yan Yean Road. Additionally, the Doreen Major Activity Centre is located a short distance from the north-west corner of the DGAP accessed off Hazle Glen Drive.

From a precinct perspective we conclude that whilst this land is zoned GWZ and RCZ, its accessibility to urban services is equal to those of landowners who live within the Doreen growth corridor.

Municipal Boundaries

Councils draft GWMP highlights the urban / rural conflict that exists along the UGB and we consider the interface either side of Yan Yean Road the prime example of this conflict which has been poorly managed.

Yan Yean Road forms the municipal boundary between the Whittlesea and Nillumbik LGA's with the DGAP east of Yan Yean Road previously located within the City of Whittlesea prior to Local Government amalgamations in 1994. We consider that had local government boundaries not changed in this area that land on the eastern side of Yan Yean Road would likely now also be urbanised.

5. DGAP Proposal – A Logical Inclusion

Interface Issues

Councils draft GWMP highlights the problems associated with the rural / urban interface adjacent to the UGB and suggests management techniques to improve cohesion within green wedge areas. What is not contemplated by the draft GWMP is the opportunity to use discrete and graduated urban development techniques on the Nillumbik side of the UGB as a management tool to improve the interface with the growth area and Whittlesea Council municipal boundary.

Whittlesea presently reap all the benefits of urban development associated with the Doreen growth corridor and in contrast Nillumbik obtain no revenue or servicing benefit from this development and instead experiences significant urban pressures as a result.

An Integrated Urban Edge

As articulated above, the DGAP and other neighbouring properties are located within the Nillumbik LGA but are detrimentally impacted by the urban development of the Doreen growth corridor within the Whittlesea LGA.

Our vision for the DGAP is for a discrete urban precinct within Nillumbik to assist Council to achieve its GWMP objectives by enabling a better graduation of land use zones in this area to more appropriately manage the urban / rural interface with the Doreen growth corridor.

Key benefits of a discrete and graduated urban development in the DGAP include:

- A small number of landowners (seven) who are united in their vision to achieve a more beneficial use of unviable agricultural land in the DGAP precinct;
- In contrast to the fragmented rural landscape north of Chapel Lane, the DGAP precinct contains large regularly shaped allotments and a well-defined precinct surround by roads on all sides;
- Excellent availability of urban services and utility infrastructure;
- Proximity to the Mernda railway station, major existing roads including future duplications/ upgrades that allow for convenient accessibility;
- Immediate proximity to an existing primary school on the southern boundary and close proximity to a private school and early learning centre; and
- Immediate proximity to a developing mixed-use activity centre on the corner of Bridge Inn Road and Yan Yean Road.

As articulated above, the sites key weaknesses from an agricultural viability perspective are its key strengths with regard to its potential to accommodate future urban development. Additionally, this land can assist Nillumbik Shire to achieve its draft GWMP objectives by allowing for a graduation of the urban interface to green wedge areas further to the east.

Beneficial Outcomes

Additional benefits for Council from a discrete and well considered rezoning and development opportunity of this precinct include:

- An opportunity to stimulate population growth within the Shire, which at 0.4 per cent per annum is currently significantly lower than the 2.4 per cent on average for metropolitan Melbourne;
- Economic benefits for Council including an increase residential rate base with a minimal

increase to urban services due to the ability to leverage off existing urban services available in the Doreen growth corridor;

- Opportunity to capitalize on surplus infrastructure capacity in the Doreen growth corridor which is not presently fully utilised; and
- The urbanisation of this land through the development of a master plan which has inbuilt mechanisms to achieve urban outcomes whilst delivering green wedge management principles on its eastern interface.

6. Conclusion & Request

6.1 Conclusion

The DGAP bounded by Yan Yean Road, Chapel Lane, Middle Hut Road and Doctors Gully Road is in the Nillumbik green wedge and directly abuts the Doreen growth corridor and UGB. Consequently, the precinct is proximate to existing and proposed urban development and major growth area road upgrades inclusive of Yan Yean Road and Bridge Inn Road.

Noting the above, land in the DGAP is currently set aside for the purposes of “Green Wedge” activities which are predominantly agricultural in nature. Independent Agricultural Land Assessments undertaken for the properties indicates the land is unviable as agricultural land due to its limited productive capacity. We note the foregoing report confirms that *“Given the constraints due to urbanisation, inability to expand the property due to high land prices, the low agricultural capability and versatility of the land and the warming and drying climate it is reasonable to conclude that this farm is totally compromised for long term commercial agricultural production.”*

Our submission confirms:

- DGAP landholdings are not considered to be Strategic Agricultural Land (SAL);
- Agricultural land uses in the precinct are detrimentally impacted by their proximity to major urban populations;
- The site is proximate to arterial roads (including future upgrades to these roads) and major urban service infrastructure which lends this precinct as being suitable for future urban uses;
- The DGAP presents Council with an opportunity to strategically manage the interface with the UGB by utilizing urban development as a green wedge management tool to assist in graduating urban densities away from the UGB; and
- The DGAP presents Council with the opportunity to obtain economic benefit from an increased residential population in the Shire and maximise the advantages of significant existing urban infrastructure located in the adjacent Doreen growth corridor.

6.2 Request

Accordingly, we formally request that the current review of the draft GWMP being undertaken by Council confirm:

- DGAP landholdings are not “strategic agricultural land” and are unviable and uneconomic for continued use as agricultural land;
- Consider a review of the existing planning controls that apply to the DGAP based on the site’s proximity to the UGB and suitability for future urban development; and
- Consider the benefits that graduated urban development in this precinct can offer Nillumbik Council from an economic perspective and as a mechanism to better graduate urban densities and defend more strategic green wedge land further to the east.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Agree

Key Move 2 - Agree

Key Move 3 - Agree

Key Move 4 - Agree

Key Move 5 - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Agree

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Strongly agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Strongly agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Please refer to attached document. I also have a copy of the strategic planning overview that was completed in 2009.

You can upload your file here.

Sudivision Yan Yean Road.docx

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Margaret Schooneveldt

Gary Thomas

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
5th August 2019

To whom it may concern

In 2011 some of the residents of Plenty forwarded a letter to the planning minister requesting a realignment of the urban Growth Boundary. As we did not receive a response, I forwarded the same correspondence under a covering letter in January 2012.

The purpose of the letter was to seek realignment of the Urban Growth Boundary for properties located Yan Yean Road to the West, Heard Avenue to the East, Howell Road to the south and Faneco Road to the North. In the original 2030 Town Planning report, land to the west of Yan Yean Road was to be residential area, land to the east of Heard Avenue a Rural Conservation zone (with a minimum subdivision area of 8 hectares) and the land we are talking about being east of Yan Yean Road and West of Heard Avenue was to be a buffer zone. For some reason the intended buffer zone became part of the Rural conservation zone. This decision was not necessarily well thought out.

The land in the area mentioned covers a total of approximately 38.5 hectares and most of the lots vary between 1 and 2 hectares. Given the widening of Plenty Road some of these blocks have reduced further in size.

The average size is just under two hectares, much smaller than the Rural zone and virtually useless for anything other than residential.

There are 21 lots in the area in question and most are long and narrow in shape with frontages to both Yan Yean Road and Heard Avenue. In 2012 most of the residents were keen to subdivide into smaller lots.

The two hectare lots are ideal for dividing into areas of approximately 1 acre as are the one hectare lots with entrance for these properties already in existence on Yan Yean Road and Heard Avenue.

The road works along Yan Yean Road have taken away the rural feel to the area and made Yan Yean Road a residential four lane motorway.

Given that council is now looking at the Urban Growth Boundary, I would like consideration to be given to the proposal to subdivide our property along Yan Yean Road. Lots could be 1 acre which would still align with a buffer area along the Heard Avenue but would allow the residents to utilise their properties better. It would also provide council with revenue from extra rates which would enable council to provide some funding to those in the green wedge who need assistance to regenerate their land. Subdivision of this area would allow more planting of trees and vegetation on these properties which would also assist the green wedge rather than having dry used vegetation.

As a property owner we purchased this land in Plenty due to the rural feel. With the duplication of Yan Yean Road, we now have a dual lane motorway outside of our front door. We would like the opportunity to subdivide so that we could build at the base of our property and return to the country feel that drew us to this land.

Kind Regards

Margaret Schooneveldt
and Gary Thomas

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

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- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

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The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

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To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

Response to the GWMP Draft of July 2019.docx

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Response to the GWMP Draft of July 2019

This management plan (GWMP) seems to have been written by a consultant because it is light on practical recommendations, is full of motherhood statements, is repetitious and includes pictures that add absolutely nothing to the prospect of a cohesive and viable plan. The original GWMP was supposed to run from 2010-2025 with reviews every four years. But this Draft suggests the need for an entirely new plan without giving any reason as to why this is necessary. The absence of a reason for the new plan and the lack of any clearly achievable recommendations in the Draft means it is rather difficult to offer a coherent response, but nonetheless here are some comments that hopefully will be useful.

Introductory Comments

The Green Wedges areas surrounding Melbourne were established by the far-sighted Rupert Hamer in the early eighties and have continued to be a fundamental elements in defining Melbourne as a city that maintains a strong rural ambience on its outskirts, whilst housing a large population. As the population of Melbourne has increased rapidly constant attempts have been made to nibble away at the boundaries of the various Green Wedges for the purpose of enabling increased development. Nillumbik has been able to resist this only because of the strident ongoing vigilance of a group of residents committed to the retention of the Green Wedge (GW).

When the Shire of Nillumbik was established in 1994 it was emphasized that it was a Green Wedge Shire and this has been a large part in the development of its distinctive identity, if not that of the northeast of Melbourne in general. It is the largest green wedge closest to Melbourne and the survival of the Nillumbik GW is all the more important now because of the increasing developmental incursions on other green wedges. And given its important function as a carbon sink in the face of the worsening effects of anthropogenic climate change, it is imperative it be retained as it is with minimum changes. If it is objected that it has an insufficient ratings base, then the council could save money by (1) completely eschewing the use of external consultants; and (2) by appealing to the State government to underwrite its operations because of the special status it gives to Melbourne as a whole.

The GW is a geographical area with its own topography and specific biodiversity, and a population of people who decide to live in the area for a variety of reasons, but mainly because they enjoy the GW ambience and define themselves as individuals/communities living in nature who do not just try to dominate it. Over the past fifty years it has inspired the work of many artists, musicians, writer, environmentalists, horse riders and other people who simply like the sound of birds and the sight of wombats and kangaroos. This may sound sentimental, yet it does capture one important aspect of the GW. Moreover, the combination of this human element and the natural environmental beauty of the GW has promoted ongoing tourism and has helped sustain a thriving hospitality scene in Hurstbridge, and St Andrews to a lesser extent.

Economic Growth

Reading between the lines of the report it is clear that economic matters are to be given priority as well as the wishes of individual landowners. Illustrative of this is that the word “prosperous” occurs six times throughout the draft, with “economy” occurring twenty-seven times. All of this is summarized in Goal 4: A prosperous economy
p.36 “A strong local economy that supports business, growth, jobs and community wealth.

Why do we need to have more economic growth? Whilst there are differences in income levels in the Nillumbik Shire, by and large most residents are financially secure and lead a good standard of living. In addition, most people work outside of the Shire except for Eltham

itself and perhaps Diamond Creek, both having small industrial precincts and considerable shopping centres. Surely the Green Wedge as it presently exists must be reckoned as a major source of “community wealth”, and here I stress the word “community” because in creating the ambience for the entire Shire, it is a valuable community possession as opposed to a set of properties owned by individuals. Nor is it “wealth” that can be evaluated in numerical terms.

Under Goal 4 there are a number of observations—not yet recommendations—that would, if carried through in terms of their implications, markedly change the GW as it stands. All fall under the category of “economic prosperity.”

For example, p. 36 “One of the barriers to food production is being able to move product to market efficiently. The small-scale production that can occur in Nillumbik is not of a scale that suits the large wholesale market or supermarkets. However strengthening the supply chain between Nillumbik food producers and food retailers could provide new opportunities for food production.”

How would this be achieved? More freeways? More traffic on the road? This may contradict p.37 “To grow and maximise the benefits derived from the visitor economy, strategies will support the need for new and diversified accommodation investment and development of new visitor experiences that are able to be managed appropriately in the green wedge environment and the townships.”

Both may well be laudable goals and they do recognize the existence of the GW is for the benefit of the whole of Melbourne, not just for its inhabitants. But the implication always in these lines is that we must have growth, as this will somehow benefit those living in the GW, as well as those outside of it. How it will benefit them is never explained, nor is considered the physical effects on the GW of more agricultural production and tourism. If the number of tourists is increased dramatically—and, of course, some tourism is desirable—, and if food production is increased, this must in turn increase the number of people in the GW and definitely will increase traffic, which in turn causes more pollution, and congestion, and militates against the existing ambience of the GW. And what does “appropriately” mean here? That is the crux of the question as development in the GW that significantly alters its present geographical configuration and biodiversity could endanger its very status as a GW, a danger not canvassed here at all.

Finally, these two proposals might encourage more land clearing; a process which, the latest IPCC report has said, exacerbates greenhouse gas production. (See *The Age*, 8/8/19 “But land would also affect the climate because land-clearing, methane from livestock, fertiliser, and other emissions related to farming and forestry are major sources of greenhouse gases.” (<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>)

2. Planning:

Planning is a fundamental function of all councils. Retention of something as vital as the GW rests very much on the development and implementation of a planning scheme that is both rigorous and transparent. The Nillumbik GW has been retained in its existing form for three basic reasons: the previous plan that was supposed to run until 2025; the general acceptance amongst the residents of the Shire that this was an appropriate plan; and the state government controlled UGB. It is the latter, in particular, that has protected the integrity of the GW, even though certain developers have consistently tried to nibble away at its borders.

The Draft offers some comments about planning which indicate one direction in which the

council might move, a direction threatening to alter the GW as it presently stands. Why these suggestions need to be commented upon is because they establish precedents that could be acted upon in other administrative arenas (VCAT, the State government) to further weaken the integrity of the GW.

Seven recommendations are especially important:

1) A4.4 "...use the Nillumbik planning scheme to encourage consolidation of smaller agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands."

Whilst this may be a useful rationale in terms of agricultural efficiency—large is better than small—it could enable a lessening of the existing GW covered by vegetation and negatively affect existing biodiversity.

2) A4.8 Advocate to the Victorian Government that:

- "planning and other controls be altered to allow landholders a right to farm on preexisting cleared agricultural land and be able to adapt to changing agricultural practice." Again, this could have a negative effect on biodiversity. We need to be planting trees on vacant ground to increase the GW's capacity as a carbon sink.

3) p.9. "Difficult, costly and time intensive and unfair planning processes were considered a challenge by some respondents."

These processes are essential if the integrity of the GW is to be maintained.

Why put this in here? It affects so few people and what does it have to do with an overarching plan pertinent to the GW?

4. p.20 para 2 "...consolidation of lots is likely to become increasingly necessary...." This could destroy the GW as it could facilitate more farming, if not more development.

5. p.20 "constraints may have to be re-examined, subject to state government support, to enable their roles as social, economic and service centres for the green wedge to accommodate incremental growth and support housing diversity for young and elderly people."

Both the latter two points (4 and 5) lead on to p.22 A1.6 "Investigate options for consolidation and amalgamation of small rural lots that are not capable of supporting a dwelling in their current configuration. Where appropriate and with owner consent, consider government purchase of such lots where they are adjacent to public land."

The latter would be acceptable only if these lots were not used for building or other activities inimical to the integrity of the GW.

6. A1.7 "Review the impacts of proximity to urban communities on rural land adjoining the urban area and investigate options to maintain the amenity and productivity of those areas."

7. A1.8 "Encourage the location of aged care services of aged care services within the townships and programs to facilitate people ageing in the community where they have lived for many years."

This sounds very reasonable as long as it does not lead to rampant development in the GW towns and then create pressure to move this development beyond these towns into the GW itself.

p.25 A2.7 "Use the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as a positive means to encourage heritage conservation and management, including support of adaptive reuse of heritage places and allowing prohibited uses, if they help support the conservation of a heritage place and are in line with planning policy objectives."

p.37 A4.4 "To ensure that land remains available for agriculture, use the Nillumbik planning

scheme to encourage consolidation of smaller agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands.”

Collectively all of these could signal a strong desire to alter the planning scheme to promote development over the values of conservation and biodiversity. Over-development can destroy the ambience of an area in a matter of months, an ambience that has often taken decades to build up. This seems especially pertinent to the following sentence:

p.40, “The RCZ is intended to support conservation and should be applied to land for which that is the primary purpose. However its current application across large parts of the shire means that land already cleared for agriculture cannot be used for that purpose without a planning permit. This is an inhibitor to this plan’s objectives to promote the right to farm and the tourism allowed in conjunction with farming.”

I can only conclude that the intention of the Draft is to utilize planning to gradually increase farming and tourism in the Shire, both of which could end up having deleterious effects on the GW. I think the RCZ should be maintained where it presently applies unless there is a watertight argument for its alteration in a manner not decreasing the existing integrity of the GW.

3. Individual Contra Community

Running throughout the GWMD is an implicit–though sometimes explicit–pitting of community against the individual, in this case, the individual landowner. It should be remembered that the GW is above all a community asset even if the land it occupies is substantially owned by individuals and families. This means some kind of arrangement has to be met enabling the retention of the GW substantially as it stands with the capacity of individuals to make some changes on their own properties. It is the purpose of planning schemes to make this arrangement.

The following passages point to this:

p.9 The new plan proposes to move the balance of local management **approaches more towards leadership and empowerment** to achieve its objectives. Essential characteristics of leadership include sharing of a vision, motivating and serving people, empathy, creativity, team building and continuous improvement.”

These are neoliberal motherhood statements which, frankly, mean nothing. Is the GWMP saying that “leadership and empowerment” (of individuals) is going to replace council decision-making on important matters of planning?

p.21 “People are the lifeblood of any community and play the most important role of all in caring and looking after our green wedge. It is the people that own the majority of the land. It is the people who manage our beautiful landscapes and risk their lives to protect us. It is the people who volunteer, participate and engage in public life. It is the children that will contribute to our future and the elderly who pass on their wisdom and our history. It is the people who stand up and respond in adversity and it is the vulnerable people we look out for together. It is the people that invest their money in their homes and businesses, that connect socially and drive our togetherness, that farm the land, that visit our businesses, that run our clubs, that sometimes just seek a simple life or who just want to enjoy their home with their families.”

This is so obvious it need not be said, so why say it? However, it misses the point that the people who live in the GW and the GW as a physical, conceptual and cultural identity define each other, and if one is dramatically changed so might the other, although there are more

definitional forces working on the people than the GW. And, I assume the constant reference to “people” here means “individuals” as opposed to “community.” I reiterate: the GW is a community asset not just a piece of land with a distinctive biodiversity that can be divided up into the possessions of individual landowners. It transcends the individuality of its residents.

p.22 A1.1 “Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a forum to

discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding.”

p.29 “Victoria’s climate change adaptation plan aligns closely with the community resilience framework in terms of community enablement. It recognises that climate change risks are most effectively addressed by those who are directly affected. In practice, this means that businesses and individuals **are often best placed to manage risks to private assets and infrastructure.**”

No, this is not right! Individuals can make a contribution to reducing greenhouse gases and promoting carbon sinks, but it is the large corporations—especially the fossil fuel companies and the large agricultural companies—that have to make the move here. (See <http://johnmenadue.com/ian-dunlop-david-spratt-australias-climate-stance-is-inflicting-criminal-damage-on-humanity-the-guardian/#more-30245>) Yet it reflects the underlying theme running throughout the report that the individual is accorded more weight in the GWMP than the community as a whole.

Conclusion

To me this Draft says very little in terms of concrete recommendations whilst paving the way for weakening of the integrity of the Green Wedge. Three factors are relevant here: firstly, the emphasis on economic prosperity as being a guiding feature of the presence of the GW; secondly, the intention to rezone some aspects of the GW; and, finally, the wish to build up the GW towns of St Andrews, Panton Hill and Hurstbridge, as this would intensify further development out from these existing centres, further weakening the integrity of the GW.

A community panel made recommendations upon which eighty percent of the panellists agreed. The GWMP could have adopted these—as it had initially suggested it would do—and then propose specific and viable recommendations that could have been put before the ratepayers of the Shire. It is clear from the thrust of the panel’s report that they essentially wanted the retention of the GW as it presently stands. The present Draft does not respect the panel’s recommendation; instead it paves the way for the council to develop the Green Wedge in a way that would abrogate what the existing GWMP recommends.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [gwmp](#)
Subject: Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission
Date: Friday, 9 August 2019 5:29:16 PM

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

The WCA sub GWMP Objection is attached.

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

The WCA sub GWMP Objection is attached.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

The WCA sub GWMP Objection is attached.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

The WCA sub GWMP Objection is attached.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

The WCA sub GWMP Objection is attached.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

To Whom It May Concern, Please accept the Warrandyte Community Association (WCA) Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) objection attached to this email.

Please reply with an acknowledge receipt of this email at [REDACTED]. Kind regards, Carli Lange-Boutle WCA President [REDACTED]

You can upload your file here.

[WCA_Sub_GWMP_090819.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

████████████████████

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

This is not SPAM. You are receiving this message because you have submitted feedback or signed up to Participate Nillumbik.



WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT NILLUMBIK GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUED ON 25 JUNE 2019

This submission is made on behalf of the Warrandyte Community Association which has as two of its objectives :

To protect the Green Wedge, and
To protect the environment and encourage restoration and regeneration of native flora and fauna.

The WCA believes that the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) released on 25 June 2019 should be abandoned for the following reasons.

1. The Draft recommends that much of the land currently zoned Rural Conservation Zone should be rezoned Green Wedge Zone. This rezoning would weaken the emphasis on conservation within the Nillumbik Green Wedge. No convincing reasons for such rezoning are provided by Council.
2. The Draft plan floats the idea of undefined “buffer zones” which is tantamount to moving the Urban Growth Boundary and would open up current green wedge land to subdivision and urbanisation. The alleged problems which buffer zones address can be solved by other means which don’t shrink the green wedge. Furthermore, so called buffer zones would surely push any problems further out, leading to the call for more buffer zones, and so on. There will always be an interface between urban areas and green wedge land. The creation of so-called buffer zones won’t remove this fact and will only serve to diminish green wedge land incrementally.
3. The Draft plan has been developed in haste and not in accordance with State Government requirements for the preparation of Green Wedge Management Plans.
4. The Council has largely ignored the thrust of community opinion as expressed in

the report on community engagement and the recommendations of the Community Panel. It was clear from this consultation process that the community was seeking to have green wedge protections enhanced and strengthened.

Having spent so much money on the consultative process it is irresponsible of Council to now ignore that opinion and advance a plan which seeks to weaken protection of the Green Wedge

5. The existing GWMP provides much greater support for the purposes of the Green Wedge as set out in the State Planning Scheme, especially through measures to protect biodiversity. Furthermore, the existing GWMP was developed with much greater thoroughness and expertise and it should form the basis of the next GWMP. To discard this plan is a waste of the considerable resources the community has already invested in this matter.

Accordingly, the WCA requests that:

1. The Draft GWMP be abandoned; and
2. That Council set up a process to review the GWMP in accord with State Government requirements and the majority recommendations of the Community Panel; and
3. That the existing GWMP be retained and amended so as to reflect the majority recommendations of the Community Panel.

9 August 2019

WARRANTYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC.
PO Box 75 Warrandyte 3113 www.warrandyte.org.au
ACN A0042350W ABN 23 120 318 791

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

See completed submission

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

See Completed Submission

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

See Completed Submission

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

See Completed Submission

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

See Completed Submission

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

See Completed Submission

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

See Completed Submission

You can upload your file here.

[GWPG Nillumbik Draft GWMP 2019 submission.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

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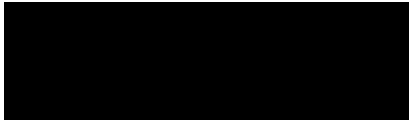
Introduction

The Green Wedge Protection Group (GWPG) was formally incorporated in 1995, following municipal amalgamations. Less formally, the Group has existed since the early 1970s. The Purposes of the Green Wedge Protection Group include:-

- Working to ensure that residents and public officials of the Shire of Nillumbik act together to protect the environment; develop a high quality urban lifestyle within limited designated areas; and promote a rural lifestyle with sensitive farming and enhanced conservation objectives.
- Ensuring the Green Wedge is the strategic focus of the Shire of Nillumbik.
- Providing input to the Shire of Nillumbik and other decision making bodies on any matter considered relevant to the Green Wedge.

The Green Wedge Protection Group is heavily involved in state and local planning issues, both currently and prior to the group's formal inception, and will continue to provide advice and direction to authorities to ensure the intent of our Green Wedges is upheld at all levels of Government, and the values protected.

The Green Wedge Protection Group thank you for the opportunity to place this submission on the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan before Council.



Kahn Franke, President, Green Wedge Protection Group

Preface

The GWPG have had many phone calls and discussions with community members who have diligently read the draft GWMP. Most, if not all find themselves confused, unsure and doubt their ability to respond at any level. Some believe that the plan is too complex for them to understand, many believe it is very badly written and random. A document that is circular, convoluted and unclear, that does not inspire, and completely misses the desired role of supporting and enhancing the environment and biodiversity. There are also those that believe it is designed to “pull the rug over our eyes” that it purposefully meanders so that unravelling the true intent is time consuming and difficult.

Whether it is a lack of experience in putting together a GWMP, little understanding of our green wedge, its communities and the complexity of the planning scheme or the extremely tight timeline to produce the draft GWMP the document fails the “pub” test, it is not easily understood.

Background

The Green Wedge concept has been in place now for nearly fifty years. In that time very little has changed. The vision is the same, zoning names have changed but the controls are similar. The biggest changes have been the introduction of the UGB by the Bracks Labor Government and the weakening of controls over uses by Liberal Government Planning Minister Matthew Guy.

The NE green wedge that Nillumbik’s boundaries are based on is one of the most intact of the twelve wedges surrounding Melbourne. It is so because the communities across Nillumbik have supported the planning scheme, accepted the controls, understood the need for preservation of biodiversity, were aware of their surroundings, particularly with regard to fire, and sought to preserve the rural and bushland vistas that typify Nillumbik. Properties changed hands, generally prospective purchasers understood the green wedge principles, did their due diligence concerning planning controls and joined a community who prized the rural lifestyle.

With time, properties have become more expensive, changing the demographics across the green wedge. There are elements within this new demographic that appreciate the beauty and the lifestyle but seem not to understand why the Nillumbik landscape still exists. The acceptance for the need for planning controls by residents has ensured that the Nillumbik Green Wedge is Melbourne’s most environmentally intact. Not since the inception of the NE green wedge has there been an attempt to “consider” changing planning provisions that have protected this area, as we now see in this draft GWMP.

These “considered” changes to the planning scheme were not recommendations from the majority report by Council’s Community Panel. If not a Panel recommendation, then whose? While the intent is clear, the justification is non-existent. This council is actively attempting to remove, relax and reduce controls over the green wedge which will hasten its slide into obscurity.

Councils' Unconventional Process

The current GWMP 2010-2025 was to be reviewed every five years, the Glossop Report, a comprehensive review was completed and presented to the previous council. The current council did not move to implement the recommendations of the Glossop Review but decided to review/rewrite (the status is still not clear in the community's eyes) the current GWMP. Councils inability to define a clear direction has led to a process that expended considerable money and community time on an unknown goal.

Council embarked on a locally untried process of a Community Jury/Panel to review/rewrite the GWMP. Consultants were employed, and the criteria for selection outlined based on demographics. This was the first area of this process to be subverted, resulting in less than 25% of the shire population holding 50% of the panel positions

The panel selected were asked to nominate speakers that they thought could add to their understanding of the task at hand, nominations were made and voted upon. Once again, the process was subverted by the addition of a speaker who was not elected by the panel.

Throughout the community consultation and the panel deliberations criteria for presenting a "minority report" were detailed. For any recommendation from the panel to be approved at least 80% of the panel had to vote in favour, if the recommendation failed to get 80% approval by a small margin then a "minority report" could be made on that failed recommendation.

Five panel members (12%) submitted an entire alternative GWMP to the majority report at the last minute on the last day of the panel sitting, under the guise of a "minority report".

Council in accepting the "minority report #1" showed bias towards this vocal minority and was consequently taken to task by the panel majority, leading to the removal of "minority report #1" from the final recommendations presented to council, only for council to re-admit it after the Ombudsman sent an informal recommendation that the authors of "minority report #1"/complainants should be listened to. The inclusion of the "minority report #1" on equal footing to the majority Community Panel recommendations again subverted the "clear and transparent" process that should surround true community consultation.

Like the rest of the community, the minority report authors had the opportunity to place a submission before council and should have been given that direction by council, in the spirit of the Ombudsman's informal recommendation.

Planning Practice Note 31 (PPN31)

Guidelines or Not?

The PPN 31 provides a guide for the preparation of GWMP's and sets out the general requirements that should be met. The PPN covers the policy context and basis for the plan, it's context and status.

A major flaw with PPN 31 is its status. While there is a need for a GW council to produce a GWMP and the PN provides guidelines on how to produce one there is no need to seek approval by DELWP on whether the GWMP proposed meets the guidelines. Apparently PPN 31 is optional. The GWMP needs only to be adopted by

council. This may not be a problem if all the requirements of PPN 31 are met. However, the GWMP draft put forward by Nillumbik lacks rigour, professional input, input by neighbouring councils, input by Melbourne Water and in fact by any external bodies. It would appear that even input from Nillumbik's own various departments was not sought as there is no acknowledgement of contributors. It has been rushed, with the final draft prepared in a vacuum, by council staff (an invisible unnamed cross-corporate internal working group of Council) with no community involvement and no opportunity for ongoing feedback.

Council freely admits that the proposed GWMP is "people centric," believing that the current GWMP puts too much emphasis on the environment, biodiversity and sustainability. However, on reading the current plan it fully recognises the importance of people within the GW – a point recognised by the community panel who recommended that the current GWMP should serve as the basis for an updated plan.

The PPN 31 guidelines begin "A GWMP is a council adopted strategy that identifies a vision, objectives and actions for the sustainable use and development of each GW" it also includes "the needs of the local community" but only after suggesting that the plan "identifies the values and features of the GW, the preferred future land use, environmental and natural resources that should be protected". The Council Plan focuses on people and their involvement, interaction, welfare etc, as do many of the other policies council has created, the emphasis within the GWMP should be the environment, sustainable land use and management, biodiversity enhancement etc, as outlined in the eleven dot points on P3 of PPN 31.

Does the draft GWMP align with PPN 31?

What is the process for preparing a GWMP? Page 3 PPN 31

Council have relied solely on the initial community information gathering forums and the Community Panel process to then weave a document that is meant to fulfil the model provided by PPN 31. Within the structure outlined there is to be engagement of "stakeholders" these are not only the landowners or community but wider agencies with an interest in the GW. Project steering and working groups were not formed – the feedback loops indicated never happened. Several bulletins were put out through the council website, no wider interaction or face to face meetings were held, no opportunity for discussion or input by the community.

Information gathering. Council claims that the participants in the wider community engagement fulfilled this element, in truth they provided their views and issues only. They did not, however, explore existing information, the policy content, identify gaps, or undertake any research.

Review existing policies and programs. Not done. As stated earlier, the current GWMP had been reviewed in 2015 and not acted upon (ie. Glossop Report), while all policies will be reviewed in the fulness of time one that should have been looked into is the Invasive Species Action Plan, particularly in relation to the impact of deer. The haste with which this review has been undertaken means that full scrutiny of all aspects of current supporting policies and strategies has not been undertaken. Council did not supply the community panel with important policies and strategies such as The Nillumbik State of Environment Report, the Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy, land capability studies and a myriad of further documentation that would aid in their decision making.

Developing actions. No community input was sought while developing a series of Actions, nor were various options explored or tested with key stakeholders. The

resultant Council draft has 50 key actions, there are a number (5) that are repeated twice or three times, such duplication is unnecessary and potentially confusing.

Monitoring and Review. The Draft Plan (page 43) on monitoring and evaluation, provides no measures to the progress and implementation of the plan nor does it provide a timeline for either the Objectives or the 43 'unique' actions.

Principles that should underpin preparation of a GWMP page 4 PPN 31

A common basis for the preparation of plans. Not met. The extensive community consultation was carried out at the beginning of the process and partially meets the information gathering criteria, yet there has been no indication of any other Government agencies being involved or briefed. No list of these agencies has been sighted. There is no evidence that appropriate council departments were involved.

A well informed, inclusive plan preparation process.

Not met.

Dot pt 1. As far as the general public know there has been no inclusion of neighbouring municipalities, the CMA, Melbourne Water etc

Dot pt 2. While open to public view on the council website once again there has been no opportunity for further informed input. There is a raft of agencies mentioned in this point of the guidelines, no evidence of any interaction with these bodies has been sighted.

Dot pt 5. Initial engagement was considerable and every effort made to involve as many people as possible, however there has been a distinct lack of follow up contact, the odd bulletin emailed but no means for continued public input until the completed document was presented to the community for feedback.

Dot pt 6. As already stated, initial engagement was considerable. The process has not demonstrated transparency, inclusiveness or built on the consultation initiated. The treatment of the Community Panel input has not built partnerships or a shared ownership. Council will need to do much more to engender trust across the community.

A common approach to the preparation of a GWMP. Page 5 PPN 31

A major plank in the preparation of a GWMP is the full involvement of all sectors of the community and wider stakeholders. This is articulated in the diagram on page 5 of PPN 31.

This section of the PN "set out the core components EXPECTED to be used in the process"

The first dot point begins "Council SHOULD establish a project steering group..."

This entire section has BEEN COMPLETELY IGNORED by Nillumbik Council in its haste to prepare the document. Not only would it have added time, it would have also increased the rigour, quality, relevance, openness, and transparency, and achieved the clarity and greater certainty for all stakeholders and landowners required by the Government within a GWMP.

A Project Working Group should also have been established to assist the Project Steering Group. Council suggests that a "cross-corporate internal working group of Council participated in the review process and drafting of the plan". This does not a

Project Working Group. Council hasn't published the membership of this cross-corporate Working Group.

These two groups are instrumental in preparing a GWMP that has expert input from a wide range of key stakeholders, PPN 31 outlines explicitly the roles of these groups.

Council contend that the "over 1000 people" and the citizens panel of 40 had the experience, knowledge, expertise and understanding across issues such as strategic planning, biodiversity, climate change, land use, environmental issues, sustainability and the myriad of other components within the preparation of a viable GWMP.

We congratulate the over 1000 participants and wish to acknowledge the incredible efforts made by the 40 panel members, some of which had no idea what a green wedge was, in giving up so much time to produce a document that is a credit to them, only to have it generally ignored by council.

Council freely admit that the entire draft is based upon the comments received in the initial engagement process and the results of the citizen panel. Council did not consider that agencies and bodies such as –

- DELWP offering support and comment at all stages to both the Project Steering and Project Working Groups.
- Melbourne Water
- Neighbouring municipalities
- Interface Councils
- Country Fire Authority
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (Agriculture)
- Port Philip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
- Heritage Victoria
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Tourism Victoria
- All Council Departments particularly planning and environment.

would be of assistance in preparing the plan. This list is not exhaustive but gives some idea of the depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise available to contribute to a full and comprehensive GWMP, as the PPN 31 guidelines suggest.

Council may have dealt with some, or all, of these organisations however there has been no documentation, minutes or notices referring to involvement by any party.

Council has not identified appropriate mechanisms to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the GWMP. No timelines for any actions have been proposed and no means of qualitative or quantitative evaluation has been put forward.

Involvement of Stakeholders and landowners. page 5

Over 1000 people in the initial consultative engagement, the Information Gathering box of the flowchart on P4 of PPN 31. 40 members of the citizens panel were involved in partially in boxes 3 in developing a Green Wedge vision. No ongoing involvement or

further interaction was deemed necessary by council. In terms of PPN 31 the GWPG contend that the steps outlined were not carried out with any rigour, if at all.

How will the GWMP be implemented? Page 5 PPN 31

The draft plan commits to the setting of four yearly priorities and annual implementation plans.

No such plans have been produced and no timelines indicated.

Status of the GWMP. Page 6 PPN 31

Council states that “This is intended as part of future four yearly reviews of the planning scheme. Changes to municipal laws are not proposed”.

There are Actions within the Draft that do recommend possible changes to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

- A2.7
- A3.9
- A4.8
- A5.6
- A5.7

Role of the Department page 6 PPN31

“Council believes that the general requirements of PPN 31 have been or will be met.”

The GWPG contend that council has treated PPN 31 guidelines as purely optional and, as there is no formal review by the department of the proposed Nillumbik draft GWMP council is free to pass it in any form they wish.

Nillumbik Council decided to go it alone, without the involvement of DELWP. PPN 31 anticipates that the department will be involved in the development of each GWMP, participate in the project steering and working groups as needed, liaise with councils and groups of councils and contribute to partnership arrangements or funding programs where available.

Nillumbik did not set up project steering or working groups, did not liaise with councils and groups of councils and needed no partnership arrangements or required access to funding programs.

Conclusion

Council Draft GWMP does not align with PPN31.

Council from the outset were unsure whether they were reviewing the current GWMP or writing a totally new document. This point alone has led to a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding within the community. There should and is considerable differences in the approach to organising a review against that required for a complete rewrite.

Ignoring PPN 31 may indicate that council believes it is not a requirement for a review. The GWPG would agree had the accepted review process been adopted.

The plan authors call the document the Draft GWMP indicating it is a new plan replacing the former adopted GWMP. The GWPG would argue that if it is a new plan then the council has a moral obligation to meet the requirements laid out in the guidelines of PPN 31.

While council has attempted to justify their process against PPN 31 by presenting a document advising of their interpretation of how the draft aligns with PPN 31 it fails to convince.

The GWPG strongly believe that the process of community and wider stakeholder engagement that is a part of PPN 31 is non-existent.

Overall the development of the Nillumbik draft GWMP fails the general requirements of PPN 31.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

General Comments

The Council Plan is required by the LGA along with other statutory requirements such as a yearly financial budget be produced. The Council Plan sets the course of the Shire for the next four years and consists of Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Strategic Indicators. It is a wide-ranging plan for the entire Shire providing detail on all aspects of managing the Shire with community and its people at its centre.

The Shire also has a myriad of more focussed Plans and Strategies that support the directions of the Council Plan but give greater detail on the specific plan or strategy. For example, the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, the Invasive Species Action Plan, the Nillumbik Trails Strategy all concentrate on their individual areas but feed into the Council Plan. The GWMP focus is to ensure the sustainable management of a green wedge, this is clearly articulated in Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 provides guidance on directions for future land use planning that should be included in the overall perspective of the Green Wedges for metropolitan Melbourne:

- *define and protect areas that are strategically important to the metropolitan area and the state, for the environment, biodiversity, landscape, open space. Water, agriculture, tourism, environment, cultural heritage, infrastructure, extractive and other natural resources.*
- *protect and manage the value of the green wedges consistent with green wedge management plans.*
- *avoid development in locations where there is a risk to life, property, the natural environment and infrastructure from natural hazards such as bushfire and flooding.*
- *accommodate additional housing and employment in established towns that have the capacity for growth.*
- *provide for non-urban breaks between urban areas.*

The intent of Plan Melbourne is specific in what the planning future should be for green wedges, primarily the natural environment. The draft GWMP as written is an extrapolation of the Council Plan without acknowledging or clearly articulating council's responsibilities to meet the Plan Melbourne directions for green wedges within the metropolitan context. Plan Melbourne's directions are supported by the eleven dot points on P3 of PPN 31 under the heading of what the GWMP should focus on.

A vision for Nillumbik's green wedge

The GWPG support the vision put forward by the panel. "Living with the landscape" is inclusive, partnering, embracing and involved with your environment. "Living in the landscape" does not engender these attributes but rather creates a limit and a sense of forlorn acceptance of your surroundings.

The explanation of the vision is further support for the Council Plan, with little of relevance to a GWMP. There is no vision of a future green wedge that has enhanced biodiversity, no vision of how the rural character to be maintained, of how flora and fauna will be protected, of its contribution to the wellbeing of communities across Melbourne, no vision of challenging climate change – these and other goals should be the focus of a GWMP. It is the connectivity with people and their environment in all its facets that requires a well thought out GWMP. Above all it should be creating an educated and informed community on the wonderful natural assets that surround us,

and work towards true sustainability at all levels. Sustainability not only of the natural environment but the altered as well – farming management and practices are ever evolving, and Nillumbik should be at the forefront.

Five Key Moves for the Shire

The Draft Green Wedge Management Plan has identified “five key moves” for the shire, as follows:

- 1. Create a comprehensive landowners’ information and support service for land use and management, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek on-going government funding to support the service.*
- 2. Implement a whole of organisation approach to community resilience addressing climate change, emergency management and a range of matters in an integrated manner. This will include robust conversations on the natural environment and biodiversity values, bushfire risk reduction, economic development, agriculture, economic and community rebuilding post events, human health, well-being and safety and water catchment planning.*
- 3. Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a forum to discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge-transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding assistance to support the program.*
- 4. Create a comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships to strengthen their identities and attractiveness as service, population, tourism, community and cultural centres.*
- 5. Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming, that need to be protected for the future and the pests that need to be managed by sourcing information from formal research bodies and landowners. Seek government funding assistance to establish and maintain this data base into the future for landowner information, program prioritisation and policy development.*

It would be appropriate to have some explanation of where and how these five key moves were developed, and detail on how each was decided upon. The development of these “Key Moves” was not a community consultation process.

As 1,3 and 5 require on going government funding, their future implementation is doubtful.

These Moves are key items. This work should have been done to inform the development of a GWMP, however this has not been done because of the undue haste to rewrite the GWMP or the lack of understanding of exactly what a GWMP entails.

#1 Needs explanation as to what is to be achieved, why it is necessary and, most importantly, what is involved.

#2 This is what a GWMP is all about. However, we have a draft but have not had the “robust conversations” critical to producing a draft GWMP.

#3 Seems very similar to #2 but requires funding. A positive move but should be happening prior to the adoption of the GWMP in line with PPN 31.

#4 To be concise, this could read “Review township plans”.

#5 These actions should inform the production of a GWMP, not be an action within it. There needs to be an explanation and definition of what these “stocktakes” are

measuring, what the data base wishes to achieve and what is being monitored. This key move misses the whole point of a GWMP. Agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming do not need to be protected for the future, it is the protection and sustainable use of the resource that they are based on that requires protection, this in turn leads to a sustainable future for every agricultural pursuit. Economic output is based upon the resource, not a plan to protect a lifestyle.

The Green Wedge Key Data

The information provided has a great deal of relevance to the production of the Council Plan, but very little to the production of a Green Wedge Management Plan. A Council Plan will supply relevant Actions to assist in the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

Relevant Green Wedge key data would need to focus on important landscape values such as endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes, threatened species, important vistas, data on climate change on a local level, pest plants and animals, loss of biodiversity and biomass, incremental impacts on habitat, ongoing loss of tree cover, negative impacts on ecosystems due to inappropriate land use and land management practices, decreasing water flows in streams, changes in rainfall patterns and associated drought conditions which will have impact on agricultural production, land degradation due to poor land management practices, and so on. All things that could influence positive outcomes in the development of a Green Wedge Management Plan that actually meet the criteria laid out in Plan Melbourne and PPN31 for the protection of Green Wedges.

Conclusion

The Green Wedge Management Plan should CLEARLY and CONCISELY explain the Aims. It should meet the accepted process for preparation (as in PPN31). It should include the information required as set out in a well-informed inclusive plan process and it should meet the common approach for the preparation of GWMPs. This Draft Nillumbik GWMP fails to meet those criteria. Nillumbik Council has, in the past, worked collaboratively with the community to produce plans and strategies, that reflect the community's aspirations and addresses their concerns. The current Draft Green Wedge Management Plan fails to meet these goals.

The Draft Green Wedge Management Plan, as circulated, is not a plan that the Council nor community can be proud of.

GOAL 1: Engaged connected communities.

This is an incredibly depressing section to read, it does not mirror the majority community and panel support for the ongoing existence of the green wedge and their love of where they live. The content centres on perceived problems brought about by “regulation”, the UGB, planning restrictions, limited housing expansion, compliance with state requirements to manage bushfire risk, retaining vegetation, managing effluent or protecting agricultural uses on undersized lots, the need for consolidation of small holdings, township boundaries constraining and restricting development, the responsibility and costs that come with rural life, lack of utility services, bushfire mitigation and preparedness (again), the complexity of the regulatory and planning system (again), uncertain use of small lots (again), balancing bushfire safety requirements and native vegetation objectives (again), restrictions on accommodating different family generations on rural allotments, and of course the problems of living on the urban boundary of trespass, rubbish dumping and dust. This list should be on every real estate agent’s ad and window front!

The Wayfarer Report was commissioned by council to review the comments of those who responded. The bar graphs show overwhelming support for the green wedge. When asked “What I like about the GW” (p11) of 1012 respondents 660 loved open space and the environment only 50 voiced complaints. When asked about “Challenges in the GW” (p14) of 385 respondents, 43 mentioned regulation and 42 mentioned planning issues. When asked about “Regulatory changes” (p22) of 225 respondents, 80 replied they were over regulated and 80 wanted increased planning controls. When asked about “Environmental opportunities (p35) 230 of 460 respondents replied “keep it as it is” and “needs protection”. And finally on p41 under “Comments “300 of 480 respondents said very clearly “Don’t mess it up!!”.

The GWPG would recommend that everyone read the Wayfarer report. The big question that council needs to openly address is just WHO ARE THEY LISTENING TO? Clearly not the majority

Objectives	GWPG response	Related Key Action	GWPG response
<i>O1.1 Enable our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge.</i>	Unclear as to who "our people" are - assuming it is referring to the entire population of the shire or metropolitan Melbourne, who should also shoulder responsibility for the Green Wedge.	<i>A1.1 Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities ...</i>	This Conversations program should have been part of the development of the Green Wedge Management Plan as per Practice Note 31. Had these conversations been held, we'd have at least 10 pertinent Actions.
<i>O1.2 Encourage, support, promote and celebrate the roles that landowners and volunteers play in the management of the green wedge.</i>	Should read “Encourage, support, educate , promote, and celebrate...” Education is essential for sustainable use and preservation of biodiversity within the GW.	<i>A1.2 Implement Council’s Nillumbik Volunteer Development Strategy 2015-2020</i>	Council Plan Action
<i>O1.3 Support community facilities in the green wedge</i>	Covered under the Council Plan.	<i>A1.3 Develop and manage community infrastructure for the green wedge as part of the Shire’s overall approach to service and asset management planning.</i>	What does this mean? Anything beyond what is already happening?
		<i>A1.4 Better utilise multi-use community spaces to create community hubs in the townships.</i>	Is this not covered in A1.3? Or A1.5? These three Actions are broad in their terms but lack definitive Actions.
<i>O1.4 Work with local communities to articulate a vision and develop plans appropriate to their scale and capacity for Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill as green wedge service centres and visitor gateways. Where possible, encourage housing diversity to enable ageing in place. Align future development with environmentally sensitive design principles and ensure that future development emphasises each town’s unique characteristics</i>	This objective is too involved and renders it unclear. It reads like two or more objectives eg. 1. Review current township plans for St Andrews, Panton Hill, Hurstbridge; and 2. Promote Ageing in Place; with multiple Actions.	<i>A1.5 Create a comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships to strengthen their identities and attractiveness as service, population, tourism, community and cultural centres.</i>	Put simply and concisely, this Action could be expressed as: Review township plans for Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill. Easy to understand, not confusing, and a definite Action.
		<i>A1.8 Encourage the location of aged care services within the townships and programs to facilitate people ageing in the community where they have lived for many years. Encourage volunteer and community groups to support ageing landowners with land management, where needed. Implement Council’s Positive Ageing Strategy</i>	There are really 2 Actions in this, not one. Eg. 1. Encourage location of aged care facilities...; and 2. Encourage volunteer and community groups...

O1.5 Recognise the limits on housing development in the rural areas	Already covered in the current Planning Scheme. Surely this is a statement and NOT an objective.	A1.6 Investigate options for consolidation and amalgamation of small rural lots that are not capable of supporting a dwelling in their current configuration. Where appropriate and with owner consent, consider government purchase of such lots where they are adjacent to public land	Could be covered by funding from a Green Wedge “body” (see below) to either assist landholder in the cost to consolidate OR for the State to buy the land.
		A1.7 Review the impacts of proximity to urban communities on rural land adjoining the urban area and investigate options to maintain the amenity and productivity of those areas.	In the body of the text for “Engaged and Connected Communities”, it identifies perceived difficulties on the urban fringe that will not be rectified by changes to the Planning Scheme as intimated in the body of the text. The Green Wedge Protection Group are happy for any “buffer zones” to be within the Urban Growth Boundary. If these perceived problems are indeed real, where are the specific, effective Actions to mitigate them?
O1.6 Better support the ageing population of the green wedge to age in place with its benefits to retaining local knowledge, community cohesiveness, engagement and involvement in local groups.	Is repeated from O1.4, and needs further clarification in the Actions	A1.8 Encourage the location of aged care services within the townships and programs to facilitate people ageing in the community where they have lived for many years. Encourage volunteer and community groups to support ageing landowners with land management, where needed. Implement Council’s Positive Ageing Strategy	See comment above under O1.4 Could be the subject of another “Robust Conversation” perhaps?
O1.7 Facilitate linked public, community and shared transport options connected to the existing railway network and destinations within the green wedge.		A1.9 Advocate for improved public transport, traffic management and reduced road congestion.	We agree
		A1.10 Advocate for improved internet access and mobile phone coverage to support the ability to create application-based services such as ride sharing and on-call transport.	ok
		A1.11 Undertake seasonal review of road conditions to improve management and review the road sealing program to ensure high use roads are prioritised.	While we agree with these, this “Action” is also TWO actions, as in 1. Undertake a seasonal review of road conditions; AND 2. Review road sealing program.

It is apparent that ‘The Green Wedge Shire’ is leaving all the heavy lifting to the State for maintenance of our biodiversity. Not one objective or action ties our “connected communities” to the environment or speaks of our “engaged” communities working to improve their interaction with and enhancing the very thing they moved here for - the rural and natural environment.

GOAL 2: Active, Creative People

Goal 2 acknowledges the benefits of “natural attributes of our environment” and the importance of green space as a determinant of health but fails to mention the green wedge in all but one objective which leads to an Action “allowing prohibited uses”. An objective could be “Support, promote, celebrate and enable public access to Nillumbik’s rich array of flora and fauna”. The action may be “Create nature based interpretive trails throughout Nillumbik’s conservation areas”. Kinglake National Park should be included as a recreational facility and a place of destination. A further objective of “Creating open space on Wanneroo” is actionable through the MW land release.

Objectives	GWPG response	Related Key Action	GWPG response
<i>O2.1 Encourage active living and enhanced mental wellbeing.</i>	Council Plan objective.	<i>A2.1 Implement the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021</i>	Council Plan action.
<i>O2.2 Provide a diversity of open spaces with a range of high quality regional, district and neighbourhood parks linked by a network of trails.</i>	Council Plan objective.	<i>A2.2 Review and update the Nillumbik Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy.</i>	Council Plan action.
<i>O2.3 Complete the trail network for walking, cycling and horse riding in Nillumbik, connecting to the regional trails network covering neighbouring municipalities.</i>		<i>A2.3 Implement the Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011.</i>	Council Plan action.
<i>O2.4 Support, celebrate and enable public access to Nillumbik’s rich tradition of local artists and makers.</i>	Council Plan objective.	<i>A2.4 Implement the Nillumbik Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022.</i>	Council Plan action.
		<i>A2.5 Investigate the establishment of a regional art gallery.</i>	Before we investigate the ESTABLISHMENT of a regional art gallery, there needs to be a business case put forward around the demand and requirement, and the anticipated financial costs for establishment and the ongoing costs. The GWPG support the concept of a regional art gallery, but don’t wish to see a financial white elephant burden the shire. Council Plan action.
<i>O2.5 Work with Heritage Victoria, the Wurundjeri Land Council and other government agencies to support local heritage protection.</i>		<i>A2.6 Develop and implement a heritage interpretation plan.</i>	
<i>O2.6 Ensure that council owned heritage places are accessible and sustainable and make better use of our heritage assets to support cultural tourism initiatives and leverage further economic benefits for green wedge communities.</i>		<i>A2.7 Use the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as a positive means to encourage heritage conservation and management, including support of adaptive reuse of heritage places and allowing prohibited uses, if they help support the conservation of a heritage place and are in line with planning policy objectives.</i>	Finally! This is an Action! However, this again is a combined series of Actions that would best be presented as separate Actions - as an individual, concise, clear and actionable item. Eg. A2.7.1. Use the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as a positive means to encourage heritage conservation and management. This is confusing, as this is what the planning scheme already does! Eg. A2.7.2. Support adaptive reuse of Heritage Places. GWPG question what is the reuse of a heritage place? This should be defined and clear in its intent. Eg. A2.7.3 Investigate allowing prohibited uses if these support the conservation of a heritage place (and are in line with planning policy objectives). Surely, if the uses are currently prohibited, then allowing these prohibited uses would not be in line with planning policy objectives. Hence the second part of this “new” action would be an oxymoron. Had Practice Note 31 guidelines been followed and the appropriate steering groups convened, then this issue would have been fully discussed and positive Actions generated.

GOAL 3: Safe and healthy environments

It is inappropriate to combine biodiversity with other seemingly conflicting/opposing activities. Biodiversity protection is paramount and clearly an articulated intention of the Green Wedge Management Plan process, thus Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement should be a Goal of its own.

In an appendix to THIS draft plan (Appendix 1), Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 which provides the desired planning outcomes for Green Wedges and peri-urban areas, has the directive to “Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species, and achieve a Net Gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.” This draft plan does not place appropriate emphasis on biodiversity protection, which should be the primary Objective of this Draft Plan.

Safety of the community should be a Goal of its own

Objectives	GWPG response	Related Key Action	GWPG response
<p><i>O3.1: Identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats</i></p>	<p>“Valuable biodiversity” is not an ecological term. It is important to protect biodiversity and habitats. The term “valuable” skirts around the importance of “less valuable” or, more accurately, “less intact or disturbed” habitats that make up the entire biodiversity map for the shire. For example, the “vulnerable” Ecological Vegetation Class Valley Grassy Forest is often degraded within Nillumbik due to its grassy understory lending itself to being readily available grazing land. This does NOT negate the importance of these otherwise “less valuable” habitats. It is also important to consider vital faunal corridors, which may or may not be currently vegetated OR may support less “valuable” (read: less intact or degraded) habitats. We need to acknowledge that our natural environment is already highly fragmented and degraded, so these important corridors may exist across landscapes that do not contain so-called “valuable” biodiversity and habitats.</p>	<p><i>A3.1: Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming, that need to be protected for the future and the pests that need to be managed by sourcing information from formal research bodies and landowners. Seek government funding assistance to establish and maintain this data base into the future for landowner information, program prioritisation and policy development.</i></p>	<p>See Key Moves Response #5</p> <p>#5 These actions should inform the production of a GWMP, not be an action within it. There needs to be an explanation and definition of what these “stocktakes” are measuring, what the data base wishes to achieve and what is being monitored. This key move misses the whole point of a GWMP. Agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming do not need to be protected for the future, it is the protection and sustainable use of the resource that they are based on that requires protection, this in turn leads to a sustainable future for every agricultural pursuit. Economic output is based upon the resource, not a plan to protect a lifestyle.</p> <p>Where is the clear environmental benefit articulated to undertake this work? Where are the criteria to inform these “stocktakes”? Stocktakes can be informed by research already done on the ESO, and informed by Nillumbik’s Biodiversity Strategy (2012), and by Nillumbik’s State of the Environment Report (2014). Further information will be available through the ABS and numerous state studies and reports on land capability, land management at both agricultural and natural levels and state work on invasive pests.</p>
		<p><i>A3.2: Subject to the findings of the data base described by A3.1, review the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.</i></p>	<p>Stocktakes can be informed by research already done on ESO, and informed by Nillumbik’s Biodiversity Strategy (2012), and by Nillumbik’s State of the Environment Report (2014).</p>
		<p><i>A3.4 Increase and prioritise Council’s focus on feral animal and pest plant species reduction, education and programs on private and public land.</i></p>	<p>Happy to support this Action, with the addition of “Forge partnerships with agencies such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria to achieve a multi-agency, broad landscape approach to pest control.” Also consider education to inform and policy to restrict planting of environmental weeds within bushland environments. Feral deer control should be an action of its own, deer are responsible for habitat and biodiversity loss on an unprecedented scale. Council should lobby the State Government to have all species deer from the Protected Species list, and listed as feral/pest species, opening up available funding for the control of these highly invasive and environmentally damaging species.</p>

<p><i>O3.2: Enhance community understanding, resilience and adaptability for the impacts of climate change and a bushfire prone environment.</i></p>	<p>In essence, support this objective. It is important for the community to understand that a lot of climate change issues are due to broad scale vegetation clearing, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss. Thus, by ensuring the community have an understanding of these driving forces for climate change is a positive.</p>	<p><i>A3.3 Implement a whole of organisation approach to community resilience addressing climate change, emergency management and a range of matters in an integrated manner. This will include robust conversations on the natural environment and biodiversity values, bushfire risk reduction, economic development, agriculture, economic and community rebuilding post events, human health, well-being and safety and water catchment planning.</i></p>	<p>See Key Moves Response #2 #2 This is what a GWMP is all about. However, we have a draft but have not had the “robust conversations” critical to producing a draft GWMP .</p> <p>This action is confusing and convoluted. What is the real intention here? What is the desired outcome of “robust conversations”? This action can mean anything to anybody and is therefore insufficiently precise.</p>
		<p><i>A3.6 In conjunction with key stakeholders, review Council’s approach to climate change to develop a best practice response. This will incorporate our statutory requirements and respond to all key state government frameworks but will need to remain agile and adaptive to changing policy settings. It will adopt an integrated approach that brings together the key local issues that have been identified in every goal in this plan. This will result in either:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>an updated climate change action plan and/or</i> • <i>a new climate change and community resilience strategic framework built from a local context that recognises the unique features of our communities, its landscapes and natural environment. It will be informed by appropriate evidence, independent expertise and strong community participation</i> 	<p>A worthy aspiration that will be widely accepted.</p> <p>It is however a lengthy, complex, and confused statement that is not an Action within itself. It is obvious that, as this starts with “in conjunction with key stakeholders” this should have been part of the Planning Practice Note 31 process, and the role of the Project Steering and Project Working Groups. This would have thus resulted in concise, achievable Actions driven by all stake holders who understood the expected outcomes.</p>
		<p><i>A3.7 Finalise and implement Council’s draft Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-23.</i></p>	<p>This has been completed.</p>
<p><i>O3.3 Reduce the number and impact of bushfire incidents.</i></p>	<p>As part of the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy, this should simply be referenced in this GWMP, as has frequently been done for all other strategies and plans that feed into the GWMP (eg. Biodiversity Strategy, etc)</p>	<p>A3.7</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p><i>O3.4 Create a community focussed approach to bushfire, a coordinated approach between key agencies and the communities of Nillumbik and ensure strong advocacy in relation to bushfire and bushfire risk.</i></p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>A3.7</p>	<p>Completed.</p>
		<p><i>A3.8 Advocate for improved mobile and broadband connectivity to help improve the ability to communicate information and improve community safety, particularly to those most vulnerable during extreme weather events.</i></p>	<p>This Action is important in keeping the community informed, particularly in emergency situations.</p>
<p><i>O3.5 Conserve the bush and rural landscapes to maintain the natural beauty of the green wedge.</i></p>	<p>While this is an important objective, it lacks substance. Recommend using the term “remnant bushland” instead of simply “bush”. This adds strength to the Objective. OR we strongly recommend rewording this objective to say: “Identify, document and protect and enhance the character of the diverse landscapes of the Nillumbik Green Wedge.”</p>	<p><i>A3.5 In partnership with relevant government agencies, encourage biodiversity conservation and responsible land management on public and private land by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>implementing Council’s Biodiversity Strategy 2012; Roadside Management Plan and Invasive Species Action Plan 2015</i> • <i>supporting Landcare and Friends groups</i> • <i>providing an advisory service for land management</i> • <i>providing rebates for Trust for Nature covenanted land and agriculture with a land management plan</i> • <i>delivering Council’s land management incentive program and other conservation protection projects</i> • <i>administering state planning policies that apply to native vegetation, and</i> • <i>delivering targeted environment and sustainability education experiences.</i> 	<p>The GWPG is happy to support this Action. Each dot-point could form individual Actions.</p>

		A3.9 As part of a future review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme consider identified landscape character and quality through the current policies and overlays that apply.	This work has already been done in the recent review of the Significant Landscape Overlay and could be adapted to meet this Action.
		A3.10 Consider, through development approvals and management of Council property, the limitation of light spill not directly associated with safety or community activity to reduce impacts on nocturnal animals and the night time amenity of the landscape.	We support this Action.
O3.6 Support Melbourne Water and the Catchment Management Authority to improve stream condition, water flows, water quality and catchment quality.		A3.12 Promote water sensitive design, balance amenity uses of our waterways with environmental considerations and balance demand for private use of water flows through extraction and diversion with broader community and environmental considerations.	We have extreme concerns relating to this Action. Amenity has no place when considering waterway health. This is not an area in which “balance” is appropriate. “Balance” may have been appropriate fifty years ago and prior to the impacts of climate change, it is not relevant now. For example, appropriate wording for this Action might be: “Review current water extraction and diversion practices, including use of dams and bores, in light of inadequate environmental flows due to reduced rain fall and climate change impacts”.
NO OBJECTIVE APPLY TO THESE ACTIONS:		A3.11 Investigate opportunities to support community-based renewable energy solutions.	Would council consider suggesting what types of renewable energy solutions they would be likely to investigate?
		A3.13 Finalise and implement Council’s Domestic Waste Water Management Plan 2019.	We support this Action.
<p>SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES: These should be included within this Goal to assist with our “healthy environment”:</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Protect and enhance ALL REMNANT vegetation.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Achieve sustainable land management.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Conserve biodiversity through implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management, ensuring land is suitable for the proposed land use.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Minimise the impacts of pest plants and animals.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Discourage further rural residential development of undersized or heavily vegetated bush allotments in the Green Wedge.</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Manage biodiversity at landscape scale for conservation.</p> <p>The following Objectives that should be included within this Goal to assist with our “safe environment”, if this goal is to stay in this combined function format, are as follows:</p> <p>OBJECTIVE: Discourage further rural residential development in areas that are defined as high bushfire risk areas.</p>		<p>SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:</p> <p>ACTION: Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat, and then ensure planning controls and incentives reflect the need to protect these areas. (relate to Objective 3.1)</p> <p>ACTION: Ensure that the state government Bio-sites register is up to date with regard to Nillumbik’s sites of biodiversity and faunal habitat importance.</p> <p>ACTION: Seek and involve neighbouring municipalities and agencies in land and biodiversity management.</p> <p>ACTION: Continue to investigate ambiguities in the current planning controls that inadequately protect biodiversity assets i.e. grazing animals within bushland, and lobby for strengthening controls to prevent these degrading environmental impacts.</p> <p>ACTION: In priority areas for biodiversity, investigate permit conditions that require land management plans. This concept is already a requirement under Green Wedge zoning, and some municipalities ask for this under other land use zones.</p> <p>ACTION: Investigate the effectiveness of enforcement of breaches in planning controls.</p>	

GOAL 4: A Prosperous Economy

Goal 4 is an important part of ensuring the economic vitality of the Green Wedge. This section speaks to positive directions for economic development but gives no background information to inform the broad ranging statements.

It states under the sub heading Agriculture, “There is an opportunity to more productively utilise land in Nillumbik’s green wedge to supply Melbourne’s growing demand for food and to provide residents with a variety of new employment opportunities”. There is a wealth of information to inform this statement. The Nillumbik Land Capability Study outlines the possibilities but also the serious constraints of soil types and declining water availability across Nillumbik. There is also a great many studies and reports on agricultural and associated economic activity that could inform prospective directions for economic reform within the green wedge. PPN 31 gives direction on using “previous relevant work`can provide a useful basis for the preparation of the plan”. Serious consideration of the data available is required to produce a GWMP that is informed, up to date and relevant.

Council has an Economic Development Strategy with aims and actions for economic development within the green wedge areas that should be reflected within the draft GWMP. They encourage development while putting emphasis on the sustainable, soil-based and environmental requirements of a GWMP.

All of this will be dependent on a healthy environment. If we are not taking utmost care of our natural environment, waterways, open spaces, habitats and indigenous species, then the health of our economy will suffer.

Objectives	GWPG response	Related Key Action	GWPG response
O4.1 Encourage investment to improve the economy and create local employment while at the same time preserving the green wedge.	Need to “enhance” not just preserve.	A4.1 Encourage investment to improve the economy and create local employment while at the same time preserving the green wedge.	
		A4.6 Encourage growth in professional services and home-based business.	
		A4.11 Create an investment attraction plan and investigate innovative land use solutions to attract professional services to locate within the townships of the green wedge.	Confused. This seems to be two Actions, as we are unsure what “innovative land use solutions” would attract what “professional services” to the townships of the Green Wedge.
O4.2 Encourage sustainable, diversified and productive agriculture, access to markets and the right to farm.	Two Objectives – 1, Encourage sustainable, diversified and productive agriculture and access to markets. This is an actionable item. 2, The right to farm. This is a regulatory action and is far more complex.	A4.4 To ensure that land remains available for agriculture, use the Nillumbik planning scheme to encourage consolidation of smaller agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands	We agree.
		A4.5 Continue to apply the sustainable agricultural rate rebate and the primary producer rate rebate.	We agree.
		A4.8 Advocate to the Victorian Government that: • planning and other controls be altered to allow landholders a right to farm on pre-existing cleared agricultural land and be able to adapt to changing agricultural practice • the support and promotion of supplementary rural business activities such as farm gate sales, farm stays and other low environmental amenity impact enterprises which are consistent with green wedge values need to be prioritised, and • the role of hobby farms be defined, recognised and policy and program be developed to support sustainable land management and agriculture at their scale.	Dot point 1. Reducing or eliminating planning controls will adversely affect biodiversity and soil quality, etc, etc. As new residents move in with little knowledge of farming management and planning controls, council’s pre-eminent position on land use strategies can only be achieved through the permit process. The State of the Environment Report provides chilling facts that we have not halted biodiversity loss even with the current controls.
O4.3 Recognise the contribution of hobby (or small scale) farming in the green wedge with supportive policy put in place.	No explanation as to why this is required. All rural activities, no matter their scale, are supported by council programs such as the Invasive Species strategy, biodiversity grants etc. Supportive policy in what areas to achieve what?	Third dot point A4.8 • the role of hobby farms be defined, recognised and policy and program be developed to support sustainable land management and agriculture at their scale.	If, as advocated, “hobby farms” were to be defined at a state level, this would be a planning amendment. The Port Philip and Westernport CMA with the DPI in 2008 set descriptors of six typologies for rural landholders within the GW which may assist in development of local policy. Needs explanation as to how “scale” effects sustainable land management to justify discerning between identical uses.

<p><i>O4.4 Recognise and support the sustainable management of the equine community in the green wedge.</i></p>	<p>The GWPG support the sustainable management of the equine community, particularly in regard to the environment and biodiversity.</p>	<p><i>A4.9 Finalise and implement a new Nillumbik Equine Strategy.</i></p>	<p>The GWPG and the wider community look forward to being involved in the development of this strategy.</p>
<p><i>O4.5 Encourage growth in the visitor economy through regional promotion and facilitation of new visitor experiences consistent with Nillumbik’s economic, social and environmental characteristics.</i></p>		<p><i>A4.10 Review and update Council’s Destination Management Plan to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>improve awareness of the benefits of cycle tourism and mapping information</i> • <i>invest in digital interpretation of heritage, cultural and natural assets</i> • <i>develop tourism through trail investment</i> • <i>develop festivals and an events attractions plan</i> • <i>build on the arts and cultural product through development of curated content and packaging</i> • <i>add to the food and wine offerings by facilitating diversity of product and infrastructure</i> • <i>manage and avoid detrimental impacts on sensitive environmental areas</i> • <i>increase strategic marketing and promotion and</i> • <i>improve and develop products suited to family experiences.</i> 	<p>This action provides concise actionable items that are easily understood and can be monitored.</p>
<p><i>O4.6 Encourage growth in professional services and home-based business.</i></p>		<p><i>A4.11 Create an investment attraction plan and investigate innovative land use solutions to attract professional services to locate within the townships of the green wedge.</i></p>	<p>See response to 4.11 above</p>
<p><i>O4.7 Encourage government to make reliable mobile phone and internet access available across the Shire.</i></p>		<p><i>A4.12 Identify and document areas of low mobile and internet connectivity and black spots. Identify opportunities to rectify areas affected.</i></p>	<p>We agree with this Action</p>
<p>Under the visitor economy it acknowledges that “Sustainable tourism is a significant opportunity and will be an ongoing objective for the green wedge”. Perhaps this should be objective O4.8.</p>		<p>SUGGESTED ACTIONS: Actions could include zero or low carbon footprint for accommodation, local cafes, promoting the natural environment, supporting wildlife tours within the bushland areas. Could also be built into the review of the Destinations Management Plan.</p>	

GOAL 5: Responsible Leadership

If this document is adopted in its current form the GWPG look forward to being involved with a “Collaborative and consultative leadership” for it has been sadly lacking in the production of this document. We also look forward to “leadership that builds trust” for trust has been eroded not built during the GWMP review/rewrite. It is also of concern when a Nillumbik goal speaks of “makes the best use of available resources to the benefit of all in pursuit of excellence”.

We do have a wonderful resource at our disposal, we either treasure it for its beauty and intrinsic wealth as we have in the past or we exploit it by commercialisation and breaking down of the planning scheme as proposed in this draft GWMP. The goal is ambiguous and “best use” requires a clear definition, to allay the mistrust prevalent in the community.

Governance and engagement

Paragraph 2 The 2018 extensive community engagement used to inform this draft was the initial consultation that should have been used to inform the Project Steering and Project Working Groups as outlined in PPN 31.

Paragraph 3 Mentions strongly held and polarised views, nothing was done to ameliorate this position. Use of the two groups from PPN 31 would have set up further lines of communication and education that may have softened these polarised views. Great community alarm was raised over recent proposed amendments to overlays - had there been a full understanding of how the planning scheme works, many would have realised their fears were ungrounded. An opportunity to inform and educate the public on many issues has been forfeited.

Paragraph 4 “Easily or cheaply” could have been added to this paragraph. Therein lies the strength of the planning scheme.

Paragraph 5,6 and 7. These all support the contention in the comments on paragraph 3. This does not “require strong leadership from Council” (para 7) but rather collaboration, consultation and interaction.

Land use planning

The paragraphs 1,2,3,5 and 7 are educational and informative.

Paragraph 4 In light of paragraph 4 under “governance and engagement” this appears to be an anomaly. This draft plan has many Objectives that challenge the intent of the planning scheme regarding green wedges which could lead eventually to planning amendments. These draft objectives are all contrary to the majority panel report. It is incumbent on council to initiate the “robust conversations” and to educate and explain what it is they wish to achieve and how it will support and enhance the green wedge before this document is adopted.

Advocacy

The panel put forward as one of their recommendations that an “authority” should be put in place to oversee green wedges. This was rejected by Council as another level of bureaucracy that may complicate Council decisions making.

All interface councils face problems that may impact one or more of the green wedges. The illegal dumping of “clean” fill in rural areas, bulk and scale of buildings are two that are impacting councils now. Council needs to investigate the opportunities of setting up a “body” that could be a pipeline to the Minister on planning problems and could also be a possible funding option. The maintenance of Melbourne’s green wedges should be shouldered by all Melburnians. Whether through direct government grants, a levy on councils per resident or a rate collection agency such as Melbourne Water who already collect park and drainage fees creating a financial pool that would be available to interface green wedge councils. This “body” would then be able to assist in funding green wedge issues. These could include but not limited to Restructure Overlays, overlay reviews, policy development, invasive species control, implementation of the GWMP and funding as specified in Key Moves 1,3 and 5.

This concept fits with O5.8 and aligns with A5.9.

The first five actions have already been covered in earlier Goals. Thus, they are repeated actions, not NEW actions. They have been covered under Key Moves.

Objectives	GWPG response	Related Key Action	GWPG response
<i>O5.1 Recognise and support landowners' maintaining land in the green wedge with up-to-date information.</i>	Information on what? This objective requires a lot of clarification (as it doesn't make sense)		
<i>O5.2 Take a joined up approach to working with the community to help it balance and cope with the competing demands of living and working in our green wedge.</i>	This is confusing and unclear – what is a “joined up approach?” Surely, those that are living in the Green Wedge chose to live here and are aware of the many demands of living in this environment.		
<i>O5.3 Support community strengthening through sharing its knowledge and capabilities.</i>	Perhaps THIS is what O5.2 is saying...		
<i>O5.4 Clearly articulate, and support, the future of our green wedge townships.</i>			
<i>O5.5 Work with the Victorian Government to ensure that the Nillumbik planning scheme supports the principles, goals and objectives of this plan.</i>	The Victorian Government has clearly articulated the principles, goals and objectives for Green Wedges. If this Green Wedge Management Plan conflicts with those, which it clearly does in its current form, then it is up to Nillumbik to justify these proposed changes to the Planning Scheme.	<i>A5.6 Consider reviewing the current application of zoning controls in the green wedge to better reflect the actual use of land.</i>	Changing the planning scheme is a long term and expensive exercise which the GWPG do not support.
		<i>A5.7 Consider reviewing the potential range of land uses that could assist owners to be better manage rural land that abuts the Urban Growth Boundary.</i>	Changing the planning scheme is a long term and expensive exercise which the GWPG do not support.
<i>O5.6 Enhance and update Council's knowledge base to support informed management of critical issues in our green wedge.</i>	We support this, and assume that this may include sourcing of information from relevant external bodies However, there doesn't seem to be an action to support this		There needs to be an action.
<i>O5.7 Keep the community appraised of and represent its interests in government policy reforms affecting our green wedge.</i>		<i>A5.8 Advocate Council's position on all government policy reform affecting the Shire, including reform of green wedge policy and planning provisions.</i>	
<i>O5.8 Attract external funding for green wedge management.</i>	See below (Advocacy)	<i>A5.9 Identify and pursue all funding opportunities from government, philanthropy and corporations to support implementation of this plan.</i>	
SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES: Objective: Implement the Green Wedge Management Plan			

From: [REDACTED]
To: [gwmp](#)
Subject: Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission
Date: Sunday, 11 August 2019 9:42:16 AM

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[Green_Wedge_Management_Plan_Review_Submission_ \[REDACTED\].docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

This is not SPAM. You are receiving this message because you have submitted feedback or signed up to Participate Nillumbik.

Green Wedge Management Plan Review Submission

After reading the Draft Plan I was extremely disappointed with the recommendations put forward. This submission will explain why this plan is a failure and will not work in the interests of the Green Wedge. My submission will put forward some ideas about what the council should be doing instead.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my submission.

Economy and Development

Essentially the plan for Nillumbik's Green Wedge is about a continuation of more of the same and more; more development, housing, and further land clearing. Nillumbik council wants fewer restrictions on economic activity and wants the shire to be a hub for agriculture activity from land that has been cleared, which the plan believes should be for that purpose. The plan suggests land clearing has been a good thing and that the regulatory framework is stifling current and future development and economic activity.

Reducing regulations would increase clearing and have a detrimental effect on the Green Wedge. Instead the focus should be on what makes people come to the Green Wedge in the first place. Not the other way around further development and economic activity.

It is important to recognize the role of agricultural activity in the shire. The review suggests an equine industry should be developed and encouraged this however, is a part of the economy within the Green Wedge and therefore it is important that it should be recognized as a part of the agricultural industry. Agriculture plays a part in making our Green Wedge a great place to live and we must encourage it and support it. Nonetheless, in doing so we must ensure that the agricultural industry respects and nourishes the environment. This involves ensuring that it is not comprised for the sake of wanting it to succeed. The environment is the trees, native animals, lovely rolling hills gullies and waterways, all an important reason people visit the Green Wedge. Nillumbik is home to as significant proportion of Melbourne' tree canopy and regarding the Well Being Index it is higher than the Victorian average. According to the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, a higher score on the Subjective Wellbeing Index indicates better mental and physical health, higher productivity and stress-coping abilities,(SGS Report, Economic, Social and Environmental Profile: Northern Metro Region, April 2019) Other measures like crime and unemployment are also low. These reasons alone state clearly why people live, visit and why development and greater need for industrial and agricultural development should not occur. We are healthy, happy and a relaxed community which loves where we live.

If the environment is threatened or damaged then the role of our agricultural and hobby farming industries and have will be reduced. Without the environment there will be no economic activity and industry and we need strong protections to ensure a viable Green Wedge.

The plan suggests that small lots should be consolidated (which I support) however this does not go far enough instead through stealth via a council timeline, a period of 20 years lots should be consolidated

within the lots of the owner of the land. This process needs a planning framework and changes to the scheme and it requires council advocating and lobbying the State Government for changes to the scheme and compensatory funding. Council must employ two officers in roles to facilitate this process. Compensatory measures from council could be provided in the form of reduced rate increases or subsidies for land management. This is important for the green wedge as it reduces the need for greater development and it alleviates uncertainty for landowners. Fewer people in our Green wedge is a must as it reduces the need for infrastructure spending and the risk of bushfire as more people ensures the need to do things to save lives.

Planning and the Environment through Responsible Leadership

The Draft plans focus is more about individual leadership than regulatory and government leadership. Individual leadership is not about community engagement, listening and learning from others and creating good outcomes which benefit all. This is the plans hidden agenda, to not listen and to advocate only when it suits this reduced regulatory agenda.

Instead it is important that leadership is about collaborating with all and creating policies which the community supports. Responsible leadership should than guide the process. Instead the plan seeks to placate and listen to a few select community groups.

As a starting point council should have as a guide developed some of its ideas on the environment and planning from the SPPF (State Planning Policy Framework) Protection of Victoria's Environment Biodiversity 2037. The draft paper fails to acknowledge or draw any ideas for an improved planning framework for the Green Wedge.

In addition, Council should have undertaken an audit of Flora and Fauna and effect of development and climate change. Once completed the results, would have shown the way forward for a new Management plan. This plan fails to even consider and state what shape the shires unique biodiversity is in or how to improve it. Therefore an audit assessment should be undertaken to see what shape our conservation, landscapes and waterways are in. Instead, the draft paper seeks further deregulation.

The plans removal of the Rural Conservation Zone and allow the Green Wedge Zone to regulate development and land use is a key recommendation. The plan suggests that the Rural Conservation Zone is restrictive on farming and agricultural uses. Instead the Rural Conservation Zone should only apply to areas of conservation value. The zone is in the way of the "right to farm and for tourism in conjunction with farming" (Page 40, Responsible Leadership).

The "right to farm", without regulations, the Green Wedge is not about an individual's free will to do as they please. Regulations ensure people take the environment into consideration and that other

landowners who wish to live in the Green Wedge for the environment can do so without other people destroying their peaceful existence.

By applying this Green Wedge zone it would allow treed patches which in some places border conservation areas to be put at risk. This alone puts a greater strain on native flora and fauna habitats across the Shire. We need to protect these areas which are vital for our threatened species to help mitigate against climate change.

Moreover, the plan details how any form of farming should be approved if the land has been cleared and the removal of Rural Conservation Land zoning will allow more animals to be owned without a permit. This may not be welcomed by neighboring properties and may damage the cleared land further.

What is required instead, is for council to advocate for a stronger Rural Conservation Zone or Green Wedge Zone to remove many of the uses added since 2012; A strengthening of the zones and overlays is required to improve protections of the flora and fauna and enable conservation to be preserved and to co-exist with agricultural industries in the Green Wedge.

On the other hand, the draft plan should be about ensuring the protection of existing biodiversity pockets and their conservation. There is no plan to extend these pockets nor to increase them. The plan lacks any aims to help address problems occurring to remnant vegetation, riparian habitats, create vegetation links, to stop land clearing, help preserve historic sites and create further habitats for vulnerable species. It is a confusing and disorganized plan lacking any future for the biodiversity of the Green wedge.

The plan fails to understand the impact of biodiversity loss. For example, one point made suggests that council will continue to ensure no net loss in biodiversity and if any vegetation is lost offsetting will occur. It is not about offsetting or no net loss rather it is about increasing vegetation in an environment under significant threat from climate change, and heatwaves and because of bushfires.

Offsetting is also an ill-conceived concept; to offset mature trees in one area with new tree plantings in another actually reduces the biodiversity. Mature tree loss increases carbon loss and increases carbon emissions. Further, it damages the biodiversity as mature trees are home to many species. There is little guarantee that new plantings will survive for long due to now frequent hot weather and it will take a several years to achieve carbon offsets compared to the trees already in place.

One effective suggestion is for Council to create a new fund called the Green Wedge Biodiversity fund. This fund should be used to help the biodiversity in the Green Wedge and should be used for this purpose only. Council should employ two or more staff members as well to monitor species in the Green Wedge and work with landowners to help manage land and preserve species which live in the Green Wedge. The fund should be funded by all ratepayers and be capped at 2 percent of overall rate earnings.

The planning scheme allows landowners to clear vegetation under 10/50 laws. Whilst the threat of bushfire is real; this alone is not helping our biodiversity and environment in the Green Wedge. The

10/50 laws should be scrapped and the State Government should force landowners away from areas deemed too dangerous to live and compensate them. Lobbying is something that the council seeks and wants to do.

If council wants to advocate and deliver responsible leadership than it should do so for measures which actually benefit the community, people and the environment.

COUNCIL SHOULD ADVOCATE HAVING THE 10/50 LAWS SCRAPPED.

Whilst we have arguments regarding doing more about the environment this cannot be done without a greater emphasis on some of the State policies surrounding it. They are inadequate and the State Government needs to have a tougher and different approach.

Summary

This Draft plan is a document which lacks any clear visionary intent for our Green Wedge. It makes suggestions about things without stating how or when. There are no timeframes, funding or goals to achieve set goals.

It seems like a document which is intent on satisfying certain groups of people. It is simply a weak and pathetic document with promises and investigations. It seems like a document completed to disguise the real agenda, less regulation and more freedom for people to do as they please.

It fails to address issues such as climate change which is going to damage our Green Wedge significantly over the coming years. There is a climate emergency and we need action on this NOW, The council seems oblivious to this dire situation, it is intending to make it worse.

There are few, if any, actions on biodiversity and helping our environment.

It is pretentious when it comes to responsible leadership, a prosperous economy, active and creative people and community engagement failing to bring any of their fake statements together for one coherent viewpoint.

Mark McDonald

██████████

██████████

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

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Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

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[Nillumbik PALs Submission to Draft Green Wedge Management Plan GWMP Final with Addenda 1908102.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

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Nilumbik Pro Active Landowners (PALS)

SUBMISSION TO
NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL ("NSC")
ON THE DRAFT GREEN WEDGE
MANAGEMENT PLAN ("GWMP")

SUBMISSION TO NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL ("NSC") ON THE DRAFT GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN ("GWMP")

August 2019

Introduction

Nillumbik Pro Active Landowners ("PALs") is now a group of approximately 2,000 landowners, residents and ratepayers, the majority of whom live in the peri urban and rural parts of the Nillumbik Shire. This constitutes a large part of Nillumbik's treasured Green Wedge.

PALs was specifically formed in early 2016 in response to unpopular proposed local planning scheme amendments:

**C81 (Significant Landscape Overlays); and
C101 (Environmental Significance Overlays).**

PALs is determined to ensure, with resounding landowner endorsement, that this council delivers certainty to the Nillumbik community, that nothing resembling those unambiguously rejected planning scheme amendments ever reemerges – particularly in any unwitting way via the Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) review currently underway.

The actual (C81) and purported NSC passage (C101) of the now resoundingly rejected planning scheme amendments, which required PALs direct and protracted legal and advocacy actions, involved a demonstrable lack of legal authority and non compliance with the **Planning and Environment Act 1987**. The seriousness cannot be overstated of the breach of trust and dereliction of duty by previous former NSC councillors and by many former NSC administration officers and staff. This was definitively established in the case of **Parsons v Nillumbik SC [2016] VCAT 1898**, which significantly contributed to the refusal by the Victorian Planning Minister to ultimately approve C81. As the current GWMP review process has evolved PALs has most troublingly discovered another **Nillumbik Planning Scheme Amendment C86** (covertly approved without any public consultation in 2014), which appears to have likely involved an equivalent level of lack of legal authority at best and blatant illegality at worst. The essential elements of C86, along with the potential former council's malfeasance and the considerable resultant damage and mischief which has been inflicted on many in the Nillumbik landowner community as a result, are described at length in this submission and demand concerted consideration in the current process to guarantee comprehensive rectification of this longstanding and patent injustice.

As a result of PALs legal (and electoral) actions, (which influenced eventual composition of the current NSC Councillor corps), C81 and C101 did not become law. PALs now represents its constituents on a range of issues considered of vital importance to their lives, families, properties and interests. Principal amongst these is the current review of the GWMP.

It presents the most important juncture in the life of this council (and of future councils) to respond to and to clearly recognise the criticality of landowners' value to and interest in the appropriate and responsible custodianship and management of our Green Wedge.

Despite the concerns identified in relation to **Planning Scheme Amendment C86** above and later in this submission, PALs remains resolutely well-intentioned and now submits this important document for NSC's serious consideration.

Executive Summary

Given that the landscape and environment character of Nillumbik includes the most heavily populated, highly vegetated, fire prone zones on Earth, the GWMP's final composition and its importance as one of a suite of critical new NSC policy documents to be read together, (including in particular the latest Bushfire Mitigation Strategy (BMS) developed by Craig Lapsley), are landmarks in PALS brief history. These initiatives are considered the most fundamental suite of works to be produced by the current council. Their development is a key performance indicator for this council, the election of which was significantly influenced by PALS' assertions that landowners relations with NSC were at an historic low and that their views had to be considered and addressed.

It is a defining opportunity for the 2016 electoral mandate to be acquitted and for the voice of landowners, so vital to a healthy Green Wedge, to be unambiguously heard and their interests appropriately taken into account and integrated into a robust and meaningful GWMP. The very fact that the 2010-2025 GWMP has been reviewed in 2018/9, demonstrates the appreciation by the current NSC of its prioritisation of the undertaking made to the electorate that landowner views and the recalibration of landowner/council relations would be central to the NSC's policy delivery.

PALS recognises and appreciates that this GWMP review presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redress decades of landowners enduring unacceptable, often intimidatory, regulatory and enforcement behaviour and other actions at the hands of council officers (who have often attended landowners' properties in number). It has been common for protracted and negative planning outcomes to be imposed on many families in the Shire. Many have been subjected to levels of planning compliance complexity, with requirements to navigate arcane and overly prescriptive environmental regulation, which has wrought unbearable stress and uncommercial financial consequences on them. These represent circumstances and conditions which would be unknown in most other Shires in the State.

This PALS submission provides critical feedback to NSC and a suite of recommendations intended to improve the final GWMP due for publication in late 2019.

The Explosion And Eradication of a Persistent (Potentially Unlawful) Myth - The “Small” or “Undersized” Lot

Ruinous health, social, environmental and economic impacts have been wrought on many Nillumbik landscapes, landowners and ratepayers as a direct result of the application of an insidious and potentially unlawful perversion of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme by the improper authoring and ill-founded Victorian Government approval and gazetting, under demonstrably false pretences, of a covert, clearly misleading and deceptive **Planning Scheme Amendment C86**.

C86 comprised sweeping changes to the **Municipal Strategic Statement** (MSS) in 2014, under the illegitimate guise of administrative edits of the MSS which purported to be *“policy neutral’ as they do not involve any significant changes in local planning policy”*.

Source: Planning and Environment Act 1987 Nillumbik Planning Scheme Amendment C86 - Explanatory Report

The disgraceful deception involved in the drafting of the Explanatory Report, which clearly indicates improper assertions to an exemption from public consultation and exhibition afforded to mere administrative changes to a Planning Scheme, continues as follows:

How does the amendment address the environmental effects and any relevant social and economic effects?

The amendment is ‘policy neutral’ and as a result there will not be any detrimental environmental, social or economic effects resulting from the amendment.

How does the amendment support or implement the State Planning Policy Framework?

The amendment supports the State Planning Policy Framework as it is policy neutral and only addresses style and language issues, and minor updating with regard to state and regional policy, the Council Plan, council strategies and factual population, social and economic data.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The amendment does not contain requirements for any new formal or informal referrals of planning applications.

These justifications and representations, amongst others in the Explanatory Report, made to the Victorian Planning Minister were patently false and the planning scheme outcomes have resulted in a litany of landowners being scurrilously denied permits and being forced to pursue fruitless VCAT litigation, literally over the course of years. In one notorious and highly disturbing and controversial case, a landowner has been ruined over the course of more than 9 years.

A strategy was included (in no way editing an existing strategy) **in the improperly amended MSS**, which was expressed as follows:

“Limit the development of new dwellings and buildings on rural allotments below the minimum subdivision size, unless exceptional circumstances apply.”



This led to the absurd consequence of the development of a range of pejorative expressions (eg "sub-standard", "small", "undersized", "unsuitable" and others) being applied to lots in the Rural Conservation Zone and Green Wedge to justify the denial of planning permits for dwellings on lots under 8 hectares with existing properly constituted land titles.

C86 was never subject to any public consultation whatsoever and in fact C86 was not subject to any exhibition at all, the exemption for minor administrative amendments to planning schemes being improperly, dishonestly and deliberately claimed, which went unchallenged.

The peri urban and rural myth eventuated and was resolutely, persistently and confidently perpetuated of there being a proper and lawful basis for the reference to lot size for dwellings in the green wedge being importantly persuasive or determinative for the grant of planning permits.

This review of the GWMP is the ideal moment in the history of the recalibration of the Nillumbik Shire Council for this improper myth to be eradicated permanently. **PALS insists that there can be no or no proper reference to lot size – particularly negative or pejorative reference whatsoever in the GWMP.** It has been suggested with authority to PALS that it is conceivable that the Nillumbik Shire Council, its executives and officers, may well be currently exposed and potentially further exposed (if the improper lot size issue is further perpetuated or in any way enshrined in the GWMP) to considerable litigation, in addition to other regulatory action and potentially serious sanction. It is that serious.



PALs Proposition For Victorian Government Endorsed Comprehensive NSC Planning Scheme Simplification

- Embrace and implementation of Vic Smart Planning Program
- Fundamental recalibration in landowner/council relations
- Ending culture of “neighbourhood dob in” reporting
- Ending multi-generational improper council officer access by unrepresentative (minority) environmental activists

The Victorian Government has recognised the need for improved efficiency and planning outcomes with the recent introduction of

*“**Smart Planning** - a reform program to make Victoria’s planning system more efficient and accessible. Over the past 20 years, multiple reviews of the planning system have identified ideas and areas for improvement. Planning needed an overhaul and that is what Smart Planning has been doing. Through Stages 1 and 2, Smart Planning has simplified planning rules and delivered a suite of modern digital tools. Stage 3 of the program started in July 2018 and is delivering further digital and planning rules improvements, with a focus on reforming local government planning.”*

Source: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/smart-planning-program>

In mid 2016, well before the election of the current council, PALs, which as a group characterises itself as **“well intentioned, not politically aligned landowners”** began discussing its intent to advocate for improved planning treatment and outcomes for landowners, with radical improvement in landowner/council relations. A key PALs initiative, which has been anticipating this very opportunity, presented by the local electoral shift, coupled with the emergence of the State Government’s Smart Planning program, factors which together provide this council with the requisite mandate and defy any spurious claims of illegitimacy, is to propose comprehensive NCS Planning Scheme review and reform.

With a view to embracing the opportunity presented by this GWMP review, PALs proposes that the NSC conduct root and branch planning scheme reform, with a guiding principle being the simplification of and reduction in planning permit requirements.

Planning Scheme Simplification

Objectives of Planning Scheme Simplification are to:

- fundamentally recalibrate the atmosphere and interaction between landowners and the NSC at council, management and officer level in matters relating to planning and environment;
- significantly expand “as of right” land management activities;
- significantly reduce the range and number of circumstances giving rise to a planning permit application, which will greatly reduce the planning and environment department headcounts, delivering considerable budgetary efficiency for NSC.
- introduce a system of land management activity “licensing” (detailed in this submission at 2 below) to replace some matters previously regulated by planning permits. The simple terminology change from “permit” to “licence” will also enhance improved relations with landowners as the requirement for a permit has become known (with trepidation as protracted, costly and complex. The common perception of licences is that they are more a right than a permission which is hard fought.

The above simplification would work hand in glove with the Vic Smart planning system which has been introduced in Victoria, to streamline processes such as the fast track of approvals for a range of simple land management activities

Benefits

PALs estimate that if adopted and implemented over time, it may be possible for the planning regime segmentation to eventually result in:

1. “As Of Right” land management activities (no permit nor licence required) representing an elimination of 25% of current workload of planning permit application cases
2. Land Management Licences (low cost eg \$100-200) with a guaranteed 21 day issue timeframe (no permit required) representing an elimination of a further 25% of current workload of planning permit application cases
3. VicSmart permit system representing approximately 25% of current workload of planning permit application cases
4. Traditional but less complex and less protracted planning permit application processes to account for the remaining 25% of current workload of planning permit application cases

Planning Scheme Simplification

100%

Current Planning Permit Requirement Case Workload

PALS

VISION FOR
PLANNING REGIME
SIMPLIFICATION

LESS 25% AS OF RIGHT

LESS 25%

PERMIT REPLACED BY LICENCE SYSTEM

LESS 25%+ VICSMART

RESULT:

75%+ REDUCTION

in Planning & Environment Department Workloads

NSC EFFICIENCY FROM GREATLY REDUCED DEPARTMENT HEADCOUNT



PALs Consideration of & Support for the Draft GWMP

With the well publicised trajectory of the development of the draft GWMP (in particular the contentious issues with the Community Panel process and minority report inclusion now resolved), PALs is pleased to provide its in principle support for the draft GWMP as a well considered document that addresses matters crucial to a comprehensive and responsive GWMP. The 2019 draft improves significantly on the 2010-25 plan.

Subject to PALs submission input detailed above and later in this document, which we submit demands addressing and incorporation into the final GWMP, the draft GWMP provides a strong strategic direction for a GWMP which should deliver positive outcomes for both the Nillumbik Green Wedge and for people in the Green Wedge who live, work and recreate there.

The final GWMP's ultimate success will of course be determined by the implementation of the various initiatives, plans and actions in it. It will succeed if it is able to deliver genuine and lasting improvement in land management and community safety. Landowner/council relations improvement should also be integral to that success.

PALs commend the council for the production of this draft GWMP and look forward to endorsing the final GWMP when it is settled later in 2019.

Matters which are fundamental for consideration for and inclusion in the final GWMP include:

Implementation

Any strategy, no matter how detailed and comprehensive, is only as good as its implementation. Greater detail needs to be included into the GWMP to guide and control its delivery. Responsibility and delegation need to be carefully considered, transparent and specified with suitable and achievable bench marks or KPI's that ensure that the delivery is genuine, time sensitive, well resourced and fair. The GWMP risks failure if its implementation is not intelligent, positive and inclusive. It is imperative that landowners are included in and are represented on every Implementation Committee in sufficient numbers to be able to directly advocate for outcomes that will affect appropriate future property and land management.

Red Tape

The reduction or elimination of unnecessary red tape is well recognised at all levels of Government, with the establishment by the Victorian Government of the

Office of the Red Tape Commissioner, with whom PALs recently met to discuss and identify significant opportunities for red tape reduction. Local Governments are being actively encouraged to reduce the level and complexity of red tape. The burden of unnecessary or excessive red tape rests heavily on Local Government administrations.

In Nillumbik, the planning and environment regimes are obvious areas overdue for the reduction in and elimination of much bureaucratic and needlessly complex, costly and restrictive provisions associated with planning permit applications and approvals.

Red tape reduction should be genuinely addressed in the GWMP as the ongoing implementation of the final GWMP will be directly and positively affected by a combination of the reduction in and elimination of needlessly complicated, expensive, onerous, protracted and adversarial/confrontational planning processes which currently exist in the council planning framework.



The GWMP presents the defining opportunity to appropriately address changes that will streamline and assist in efficient processing, with minimal delays and reduced/minimal cost to both Council and Applicants.

The GWMP is also the appropriate forum to advocate for VicSmart provisions for planning permits to be incorporated into rural zones. This would automatically and substantially reduce red tape and assist in reducing the heavy financial burden on applicants. The draft GWMP is silent in this regard. The final GWMP should embrace this initiative and instigate delivery of genuine and demonstrable red tape reduction.

PALs restates its insistence on the complete revocation of any and all of the changes made to the MSS by **Planning Scheme Amendment C86** and notes that council intends to review the MSS with information which will be published as part of the final GWMP.



Five Key Moves For The Shire

1. The landowners support service.

PALS is concerned that, given the historical unhealthy culture in council/landowner relations in Nillumbik, information collected under this initiative could form the basis of a landowner "hit list/file" which could be misused against landowners in the future.

PALS is intent on the complete eradication of any vestiges of the sorts of sanctions, punishments or intimidation in any enforcement activities which have been common, well known, feared and documented in Nillumbik under previous administrations. It is simply unacceptable for menacing and threatening conduct to be any part of council/landowner relations. There remains widespread scepticism amongst landowners in relation to the council officers' intentions and ideologies. Landowners still harbour great reluctance to allow council officers on their land for any reason. It has been demonstrated by the Australian Taxation Office that cooperative and collaborative interaction delivers more positive compliance outcomes than achieved via adversarial settings.

There remains significant work to be done by NSC in this regard as the public face of council through the offices of planning, environment and enforcement (in particular) are consistently still currently demonstrating that staff resist or fail to follow council's strategic directions.

PALS continues to field many concerns from landowners reporting issues of continued delay, intimidation, refusals, spurious repeated calls for additional information and reports, as well as drip feed responses and the provision of conflicting information. Persistent demonstrable ongoing direct connections with local green activist groups remain concerning to PALS. Anecdotal reference to a "bat phone" to council officers has been frequently reported. Addressing this matter is key to restoring trust and improving landowner/council relations. The essence of local government probity demands it.

Fundamental and appreciable behavioural change in council officer attitude towards landowners is essential to instil any comfort in the notion that the council, "is here to help". Until that has been demonstrated and achieved, on a practical level, this initiative is destined to fail as landowners will view the service with justified suspicion. The development of trust will inevitably take some considerable time and accounts of positive interaction between landowners and council officers will need to percolate through the community.

Recommendation: Information Integrity and Security

PALS recommends strongly that council specifies a guarantee that any information to be derived from this and any other information gathering activities relating to landowners' environmental assets, planning matters and/or from any other enquiries will be treated in the same way as information is required to be dealt with under Commonwealth Privacy legislation and will not be available for purposes other than those for which it is being sought and provided.



2. Whole of organisation approach.

As detailed above, while PALs considers this a valuable and long overdue initiative, it is audacious or optimistic without pre-requisite behavioural change. The robust nature of the discussions referred to must recognise the landowner mandated considerations which should be appropriately weighted with any divergent views or positions.

The process needs to be applied across all aspects of management of the green wedge not just those related to vegetation and the environment, the obvious lightning rods for divergence.

Recommendation: Regular online reporting/updates on this initiative

PALs recommends regular reporting on progress and implementation of this initiative to monitor its efficacy.

3. Conversations Program.

This is a worthwhile initiative that could build on the work already done at St. Andrews. However, PALs insists that in the absence of actively encouraged landowner involvement, a de facto unrepresentative "Friends of" forum may develop, which is not appropriate in the establishment and development of trusted and renewed landowner/council relations. It flies in the face of basic principles of democratic representation.

There appears to be no significant distinction between Key Moves 2 and 3 apart from the community members' involvement in 3. If this is intended to gauge genuine community endorsement or sentiment in relation to initiatives which may result from Key Move 2 that appears sensible and reasonable. Legitimate and concerted community consultation is a fundamental aspect of improving council's representative response to issues.

Recommendation: Revision of Program Description

Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a **genuinely representative/community-wide** forum to discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge-transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding assistance to support the program.

4. Comprehensive planning and place management initiative for townships.

This initiative is fully supported.



5. Stocktakes of assets and activity.

In its purest form, this could be a valuable resource, but only if the information is statistically collected in a non-identifiable way, with the guarantee of information integrity and security recommended in relation to the Landowner Support Service above.

PALs estimate that landowners would have much to offer in this space but would be reluctant to do so if their input was at risk of misuse or repurposing for future use against them. Again, the trust of landowners is pivotal and yet to be unequivocally established. The majority of landowners already understand and appreciate what is required to properly manage their land and their enterprises. Issues arise predominantly where they are often denied the power to undertake necessary works unless first obtaining a planning permit. Historically, it has appeared that council officers assume that they know best and that all landowners are, essentially, intent on negatively impacting the environment. It is essential that this mechanism and any resultant database retains its intended purpose and is not compromised or perverted to challenge landowners.

Recommendation: Information Integrity and Security

PALs recommends strongly that council specifies a guarantee that any information to be derived from this and any other information gathering activities relating to landowners environmental assets, planning matters and/or from any other enquiries will be treated in the same way as information is required to be dealt with under Commonwealth Privacy legislation and will not be available for purposes other than those for which it is being sought and provided.



How the GWMP Relates to Council Policy & Strategy

Urgent Public Alert to Potentially Improper Amendment to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

Page 15 of the draft GWMP states (inter alia):

"The Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) will inform future versions of the Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement.

It will also inform key shire-wide strategies such as economic development, housing, positive ageing, bushfire mitigation, arts and culture, biodiversity, climate change adaptation and recreation.

It is this review of the GWMP that presents the critical opportunity for the community of Nillumbik, the current councillor corps together with new and incumbent council officers, to be alerted to the potentially unlawful perversion of the planning process by previous NSC council administration/s through the unadvertised, improper and wholesale amendment of the Municipal Strategic Statement ("MSS") by **Planning Scheme Amendment C86**, without any community consultation whatsoever.

See Addendum 1 for full details of Nillumbik Planning Scheme Amendment C86, its sweeping changes to the MSS and in particular the perverted issue of "small" lots.

PALS is determined to have NSC comprehensively address and resolve this serious impropriety, given the extremely negative outcomes for and impacts on the lives of many Nillumbik landowners, who have struggled for years at great expense to their financial, physical and mental health as they have been run through the Nillumbik planning mill. Most have failed to have planning permits granted for their homes on lots which in any other Shire in Victoria would be characterised as commodious and ideal for a dwelling. This must be rectified expeditiously during this term of council.

Understanding this perversion to the planning scheme by stealth is one of the most serious and odious aspects of Green Wedge planning which must be rectified by the current process. PALS understands that failure to do so may well result in considerable exposure to litigation for the Nillumbik Shire Council.

Principles

Leadership.

Respect, Collaboration, Integrity, Adaptability, Community are all very laudable principles, fundamental and lacking in previous councils. It remains to be definitively demonstrated across the organisation that they are established, must less entrenched. These principles are absent from the existing GWMP and the current council is to be commended for their inclusion. They are absolutely key in gaining the trust of landowners. They must be appreciable “across the counter”. If this were achieved and clearly demonstrated, the essential thrust of the GWMP would be assured.

Recommendation: Community Interaction Monitoring

Regular community satisfaction monitoring. Regular reporting of negative events/interactions between constituents and council officers to ensure culture change at officer level.

Aboriginal voice.

Certainly there is much to be learned from the indigenous people, particularly in relation to land management and land fit for purpose.

Whole of Shire approach.

The responsibility to produce and regularly review GWMPs is a State Government mandatory requirement for Green Wedge shires. While planning is a State responsibility and a critical aspect of any GWMP, this principle as presented tends to indicate a sort of deflection from the responsible part the Shire has to play in the management of planning matters, particularly in the Green Wedge.

PALs does not accept that co dependency implies that anyone living in suburban areas of Nillumbik has a right or a responsibility to impose controls on the use of rural land owned by rural landowners. Co dependency connotes each group derives benefit from a situation or circumstance. While the value to Nillumbik and Metro Melbourne of landowner custodianship and active management of the Green Wedge is appropriately recognised in this principle, it would be constructive to express the intent as recommended below so as to convey the understanding of the shared responsibility for the management of the Green Wedge being properly determined by a combination of State Government (the broader community/ the people), the Council (with democratic guiding principles to represent community prevailing views) and affected landowners (those largely responsible to implement actions as the burden recipients)

A divergent range of views being considered is appropriate – provided that the whole of Shire approach enshrines landowner ownership and responsibility as prevalent.

Recommendation: Principle revision

FROM: “Urban and green wedge areas within the Shire are co-dependent, the green wedge’s overall planning is controlled by the state government and its residents are valued for their management of rural land that benefits metropolitan Melbourne”

TO: “Urban and green wedge areas within the Shire are co-dependent. The green wedge’s overall planning is controlled by the state government which in partnership with the Shire will appropriately balance landowner views, input and responsibility in its management with the wider community’s aspirations for it. Green wedge residents are valued for their management of rural land that benefits metropolitan Melbourne”



Manage Change

This is appropriate provided adverse impacts on current landholdings are avoided.

Collaboration

PALs support this stated principle, long overdue and absent from the previous GWMP.

Conserve heritage

Recommendation: Principle revision to enshrine landowners' role in green wedge foundation and on its ongoing health

FROM: "The green wedge environment and cultural heritage are irreplaceable resources for the local and metropolitan community that need to be conserved and enhanced."

TO: "The green wedge environment and cultural heritage, comprising landscape, enterprise, lifestyle and environment, are irreplaceable resources for the local and metropolitan community that need to be conserved and enhanced. The foundation role of landowners and their ongoing role in its management and future health is appreciated."

Sustainability, precautionary principle

The term "precautionary principle" has a little understood or appreciated particular meaning.

It has been the basis for many planning permit refusals and is a too often used means to deny permits and to reject applications. It has been too frequently referred to in council officer recommendations and in VCAT decisions, where unqualified bureaucrats arrogate to themselves a greater level of intelligence, experience and/or knowledge than properly qualified authorities, experts and/or consultants. The expression is misappropriated to thwart deserving planning permit applications.

If there is expert servicing authority and/or consultant reports that approve or state with qualification and experience that whatever facet of an application under consideration, (fire, flood, vegetation, slope or material, etc.), that the issue can be properly managed to an acceptable risk, then there should be no resort to the term nor to its use by council officers. Consistently, bureaucrats, including inappropriately qualified (or even unqualified) council officers, purport to refuse a permit on the basis of the "precautionary principle" as a default phrase which defies being refuted. Experts should properly determine what is, and is not, an acceptable risk. Risk aversion is as understandable as is voluntary assumption of qualified and defined risk.

Recommendation: Any reference to the "precautionary principle" should be removed from the GWMP.



GOALS

Goal 1. Engaged Communities

PALs strongly support this goal but remain cautious of its successful implementation.

Rural landowners, those that live within the green wedge and therefore determine the success or failure of the GWMP, do indeed understand that they have responsibilities that run with the enjoyment of owning property and living within the landscape. What has been sadly lacking is the empowerment of those landowners to fulfil their responsibilities without the endless red tape and bureaucratic controls and enforcement / penalties.

Developing Landowner Engagement

To develop genuine and lasting landowner engagement, confidence needs to be engendered through the GWMP and other key initiatives of the current council.

The contemporaneous Bushfire Mitigation Strategy is a document referred to in the draft GWMP but there is no certainty as to where the BMS would be prioritised in the hierarchy of decision principles.

Whilst the matrix graphic on page 15 of the draft document appears to suggest that the GWMP is subordinate to the BMS, there needs to be an unequivocal statement confirming that the BMS is to be prioritised above the GMWP. PALs is concerned however that in practice it will remain the reverse. This would lead to an inevitable dilution of the BMS principles as other considerations incumbent within the GWMP may be given or take priority. The definitive statement of the hierarchy should be specified.

There is a compelling argument to change the zoning of the Nillumbik Green Wedge from a Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) to a Green Wedge Zone (GWZ). What exists inside the green wedge now, in terms of existing dwellings, landscapes, lifestyles and infrastructure is not consistent with a RCZ. It is simply not fit for purpose. A rezoning to a GWZ still satisfies all of the principles consistent with a green wedge, but is more accommodating of the reality of those same existing dwellings, landscapes, lifestyles and infrastructure.

Recommendation: The new GWMP could / should take a leading role in advocating for this change in Zoning.

It is within the scope of the GWMP document to initiate the discussion with Government and this should be done as a priority task.

Removal of All Lot Size Reference in the GWMP

Similarly, the issue of the misnamed “small lots” is repeatedly raised through the draft GWMP, Conspicuously, it is not dealt with in any definitive way. PALs insists that it is addressed as recommended in this submission.

PALs recommends that the following section of the draft GWMP at pg 22 must be comprehensively rewritten to address the lot size issue:

FROM: “Outside of the major townships, housing is limited to one dwelling per allotment (plus a dependant person’s unit) but is not always possible because the size and location of many smaller allotments will not allow compliance with state planning requirements to manage bushfire risk, retain vegetation, manage effluent or protect agricultural uses. Consolidation of lots is likely to become increasingly necessary to assemble sufficient land to manage all of the requirements for a new dwelling.”

TO: “Up until 2019, outside of the major townships, housing was effectively limited to one dwelling per allotment (plus a dependant person’s unit). Dwelling permitting and building was frequently not possible due to inaccurate reference to the size and location of many allotments which were mistakenly interpreted as not allowing compliance with state planning requirements to manage bushfire risk, retain vegetation, manage effluent or protect agricultural uses.

Consolidation of lots on a voluntary basis only may occur in future, although the planned review of the MSS will recognise that all existing lots in Nillumbik will be assessed on their merits regarding requirements for a new dwelling, correcting the error of the past where lot size was mistakenly considered as relevant and/or determinative”

Whilst a mechanism for consenting, voluntary consolidation of what have previously, inaccurately and perversely been referred to as “small lots” may be worthwhile discussing, current and past experience shows that former and even current council planners have not considered consolidation as a voluntary option. It has been regarded as a compulsory requirement and included as a condition on any provisional planning permit.

No consolidation.....No permit. PALs reject that sort of requirements particularly in light of the C86 information detailed in this submission.

This issue of lot size has been comprehensively explained earlier in this submission and is detailed in Addendum 1. PALs expects it to be resolved beyond debate.

In relation to consolidation of any lots, absent the comprehensive redraft of the MSS which PALs is calling for here there is no reason to expect that the entrenched approach would change with the introduction of the new GWMP. The history of examples of a planner attempting to force purported authority onto an Applicant, who is intimidated or coerced into accepting a consolidation condition, which is clearly not voluntary and is most certainly not in the spirit of collaboration espoused in the draft GWMP document, is rejected by PALs and should be consigned to history. It is a totally unacceptable improper legacy of the planning process for a council planning officer, or any other public servant, to force, or attempt to force, consolidation onto any Applicant against their will.



There are known to be a large number (100's) of existing titles that have an area less than the minimum required were an application being considered within the context of being a "subdivision" application.

The GWMP needs to clearly and concisely confirm that no such existing title should be labelled nor in future referred to as "small", "substandard", "inappropriate" or "less than the allowable minimum area".

This type of terminology refers only to the area of proposed lots that form part of a new or revised subdivision application. The terminology only properly and appropriately refers to new lots or titles yet to be created. **It most certainly should not in future refer to existing titles.** No existing title can be appropriately regarded as "small" or any of the other arbitrary classifications above in isolation.

There are a large number of existing titles where dwellings are located, yet these are routinely and falsely labelled as having an area that falls beneath this mythical limit. This establishes and confirms that the current zoning is not fit for purpose, as each and every one of these existing occupied titles exist legally. It is not acceptable to ignore this basic fact. Steps to remedy the situation and change the zoning so that it is fit for purpose and thereby confirm the legitimacy of the lots' occupation must be unequivocally taken via the current review process.

A robust GWMP should be the catalyst to initiate this change together with the required overhaul of the MSS.

The draft GWMP is conspicuously quiet on the issue of these misnamed "small lots" that are, or may be capable of containing a dwelling and property infrastructure. This glaring omission requires resolution for all lots that are incorrectly and falsely labelled as "small". It is a basic denial of human rights and property rights that these so called "small lots" can be denied the same fair, reasonable and impartial assessment in any planning application, as any other existing title.

ANY application should be considered purely on its merits and the area of the parcel, in isolation, cannot be presented as a reason for refusal.

This is of particular relevance and importance when such a significant number of existing titles, many of them also currently vacant, supposedly sit beneath this mythical minimum. Yet it has been so frequently demonstrated by the significant number of existing dwellings in rural areas on "small lots" that dwellings and infrastructure can be comfortably accommodated on allotments, some as small as average house lots, without detrimental or adverse effects on the neighbourhood amenity, the environment or the landscape.

In fact, it has often been the case that the first people to submit an objection to a planning application for a dwelling and infrastructure, are themselves occupying a parcel that is less than the mythical "minimum" area.

Recommendations: The final GWMP should commit to the complete revocation of any and all of the changes made to the MSS by Planning Scheme Amendment C86. The consequential comprehensive review of the MSS with information which will be generated from the final GWMP should be a key action to flow from the GWMP.

Abolition of reference to lot size and any involuntary lot consolidation should be guaranteed in the GWMP

Rural living

Council is to be commended for the detail in relation to the role and responsibilities that landowners and hobby farmers make and contribute towards a robust and healthy green wedge.

The prioritisation of human life and the importance of bushfire mitigation strategies are obvious and integral components of an overall living landscape.

The drafting of the GWMP to include reference to the consultation process feedback which is actually included in the proposed GWMP, appears to have the intent of justifying or explaining the substantive body of the plan. That mechanism or style, while understandable, is not particularly helpful particularly with passages such as:

“The engagement revealed general concerns with aspects of the state government’s planning framework relating to the uncertain use of small rural lots, the balancing of bushfire safety requirements and native vegetation objectives and restrictions on the ability to accommodate different family generations on rural allotments”

Such passages, which appear throughout the draft GWMP, read as reportage in relation to the community and other feedback used to inform the draft, whereas the plan itself ought to address such concerns with proposed solutions fit for purpose in Nillumbik, with source information more appropriately footnoted rather than appearing in lengthy narrative sections. This submission of PALS provides a catalogue of recommendations which are aimed at delivering fit for purposes responses to PALS constituents’ long held concerns regarding green wedge management.

“Offset Scheme” and “Offsetting” references

The application of the shadowy and opaque vegetation offsets scheme requires another entire document. However, the draft GWMP identifies the “no net loss” principle as the guiding principle. This is encouraging as current practice clearly demonstrates the application across the entire framework of a “net gain” principle whereby cash is extorted from applicants and paid into unknown and unidentifiable accounts for undeclared and unknown future use.

The principle of “no net loss” should dictate that it is vegetation related and dedicated to replacement of vegetation lost from any parcels that are subject to an application, but with the vegetation planted **on site**. Further, the currency of the offset should be vegetation not cash.

As a result of recommendations made in the Wren Report to NSC for the incoming 2016-20 council and CEO to consider reviewing the NSC offset scheme involvement, PALS has actively pursued the goal of having the offset scheme dismantled and recalibrated properly to remove clearly identifiable corruption of what was intended as a well founded environmental initiative.

Whilst aerial photography investigations easily dispel the myth of rampant vegetation loss through the green wedge area, the application of the vegetation “cash for clearing” racket ensures that even when vegetation can be removed from the landscape via a planning permit, the requirement



for cash or offsets purchased in some distant location only go to hinder or prohibit an applicant from replacing vegetation on their own land. Therefore, the Nillumbik Green Wedge could suffer irreversibly from vegetation loss because applicants are often not allowed to offset their vegetation removal by replanting on their own site.

Recommendations: The NSC review of the offset scheme, its administration and management recommended with legal authority to the current council by Wren QC, should be enshrined in the new GWMP and implemented. The Principle of “no net loss” is within the scope of the GWMP implementation and should be adopted and clearly enunciated in the final GWMP document.

As of right to rebuild

The issue of as of right provisions to rebuilding following the loss of dwellings and/or infrastructure in a bushfire (or PALs presume other natural disasters) has not been adequately addressed. Since its inception, as PALs developed as a landowner advocacy group, it has been more and more frequently the resort of distressed, frustrated and often angry landowners who have suffered through natural disaster and often at the hands of NSC.

Most recently in preparation for this submission, the following was received from a long suffering Nillumbik landowner who endured total property destruction on Black Saturday, 8 February 2009 – over a decade ago.

“Post disaster right to rebuild without permits would be fantastic if we could backdate it 10 years, i have been told by doctors to stop fighting them over this issue to preserve my health, and i try to stop looking at my half built house that i am not allowed to finish. I dont wish what i have had to suffer from government and council after black saturday, on anyone else.....”

(Quote included as received - without editing)

PALs encourages NSC, councillors, officers and staff to suspend any personal or professionally entrenched attitudes or bias and instead follow to follow principles and morals to achieve necessary change, so that the next person to experience devastation by fire, lose everything but survive, does not have to live through the ongoing trauma and bureaucratic nightmare that this person has had to endure for **10+ years**.

Lofty words and ideals do not necessarily translate into aligned action. If no other outcome is delivered as a result of the final GWMP it must surely be the guarantee of the right to rebuild **WITHOUT A PLANNING PERMIT**

Intense visceral human suffering should not be exacerbated by red tape and tortuous processes. Special consideration and automatic exemptions should be enshrined in the GWMP and delivered in resultant NSC conduct and action to support, heal and nurture the survivors of disasters.

It is not good enough for the GWMP to include:

“Council supports the premise that people should be able to rebuild” but then sentences any affected persons to the same disgraceful planning requirements and framework that inflict incredibly stressful, harsh, expensive, extremely lengthy bureaucratic processes with no guarantee of a successful outcome.



No council has a right to inflict this type of prohibitive, continually negative and incredibly counter-productive regime onto any Applicant, let alone any that have just survived the un-imaginable trauma and stress of losing their loved ones, home, infrastructure, animals and livelihoods to a bushfire.

To require an Applicant in this circumstance to apply for a planning permit and not guarantee **right to rebuild** is a disgrace.

To suggest that ***"the planning and building controls are in place so that the design and siting of replacement buildings reduce future risks to the occupants, not repeat them. This may mean that another location on the property is a better option to address fire risk"*** is a furphy which perpetuates bureaucratic perspectives which tend to complicate rather than simplify.

To suggest that the planning controls should be applied to "protect" applicants from repeating the same mistakes that council had already previously approved as being acceptable at the time is nonsense.

When a person seeks to rebuild their life by, in part, rebuilding their home and a council planner steps in with authority and often described insincerity, and forces the person to build elsewhere on their property, if indeed there even is "an elsewhere" in the planners view, so that it will *"reduce future risks to the occupants, not repeat them"* represents an unmitigated arrogance and an illegitimate use of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

A genuine **"as of right to rebuild"** would guarantee exactly that, a right to rebuild without needless bureaucratic interference. The provisions and requirements to successfully obtain a building permit would control and require applicants to satisfy relevant building codes, BAL ratings, building composition and materials, orientation and defensible space.

It is of no business for council planners in any context, save and except should the applicant themselves seek to build elsewhere on their land, in which case the normal planning requirements may be triggered.

Council should act in the best interests of the community and facilitate any rebuild, rather than forcing people back into the complexities and difficulties of a planning permit application process that may cost well north of \$25,000 and take between 12 and 36 months to get to a point where the person may, or may not, get a notice of determination.

PALs use the term notice of determination, as distinct from a planning permit, because even at that point it would be more than likely that vexatious objectors would drag the application to VCAT, thereby adding up to another 12 months and \$50,000 plus to defend, even then with no guarantee of success. This is all before even starting the construction process.

The requirement for a planning permit also condemns the applicant to the extortion of cash in relation to vegetation offsets which would be likely included into permit conditions, adding another \$10,000 - \$100,000 or likely even more, depending upon the circumstance.

The planning definition of Existing Use Rights is as follows:

"Existing use rights apply to the land, not the owner, and it is up to owner of the property to prove that they apply. It is important to note that any works to properties with existing use rights require a planning permit and must comply with current planning requirements."

The planning definition of **Use Terms** include the following in relation to a dwelling:

"A building used as a self contained residence..... It includes out-buildings and works normal to a dwelling."

Whilst the above appears to confirm that existing use definitions may apply to a dwelling, it is unclear how use definitions would apply to a dwelling and infrastructure that has been destroyed and whether there is a direct requirement for a planning permit for a new / replacement dwelling or that the permit requirement refers to the dwelling that was destroyed. Even assuming that existing use did apply there is a time control within the planning scheme that dictates that the use must be continuous and must not have a non-use period in excess of 2 years.

There is very little likelihood that if a landowner was forced into the planning permit process, it would be successfully resolved and approved in less than 2 years, so possibly eliminating the avenue of existing use rights.

It is important to also fully understand that matters associated with satisfying building requirements for properties affected by the current Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO), in terms of materials, construction methods, BAL ratings, ancillary infrastructure such as fire bunkers, excavations, sprinkler systems and water supplies would massively increase the cost of a replacement building even two or threefold.

It is unclear if insurance would cover the additional costs associated with rebuilding to the current BMO requirements, but more than likely, the insurance would only cover the amount insured and would make no allowance for current, more rigorous building requirements. Similarly likely is it that insurance would not cover the cost of the planning permit process and/or any associated cover in terms of temporary accommodation through that permit period.

It is, therefore, incumbent on council in dealing with these types of disasters and the people that are so tragically traumatised, to minimise the stress, cost and time for survivors to rebuild their life through the rebuilding of their home.

Council has a duty of care to assist in these situations by the genuine application of an "as of right" provision and to remove the planning bureaucracy and the massive cost associated with planning permits and allow survivors to get on with their lives.

Planning permit requirements imposed on the right to rebuild is not the compassionate response that the landowner community is looking to council to apply.

All in all this precise situation may have a devastating and irreversible effect on a person's decision to "leave early" or "stay and defend", knowing the almost certain bureaucratic jungle that would result if there was no effort to save the house and infrastructure on the day. If people leave and their home is destroyed, the above processes awaits them. If they stay, maybe they will make that



decision because they are appropriately prepared, or purely because they cannot afford or would be mentally unable to deal with the process of rebuilding.

This could conceivably lead to loss of human life that could be directly attributable to the negligence of council through the inappropriate application of planning requirements in the aftermath and the effect that process has on their initial decision making.

The planning scheme includes the following clauses in relation to the ability of council planners to waive unnecessary requirements.

In relation to any matter:

"If in the opinion of the responsible authority any requirement is not relevant to the evaluation of an application, the responsible authority may waive or reduce the requirement."

In relation to the siting and detail required for any proposed dwelling:

"If in the opinion of the responsible authority a requirement of the site and context description is not relevant to the assessment of an application, the responsible authority may waive or reduce the requirement."

PALs suggests that possibly few or no council planners even know of the existence of these clauses, let alone would they ever consider employing them. Yet it may provide the appropriate mechanism for a far more humane, reasonable and fair assessment, not only of applications generally, but particularly those related to rebuilding rights.

Therefore, there may be space within the existing planning framework, given the correct oversight and control by management, for reasonable assessments and permit deliveries to occur.

Council must enshrine into the GWMP an unequivocal confirmation of the absolute right to rebuild following a bushfire, no ifs no buts. Anything less is a betrayal of the community it purports to represent.

Recommendation: NSC must guarantee to remove the need for a planning permit and grant a genuine and automatic "right to rebuild" in the event of partial or total destruction of a dwelling and property infrastructure.

NSC can only purport to be serious about community engagement if it integrates the recommendations detailed in this section of this submission into the final GWMP.

Objectives

Recommendations for revisions:

O1.1 Enable our people **by empowerment (not restriction/prohibition nor excessive prescription)** to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge.

O1.5 Address the previous **challenges for** housing development in the rural areas and **facilitate its administration with reduced red tape and genuine collaborative planning permit process navigation. Abolish lot size reference in Nillumbik Planning Scheme.**

Key Actions

Recommendations for revisions:

A1.1 Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a genuinely representative/community-wide forum to discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding assistance to support the program.

A1.6 Investigate options for voluntary consolidation and amalgamation of rural lots which currently do not have dwellings approved.

Abolish any planning scheme references that were previously misused to characterise lots that have recently been incorrectly characterised as not capable of supporting a dwelling due to lot area.

Where appropriate and with owner consent, consider government purchase of such lots where they are adjacent to public land.

GOAL 2. Active and creative people

PALs strongly support this goal and the initiative, while encouraging council to recognise and respond to the negative impact on constituents health and wellbeing from historical landowner/council relations. This is of particular relevance with the key action A2.1 where the council plans to implement the Health and Wellness Plan 2017-2021.

GOAL 3. Safe and healthy environments

PALs broadly support this goal subject to the following points.

- No net loss. See comments above regarding offsetting and the Offset Scheme itself. It must be acknowledged that the "no net loss" principle should not be misapplied so that it tends closer to a "net gain" approach.

The administration of this environmental initiative should not be a means of extorting funds from applicants as a bargaining mechanism for the granting of a permit (it is noted that in

a number of recent well publicised permit applications, long frustrated landowners have capitulated to council demands for substantial and opaque offset requirements in order to expedite permit approvals.

PALs notes with well based concern that while the State legislation controlling offsetting contains complex biodiversity and other component calculations, all of which include calculations with multiple varieties of formulae to a number of decimal places, strangely conveniently rounded offset payment requirements have been included in planning permit conditions (in one particularly notorious example in North Warrandyte the cash figure was precisely \$80,000 which absolutely defies explanation of compliance with the legislations calculation bases). This is just one of the many reasons for PALs lobbying for the wholesale review of the Offset Scheme as recommended by Wren QC.

- If the Offset Scheme is to be retained, the currency used to calculate required vegetation replacement should be vegetation itself, not money with incomprehensible or confected amounts. Any vegetation deemed required as replacement for vegetation removed should be directly planted on the site where vegetation was removed or elsewhere in Nillumbik itself if one of the aims of the scheme is to limit vegetation loss in the Shire.
- A real world assessment of vegetation loss across the green wedge should inform the GWMP. There is irrefutable proof from historical aerial photography over the green wedge area that clearly demonstrates a significant increase in vegetation, not loss. This is further re-enforced by FFMV, local CFA brigades and landowners who all confirm that ground fuel loads are now significantly greater than immediately prior to Black Saturday 2009. This is despite an increase in the number of dwellings, infrastructure and enterprises across the green wedge.

Objectives

Suggested revisions:

FROM: O3.1 Identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats.

TO: O3.1 Identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats, while recognising and balancing the priority of human life in and inhabitation of the green wedge.

FROM: O3.5 Conserve the bush and rural landscapes to maintain the natural beauty of the green wedge.

TO: O3.5 Conserve the bush and rural landscapes to maintain the natural beauty of the green wedge, while enabling human safety via appropriately conducted rural land management.

Key Actions

Recommendations: Remove of any actions (principally Action points A3.2 and A3.9) which in any way may provide scope to reconsider or revive (in any guise) rejected Planning Scheme Amendments C81 and C101.

Council must guarantee the impossibility of initiation of any new planning scheme amendments whatsoever that bear any resemblance to C81 and C101 which were comprehensively refused approval by the Victorian Planning Minister and/or found to be unlawful through VCAT action respectively.

Suggested revisions:

FROM: A3.2 Subject to the findings of the data base described by A3.1, review the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

TO: A3.2 Subject to the findings of the database described by A3.1, review the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme expressly and only to re-evaluate unnecessary or redundant overlays, reduce regulations, associated permit costs and time frames, improve council / community relations and interaction and to empower landowners to confidently conduct required land management activities for bushfire mitigation with specific regulation exemptions.

Exemptions contained in the schedules to the Victorian Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations provide council with guidance.

See: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/91251/Exemptions-from-requiring-a-planning-permit-to-remove,-destroy-or-lop-native-vegetation-Guidance.pdf
and Addendum 2 below – summary of exemptions

Action A3.5 makes reference to ***“encourage biodiversity conservation and responsible land management on public and private land by”***.....and lists several bodies, plans and management tools that would be consulted, supported or involved in delivering the different relevant facets of the strategy.

However, there is no mention of landowners or landowner groups.

This is a serious and fundamental flaw in and omission from the GWMP. It is also presents a concerning indication that landowners are not being contemplated or considered as involved in the preservation of their landscapes and environment.

PALs considers it mandatory that an additional dot point be included under Action A3.5 as detailed below:

- **Support and resource provision for landowners and landowner groups to be actively involved in any actions that directly or indirectly affect their properties.**



Additional suggested revisions

FROM: A3.5 (6th Dot Point)

administering state planning policies that apply to native vegetation

TO: A3.5 (6th Dot Point)

administering state planning policies that apply to native vegetation with specific adoption of (and provision to landowners, in relation to) landowner land management regulation exemptions

Exemptions contained in the schedules to the Victorian Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations provide council with guidance.

See: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/91251/Exemptions-from-requiring-a-planning-permit-to-remove,-destroy-or-lop-native-vegetation-Guidance.pdf
and Addendum 2 below – summary of exemptions

FROM: A3.7 Finalise and implement Council's draft Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-23

TO: A3.7 Publish a definitive statement of the relative hierarchy of priorities to clearly articulate the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy's priority when finalising and implementing Council's draft Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-23

FROM: A3.9 As part of a future review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme consider identified landscape character and quality through the current policies and overlays that apply.

TO: A3.9 As part of a future review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme re-evaluate the importance and impact of landscape character and quality through the re-assessment of current policies and overlays to specifically deliver simplification, regulation reduction and improved council / community interaction, while facilitating landowners' responsible land management activities by empowering confident bushfire mitigation works with specific regulation exemptions.

Exemptions contained in the schedules to the Victorian Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations provide council with guidance.

See: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/91251/Exemptions-from-requiring-a-planning-permit-to-remove,-destroy-or-lop-native-vegetation-Guidance.pdf
and Addendum 2 below – summary of exemptions

GOAL 4. A prosperous economy

PALs strongly support this goal and the initiative.



OBJECTIVES

Suggested revisions:

FROM: A4.4 To ensure that land remains available for agriculture, use the Nillumbik planning scheme to encourage consolidation of smaller agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands.

TO: A4.4 To ensure that land remains available for agriculture, use the Nillumbik planning scheme to encourage voluntary consolidation of smaller agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands.

GOAL 5. Responsible leadership

Governance and engagement

The principles are well founded and supported. The guiding principle for interaction between council officers and the landowners / community should be based around mutual respect and genuine assistance to facilitate a growing mutually positive relationship.

Current practice does not support this and while significant work has been undertaken by council to improve management outcome and to change the council officer behaviours towards landowners, there is more to be done to secure genuine and lasting change. The previous orthodoxy of punishment, enforcement and harassment in attempts to control landowners is not tolerable and demands new approaches. If landowners were the beneficiaries of a new outlook from council officers, it could form the basis of a positive ongoing partnership.

It should be noted and it has been consistently repeatedly stated by PALS that the vast majority, if not all landowners currently living, or those who still wish to live within the green wedge are not developers and do not wish to subdivide inappropriately or in conflict with current zoning. This mischaracterisation of landowners and PALS, which has been perpetuated consistently since PALS inception is a false narrative conceived and repeated by a small number of disaffected environmental activists seeking to discredit PALS genuine and legitimate role in improving landowner/council relations. It is in stark contrast to PALS own characterisation as "well intentioned, not politically aligned landowners.

Land use planning

See earlier comments regarding appropriate zoning. There is a compelling argument that a GWZ is more appropriate for a green wedge area than the current RCZ.

It is encouraging to see acknowledgement in the draft GWMP that the current RZC zoning is not fit for purpose. The council response to the DELWP Strategic Agricultural Land Review was to suggest appropriate rezoning to free up land that is currently used, or capable of being used in its present form, for agricultural purposes. Mention of this principle is also noted in the draft GWMP.

Whilst there is very good evidence that this type of micro zoning would be helpful in delivering the principles of the GWMP and the council view is that current zoning: ... ***"is an inhibitor to this plan's objectives to promote the right to farm and the tourism allowed in conjunction with farming"***, it is also an acknowledgement that the current zoning is not fit for purpose.



It is equally encouraging that council appreciate that it is the role of the GWMP to advocate for and follow through on this type of micro rezoning. It must also therefore accept that it can be the role of the GWMP to advocate more broadly for an appropriate rezoning to GWZ, to advocate for true as of right provisions to rebuild free of planning permit requirements and restrictions and to also deal properly with the issue of the misleading terminology of the “small lots” and their use.

It is also appropriate for council to advocate for the reduction and/or elimination of inappropriate red tape and to advocate for a right to farm principle across all of the green wedge land that is fit for that purpose.

It should also advocate for all the existing parcels occupied within the green wedge to have a suitable zoning attached to the parcels that legitimise their existence. There is a clear obligation to relevant landowners in this regard as well, as it was council that approved the building of their dwellings and infrastructure initially. Appropriate rezoning in this regard would ensure that future planning applications could not be met with the erroneous “substandard” argument as a means to refuse. Actions A5.6, A5.7 and A5.8 should simply drop the word “consider” to make them unambiguous as commitments, which would be appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is noted that a broad framework for implementation is set out under this heading which is supported.

However, it is not clear actually who, or what, group or committee within the council structure will be charged with the oversight and collation of the relevant advisory committee outcomes and their incorporation into an overall set of reportable targets, outcomes and KPI performance.

This may be a facet of the GWMP that is designated to the Governance portfolio of council but without the oversight of a Councillor as Chair. It is already incumbent on the council Governance Officer to uphold the proper processes and deliveries of council and to advise council of its legal and moral obligations in an independent manner.



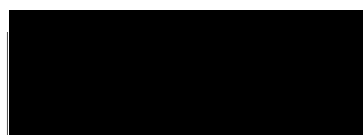
Conclusion

PALS congratulates Nillumbik Shire Council for the significant progress made to date in the recalibration of council/landowner relations, which is represented by not only this Green Wedge Management Plan review process, but also the other meaningful policy and management initiatives that have been introduced since its election.

The key emphasis of this submission is to provide NSC with the representative experience and intelligence of Nillumbik's well intentioned pro active landowners, who all have as their abiding concern, the welfare of all of the community of Nillumbik and its environs, as well as its precious environmental assets.

PALS restates here that genuine NSC/community partnerships are essential to effect real change in landowner/council relations and the development and refining of a world's best practice GWMP is a leading example of the value of the collaboration so critical to this landmark undertaking of council.

This PALS submission provides critical feedback to NSC and its suite of recommendations is intended to improve the final GWMP due for publication in late 2019. We commend this submission to NSC and thank council for the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a vital initiative.



Damian Crock
Chair
Working Group
Nillumbik PALS
9 August 2019



ADDENDUM 1 & 2

Nillumbik Pro Active Landowners (PALS)

SUBMISSION TO
NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL ("NSC")
ON THE DRAFT GREEN WEDGE
MANAGEMENT PLAN ("GWMP")

SUBMISSION TO NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL ("NSC") ON THE DRAFT GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN ("GWMP")

August 2019

ADDENDUM 1

Nillumbik Planning Scheme Amendment C86 & Possibly Unlawful Sweeping Changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

From: XXXXX

To: XXXX

Date: 12 March 2019 at 12:12

Subject: C86

Hi XXXXX

As discussed, C86 amended CI 21.05-2 includes references to discouraging dwellings on lots below the minimum subdivision size.

As the explanatory report states, this 'editorial' or 'policy neutral' amendment was approved without exhibition on the basis that any changes were just that and did not represent a type of substantive change.

As you can see in the tracked change version of the clause, it was not an editorial change (see excerpt). This new clause purported to replace the previous which related to subdivision and creation of smaller lots, not the establishment of dwellings.

Importantly, as (a recent) submission pointed out to the Tribunal.....{VCAT. re a Nillumbik permit application case}, this is the only part of the scheme that refers to discouraging dwellings on lots below the minimum subdivision lot size (even though these lot sizes do not apply to dwelling applications and are only relevant to the creation of new lots).

Unfortunately, the Tribunal nonetheless gave weight to this clause and referred to it in its decision, **despite the public never being consulted on its insertion into the planning scheme.** (emphasis added by PALS).



Copy of Explanatory Report Apparent Misleading & Deceptive Claim to Exemption for Administrative Editorial Changes

Planning and Environment Act 1987

NILLUMBIK PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C86

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the Minister for Planning, who is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of Nillumbik Shire Council (council).

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to all land in the municipality.

What the amendment does

The amendment replaces Clause 21 of the Local Planning Policy Framework with an updated Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

The changes to the MSS involve editorial changes and factual updating of text and are 'policy neutral' as they do not involve any significant changes in local planning policy.

The changes to the MSS can be categorised as follows:

- Factual updating - resulting from more recent population, economic, and social data.
- Updating references to state and regional policy.
- Updating as a result of adopted council plans and strategies.
- Editorial changes - for instance to remove anomalies, use plain English, and create a more contemporary MSS.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

• Why is the amendment required?

The Nillumbik MSS was developed from 1997 to 2000 and was introduced with the New Format Nillumbik Planning Scheme on 22 June 2000. During the past thirteen years there has been no comprehensive change to the MSS, other than a series of minor alterations associated with various amendments.

Excerpt from C86 amendment to Municipal Strategic Statement CI 21.05-2 @pg10

Objective 4

- To minimise infrastructure servicing demand in rural areas.

Strategies

- Limit the development of new dwellings and buildings on rural allotments below the minimum subdivision size, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- ~~Restrict the creation of small lots in rural areas, including where subdivision will add to already concentrated areas of small lots in rural areas. Also strongly discourage the de facto creation of rural residential type (or smaller) lots in rural areas via the realignment of existing property boundaries.~~
- Strongly discourage commercial and industrial type uses and developments in rural areas with limited vehicular access, due to unsealed roads, no-through roads or other constraints to road safety or efficiency.
- Encourage the location of commercial/tourism uses which have the potential to attract substantial numbers of daily visitors, such as art galleries, cafes, plant nurseries, restaurants and wineries, in close proximity to major roads to limit the impact of these uses on the local road network.



Amendment C86 and the misconceived/confected “sub-standard lot” test

In previous decisions and Tribunal cases concerning dwelling applications on RCZ lots, Council has sought to apply a concept of ‘sub-standard lots’ (ie. lots below the minimum 8 hectares subdivision lot size). Council has asserted that this test is somehow relevant to the assessment as to whether land should be used for a dwelling.

The minimum lot size of 8 hectares (or 20 acres) was never conceived as a standard to be applied to existing lots, nor to whether land should be used or developed for a particular purpose, such as dwellings. The minimum lot size was simply a means of putting a brake on the creation of any new smaller lots (ie. through subdivision) when policies for the green wedge were originally conceived.

As noted by the Tribunal in the *Weingartner v Nillumbik SC [2016] VCAT 1359*, the current policies and controls for the Nillumbik green wedge have their origins in the 1971 document, *Planning Policies for Metropolitan Melbourne Region*.

It was at this time the minimum lot sizes for the subdivision of land within the green wedge areas were set down in policy and implemented in new controls.

Plan 14 of the 1971 Report identified the Subject Land and the surrounding area within the North-eastern hill country landscape zone (at page 111):

North-eastern hill country. Pleasant steep to undulating hill country, partly covered by scattered open forest with rural uses intermixed, grazing being the main activity.

Relevantly, these areas were not included in the Conservation Zone, which was a more “stringent planning control” that was applied to areas of “major conservation significance”. This zone included a 40 hectare minimum lot size and sought to “conserve existing characteristics to a major degree”.

In contrast, the areas within the Landscape Interest Zones were applied to areas which had generally been disturbed and anticipated some further change:

The areas which have been classified as of landscape interest have been changed from the natural state principally through clearing and the establishment of rural activities. However some of the original landscape still remains and it is interspersed with the rural land giving attractive views and a pleasant unspoiled character which, desirably should be retained. The control over the landscape areas would not be as rigid as in the conservation areas as further changes in these areas could occur without major detriment to their character.

(see *Planning Policies for Metropolitan Melbourne (1971)* at page 45)



Landscape interest Zones

This zone has been applied where land has considerable interest in terms of natural features or habitat, but where a degree of development or change could occur.

The form of planning control proposed for this zone is less stringent than for the conservation zone, and provides for a broader range of permitted and discretionary uses. It is generally intended that land within this zone should not be subdivided into allotments of less than 20 acres.

Land included in this zone has a total area of 179 square miles, and apart from limited sections in river valleys, is largely concentrated to the north-east and east of Melbourne, including quite substantial portions of the municipalities of Whittlesea, Eltham, Lilydale, Sherbrooke, and Berwick.

(see Planning Policies for Metropolitan Melbourne (1971) at pages 83-84)

Importantly, a lesser minimum lot size of 20 acres (8 hectares) was imposed for subdivision as a measure to prevent further subdivision. **It was not conceived of, nor intended as any type of standard to be applied to the assessment of proposals for the use or development of existing lots.**

This is reflected in the text of the RCZ, which makes it very clear that **8 hectares is a minimum lot size for determining whether a subdivision is prohibited.**

Whether or not a lot is more than 8 hectares in size is simply irrelevant to applications to use land for a dwelling, the same considerations apply regardless of whether a lot is 4 hectares or 20 hectares.

It is also misconceived to assert that the policy framework separately applies a minimum lot size or 'sub-standard lot' test to the assessment of dwelling applications in the RCZ.

Neither the Rural Conservation Zone, the SPPF nor the LPPF refer to "sub-standard" sized lots in Green Wedge areas as a term being relevant to the assessment of dwelling applications.

In the LPPF, the only reference to the minimum lot size for subdivision occurs in a strategy (approved under Amendment C86 in 2014) to Clause 21.05-2 (which Council still relies on in 2019) in relation to "Rural Land Use" towards the following objective:

Objective 4

To minimise infrastructure servicing demand in rural areas.

Strategies

Limit the development of new dwellings and buildings on rural allotments below the minimum subdivision size, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The reference in this strategy to "exceptional circumstances" without anything further, is very poorly expressed and is of little assistance in the assessment of Permit Applications. Its poor expression may reflect the fact that, like other strategies relied upon by Council, **it was approved without any public exhibition or independent review by a Panel as it was approved through an amendment that was supposed to be administrative or "policy neutral":**



The changes to the MSS involve editorial changes and factual updating of text and are 'policy neutral' as they do not involve any significant changes in local planning policy

(see Explanatory Report, Amendment C86 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, page 1 above)

The tracked changes version of this clause shows that it was an entirely new strategy, which appears to have replaced an earlier strategy that was only directed to the creation of smaller rural lots (ie. through subdivision applications).

Quite clearly, this and other strategies introduced by Amendment C86 cannot be said to be policy neutral - they had no previous policy basis in the scheme and they should have been subject to public exhibition. This appears to be unambiguously improper and PALS is intent on a thorough determination of its lawfulness. It is conceivable that NSC could be exposed to considerable legal action from every resident/landowner and/or ratepayer who has been negatively impacted by this apparently serious perversion of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme which has led to longterm deception of the community and of the legal system itself.

The lack of fairness and credibility of the C86 amendment process is brought into sharper focus by NSC officers' persistent conduct in seeking to inflexibly apply this strategy as if it were a mandatory test or control to permit applications for RCZ lots. Despite the clear and serious procedural irregularities associated with C86, Tribunals have unfortunately afforded this strategy weight in determining to uphold Council decisions to refuse permit applications for dwellings. For example, see [*Walsh v Nillumbik SC \[2018\] VCAT 415*](#) at paragraph 55 and [*Weingartner v Nillumbik SC \[2016\] VCAT 1359*](#) at paragraph 28.

Council's conduct since the implementation of the revised MSS demonstrates that this new strategy (although misconceived and apparently misrepresented) was designed to clearly target applications affecting lots smaller than 8 hectares in the RCZ. This new strategy clearly affected the interests of (a number of) ...landowners, who could quite easily have been identified and notified by Council of Planning Scheme Amendment C86, yet this did not occur.

21.03

23/02/2012
 C74
 Proposed
 C86

MUNICIPAL PROFILE & KEY INFLUENCES

The Municipal Strategic Statement has been developed to address the key land-use issues which face the Shire. Future land use and development planning decisions in the Shire need to be made in awareness of the needs of current and future populations and with an understanding of the environmental, social and economic influences that shape the Shire.

The key characteristics of the municipality are referred to in the Municipal Strategic Statement under the following theme headings:-

- Settlement & Housing
- Rural Land Use
- Environment, Conservation & Landscape
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure

This section provides profiles under each theme heading and the resultant key influences. The objectives, strategies and implementation actions which respond to these issues follow, similarly under theme headings, in Clause 21.04.

21.03-1

19/01/2006
 VC37Propo
 sed C86

SETTLEMENT & HOUSING**Settlement Pattern**

The Shire of Nillumbik is part of the broader Yarra Valley, and prior to European settlement was home to Wurundjeri willam people of Woiworung language group for at least 30,000 - 40,000 years. ~~The Yarra Valley was central to the process of Victorian colonisation. Some historians believe the 1835 treaty John Batman struck with Wurundjeri people (trade goods and chattels and the promise of an annual rent in exchange for land) took place on the Plenty River. Many Aboriginal archaeological sites which contribute to the cultural heritage of the region have been identified within the Shire.~~

~~White-Non-Indigenous~~ settlers arrived in what is now the Shire of Nillumbik in approximately 1837. Rural townships slowly developed until the 1850s when gold was found in the area. This led to prospecting activity and a significant increase in white-new settlements. Agricultural activity followed to supply the markets of Melbourne and the opening of the railway in the early 1900s led to sustainable townships. Most townships were located close to either a creek or river and the slow rate of development meant that urban development was largely limited until the 1950s, despite the existence of the railway and proximity of the area to metropolitan Melbourne.

~~Since 1971, non-urban breaks have been maintained between townships by planning policies and controls, which help provide a sense of identity and community for each township and preserves the rural character of much of the Shire. More recently, the topography and recognition of the environmental importance of the rural area has meant that outward growth has not been considered appropriate or cost effective. Successive authorities responsible for planning in the Shire have applied consistent planning principles to enhance and protect the principle of the 'green wedge'. These planning principles have recognised that urban development pressures which have come from the proximity of the Shire to metropolitan Melbourne will continue. The Mernda residential growth corridor in the City of Whittlesea, to the west of the Shire is likely to add to the existing pressure placed on the Shire.~~

Since 1971, non-urban breaks have been maintained between townships by planning policies and controls which help provide a sense of identity and community for each township. The effect of these policies has been to clearly identify the towns and to preserve the rural character of most of the Shire. The introduction of an Urban Growth Boundary in 2002 limited residential development in the areas outside of the urban areas. These non-urban

areas are the 'green wedges' and are areas of environmental and agricultural importance to both the Shire and the wider Melbourne Metropolitan area.

The Shire of Nillumbik includes the urban areas of Diamond Creek, Eltham, Plenty, Research, Wattle Glen, Hurstbridge and parts of Greensborough. Low-density residential development exists around both Eltham and Research, effectively forming a buffer to the rural areas. The northern area of Plenty, as with Yarrambat further north, has a rural residential community, while North Warrandyte forms a well treed low-density residential area on the northern side of the Yarra River (the main township of Warrandyte is located within the adjoining City of Manningham).

~~Townships in the Shire are Hurstbridge, Panton Hill and St Andrews. Each of these townships are physically separated by non urban breaks. Various small rural communities include Arthurs Creek, Christmas Hills, Cottles Bridge, Doreen, Kangaroo Ground, Nutfield, Smiths Gully, Strathewen and Watsons Creek.~~

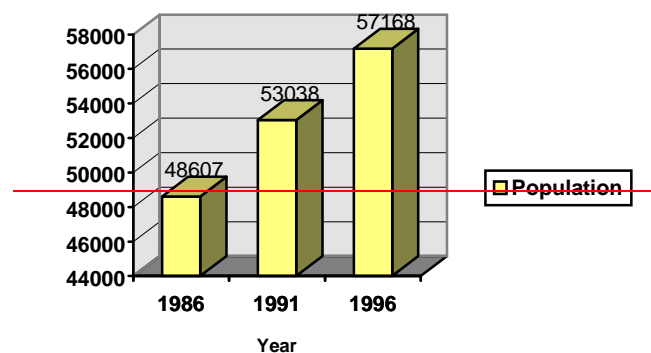
Eltham and Diamond Creek are the Major Activity Centres and other centres are identified as Neighbourhood Activity Centres with different expectations for growth. Within the non-urban areas, there are the townships of Panton Hill and St Andrews and the much smaller rural communities of Arthurs Creek, Christmas Hills, Cottles Bridge, Doreen, Kangaroo Ground, Nutfield, Smiths Gully, Strathewen and Watsons Creek.

Population

~~The Shire of Nillumbik has a population of approximately 58,650. The current rate of population growth is 1.51% per annum, compared with the average population growth rate of Melbourne of 1.43% per annum (Department of Infrastructure, 1999). This growth has generally occurred within urban areas of the Shire while non urban areas have experienced a decline in population in recent years.~~

The Shire of Nillumbik has a population of approximately 62,500 for the year 2012. The Shire of Nillumbik's population is not expected to increase substantially.

~~Population Change for Statistical Local Areas, 1986-96~~

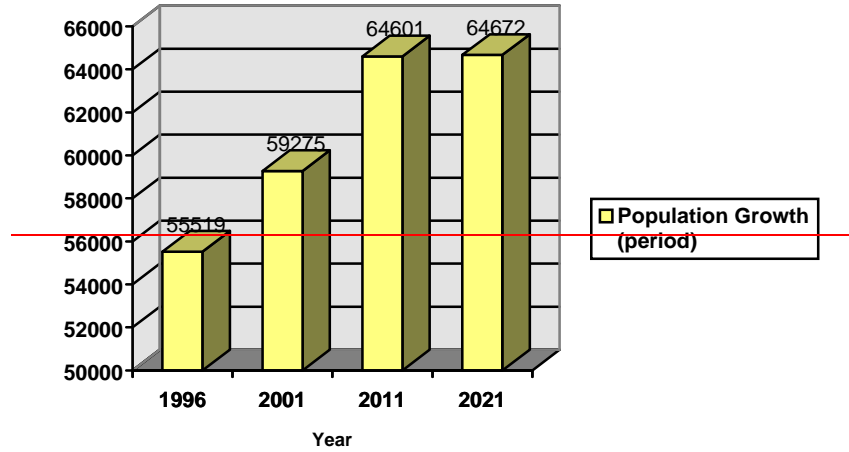


~~1.51% Average Annual Change 1986-1996*~~

~~Source: ABS Estimated Population (*Average Annual Change 1991-1996)~~

~~The Shire of Nillumbik's population is not expected to increase substantially. By 2020, it is forecasted that the population will be approximately 64,700 and it is expected that the population would then stabilise.~~

~~Population Projected Growth for Shire of Nillumbik 1996-2021~~



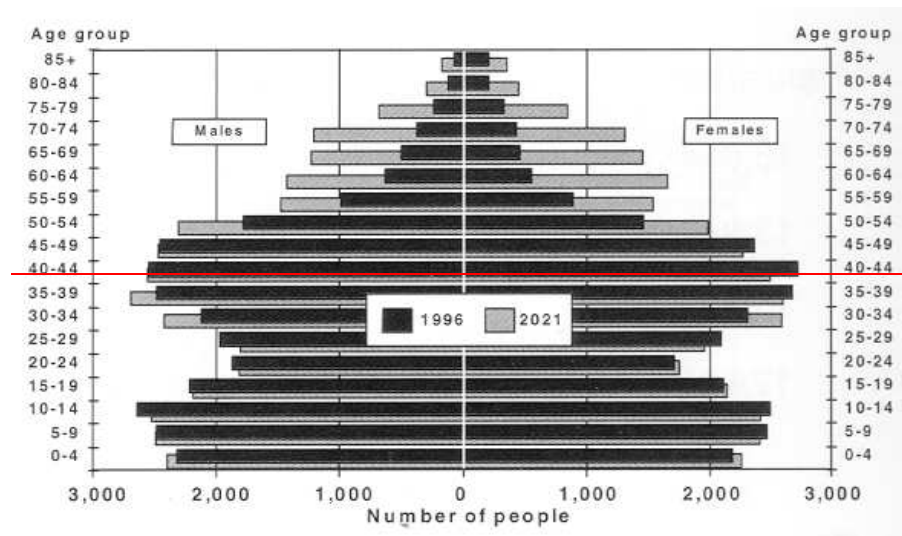
Average annual change 0.12% for 1996-2001, 0.9% for 2001-2011 and 0.01% for 2011-2021. (1996-2021 overall average growth 16.5%)

Source: Victoria in Future, Department of Infrastructure, 1996

By way of comparison, the Mernda residential growth corridor in the neighbouring City of Whittlesea is anticipating a substantial population increase. Whittlesea is expecting an average annual change of 2.06% from 1996-2001, 2% from 2001-2011 and 2.37% from 2011-2021. The Whittlesea population is expected to increase from 106,273 in 1996 to 181,215 by 2021 (71% growth) (Department of Infrastructure 1996). This highlights the role of the Mernda residential growth corridor in the City of Whittlesea. The Shire of Nillumbik, however, is not a designated growth area.

The age structure of the population in the Shire of Nillumbik reflects that of many metropolitan fringe areas. People aged below 15 years, and between 30 and 50 years form the largest age groups. A relatively small proportion of people in the Shire are aged over 60 years, although the overall population has aged since 1986 consistent with other parts of the metropolitan area.

Age & Sex Structure of the Population for Shire of Nillumbik - 1996 & 2021



Source: Victoria in Future, Department of Infrastructure, 1996

Localised differences in the age profile of communities reflect the characteristics of growth and change that are occurring in the municipality. While the median age in some established urban areas, township communities and rural areas is older, many of the newly developed residential areas on the urban fringe and on the fringes of established townships have younger populations.

The Shire of Nillumbik has a significantly higher proportion of traditional nuclear families (two parent families) which represent 57.2% of all family types, compared to the metropolitan average of 38.1% of all family types (ABS 1996a).

Housing Characteristics

Single detached housing on conventional lots is the predominant housing form in the Shire at 96% of housing stock, compared to the metropolitan Melbourne average of 76% (Department of Infrastructure 1998a). Medium density housing forms an extremely low component of the overall pattern of housing in the Shire. Between 1986 and 1996, the number of medium density houses increased by 375 in the Shire (i.e. approximately 37 per year). This growth was most apparent in the southern parts of the Shire, though medium density housing still forms less than five per cent of all housing in these areas. Single dwellings will continue to make up the great majority of dwellings constructed in the Shire.

Housing type in the municipality ranges from a scattering of early farm houses and cottages, to post war homes in older suburban areas and townships, through to larger modern dwellings in more recent subdivisions. While there may be no distinct building style, residential areas in the Shire are generally characterised by extensive indigenous tree canopies and bush streetscapes.

Most existing dwellings are of weatherboard or brick construction, although a strong tradition of adobe and mud brick construction emerged from the artisans attracted to the area from the 1950s. Other building techniques such as rammed earth and straw bale construction provide continuing evidence of an interest in alternative construction materials in the municipality.

Residential Supply and Demand

The 1996 ABS Census found that there were 17,537 households in the Shire at that time. The average household size in the Shire is significantly larger than the metropolitan wide Melbourne average yet is expected to decline consistent with the metropolitan wide pattern of recent years. The average household size in the Shire was approximately 3.2 persons in 1996 (compared to metropolitan Melbourne at 2.7 persons) while household size is projected to fall to 2.9 persons per household by 2021 (compared to metropolitan Melbourne at 2.53 persons). Coupled with an increasing population, the estimated number of households required in the Shire by 2021 is forecast to be approximately 22,340, indicating that about 4,800 new households will need to be accommodated by the year 2021 (Department of Infrastructure, 1996).

At present there are approximately 15,500 lots in the residential zones of the municipality of which approximately 14,460 lots (93%) are occupied by one or more existing dwelling/s. The remaining 1,040 lots are vacant, most of which are located in the Eltham and Diamond Creek residential areas (Nillumbik Residential Land Supply Analysis, October 1998).

The Nillumbik Residential Land Supply Analysis identified a substantial supply of residential land in the Shire, consisting of:

- approximately 19 years based on household growth; and,
- approximately 23 years based on dwelling commencements.

The realisation of lot yields will be affected by a number of constraints, including environmental values and characteristics, infrastructure servicing issues, willingness of land owners to develop, as well as the rate of take-up of land for medium density development. It is clear, however, that sufficient residential and low density residential land exists to support demand for a number of years.

Areas identified as having further growth potential for residential subdivision in existing residential zones include:

- Greensborough;
- Land to the north and north-east of the Diamond Creek township;
- Land on the north side of Aqueduct Road and land to the east of Ryans Road in Diamond Creek; and,
- The Plenty residential area extending from Plenty River Drive north to River Avenue (1000-2000m² lots).

Minister's Direction No. 6 is a State Government policy which must be addressed in any proposal to introduce new areas of low density residential land. Minister's Direction No. 6 states that supply of land for residential development at a density of 0.4 to 2 hectares should not exceed ten years' supply. The provision of further rural residential land in the Shire at this time would be unnecessary and contrary to the Minister's Direction and the concept of the 'green wedge'.

Undeveloped areas zoned for low density residential development in the Shire are in:

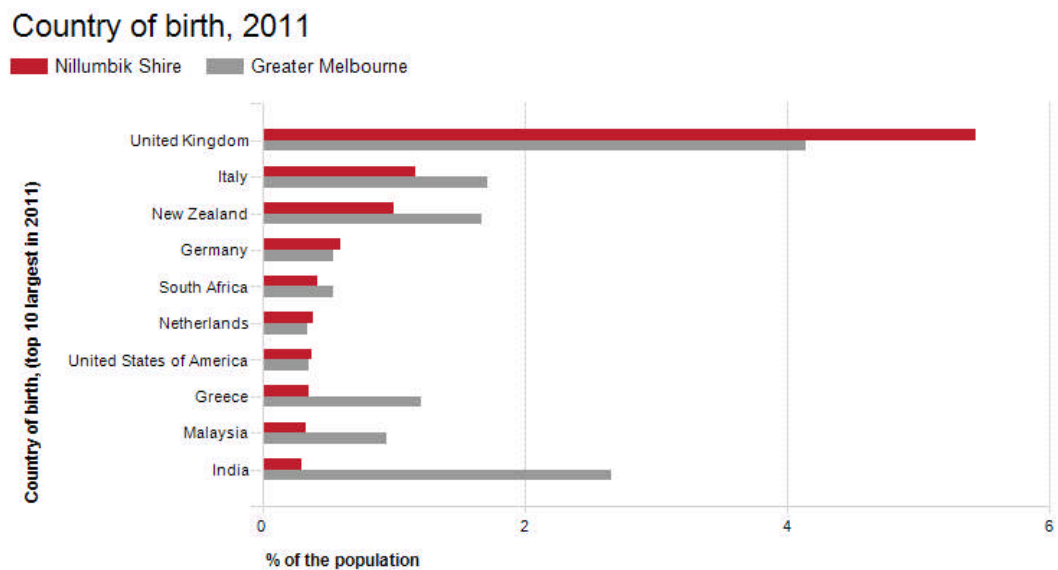
- Yarrambat (1-2 ha lots);
- Plenty generally between Kurrak Road and River Avenue (0.4 ha lots).

The proximity of the Plenty River to these areas means careful consideration of potential development is required based on existing environmental values. The facilitation of drainage in these areas is an important consideration. This is addressed in the Infrastructure section (21.03-5).

Cultural Diversity

Residents of the Shire of Nillumbik are relatively homogeneous with Australian born persons the dominant country of birth at 82% in 2011 compared to the metropolitan average of 63%. Figure 1 gives a breakdown of the ten top countries that the non-Australian born population comes from. Only 7 % of the population in 2011 were from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Figure 1: Country of Birth of Overseas Born Residents

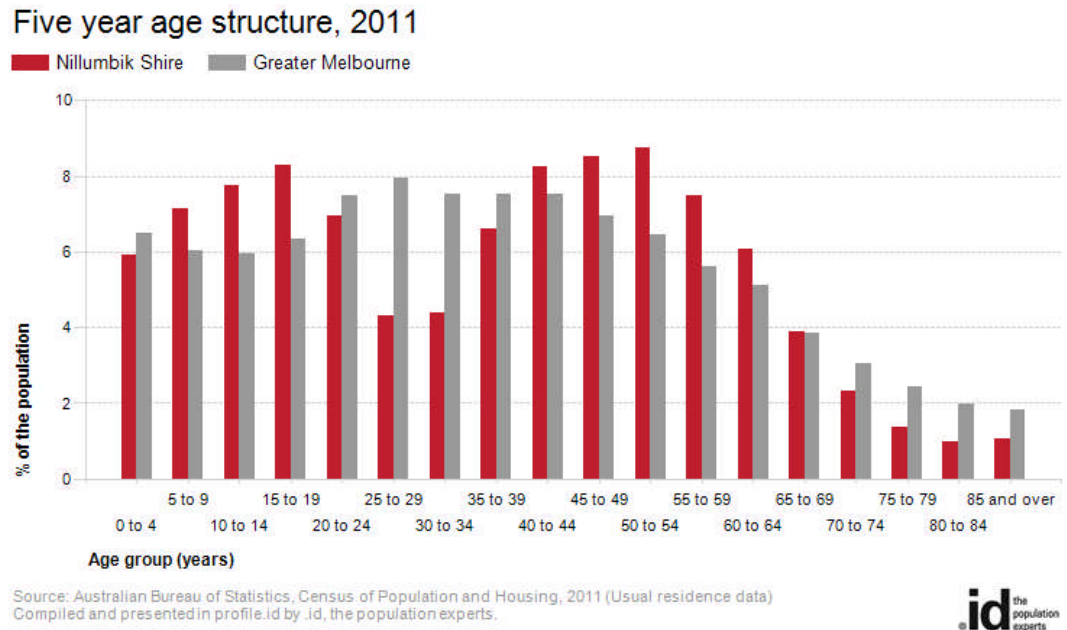


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



Age Structure

The age structure of the population in the Shire of Nillumbik reflects that of many metropolitan fringe areas. People aged 5-25 years, and between 40 and 60 years form the largest age groups. Some 16% of people in the Shire are aged over 60 years compared with the neighbouring Councils (22% in Banyule and 15% in Whittlesea) and the MSD (18%). The overall population has aged since 1991 consistent with other parts of the metropolitan area, refer to Figure 2 following.

Figure 2: Age Structure of Nillumbik compared with MSD

An Ageing Population

An overall ageing of the population for the municipality is expected as large numbers of people move up the age structure during the projected period.

Although the age structure overall is younger than for the MSD, there are regional variations. The largest proportion of children aged 0–4 years are in Hurstbridge (7.0%), and Eltham East (7.0%) compared to the Nillumbik (5.9%) and MSD averages (6.5%). The largest proportion of school aged children (5-17) are in Edendale (24.1%), Eltham North (21.6%), Kangaroo Ground (21.6%) and Yarrambat (23.4%) compared with both the Nillumbik and MSD averages of 19.8% and 15.7% respectively. The greatest proportion of people aged over 70 years live in Eltham Central (9.8%), Wattle Glen (8.2%) and Eltham South (8.1%) compared with the overall average for Nillumbik of 5.6% and the MSD average of 9.2%.

A Changing Household Size with Implications for Dwelling Type

The average number of persons constituting a household in Nillumbik is expected to decline from 3.14 persons in 2011 to 3.01 by the year 2031 (DTPLI Victoria in Future 2012). However, it is agreed that Nillumbik will experience a reduction in household size due to an ageing of the population. A smaller household size has implications for the type of housing and services to be provided in the future to ensure residents have housing choice.

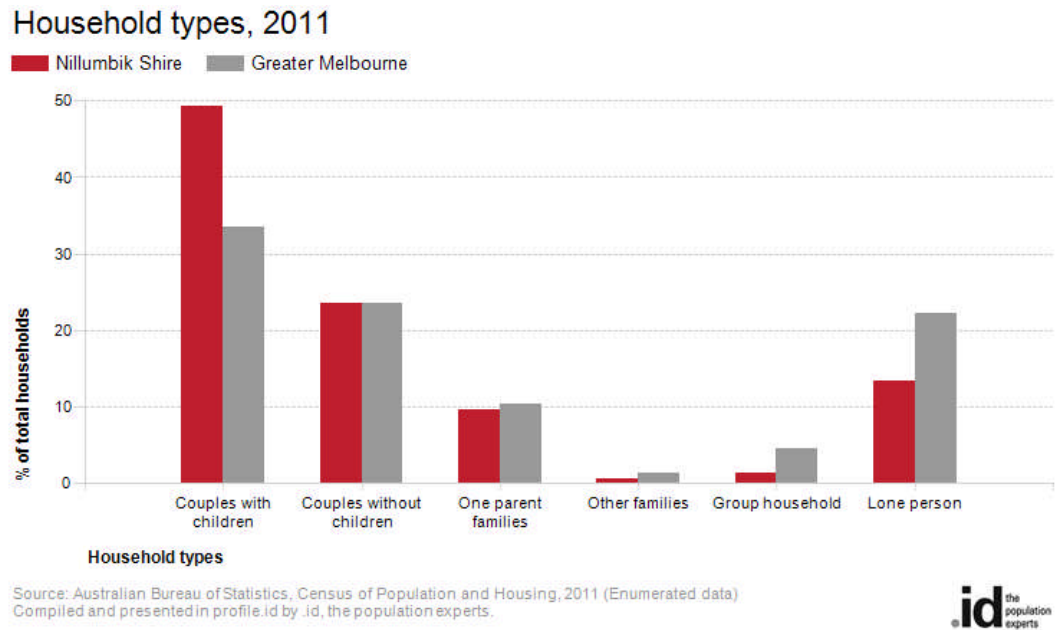
A key planning issue arising from these trends is that there is a lack of housing diversity and that the current predominant form of housing may not be suitable for all residents in the future, particularly as household size is decreasing and the age of residents is increasing. While the overall population is not expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years, the number of households and dwellings will increase by a more significant amount. This will drive demand for more housing and potentially a more diverse housing stock.

Household Structure and Family Type

The household structure of the Shire of Nillumbik in 2011 was concentrated in traditional family household types with 60% of all households including a parent (or parents) and either

[dependent or non-dependent children. Refer to Figure 3 below for household types.](#)

Figure 3: Household/family types in Nillumbik Shire compared to MSD



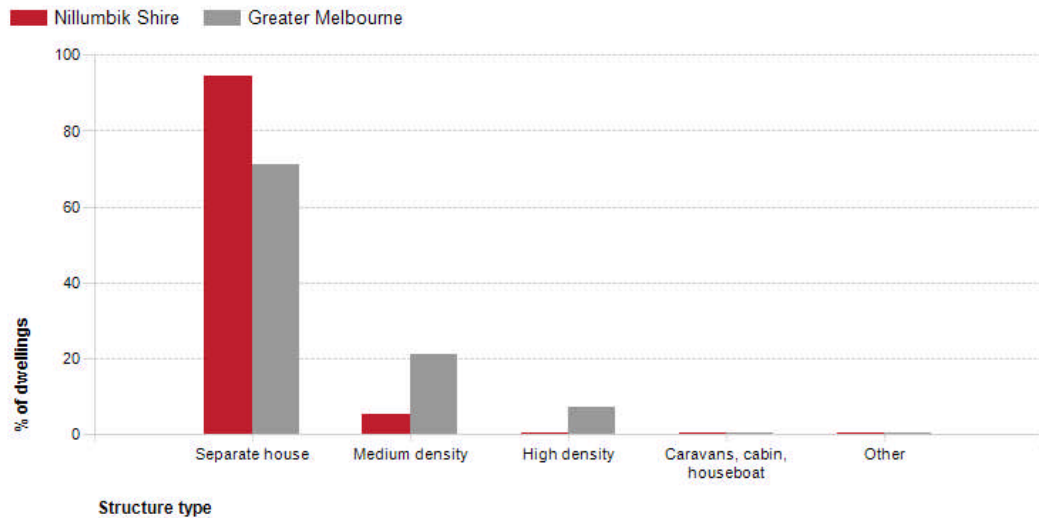
Housing Characteristics

[Housing types in the municipality range from a scattering of early farm houses and cottages, to post-war homes in older suburban areas and townships, through to larger modern dwellings in more recent subdivisions. While there may be no distinct building style, residential areas in the Shire are generally characterised by extensive indigenous tree canopies and bush streetscapes.](#)

[Most existing dwellings are of weatherboard or brick construction, although a strong tradition of adobe and mud-brick construction emerged from the artisans attracted to the area from the 1950s. Other building techniques such as rammed-earth and straw-bale construction provide continuing evidence of an interest in alternative construction materials in the municipality. These building types add character to the municipality and will be encouraged in the future, providing the scale of the development reflects the surroundings.](#)

Dwelling Types

[There is a significant concentration of separate houses in the Shire of Nillumbik. The proportion of separate houses in the Shire of Nillumbik was significantly greater \(95%\) than for MSD \(71%\) in 2011. The share of flats and apartments was smaller in the Shire of Nillumbik in comparison with the MSD.](#)

Figure 4: Dwelling Structure for Nillumbik compared with MSD**Dwelling structure, 2011**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Enumerated data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

**Accommodating Future Housing Needs.**

There is a clear framework in place at both the State and Local government policy levels for the location of future housing promoting urban consolidation, protection of green wedges and the provision of medium density housing within identified activity centres.

Future housing demand in the region, including preferred housing locations, is likely to reflect historical patterns of movement. There continues to be a strong demand for housing within the municipality, including the desire to live in rural areas for lifestyle reasons. The ability of the Shire to meet projected demand for future housing will increasingly be constrained by the availability of land as the last remaining land parcels are developed.

Protecting and Enhancing Neighbourhood Character

Accommodating future housing needs inevitably will include provision of housing other than detached dwellings. This will occur in a sensitive manner which will not compromise neighbourhood character. This is to be achieved by ensuring that multi-unit housing will occur within a local policy context including stringent design guidelines, Significant Landscape Overlays and setting clear direction in respect to desired future character.

Housing Affordability

House prices within the Shire of Nillumbik have risen substantially over recent years. In the last 5 years the median house price has increased from \$466,000 in 2008 to \$585,000 in 2013. (Melbourne median is \$569,000). Clear policies promoting the development of alternative housing types such as two-bedroom accommodation catering to small households can potentially provide more affordable housing in tune with State Government initiatives.

Residential Supply and Demand

Victoria in Future 2012 projects that the estimated resident population of Nillumbik will increase from 64,219 people in 2011 to 72,238 people by 2031. This equates to an average annual increase of 0.6% between 2011 and 2031. The total number of households is projected to increase from 20,391 households in 2011 to 23,812 households in 2031. This represents an increase of 3421 households over the 20 years from 2011 to 2031.

Although there will be a small increase in accommodation for households in close proximity to the Activity Centres within the Shire, the key planning issue and challenge in the future will be to provide for a diverse range of dwellings within the Urban Growth Boundary while ensuring that the development is in keeping with the neighbourhood character of the locality.

The realisation of lot yields will be affected by a number of constraints, including environmental values and characteristics, infrastructure servicing issues, willingness of land owners to develop, as well as the rate of take-up of land for medium density development. Areas identified as having further growth potential for residential subdivision in existing residential zones include:

- Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres
- Apollo Parkways
- Land in the Diamond Creek North Area A Development Plan and Diamond Creek Area B Development Plan to the north and north-east of the Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre;
- The Plenty Low Density Residential area.

Undeveloped areas zoned for low-density residential development in the Shire are in:

- Yarrambat (1-2 ha lots),
- Plenty - generally between Kurrak Road and River Avenue (0.4 ha lots).

The proximity of the Plenty River to these areas means careful consideration of potential development is required based on existing environmental values. The facilitation of drainage and sewerage in these areas is an important consideration. This is addressed in the Infrastructure section (21.03-5).

Influences

With respect to settlement and housing issues in the Shire of Nillumbik, the following influences must be considered:-

- ~~The existing settlement pattern in the Shire can be maintained if non urban breaks between urban areas and townships, and between townships, are retained and enhanced.~~
- ~~There is a need to provide for the projected increase in household numbers, changes in household types and aging of the local population.~~
- The Urban Growth Boundary and the increased role for activity centres.
- There is a need to diversify housing stock to accommodate an ageing population and changes in household types and size.
- The high presence of traditional nuclear families (~~almost 60~~49% of all households which is almost ~~20~~16% higher than the Melbourne metropolitan average) supports traditional dwellings in urban areas of the Shire.
- There is ongoing pressure for further urban development given the proximity of the municipality to central Melbourne and the ~~Mernda-Whittlesea~~ growth corridor, and improved road access provided by the ~~Northern-Western~~ Ring Road.
- There is a need to address environmental constraints in the siting, design and construction of new dwellings in a way that responds to local characteristics, including the maintenance of the bushland character of many residential areas which are highly valued by the local community; and the appropriate and sustainable management of stormwater throughout the municipality.

- ~~Consideration must be had for the Minister's Direction No 6 which limits the supply of rural residential land.~~
- ~~There is a need to prepare development contributions plans to ensure efficient and timely provision of local infrastructure.~~

21.03-2 RURAL LAND USE

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~~Mining~~

~~From the 1850s, several gold mines have operated in rural areas which now form part of the Shire of Nillumbik. These areas include the Plenty/Yarrambat corridor, Diamond Creek, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill and St Andrews. In most instances mines were operated without environmental precautions. As a result some of these areas contain soil which is potentially contaminated through concentrations of arsenic and possibly cyanide and mercury (Sinclair Knight Merz 1998).~~

~~In 1994, the then Shire of Diamond Valley introduced planning controls to cover a broad area of Plenty and Yarrambat identified for its history of gold mining. In 1998, in the absence of detailed information concerning specific locations of potentially contaminated land in this area, a report titled 'Site History and Contamination Assessment from Goldmining and Other Land Uses in Plenty River Corridor' was prepared to better understand the extent of area that was potentially contaminated by former mining activity (Sinclair Knight Merz 1998). This report provided a detailed historical assessment and contamination review of land in the area and divided land into three categories with regard to contamination – 'likely to be contaminated', 'possibly contaminated' and 'unlikely to be contaminated'. The report recommended that land identified as 'likely to be contaminated' require an environmental audit, while land identified as 'possibly contaminated' require an environmental site assessment potentially leading to an environmental audit.~~

~~Today, there are two mining licences for properties in the Shire located at One Tree Hill, Christmas Hills and at Black Cameron Road, Smiths Gully. In total, these licences cover an area of only nine hectares. A resurgence in mining activity is not expected in the Shire and support would be unlikely given the broad range of environmental values which are now attributed in the municipality.~~

~~Subdivision~~

~~The Shire of Nillumbik was originally surveyed from the early 1840s, with settlement establishing from the 1850s when gold was found in the area. With the exception of the broad scale farming areas in the north and north west of the Shire and conservation areas around Kinglake National Park, Christmas Hills and Watsons Creek, land was generally subdivided into eight hectare (twenty acres) parcels, most of which were subsequently sold to settlers. The subdivision minimum permitted in these non urban areas has remained at eight hectares since 1971 when 'Landscape Interest' controls were introduced through an amendment to the then Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme. At the time these minimums were introduced, it was recognised that many lots were already below eight hectares in area. It was determined, however, that further subdivision would compromise the environmental and landscape values in the non urban areas. The subdivision minimum permitted in the aforementioned farming and conservation areas has remained at forty hectares since 1971.~~

~~Urban areas in the Shire took shape through a range of speculative subdivisions from the 1920s in areas such as north and central Eltham, followed by conventional subdivision and development from the 1960s to the present day.~~

~~There are two original crown township subdivisions in the Shire which were never developed and are in the process of being restructured. Located at Rankin Street, Panton Hill and Fawkner Crescent, Hurstbridge, these areas are inappropriate for township development due to unavailable services, and as the lots are too small to contain dwellings and associated effluent disposal.~~

~~Within the Plenty Valley, rural residential sized lots were possible following the introduction of the Plenty Valley Strategic Plan in the early 1990s. In addition, larger lots (approximately two hectares) are located along the Plenty River fringe to provide a transition area between the conservation areas of the Plenty Gorge and adjacent residential areas to the east.~~

Early Development and Subdivision

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, the first Europeans to occupy small portions of land on the edges of the Shire of Nillumbik were squatters. Pastoral leases over most of the Shire of Nillumbik were claimed during the 1840s and 1850s, while some portions were purchased as freehold land. From the 1860s, selectors began to take up small and medium sized blocks across the Shire, beginning with areas around the gold centres of Diamond Creek, Panton Hill and St Andrews. Under the Land Acts of the 1860s, selectors were able to purchase small holdings on the proviso that they improved them by clearing, fencing and building. Some aspects of the Land Acts specifically related to the gold mining areas and allowed the sale of 8 hectare (20 acre) blocks. The more remote areas were not surveyed and settled until the end of the nineteenth century.

The subdivision minimum permitted in some of these non-urban areas has remained at eight hectares since 1971 when 'Landscape Interest' controls were introduced through an amendment to the then Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme. At the time these minimums were introduced, it was recognised that many lots were already below eight hectares in area. It was determined, however, that further subdivision would compromise the environmental and landscape values in the non-urban areas. The subdivision minimum permitted in the farming areas in the north and north-west and the conservation areas around Kinglake National Park, Christmas Hills and Watsons Creek has remained at forty hectares since 1971.

Urban areas in the Shire took shape through a range of speculative subdivisions from the 1920s in areas such as north and central Eltham, followed by conventional subdivision and development from the 1960s to the present day.

This pattern of development has been reinforced by the introduction of an Urban Growth Boundary to contain sprawl and minimise the extension of the current urban areas. The urban area occupies less than 10% of the Shire's total area, therefore confirming that the majority of the land area in the Shire is contained within the Green Wedge.

Within the Plenty Valley, rural residential sized lots were possible following the introduction of the Plenty Valley Strategic Plan in the early 1990s. In addition, larger lots (approximately two hectares) are located along the Plenty River fringe to provide a transition area between the conservation areas of the Plenty Gorge and adjacent residential areas to the east.

Agriculture

While much of the geographic area of the Shire is rural, there are only a handful of large scale agricultural enterprises. The majority of the Shire's rural areas have thin, highly dispersive soils with low fertility that are subject to erosion. This makes much of the Shire unsuitable for traditional agricultural use. However the Shire does experience relatively high and reliable rainfall and a long growing season. As a consequence, areas with gentle to moderate slopes (below 20%) are generally of average agricultural quality and much of the Shire has maintained its vegetation cover and resulting environmental values.

Broad-scale agricultural enterprises are mostly concentrated to the north-west of the Shire around Arthurs Creek, Doreen and parts of Strathewen where enterprises run on larger land holdings. Very high quality agricultural land exists at Kangaroo Ground and Arthurs Creek. Small agricultural enterprises are prevalent in many rural areas of the Shire.

~~Sheep and beef make up almost half of the agricultural property numbers within the Shire (Neil Clarke & Assoc. 1998). Horticultural crops are intensive uses common in the Shire's rural landscape with the main commodities being nurseries, grapes, apples and pears. Egg production and horses are industries that are long established in the Shire, while olives and grapes are amongst relatively new commodities being established. There has been increasing interest in the operation of cellar door sales for vineyards, which until recently has been excluded in most areas of the Shire by previous planning controls prohibiting this use.~~

~~It is acknowledged that agricultural uses make a significant contribution to the characteristics of rural areas in the Shire, and will continue to do so.~~

In 2001, there were 119 farming enterprises in the Shire (Neil Clarke & Associates December 2005). 83 enterprises (69%) were classified as Part time with enterprise turnover less than \$50,000. There were 12 enterprises (10%) with enterprise turnover greater than \$200,000. In 2001, most of these commercially viable enterprises derived their income from sheep, beef, poultry and egg production, followed by grape growing. The main horticultural crops, excluding grape growing, are tomatoes, apples, pears and nurseries.

Many areas in the Shire are significant for agricultural purposes, such as grazing or viticulture, as well as contributing to the significant landscape qualities that characterise the Shire. It may also be possible to expand the production of 'high value' agricultural commodities already well suited to the area.

Various opportunities exist for land use within the region, particularly due to the Shire's suitable rainfall and high ability to change between different agricultural industries (Land Capability Study, 25 February 1998). The Shire's close proximity to Melbourne poses various problems for the region, including an increased influx of tourists and the continual pressures of urbanisation upon the environment. An issue facing many farmers is the inability to achieve economies of scale, because of the high cost of land in the Shire. The principle pressures include the increasing land value and hence rising rates, as well as the changing nature of the rural community. It is important that all agricultural areas are retained for continued agricultural use and that fragmentation of rural land by inappropriate subdivision and residential development is not supported. Property owners are encouraged to consolidate land into larger lots to promote more viable agricultural pursuits and activities.

Rural Lifestyle

The Shire of Nillumbik has a rural population of approximately ~~9,000~~11,250 (2011).

Apart from broad-scale agricultural areas concentrated in the north-west of the Shire, rural land consists of rural residences set in a natural environment interspersed with small-scale agricultural farms. Much of this rural area is highly valued by residents and visitors for its strategic environmental and landscape qualities.

As a consequence, residential settlement in these areas is usually based on an appreciation of the bush and often a willingness to revegetate previously cleared areas. With an undulating topography, there is also the attraction of distant views (including ranges, valleys and central and metropolitan Melbourne). The desire to obtain a view by the siting of any building on ridge-lines and/or the removal of trees is not supported.

~~This can lead to situations whereby the pursuit of views by private land owners (such as building on ridge lines to maximise views) conflicts with landscape values of discouraging development in prominent locations.~~

Extensive areas of native vegetation, water courses and undulating terrain are the main features which contribute to the extensive habitat links and the landscape identity of the Shire (Figure 3). ~~These features should also influence the siting of residential developments in the rural areas of the municipality.~~(Map 3). These features are referred to in greater detail in the following section. Additional residential development in the rural areas is discouraged due to

the lack of services and facilities available and the potential for subdivision and development to fragment rural land into unviable land parcels.

A large part of the rural areas in the Shire rely on all-purpose effluent disposal systems as sewer is unavailable. Irrespective of other considerations, a number of existing rural lots in the Shire ~~may be~~ unsuitable for residential development as effluent generated on site cannot be contained on-site. These lots will need to be consolidated to create larger lots capable of containing effluent on site.

The Green Wedge Management Plan identifies rural land use and capability and provides guidance in developing a sustainable direction for the non-urban areas of the municipality. The study considers major rural issues including the role of agriculture, conservation, rural living and related tourism opportunities in the Shire.

Mining

From the 1850s, several gold mines have operated in rural areas which now form part of the Shire of Nillumbik. These areas include the Plenty/Yarrambat corridor, Diamond Creek, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill and St Andrews. In most instances mines were operated without environmental precautions. As a result some of these areas contain soil which is potentially contaminated through concentrations of arsenic and possibly cyanide and mercury (Sinclair Knight Merz 1998).

A resurgence in mining activity is not expected in the Shire and support would be unlikely given the broad range of environmental values which are now attributed in the municipality.

Influences

With respect to rural land use issues in the Shire of Nillumbik, the following influences must be considered:-

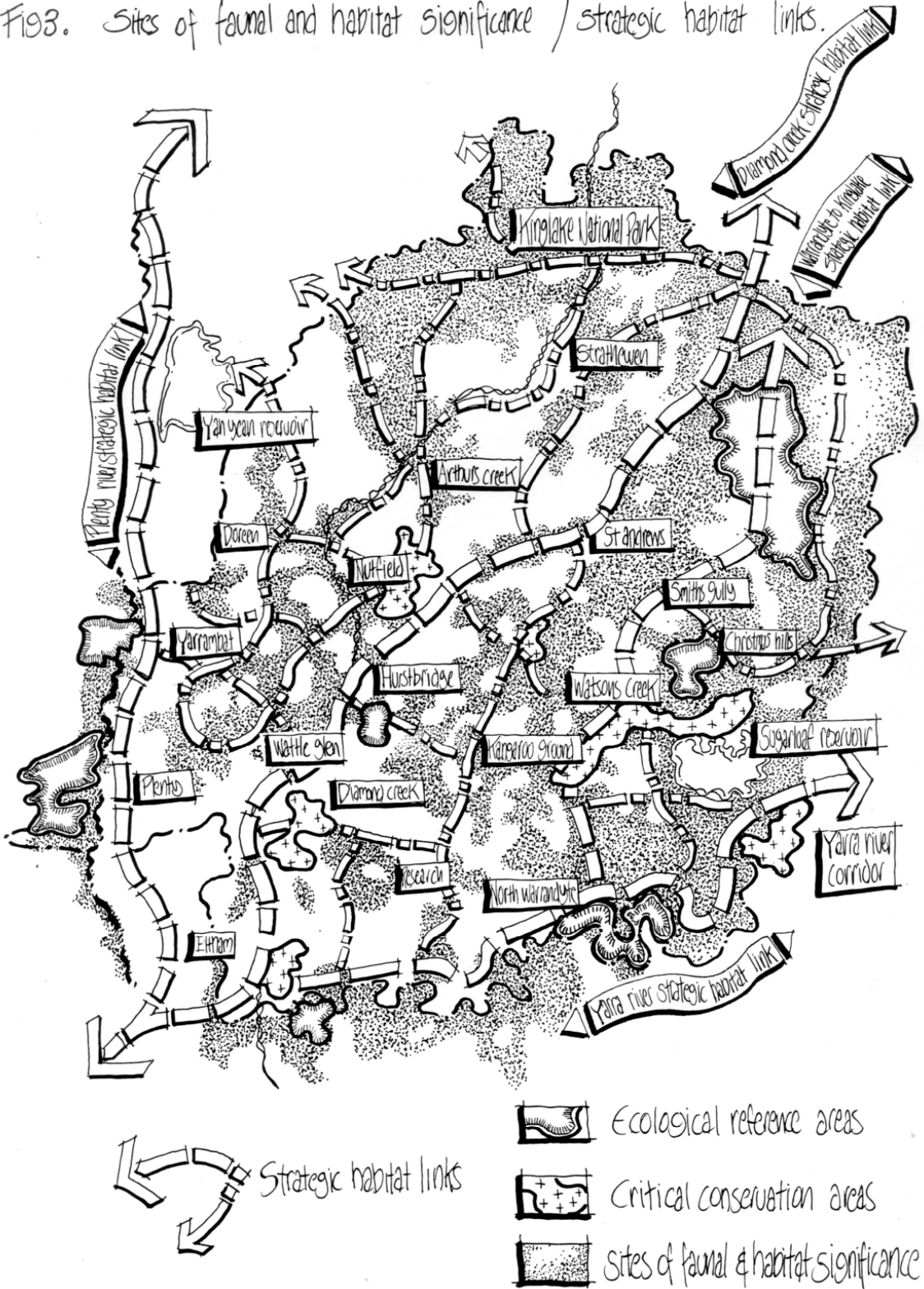
- The Plenty/Yarrambat corridor area has ongoing pressure for low-density residential development. This area is also known for prior gold mining activity. Investigations and environmental audits, where appropriate, will ensure new sensitive development does not occur on land which contains unacceptable levels of soil contamination, unless property owners undertake appropriate remedial works.
- ~~Agricultural land should be protected for both its productive potential and environmental value. High quality agricultural land should be retained for soil based agricultural production and sustainable use of the land is to be encouraged for that purpose. Farm scale, particularly the broad acre farming areas in the north west of the Shire, should be maintained. Land currently used for agriculture or hobby farming should be retained and further subdivision and the development of dwellings should not be permitted. Farm scale, particularly the broad-acre farming areas in the north-west of the Shire, should be strengthened and consolidation of properties to larger more viable farming lots encouraged.~~ Agricultural land should be protected for both its productive potential and environmental value. High quality agricultural land should be retained for soil based agricultural production and sustainable use of the land is to be encouraged for that purpose. Farm scale, particularly the broad-acre farming areas in the north-west of the Shire, should be strengthened and consolidation of properties to larger more viable farming lots encouraged.
- ~~In establishing agricultural uses, significant areas of natural bushland within the Shire of Nillumbik was/were cleared. Existing agricultural areas in the Shire are supported while the retention of existing native vegetation in the Shire is equally supported. The clearing of native vegetation for any use, including agriculture, is generally not supported and is guided by the Native Vegetation Framework, Clause 52.17.~~ In establishing agricultural uses, significant areas of natural bushland within the Shire of Nillumbik ~~was/were~~ cleared. Existing agricultural areas in the Shire are supported while the retention of existing native vegetation in the Shire is equally supported. The clearing of native vegetation for any use, including agriculture, is generally not supported and is guided by the Native Vegetation Framework, Clause 52.17.
- Conflict may occur between agricultural pursuits, rural living and other uses within rural areas of the Shire. While many uses and associated developments are allowed in rural areas, new uses must be planned so as to maintain the quality and quantity of natural resources, support the sustainable management of natural systems and support 'best practice' agriculture. ~~Similarly, subdivision should not challenge the integrity of the~~

~~natural environment or the productiveness of agricultural land.~~ Similarly, subdivision and the development of additional dwellings should not challenge the integrity of the natural environment, disrupt the landscape or the productiveness of agricultural land.

- The location and design of buildings is very important in influencing the landscape of rural areas. The preservation of landscapes is best achieved by restricting the numbers and presence of buildings in rural areas. Endeavours by private land-owners to take advantage of views (usually by building in prominent locations) are often at odds with landscape qualities. The rural landscape in the Shire is highly valued and ~~should take precedence over opportunistic individual house sites.~~ the siting of buildings on ridgelines and/or removal of trees is not supported.
- There are ~~existing~~ vacant rural lots in the Shire which ~~would be~~ unable to contain all effluent generated from a typical residential use. The residential development of such lots would be inappropriate due to the escape of effluent into other lots and watercourses, as well as non-compliance with the Environment Protection Act 1970 and State Environment Protection Policies. The consolidation of these lots with adjoining lots is encouraged.
- The protection of significant landscapes and vistas in the rural areas will be identified as an outcome from the Green Wedge Management Plan.
- Earthworks and other works in rural areas, including vegetation removal, have the potential to detrimentally impact on stormwater quality. Development, building and earth works should all be conducted in a manner that seeks to minimise such detrimental impacts.
- ~~In~~ locations where soil contamination has been identified, soil audits will be required to ensure that the land is no longer contaminated, prior to further development being permitted to occur on the land.
- The bush environment means that much of the Shire is high bushfire hazard as recognised by the application of the Bushfire Management Overlay. Development in these areas needs to minimise the risk to life and property.

Figure Map 3 - Sites of Faunal and Habitat Significance / Strategic Habitat Links

FIG3. Sites of faunal and habitat significance / strategic habitat links.



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C74
Proposed
C86**Environment, Conservation & Landscape****Natural Resource Profile****Topography**

The Shire of Nillumbik is a predominantly undulating landscape. Lowland hills and alluvial plains with ridgelines less than 200 metres in elevation dominate the southern portion of the Shire ([Figure-Map 4](#)). Further north, the country becomes steeper and is described as upland hills where ridgelines exceed 200 metres in elevation. The northern boundary of the Shire comprises mountainous terrain which forms the Kinglake Ranges of the Great Dividing Range with elevations typically in excess of 400 metres.

Climate

Elevation and topography significantly influence the Shire's climate. Temperature generally falls and rainfall increases towards the more elevated parts of the Shire. Annual average rainfall ranges from about 800 mm in the south up to 1400 mm in the Kinglake Ranges. The Shire has a typical winter rainfall incidence and average maximum daily temperatures range from 25 degrees in January through to 10 degrees in June.

Catchments and Water Quality

The Shire of Nillumbik is situated in the Yarra Catchment and includes the sub-catchments of Arthurs Creek, Diamond Creek, Watsons Creek and the Plenty River ([Figure-Map 4](#)). The Yarra catchment is overseen by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority. The condition of rivers and tributaries in the Shire ~~is generally poor with most water courses exhibiting poor water quality particularly in the cleared and urban areas. Decline in water quality is associated with a combination of factors including unsustainable land management practices, excessive vegetation clearance, unrestricted stock access to streambanks and low flow rates associated with the proliferation of private dams. Leakages from septic tanks, and inadequate stormwater management in urban areas, are further pressures that have lead to a decline in water quality.~~ ranges from excellent in the forested northern part of the Shire to poor in the urban areas. Decline in water quality is also associated with unsustainable land management practices, excessive vegetation clearance, unrestricted stock access to streambanks and low flow rates associated with the proliferation of private dams and drought.

Under the Water Act 1989, Melbourne Water has developed a Streamflow Management Plan for the Diamond Creek and Plenty River Catchment. This management plan does not permit a person to operate an aesthetic dam if the replenishment of evaporation from that dam will cause predetermined limits on water that are set for the catchment to be exceeded.

Development throughout the municipality has the potential to affect stormwater quality. Urban development in particular is characterised by extensive areas that have been compacted, paved or covered (eg roads, car parking areas and building roofs). As these surfaces prevent rainfall from being absorbed into the ground, they result in higher volumes of stormwater run-off during rainfall events. Together with run-off from disturbed land, these factors change the rate of run-off and the character and quality of run-off into the Shire's rivers and streams. The pollutant sources may include construction debris and surplus soil on building sites and road reserves, run-off from unmade roads, seepage from under-performing septic systems and disposal of domestic grey water to stormwater from sites not connected to sewer. The cumulative effect of these pollutants can result in considerable damage to the environmental quality of the Shire's waterways. The ongoing and sustainable management of stormwater in accordance with best practice principles is a priority for the Shire.

Land Systems and Land Capability

The majority of the Shire, as indicated by the occurring land systems identified by McGrath (1999), has thin, highly dispersive soils with low fertility that are subject to erosion. Other common soil limitations include compaction, leaching of nutrients, waterlogging and the potential for soil salinity. As a result of these various natural constraints, the capability of much of the Shire for agricultural purposes is low average. However there is relatively high and reliable rainfall in the Shire and a long growing season. There are some areas of deeper, better structured soils, most notably the volcanic soils at Kangaroo Ground and alluvial plains along Arthurs Creek which are of higher agricultural quality.

Environmental Significance

~~Flora~~

~~Much of the Shire remains heavily vegetated, particularly in the non-urban undulating regions and along the major rivers and creeks. Figure 5 shows the extent of remnant vegetation in the Shire. Eight Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) have been identified within the Shire and the major EVC's that are well represented include the Heathy Dry, Damp, and Herb-rich Foothill Forest. The Riparian and Valley Grassy Forests are not well represented as they have been subject to clearing for agricultural activities and more recently urban expansion. In relatively undisturbed areas, the Shire is rich in indigenous understorey species, especially terrestrial orchids. Over 100 different orchid species occur within the Shire and this represents over thirty per cent of Victoria's orchid species. Three orchid species found in the Shire are listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.~~

Native Flora and Fauna

Much of the Shire remains heavily vegetated, particularly in the non-urban undulating regions and along the major rivers and creeks. Map 5, following, shows the extent of remnant vegetation in the Shire. The Department of Environment and Primary Industry has developed a comprehensive listing of ecological vegetation classes (EVC) that covers the entire state. This work is being progressively refined as flora and fauna surveys are performed or reviewed. Numerous EVC types have been identified in Nillumbik and the types which have the greatest coverage in Nillumbik are the Grassy Dry Forest (32%), Herb-rich Foothill Forest (19%) and the Valley Grassy Forest (16%). Three types - Creepline Herb-rich Woodland, Plains Grassy Woodland and Swampy Riparian Complex - are considered to be endangered, and three types - Box Ironbark Forest, the Cool Temperate Rainforest, Gully Woodland, Riparian Forest - are regarded as vulnerable.

Figure-Map 4 - Physical Characteristics

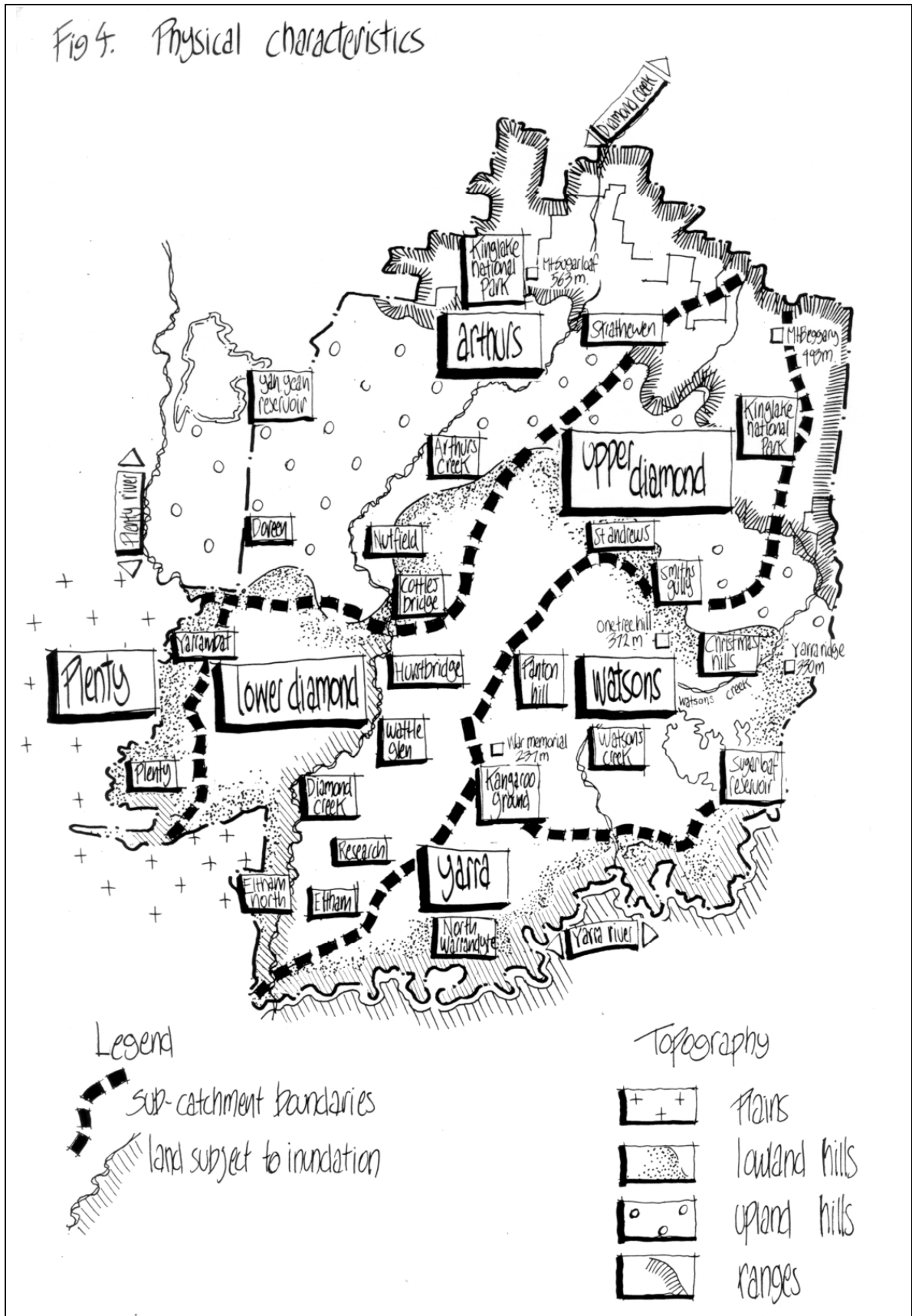
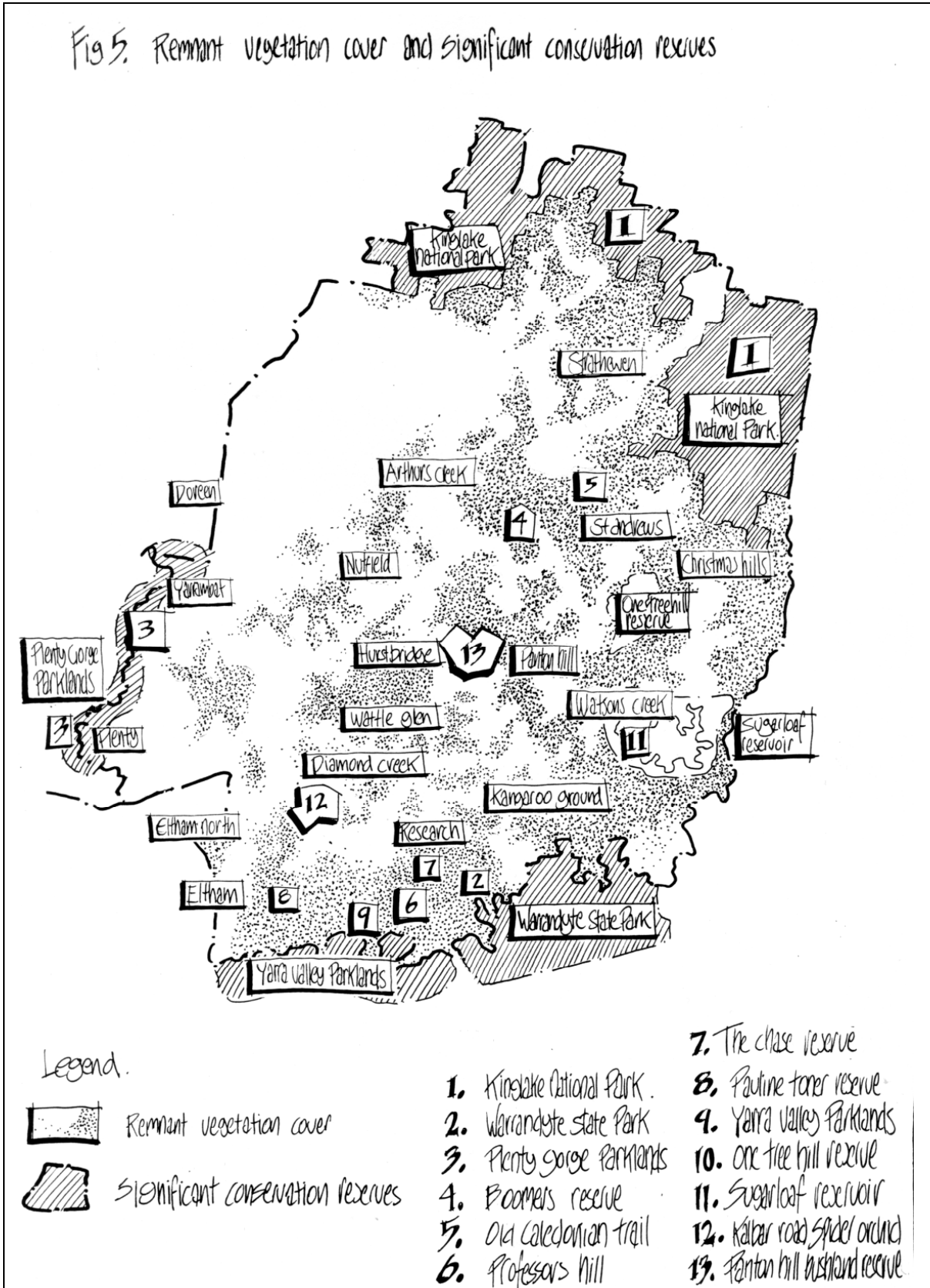


Figure-Map 5 - Remnant Vegetation Cover and Significant Conservation Reserves



Ecological Vegetation Classes occurring within the Shire of Nillumbik.

TYPICALLY OCCURRING SPECIES	
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Manna Gum
<i>E. ovata</i>	Swamp Gum
<i>E. macrorhyncha</i>	Red Stringybark
<i>E. polyanthemos</i>	Red Box
<i>E. tricarpa</i>	Red Iron Bark
<i>E. melliodora</i>	Yellow Box
<i>E. camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum
<i>E. polyanthemos</i>	Red Box
<i>E. obliqua</i>	Messmate
<i>E. radiata</i>	Narrow-leaved Peppermint
<i>E. cypellocarpa</i>	Mountain Grey Gum
<i>E. rubida</i>	Candlebark
<i>E. melliodora</i>	Yellow Box
<i>E. blakelyi</i>	Blakely's Red Gum
<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Monterey Pine
introduced pasture species	

Source: Natural Resource Inventory – Nillumbik Shire. Centre for Land Protection Research NRE 1998

Of the 342 native faunal species recorded in Nillumbik, 63 are listed significant species including the distinctive Brush-tailed Phascogale, the Lace Monitor and the Common Dunnart. In relation to native flora, there are over 1000 species, 64 of which are listed significant species and many of these are delicate terrestrial orchids including some not found anywhere else.

FLORAL SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE SHIRE OF NILLUMBIK THAT ARE LISTED UNDER THE FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE ACT 1988.

SPECIES NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Caladenia amoena</i>	Charming Spider orchid
<i>Caladenia rosella</i>	Rosella Spider orchid
<i>Glycine latrobeana</i>	Clover Glycine
<i>Eucalyptus crenulata</i>	Buxton Gum

Sources: Natural Resource Inventory – Nillumbik Shire. Centre for Land Protection Research NRE 1998, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, NRE Flora Information System.

Although conservation publicly owned land plays an important role in protecting biodiversity including specific vegetation communities, there is also significant remnant vegetation which occurs on privately owned land. In locations where high environmental values occur on private land, there is a need to ensure appropriate planning controls apply to protect the

[biodiversity values. In addition, land stewardship programs, such as Trust for Nature Covenants, should also be encouraged to ensure these areas are appropriately managed.](#)

Environmental Weeds

Weeds are a major problem within the Shire with ecological, economic and social impacts. Most weeds originated from overseas, for example Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) originated from Europe and Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) from South Africa. Other weeds are native to Australia but are not indigenous to the area. For example the Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*) indigenous to New South Wales and originally grown as a popular garden plant, is now a serious invasive weed of bushland areas within the Shire. There are many environmental weeds threatening natural ecosystems within the Shire, some include Angled Onion (*Allium triquetrum*), Wild Watsonia (*Watsonia meriana*), Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), Crack Willow (~~←*Salix*~~ (*Salix fragilis*), Bridal Creeper (*Myrsiphyllum asparagoides*) Spanish Heath (*Erica lusitanica*) Cape Broom (*Genista monspessulana*) and Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*). Major agricultural weeds threatening agricultural productivity in the Shire include Paterson’s curse (*Echium plantagineum*), Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*), Serrated ~~Tussock~~ (*Tussock* (*Nassella trichotoma*) and Chilean Needle Grass (*Nassella neesiana*).

[Weeds impact on environments by competing for light, nutrients, water, space and pollinators with desired plants. In natural ecosystems, biodiversity is reduced when weeds flourish at the expense of indigenous plants. The decline in indigenous plants leads to a reduction in the amount of food available for native wildlife. Weeds, notably those plants most at risk to threatening the biodiversity of native flora in the Shire, have been identified in the Shire of Nillumbik Environmental Weed List 2009, which is an incorporated document to the planning scheme. Council has prepared a Weed Action Plan which aims to provide more effective weed management throughout the Shire on both public and private land.](#)

Fauna

~~The Shire supports diverse native fauna. Results of the most recent surveys of native fauna in north east Melbourne, (Beardsell 1997), identified 322 native terrestrial vertebrate species and 14 species of native freshwater fish most of which occur within the Shire. A large number of these species are considered to be threatened as a result of habitat loss and other threatening processes such as increased predation by foxes and cats. The more vegetated and remote parts of the Shire support a range of threatened ground dwelling mammals including the Brush tailed Phascogale and the Common Dunnart. Other rare species include the Eltham Copper Butterfly, Swift Parrot and the Regent Honeyeater which is believed to have a total population numbering fewer than 1000 individuals. Nine native faunal species occurring within the Shire are currently listed under Victoria’s Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.~~

Faunal species occurring in the Shire of Nillumbik that are listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

SPECIES NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl
<i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i>	Masked Owl
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot
<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater
<i>Xanthomyza phrygia</i>	Regent Honeyeater
<i>Phascogale tapoatafa</i>	Brush-tailed Phascogale
<i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i>	Common Bent-wing Bat

~~Paralucia-pyrodiscus-lucida~~

~~Eltham-Copper-Butterfly~~

~~Aerodipsas-brisbanensis-cyrilus~~

~~Large-Ant-Blue-Butterfly~~

~~Sources: Natural Resource Inventory—Nillumbik Shire, Centre for Land Protection Research NRE 1998, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.~~

Pest Animals

Major pest animals within the Shire include the European rabbit (~~Oryctolagus-cuniculus~~), Red Fox (~~Vulpes-vulpes~~), deer, goat and feral cat (~~Felis-catus~~). Predation of native wildlife by the cat and fox have been identified as potential threatening processes under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. At most risk are native birds such as the Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*) and small native mammals including the threatened Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*). Rabbits are a major environmental and agricultural problem across the Shire contributing to significant erosion problems particularly on streambanks. Rabbits also severely impact on natural regeneration of bushland and significantly reduce flora diversity. Rabbits are also responsible for reducing pasture productivity and impact on horticultural enterprises including viticulture.

Sites of Environmental Significance

All areas supporting native flora and fauna are environmentally significant, however there are specific locations in the Shire occurring on both private and public land that have been identified as particularly important. Figure 3 shows the national, state and regional environmentally significant areas and strategic habitat links within the Shire. ~~There are three sites of national faunal significance, twenty two sites of state faunal significance, twenty eight sites of regional faunal significance, comprising a total area of 288 square kilometres. This represents 67 per cent of the total land area of the Shire, (Beardsell 1997). Within a number of sites of national and state significance there are four Ecological Reference Areas and nine Critical Conservation Areas that have been defined. These areas have been identified on the basis that they are the most critical for conservation of environmental values within the Shire.~~ Identification, protection and enhancement of the environmentally significant sites and strengthening of the connecting habitat links will assist the maintenance of biodiversity within the Shire and surrounding areas. Major environmental features within the Shire are:

- Major public reserves including Kinglake National Park, Plenty Gorge ~~Metropolitan Park,~~ and Warrandyte State Park [and Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System.](#)
- ~~▪ All Ecological Reference Areas and Critical Conservation Areas.~~
- All of the major watercourses (notably Yarra River, Plenty River, Diamond Creek, Arthurs Creek and Watsons Creek).
- Habitat links along the major watercourses.
- The strategic habitat link connecting Kinglake National Park to Warrandyte State Park.
- The east-west habitat links connecting the Plenty River, Diamond Creek and Yarra River.
- In excess of 100km of significant roadside vegetation in the Shire.
- ~~▪ In excess of 100km of significant roadside vegetation in the Shire.~~

Many community-based environmental groups, including Landcare and ‘Friends Of’ groups are actively involved in the protection and enhancement of the environment throughout the Shire. Groups are involved in a range of environmental projects occurring on public and private land. Projects involve revegetation of degraded areas, protection of remnant vegetation, weed and vermin control, education programs and participation in a water quality testing program known as Waterwatch.

Landscape

The Shire of Nillumbik has high landscape value and plays a regional role for metropolitan Melbourne as an accessible area of natural landscape beauty. The rural areas provide vistas of agricultural land, treed bushland, hills and watercourses with minimal urban intrusion. In the urban areas spacious development of buildings has allowed the retention and regeneration of tree canopies and vistas that are not dominated by buildings. Indigenous vegetation is predominant in landscapes throughout the Shire.

The integrity of streetscapes and natural landscapes in the Shire is threatened by some new uses and developments which do not respond to the local characteristics of areas. In urban areas, streetscapes generally consist of single dwellings on conventional lots with ample opportunities for canopy trees. Recent developments (particularly medium density housing) provide mixed results in their impact or enhancement of streetscapes (especially in relation to set-backs, designs, landscaping and prominence). [Council's Neighbourhood Character Policy addresses this by implementing the findings of the Shire of Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Study 2000 that identifies the key existing characteristics and preferred future character of the Shire's residential areas. It provides design guidance to ensure that development and, where relevant, works; respond to the preferred neighbourhood character of residential areas.](#)

In rural areas, dwellings on hill-tops and along ridge-lines take advantage of distant views but (together with associated out-buildings) compromise the natural landscape qualities of rural areas. The presence of multiple buildings and other structures (such as signs, telecommunication poles and power lines) can also be to the detriment of rural landscapes. The use of reflective materials in buildings can be a significant detractor in the rural landscape.

The Eltham Gateway (located along Main Road, from Eltham Lower Park to the Eltham ~~Shopping~~ [Major Activity Centre](#)) was identified in ~~the 1980s~~ [1987 and reconfirmed in 2011](#) as a significant landscape area for its role as the entrance to the Eltham ~~township~~ [Major Activity Centre](#). The Gateway contains a diversity of native vegetation species and an avenue of exotic vegetation, as well as a number of historic buildings and extensive community facilities. The Main Road entrance to Eltham from Kangaroo Ground also provides a significant visual entrance to the township.

Heritage

Aboriginal Heritage

Prior to European arrival, the Shire was occupied by the Wurundjeri -willam clan of the [Woiworung](#) ~~Woi-wurrung~~ speaking people. Available evidence suggests that indigenous Australians could be the longest surviving living culture in the world and that the Yarra Valley has been populated for at least 30,000 - 40,000 years. In this time there has been climatic changes, volcanic activity, reformation of the land, flora and fauna changes, rising sea levels and separation of Tasmania from the Australian mainland. The Wurundjeri willam people survived all this, adapting successfully to the changing conditions, living seasonally with the land in mobile clans, developing their own environmental management practices, complex social systems and spiritual beliefs - a way of life that developed over tens of thousands of years.

The arrival of Europeans in the Port Phillip region in the 1830s had a significant impact on the [Woiworung](#) ~~Woi-wurrung~~ population. As the land in this region was taken over for farming and later for mining, traditional hunting and fishing grounds disappeared, sacred and significant sites were destroyed, lost or entry forbidden. Within two years of settlement Wurundjeri people were being forced off their traditional lands into reserves and missions to become 'civilised' and 'productive' workers in primary production enterprises. ~~By 1853 a census of the Port Phillip District Aboriginal population revealed that the Woi-wurrung people numbered just 36 individuals (du Cros 1996).~~

~~A large number of existing and potential Aboriginal archaeological sites have been identified within the Shire, testifying to the long term Aboriginal occupation of the area. Most of the recorded sites consist of isolated artefacts, surface artefact scatters, and scarred trees. Other less common sites include mounds, exposures in banks, quarry/stone sources, rock arrangements and a burial site. (du Cros 1996). Potentially, there are heritage sites in the Shire which have not yet been identified or are not public knowledge.~~

All Aboriginal sites in Victoria are protected by the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. All known places of Aboriginal Cultural Significance are registered by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. In addition, the SPPF and Council's MSS commit Council to identifying, conserving and protecting places of Aboriginal heritage in the Shire. The locations of known places are not publicised as an active measure to ensure their protection.

Post-Contact~~Non-indigenous~~ Cultural Heritage

The first Europeans settled into the area during the 1830s, but ~~as the soils were generally poor, pastoral activity was limited.~~ It wasn't until the discovery of gold in the 1850s that the population in the area began to grow. Throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s the settlements of Diamond Creek, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill (originally named Kingstown), Plenty, Research (originally named Swipers Gully), St Andrews (originally named Caledonia Diggings, then Queenstown), and Smiths Gully were established. Alluvial gold ran out quickly but quartz mining continued well into the twentieth century, and two mining leases exist ~~for land~~ in the Shire today. A range of gold mining related historic sites have survived including mines, alluvial remains, tailings and a battery. Many of the disused mines are now important roosting sites for a range of bat species including the threatened Common Bent-wing Bat.

Through the discovery of gold and the resultant increase in population, extensive land subdivision and vegetation clearance occurred. Agricultural activities began to expand, especially the establishment of orchards. By 1900, orchards covered much of the west of the Shire from Diamond Creek up to Strathewen in the north. Other agricultural pursuits included sheep and cattle farming in the north and east of the Shire and also a thriving agricultural settlement based around Kangaroo Ground. Many historic original farm houses, bridges, and other features remain today.

With the arrival of the railway around the turn of the century, settlements within the Shire became more accessible. Many artists, architects and environmentalists attracted by the area's landscape and natural environment settled in locations such as Eltham, North Warrandyte and Kangaroo Ground. Today, the Shire is well known for its 'environmental buildings' such as the Montsalvat Artists' Colony in Eltham and mud-brick dwellings designed and built by local identities Justus Jørgensen, John Harcourt and Alistair Knox.

Conservation Open Space

The Shire of Nillumbik contains extensive areas of open space for the purposes of conservation. These areas are mainly connected to the major river and creek systems. Sites include the Plenty Gorge ~~Metropolitan~~ Park, Sugarloaf Reservoir Park, One Tree Hill Reserve, Kinglake National Park and the network of parks along the Yarra Valley including Warrandyte State Park.

Most of the major parks in the region are managed by Parks Victoria (a State Government Agency). There are also significant areas managed by Nillumbik Shire Council including the Panton Hill Bushland Reserve System, Professors Hill and The Chase Reserve in North Warrandyte. The Council also manages wetlands and riparian parkland along the Diamond and Watsons Creeks and several significant urban reserves including Eltham Copper Butterfly Reserves and the Kalbar Road Spider-Orchid Reserve. ~~Figure Map 5~~ identifies significant conservation reserves within the Shire.

The Nillumbik Open Space Strategy, November 2005 comprises a comprehensive inventory of public open space in Nillumbik and provides strategies for future use and enhancement.

Environmental Hazards

Fire Risk

Due to the combination of extensive vegetation cover, the orientation of steep sloping land, and prevailing winds, much of the Shire's non-urban and urban areas are prone to high fire risk. This is evidenced by major fires occurring in 1939, 1962, 1969, 1981, 1991 and 2009 (Black Saturday). ~~The management and coordination of wildfire risk preparedness and response is coordinated through the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan, which covers the entire Shire. In addition, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) has prepared wildfire mapping that identifies those areas where particular precautions need to be taken in the design of subdivisions and buildings and the ongoing management of land. Risk to life and assets from wildfire is separately managed by different fire authorities within and beyond the municipality within the various wildfire risk areas. This is particularly addressed through the detailed planning policies and provisions of the Wildfire Management Overlay. Fire risk mapping and management of the state parks, forest and reserves are identified in the Department of Sustainability and Environment District Fire Prevention Plans. The Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) has prepared Bushfire Management Overlays that identify those areas where particular precautions need to be taken in the design of subdivisions and buildings, and the ongoing management of land.~~

Flooding

Some areas of the Shire are liable to inundation from 'overland flow', 'sheet flooding', or a 'one in one hundred year flood'. Most of these areas are located along the Diamond Creek from Hurstbridge to Eltham, along the Yarra River from Kangaroo Ground to Eltham and the Plenty River at Plenty.

Passage and storage of floodwaters, flood-related damage and protection of water quality are important issues. The increase of sealed and impervious ~~services surfaces, especially in the~~ urban areas has increased the risk of flash flooding problems.

Unstable Land and Erosion

The Shire is not subject to significant landslide activity except where new development alters the conditions of sites on steeper slopes. Soils associated with the weathering of the Silurian rocks (ie. most of the soils in the Shire) are 'dispersive' and very susceptible to sheet or rill erosion on slopes and gully erosion in drainage lines. Soils in the vicinity of Kangaroo Ground are derived from weathering of basalt and have a high shrink-swell potential that can result in foundation movement and hence damage to structures and disruption to services.

Salinity

Low lying areas of the Shire are prone to dryland salinity particularly in areas that have been extensively cleared. Without vegetation that would normally utilise surface and groundwater, watertables rise and mobilise salts to the upper soil horizons. ~~Dryland salinity is not identified as a major problem in the Shire.~~ The retention of vegetation and revegetation of recharge areas will be critical in avoiding salinity related problems.

Influences

With respect to environmental issues in the Shire of Nillumbik, the following influences must be considered:

- Although comparatively rich in native flora and fauna there are a number of key environment threatening processes that are occurring within the Shire. Five major threats have been identified (Beardsell 1997):

- Habitat destruction, modification and fragmentation mainly through land clearing and other processes such as dieback.
- Water quality decline as a result of pollution, soil erosion, reduced flow rates and poor catchment management.
- Urban/human disturbance, particularly the impact of residential development, recreational activities and fire.
- Declining range/population of rare or threatened native species caused by habitat loss and ecosystem imbalances favouring certain species to the detriment of other species.
- ~~Introduced species impact - notably **noxious and environmental** weeds, **foxes, rabbits** **pests** and the loss of limited resources such as hollow logs as a result of direct competition.~~
- ~~**Wider environmental threats including climatic changes as a result of global processes caused by increased levels of greenhouse gas emissions need to be addressed. Energy consumption, the use of non renewable resources and the generation of waste are other related wider environmental issues.**~~
- The Shire's waterways are highly important for their environmental, landscape and cultural significance. Increased awareness of the environmental impacts of stormwater on waterway values has lead to the need to protect waterways from inappropriate stormwater treatments.
- Wider environmental threats which need to be addressed include increased levels of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from increased energy consumption, the use of non-renewable resources, and unnecessary use of the motor car and the generation of waste.
- The Shire of Nillumbik is rich in Aboriginal and post contact cultural heritage. With significant development occurring throughout the Shire, areas of archaeological, historic and cultural significance are under increasing threat and need to be identified and protected. As there are Aboriginal heritage sites in the Shire which ~~are not common public knowledge~~have yet to be identified, proposals involving site disturbances may ~~be required to be assessed against~~require assessment for heritage value and may also require referral to relevant heritage bodies.
- Land use and development should reflect the limitations and threats posed by land capability, risk of fire, flood, stormwater management and the availability of physical services. In regards to proposed development in flood prone areas all potential detrimental environmental effects need to be addressed and the importation of fill in an attempt to raise the natural level of the land would be considered inappropriate. Regional and local catchment strategies that identify sustainable land management practices and appropriate land uses should be supported.
- ~~In regard to proposed development in areas recognised for biodiversity values and where wildfire poses a particularly significant threat, both of these issues need to be addressed when planning decisions are made. Each development will need to be considered on its merits. The way it is located and designed and the facilities and management proposed to be carried out to address both issues will be relevant considerations.~~
- Landscape values, consisting of urban and non-urban vistas within the Shire, are under increasing pressure as a result of changing land uses and developments. The containment and consolidation of townships and the maintenance of boundaries between the urban and non-urban areas and vegetation retention will be critical in maintaining and enhancing these landscape values. Siting and design consideration which respects the neighbourhood character (including built form, vegetation and topography) is particularly important in the urban areas of the Shire. Landscape values in rural areas will be best protected by restricting numbers of buildings and by ensuring buildings are sited and designed to avoid prominence from surrounding properties and roads.
- ~~In regard to development proposed in areas recognised for biodiversity values and where wildfire poses a particularly significant threat, both issues need to be addressed when planning decisions are made. Each development will need to be considered on its merits.~~

~~Relevant considerations include the location and design of the development, and the facilities and management proposed to be carried out on site.~~

21.03-4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Workforce, Industry, Employment & Travel

~~The Shire of Nillumbik workforce is skilled, with high levels of participation in the labour force. (amongst both men and women). Retail and service sector business forms a significant component of the local industry structure, along with local construction businesses and small manufacturing enterprises. Significant numbers of people in the Shire are employed as managers or professionals. High numbers of tradespeople complement this skilled workforce. Participation in the workforce amongst women is higher in the Shire of Nillumbik than in Melbourne as a whole (ABS 1996a). The Shire has a total labour force of 34,276 wherein 12,929 (38%) people are employed part-time compared with a lower percentage of part-time employment for the MSD (32%).~~

~~Retailing, manufacturing and health services are the most significant employment sectors in the Shire. Agriculture is a significant employer in the rural areas of the Shire. Manufacturing, property and business services are prominent in the urban areas. Service based industries such as accommodation and cultural services are becoming increasingly important components of the local employment structure.~~

~~The Shire of Nillumbik has a relatively low level of unemployment (3.1% June 1999 quarter compared to the Victorian rate of 7.6% and the national rate of 7.2%). As at June 1999, the Shire had a labour force of 32,017 (Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business 1999).~~

~~The Shire of Nillumbik is a commuter area in total, 80 per cent of the workforce travel to other areas for employment. Specifically, these areas include inner Melbourne and the middle suburban areas of Banyule and Darebin municipalities. The 1996 Census found that, in the northern (rural) areas of the Shire, close to 30 per cent of the workforce were employed locally.~~

~~Private vehicle travel is the most prominent method of travel to work in the Shire, with 83 per cent of all journeys being undertaken by car. The numbers of people using public transport were higher in the urban areas of the municipality (where public transport provision is concentrated), however in all, only 9.3 per cent of journeys involved public transport (ABS 1996a).~~

Local Businesses

~~The Shire of Nillumbik has a relatively small economic base. This is evidenced by low levels of non residential investment when compared to neighbouring municipalities (ABS 1997a). There are approximately 2,550 businesses operating in the Shire. Of these, the two most significant industry sectors are construction (24.6%) and property and business (23.3%). There is a growing trend towards home based business, especially in the service sector.~~

~~The main commercial activity precincts in the Shire are concentrated in the Eltham Town Centre and the Diamond Creek Township. Other smaller local centres are located at Hurstbridge, Research, Panton Hill, St. Andrews, Bolton Street in Eltham South and Civic Drive in Greensborough. At the smallest scale, localities with a sole general store are Doreen, Kangaroo Ground, Plenty, Smiths Gully, Yarrambat and Wattle Glen. A number of small rural communities in the Shire do not have local retail services. A local convenience centre to serve the local community is located on the north east corner of Diamond Creek Road and McLaughlans Lane, Plenty. Uses appropriate for the area include residential, commercial and community activities that benefit from a main road frontage and which provide a service to the local community. Such uses include education and religious establishments, indoor sporting and community facilities, residential uses including a retirement village and special accommodation, motel, home businesses, drive in restaurant~~

~~and take away food activities, a single 24 hour petrol station, convenience shop and plant nursery. The precinct is not a “neighbourhood activity centre” and is not considered an appropriate location for a “department store” or “supermarket” and any development on this site should not detract from the Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre. Reference should be made to the Panel Report for Amendment C22 to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.~~

~~Retailers in the Shire form part of the hierarchy of retail business in metropolitan Melbourne. Regional and higher order centres are based outside of the Shire. Of particular note is the Greensborough Shopping Centre and Main Street shops, Northland in Preston, Westfield Shopping Town in Doncaster and the St Helena Shopping Centre. Retail in the Shire provides for district and local catchments.~~

~~There are three industrial estates in the Shire, located at Research, Diamond Creek and Eltham. These Estates are not earmarked for expansion and land in these precincts is almost fully developed. There are some 120 sites zoned industrial in the Shire that cover in excess of 30 hectares. Contained within these are a spread of automotive, light industrial, service and retail activity. The vacancy rate of industrial premises in 1998 was 4.4% (Source: Department of Infrastructure 1998b) which suggests that industrial land supply is consistent with demand in the Shire. To the west and south west of the Shire, the Shire of Whittlesea and Cities of Darebin and Hume have extensive industrial areas.~~

The Shire of Nillumbik has a relatively small economic base with a total of 6480 registered businesses (ABS Business Register 2012). The majority of businesses are small as 89% of Nillumbik businesses employ less than 5 people. The majority of local businesses are in the Property and business services (27%), Construction (26%) and Retail (9%) sectors (Economic Development Strategy 2011). It is estimated that 60% of small businesses are home-based.

The Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 estimates that there are approximately 3900 home-based businesses in Nillumbik. There is a growing trend towards home-based business, especially in the service sector. Home-based businesses can achieve environmental and social benefits through decreased travel time, and provide increased custom for other local business as services and products are sourced locally.

There are 11,479 workers employed in the Shire of Nillumbik (2011), in which 6632 (58%) live and work within the Shire. The majority of the remaining workforce resides in Banyule (15%) and Whittlesea (9%).

Workforce

The Nillumbik workforce has a greater proportion of managers, professionals and technicians & trades compared to the MSD as described in the following Figure 5.

Figure 5: Occupation in Nillumbik compared to MSD

Occupation of employment, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



The percentage of the population employed in construction, education & training and health care & social assistance are slightly better represented than the MSD whereas manufacturing, accommodation & food, transport postal & warehousing, and financial & insurance are slightly under represented compared with the MSD (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011).

Travel to Work

The Shire of Nillumbik is a commuter area - in total, 66% of the workforce travel to other areas for employment. The 34% level of local employment is very low by comparison with other municipalities such as Banyule, Yarra Ranges and Whittlesea. The small level of jobs found within the Shire is related to:

- the relatively small amount of commercial and industrial land within the Shire;
- the relatively high proportion of Nillumbik residents who work in managerial, professional and semi-professional roles, being jobs that are traditionally concentrated in central and inner Melbourne; and
- Nillumbik's accessibility to central Melbourne and other employment centres.

While the low level of employment opportunities in Nillumbik may not necessarily be a problem, it does have implications, notably the need for people to travel further to their place of employment and community connectedness. Issues arise such as increased traffic congestion and the need for residents to have good access to their place of employment, including access to public transport services. The 2011 Census identified 22,933 (80%) of people in Nillumbik travelled to work as the driver of a car and 1447 (5%) of people were passengers. Public transport was used by 3218 (11%) of people. A total of 418 people walked to work, a further 180 people went by bicycle and 1739 people worked at home.

There are 20% of Nillumbik residents employed in the Shire. The next highest percentage of Nillumbik employed residents work in Melbourne City (13%) and Banyule (11%).

Activity Centres

State Planning Policy aims to build up activity centres as a focus for high-quality development, activity and living for the whole community. The Principal Activity Centres which serve the needs of Nillumbik residents are all located outside the Shire boundary and include Greensborough, Preston – Northland, Doncaster and Ringwood shopping centres.

At the third tier in the hierarchy, the designated Major Activity Centres in the Shire are Eltham and Diamond Creek. These major activity centres will provide the focus for services,

employment and social interaction and the retail base of centres will be broadened to include a wider range of services over longer hours, and to restrict out-of-centre development. Structure plans have been developed for the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre. The Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan establishes a management framework to guide development and land-use change in order to achieve stated environmental, social and economic objectives. The Eltham Structure Plan identifies the need for additional retail floorspace to meet existing demand, and further demand in the future arising from increased per capita retail spending of residents and an increasing population. The Structure Plan also identifies a need for the provision of small-scale offices to accommodate local and regional services such as accountants, solicitors, consultants, IT services and employment services.

The Neighbourhood Activity Centres in the Shire have been identified as Apollo Parkways and Hurstbridge Town Centre. Diamond Creek and Eltham Major Activity Centres and Hurstbridge Neighbourhood Activity Centre offer a good blend of uses, opportunities for increased tourism activities and the existence of public transport generally supports higher levels of business and other activities, resulting in lower car usage and enabling multipurpose trips. These centres make it easier for people to gain access to a wider range of goods and services, employment opportunities, entertainment and community facilities. State Planning Policy also aims to locate a substantial proportion of new housing in or close to activity centres and other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport. Integrating new housing into activity centres further broadens the mix and helps to contain urban sprawl, strengthen the role of activity centres and better utilise existing physical and social infrastructure, including public transport.

Below the fourth tier in the hierarchy, there are Local Convenience Centres in Beard Street, Eltham, Bolton Street, Eltham, Diamond Creek Road Business Area, Plenty and Main Road, Research. In relation to the Diamond Creek Road Business Area, retail activity is limited and it is not considered an appropriate location for a department store, supermarket or any other significant retail activity which would detract from the Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre.

The rural townships of Kangaroo Ground, Pantom Hill and St. Andrews have a strong sense of identity and provide a focus for community life and interaction and also provide opportunities for an expanded role in tourist associated activities. Other localities such as Doreen, Smiths Gully and Wattle Glen have a general store whilst a number of small communities, such as Arthurs Creek, Cottles Bridge and Strathewen, do not have local retail services.

Industrial and Business Precincts

The three industrial estates in the Shire, located at Diamond Creek Town Centre, Bridge Street area, Eltham and Research, currently comprise approximately 30 hectares of land. This is a relatively small land area compared to the extensive industrial areas to the west of the Shire in the municipalities of Whittlesea, Darebin and Hume.

The Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan has identified a significant change in the strategic direction for part of the land in the industrial precinct in Eltham. The Structure Plan identifies community benefits from concentrating restricted retail uses, such as home furnishings and trade supplies, to the Bridge and Bolton Street areas and also supports the location of small scale offices in Brougham and Susan Streets. The Structure Plan supports land redevelopment to result in a more productive use of the precinct, such as encouraging non-industrial uses such as office accommodation or show rooms that cannot be accommodated in the Eltham Major Activity Centre due to a lack of sufficiently large sites. The Eltham Structure Plan supports the retention of small scale industrial activities in the core of the Eltham industrial precinct that do not generate negative off site impacts.

Tourism

~~The Shire of Nillumbik boasts a tourism industry that draws on the area's natural environment, rural landscapes, the arts and its unique heritage. Approximately 380~~

~~businesses in the Shire rely, to varying degrees, on tourism for their trade. These range from wineries, motels, nurseries and antique shops.~~

Tourism is a growing and vibrant sector in Nillumbik and offers destinations and visitor experiences based on the area's natural environment, rural landscapes, agricultural production including viticulture, heritage places and the arts. Hundreds of businesses in the Shire benefit, to varying degrees, on tourism for their trade. These range from wineries to motels, nurseries, cafes and antique shops.

~~Key attractions to the Shire include:~~

- ~~▪—Art in Public Places~~
- ~~▪—Diamond Valley Miniature Railway~~
- ~~▪—Edendale Community Farm~~
- ~~▪—Heidelberg School Artists Trail~~
- ~~▪—Hurstbridge Shops~~
- ~~▪—Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower~~
- ~~▪—Kinglake National Park~~
- ~~▪—Montsalvat Artists Colony~~
- ~~▪—St Andrews Market~~
- ~~▪—Sugarloaf Reservoir~~
- ~~▪—Galleries~~
- ~~▪—Mud brick architecture~~
- ~~▪—The natural environment and parklands~~
- ~~▪—Wineries~~

Key attractions to the Shire include the Art in the Nillumbik Art Collection, Heidelberg School Artists Trail, Diamond Valley Miniature Railway, Eltham Blues and Jazz Festival, Diamond Creek Town Fair, Eltham Town Fair, Artists open studio weekend, Hurstbridge Wattle Festival, Edendale Farm Community Environment Centre, Hurstbridge Shops, Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower, Kinglake National Park, Montsalvat Artists Colony, St Andrews Market, Sugarloaf Reservoir, Galleries, Mud-brick architecture, natural environment, parklands, walking and cycling trails and wineries.

To assist with the development of tourism, the Nillumbik Tourism Association was launched in October 1998 with the full support of Nillumbik Shire Council. The Association aims to enhance tourism within the area, ~~linking with the Yarra Valley, Dandenong Ranges and the Great Dividing Ranges product region.~~ The 'Destination Nillumbik' strategy aims to improve the visitor experience in Nillumbik and will guide the Association's and Council's activities for the 2012-2015 period.

Economic activity as it relates to the agricultural and rural tourism sector has been assessed as part of the Green Wedge Management Plan and changes to the MSS have been recommended.

Agriculture

While the great majority of the Shire of Nillumbik consists of rural land, large parcels of land used for agriculture are concentrated in the north-west of the municipality. Smaller parcels are interspersed with environmental values throughout other rural areas. Many agricultural land holdings are of a small scale and are of greatest agricultural value if a concentrated agricultural use is undertaken.

~~The total gross value of production (GVP) for the Shire is \$7.0 million, of which the GVP from a wide range of horticultural crops is \$4.3 million. This represents in excess of 60 per~~

~~cent of the Shire's agricultural turnover. The main horticultural crops are apples, nurseries, grapes and pears. The GVP from livestock products and slaughtering is \$2.4 million. This represents approximately 34 per cent of the Shire's agricultural turnover. The main livestock products are egg production, beef, pork and hay.~~

The total gross value of production (GVP) for the Shire in 2012 was \$16.3 million, of which 40% was from Poultry Slaughtered and 13% was from egg production (2011 Census and Neil Clark & Associates 2005). Some 31% of GVP was from horticultural crops and a further 3% was from pastures (including lucerne). The main horticultural crops were tomatoes, apples, pears, grapes and nurseries. A further 13% of GVP came from other livestock products and slaughtering.

There is strength in the mix of agricultural enterprises in the Shire, and a balance between intensive livestock and horticulture. This leads to greater stability of GVP for the Shire, although when compared to total regional and Victorian production ~~of \$6.3 billion~~, the Shire of Nillumbik is a small scale agricultural producer with only 0.2% of total State production.

Sheep and beef industries make up a substantial proportion of agricultural properties in the Shire. It is unlikely that these properties will be able to increase to become large scale enterprises. Land prices would be the main limiting factor. Horticultural industries and intensive livestock industries are able to produce relatively high levels of gross income per hectare and these industries have more scope for improvement. Viticulture is increasing in the Shire ~~and is popular with hobby farmers~~ as are other niche products such as olives. Sub-commercial farming in the form of agistment of animals, especially horses, is another common means to supplement income derived off the land. It is estimated that approximately one-quarter of agribusinesses engage in some kind of value-adding activity, either with their own produce or with that produced by others. Such agribusinesses include winemakers, fresh fruit and vegetable producers, meat producers and dairying enterprises and lavender oil producers.

Agricultural industries which are well managed and support natural environmental and landscape values are valued by the Nillumbik Shire Council. Increasing the productiveness of agricultural industries is important for the well-being and sustainability of the green wedge areas of the Shire, providing the environmental significance is not compromised.

~~Agricultural industries which are well managed and support natural environmental and landscape values are equally supported by the Nillumbik Shire Council. Increasing the productiveness of agricultural industries is important for the well being of residents and also provides an efficient means of maintaining most of the environmentally and socially significant conservation areas in rural areas of the Shire.~~

Education

~~Technology intensive and research orientated industries are developing in close proximity to the Shire notably the planned RMIT University development at the Janefield site in Bundoora.~~

~~The Shire is close to a number of tertiary education institutions (e.g. La Trobe University and RMIT University) and is home to the Greensborough campus of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE. These facilities provide significant employment and further education opportunities.~~

~~The Shire of Nillumbik is serviced by the following educational institutions:~~

- ~~▪—25 primary schools~~
- ~~▪—5 secondary schools~~
- ~~▪—1 TAFE college~~
- ~~▪—5 adult community education facilities.~~

The Shire is close to the La Trobe University and is also serviced by 24 primary schools, 6 secondary schools, and 3 adult community education facilities.

Influences

With respect to economic development issues in the Shire of Nillumbik, the following influences must be considered:-

~~The continued viability of local commercial and industrial areas will be important both to provide an employment base and offer easily accessible services.~~

~~Retailers in the Shire should concentrate on individual specialist shops leaving regional and higher order shopping centres to cater for the general market. The main catchment centres in the Shire are at Eltham and Diamond Creek and these should provide for a local/district clientele and special interest areas. The drawing power of these catchment centres is dependant, in great part, on high occupancy levels and the maximisation of retail activity at ground level street frontages in core retailing areas.~~

~~The local catchment centres in the Shire rely on patrons who expect short travel times and easy access. Accessibility to these centres must be maintained as will car parking. Maintenance of business mix is also important to these centres.~~

~~Business development projects, and the revitalisation and upgrading of town centres in terms of physical improvements, are important to the viability of local commercial areas. Council and traders groups need to work in partnership.~~

~~There is a history of many varied reports and studies into strategic planning for the various commercial centres in the Shire. There is benefit in reviewing these documents for each centre and preparing strategies which set the strategic framework for individual centres (and replace previous documents).~~

~~Technology advances have influenced a number of increasing operations of home based businesses. There are opportunities for the establishment of further home based businesses, if amenity is not detrimentally impacted.~~

~~Industrial uses are restricted to three designated areas in the Shire. These areas are mostly developed, so there may be pressure to allow industrial use in other areas which are not suited or zoned for this type of use and which may be in conflict with other interests. New large industrial uses are probably better suited in municipalities containing large industrial estates.~~

~~Due to the limited areas of designated industrial land in the Shire, industrial land should be reserved for industrial uses, and commercial and other uses be strongly discouraged in these areas.~~

~~Changes in the global restructuring of agriculture have generally led to requirements for greater land holdings to achieve economic viability. This has influenced some people to leave rural areas within the Shire where expansion is not possible, and has subsequently resulted in subdivision pressures to maximise land sales. The containment of lot sizes for agricultural land and the maintenance of the productive potential of agricultural land will support ongoing agricultural production in the Shire.~~

~~Existing "high value" horticultural commodities (such as apples, grapes, pears and nurseries) in the Shire indicate that they are well suited to the area. There is further potential for high value horticultural commodities to establish in the Shire.~~

~~Productive agricultural industries provide the potential for money to be injected into weed and pest animal control and revegetation of strategic areas of land. Agricultural industries should be encouraged to operate responsibly within the environmental and landscape qualities of rural areas, and subsequently, responsible operations should be full supported.~~

~~Tourism offers viable and ecologically sustainable economic development opportunities that are presently underdeveloped. Agricultural based and environment activities such as wineries, nurseries, eco tourism and host farms may provide opportunities for tourist activities if appropriately designed, located and managed to respect the environmental conservation and landscapes of rural areas and the existing road hierarchy.~~

~~Tourism, especially in non urban areas, will need to recognise the level of infrastructure which is available.~~

- The continued viability of local commercial and industrial areas is important to provide local employment opportunities and readily accessible goods and services.
- The Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres should provide goods and services for a local/regional clientele and special interest (niche) areas. Future development in these centres will be guided by the goals and strategies in any approved structure plans. The Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan must be taken into account in the consideration of the future development of Eltham.
- The Northern Area Consultative Committee (NACC) report, “Growing Melbourne’s North”, August 2003, identified small and medium size businesses in the personal, recreation and other services sector that are expected to increase in the future. Formation of businesses of this nature, together with general retailing, will be important in trapping a higher proportion of resident income in the future, creating more local income and employment.
- Local planning must focus on meeting the needs of local business, in particular business services, education/training and personal services. This strategy must also ensure that the residential living environment is protected and enhanced in order to retain and attract global knowledge workers and information focused businesses.
- Nillumbik is situated on the end of the Western Ring Road which has provided significant transport connections to the west and enables residents to access the key employment sectors of the west, including Melbourne Airport, La Trobe University, Greensborough and the Northern Hospital, Cooper Street, Epping. In addition, the Cities of Hume and Whittlesea have designated greenfield sites to attract new employment to the region. Nillumbik is also within close proximity to the Eastern freeway and the links that provides to the eastern employment centres. The future issue will be to manage effectively the growing traffic congestion arising from the high degree of car dependency in the Shire.
- In addition to private transport routes, Nillumbik is serviced by the principal rail network from Hurstbridge to the Melbourne CBD. The challenge will be to provide more public transport services to meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population.
- The competitive advantage of the outer region is that the local catchment centres in the Shire rely on patrons who expect short travel times and easy access. Accessibility and car parking at these centres must be maintained to ensure the continued viability of local centres.
- Business development projects, and the revitalisation and upgrading of activity centres in terms of physical improvements, are important to the viability of local commercial areas. Council and traders groups need to continue to work in partnership to ensure that activity centres and townships are well designed, attractive and viable and provide a range of retail and business facilities and community services to meet the needs of residents and tourists.
- Through technology advances, there are opportunities for the establishment of further home-based businesses and there are benefits to the community in supporting these businesses. In addition, there are recognised gaps in the provision of small office accommodation to provide for the needs of new small businesses and professional services.
- Changes in the global restructuring of agriculture have generally led to requirements for greater land holdings to achieve economic viability. The containment of lot sizes for agricultural land is important to ensure sustainable and productive agricultural land. There will continue to be land use conflict between agricultural and rural residential land uses and it is important that any potential conflict is managed appropriately.
- Existing ‘high value’ horticultural commodities (such as apples, grapes, pears, and nurseries) and intensive livestock (such as egg and poultry production) in the Shire indicate that they are well suited to the area. There is further potential for high value horticultural and intensive livestock commodities to establish in the Shire. In relation to

intensive livestock, the amenity and environmental significance of the area must be considered in the further development of these activities.

- Productive agricultural industries provide the potential for money to be injected into weed and pest animal control and revegetation of strategic areas of land. Agricultural industries should be encouraged to operate responsibly within the environmental and landscape qualities of rural areas, and subsequently, responsible operations should be fully supported.
- Tourism offers viable and ecologically sustainable economic development opportunities that are presently operating on a small scale. Agricultural based and environment activities such as wineries, nurseries, eco-tourism and host farms may provide opportunities for tourist activities if appropriately designed, located and managed to respect the environmental conservation and landscapes of rural areas, and the existing road hierarchy.

21.03-5 INFRASTRUCTURE

19/01/2006

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Proposed

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~~There are a range of physical infrastructure services which support and make possible the existing settlement pattern in the Shire, and provide for social and other needs of residents (Figure 6). Various utility service providers operate within the municipality, whilst the Nillumbik Shire Council is responsible for the provision and maintenance of a number of local services. Considering the period from settlement in Australia to present time, disability access is a most recently formalised infrastructure consideration for both public and private facilities (the Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 1992).~~

The physical infrastructure services which support and make possible the existing settlement pattern in the Shire include roads, public transport, drainage, sewerage, water supply, gas, electricity, internet and postal services, garbage collection, community facilities and services and public open space (refer to Map 6). Various service providers operate within the municipality, while the Nillumbik Shire Council is responsible for the provision and maintenance of a number of local services, such as drainage, roads, community services, public open space and garbage collection.

The provision of infrastructure services is most efficient in the established township and urban areas. Rural areas are not provided with a full utility service provision. New development is therefore encouraged to locate in established areas to take advantage of the existing infrastructure. New development in approved green field locations may be required to provide infrastructure in accordance with a development contributions plan.

Utility Services

~~Water supply in the Shire is managed by Yarra Valley Water. Nine reservoirs and 15 pumping stations service the Shire and the principal water sources are Sugarloaf and Yan Yean reservoirs. Depending on need, some water is also supplied from Silvan Reservoir. Existing water supply services are expected to cater for anticipated population growth within existing residential areas subject to some local infrastructure upgrading. The Sugarloaf Reservoir, managed by Melbourne~~

~~Water, is located in the eastern part of the Shire. The Watsons Creek Reservoir is proposed to be constructed to the north of Sugarloaf. Timing for construction of the Watsons Creek Reservoir has not been finalised and is dependent on water pricing, demand and water consumption patterns. Sugarloaf has a capacity of 96,200 megalitres and the proposed Watsons Creek Reservoir would have a capacity of 120,600 megalitres.~~

~~The Eltham sewer catchment is managed by Yarra Valley Water, and services the residential areas of the Shire. Preliminary assessments indicate that the catchment will be able to service those areas set aside for future residential development. Limitations in sewerage capacity restrict any additional expansion of many of the Shire's residential areas. The development~~

~~of some low density residential areas in Plenty may be delayed until the extension of sewer mains is realised.~~

~~Yarra Valley Water is developing detailed hydraulic models of all the Shire's sewer catchments and water supply systems to facilitate a better understanding of the two systems and of where spare capacity exists.~~

Melbourne Water manages Melbourne's water supply catchments, removes and treats most of Melbourne's sewerage, and manages rivers and creeks and major drainage systems in and around Melbourne. As a retail water company, Yarra Valley Water provides water supply and sewerage services to 1.5 million people who live and work in the Yarra River catchment area of Melbourne. Existing water supply services are expected to cater for anticipated population growth within existing residential areas subject to some local infrastructure upgrading. The Sugarloaf Reservoir is managed by Melbourne Water and is located in the eastern part of the Shire.

The Eltham sewer catchment is managed by Yarra Valley Water, and services the residential areas of the Shire. Preliminary assessments indicate that the catchment will be able to service those areas set aside for future residential development.

Melbourne Water is responsible for the management of the main drain system throughout the municipality. In most instances drainage is directed to the creek and river system, although an exception to this is the Eltham Main Drain which follows the Main Road through Research and Eltham.

Nillumbik Shire Council manages street and easement drainage which directs flows from individual properties to the Melbourne Water system.

Existing drainage arrangements in the Yarrambat area are insufficient for the further development of this area. The Yarrambat Local Structure Plan (1993) and the Yarrambat Extension Area Local Structure Plan (1996) ~~were prepared, in part, to~~ make special provision for the collection of levies to fund future drainage of the area.

~~Development contributions plans have been prepared and implemented to fund major infrastructure in the new residential areas north of Diamond Creek, known as Areas A and B, as well as for the low density residential area of Plenty. The preparation of further development contributions plans may also be necessary in other areas of the municipality, depending upon the requirement to construct or upgrade infrastructure in response to need, based on a local drainage plan prepared in consideration of development levels earmarked in this area. The requirements for development contributions in these structure plans towards drainage in Yarrambat are likely to be superseded in the near future by a Council development contributions policy or, as is anticipated, by a Melbourne Water drainage scheme. The application of a development contribution policy may also be necessary in other areas of the municipality.~~

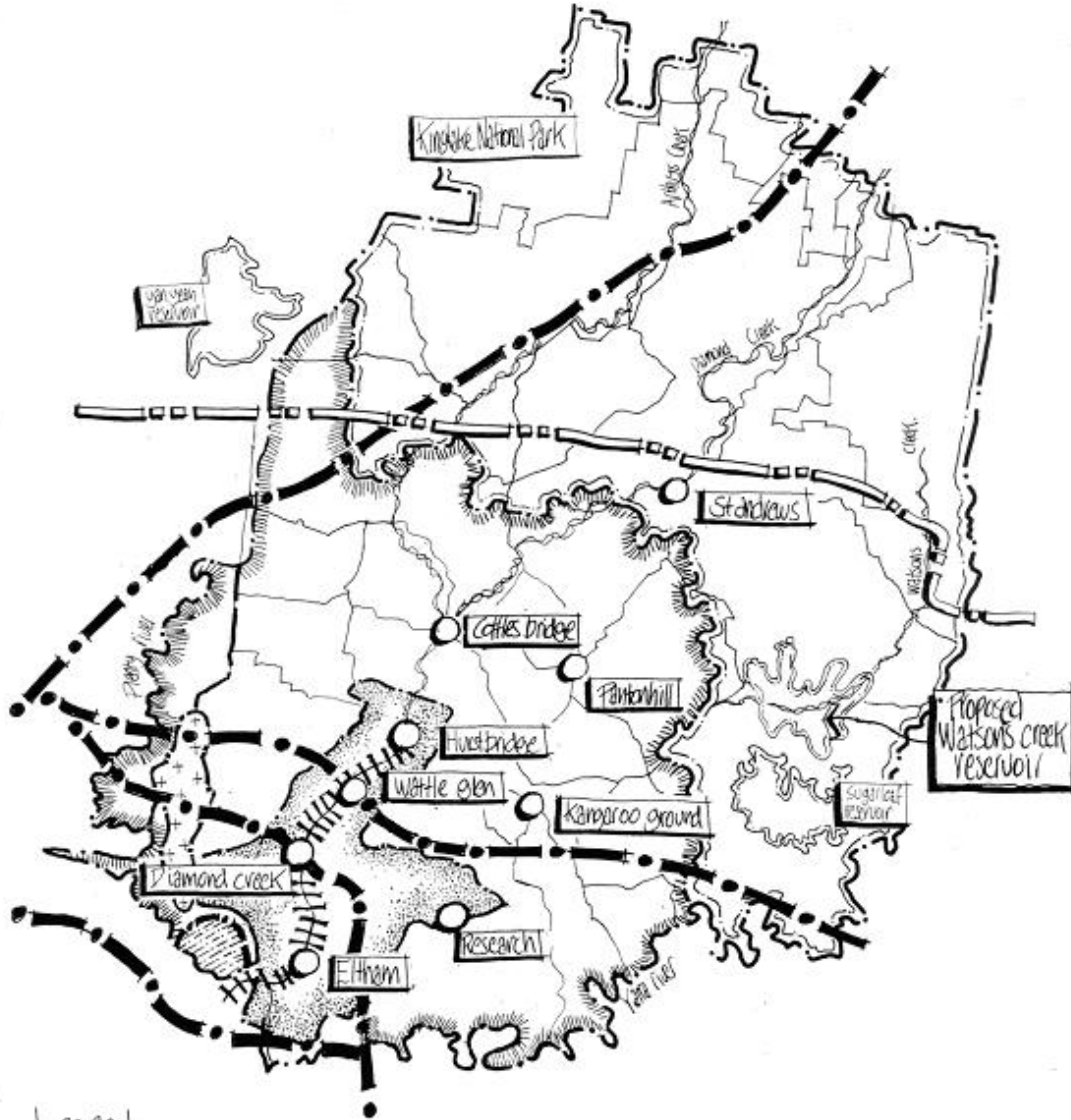
Electricity is provided to the municipality by ~~Eastern Energy~~SP Ausnet. The electricity provision is extensive and is able to service most of the municipality. Most areas, with the exception of the more remote locations, have access to broadband internet services. In some locations, although mobile phone reception is faint, the provision of additional mobile phone towers would not be appropriate to environmental surroundings.

Two major electricity transmission lines traverse the Shire. The transmission lines which are operated by SPI PowerNet, carry high voltage electrical energy from power stations to the major load centres, prior to delivery to consumers. Areas of land below and immediately adjacent transmission lines are clearance areas and therefore are devoid of medium to high vegetation. These areas are also restricted in the size and types of buildings which may be erected, with sensitive uses such as dwellings not permitted.

Envestra supplies and maintains natural gas to the urban areas of Eltham, Research, Greensborough and Diamond Creek. A limited area of North Warrandyte is also connected to the natural gas system but is serviced by Multinet Gas Pty. Ltd.

Figure-Map 6 - Infrastructure Assets

Fig6. Infrastructure assets



Legend








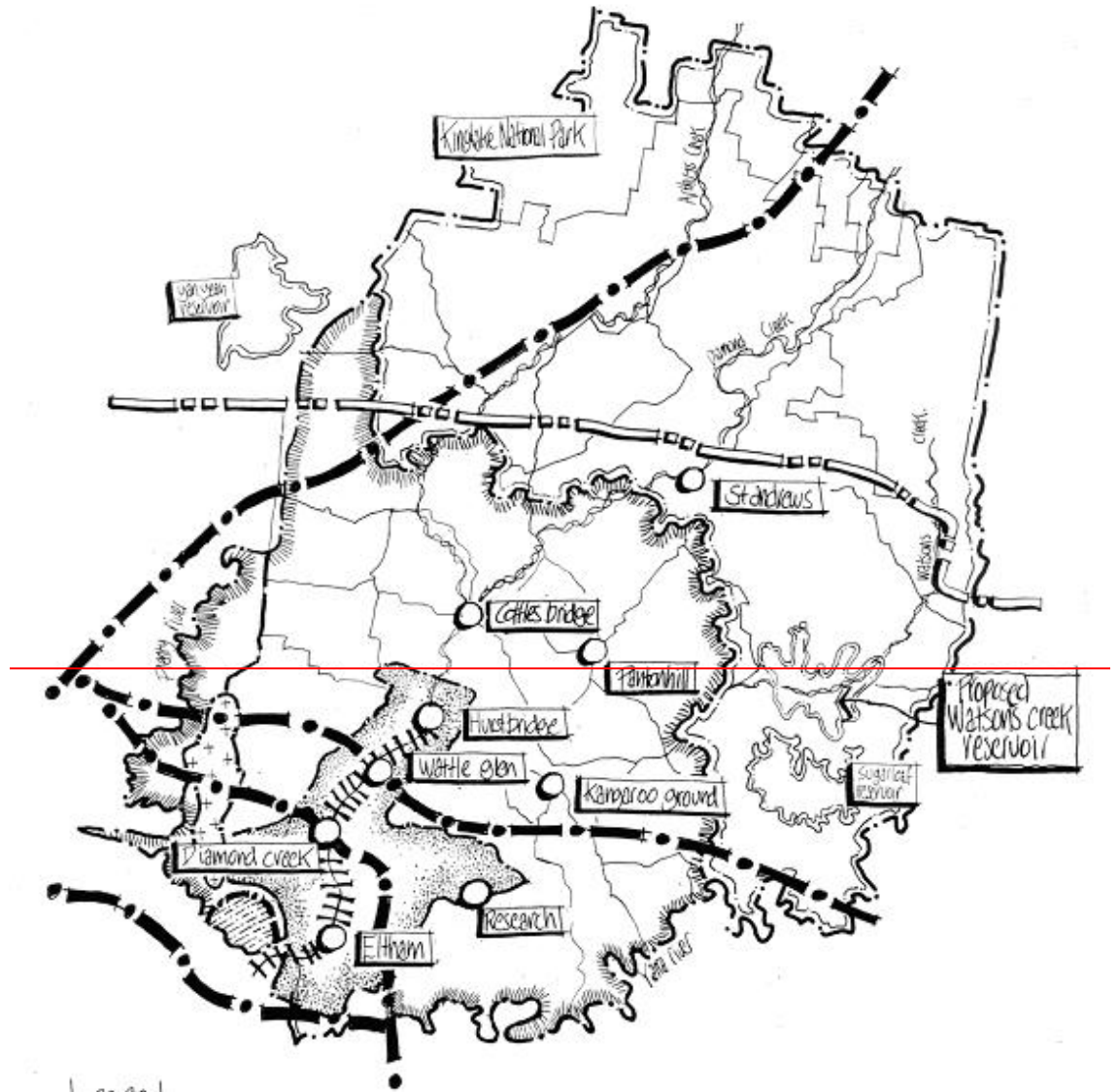
-  Reticulated water boundary.
-  Lower Plenty sewer catchment
-  Eltham main sewer catchment
-  High Pressure gas pipeline
-  High voltage electricity.
-  Railways.
-  Proposed Mcraughians branch sewer

Fig 6 Infrastructure assets



Legend

-  Reticulated water boundary.
-  Lower Plenty sewer catchment
-  Ethern main sewer catchment
-  High Pressure gas pipeline
-  High voltage electricity.
-  Railways.
-  Proposed meiraughians branch sewer

~~Two major electricity transmission lines traverse the Shire. The transmission lines which are operated by PowerNet, carry high voltage electrical energy from power stations to the major load centres, prior to delivery to consumers. Areas of land below and immediately adjacent transmission lines are clearance areas and therefore are devoid of medium to high vegetation. These areas are also restricted in the size and types of buildings which may be erected, with sensitive uses such as dwellings not permitted.~~

~~Kinetik Energy supplies natural gas to the urban areas of Eltham, Research, Greensborough and Diamond Creek. A limited area of North Warrandyte is also connected to the natural gas system.~~

~~Stratus Networks Pty Ltd is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the gas reticulation network servicing households in the Shire, except for North Warrandyte which is serviced by Multinet Gas Pty. Ltd.~~

There is one major gas transmission pressure pipeline running through the Shire. The responsibility, safe operation and ownership of this pipeline is vested in ~~GPU GasNet Pty Ltd~~ the APA Group. The pipeline provides a link between ~~the companies pipelines in~~ Pakenham and Wollert (~~Shire City~~ of Whittlesea) and can carry gas in either direction. While the pipeline does not directly supply households in the Shire of Nillumbik it is an integral part of Victoria's gas network.

Transport

Many early roads in the Shire of Nillumbik were self funded and built by early settlers in a difficult terrain traversed by several waterways. The railway line was extended to Hurstbridge around 1912, primarily to enable the carting of orchard produce to Melbourne.

The municipality is now serviced by the metropolitan arterial road network, urban collector and rural connector roads (~~Figure Map 7~~). Public transport consists of the Hurstbridge railway line, and various connecting local bus routes concentrated in the urban south-west area of the Shire.

~~Arterial roads cater for significant traffic movements in the metropolitan and rural regions. A declared system of arterial roads provides key routes through the urban areas of the municipality, and main routes in the rural areas. There are around 280 kilometres of sealed local roads and 350 kilometres of unsealed local roads in the municipality. There are some 100 kilometres of Arterial Roads in the municipality which cater for significant traffic movements in the metropolitan and rural regions. There are around 430 kilometres of sealed local roads and 340 kilometres of unsealed local roads in the municipality.~~ Many unsealed local roads service traditional residential, agricultural or bush uses and would be unsuitable for new uses requiring significant increases in traffic movement.

The Western ~~and Northern~~ Ring Roads provides a direct connection for the Shire to Melbourne Airport and the north western sector of Melbourne. While there are no existing State Government proposals to extend the ~~Metropolitan-Western~~ Ring Road, Nillumbik Shire Council is very concerned at the significant impact a future extension would have on the municipality. This includes environmental, transport and settlement impacts that may be inconsistent with the Municipal Strategic Statement.

~~The Shire has railway stations at Eltham, Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. The Hurstbridge line remains an important link through the municipality and provides the main form of public transport for residents in the Shire to north eastern suburbs and central Melbourne. There is potential to upgrade and improve parking around the stations and the frequency of service.~~

~~The metropolitan bus system services only a small area of the Shire namely, Eltham, Greensborough and the immediate surrounding urban areas.~~

~~The 1996 Census found that 93.1% of households in Nillumbik own at least one vehicle compared to 83.3% for Melbourne as a whole. The Census also found that the use of public transport to access workplaces was 6.4% for the Shire, compared to 10.3% for Melbourne as a whole. This highlights a high reliance of the Shire's community on private transport and an established culture of car ownership.~~

The North-East Integrated Transport Strategy is currently being prepared by the State Government Department of Infrastructure in partnership with Vic Roads, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Shire of Nillumbik and Cities of Banyule, Manningham and Whittlesea. The goals of the Strategy include the provision of safer, more accessible and responsive public transport, reduced growth in greenhouse gases, better road and traffic management and better integration of transport with land use.

The State Planning Policy Framework gives priority for the development of transport policies that seek to integrate land-use planning and transport planning. Some of these policies are to identify and progressively implement a metropolitan wide Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN), build activity centres as important transport nodes, encourage walking and cycling, ensure an efficient and coordinated freight and logistics system and develop an arterial road system that is efficient, safe and considers the needs of all road users. In urban areas, there are 25 kilometres of formal trails and in rural areas, there are 3 kilometres of formal trails. The further development of trails to link the key activity centres is a priority to encourage safe pedestrian access for residents.

The Shire has railway stations at Eltham, Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. The Hurstbridge line remains an important link through the municipality and provides the main form of public transport for residents in the Shire to north-eastern suburbs and central Melbourne. The metropolitan bus system provides a limited bus service to Diamond Creek, Greensborough, Eltham and Warrandyte.

Recreation and Open Space

~~Kinglake National Park, Plenty Gorge Metropolitan Park, Sugarloaf Reservoir Park, Yarrambat Park and the network of parks and trails along the Yarra River system are progressively being developed and marketed. The trail along the Diamond Creek, which commences at Yarra River and concludes at the township of Diamond Creek (Figure 2), may be extended to Hurstbridge in the short to medium term. A link to the Great Dividing Range at Kinglake National Park may be a possibility in the long term.~~

~~Yarrambat Park provides a public golf course, driving range, archery club, aero club, pistol club and trotting facilities. Sailing activities take place at Sugarloaf Reservoir. A major private golf course is proposed in Christmas Hills, known as the Heritage Golf Course.~~

~~Other outdoor recreational facilities in the Shire include: a swimming pool in Diamond Creek; hockey field in Plenty Park; rugby field in Eltham; an adventure park for children in Eltham North Reserve; and a number of equestrian venues. In addition, there are in excess of 20 ovals and 50 playgrounds and numerous other facilities for sports such as football, cricket, tennis, netball and bowls. In the urban areas there is an established network of bicycle and walking paths while in rural areas there are a number of horse riding, walking and mountain-bike trails.~~

~~Indoor recreational facilities include: the Eltham Leisure Centre which attracts more than 700,000 users per annum; the Diamond Valley Indoor Sports Centre which attracts more than 150,000 users per annum; the Diamond Creek Community Centre with approximately 55,000 users per annum; Nillumbik Swim School; and the Oz Skate Centre.~~

The Open Space Strategy defines Council's vision and strategic direction for the development and management of open space. In urban areas, the open space system needs to provide a broad range of recreational facilities and open areas which are in close proximity to residential areas. In rural areas, the emphasis is towards developing key regional and district recreational areas, enhancing and developing open space within townships and settlements, protecting native flora and fauna as well as developing a comprehensive regional based trail network. The Open Space Strategy lists a number of actions for improving and enhancing urban open space and developing and extending rural open space and the trail network. The Recreation Strategy 2011-2019 and the Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011 provide further direction in the development of trails and recreational opportunities.

Several significant conservation open space areas in Nillumbik include Kinglake National Park, Sugarloaf Reservoir, Plenty Gorge Park, One Tree Hill Reserve and the open space areas along the major waterways of the Yarra River, Diamond Creek, Watsons Creek,

Arthurs Creek and the Plenty River. The open space network, especially along the waterways, has retained large areas of native vegetation and plays a key role in protecting rare and threatened flora, fauna and vegetation communities. A nature conservation link has been created between Warrandyte and Kinglake National Park. The trail along the Diamond Creek, which commences at Yarra River and concludes at the township of Diamond Creek (Figure 2), may be extended to Hurstbridge.

Rural regional and district open space areas include Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower, Yarrambat Park, Eltham Lower Park and St Andrews Reserve. Yarrambat Park provides a public golf course, driving range, archery club, aero club, pistol club and trotting facilities. Sailing activities take place at Sugarloaf Reservoir. A major private golf course, Heritage Golf Course, is located in the Bend of Islands.

Other outdoor recreational facilities in the Shire include a swimming pool in Diamond Creek; hockey field in Plenty Park; rugby field in Eltham; an adventure park for children in Eltham North Reserve; and a number of equestrian venues. In addition, there are in excess of 32 ovals and 60 playgrounds and numerous other facilities for sports such as football, soccer, basketball, baseball, cricket, tennis, netball, bowls skate parks, BMX tracks, a Fishing platform and horse and pony clubs. In the urban areas there is an established network of bicycle and walking paths while in rural areas there are a number of horse riding, walking and mountain-bike trails.

There are also a range of indoor recreational facilities which include the Eltham Leisure Centre which attracts more than 780,000 users per annum, the Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness Centre which attracts more than 420,000 users per annum, and the Diamond Creek Community Centre with approximately 225,000 users per annum.

Community Services and Facilities

Nillumbik Shire Council is engaged in planning and ensuring the provision of a range of community services, in partnership with State and Federal Governments and with local providers. The services are delivered to various groups, such as children, youth, and senior citizens and also to groups with additional needs such as the disabled. The Shire of Nillumbik covers a large area with diverse communities located in urban and rural areas. The dispersed population in the rural areas creates major challenges for the equitable distribution of community services, especially Home Care, Personal Care, Respite Care, Home Maintenance, Community Transport and Delivered Meals. The aim of these services is to help people maintain their safety and independence at home and in the community and to avoid early than necessary admission into residential care. The achievement of these aims is constrained in dispersed areas where the population is heavily reliant on private transportation.

Other community services and facilities provided or subsidised by Council are located in activity centres and townships and include libraries, meeting halls, community health centres, senior citizen centres, pre-schools and a range of community and leisure activities. The concentration of a range of facilities within commercial areas increases the options for multi-purpose trips and the use of public transport.

The Shire endeavours to meet the needs of all members of its community, and will ensure that people with a disability or impairment are able to participate in all aspects of life with equity, dignity and equality of access. In the development of new housing, a proportion must be able to be adapted for occupation by persons with a disability, impairment or who are frail and elderly. In relation to new public and commercial buildings, access should be available for people with a disability, including easy access for wheelchairs and pushers.

Influences

With respect to infrastructure development issues in the Shire of Nillumbik, the following influences must be considered:-

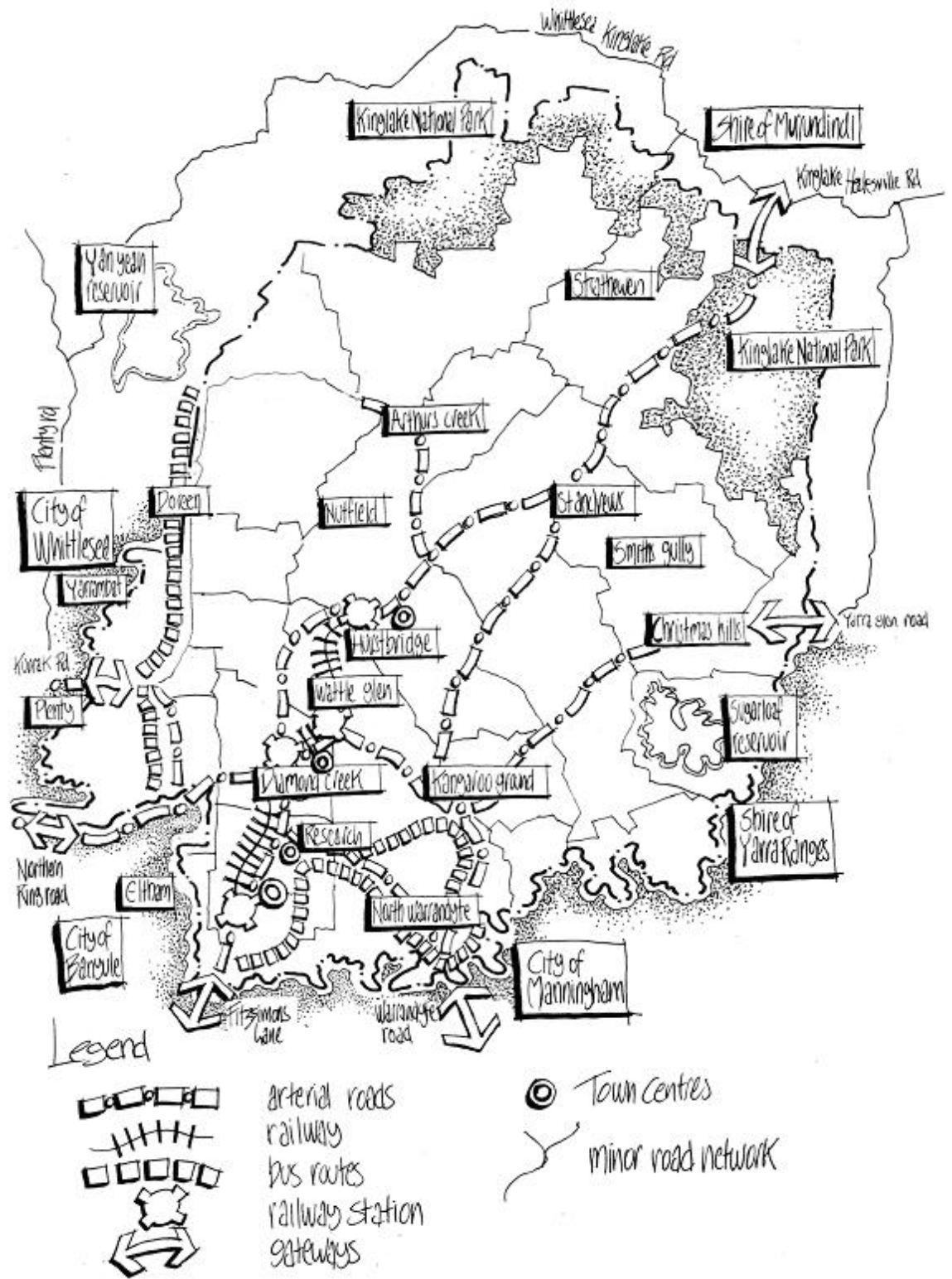
- ~~•—The provision of infrastructure services is most efficient in the established township and urban areas. Rural areas are not provided with a full utility service provision.~~

- Dispersed low-density residential development can create demand for infrastructure services that is both costly to provide and difficult to implement sequentially across an area. Where infrastructure is provided, a dispersed low-density pattern of residential development can mean that the infrastructure is of poor quality or has high recurrent costs for maintenance [and use](#).
- The high level of car usage and projected population increase may encourage the upgrade of arterial roads in the municipality. Similarly, there is mounting pressure for the sealing of rural connector local roads to provide improved access and to reduce the amount of sediment making its way into streams and rivers. The construction of new roads or road upgrades should be considerate of possible impacts on the rural amenity and should be consistent with local environmental values. Alternative travel arrangements such as public transport should be explored.
- In-fill residential development in the form of medium density housing in townships and urban areas, adds to the usage of existing roads, [drainage](#) and increases traffic. Road capacities need to be determined.
- ~~Local roads service existing local uses.~~—Proposals for new uses need to be considered with respect to the capacity and condition of local roads. The potential impact that new uses would have on traffic numbers and matters such as traffic congestion, dust and impacts on road surface (such as corrugation and pot-holes) should be addressed as appropriate.
- The Shire’s location adjacent to the ~~Mernda residential~~[Whittlesea](#) growth corridor and established urban areas of Melbourne will, over time, result in additional external traffic pressures within the Shire. Plenty Road and the light rail in the City of Whittlesea are the designated primary north-south transport spines servicing the ~~Mernda-~~[Whittlesea](#) growth corridor.
- An increasing population and changes in demographics result in a demand for additional recreational facilities and localised parks/playgrounds, and a greater variety of recreational opportunities. The use of development contributions in new subdivisions will assist in the provision of appropriate open space and recreational facilities.
- The management of roads in the Shire is a major consideration, especially due to pressures created by the Whittlesea Growth Corridor, the Western Ring Road and access to the Eastern Freeway. State Planning Policy recognises the importance of providing good public transport to activity centres, but although Eltham, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge activity centres have good access to the principal public transport network, the service levels need to be increased and improved connectivity to other modes of public transport is also required.
- Access to social and recreational opportunities is influenced by the dependence of young people and elderly people on the existing public transport network and locations of facilities.
- Disability access should be provided in all new public and commercial buildings and a significant proportion of private dwellings.
- Disability access for recreation and open space opportunities as well as other meeting places (including commercial facilities), is an important equity issue. Disability access ~~can-should~~ be improved for existing developments and pursued in the planning of new developments.
- The concept of a Metropolitan Ring Road incorporating a future extension of the ~~Northern-Western~~ Ring Road into the Shire is of major concern especially in regard to the impact on the ‘green wedge’, infrastructure provision and private expectations.
- Incorporate greater links between land use planning and transport, especially in relation to activity centres and the public transport network. Recognise the broader role of roads for all users including cycling, walking and buses.

- The Open Space Strategy 2005, the Recreation Strategy 2011-2019 and the Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011 must be referred to in any requirement to provide public open space arising from development.
- The ongoing management of stormwater quality is an issue that affects use and development throughout the Shire. Increasingly, the management of stormwater will be the responsibility of site holders and land developers who are to be encouraged to use best practice principles in relation to stormwater management.

Figure Map 7 - Transport and Movement Systems

Fig 7. Transport and movement systems



21.0516/01/2014
C60 PROPS
ED C86**OBJECTIVES - STRATEGIES - IMPLEMENTATION****21.05-1**23/11/2006
6/01/2014
C60
Proposed
C86**Settlement and Housing**

The maintenance of the existing settlement pattern consisting of distinct urban areas and clearly defined rural townships surrounded by non-urban areas is critical to the ongoing sustainability of the Shire of Nillumbik as a 'green wedge' municipality. Expansion of townships into surrounding areas is contrary to State Planning Policy and the principles of the 'green wedge'. ~~the 'green wedge' concept and needs to be addressed through township strategies.~~ The Shire of Nillumbik is located on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and it does not form part of a designated growth corridor. Outward metropolitan development, therefore, will not be a significant feature of the municipality.

~~Clear objectives and strategies in this regard are intended to result in realistic expectations of land potential by identifying preferred areas for future residential use and development. Current assessment of residential and rural residential land indicates adequate supply to meet demand in the long term.~~

The activity centres have an increased role in providing for a diversity of housing and in particular, medium density housing in accordance with the adopted structure plans. Relevant State Planning Policies in relation to settlement and housing include Activity centres (Clause 11.01), Urban growth (11.02), Melbourne's urban growth (11.04-5), Green wedges (11.04-02) and Residential development (16.01). Environmental and Landscape Values (Clauses 12.01-04) of the SPPF are relevant to residential development, particularly in the more environmentally significant areas of the municipality. Key environmental issues are discussed in more detail in the 'Environment, Conservation & Landscape' section (Clause 21.05-3).

~~Relevant State Planning Policies include: Planning for urban settlement (14.01), Metropolitan development (14.02), Energy efficiency (15.12), Residential development for single dwellings (16.01), Medium density housing (16.02), Rural living & rural residential development (16.03), Design & built form (19.03) and various infrastructure policies (Clause 18) have direct relevance to this section of the Municipal Strategic Statement.~~

~~State Planning Policy states that 'outward metropolitan growth must be confined to designated growth areas'. The Shire of Nillumbik is located on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and it is noted that it does not form part of a designated growth corridor. Outward metropolitan development, therefore, will not be a significant feature of the municipality.~~

~~Environment policies (Clause 15) of the SPPF are relevant to residential development, particularly in more environmentally significant areas of the municipality. Key environmental issues are discussed in more detail in the 'Environment, Conservation & Landscape' section (Clause 21.05-3).~~

Objective 1

To provide for a range of housing types to meet the projected increase in the number and type of households within the municipality, while respecting the neighbourhood character, and protecting the natural and cultural heritage values of the locality.

~~To provide for residential development which meets the projected increase of the number and type of households within the municipality, while respecting local community and environmental values through locality and site responsive consideration and design.~~

Strategies

- ~~• Provide a diversity of housing within the Major Activity Centres of Eltham and Diamond Creek.~~

- Ensure anecdotal demand figures do not drive strategic planning decisions for the Shire, as population growth in the Shire is not predicted to be substantial.
- Actively encourage residential development within existing urban zones in accordance with the framework plan, [the Neighbourhood Character Study](#), [the major activity centre structure plans](#) and [the](#) township strategy plans.
- Focus new residential subdivision and development in areas that are zoned residential and are currently vacant in Greensborough, Diamond Creek and Plenty, and new low-density subdivision and residential development in areas currently zoned for that purpose in Yarrambat and Plenty and other appropriately zoned areas.
- Focus medium density housing [in the designated areas in the major activity centre structure plans and](#) ~~g in~~ areas with good access to commercial and community services, public transport, open space and where appropriate infrastructure is available. Strongly discourage medium density housing in areas where such services, facilities and infrastructure are inadequate.
- Require [all accommodation, including](#) medium density housing to be site and locality responsive and to respect local neighbourhood character, including the retention of significant vegetation.

- Actively encourage the consideration of a comprehensive range of siting and design issues at the earliest possible stage of development proposals.
- Encourage good architectural design that meets the needs of our ageing population
- Require development contributions to ensure the timely provision of appropriate infrastructure.
- Encourage the use of alternative building materials such as mud-brick and rammed earth construction.
- Ensure all new residential development is undertaken in such a way that stormwater quality is not compromised and encourage all new development to accord with best practice principles in relation to storm water management.

Objective 2

To contain urban development and maintain non-urban breaks between existing urban areas and townships, and between townships.

Strategies

- Contain residential development within existing urban zones and review township strategy plans in accordance with the ~~framework plan and township strategy plans~~ Urban Growth Boundary.
- Contain new low-density residential development in areas currently designated for that purpose at Yarrambat and Plenty and other appropriately zoned areas.
- Oppose the rezoning of land for urban or low-density residential purposes, unless supported by the framework plan or a future Council strategy.
- Maintain and enhance the Eltham Gateway (from Eltham Lower Park to the ~~Main Road shopping centre~~) Eltham Major Activity Centre:-
- Encourage landscape and urban design works which retain the integrity of, and enhance existing entrances to townships and commercial centres.
- Strongly discourage the realignment of boundaries of rural properties for the purpose of creating defacto residential lots. Generally, ~~realignments – are~~ realignments are only supported for minor boundary adjustments which respond to topography or physical man-made features and do not provide for further development opportunities:-

Objective 3

To consolidate and sustain existing urban areas and ~~township character. character~~ to protect and enhance urban streetscapes, townships and landscapes in the Shire.

Strategies

- Encourage the concentration of commercial and community services and facilities in ~~urban areas~~ major and neighbourhood activity centres and townships.
- ~~Cluster commercial and community facilities in rural townships that have no commercial zonings.~~
- Focus medium density housing in areas where appropriate infrastructure is available and in areas with good access to commercial and community services, public transport and public open space. Strongly discourage medium density housing in areas where such services, facilities and infrastructure are unavailable or inadequate.

- ~~Review strategies relating to medium density housing following completion of structure plans for Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres.~~

■

- Maintain the Eltham Gateway and ensure ~~that~~ new development enhances the integrity of the Gateway (from Eltham Lower Park to the ~~Main Road shopping centre~~ [Eltham Major Activity Centre](#)).

- ~~Review and i~~Implement township strategies.

~~Objective 4~~

~~To promote energy efficiency in the layout of subdivisions and the siting and design of dwellings.~~

~~Strategies~~

- ~~Encourage domestic dwelling design to achieve a 4 or 5 star energy rating, and to promote the use of Energy Efficiency Victoria's Home Energy Rating Scheme and energy rating software.~~
- ~~Encourage subdivision designs to maximise solar access for lots. This includes careful orientation and sizing of house lots to maximise free solar heating and reduce overshadowing of north facing windows (refer to Energy Efficiency Victoria guidelines).~~
- ~~Encourage greater use of renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and water and reduce reliance on non renewable resources such as fossil fuels.~~

Objective 4~~5~~

To maintain and enhance the character of urban and township areas.

Strategies

- ~~Encourage new development to respond~~[Encourage applicants to refer to the ~~the~~ Neighbourhood Character Study and Guidelines to provide direction in relation to new development and in particular, to take into account the](#) characteristics of the local landscape and built form, including the retention of existing vegetation and recognition of housing styles and set-backs.
- Discourage development which would dominate and detract from the streetscape and which does not consider the neighbourhood character.
- Encourage planting of indigenous vegetation.
- Encourage landscape planting which complements and enhances the entrances to urban areas, townships and commercial centres.
- [Encourage the provision of tree reserves where the edge of a township or urban area abuts a main or secondary road, and maintain existing non-urban breaks between rural townships and between urban and non-urban areas.](#)
- [Limit subdivision and buildings in rural areas to maintain vistas. Encourage consolidation of buildings in locations below the ridgeline.](#)
- Maintain and enhance the landscape values of the Eltham Gateway (from Eltham Lower Park to the Main Road shopping centre).
- Ensure that new development reflects the historic and rural character of the Hurstbridge Township.
- Encourage muted tones for external surfaces and strongly discourage bright or contrasting colours.

Implementation

The Housing and Settlement strategies will be implemented as follows:

Using Local Policies

- Use a local policy to facilitate medium density housing in areas with good access to local services and public transport, and which demonstrates site and area responsive design (Medium Density Housing Policy, Clause 22.01).
- Use a local policy to guide subdivision of lots in Green Wedge areas. (Subdivision in Green Wedge Areas 22.02).
- Use a local policy to guide consideration of permit applications for residential use and development on small lots in Green Wedge Areas. (Residential Use and Development on Small Lots in Green Wedge Areas. 22.03).
- Use a local policy to guide the consideration of use and development in the gateway to the Eltham Township (Eltham Gateway Policy, Clause 22.10).
- Use a local policy to guide consideration of permit applications in Residential 1 and Township zones (Neighbourhood Character Policy, Clause 22.12).
- Use a local policy to guide the consideration of signage proposals in order to protect the visual quality of the Shire's urban streetscapes and rural landscapes from inappropriate signage (Signage Policy, Clause 22.09).

Applying Zones and Overlays

- Apply the Residential 1 Zone to existing residential areas and designated vacant residential areas serviced with reticulated water and sewerage.
- Apply the Low Density Residential Zone to existing low density residential areas located in North Warrandyte, the Plenty and Yarrambat corridor and around the urban edge of Eltham and Research.
- ~~Apply the Mixed Use Zone to the Eltham Gateway area to recognise the combination of residential, community, office and commercial land uses along Main Road.~~
- Apply the Township Zone to Hurstbridge, Pantom Hill and St. Andrews to provide for residential development and a range of commercial, light industrial and other uses in these townships.
- Apply the Urban Floodway Zone within urban areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding.
- Apply Environmental Significance Overlays to residential and low density residential areas identified as sites of faunal and habitat significance, Yarra River environs and Plenty River environs to protect the special environmental values of these areas.
- Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay to townships, low-density residential areas and parts of Eltham to encourage the retention of the treed nature of these areas- [and ensure that the preferred future character of the areas, as identified in the Shire of Nillumbik Neighbourhood Character Study 2000, is achieved.](#)
- ~~Apply the Development Plan Overlay to new residential areas to specify requirements over the future development of the area (notably: Area A north of the Diamond Creek township, Area B north west of the Diamond Creek township and land west of Eastgate Drive, Greensborough).~~
- Apply the Development Plan Overlay to a low density residential area in Plenty and to land along the Plenty Gorge to specify requirements over the future development of these areas. The Development Plan Overlay will address land capability, infrastructure sequencing, environmental significance and preferred design outcomes which encourage a coordinated approach to development.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to the Eltham Gateway to encourage the retention of the treed nature of this area and guide development.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to locations in Plenty and Yarrambat where land capability, infrastructure sequencing, environmental significance and preferred design outcomes influence future residential development.
- Use the schedule to the Design and Development Overlay for designated areas in Yarrambat, to incorporate considerations in the Yarrambat Local Structure Plan, May 1993 and Yarrambat Extension Area Local Structure Plan, September 1996.
- Use the schedule to the Design and Development Overlay for designated residential areas in Plenty, to incorporate considerations in the Plenty Valley Environmental Living Area Outline Development Plan, March 1992 (including setting minimum lot sizes) and the Plenty Valley Environmental Living Area Siting and Design Guidelines, June 1991.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to the Hurstbridge Township to encourage the retention of the historic and rural character of the Township and guide development.
- [Use the schedule to the Design and Development Overlay to incorporate considerations in the *Hurstbridge Design Guidelines Heidelberg-Kinglake Road \(Main Road\) Precinct, 2013.*](#)

Undertaking Further Strategic Work

- ~~▪ Undertake a housing strategy for the municipality.~~
- ~~▪ Undertake a neighbourhood residential character study and prepare residential design guidelines.~~
- ~~▪ Investigate the use of schedules and the Neighbourhood Character Overlay to vary residential standards.~~
- ~~▪ Finalise strategy documents for the Eltham Town Centre and Hurstbridge Township.~~
- ~~▪ Prepare a strategy for Wattle Glen Township.~~
- ~~▪ Facilitate a development plan for the Plenty Low Density Residential area.~~
- ~~▪ Consider urban fringe objectives for Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge. This could entail assessment of a more formal 'buffer' treatment for these urban areas, with the purposes of containing urban development and providing an appropriate urban/rural interface to define and protect the non-urban areas.~~
- Review the Medium Density Housing Policy (Clause 22.01) to encourage greater housing diversity in the urban areas and the role of medium density housing and activity centres in meeting housing objectives.
- Implement structure plans for the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres
- Identify opportunities for medium density and more diverse housing that meet community needs particularly in the context of an ageing population. This should be undertaken through structure planning in identified activity centres.
- Review the stock of vacant residential land supply and demand
- Review the strategy documents for Hurstbridge and Wattle Glen.
- Consider undertaking further strategic work and reviewing implementation mechanisms to identify and ensure appropriate development including signage controls in township entrances and gateways.
- Revise objectives relating to energy efficiency rating in accordance with State Government legislation.
- Investigate application of energy rating systems to alternative building materials such as mud brick.

Other Actions

- ~~▪ Use Energy Efficiency Victoria's Home Energy Rating Scheme and energy rating software to assess the energy efficiency of housing designs and proposed subdivision layouts.~~
- Provide expertise and education to the public in the use of non-forest timbers and alternative building materials such as mud-brick, straw-bale and rammed-earth.
- Collate good examples of residential development designs and layouts which respond to site characteristics and streetscape and respect the neighbourhood. Make use of these to help demonstrate to the public the expectations of site and locality analysis and response in residential proposals.

21.05-2

RURAL LAND USE

14/12/2006
PROPOSED
C86C44

Overview

~~A great part~~ Approximately 92% of the Shire of Nillumbik is rural ~~land and lies outside the Urban Growth Boundary.~~ Rural areas contain natural resource based activities including agriculture ~~and~~, hobby farming, limited gold mining and forestry. Rural areas also contain sites of environmental significance as well as residences in rural or bushland settings. This diversity of uses raises issues of land use conflict, resource use and environmental management. These issues must be managed by ensuring the sustainable land use and natural resource management of rural areas.

The objectives, strategies and means of implementation which relate to the natural environment, conservation and landscape, much of which is prevalent in the rural areas of the Shire, are addressed in the 'Environment, Conservation & Landscape' section (21.05-3).

~~Relevant State Planning Policies include: Planning for protection of catchments, waterways and groundwaters (15.01), Soil contamination (15.06), Conservation of native flora and fauna (15.09) and various other environment policies, Rural living and rural residential development (16.03), Agriculture (17.05), Waste Management (18.10) and Subdivision (19.01) have direct relevance to this section of the MSS.~~

State Planning Policy (Clause 11.04-6) supports the protection of the green wedges of metropolitan Melbourne from inappropriate development. In Nillumbik, environmental and social values are ascribed to areas of environmental and landscape quality in the vicinity of the Yarra River, Plenty River, Diamond Creek and surrounding areas. Relevant State Planning Policies include River corridors (11.04-8), Protection of agricultural land (14.01-1) and Sustainable agricultural land use (14.01-2), Catchment planning and management (14.02-1) and Rural residential development (16.02-1)

Rural land use issues cover a range of themes including the environment, housing, economic development and infrastructure. Rural land use issues are incorporated in a number of the themes of the State Planning Policy Framework: namely Environment; Housing; Economic Development; and, Infrastructure.—This reflects the many considerations which are to be had for future subdivision, use and development in rural areas of the Shire.

Objective 1

To retain existing agricultural land for soil based agricultural production and promote sustainable agricultural activities.

~~agriculture.~~

—Strategies

- Promote land use in rural areas in accordance with the capability and productive potential of the land.
- Limit small lot subdivision and encourage the consolidation of titles of agricultural land in order to maintain farm scale, retain the productive potential of land and the ability to undertake sustainable land management practices.
- Limit non-soil based use and development in land identified as rural, conservation farming or conservation in the Framework Plan, and land identified as high quality in Kangaroo Ground.
- Support the continuance and diversification of agriculture which demonstrates sustainable land management practices.

- ~~Encourage the consolidation of titles.~~ Protect the productive potential of agricultural land from inappropriate use and development.
- Facilitate opportunities for diversification in agricultural activities.
- ~~Discourage residential uses within non-urban areas.~~
- _____

Objective 2

To limit the fragmentation of land in rural areas.

Strategies

- Ensure land use changes do not have an adverse impact on the landscape or strategic environmental values of the land.
- Protect the productive potential of rural land by limiting small lot subdivision.
- Strongly discourage subdivision of property boundaries for the purpose of creating rural residential or hobby farm lots.
- Generally, support realignments for minor boundary adjustments which respond to topography or physical man-made features. Where small lots are allowed via the realignment of existing property boundaries, consider restrictions for the balance of the land with respect to future development and subdivision potential.
- Encourage new rural residential development in areas zoned for that purpose at Yarrambat and Plenty and other appropriately zoned areas.
- With respect to subdivision, consider rural land consistent with the Framework Plan, as rural, conservation, , environmental rural and conservation interface based on land capability, rural character, proximity to major environmental assets and potentially conflicting low-density residential areas, landscape features and strategic environmental values.
- Encourage retention of large lots in single ownership for the purposes of preserving conservation values or agricultural potential which may require a larger subdivision size.
- Encourage the consolidation of titles.

Objective 3

To ensure that any new dwelling built in the non urban area does not adversely impact on the primary production activities carried out on the land or on the environmental values of the land.

~~To facilitate the separation of conflicting rural land uses.~~

Strategies

- ~~Restrict the number of dwellings and discourage other sensitive uses from being established in rural areas.~~
- ~~Ensure that sensitive uses (such as dwellings) which may be adversely affected by rural land uses are located, sited and designed so as to avoid or minimise these impacts.~~
- ~~Ensure that agricultural uses that may have adverse impacts on nearby land are located and managed to avoid or minimise these impacts.~~ Ensure that the development of any new dwelling outside of the Urban Growth Boundary does not adversely impact on the primary production activities carried out on the land or on neighbouring land.

- Encourage sites to be used according to land capability, and be managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the quality and quantity of natural resources, surrounding land and the catchment.
- ~~Identify areas of heritage value and determine levels of significance (national, state or local).~~
- ~~Strongly discourage commercial and industrial type uses and developments in rural areas with limited vehicular access, due to unsealed roads, no through roads or other constraints to road safety or efficiency.~~
- Ensure land to the west of the Bend of Islands will not threaten the integrity of the protection of flora and fauna in the Bend of Islands when residential use is introduced to this area.
- Consolidate residential uses and development in the urban areas, townships and designated low density residential areas in the Shire.
-

Objective 4

- To minimise infrastructure servicing demand in rural areas.

Strategies

- Limit the development of new dwellings and buildings on rural allotments below the minimum subdivision size, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- ~~Restrict the creation of small lots in rural areas, including where subdivision will add to already concentrated areas of small lots in rural areas. Also strongly discourage the defacto creation of rural residential type (or smaller) lots in rural areas via the realignment of existing property boundaries.~~
- Strongly discourage commercial and industrial type uses and developments in rural areas with limited vehicular access, due to unsealed roads, no-through roads or other constraints to road safety or efficiency.
- Encourage the location of commercial/tourism uses which have the potential to attract substantial numbers of daily visitors, such as art galleries, cafes, plant nurseries, restaurants and wineries, in close proximity to major roads to limit the impact of these uses on the local road network.
- Facilitate the restructuring of old and inappropriate subdivisions.
- Encourage new rural residential development in areas currently designated for that purpose at Yarrambat and Plenty and other appropriately zoned areas.
- Ensure ~~new~~ lots have the capacity to contain all effluent generated on site and provide for the appropriate management of stormwater.

Note: Services and facilities for the urban population of Mernda in the City of Whittlesea should be located in the urban zoned land of the City of Whittlesea. Rural land in the Shire of Nillumbik near the ~~Mernda-Whittlesea~~ growth corridor will continue to be used for rural purposes.

Objective 5

To protect and enhance rural landscape character.

Strategies

- Conserve bushland and encourage revegetation.

- Ensure uses, buildings and works in rural and low-density residential areas maintain or enhance the landscape character of the locality, including views to the site.
- Restrict multiple buildings in rural and low-density residential areas, and support the consolidation of buildings (especially outbuildings).
- Ensure that the siting and design of buildings and works in rural areas avoid ridge-lines and hilltops wherever possible to ensure that they do not form a silhouette on the horizon.
- Discourage the use of reflective building materials such as zincalume in rural areas where a proposed building would be visible from other properties or roads.
- Encourage the use of muted tones on external surfaces while discouraging the use of bright or contrasting colours.
- Restrict subdivision [and the development of buildings on lots](#) in rural areas to maintain landscape qualities.
- Consult the Nillumbik Shire Council Roadside Management Plan in the consideration of works on roadsides.
- Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation and discourage the planting of exotic species.

Implementation

The above strategies will be implemented by:

Using Local Policies

- Use a local policy to guide subdivision on rural land, and require property management plans to demonstrate good land management practices (Subdivision in Green Wedge Areas, Clause 22.02).
- Use a local policy to protect the integrity of landscape values in the Shire from inappropriate siting and design of buildings and works (Siting and Design Policy for Buildings & Works in Non-Urban Areas, Clause 22.04).
- Use a local policy for an area adjoining the Bend of Islands to help protect flora and fauna in the Bend of Islands (Yanakie Farm Domestic Pet Policy, Clause 22.11).

Applying Zones and Overlays

- Apply the [Green Wedge](#) ~~Rural~~ Zone to land which provides for sustainable use for extensive animal husbandry and crop raising (land described as Farming in the Framework Plan).
- Apply the ~~Environmental~~ Rural [Conservation](#) Zone to non-urban land with environmental significance and landscape values.
- Use the schedule to the ~~Environmental Rural Zone~~ [Rural Conservation and Green Wedge Zones](#) -to establish varying subdivision minimums based on land classified in the Framework Plan as Conservation, Conservation Farming, ~~Environmental~~ Rural [Conservation](#) and Conservation Interface. The schedule specifies the outcomes unique to each of the classifications.
- Apply the Special Use Zone to protect the unique environmental and lifestyle values of the Bend of Islands area.
- Apply the Restructure Overlay to two old and inappropriate subdivisions at Rankin Street in Panton Hill, Fawkner Crescent in Hurstbridge and Smiths Gully Road in Smiths Gully.

- ~~▪ Apply a variety of overlays which relate to significant environments and landscapes, high fire areas, flooding, potential contamination and heritage. These overlays are outlined in the Environment, Conservation & Landscape section (21.05-3).~~

Undertaking Further Strategic Work

- ~~▪ Undertake a rural land use study to review the use, development and subdivision objectives and strategies in the Rural Zone.~~
- ~~▪ Undertake a review of the Sustainable Agriculture Rebate program to determine if it is effective in meeting Council objectives.~~
- ~~▪ Undertake a review of planning provisions in areas zoned Environmental Rural Zone. The review will consider land use and development, environmental management, subdivision provisions and land capability issues. A set of criteria, with relative weightings, is to be developed at the commencement of the review. The review will also include an evaluation of options for new provisions to reflect the high quality agricultural land at Kangaroo Ground.~~
- Review planning controls including Local Planning Policy Framework (MSS and local policies) and the application of zones and overlays as an outcome of the Green Wedge Management Plan.
- Review the Yanakie Farm Domestic Pet Policy, upon implementation of the Warrandyte to Kinglake nature conservation link.

Note: Many future strategic initiatives for rural areas of the Shire are included in the Environment, Conservation & Landscape section (21.05-3).

Other Actions

- ~~▪ Participate in the Agribusiness Forum (in conjunction with the Shire's of Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges and Cardinia).~~
 - ~~▪ Encourage participation in the sustainable farming workshops facilitated by the Department of Natural Resources & Environment.~~
- ~~**Note:** There are many other actions for rural areas of the Shire which are outlined in the Environment, Conservation & Landscape section (21.05-3).~~

21.05-3

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ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION & LANDSCAPE

Overview

In order to maintain the high environmental and landscape values that occur within the Shire, threatening processes associated with the loss and degradation of the natural and built environment need to be addressed. The long term protection of native species and ecosystems requires large areas of high quality native vegetation interconnected by a network of habitat corridors. These areas are located on both public and private land. Knowledge and understanding of environmental and culturally significant values within the Shire, and the encouragement of a coordinated catchment approach based on sustainable principles, is critical in achieving sound planning decisions.

State Planning Policy supports improved environmental management that ensures water resources are managed in a sustainable way, that resource use and waste generation is reduced and that native habitat and areas of important biodiversity through appropriate land-use planning is protected.

Relevant State Planning Policies include: Open space planning (Clause 11.03-1), River corridors (11.04-8), Protection of habitat (12.01-1), Native vegetation management (12.01-2), Environmentally sensitive areas (12.04-1), Landscapes (12.04-2), Bushfire planning strategies and principles (13.05-1), Energy and resource efficiency (15.02-1), Heritage conservation (15.03-1) and Aboriginal cultural heritage (15.03-2). ~~Protection of catchments, waterways and groundwater (15.01), Floodplain management (15.02), Protection from wildfire (15.07), Conservation of native flora and fauna (15.09), Open space (15.10), Heritage (15.11) and Energy efficiency (15.12) have direct relevance to this section of the MSS.~~

Given the unique natural and cultural value of the Shire, Clause 15.11 ~~2-03~~ is highly relevant and states *'to ensure the conservation of places of heritage significance' and 'to ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance'* ~~planning and responsible authorities should identify, conserve and protect places of natural or cultural value from inappropriate development...'~~

State Planning Policy also states *'to assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals and control of pest plants and animals'* ~~decision making by planning and responsible authorities should assist the conservation of the habitats of threatened and endangered species and communities as identified under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988...~~ Given the large number of threatened native species and threatening processes occurring in the Shire, this is a particularly relevant consideration in any planning decision.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance sites of environmental significance.

Strategies

- **Retain high value conservation land in public ownership wherever possible.**
 - Protect areas of environmental significance, ~~including Ecological Reference Areas and Critical Conservation Areas~~, by restricting land uses encouraging only suitable land use and development that may adversely impact on native flora and fauna.
 - ~~Establish a shire wide network of viable~~ strategic habitat links and retain high value conservation land in public ownership wherever possible.

-
- ~~Incorporate the retention and enhancement of strategic habitat links into subdivision plans and site management plans where appropriate.~~
- ~~Protect all waterways within the Shire from disturbance and pollution caused by inappropriate land use, development and works including dam construction.~~
- ~~Consider the natural catchments/systems in assessing applications for use, development and subdivision.~~
- Encourage the retention of vegetated areas of sufficient size that maintains the viability of faunal populations and vegetation communities and protects [biodiversity and](#) other significant environmental values.
- Identify significant nature conservation values and develop actions to ensure their long term survival.
- Protect and enhance roadside vegetation through the implementation of the Nillumbik Shire Council Roadside Management Plan ([19972012](#)) and the planting of roadside reservations only with indigenous plantings, unless there are exceptional circumstances for alternative plants.
- ~~Provide support and assistance to community environmental projects involved in protecting and enhancing areas of high conservation value.~~
- ~~Undertake community education programs that will encourage the protection and enhancement of sites of environmental significance.~~
- [Protect remnant vegetation by encouraging](#) ~~Promote~~ the use of Trust for Nature [Conservation Covenants](#) on private bush land.
- [Encourage the protection and enhancement of sites of environmental significance with planting of indigenous vegetation rather than exotics.](#)
- [Encourage siting and design of dwellings that avoids the need to remove native vegetation and ensure development proposals address the Net Gain Principle of the Native Vegetation Framework.](#)
- [Protect all wetlands, floodplains and native habitat areas from inappropriate land use, development and works including dam construction.](#)

Objective 2

To ensure land use and development is assessed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment: [and encourage sustainable land management.](#)

Strategies

- ~~Develop and support local action plans for each sub-catchment within the Shire of Nillumbik.~~
- Encourage land uses which complement land capability, improve water quality and maintain environmental flows.
- Encourage coordinated environmental management of public and private land.
- Protect the natural systems including land, air and water from pollution and detrimental activities in accordance with relevant State legislation including State Environment Protection Policies, best practice environmental management guidelines and approved catchment strategies.
- ~~Develop a policy which covers specialist agricultural pursuits such as viticulture and propagation of olives.~~

- Encourage use and development that can demonstrate consistency with the requirements of Council's Sustainable Water Management Plan 2008 and best practice principles in relation to stormwater management.
- Refer to Melbourne Water's Diamond Creek and Plenty River Streamflow Management Plans when responding to permit applications within these catchments.
- Protect all waterways within the Shire from disturbance and pollution caused by inappropriate land use, development and works including dam construction.
- Ensure land use and development is consistent with identified land capability and environmental constraints and is managed to have minimum adverse impact on neighbouring properties and the catchment.
- Protect rural land from subdivision and development that impacts on the ability of the land to undertake sustainable land management practices.
- Where a permit is required for agriculture, seek to apply conditions requiring the protection of native vegetation (eg. fencing off remnant vegetation).

Objective 3

~~To encourage sustainable land management practices.~~

Strategies

- ~~Ensure land uses demonstrate compatibility with the land capability and environmental characteristics of a site and be managed to have minimum adverse impact on neighbouring properties and the catchment.~~
- ~~Provide environmental incentives to private land owners by supporting Landcare groups and 'friends of' groups and through Council weed and vermin control programs and the Sustainable Agricultural Rebate.~~
- ~~Protect rural land from subdivision that impacts on the ability of the land to undertake sustainable land management practices.~~
- ~~Where a permit is required for agriculture, seek to apply conditions requiring the protection of native vegetation (eg. fencing off remnant vegetation).~~
- ~~Undertake community education programs that will improve the knowledge and skills of land owners and managers in sustainable land management.~~
- ~~Undertake community education programs that will encourage the protection and enhancement of sites of environmental significance with reference to the planting of indigenous vegetation rather than exotics.~~
- ~~Encourage the removal of weeds across the Shire.~~

Objective 4

To protect places of natural and cultural heritage.

Strategies

- Work with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to pProtect sites of Aboriginal heritage significance identified in the Nillumbik Shire Council Aboriginal Heritage Study (1996) or any subsequent studies.
- Ensure that informed assessments are carried out with respect to the possible potential Aboriginal heritage value of a sites, - and where there is indicative physical and/or historical evidence of Aboriginal heritage on a site. Rrequire referral to relevant heritage bodies as necessary.

- Protect heritage sites, buildings and trees identified in heritage studies- and undertake ongoing review of places for their heritage significance
- Encourage new use and development to contribute to the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage.
- Undertake and support community education programs that protect sites of natural and cultural heritage.

Objective 4

To promote energy efficiency in the layout of subdivisions and the siting and design of buildings.

Strategies

- Encourage subdivision designs to maximise solar access for lots. This includes careful orientation and sizing of house lots to maximise free solar heating and reduce overshadowing of north facing windows
- Encourage greater use of renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and water and reduce reliance on non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels.

Objective 5

To avoid and mitigate the limitations and threats posed by environmental hazards in land use and development.

Strategies

- Ensure that development in areas of ~~wildfire hazard~~ bushfire risk is appropriately sited, designed and managed to avoid or minimise risk.
- Restrict sensitive uses, such as dwellings, in areas of ~~wildfire hazard~~ bushfire risk.
- ~~Implement fire prevention—~~ management programs which are integrated with environmental objectives and strategies and the Municipal Fire ~~Prevention Strategy~~ Management Plan
- ~~Ensure development is assessed in accordance with the Bushfire Management Overlays where applicable.~~
- Ensure that development in areas subject to inundation and flooding is appropriately designed and managed to minimise risk and to protect the environmental values of the site including water quality and streamside habitat.
- Ensure that development, including vegetation removal, takes into account the potential risk of soil erosion, stormwater quality—soil, soil expansion and landslip.
- ~~Ensure appropriate supplies of static water are provided in proximity of new dwellings for the purposes of fire fighting in areas of high fire risk. Ensure that these supplies are readily accessible by the Country Fire Authority.~~
- Ensure that land which may be contaminated is appropriately investigated and treated before new sensitive uses are allowed.

Objective 6

To promote resource conservation

~~and reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions.~~

Strategies

- ~~▪ Implement the Council's Cities for Climate Protection™ obligations as defined in milestones 1 to 5. This will include implementation of a local action plan to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions.~~
- Encourage retention and planting of indigenous vegetation through planning provision and environmental initiatives, recognising the role that vegetation plays in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- ~~▪ Encourage domestic dwelling design to achieve a 4 or 5 star energy rating, and to promote the use of Energy Efficiency Victoria's Home Energy Rating Scheme and energy rating software.~~
- ~~▪ Encourage waste minimisation and the use of recycled and plantation-grown timbers in the construction of new buildings, adoption of subdivision designs that maximise solar access for lots. This includes orientation and sizing of house lots to maximise free solar heating and reduce overshadowing of north facing windows (refer to Energy Efficiency Victoria guidelines).~~
- ~~▪ Encourage greater use of renewable energy resources such as solar, wind and water.~~
- ~~▪ Encourage retention and planting of vegetation through planning provision and environmental initiatives, recognising the role that vegetation plays in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.~~
- Encourage the use of recycled and plantation grown timbers in the construction of new buildings.
- Encourage the use of alternative building materials such as mud-brick and rammed earth construction.
- ~~▪ Encourage waste minimisation in the construction of buildings.~~

Objective 7

To protect and enhance streetscapes conservation areas and landscape identify opportunities to create and link areas of open space in accordance with the Open Space Strategys in the Shire.

Strategies

- ~~▪ Implement siting and design guidelines for development in urban, township, low density residential and rural areas.~~
- ~~▪ Ensure new developments in urban areas and townships contribute to the enhancement of streetscapes and character of the local area.~~
- ~~▪ Contain development in urban and township areas in accordance with the framework plan and township strategy plans.~~
- ~~▪ Maintain existing non urban breaks between rural townships and between the urban and non urban areas.~~
- ~~▪ Encourage the use of muted tones on external surfaces while discouraging the use of bright or contrasting colours.~~
- ~~▪ Ensure buildings and works in rural and low density residential areas are compatible with the landscape character of the locality, including views to the site.~~
- ~~▪ Limit subdivision in rural areas to maintain vistas.~~
- ~~▪ Limit multiple buildings in rural and low density residential areas, and support the consolidation of buildings (including outbuildings).~~

- ~~▪ Ensure that the siting and design of buildings and works in rural areas avoid ridge lines and hilltops wherever possible.~~
- ~~▪ Discourage the use of reflective building materials such as zincalume in open areas where a proposed building would be clearly visible from other properties or roads.~~
- ~~▪ Maintain the Eltham Gateway and ensure that new development enhances the integrity of the Gateway (from Eltham Lower Park to the Main Road shopping centre).~~
- ~~▪ Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation.~~
- ~~▪ Encourage the removal of noxious weeds.~~
- ~~▪ Encourage the containment of all waste materials on construction sites.~~

Objective 8

~~To protect and enhance conservation areas and identify opportunities to create and link areas of open space.~~

Strategies

- Encourage large lot rural land use and rural living opportunities that protect the environmental and landscape values of major conservation areas such as the Plenty Gorge ~~Metropolitan Park~~, ~~and~~ Kinglake National Park ~~and the Yarra River Valley~~.
- Strongly encourage the design of subdivisions to incorporate the potential for open space linkages and the retention of remnant vegetation and drainage lines as parts of open spaces.
- Develop and implement site management plans for conservation areas of high environmental sensitivity owned and managed by Council.
- Retain high value conservation land in public ownership.

Implementation

The Environment, Conservation and Landscape strategies will be implemented by:

Using Local Policies

- Use a local policy to provide guidelines on appropriate and responsive siting and design of buildings in rural areas and to minimise landscape impact, energy usage and fire hazard (Siting and Design Policy for Buildings & Works in Non-urban Areas, Clause 22.04).
- ~~▪ Use a local policy to guide considerations of applications within the Wildfire Management Overlay to address the design of subdivisions, siting and design of buildings, and the use and management of land in relation to identified environmental issues. (Wildfire Management Policy, Clause 22.13).~~
- Use a local policy to acknowledge the prior occupation of the Shire by the Wurundjeri people and which requires future development in particular areas to have regard to sites of Aboriginal heritage, (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Policy, Clause 22.05).
- Use a local policy which acknowledges Nillumbik Shire Council's Roadside Management Plan and provides guidelines for the consideration of proposals within or near roadsides (Roadside Management Policy, Clause 22.06).
- ~~▪ Use a local policy to guide the consideration of signage proposals in order to protect the visual quality of the Shire's urban streetscapes and rural landscapes from inappropriate signage (Signage Policy, Clause 22.09).~~

- ~~Use a local policy to guide the consideration of use and development in the gateway to the Eltham Township (Eltham Gateway Policy, Clause 22.10).~~
- Use a local policy for an area adjoining the Bend of Islands to help protect flora and fauna in the Bend of Islands (Yanakie Farm Domestic Pet Policy, Clause 22.11).

Applying Zones and Overlays

- Apply the ~~Environmental~~ Rural Conservation Zone to most rural areas in the Shire to protect environmental values and to promote sound management and land capability practices.
- Apply a Special Use Zone to protect the unique environmental and lifestyle values of the Bend of Islands area. This zone specifically prohibits the construction of fences, keeping of domestic pets, grazing and agriculture and the planting of non-indigenous vegetation (except for a small kitchen garden).
- Apply the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to manage the use of major public reserves of significant environmental value.
- Apply the Urban Floodway Zone within urban areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding.
- Apply the Public Acquisition Overlay to land identified by an authority for the purposes of acquiring public open space, notably Yarra Valley Parklands, Plenty Gorge Metropolitan Park and the Diamond Creek Linear Open Space Link.
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay to identified sites of national, state and regional faunal and habitat significance, derived from the NEROC Report (Beardsell, 1997). The overlay identifies potential environmental constraints, strengthens vegetation retention controls and where appropriate requires property management plans to demonstrate how new development or land use will not impact on environmental values.
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay to protect and enhance environmental and landscape characteristics of the Yarra River Valley environs. The overlay will facilitate the objectives of the *Middle Yarra Concept Plan* (Melbourne Water, 1991).
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay to protect and enhance the environmental and landscape characteristics of the Plenty River environs. The overlay will facilitate the objectives of the *Lower Plenty River Concept Plan* (Melbourne Water, 1992).
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay to all land within 30 metres of the Diamond, Arthurs and Watsons Creeks to protect existing vegetation, stream banks and improve water quality.
- Apply a Significant Landscape Overlay to low density residential areas in North Warrandyte and around Eltham that will protect the environmental and landscape character of the area. Proposed development will need to address issues including vegetation retention and the sensitive siting of buildings and works.
- Apply a Significant Landscape Overlay to bushland residential areas that will protect the environmental and landscape character of the area. Proposals will need to address the retention of native vegetation.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to the Eltham Gateway to encourage the retention of the treed nature of this area and guide development.
- Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay to areas identified as potentially contaminated with concentrations of arsenic, cyanide or mercury, as a result of past gold mining activity.
- Apply the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay to areas affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other flood prone area determined by Melbourne Water.

- Apply the Special Building Overlay to urban areas identified by Melbourne Water that are liable to inundation by overland flows from the urban drainage system.
- Apply the ~~Wildfire~~ Bushfire Management Overlay to areas of high ~~wildfire~~ bushfire risk.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay to identify, protect and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.
- Apply the Development Plan Overlay (for areas expressed in Clause 21.05-1) to ensure consideration of environment and landscape in specifying requirements over the future development of these areas.

Undertaking Further Strategic Work

- ~~Prepare an Environment Strategy~~ Ongoing implementation review of the Environmental Charter and associated statement and strategies to ensure ~~that will investigate environmental issues across the Shire and identify and implement~~ appropriate actions that will to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Prepare a catchment management plan for the Watsons Creek catchment based on State of the Environment Reporting.
- ~~Prepare an~~ Review the Open Space Strategy ~~that will include investigating the appropriate management of public reserves, and opportunities which exist for linking existing open space areas and creating further open space.~~
- ~~Conduct a heritage study review.~~
- ~~Review the Nillumbik Shire Council Roadside Management Plan.~~
- ~~Conduct a rural land use study to review the use, development and subdivision objectives and strategies in the Rural Zone.~~
- ~~Undertake a neighbourhood residential character study and prepare residential design guidelines.~~
- ~~Investigate areas for the application of the Vegetation Protection Overlay.~~
- ~~Consider a review of the NEROC Report (Beardsell, 1997).~~
- Review planning controls including Local Planning Policy Framework (MSS and local policies) and the application of zones and overlays as recommended by the Green Wedge Management Plan.
- Review the ESO1 boundaries and schedule to improve mapping and identification of significant environmental sites, threatened vegetation communities and species and identification of habitat links.
- Review the ESO-1 schedule to clarify the need for information such as a flora and fauna assessment, proposed revegetation/landscaping, identification and control of weed species and ongoing management of the site.
- Review the coverage of ESO4 waterways to consider inclusion of additional significant waterways such as running creek and Deep Creek in Arthurs Creek, Pigeon Bank Creek and Stony Creek in Kangaroo Ground/North Warrandyte.
- Review the NEROC Report (Beardsell, 1997) as part of a regional project involving adjoining municipalities and DSE.
- Review the LSIO, UFZ and SBO as new information becomes available.
- Review Local Planning Policies Subdivision in Green Wedge Areas (Clause 22.02) and Siting and Design Policy for Building and Works in Non-Urban Areas (Clause 22.04) to improve their application as recommended by the Green Wedge Management Plan.
- Review the Local Planning Policy Framework to incorporate bushfire considerations into the Planning Scheme.

- Continue to review the Environmental Audit Overlay in relation to identification of sites of potential contamination.
- Identify and protect significant landscapes and vistas in the rural areas as an outcome of the Green Wedge Management Plan.
- Implement the *Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines 2013*.

~~Other Actions~~

- ~~Implement environmental incentive programs for private landowners, which include a range of financial incentives that promote sustainable land management practices. Programs include:~~
 - ~~Community Weed Control Program.~~
 - ~~Paterson's Curse Control Program.~~
 - ~~Serrated Tussock Control Program.~~
 - ~~Rabbit control works on private land.~~
 - ~~Sustainable Agricultural Rebate Program.~~
- ~~Implement strategies of the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan to address education and awareness of wildfire risk.~~
- ~~Undertake specific community education programs, that will:~~
 - ~~protect and enhance sites of environmental significance including significant roadsides.~~
 - ~~promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal heritage.~~
 - ~~protect waterways through the program Waterwatch.~~
 - ~~encourage the adoption of sustainable land management practices by providing property management courses;~~
 - ~~encourage prospective purchasers to consider environmental issues prior to purchasing property.~~
- ~~Provide ongoing support to environmental groups for environment protection, including providing materials, advice, educational opportunities and supporting an annual environment awards.~~
- ~~Develop a service charter for the establishment and support of environmental groups within the Shire~~
- ~~Provide advice and information on land management issues including native flora and fauna, weed and vermin control, pasture management and other environmental issues.~~
- ~~Support festivals such as Envirofest and Warrandyte Festival, and support complementary environmental initiatives such as Clean Up Australia.~~
- ~~Support coordinated catchment management programs such as Melbourne Water's Stream Frontage Program and conservation programs including Trust For Nature and Land for Wildlife.~~
- ~~Implement the Council's Cities for Climate Protection™ obligations as defined in milestones 1-5.~~
- ~~Support and encourage environmental best practices through education programs aimed at minimising resource consumption and wastage and maximising efficiency.~~
- ~~Provide expertise and education to the public in the use of non-forest timbers and alternative building materials such as mud-brick, straw-bale and rammed earth.~~

- ~~▪ Implement specific actions to demonstrate leadership in the adoption of environmental best practices such as installing a lighting control system at the Council's civic offices to reduce energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions.~~
- ~~▪ Undertake monitoring and auditing of corporate and residential resource use and waste output to identify areas for improvements and quantify progress.~~
- ~~▪ Implement environmental works on Council owned environmental reserves in coordination with incentives for private land holders and other agencies.~~

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Overview**

Economic development opportunities in the Shire of Nillumbik are likely to be generated by small business enterprises [especially home-based businesses](#) involved in leisure services, retailing, rural industry, tourism, information technology, education and training, innovative environmental management and sustainable agriculture. The principal focus with respect to economic development is to strengthen existing enterprises and facilitate new business initiatives which respect the Shire's environmental, social and economic development priorities.

Relevant State Planning Policies include: [Activity centre network \(Clause 11.01-1\)](#), [Activity centre planning \(11.01-2\)](#), [Urban design \(15.01-1\)](#), [Business \(17.01-1\)](#), [Industrial land development \(17.02-1\)](#) and [Facilitating tourism \(17.03-1\)](#). ~~Melbourne 2030, Activity centres (17.01), Business (17.02), Industry (17.03), Tourism (17.04), Agriculture (17.05) and various other economic development policies have direct relevance to this section of the Municipal Strategic Statement.~~ [The main employment locations in Nillumbik, the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres, Hurstbridge Neighbourhood Activity Centre and the industrial land at Research need to be maintained to continue to provide opportunities for local employment. In the non-urban areas, the range of tourism and commercial activities are restricted to activity centres or purposes that can be used in conjunction with agriculture, rural industry or winery.](#)

Many of the objectives included in Clause 17 directly relate to strategic directions for economic development in the Shire of Nillumbik. These objectives must be pursued in conjunction with other objectives identified in the Municipal Strategic Statement, ~~especially the Settlement & Housing section (21.05-1) and the Environment, Conservation & Landscape section (21.05-3).~~

Objective 1

To facilitate environmentally sustainable economic development.

Strategies

- Facilitate establishment of clean green businesses ~~and strategies encouraging greenhouse reduction targets as part of Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2010-2015 and Ecologically Sustainable Development Policy 2012.~~
- Facilitate establishment and growth of enterprises involved in environmental and agricultural research and development, and tourism based on environmental and local sustainable interests.
- Ensure urban and rural based tourism is compatible with the environmental capacity of the Shire and the locality.
- Develop links between research and education organisations and the Shire's community to provide opportunities to implement innovative approaches to sustainable land use and land management.
- [Promote economic development opportunities that build on the cultural and physical characteristics of the conservation and rural focus \(the 'green wedge'\) of the Shire.](#)
- [Encourage home-based businesses which achieve environmental and social benefits through decreased travel time, use of existing structures and resources, provision of a neighbourhood presence and provides increased demand for other local businesses as services and products are sourced locally.](#)

- Facilitate signage to advertise business undertaken on-site, while ensuring that signs will not detract from streetscapes or landscape characters of areas, and not raise traffic safety concerns.
- Promote passive recreational activities within the Shire.

Objective 2

To promote Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres as the main commercial and community activity areas in the Shire, and support the viability and vitality of these areas.

Strategies

- Concentrate the Shire's major retail activities in the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres.
- Develop a sense of place and opportunities for meeting and community interaction in the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres.
- ~~▪ Ensure that new development enhances the natural and built environment of the respective commercial/community centres.~~
- Implement the Structure Plans for the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centres
- Ensure use and development in the Diamond Creek Road Business Area (north east corner Diamond Creek Road and McLaughlans Lane, Plenty is of only for limited local convenience and does not detract from the retail role and function of Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre.
- Ensure that the future land use and development in activity centres is appropriate to the role and function of the centre and enhances the natural and built environment.
- Maintain the retail nature of uses in core retailing areas at pedestrian thoroughfare levels (ie. non-retail activities, such as offices and storage, should not be located at pedestrian thoroughfare levels in core retailing areas, as these uses detract from the retail presence of these areas).
- Ensure that new development enhances the accessibility of commercial and public areas to all users.
- Broaden the mix of land uses in and around major activity centres and neighbourhood activity centres to include services and medium density housing.
- Undertake infrastructure and streetscape improvements.
- ~~▪ Investigate car parking demand and supply for the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre.~~
- Develop and implement a new masterplan for traffic and landscape development along Main Hurstbridge Road which maintains two lane/two-way traffic but keeps open possible duplication after 2020 to help improve traffic flows and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, improve the town centre landscape and develop a distinct image.
- ~~▪ Implement a public space precinct development for Commercial Place in Eltham.~~
- Implement the *Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan, 2005*⁵⁴ and *Diamond Creek twenty20-Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Structure Plan and Leisure Facilities Plan, September 2006*.
- ~~▪ Ensure use and development in the Diamond Creek Road Business Area (Corner Diamond Creek Road and McLaughlans Lane) does not detract from the retail role and function of Diamond Creek township.~~

Objective 3

To promote good urban design in all [activity centres and townships](#) ~~;~~ [and recognise the importance of retaining the historical and individual characteristics of each area.](#)

Strategies

- Encourage the creation of a sense of place and opportunities for meeting and community interaction.
- ~~▪ Provide guidelines for residential design in urban areas.~~
- Ensure that new development enhances accessibility for all users [including pedestrian and cyclist access, improved public space, orientation to public transport and the main public transport networks.](#)
- ~~▪ Use Implement the Eltham Major Activity Centre Guidelines 2009 the documents *Main Road Eltham Building Facade and Shopfront Design Guidelines* (John Curtis Pty. Ltd 1996) ~~and~~ and the *Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan, 2005* ~~and the~~ [Bridge Street Business Precinct, Urban Design Framework](#) ~~to assist consideration of development in the Eltham shopping centre.~~ [to assist consideration of development in the Eltham Major Activity Centre.](#)~~
- ~~▪ Use the document *Bridge Street Business Precinct, December 2003* to assist consideration of development in the Bridge Street Area.~~
- ~~▪ Use Implement the *Diamond Creek twenty20 –Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Structure Plan and Leisure Facilities Plan, September 2006* ~~and the~~ [Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Guidelines 2009](#) to guide the urban form and landscape development in and around the [Diamond Creek Major -Aactivity Centre](#), ~~noting that aspects of the plan affect areas beyond the designated study area such as the image and character of approaches to the centre.~~~~
- Implement the *Hurstbridge Township Strategy 2002* and the *Hurstbridge Design Guidelines, Heidelberg-Kinglake Road (Main Road) Precinct 2013* to guide the built form and landscaping of the Hurstbridge Township.
- ~~Refer~~ [Implement to the Eltham Gateway Design Guidelines 2013 to provide guidance on new development in the Eltham Gateway.](#)
- [Ensure that business signs do not detract from streetscapes or landscape characters of areas, and do not raise traffic safety concerns.](#)
- [Ensure that new development is complementary to and enhances the existing historical and individual character of each locality](#)

Objective 4

To facilitate small scale industries [and business opportunities](#) and the retention of low impact [business and](#) industrial areas.

Strategies

- ~~▪ Encourage industrial uses to consolidate in designated industrial areas, with the exception of areas designated for peripheral sales and offices in the Eltham Major Activity Centre Structure Plan, 2005.~~
- ~~Discourage non industrial type uses from establishing in designated industrial areas~~ [Encourage industrial uses to consolidate in industrial areas.](#)

- With the exception of designated areas in the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Structure Plans, discourage non-industrial type uses from establishing in designated industrial areas.
- Encourage low impact uses such as offices, health centres and recreation venues on the north side of Brougham Street and west side of Susan Street (Eltham) as well as areas identified in the Diamond Creek Structure Plan.
- Encourage site consolidation and the development of bulky goods retailing in Bridge Street, Bolton Street and Sherbourne Road, Eltham.
- Discourage large inappropriate industrial uses from establishing in the Shire.
- Encourage occupiers of industrial estates to undertake co-ordinated beautification works.
- Encourage appropriate landscaping for existing and new developments in industrial areas.

Objective 5

To provide for land uses that expand tourism opportunities in the Shire and realise a potential for additional local employment.

Strategies

- Facilitate low impact tourism development opportunities that build on the cultural and physical characteristics of the 'green wedge'.
- Encourage the establishment of tourism related uses in urban locations where there is safe and efficient access to main roads, and which would not be to the detriment of neighbouring and surrounding land uses and from the neighbourhood character and streetscape.
- Encourage the establishment of tourism related uses in rural locations where there is direct access from a major road, and where such use and development is compatible with the environmental and landscape values of the site and surrounding area. Ensure that access is not reliant on unsuitable local roads and that the use will not adversely impact on neighbouring and surrounding land uses.
- Ensure tourism use is of a scale and type which can be adequately catered for by available infrastructure services.

~~Objective 6~~

~~To retain existing agricultural land for soil based agricultural production and to promote sustainable agricultural activities.~~

~~Strategies~~

- Protect the productive potential of agricultural land from inappropriate use and development.
- Provide for the continuance of sustainable agricultural activities.
- Facilitate opportunities for diversification in agricultural activities.
- Retain agricultural land in the north western area of the Shire and in Kangaroo Ground for predominantly soil based agricultural purposes.

▪ .

Implementation

The above strategies will be implemented by:

Using Local Policies

- Use local policy to provide guidelines for the consideration of applications with respect to development and use in the Eltham Major Activity Centre. The policy includes considerations of environmental character, amenity, traffic, parking and advertising signs (Eltham Major Activity Centre Policy, Clause 22.07).
- Use local policy to guide decisions about land use and development in and around the Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre. The Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Policy, Clause 22.14 deals with land use, building form and landscape, community and leisure facilities, transport and mobility.
- Use local policy to provide guidelines for the siting and design of industrial buildings. The policy includes considerations of landscaping, materials, building heights, loading and unloading facilities and earthworks (Industrial Areas Policy, Clause 22.08).

Applying Zones and Overlays

- Apply the Industrial 3 Zone to the three established industrial areas in Diamond Creek, Eltham and Research.
- Apply the Business 1 Zone to established retail areas in the Shire.
- Apply the Business 1 Zone to a [limited local convenience centre on the north east corner of highway related commercial precinct adjacent to Diamond Creek Road in Greensborough and McLaughlan's Lane, Plenty.](#)
- Apply the Business 2 Zone to two areas in the Shire ~~which form part of existing retail areas but are not part of the core retail concentrations in these centres. The areas are~~ at the Eltham Major Activity Centre (on the western side of Main Road) and the Diamond Creek ~~Town~~ [Major Activity](#) Centre (on the northern side of Main-Hurstbridge Road east of the railway crossing).
- ~~▪ Apply the Rural Zone to areas at the north western area of the Shire. The Schedule to the zone includes specifying a minimum lot size of 40 hectares.~~
- Apply the Township Zone to provide for a range of residential, commercial, light industrial and other uses which complement the multi-use function of smaller townships in the Shire.
- ~~▪ Apply the Special Use Zone to the designated 'Heritage Golf Course' in the south east of the Shire.~~
- Apply the Development Plan Overlay to the Kangaroo Ground commercial precinct to specify requirements over the future development of the area.
- Apply a variety of overlays which do not relate specifically to economic development but will highlight considerations for particular land parcels (e.g. significant landscape and land subject to inundation). These overlays are included under other themes.
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay to the Hurstbridge Township to specify requirements to guide development.

Undertaking Further Strategic Work

- [Implement the Eltham and Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre Structure Plans, the Bridge Street Business Precinct Urban Design Framework and Finalise strategy documents for Diamond Creek Township and the Hurstbridge Township Strategy.](#)
- [As part of structure planning for activity centres review the quality, extent and visual impact and effectiveness of signage in industrial, commercial and gateway precincts to allow businesses to effectively promote their presence, products and activities.](#)
- [Review the Industrial Areas Policy \(Clause 22.08\).](#)

- Finalise the Shire of Nillumbik Recreation Strategy.
- Prepare a parking precinct plan for the Eltham Major Activity Centre.
- Prepare a parking plan for Diamond Creek Major Activity Centre.
- Conduct a rural land use study to review the use, development and subdivision objectives and strategies in the Rural Zone.
- Review the Sustainable Agriculture Rebate program to determine if it is effective in meeting Council objectives.

Other Actions

- Meet with trader groups on a regular basis and provide advice and support.
- Participate in the Agribusiness Forum (in conjunction with the Shire's of Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges and Cardinia).
- Encourage participation in the sustainable farming workshops facilitated by the Department of Natural Resources & Environment.
- Participate in the New Business Development Service.
- Undertake initiatives of the Nillumbik Tourism Report (Nov 1996).
- Provide support to the Nillumbik Tourism Association.
- Promote Business Victoria Programs.
- Provide information on business assistance programs on the Council web site.
- Determine the future direction of the Edendale Community Farm.

21.05-514/12/2006
[Proposed](#)
[C86C44](#)**INFRASTRUCTURE****Overview**

The provision of appropriate infrastructure services such as public utilities, public open space, recreation and transport networks are integral to a variety of land uses. The dispersed nature of low-density residential areas creates some difficulties in the provision of a full range of infrastructure services, and rural areas invariably have only limited physical infrastructure. Planning for all areas of the municipality needs to take into ~~the~~ account the appropriate level of infrastructure provision required. New development is encouraged to be more concentrated at activity centres to ensure the most efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Relevant State Planning Policies in relation to infrastructure include Open Space (Clause 11.03), Integrated Transport (18.01), Movement Networks (18.02), Community Infrastructure (19.02) and Development Infrastructure (19.03). ~~include: Declared highways, railways & tramways (18.01), Car parking & public transport access to development (18.02), Bicycle transport (18.03), Water supply, sewerage & drainage (18.09), High pressure pipelines (18.11), Developer contributions to infrastructure (18.12) and various other infrastructure policies, Open space (15.10), and various housing policies (Clause 16) have direct relevance to this section of the Municipal Strategic Statement.~~

State Planning Policy states that *'planning for development of urban physical and community infrastructure should enable it to be provided in a way that is efficient, equitable, accessible and timely...'* It is important to note that the Council is regularly approached to allow development in non-urban areas. Rural areas do not and will not contain the levels of, and types of, infrastructure that are common-place in urban areas.

State Planning Policy also states that *'planning authorities are to consider the use of development contributions (levies) in the funding of infrastructure.'* This is particularly important in the Shire of Nillumbik for low-density housing in the Plenty/Yarrambat Corridor, as well as new residential developments in Plenty and Diamond Creek, and in-fill development throughout urban areas of the Shire.

Objective 1

To ensure the efficient provision of infrastructure to areas designated for residential and low-density residential development.

Strategies

- Encourage the provision of utility services to designated residential areas.
- ~~Identify areas which will have the most significant infrastructure requirements, such as in Plenty, Yarrambat and new residential areas immediately north and north east of Diamond Creek.~~
- Limit the development of residential and low-density residential services until critical infrastructure services are available, and in particular ensure the development of low-density residential areas in Plenty occurs in accordance with ~~the~~ development plan which includes, amongst other things, arrangements for reticulated water and sewerage in the area.
- Ensure the provision of useable public open space in new subdivision and encourage open space links to the existing open space network in accordance with the Recreation Strategy 2011-2019, Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011 and the Open Space Strategy 2005.
- Implement approved development contributions plans ~~Prepare Development Contribution Plans~~ for residential and low-density residential areas to assist in the fair

and equitable provision of infrastructure and review the need for further plans in the Shire.

- Encourage the implementation of best practice principles in relation to stormwater management, including (where appropriate) the development and enhancement of natural drainage lines ~~rather than pipe stormwater underground.~~ and promote reuse of stormwater on site.
- Implement the Shire of Nillumbik Sustainable Water Management Plan 2008.



Objective 2

To provide safe and efficient roads and road links within the municipality and to the wider region.

Strategies

- Upgrade the local road network to provide all weather roads and reduce environmental impacts on downstream waterways, by sealing unmade local roads where appropriate, in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Provide for adequate access and egress for emergency services to ensure community safety.
- Discourage the introduction of uses in areas along local roads (especially unsealed, narrow and/or no-through roads), where uses would attract significant additional vehicular movements which would be inconsistent with existing vehicular traffic and the capacity of the road, and/or which would be to the unacceptable detriment of the condition of the road.
- Recognise that traffic levels along Yan Yean Road ~~may increase~~[has increased](#) due, in part, to recent and anticipated future residential development in the ~~Mernda-Whittlesea~~ growth corridor in the City of Whittlesea. Ensure that land use adjacent to Yan Yean Road is compatible with the long term arterial road transport function of the road and that direct access to properties from Yan Yean Road is minimised.
- Provide for the long term duplication of Yan Yean Road, from Diamond Creek Road to Kurrak Road, and encourage sufficiently large set-backs for development and use on properties fronting the road along this alignment.
- ~~Encourage vehicular traffic generated by the Mernda-Whittlesea growth corridor in the City of Whittlesea, to access Melbourne via Plenty Road, and not via Yan Yean Road.~~
- [Recognise the broader role of roads for all users including cycling, walking and buses. Ensure integrated planning of transport modes, especially the provision of paths and roads to be continuously accessible in and between neighbourhoods and community facilities where possible to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling, use of mobility devises \(ie. motorised scooters/wheelchairs\) and access to public transport.](#)

Objective 3

To encourage increased public transport usage.

Strategies

- Promote medium density housing around scheduled public transport stops and where there is good access to commercial and community facilities and open space links.
- Encourage improved [and more flexible](#) public transport provision and public transport linkages across the Shire [which meets the needs of lower population densities on the urban fringe.](#)
- ~~Encourage the use of rail across the Shire by an increase in the availability of buses to feed the railway stations in the Shire.~~
- [Advocate accessible public transport options for people with disabilities to relevant transport authorities.](#)
- [Incorporate greater links between land use planning and transport especially in relation to activity centres and the public transport network.](#)

~~Objective 4~~

~~To minimise infrastructure servicing demand in rural areas.~~

~~Strategies~~

~~Refer to Objective 4 in 21.05-2 'Rural Land Use' for identified strategies.~~

Objective 45

To provide equitable local recreational facilities and public open spaces to meet local community needs.

Strategies

- Encourage, particularly through structure plans and strategies, the formation of open spaces and opportunities to link areas of public open space.
- ~~Identify~~ Refer to the [Recreation Strategy 2011-2019 and the Open Space Strategy, November 2005 to identify](#) recreational needs of local communities in the development of public open spaces in local areas.
- Provide active and passive recreational facilities as an integral part of each township.
- Consolidate public open space into viable management units.
- Provide public open space networks within reasonable walking distance of urban residential areas.
- Design public open spaces in ways that ensure that access is available to all persons where appropriate.
- View open space as an environmental resource and as a means of protecting significant habitat.
- ~~Require~~ Seek public open space contributions in accordance with the [Open Space Strategy, November 2005](#).
- [Provide active recreation areas, including playgrounds and identify opportunities for more sporting fields in accordance with the Recreation Strategy, 2000.](#)

Objective 56

To provide a network of public open spaces across the Shire and similarly a network of ~~bridle and walking paths~~ [recreation trails](#) throughout the Shire.

Strategies

- Link public open spaces where possible to provide diversity of recreational opportunities. [in accordance with the Open Space Strategy, November 2005.](#)
- Actively encourage the design of subdivisions to incorporate the potential for open space linkages and the retention of remnant vegetation and drainage lines as parts of open spaces.
- Provide appropriate access to regional recreation features.
- Identify a network of appropriate routes.

- Consider ~~the feasibility studies into the options~~ for the location provision of a ~~walking/bicycle trail~~ recreation trails including the development of regional trails along the Maroondah Aqueduct from Research to Sugarloaf Reservoir, trails from Greensborough to Diamond Creek and from Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge.

~~▪ (Parklinks Pty. Ltd. & Ardam Design Services, 1999).~~

- Progressively install trail infrastructure.

Objective 76

To ensure access and mobility needs of people ~~with~~ of all disabilities are:-

- addressed for existing public places;
- encouraged for existing private meeting places; and,
- considered in future use and development proposals.

▪

Strategies

- Improve accessibility to Council facilities and programs for people with disabilities.
- Ensure that disability access issues are addressed in strategic planning initiatives.
- Incorporate ~~the~~ physical mobility and access needs of people ~~with~~ all disabilities in the design, construction and maintenance of public roads, footpaths, seating, ~~disabled~~ designated parking bays for people with disabilities and other physical infrastructures, providing topography permits.
- Encourage provision of accessibility to private meeting places for people with disabilities.
- Require applications to address accessibility issues for commercial proposals and other proposals where appropriate.
- Actively promote to developers their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), and the economic effects of non-compliance.

Implementation

The above strategies will be implemented by:

Using Local Policies

- Use a local policy for areas having appropriate infrastructure provision and good access to public transport and public open space, which may be proposed for medium density housing (Medium Density Housing Policy, Clause 22.01).
- Use a local policy for land identified in the Framework Plan as ‘Farming’ to control the creation of small lots in rural areas (~~Small Lot Subdivision Policy~~ Subdivision in Green Wedge Areas, Clause 22.02).
- ~~Use a local policy to control the development of more than one dwelling on a lot to avoid infrastructure inefficiencies in rural areas and protect environment and landscape values (Multiple Dwellings in Non Urban Areas Policy, Clause 22.03).~~

Applying Zones and Overlays

- Apply the Residential 1 Zone and the Low Density Residential Zone to contain township areas which can be serviced by an appropriate range of utility services.
- Apply the Public Use Zone to areas of public infrastructure in the Shire.
- Apply the Road Zone Category 1 to proclaimed State highways and the Road Zone Category 2 to other key roads.
- Apply the Public Park and Recreation Zone to areas used as public recreation reserves.
- Apply the Special Use Zone to the Heritage Golf Course at Christmas Hills.
- Apply the Public Acquisition Overlay to land proposed to be acquired by Melbourne Water, VicRoads, Parks Victoria and Nillumbik Shire Council.
- Apply Development Plan Overlays and Design and Development Overlays in areas of Plenty and Yarrambat where they assist in the co-ordinated provision of services to new residential and low density residential areas.
- Apply the Restructure Overlay to three old and inappropriate subdivisions at Rankin Street in Panton Hill, Fawkner Crescent in Hurstbridge and Smiths Gully Road in Smiths Gully.

- Apply the Development Contributions Plan Overlay to require development contributions applying to the development of the areas known as Diamond Creek North, Areas A, ~~Diamond Creek North, Area~~ and B and the Plenty Low Density Area, west of Yan Yean Road and south of Kurrak Road, Plenty.
- Apply the Schedule to Clause 52.01 to specify an open space provision of 5% in Diamond Creek North Areas A and B.
- Apply the Schedule to Clause 52.01 to specify an open space contribution of 7.9% of site value for the Plenty Low Density Area, ~~in accordance with the approved Development Plan and the relevant Development Contributions Plan.~~
- ~~▪ Apply the Schedule to Clause 52.01 to specify an open space contribution of 5% of site value for Diamond Creek North, Area B, in accordance with the approved Development Plan and the relevant Development Contributions Plan.~~

Undertaking Further Strategic Work

- ~~▪ Finalise the Shire of Nillumbik Recreation Strategy.~~
- Finalise a disability access policy and develop and implement a disability access action plan.
- Implement the Open Space Strategy, November 2005.
- ~~▪ Prepare an open space strategy that will include investigating the appropriate management of public reserves, and opportunities which exist for linking existing open space areas and creating further open space.~~
- ~~▪ Facilitate a development plan for the Plenty Low Density Residential Area.~~

~~Other Actions~~

- ~~▪ Provide Council representation on the Christmas Hills Working Group (with respect to the proposed Watsons Creek Reservoir).~~
- ~~▪ Establish a consultation group with representatives from Council, servicing authorities, the development industry and the community to advise on the ongoing co-ordination of the provision of services.~~
- ~~▪ Implement recommendations in the Shire of Nillumbik Playground Development Plan 1996.~~
- ~~▪ Review the provision of community transport options with relevant agencies to ensure improved access to community facilities and services.~~
- ~~▪ Provide disability access information in relevant Council documents and promote disability accessible venues and programs run by Council.~~

ADDENDUM 2

Exemptions contained in the schedules to the Victorian Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations

See: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/91251/Exemptions-from-requiring-a-planning-permit-to-remove,-destroy-or-lop-native-vegetation-Guidance.pdf

New Native Vegetation Clearing Regulations were gazetted on 12 Dec 2017. These are enacted through amendments to local council planning schemes		
Exemptions – unless any of the following exemptions apply a permit is required to remove, lop or destroy native vegetation.		
Exemption	Clause	Rationale for removal
52.48 – Bushfire Protection	Advisory Note 39	Defendable space - 10/30 rule or 10/50 if in an area covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).
52.17 – Native Vegetation – key items for PALS	2.3 Dead Vegetation	Dead trees under 40cm diameter at 1.3 M high
	2.4 Emergency works	Where an immediate risk to personal injury or damage to property.
	2.7 Fences	Operate and maintain existing fences and construction of a boundary fence (4 metre rules applies).
	2.8 Fire protection	As per 52.48 above.
	2.11 Grazing	Domestic stock grazing on freehold land can remove vegetation.
	2.16 Lopping and Pruning	1/3 of foliage (trunk must remain)
	2.20 Personal use	For >10 Ha - reasonable amount for domestic use – trees under 40cm diameter at 1.3 M high and used for cooking/fencing/heating/hobbies.
	2.22 Planted vegetation	Any vegetation sown or planted.
	2.24 Regrowth	Less than 10 years old
52.16 – Native Vegetation Precinct Plan	NVPP must be approved by Minister for Planning	Most of the exemptions above do not apply under a NVPP
52.03 – Specific sites and exclusions	Refer Local Planning Provision	Specific sites by location.

Permit Process – There are three assessment pathways to obtain a permit determined by the proposed extent of removal and the location.			
Extent of Native Vegetation Removal	Location Category relates to Biodiversity Value (refer map page19 of guidelines)		
	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
<0.5 Ha and no large trees	Basic	Intermediate	Detailed
<0.5 Ha and one or more large trees	Intermediate	Intermediate	Detailed
>0.5 Ha	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed
Assessment Pathway	All applications to remove native vegetation must include the information set out in Table 4 of the guidelines (pages 20 and 21).		
Basic	The applicant can use the NVIM tool to prepare the application.		
Intermediate	The applicant can use the NVIM tool to prepare the application.		
Detailed	An accredited site assessor must complete the assessment report and provide additional information set out in Table 5 of the guidelines (page 22).		
	Note: A responsible authority cannot require an applicant for a Clause 52.16 or Clause 52.17 permit that is in the Basic or Intermediate Assessment Pathway to engage an accredited native vegetation assessor		
NVIM Tool	Native Vegetation Information Management System		
The native vegetation removal tool will generate a report (including biodiversity offset that is submitted with a permit application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.16 and Clause 52.17 of Victoria’s planning schemes . The report should also be included with any other application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation.			
This tool assists the applicant to identify their property and the extent of proposed vegetation removal, it will produce a report identifying; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Assessment Pathway, 2. Location Category, 3. Extent of Removal, 4. Strategic Biodiversity Value, 5. Condition Score, 6. Offset Type and, 7. Offset Amount. 			
This information provides the basis of the application to remove the native vegetation.			

PALS Submission and Response	
<p>PALS provided a comprehensive submission to the review of native vegetation clearing guidelines on March 8 2017 and made a formal presentation to DELWP on March 31 2017. Our initial view on the draft regulations was that it was draconian, failed to adequately consider the primacy of human life and did not recognise the valid contribution of landowners as custodians of the land.</p> <p>PALS made a number of recommendation to the review in particular relating to;</p>	
Exemptions	PALS sought to expand the range of exemptions and this appears to have largely been accommodated however we may seek to reduce the 10Ha threshold on personal use to enable more Nillumbik landowners access to this sensible exemption.
Bushfire Safety	PALS sought to exempt properties covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay from these regulations – this was not accommodated however the expanded defensible space (10/50 rule) in BMO areas is welcomed.
Mapping	<p>PALS sought improvements to mapping and simpler tools to enable more accurate assessment – the NVIM tool appears to satisfy these suggestions and is welcomed.</p> <p>PALS is yet to fully consider the full impact of “location types” in Nillumbik and we are concerned that much of Nillumbik may fall into Location 3 (placing all applications into the Detailed Pathway). We will consult our membership further on this.</p>
Application Process	PALS sought a much more streamlined application process – the previous process was much too cumbersome and complicated – the pathway process for Basic and Intermediate pathways is welcomed as it enable applicants to avoid the use of a costly accredited native vegetation assessor – it also creates a strong incentive for applicants to reduce their clearing footprint to push their application into these simpler permit pathways.
Offsets	PALS is still seeking major changes to improve the transparency and governance of the biodiversity offset regime – we recognise improvement in the application process and will continue to advocate for major changes in this area.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

The community of Nillumbik wants more protection of our green environment, we want to see more emphasis on having large biodiversity values, a healthy nature and a green environment. That's our vision.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.

3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Again, where is the emphasis on the protection of what is so valuable to us. These key moves push for development and destruction of our leafy towns and bushland areas. Environment always seems to come last with this council, and always together with another discipline, in this case agriculture.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik’s relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Sustainability of our natural environment must be placed as a first principle, above all others.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

[Goal 2: Active and creative people](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Active and creative people are great, but we don't need more tracks, we need

to ensure that the green spaces we have do not further decline. How about investing in weed control instead?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

The problem here is the "But" when reading this: [council] acknowledges that native plants and animals have intrinsic value but that there is also a need for balanced outcomes. Maintaining a healthy natural environment is vital but creates a complex challenge to find the right balance between protection and how we use land. Seems like this council is a bit out of balance and prefers development over protection.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

The Nillumbik community does not want any further business, industry and employment growth in the short to medium term. We want to keep our leafy green look, which is what the tourists like. We also don't want to lose any more natural bushland to the grazing of horses.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

5?

This is the most dangerous goal for the Green Wedge! To change the objective of land currently zoned RCZ and instead to promote the right to farm and the tourism allowed in conjunction with farming equals destruction to our natural environment! Do not loose any land zoned as RCZ and manage this land for conservation purposes, do not allow anymore destruction of land zoned as RCZ.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Please see my submission attached.

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP submission To Nillumbik Shire Council.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

████████████████████

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

To Nillumbik Shire Council,

This submission is to let you know that I (including my family) don't support the draft Green Wedge Management Plan.

This proposed plan is directed to allow bushfire protection, biodiversity conservation and agriculture/tourism to be allowed at the same time. However, this is impossible. Managing land for conservation purposes does not allow grazing or agricultural activities at the same time.

Managing land for bushfire protection modifies the land and biodiversity values - as we well know; "High biodiversity values equals High bushfire risk". As such, a piece of land cannot be managed for conservation and bushfire protection purposes at the same time.

Nillumbik council spent hundred-thousands of dollars to establish an independent community group to give advice on what the community thinks how the Green Wedge should be managed. Why does council not listen and adopt these recommendations? Can't you see that the community does not want to have a second Doncaster, but instead loves the green environment? However, you are a pro-development council and do not seem to care about protecting our environment.

This is what we want from our Councillors:

- Protect the Rural Conservation Zone and manage it for conservation purposes
- Only allow development where it is safe from bushfires and does not impact on biodiversity values
- Protect the biodiversity values we've got – remember that you cannot replace a tree, because of the 80-year time lag in between.

As such in short: do not replace the current GWMP. Or draft a new GWMP and adopt all recommendations from the independent community survey.

Ensure that the protection of our natural environment is the most important goal in Nillumbik's GWMP.

Kind regards,

G. Hilty

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Waters down environmental protections by rebalancing towards to 'people' over 'place', threatens zoning changes (RCV) and lacks substantive reference to crucial topics, e.g. biodiversity, climate change. It also completely lacks performance measures. Lack reference to the recommendations of the 80%+ members of the Community Panel, thus undermining the integrity of the earlier consultative process. To what extent did Council defend itself to the Ombudsman?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Neutral

Key Move 2 - Neutral

Key Move 3 - Neutral

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

How will the success of implementation be measured?

'Conversations' program requires both provision of reliable information and small-scale processes for bringing together diverse community interests.

Probably too late to do much to bridge the existing divisions, which seem to have widened rather than narrowed recently.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice

- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Neutral

Aboriginal voice - Strongly agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Neutral

Manage change for future benefit - Neutral

Collaboration and connectedness - Disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Neutral

Social equity - Neutral

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Neutral

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Neutral

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

It is virtually impossible to disagree with any of these motherhood (or fatherhood) ideals, e.g. 'manage change for future benefit' (how could one disagree?), but they lack substantive and practical detail, e.g. how, exactly, will the voice of the Traditional Custodians be heard?

To what extent can we expect recognition from the State for our contribution to the welfare of Greater Melbourne?

The precautionary principle is essential, and it is reassuring that it continues to

be in the Plan. But will it be protected from the designs of Councillors beholden to special interest groups?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

General: Acknowledgement of primary role of the State in planning policy framework is welcome, though I fear there are pressures to push for amendments that will allow questionable land management uses.

O1.1. Of course, I would like to see local communities engaged, provided they are well-informed. I fear that 'shared responsibility' is code for Council timidity in the face of narrow partisan political pressures.

A1.6. Worry about consolidation of the small rural lots leading to environmental degradation

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

O2.3. Support development of trail usage, where appropriate to local environment. Mountain bikes and horses must be restricted to already damaged areas and protected by buffer zone

O2.5. Support greater input from Wurundjeri People

O2.6. Need to recognise tensions between tourism and other economic enterprises and threat to existing natural environment and its enhancement

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

General: much of the rhetoric here is welcome, e.g. 'stop the decline of biodiversity', but there is a lack of specificity and measurable outcomes. There is a need for residents who hold land in stewardship (so-called 'owners') to act responsibly and to face sanctions if they do not. Again, there are significant omissions

O3.1. Wildlife corridors nowhere mentioned

A3.6, 3.11, 3.12. All strongly support

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

O4.2 I support the responsible promotion of agriculture for food production (as land around Great Melbourne is systematically being taken out of productive use) on existing cleared land with appropriate buffer zones.

A4.3 Support in principle but worry about special interests using modified land controls for development purposes

O4.4/A4.9 Undue emphasis on equine interests, perhaps reflecting power of certain lobby groups

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

General: much to like in the rhetoric of this section, but once again, KPI's are missing and there is no acknowledgment of the fact that 80%+ of randomly selected Community Panelists made over 30 recommendations to Council, which, I'm afraid, shows timidity rather than 'Responsible Leadership'.

A5.3. 'Conversations' program should look at combining the provision of expert information as in the Melbourne/Sydney large-scale, top-down programs with the intimacy of the current 'St. Andrews Conversations'

A5.6. Worry about watering down of current provisions

A5.7. Could lead to expansion of the UGB

A5.9. Support but not optimistic

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

See uploaded file, which covers much the above in a fuller, more appropriate narrative style.

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP Draft. - TF Response.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

████████████████████

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

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<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

GWMP Draft: TF Response

The debates surrounding Nillumbik's attempts to redraft its GWMP take place within the broader environmental and socio-political contexts of potentially catastrophic climate change and the fracturing of democratic decision making as extreme and often self-interested views pull away from the political centre. The first threatens the physical wellbeing of current and future of the planet and its inhabitants, and the second threatens the fabric of the human community. Nillumbik by itself of course cannot reverse both trends but it present a model for dealing with them. The current draft makes some attempt to address both issues but needs to deal more thoroughly with both.

The current draft aims to redress a perceived imbalance between values symbolised by these two foci, Place and People. It is greatly informed by the views of some Nillumbik residents that the original plan was heavily biased towards the environmental values of Place and the way in which it was implemented was heavy-handed and disadvantaged certain communities of People, who felt the lifestyle to which they aspired was denied to them. The current draft specifically aims to reduce reliance on legislation and enforcement and increase shared understandings and collaborative action amongst a severely divided population, even though it appears a vast majority may support the general concept of a Green Wedge.

Although it clearly places limits on such activities it is not clear how legitimate development of such activities can be quarantined from adjacent bushland or how they may affect existing wildlife corridors. Perhaps of greatest concern is the apparent downgrading of the value of biodiversity, a significant bulwark against detrimental climate change. The first priority of 'Plan Melbourne 2017-2050' (Appendix 1) is 'to maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.' (44). The Draft Plan mentions the importance of biodiversity, noting its decline in Victoria.

There is little in the Draft with which to specifically disagree since it does systematically acknowledge the recommendations put forth by the 80% + members of the Community Panel (as well as concerns of the 'Minority Report') and is written in very general terms. I am particular pleased to see a strong acknowledgment of a role for Wurundjeri input, though it is yet to be spelled out. But I wish to make a few general comments under the twin headings of Place and People.

Place: The GW occupies a large proportion of the geography of Nillumbik and plays a major role in protecting Melbourne from unfettered urban growth by asking its residents to restrict the way in which they live to protect and enhance the existing natural environment for the greater good of the city and its inhabitants. The contribution, unfortunately, remains unrecognised and unrewarded by the state government. The GW concept dates from the 1970s and was legislatively defined in 1987 (Part 1, p 1) and specifically legislated in 2003 (Part 1, p 2). Nillumbik's initial GWMP dates from 2010 and posited 'economic environmental and social sustainability' (Part 1, p 7). It exists within 'a strong state planning policy framework' (23) that cannot be unilaterally changed.

The current draft certainly does not ignore Place but it places less emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the existing natural environment and more on potential limited modification of it to promote economic and social goals, like tourist enterprises, commercial agriculture and hobby farming. Although it clearly places limits on such activities it is not clear how legitimate development of such activities can be quarantined from adjacent bushland or how they may affect existing wildlife corridors. Perhaps of greatest concern is the apparent downgrading of the value of biodiversity, a significant bulwark against detrimental climate change. The first priority of 'Plan Melbourne 2017-2050' (Appendix 1) is 'to maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.' (44). The Draft Plan mentions the importance of biodiversity, noting its decline in Victoria. However, it also stresses the need to 'find the right balance between protection and how we use the land' but sees the provision of information of the only means to achieve this goal (29)

People

Community support for the GWMP is of course a necessity. Without significant majority support combined with attention to minority opinions the current highly polarised battles between segments of the community will keep recurring. Despite the embeddedness of a GWMP since 2010, in recent years the division only seems to have increased, and the recent 'deliberative democracy' of the Community Plan did nothing to alleviate it. A major aim of the Draft is to promote collaboration among residents and between Council and residents, and to this end there are many mentions to a Green Wedge. The draft appears to place great faith in a mechanism called 'Green Wedge Conversations', based on models used by councils in Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland as well as overseas.

https://nillumbiksc-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/yasmin_green_nillumbik_vic_gov_au/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B64ACFCE2-4AED-4667-B576-46FC60E31320%7D&file=GWMP%20Consultation%20Document.docx&action=default&mobileRedirect=true

1. Approach

- a. Uncomfortable with on-line response set-up which sets up rigid, metric categories for issues that require nuance and qualification
- b. Difficult to disagree with the high-level generalisations that are offered. Who could possibly oppose the proposition to 'Manage change for future benefit'?
- c. Preference for sticking more closely to the recommendations of the 80%+ panellists – difficult to follow how some were dealt with in the discursive draft document, especially from 'Inputs' table p10ff
- d. So, I have chosen to put my views and suggestions in narrative terms

2. Context

- a. Potentially catastrophic climate change
- b. Fracturing political debate carried out in strident tones that both threaten the core values of democratic debate and elevate self-interest over the community cohesion

3. GWMP
 - a. History: importance and longevity
 - i. Concept and legislation – brief history ok (p 9)
 - ii. Role in mitigating climate change acknowledged (p 10)
 - iii. Nillumbik’s contribution and lack of reward (p 13)
 - iv. Role of state planning framework – well done (p 9)
 - b. Change in emphasis from place to people, reducing legislative and enforcement processes in favour of provision of information and voluntary cooperation (p 11)
 - c. Role of panel
 4. Place
 - a. Tripartite aims from the start
 - b. Whole of government approach
 - c. Perception of need to ‘rebalance’
 - d. But climate change threatens the natural world and with it the human sphere. In the end, addressing it effectively is non-negotiable
 - e. Precautionary principle is essential and must continually provide a measure of potential actions
 - f. Biodiversity is at the heart of our response to threat – need safeguards with respect to any modification of current land use, i.e. via permits in RCZ; containment, quarantining of farming (agricultural or hobby farming), commercial and recreational use of public and private land to prevent negative effects on remnant bushland. Continued use of planning permits but simplified process that aims provide and test knowledge of acceptable uses
 5. People:
 - a. Importance in carrying out GW provisions
 - b. Broad support for Nillumbik GW across Shire
 - c. Allow for diversity of lifestyle within limits ranging from minimal impact eg SUZ 2 to hobby farming on appropriate land
 - d. Competing objectives
 - i. Township – rural
 - ii. Hobby farm environmentalists – status quo+ conservationists
 - e. Green Wedge Conversations
 - i. Principles
 - ii. Models
 - iii. Insufficiencies
 1. Information bubbles, alternative facts and distrust of science and expertise
 2. Scale?
 - f. Opportunities for smaller-scale conversations
 - i. Format
 - ii. Trained facilitation teams: council staff and selected volunteers
-

RESPONSE TEXT

Approach

It is clear that a lot of hard work has gone into the Draft Management Plan (DMP), and it covers a lot of ground, albeit in a rather general form. I would have preferred it to have stuck more closely to the recommendations of the 80%+ panellists who worked so diligently in preparing them, and I found it very difficult to see how some were dealt within the narrative section and even in the second half of the ‘Inputs’ table, which was more useful. I would be

curious to learn how the Community Panellist majority views the DMP and hope they are given a major voice in the upcoming consultations.

I am uncomfortable with the on-line response set-up, which creates rigid, metric categories for issues that require nuance and qualification, though there is room for elaboration for each. It is difficult to disagree with many of the high-level generalisations offered, e.g. Who could possibly oppose the proposition that we should ‘manage change for future benefit’?

So, I have chosen to put my views and suggestions in narrative terms, starting with an attempt to put the management of the Green Wedge (GW) within some very broad perspectives and then concentrating on People and Place.

Context

The debates surrounding Nillumbik’s effort to redraft the DMP are taking place within the broader environmental and socio-political contexts of potentially catastrophic climate change and the fracturing of democratic decision making, as extreme and often self-interested views pull away from the scientific consensus and the political centre. The first threatens the current and future physical health of our planet and its inhabitants, and the second threatens the social, political and economic fabric of the human community. Nillumbik by itself of course cannot reverse both trends, but it can present a model for dealing with them. Effective management of the GW thus is important in its own right and also as a contribution to Australian society and beyond, especially in the absence of strong federal government leadership.

The Green Wedge and Its Management

The DMP quite rightly situates the current review within the legislative and planning policy history of Melbourne’s GWs and Nillumbik’s contribution to them. It provides a brief history of the concept dating back to the 1970s and mentions the importance of the State in implementing and regulating it, citing key policies that govern its management (p 9). It acknowledges the GW’s role in mitigating climate change (p 10) and the importance of Nillumbik’s contribution to implementing and maintaining it, despite few resources being allocated for this important work (p 13).

However, as is made clear throughout the current DMP, there has been a significant change in emphasis from ‘place’ to ‘people’, seeking to reduce the importance of legislative and enforcement processes in favour of the provision of information and voluntary landholder cooperation (e.g. p 11). It would be a shame to see people and place as binary oppositions since effective planning requires them both. Compared to its predecessor, the DMP places less weight on maintaining and enhancing the existing natural environment and more on the limited modification of it to promote economic and social goals, like tourist enterprises, commercial agriculture and hobby farming, all of which have been clearly allowed (and encouraged) in the current Plan. In a nutshell, it claims the need to ‘find the right balance between protection and how we use the land’ (p 29)

The Importance of People

Planning schemes cannot be effective without the support, or at least acquiescence, of the people affected by them. Wilful disregard or ignorance of planning provisions is not unknown, even in areas like the Bend of Islands, where the community is generally knowledgeable and unified but where the presence of trail bikes and pets occasionally have flaunted the zoning conditions. I hope that Council will not retreat from its obligation to monitor such violations, enforce the relevant requirements and require restitution for damage done.

Although there appears to be strong support across the Shire for the concept of a GW, there are quite different views about how it should affect the lives and livelihoods of its residents. Competing objectives exist between some township and some rural inhabitants and among rural residents in different communities. Notwithstanding the existence of the GW in concept and legislation over decades, in recent times division seem to have deepened and voices become more strident. Despite the goals of the recent Community Panel process of 'deliberative democracy', the gulf apparently has increased.

The scope of the original Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) embraced the areas environmental, economic and social sustainability, a vision further recognised by the recent Panel in their vision statement, which was endorsed by Council ('Response', p 8). It is meant to allow for a diversity of lifestyle and economic activities while 'living within the landscape' (whatever that actually means). Thus, it can vary from minimal impact on the surrounding bush ('residential conservation') to farming and recreational activities where appropriate.

I have learned that in recent years an indeterminate but vocal section of the rural community believes that their values and lifestyle has not been sufficiently acknowledged by Council and that they have been actively discriminated against both in theory and practice. It appears this grievance has informed the DMP's emphasis on 'rebalance', even though many others believe that they have been respected and their interests well looked after. In this sense 'rebalancing' seems to favour the expressed needs of one particular group. A key suggestion of DMP to enhance the capacity of communities and individual landholders to make informed and wise decisions on how to live on their property is the introduction of a 'Green Wedge Conversations' program.

Based on models operating in cities like Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland, among others, these events bring together panels of experts on specific issues affecting local residents and are open to everyone who is interested. This approach aims to promote a shared knowledge base that may help residents provide input into policy formation and make choices about how they wish to live. It certainly is worth trying.

Nevertheless, I wonder to what extent such large-scale events would be taken up and act to foster a sense of shared community in Nillumbik. There seems little opportunity for interaction either with the panel or among participants, but maybe there is a way to enhance that possibility when translated into a smaller scale by adding space and time for break-out groups with trained facilitators. Also, given our broader culture in which individuals often operate in closed 'thought bubbles', and science and research are placed alongside of 'alternative facts', I wonder how widely accepted such information will. It appears that the 'expert' information presented in the recent Community Panel exercise may not have done much to promote unity. Still, on many issues, expert knowledge may well be welcomed by many residents.

It seems to me that on the most contentious issues, though, we have lost the capacity to listen, so I suggest an additional process be trialled where deep-seated conflict exists. When called for by potential participants or suggested by Council, it may be possible to introduce a voluntary process facilitated by an agency like the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV), trained council staff or community members acting on Council's behalf. Such a process would bring together community members perhaps at first just to listen respectfully to each other and then perhaps to move towards canvass potential ways forward. Although the DSCV offers a free service conducted by trained mediators, the training of local staff and residents would provide the opportunity to disseminate conflict management skills throughout the Nillumbik community and perhaps lead to greater respect and resilience.

The Importance of Place

Planning schemes of course exist only with respect to defined geographic spaces – 'Place'. The Nillumbik GW has specific boundaries containing a variety of local ecologies as well as human habitation. For thousands of years it was managed by the Wurundjeri people, and it is important, to the extent possible that future management incorporates their input, particularly with respect to the stewardship of what we have inherited (or confiscated) from them (p 19). I realise that consultation with the Wurundjeri Council is ongoing, and it should be encouraged. Perhaps a position on the expanded ESAC would be useful.

The importance of place also is acknowledged by the 'whole of government' approach contained in the DMP. If seriously carried through, it would mean that the presence of GW concerns is embedded in all spheres of local government, rather than relegating it to a few specific ones only, and continuous consciousness of place would be present.

At the very heart of 'place' is climate change, which essentially threatens the natural world and with it human habitation as we know it. In the end, addressing it effectively is non-negotiable. There are, of course, many factors involved, most of them emanating from far beyond the borders of Nillumbik. Council has a climate change policy and sponsors a number of programs aimed reducing our own contributions to promoting it. As far as the GW is concerned, the reduction of biodiversity is a great threat. I'm sure there will be detailed responses from others more qualified than I that comment on this aspect. However, it may be worth pointing out that biodiversity was at the top of list of what 'the community values about the Nillumbik GW' in the 2010 GWMP (p 11), that the state government's *Biodiversity Strategy 2037* 'sets out the roadmap to stop the decline of our biodiversity and achieve overall ... improvement' and that the first of the 'desired outcomes for green wedges ...' (p 29), and that *Plan Melbourne 2017* explicitly advocates to 'protect and enhance environmental and biodiversity assets' (Appendix 1).

To address the issue of biodiversity necessitates the application of the 'precautionary principle' wherever land use change is proposed. Safeguards are needed with respect to any modification of current land use, such as any potential RCZ rezoning (p 41), as well as to contain or quarantine farming (agricultural or hobby farming), commercial and recreational use of public and private land to prevent negative effects on remnant bushland. Wildlife corridors (seemingly absent from the DMP) and buffer zones are essential. Continued use of planning permits, but

perhaps a within simplified process that aims to provide and test knowledge of acceptable uses, may be workable. However, in addition to enhancing the knowledge of local landowners as suggested, there is a clear role for continued legislation, monitoring and enforcement to prevent long-term damage. Compromise in the name of 'rebalancing' is dangerous.

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Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

This submission is submitted by Wayne Kinrade on behalf of the Green Wedge Community Panel. A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does not satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 2 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 3 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 4 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 5 - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Principles

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- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Strongly disagree

Aboriginal voice - Strongly disagree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Strongly disagree

Manage change for future benefit - Strongly disagree

Collaboration and connectedness - Strongly disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Strongly disagree

Social equity - Strongly disagree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Strongly disagree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Strongly disagree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does not satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does not satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a

fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a

fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a

fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

A majority of the Green Wedge Community Panel consider the draft is at odds with the position of the Community Panel. It does not satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations. The draft plan lacks specifics and proposes radical changes to the Green Wedge. Our Green Wedge must be protected but this draft plan will have the opposite effect. A majority of the Community Panel consider the draft plan needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack the core foundations of the Green Wedge must be removed.

You can upload your file here.

[Draft GWMP submission by a majority of the Community Panel.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

A submission, compiled and presented by a majority of
the **Green Wedge Community Panel**

in response to the **Draft Nillumbik Green Wedge
Management Plan June 2019**

*A plan lacking in specifics which proposes radical changes to the Green
Wedge*Page 2

Who we are

Last year Nillumbik Shire Council commissioned a significant program of community consultation on its Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP), embracing meetings with a range of stakeholders, an online survey, coffee shop meetings and a series of open community workshops. An extensive 'Community Engagement Report' captured the views expressed during this program.

The final phase of the program was a Community Panel, comprising 42 Shire residents randomly selected through a rigorous, independent process. The Panel sat for six Saturdays from August to November 2018 to review the existing GWMP and to make recommendations to Council. Recommendations were required to be supported by at least 80 per cent of Panel participants. In framing its recommendations the Panel carefully considered a wide range of views, including those reflected in the Community Engagement Report. The Panel's report was presented to Council on 17 November 2018.

This submission to the draft GWMP has been prepared by a majority of the Community Panel, who following their formal contribution as members of the Panel felt an obligation to review the draft in the context of the clearly expressed views of the community.

Background

In 1994, the State Government's Local Government Review Board declared that the newly-formed Shire of Nillumbik was to be a conservation Shire, with the Green Wedge as its strategic focus.¹

1 Nillumbik Shire Council, *Nillumbik Green Wedge Management Plan: Part 2: Delivering the vision*, p. 2. Available at www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/planning-matters/planning-for-our-shire/green-wedge/nillumbik_green_wedge_management_plan_actions.docx.

The Community Engagement Report noted that:

- 'The environment including plants, animals and the bush was... considered important by respondents from all engagement activities'²

2 Wayfarer Consulting 2018, *Nillumbik Green Wedge Management Plan: Community Engagement Report*, p. 12. Available at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/gwmp/community-panel.

- '[The] natural environment – native vegetation/waterways/flora and fauna... is substantial and interconnected and still in remarkably good condition given the proximity to Melbourne'³

3 Ibid.

- In comments submitted in the online survey, 'the most common theme was to protect the Green Wedge... 'don't mess it up''⁴

4 Ibid, p. 41.

The overarching Metropolitan Planning Strategy, *Plan Melbourne*, requires Green Wedge Management Plans to 'protect and manage the value of green wedges'⁵

5 The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2017, *Plan Melbourne Strategy 2017–2050*, p. 87. Available at www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/the-plan.and to 'protect biodiversity assets'.⁶

6 Ibid.

The Victorian Government's *Biodiversity 2037* strategy states there should be no 'net loss' to biodiversity as a result of permitted clearing of vegetation.⁷

7 The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2017, *Protecting Victoria's Environment: Biodiversity 2037*, p. 14. Available at www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan. Page 3

Our overall assessment

The draft is at odds with the Panel's position. If implemented this draft GWMP will not satisfy the requirements set out in State planning documents nor will it meet community expectations.

Our Green Wedge must be protected and conserved but this draft plan will have the opposite effect.

Of major concern is what is missing. No specific actions are proposed to address the ongoing decline of biodiversity in the green wedge or the loss of native vegetation. The draft lacks objectives and specific actions to address biodiversity-related issues.

In contrast, the current GWMP describes the complex interaction of these issues. It has nine high priority actions addressing biodiversity, and sixteen medium priority actions.

Also of concern, the draft proposes actions that threaten to degrade the Green Wedge. In particular, it says that Council will:

- advocate for changes to township boundaries 'to accommodate [sic] incremental growth'⁸

8 Nillumbik Shire Council 2019, *Draft for Consultation: Green Wedge Management Plan*, p. 22. Available at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/gwmp.

- 'investigate options to maintain the amenity and productivity' of rural land adjacent to urban areas⁹

9 Ibid, p. 24. i.e. introduce new land uses, possibly including subdivision, outside the urban growth boundary (UGB), thereby increasing the footprint of townships

- lobby for a rezoning of the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) areas, i.e. water down the planning scheme protection of the Green Wedge¹⁰

10 Ibid, p. 40.

- attempt to lessen the current application of the RCZ because it 'is an inhibitor to... the right to farm',¹¹

11 Ibid. and

- remove Environmental Significance Overlays (ESOs) from 'protected' land used for agriculture and hobby farms, even when significant biodiversity/habitat is found there (see Action A3.2 – guided by A3.1) This concerns RCZ land, the prime purpose of which is conservation i.e. undermines planning provisions

We also note that:

- Some of the 'actions' presented in the report are either aspirational, not accompanied by any actionable items, or provide nothing to guide their implementation, and
- The 'Five key moves for the shire' are generic and there is no explanation of the rationale for their strategic importance Page 4

Rezoning

Most of Nillumbik is zoned RCZ, the primary purpose of which is conservation. The Council wants to rezone some areas Green Wedge Zone (GWZ), the primary purpose of which is agriculture, with tourism also having a role. Such rezoning would allow:

- most agriculture to be introduced without the need for a planning permit;
- subject to a permit, intensive animal husbandry such as cattle feedlots, prohibited in the RCZ;
- subject to a permit, approval of a range of recreational and tourism land uses

The following is put forward in support of the rezoning proposal:

[The] current application [of the RCZ] across large parts of the shire means that land already cleared for agriculture cannot be used for that purpose without a planning permit.¹²

12 Ibid.

What is meant by 'land already cleared for agriculture'? If land has been used for agriculture within the previous two years the Nillumbik Planning Scheme allows it to continue to be used for that purpose as an 'existing use'. If more than two years have elapsed it is appropriate that a permit assessment be conducted by Council to determine the conservation value of any regenerated native vegetation.

The argument for change presented in the draft GWMP is specious.

Rezoning of this kind would require Ministerial approval, but by including this rezoning target in the draft Council is revealing its vision for our Green Wedge.

Buffer zones

The draft GWMP promotes the

consolidation of population around townships and [on the] fringe of the Urban Growth Boundary.¹³

13 Ibid.

The implication is that this would result in a useful 'buffer zone'. The draft suggests that such a buffer zone would solve problems of trespass, rubbish dumping and dust from unsealed roads.

Subdivision will not solve these problems, which occur across the whole Shire. The 'buffer zone' proposal is essentially an attack on the Urban Growth Boundary. *Page 5*

The 'stocktake' and a proposed attack on Environmental Significance Overlays

Environmental Significance Overlays (ESOs) are put in place not only to protect areas rich in biodiversity but also to protect those areas that provide the critical linkages and wildlife corridors.

Various described as a 'Key move' or a 'Key action', repeated verbatim four times in the draft GWMP is the following:

Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming, that need to be protected for the future.¹⁴

14 Ibid, found on p. 13 as 'Key move 5', on p. 32 as 'key action 3.1' under 'Safe and healthy environments', on p. 39 as 'key action A4.3' under 'A prosperous economy', and on p. 41 as 'key action A5.5' under 'Responsible leadership'.

This action is problematic. What is meant by 'protected'? It seems that Council is proposing to prioritize agriculture and hobby farming over conservation.

Consider also key action A3.2:

Subject to the findings of the [stocktake, referred to above], review the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.¹⁵

15 Ibid, p. 32.

Apparently the intent of the stocktake is to remove ESOs from lands which the stocktake finds should be 'protected' for agriculture, including hobby farms, at the expense of the environment.

Reinforcing this intent is the wording of objective O3.1:

Identify, protect and enhance *valuable* biodiversity and habitats.¹⁶

16 Ibid.

The purpose of ESOs is to protect *significant* biodiversity, which includes not only areas of valuable biodiversity but also vital faunal linkages. The draft's objective O3.1 demonstrates a misunderstanding of the way in which ESOs are designed to work at a landscape level, and would see a continued decline in biodiversity across the Green Wedge.

All biodiversity is 'valuable', including that found on agricultural land and hobby farms, because so much has been lost.

The Community Panel was clear in its commitment to the protection of 'actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat'.¹⁷

17 Nillumbik Shire Council, *Green Wedge Management Plan Community Panel Recommendations*, p. 9. Available at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/gwmp/community-panel.

This proposed 'review' of ESOs, especially when considered in conjunction with Council's proposal to rezone some areas from RCZ to GWZ,

- is supported by very few in the community, and
- contradicts state government planning policy and legislation

Insufficient attention to strengthening biodiversity

The need to pay more attention to biodiversity repair is highlighted in coverage of the Victorian Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's latest State of the Environment Report:

Biodiversity is rapidly deteriorating in many parts of the state, with feral animals and plants on the march while native species are losing habitat and under increasing threat of extinction. Most species loss comes from practices such as grazing, tree clearing and fire protection on private land... Dr Sparkes recommended conserving more private land...¹⁸

¹⁸ Carey, A, 'Extreme weather, rising seas, feral animals: the state's environmental report card is grim', *The Age*, 19 March 2019, www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/extreme-weather-rising-seas-feral-animals-the-state-s-environmental-report-card-is-grim-20190319-p515kd.html.

The significance of Nillumbik's flora and fauna should have been included in the draft for the benefit of community understanding: the area has 1,031 indigenous flora species, 64 of which are listed as significant species. There are also 350 indigenous fauna species, 70 of which are listed as rare or threatened, including the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Common Dunnart, Lace Monitor, Eltham Copper Butterfly, Swift Parrot, Masked Owl, Powerful Owl and the Australian Grayling. There is also a large but unknown number of indigenous invertebrates, fungi, and bacteria. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has identified 84 sites of biodiversity significance in the Shire. Twelve are of national significance, 33 of state significance, 38 of regional significance and one of local significance. There are 23 Ecological Vegetation Classes identified within the Shire.¹⁹

¹⁹ Collated from: Nillumbik Shire Council 2012, *Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2012*, and Nillumbik Shire Council 2014, *State of Environment Report 2014*.

The draft GWMP is completely silent on these assets that we have an obligation to protect not only for Nillumbik residents but the broader nation.

Under Goal 3 of the draft GWMP there are several references to the need for ecosystem and biodiversity protection yet the proposed actions fail to seriously address biodiversity decline across the landscape.

Further to the problems with objective O3.1, confining Council's protection to only 'valuable biodiversity and habitats', none of the other five Objectives in the draft GWMP specifically addresses biodiversity decline.

Under A3.5 the draft plan says biodiversity conservation will be 'encouraged' but specifies no regulatory framework. Because of this the Action is unlikely to be effective. A3.5 has a worthy Objective of 'conserving the bush and rural landscapes' but is not associated with any executable action.

Under the current GWMP, the themes of *Environment and People* and *Communities* have their own separate goals. The coupling of a 'healthy and safe communities' theme with 'safe and healthy environments' under Goal 3 has caused confusion and a lack of focus on the needs of our Green Wedge environment. The draft GWMP notes that the threat of bushfire is driving an:

integrated approach to the major land use issues in the Green Wedge.

As a result, environmental sustainability is being sacrificed for 'community resilience'.

The Objectives and Actions of Goal 3 as currently presented in the draft GWMP are a missed opportunity. The draft GWMP lacks objectives and specific actions to address:

- the protection of indigenous remnant vegetation
- sustainable land management
- significant sites and wildlife corridors
- land use and the effect of development on the wider catchment
- sustainable land use planning
- conserving biodiversity
- discouraging rural residential development on undersized or heavily vegetated bush blocks, or in high bushfire risk areas in the Green Wedge, and
- managing conservation at a landscape scale

By way of contrast, and as asserted above in our Overall Assessment, the current GWMP has nine high priority actions addressing biodiversity, and sixteen medium priority actions.

The draft document must be re-written to address these primary areas of community concern. As it stands, the draft GWMP, were it to be implemented, would endanger the survival of our unique biodiversity. For the Green Wedge Shire, that is unacceptable.

Climate Change

The community and other levels of government are looking to local government for genuine commitment and tangible action in response to climate change and threats to biodiversity.

The draft GWMP contains no relevant actions. It speaks of climate change adaptation but does not aspire to mitigation. While the green wedges are often referred to as the 'lungs of Melbourne', less figuratively they are its carbon sink. While the protection of native vegetation is important for its own sake, it is also important in combating climate change.

A Lack of Proper Process

The current GWMP, released in 2010, took 5 years to develop because it went through a rigorous process mandated by State government. Planning Practice Note 31 (PPN 31) 'Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan' describes the process in detail. Council has written its new plan in a matter of months, ignoring key components of PPN 31. A Project Steering Group should have been formed, chaired by council and including key stakeholder representatives from organisations such as Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, the CFA, and the DELWP, amongst others. This did not happen. PPN 31 also requires a clear implementation plan which identifies priorities, resources required, responsibilities and time lines. This was developed in detail for the current plan but is missing in the draft.

The Community Panel acknowledged 'the significant amount of work and expertise that has gone into preparing the existing plan', and further recommended 'that it should serve as a base from which to prepare an updated plan, and any actions that are yet to be completed should be carried over, unless specifically contradicted by our recommendations.'²¹

But Council has chosen to draft a completely new plan, not an updated and extended version of the current one, and has done so in a few months without following the proper process. The result is insubstantial and appears to have given undue weight to a minority report produced by 5 members of the Panel.

Conclusion

PPN 31 states that 'It is anticipated that the Department will be involved in the development of each GWMP and be provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft prior to it being adopted by Council.'²²

²² The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2015, *Planning Practice Note 31: Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan*, p. 6. Available at www.planning.vic.gov.au/resource-library/planning-practice-notes. We hope that council will honour this final step in the expected process and ask for DELWP's comments on its new plan.

The 22 Panel members who prepared this submission conclude that the draft GWMP approach needs a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack core foundations of the Green Wedge should be removed. Specific detail is needed on actions that support the community's overwhelming desire to protect the Green Wedge.

Submitted by:

Wayne Kinrade, on behalf of the following members of the Community Panel:

Isabella Amouzandeh

Caitlin Baker

Jason Bonga

Alex Collum

Judith Cordingley

Sue Grad

Lara Jackader

Greg Johnson

Maria Katsikas

Wayne Kinrade

Don Macrae

Heather McGain

Bruce Parry

Tiz Spanga

Lynlee Tozer

Yvonne Tunny

Roy Woodcraft

Peter Yates

and 4 others who wish to remain anonymous. *Page 9*

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

As we represent the interests of NTB members, which incorporates local artists, wineries, tourism and home based businesses we are fully supportive of economic and business growth within the Shire. Whilst we agree with the objectives 4.1 of preserving the green wedge, there needs to be a more balanced view in the interests of allowing businesses to grow without excessive cost. For example, expectations for businesses, bed and breakfast, farms, wineries and any potential tourist attractions are often unable to open or commence due to stringent planning laws.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Agree

Key Move 2 - Agree

Key Move 3 - Agree

Key Move 4 - Agree

Key Move 5 - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Within any of the 5 key moves, economic growth is not stated and how business development will work within the framework is also not mentioned.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice

- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Agree

Aboriginal voice - Agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

We must ensure that we have an open and positive approach to business growth by all stakeholders

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

The NT&B represent artists from across the Shire. We strongly support all initiatives that will promote and develop this industry and culture.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

A balanced view needs to be considered to ensure viable sustained tourism and business growth whilst keeping the environment healthy. More rebates to create environmentally balanced new businesses and to help existing business

promote healthy environmental objectives should also be considered by Council as cost is a big prohibitive to business growth within this area.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Please view attached document

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Strongly support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Please view attached document

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Please view attached document

You can upload your file here.

[Submission on Green wedge draft proposal by the Nillumbik Tourism and Business Inc.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your

contribution, please provide your email address.



As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Submission on Green Wedge Draft proposal by the Nillumbik Tourism and Business Inc. (NT&B)

On behalf of the members of the NT&B, we would like to bring to your attention our thoughts regarding the draft green wedge plan.

The NT&B is totally committed and supportive of the importance of the green wedge consultation process for the continuing protection of this important State asset.

Our attention has been drawn to Goal 4: A Prosperous Economy. Our thoughts:

- Objective 4.1 -- Whilst we totally agree that we must continue to encourage and improve local business opportunities and employment, this can only be achieved by Council having a better understanding of business's requirements and being more open, flexible and using lateral thinking on ways that this can be achieved whilst still meeting the green wedge objectives.
- Objective 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 -- We totally agree with all points and actions required to achieve these goals. We believe the best approach to enable this to occur, is to amalgamate all the Traders Associations and the NT&B into one coherent group. This will focus business needs and be one voice to Council and other regulatory bodies, which are presently hindering growth.
- Key Actions – We are very keen to view the final draft of the Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy and how this will impact business growth within the Shire and what constraints may be involved due to the Green Wedge Management Plan. It is clear from the key action points that without a collective approach from all stakeholders this will not be possible. Hence our support for the one major business association that can truly represent all business support, strategies and needs throughout our Shire.

Potential full time professional marketing people could be employed to facilitate a coordinated approach, avoiding the current duplication of this role by all organisations.

We would love the opportunity to elaborate in more detail our response at your convenience.

Yours Sincerely

On behalf of NT&B members

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Refer uploaded file attached

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.

4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Disagree

Key Move 2 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 3 - Disagree

Key Move 4 - Disagree

Key Move 5 - Disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Refer uploaded file attached

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage

- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Disagree

Aboriginal voice - Disagree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Disagree

Manage change for future benefit - Strongly disagree

Collaboration and connectedness - Disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Disagree

Social equity - Strongly disagree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Disagree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Disagree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Refer uploaded file attached

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Refer uploaded file attached

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Refer uploaded file attached

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Refer uploaded file attached

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Refer uploaded file attached

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Refer uploaded file attached

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Refer uploaded file attached

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP NSC Draft Jun19 - Submission A Van Hulsen - final.doc](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

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A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

- Yes
- No
- Partially
- Not sure

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Council's initial community engagement clearly demonstrated that the large majority of Nillumbik **residents cherish the high environmental values of the Green Wedge** and want it protected and enhanced. **It is clear from Council's Draft GWMP that it largely ignored for the vast majority of community's position and its own-constituted Community Panel - that it listened to only a select group of rural "landowners" and those promoting the "equine industry". Because of wrong prioritisation, mis-framing, and a dearth of crucial environmental expertise and rigor, Council's Draft GWMP is wrought with fundamental problems and needs a rewrite¹.**

The following issues need to be addressed in the re-write:

1. The real thrust of the vision statement is only revealed in the latter parts of the Plan, and lies in its mis-framing and -prioritisation fore mostly in terms of bushfires and resilience, the active promotion of economic growth and development, and in its signature project, a

¹ Using the current 2010-2025 GWMP as a basis - as recommended by the Community Panel.

new equestrian strategy. There also seem associated, disconcerting attempts to redefine planning terms.

The urgent needs of the environment are inappropriately subjugated to these - really only receiving mere lip service; there is a gross lack of **key environmental actions which include set targets**.

2. Throughout the Draft Plan is displayed a disturbing and negligent lack of environmental expertise and rigor, and mis-prioritisation.
 - It is very selective in citing documents, ignoring most of Council's own environmental policies and plans. Incredibly, there's no consideration of the **various State of Environment reports or Nillumbik's Environment Charter**; and it is oblivious to **many recent expert reports** (United Nations, federal, state, Council reports, local expert opinions), all sounding alarm bells and advocating urgency.
 - Incredibly, there is no **goal/chapter dedicated to the environment or biodiversity**.
 - The Draft Plan is in denial of **locally, declining environmental values**, and that there are **environmental crises**² going on (climate change; biodiversity extinction; water; waste) - requiring urgent, concerted action; a sense of alarm or urgency is completely absent (refer my paragraph 62 below). Negligently, it **considers climate change only in terms of its impact** on bushfires, not **on biodiversity**. The Draft Plan fails a duty of care - it will not only guarantee the continued decline in our biodiversity and environmental values, but it will accelerate the degradation.
3. **A main aim of the GWMP should be to arrest the decline, and to restore and strengthen biodiversity.**
4. The Draft fails the **Shire's primary strategic 'conservation' objective**. It is not fit for the urgent, 21st century challenges facing us.
5. **Turning around the continued environmental decline and mitigating climate change and biodiversity extinction must be an overarching goal for the GWMP** and therefore must be addressed in the vision. **It must inform all objectives and actions such as regenerative agriculture, fire management, waste management, bush regeneration, education, and economic strategy**. Throughout the Draft, the repeated references to 'adaptation' (to

² According to many expert opinions [many references can be supplied], the planet is on a catastrophic trajectory, and many environmental alarm bells are going off all over the globe: destruction of habitat; invasive species; pesticide use; deforestation; polluted rivers; over-fished, plastic-polluted, acidifying oceans; poisonous air in many capital cities - and only the symptoms are treated, not the causes (population growth; rampant consumerism; an unsustainable capitalist economic system that depends on constant growth). There's only one planet Earth - we urgently need more holistic (and simultaneous) action on biodiversity, climate change, water, soils, air, waste; and to transform to an ecologically sustainable society.

climate change) leave the reader with the impression that Council has basically thrown their hands up in the air, suggesting there is nothing that they nor Nillumbik residents can do to **tackle the climate change and biodiversity extinction crises**. This is not true and **must be part of every day action**.

6. The GWMP needs to **recognise the leading role that Nillumbik can play**; that we can be part of the solution - **actively seeking local solutions to global problems** (including regenerative agriculture). We're a relatively affluent population; and with our inherent carbon sink and rich biodiversity values and strategic GW conservation focus, Nillumbik really is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, where and when else?
7. The Draft fails the first priority for the Green Wedge as stated in the State Government's 'Plan Melbourne 2017-2050': to "**Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.**"
8. The Draft should frame a top priority GW goal consistent with the "*Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*" goal for Victoria - that '**Nillumbik's natural environment is healthy**'.
9. The Draft places people³ (homo sapiens) centrally. Yet the area has 1,031 indigenous flora species and 350 indigenous fauna species; planet earth is inhabited by an estimated 8.7M different species. **Steward or guardianship recognises we're all part of a larger whole (creation - web of life - interdependence) and depend on a healthy environment. The Draft must recognise this; take a broader view beyond the interests of local landholders/people, and adopt a systems view, and place guardianship, duty of care, and ecosystems and eco services⁴ central to the plan.**⁵

³ land ownership.

⁴ Ecosystems generate a stream of vital life-support services. Ecosystem services are grouped into four broad categories: **provisioning services**, such as the production of water, food, fibre, medicine, genetic resources; **regulating services**, such as the control of climate, natural hazard, disease, (crop) pollination or pests, water purification and waste management; **supporting services**, such as nutrient cycles and oxygen production, habitat services providing habitat for migratory species and to maintain the viability of gene-pools; **cultural services** include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values.

⁵ Scientist Brad Lister : "*We are essentially destroying the very life support systems that allow us to sustain our existence on the planet, along with all the other life on the planet, It is just horrifying to watch us decimate the natural world like this. ... I don't think most people have a systems view of the natural world, ... But it's all connected and when the invertebrates are declining the entire food web is going to suffer and degrade. It is a system-wide effect. ... as a society we have failed to give value to our environment.*"

[https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/15/insect-collapse-we-are-destroying-our-life-support-systems?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0dyZWVuTGlnaHQMtMTkwMTE4&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GreenLight&CMP=greenlight_email]

10. "Ownership" of the Green Wedge is given unprecedented and inappropriately attention (eg map p. 12). All such references should be deleted, and instead "**guardianship**" ought to be advocated.

11. The Draft Plan primarily frames the value of the natural environment in terms of: what it provides to residents and visitors; its recreation and tourism potential, and 'livelihoods' - though this is actually greatly overstated as the GW provides mainly rural residential living, and most people earn a livelihood in jobs outside GW and shire; its inherent fire threat. The Draft's vision is about how to "use the GW / the environment", and lacks **appreciation of the environment for its intrinsic values**. It's a notable fact that unemployment is not a significant issue in Nillumbik; the **continuing degrading environment and looming climate change and biodiversity extinction crises** are. **Environmental protection and reinvigation, and helping reverse the trend of Australia highest rate of mammal extinction in the world must be top priorities**⁶ to the vision for the Green Wedge.

The ecological ignorance, the disregarding of alarming environmental degradation and related expert reports, the 'Business As Usual' attitude, and the continued commodifying of our natural resources without thought to the consequences - displayed in this paper are a real worry.

12. Concepts like **biodiversity; ecological viewpoint; ecological footprint; environmental sustainability; precautionary principle; a 'systems view'; ecosystems and services; the need to transform to an ecologically sustainable society; as well as the values and needs of the environment, such as the importance of indigenous vegetation, and habitat for wildlife and connectivity** - all need to be discussed in the Draft GWMP.

13. The Victorian Green Wedge Planning Zones are aimed at conserving the natural environment of the Green Wedge, and the GWMP should be **supporting** the zones and not trying to undermine **the RCZ and its conservation responsibilities** as this Draft does.

14. It is vital that Nillumbik demonstrates its respect of Indigenous people, their cultural heritage and knowledge. This barely gets a mention in the GWMP despite the fact **that indigenous people have ensured the vitality of the area's biodiversity for tens of thousands of years.**⁷

⁶ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/20/no-clue-environment-department-doesnt-know-if-threatened-species-plans-implemented?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMTkwMzIx&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&CMP=GTAU_email

⁷ The Draft lacks the affinity that "*The traumatised Australian landscape is desperately trying to repair itself*". (Bruce Pascoe, "Dark Emu").

Five Key Moves.

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Key Move 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key Move 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Key Move 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key Move 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Key Move 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

15. The moves have only been very broadly and inadequately defined, giving rise to many further questions, enabling all sorts of contradictory interpretations, and engendering a reluctance to support.
16. Eg. For how long is the "Conversations" commitment expected to last - will they be on-going? How inclusive will they be? Given the very divisive and insulting community attitudes that prevail, will there be independent arbitrators and mediation experts? What

happens to this initiative if no or only very temporary government funding becomes available for it?

17. Eg. It speaks of 'community resilience', which sounds good. But the Draft only very narrowly defines "community resilience" in terms of the management of the bushfire threat only - nothing about the need for an 'ecosystems & services' view, the alarming impacts of continued environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity extinction. What about 'environmental resilience' on which people, the community, the economy ultimately all depend, and without which they cannot sustainably thrive?
18. Upon perusing further detailed explanation on p. 30, 32, 41, ...: based on the mere and ill-founded reason that 'they own the land'⁸, the 'moves' seem to endow such landholders with greater decision-making power over potentially a whole gambit of future policy making and infrastructure building, such as: managing the GW; the natural environment and biodiversity value; water and water catchment planning; bushfire risk reduction and emergency management; economic and community rebuilding post events; the built environment; the economy and economic development; agriculture; health and human services; well-being and safety? **That landowners - potentially afflicted by pecuniary and self-interests and lacking a 'systems' view, will judge all with the 'limited people-focussed' mindsets, obsessed with bushfire mitigation and 'how-to-use-the-GW', does not augur well for 'environmental resilience', and is a great worry.**
19. P.13. "*Create a comprehensive landowners' information and support service for **sustainable land use and management**, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek on-going government funding to support the service.*" This needs the word "sustainable" inserted before "land use" to give this move direction and intent. Fundamentally, there should be a **key move to undertake works that protect and enhance farmland, bushland, waterways and indigenous species, especially those that are threatened.**
20. '**Robust discussions**' are mentioned but there is no statement that these **and ensuing actions must be based on respected, current scientific knowledge.**
21. **The bias exhibited in this Draft Plan as well as throughout the GWMP review process** also offends principles of fairness. Unfortunately, with Council's track record throughout this review process of bending over backwards to two community voices [eg. acceptance and evident consideration of their lengthy 'submissions' during the initial 'survey' process; the reconstituting of the Community Panel's rural membership from a 20% to a 50% level of representation; retrospectively organising dedicated work shops at the behest of these groups; leading and inappropriate interference by a councillor during the first day (18Aug18) of the GWMPR Community Panel sessions; accepting a minority report (which of itself had inappropriate, external collaborations)], fairness cannot be expected, and **makes very doubtful any chance of Council's fair conduct of its Draft Plan's "5 key moves"** (which potentially has very pervasive ramifications across a whole gambit of policy areas).

⁸ What about young people or people renting in the Green Wedge?

22. It's unclear how the moves would actually preserve and enhance the Green Wedge any better than the current GWMP 2010-2025 does - though the latter still does so inadequately, as there has been consistent net loss of vegetation. This demonstrates that any new plan must be stronger and clearer about the **actions needed to reverse this ongoing decline**. The draft GWMP does not achieve this. As per the preamble of the recommendations made by the Community Panel, **the current Plan** (which has much more detail than the new Draft about how to achieve protection of the Green Wedge) **should serve as the basis for an improved Plan**.
23. There are no commitments to actually **address the environmental issues of Climate Change and Biodiversity** which featured as actions in the last GWMP. There also needs to be much greater emphasis on the **care of the natural environment, and on regenerative agriculture**.
24. The document needs to describe in much greater detail the **ACTIONS** to be taken, and each of these **must prioritise best environmental practice, ensuring the protection and enhancement of ALL native vegetation and fauna across the Shire; and set targets**.
25. Every descriptor needs to clearly indicate how it will **contribute to the protection and reinvigoration of biodiversity for the long term**.
26. While some of the 'Five Key Moves' could potentially be useful (depending on how they are interpreted and applied), again, their emphases are wrong. They miss the priority of actually supporting improvement of biodiversity and the natural environment; and they **seem to put the interests of landowners/people ahead of larger, all-encompassing principles (stewardship; ecosystems & ecosystem services; biodiversity; intergenerational equity)**, which again betrays the Community Panel's recommendations. Given the anti-environment/biodiversity/conservation framing/foundations of the plan, the '5 key moves' cannot be supported.

Principles

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan? **DISAGREE** [all, because there is a worrying lack of detail]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aboriginal voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manage change for future benefit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaboration and connectedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social equity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety, wellbeing and resilience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conserve and enhance our heritage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainability and the precautionary principle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you

have any comments about the Principles?

[NOTE: My on-line alteration to above indicated 'support' levels to "STRONGLY DISAGREE" for principles: Manage change for future benefit; Social Equity; Sustainability and the precautionary principle"].

27. The Principle statements, aimed at guiding the implementation of the plan, are extremely broad leaving their interpretation and application unclear. **Each principle must ensure the protection and care for the environment.**

28. A principle that focuses on **preservation of environment and biodiversity**, and describes the **urgent need to reverse the decline of biodiversity and effects of climate change** should be added.

Biodiversity Protection should be given the status of a **Goal** in the Plan.

29. The words "biodiversity and environmental" need to be inserted before "values" in the principle saying: *"The green wedge is a changing environment and home to many people. Change will be managed to conserve its **biodiversity and environmental** values and with a focus on long-term stewardship."* so that the prioritisation of the values of the Green Wedge will be in keeping with the State Government's policies *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*

and *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, which state 'Victoria's plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment so it is healthy, valued and actively cared for.'

30. Principles concerning the encouragement of “**indigenous species and habitat conservation**” and “**sustainable land and water management**” need to be defined. This is not adequately covered by 'sustainability and the precautionary principle' . We need to anticipate and avoid any actions that may cause serious or irreversible harm to the environment and the people who live within it.

31.

PRINCIPLES:
As the principles' re-phrasing in the GWMP Draft Jun'19 have lost significant aspects of their original intent, the following recommendations of the <u>Community Panel majority Report, Nov 2018</u> should be re-instated, particularly the yellow-highlighted words:
3. Whole of Shire approach: the green wedge is a whole of shire responsibility; both urban and rural areas are co-dependent and should have a voice about the green wedge future.
4. Relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne: Nillumbik's role as the green wedge Shire has increased significance, as Melbourne expands within the urban growth boundaries. Nillumbik's role in protecting biodiversity and natural landscape must be supported.
1. Focus on the future: there is a danger that short term pragmatics compromise our stewardship responsibilities. Council and stakeholders must assume responsibility for a focus on the long term, because of the precautionary principle and the need to respect future generations.
(As recommended by the Community Panel majority Report, Nov 2018) the following objectives and strategies of the <u>existing GWMP 2010-2015 Guiding Principles</u> should be retained , particularly the yellow-highlighted words:
Sustainability: social, environmental, economic. Sustainability is something we work towards. Council and the community must manage the Nillumbik Green Wedge in ways that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate exemplary sustainable practices • conserve and enhance natural and cultural values • contribute to a diverse local economy that does not impact negatively on Green Wedge values • connect and support communities • encourage sustainable living and take account of the 'ecological footprint' of human activity.

Precautionary principle

Management needs to anticipate the possibility of detrimental social, health or environmental outcomes from any action. In general, the precautionary principle involves acting to avoid serious or irreversible harm, even when full scientific certainty about the likelihood of such harm is lacking.

32. The "social equity" principle needs to be broadened to include "intergenerational equity".

GOAL 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

DO NOT SUPPORT [because there is a worrying lack of detail]

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

Do you

have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

33. Council's new GWMP is not an update of original plan but a complete re-write with a radical change of priorities and emphases - where bushfires & landowners are placed central, not the environment. Goal 1 must be framed around **Nillumbik's conservation role with the Green Wedge as its strategic focus** - as designated by the Local Government Review Board in 1994.

34. Especially in the face of looming environmental crises, and as Melbourne's most in-tact green wedge, Nillumbik's conservation responsibility is unique and extra important. As such Nillumbik's GW has particular needs; and the new plan presents an opportunity to highlight and **expand the stewardship-role of the whole community**. This needs to be clearly stated and emphasised. Thus, rather than 'What can we get out of the land?', we should be asking: '**How can we maintain and reinvigorate the natural environment?**'.

35. Rather than the biased and skewiff priorities of the Draft Plan that are contrary to the very clear and strong community sentiment wanting to preserve and enhance the GWs natural environment, the Draft's interpretation of its statement: "*To make progress and come together, we can focus on shared priorities. Where we share differing views but common*

objectives is an opportunity for progress." should rally the community as a whole to come together around serious actions to mitigate climate change and biodiversity extinction, and to turn around the continued environmental decline. These are top priorities for how we live together as a community – our collective wellbeing depends on it, as does the environment. It is also why regenerative agriculture needs to be encouraged.

36. Regarding the statement: "*ensuring no 'net loss' to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation – meaning land can't be readily cleared (without off-setting)*", the Draft Plan needs to acknowledge that the **current off-set arrangements are inadequate and are falling short, as do other important environmental protection laws** [eg. the Environment Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act, which needs urgent reform⁹ (guided by a "*Blueprint for the Next Generation of Environmental Law*", 2017, Australian Panel of Experts on Environmental Law)].
37. RE: "*Localised concerns were also raised expressing frustrations with living and managing rural lands on the border of the urban growth boundary, particularly around Diamond Creek. Difficulties with trespass, rubbish dumping and dust from heavily used unsealed roads were all raised as symptoms of being abruptly adjacent to fully urbanised land. These conditions are, by contrast, improved on the edge of Eltham where a buffer zone is built into the urban area itself.*" Action A1.7 vaguely refers to the resolution of this; however **the problem needs to be properly quantified to ensure that the appropriate counter-measures are applied** (eg. law enforcement or road sealing rather than divisive land-use rezoning).
38. RE: "*formal township boundaries are also constrained and development within them has been limited until sewerage services become available. These constraints may have to be re-examined.*" Why? Why do we keep pushing the boundary and undermining the natural environment?!? Apparently land in Wattle Glen is again up for such speculative consideration. Such speculation encourages would-be subdividers to actively degrade their land - as can be corroborated by much evidence received by Council. We in Wattle Glen are sick and tired of every couple of years having to waste huge energy and time to defend our township character and rural values. **It's the Urban Growth Boundary's intent to stop land speculation and to protect the GW - so please stop enflaming speculation and degrading the GW, and wasting everybody's time!** [Also refer my paragraph 52 below:

⁹ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/14/a-speech-is-not-a-policy-environment-groups-call-on-alp-to-announce-policy-details?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX01vcM5pbmdNYWlsQVVTLE5MDMxMw%3D%3D&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MorningMailAUS&CMP=morningmailau_email

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/17/greens-pressure-labor-with-pre-election-push-to-tackle-climate-and-land-clearing?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMTkwMzE3&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&CMP=GTAU_email

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/20/no-clue-environment-department-doesnt-know-if-threatened-species-plans-implemented?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMTkwMzIx&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&CMP=GTAU_email

Also refer the advocacy group, Labor Environment Action Network [[LEAN](#)] & Bill Shorten 2019 election promises.

"One of the greatest threats to the Shire is 'death by a thousand cuts' (and fragmentation)]".

39. Referring to **Nillumbik Planning Scheme (tidy up corrections) Amendment C115**. In the interest of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of the Green Wedge, the Draft GWMP should ascertain whether the deleted, but **helpful clauses 22.02 & 22.03 concerning 'residential development and small lots' need to be reintroduced**.
40. An **investigation of the re-introduction of "Small Lots" into the planning scheme - including aspects such as: lot consolidation, preventing boundary realignments as a way to increase the number of dwellings in the Green Wedge, lot size considerations being valid, restrictions on indigenous vegetation removal and use of tenement controls for new applications** - should be included in the Draft GWMP.

GOAL2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

DO NOT SUPPORT [because there is a worrying lack of detail]

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

41. The Objectives and Key Actions for Goal 2 must clearly and strongly focus on **ensuring Nillumbik's biodiversity is top priority**.
42. Green space is an important determinant of health - not just because it enables physical activity as stated in the Draft Plan, but also because it promotes higher levels of mental wellbeing and social connectedness. So **physical activity in the GW should not cause it to deteriorate**.
43. The wording of this goal is disconcerting - consistently underplaying the GW's environmental values and Nillumbik's conservation role; and appearing to inappropriately redefine planning terms such as 'cultural heritage' and the character of the GW¹⁰; as well as action A2.7 "*Use the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as a positive means to encourage heritage conservation and management, including support of adaptive reuse of heritage places and allowing prohibited uses, if they help support the conservation of a heritage place and are in line with planning policy objectives.*"

Again, the **action A2.7's** entertaining of changing the planning scheme to 'allow prohibited uses' **is the wrong direction** - causing more nibbling, especially if it is to indulge our

¹⁰ as a "treed landscape and open space", denying the Green Wedge's vital dynamic between tall, medium & low storeyed vegetation, and inherent rich biodiversity. Such characterisation may even inadvertently and dangerously promote inappropriate land-uses or practices such as removal of important vegetation, grazing of hard-hoofed animals, building on small lots.

recreational pursuits. **Nillumbik's conservation role must be affirmed now even more than ever.**

44. Horse ownership has been significantly proliferating in the GW over the last 10-15 years.

- The *2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report's* findings that **recreational horses and grazing have a negative impact on biodiversity**, need to be recognised¹¹. Due to being hard-hoofed and their tendency to cause much erosion and land and water degradation and to spread weeds, **their land-use needs to be restricted, especially near water courses, on steep slopes and on bush blocks.**
- A **property management plan and a land capability study** are needed when a planning application concerns the *Environmental Significance Overlay* or **hoofed grazing domestic animals** to protect eg. water courses, bush blocks, and steep slopes against inappropriate land use and erosion, **and to encourage indigenous vegetation and habitat for wildlife.**
- When/if an **equestrian strategy** gets considered it **should be conditional on the above requirements**, and should be accompanied by **education of the equine sector and other graziers** to promote greater environmental care and understanding and responsible ownership of animals.

45. In order to better manage Nillumbik's natural environment, **greater working relations must be fostered with the Traditional Custodians** of the land. A **key action** should be developed for this objective.

¹¹ And whereas completely ignoring the GWMP Community Panel recommendation: "***Diminishing biodiversity is occurring due to grazing stock being introduced to bushland on private properties***", the Draft Plan similarly needs to recognise and action it in the Draft Plan.

GOAL 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

DO NOT SUPPORT [because there is a worrying lack of detail]

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Do you

46. The GWMP needs to strongly acknowledge the importance of ALL indigenous vegetation and address the urgent need to conserve it THROUGHOUT the Shire, on private and public land. The community must work together to focus on increasing habitat for wildlife and connectivity; preserving biodiversity; valuing what ecosystems provide; developing a 'systems view' (that ALL is interdependent); address the climate change

and biodiversity extinction crises, and the need to transform to an ecologically sustainable society. This must become the underpinning ethos that guides the Actions and all other aspects of the plan, without compromise.

47. It is inappropriate to clump biodiversity with other seemingly conflicting or opposing activities. Biodiversity protection is paramount and clearly an intention of the Green Wedge Management Plan process, thus, **Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement should be a Goal of its own.**
48. The State Government Victoria states: '*Life forms that make up biodiversity have intrinsic value and warrant our respect*'.¹²

The intrinsic values of the environment (including ecosystem services) need to be appreciated - or that people are working to protect our fellow creatures and living plants, which they value highly in their own right, outside of their benefits to human beings. **The indigenous species, habitats and their value in their own right need to be identified.**

Lynlee Tozer (local ecologist):

"We live in a time when the natural environment crumbles around us...right before our eyes, at our own hands, or at least due to our ability to turn a blind eye to our part in the decline. The natural environment is precious. It is irreplaceable. It is important. And not just important to us selfish, self-obsessed, self-important humans...but important in an intrinsic sense."

49. The GWMP Draft needs to **properly define biodiversity** (and in the local context - so that readers have some appreciation of what we need to care for).
50. **Ecosystems and ecosystem services** need to be explained, as well as **the vital importance of the shire's network of waterways and their catchments.**
51. It needs to properly consider **all the threats to the Green Wedge** [eg. ever-increasing population, economic development, land clearing for agriculture, human settlement, inappropriate water extraction, traffic, tourism, management of the bushfire threat, invasive weeds and pest animals, domestic and recreational animals (including horse grazing); the accumulative impacts of individual planning applications (and the need to account for these); climate change impacts].
52. The use of stock-takes and studies [see A3.1, p32] that describe some areas of vegetation as more significant or valuable than others is alarming as it can lead to greater degradation of the environment which is already under pressure. The majority of the Shire's ecosystems are already 'disturbed' because of mismanagement, and this means we must change our ways. **Every Objective and Action ought to aim for preservation and reinvigoration of the environment.** One of the greatest threats to the Shire is 'death by a

¹² DEWLP Biodiversity 2037, <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

thousand cuts' (and fragmentation), where bit by bit land clearing and grazing leave our flora and fauna vulnerable to ever-increasing stress and disappearance. In turn this also places greater pressure on our community's overall well being.

53. **A main aim of the GWMP should be to arrest the continued decline of local environmental values, and to restore and strengthen biodiversity. It needs to appraise the locally, declining values, and devise actions or strategies to turn around the decline.**

54. **The ecological importance and habitat value of lower and medium storey indigenous vegetation needs to be appreciated, and their protection needs to be strengthened. The planting of indigenous vegetation should be encouraged throughout the shire.**

55. The Draft Plan needs to recognise **the global biodiversity extinction crisis**, which United Nations scientific experts urge **is as critical as the climate change crisis**. (refer my paragraph 62). Full appreciation of the alarming environmental crises going on (locally and globally - climate change; biodiversity extinction; water; soils; waste), as well as of the **impact of the climate crisis on biodiversity**, is needed - all requiring **urgent, concerted action**.

56. Since the last GWMP was written, **climate change and biodiversity issues have become more critical, not less**, eg: bees, Nillumbik orchids and frogs, but this Draft seems oblivious; and it has no actual initiatives to improve. Clearly, **Business-As-Usual will not suffice, and much more concerted efforts need to be made**.

57. The application of '**regenerative agriculture**' in Nillumbik needs to be thoroughly investigated.

58. The Draft needs to **affirm the first priority for the Green Wedge as stated in the State Government's 'Plan Melbourne 2017-2050'**: to "*Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.*"

59. The Draft should frame a **top priority GW goal** consistent with the "*Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*" goal for Victoria - that '**Nillumbik's natural environment is healthy**'.

60. Goal 3 repeatedly uses the language of 'balance', and this needs to be amended as it indicates that our thinking is oppositional. It implies that there is a need to trade-off environmental health against other considerations, while international, national, and state government reports indicate that we **must prioritise the health of our environment**. For example, A3.12, p 33, speaks of balancing amenity, environmental considerations, private water extraction and community considerations. What needs to take place is a **prioritisation of environmental considerations, as without optimal environmental health, all other activity and considerations will be constrained**.

61. This goal is negligently and inadequately informed by environmental expertise. It needs to **appraise all Council's own environmental policies and plans¹³**, especially the **various State of Environment reports** (federal/state/local), as well as **many recent expert United Nations reports**, all sounding alarm bells and advocating urgency.

62. This paragraph 62 is devoted to providing expert evidence of continued locally declining environmental values, global environmental crises, and for the need for urgent mitigating actions.

i. **Both Nillumbik's and the 2018 Victorian State Of Environment Reports [SoE] find that our local environmental values (land, water, air) continue to decline. The Vic SoE paints a bleak outlook for the state's native plants and animals and finds that Victoria's biodiversity is rapidly deteriorating; that most species loss comes from practices such as grazing, tree clearing and fire protection on private land; that more private land needs to be conserved; and that we need to step up our efforts on climate change and biodiversity.**

ii. Whereas completely ignoring **GWMP Community Panel¹⁴ recommendation: "*Diminishing biodiversity is occurring due to grazing stock being introduced to bushland on private properties.*"**, it similarly needs to be actioned in the Draft Plan.

iii. **Locally, Associate Professor Randall Robinson confirms that biodiversity is "*in decline in Nillumbik with a wide range of evidence that cannot be ignored*"**. He points to:

- Out of control proliferation of noxious weeds such as Chilean Needle Grass, Serrated Tussock, Boneseed, Bridal Creeper and Sweet Pittosporum.
- Prevalence of introduced pests, including weeds, directly impacting on many of our native species.
- Decline of native insect species.
- The decline in nectar-producing plants in the Shire, leading to a decline in small, nectar-feeding birds.
- Decline in stream flows and creek biota because of upstream water harvesting into legal and illegal dams.
- The general drying of the climate which has led to shifts in most plant and animal communities throughout Australia, including in Nillumbik, with sharp declines in some notable groups of species including Orchids.

iv. At the NSC **Southern Toadlet** Information Evening 8Jun19, **expert Craig Cleeland showed monitoring evidence of catastrophic decline occurring in the population** from

¹³ Eg. Biodiversity Strategy 2012; Environmental Education Strategy 2012; Ecologically Sustainable Development Policy 2012; Green Wedge Management Plan 2010-2025; Climate Change Action Plan 2010-2015; Rabbit Action Plan 2009; Weed Action Plan 2008; Sustainable Water Management Plan 2008; Stormwater Management Plan 2001; Waste Management Strategy; Reserve Management Plans; Individual project plans; Integrated Water Management Study; Nillumbik State of Environment Report; Nillumbik Environment Charter; NEROC Report and the C101 Abzeco Reports.

¹⁴ which had a number of serving members with extensive tertiary environmental or ecology qualifications and work experience.

between the 1970's-90's, and again since 2010; and of once hearing a cacophony of hundreds of individual frogs' calling reduced to a single individual male: "*There is very strong evidence that they are declining.*"

- v. Victoria is not in drought, yet **it's mid-winter and our waterways are still dry!** This suggests that like the Murray-Darling, **very important local ecosystems are in crisis**, that it may well be on the way to collapse, and that **urgent reforms** are needed to save them. Surely this alone should serve as an alarm bell for marshalling serious and unprecedented environmental actions?!?

The Draft Plan makes the shocking revelation that "***Streamflow has reduced by approximately fifty per cent over the last two decades making critical the task of managing and protecting groundwater and surface waterways to sustain and protect water quality from the negative impacts of sedimentation, reduced flows, effluent and other water pollution.***" (p. 32), yet **inadequately**, the Draft frames the water crisis **not in terms of the overarching ecological impacts, but for the (short term) needs of agriculture, fire-fighting and rural living**; and all it proposes is to "support Melbourne Water and the Catchment Management Authority; and to finalise and implement Council's Domestic Waste Water Management Plan 2019'.

- vi. According to research from RMIT's Centre for Urban Research, **in the past 5 years, 4,571ha of Melbourne's total tree and shrub cover has been lost - Nillumbik as well suffered a net loss.** ¹⁵
- vii. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns **there is only a dozen years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.** ¹⁶



A young protestor holds a sign during a climate strike in 2019.

Photograph: Ben Stansall/AFP/Getty Images

¹⁵ <https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/melbourne-s-green-spaces-are-being-lost-in-rush-to-build-more-housing-20190728-p52bir.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report>

- viii. In a new 'heat study' paper published in Science Advances by a team of British and American researchers, the impact of climate in change is counted in terms of number of lives lost. Kristie Ebi, a public health expert at the University of Washington and a study co-author says: ***“Climate change, driven by greenhouse gas emissions, is affecting our health, our economy and our ecosystems. This study adds to the body of evidence of the harms that could come without rapid and significant reductions in our greenhouse gas emissions.”*** The World Health Organization has previously stated that **tackling the climate crisis would save at least a million lives a year globally, making it a moral imperative to act.** Scientists have warned the world is now dangerously close to breaching the 1.5C limit, which would push societies to a new reality of severe droughts, coastal flooding, wildfires and the loss of key ecosystems such as coral reefs. **Even if current Paris agreement pledges are met, the world is on course to heat by around 3C.**¹⁷
- ix. In "Climate Emergency Darebin", **Darebin Council describes climate change as an emergency; recognises the need for “emergency speed”; commits to “accelerate sustained and meaningful action on the climate emergency”; and to develop a ‘vision for restoring a safe climate for all’.** We should **do the same in Nillumbik.**
- x. A global assessment report on the state of the planet's biodiversity and ecosystem services by **the UN Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Ibpes) is sounding alarm bells; and as did the recent 'keep global warming to 1.5°C' IPCC report and its declaration of a 'climate emergency', it aims to push the nature crisis into the global spotlight.**¹⁸

Cristiana Paşca Palmer (executive secretary of the United Nation’s Convention on Biological Diversity – the world body responsible for maintaining the natural life support systems on which humanity depends) said ***“The loss of biodiversity is a silent killer. It’s different from climate change, where people feel the impact in everyday life. With biodiversity, it is not so clear but by the time you feel what is happening, it may be too late.”*** She warns that the world must thrash out a new deal for nature in the next two years or humanity could be the first species to document our own extinction; that **people in all countries need to put pressure on their governments to draw up ambitious global targets by 2020 to protect the insects, birds, plants and mammals that are vital for global food production, clean water and carbon sequestration. The already high rates of biodiversity loss from habitat destruction,**

¹⁷ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/05/thousands-could-perish-annually-us-global-heating-study?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0dyZWVuTGlnaHQMTkwNjA3&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GreenLight&CMP=greenlight_email

¹⁸ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX01vcM5pbmdNYWlsQVVTLE5MDUwNg%3D%3D&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MorningMailAUS&CMP=morningmailau_email

chemical pollution and invasive species **will accelerate** in the coming 30 years as a result of climate change and growing human populations.

The UN's top climate and biodiversity institutions and scientists found that **nature-based solutions** – such as forest protection, tree planting, land restoration and soil management – could provide up to a third of the carbon absorption needed to keep global warming within the Paris agreement parameters. The French president, Emmanuel Macron was recently the first world leader to note that **the climate issue cannot be solved without a halt in biodiversity loss**.¹⁹

xi. Also to realise are the findings of a recent study that climate change has already caused irreversible damage to our biodiversity; and that **the speed of climate disruption is outstripping many animals' capacity to adapt, especially for animals already deemed at risk of extinction, and warning of a growing threat to even common species**.²⁰

xii. Nillumbik does not have an acute unemployment problem; **thus the Draft's priority to 'actively seek and promote economic development' is comparatively misplaced. Instead it should 'actively seek and prioritise local solutions to the global crises (climate and biodiversity)'**. Refer "Nillumbik Environment Charter":

Via its Environment Charter²¹, Nillumbik Shire Council:

- recognises Council's enormous responsibility for the protection and enhancement of our local environment and for contributing to **global environmental solutions**.
- helps guide Council's commitment to enhancing biodiversity, encouraging sustainable built form, reducing our environmental impact and continuing education around **environmental sustainability'**.
- enables Council and the community, to move to a more sustainable future, and to achieve greater local sustainability and conservation of our natural environment.
- is committed Protecting and improving **Nillumbik's biodiversity**; and Council will be **proactive in caring for waterways, improving soils, pest plant and animal control, reserve management, roadside management, biodiversity conservation, land management and Green Wedge management**.

¹⁹ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/03/stop-biodiversity-loss-or-we-could-face-our-own-extinction-warns-un?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX01vcm5pbmdNYWlsQVVTLTE4MTEwNg%3D%3D&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MorningMailAUS&CMP=morningmailau_email

²⁰ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/23/animals-failing-to-adapt-to-speed-of-climate-crisis-study-finds?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWVuVG9kYXIVS19XZWWVrZGF5cy0xOTA3MjQ%3D&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayUK&CMP=GTUK_email

²¹ The Nillumbik Environment Charter states that Nillumbik has an aware community that is concerned about both the local environment and global environmental issues including biodiversity conservation, climate change and the depletion of resources.

- is committed Improving the **sustainability of the built form**; to Council actively utilising and encouraging sustainable building design, products and techniques, responsible use of materials, energy conservation, retro-fitting, **renewable energy and sustainable water management**.
- is committed **Reducing our daily environmental impact** - to reducing its **carbon footprint** through a reduction in waste, improved transport, greener purchasing and **sustainable use of natural resources**.
- is committed Adapting to the environmental impacts of climate change; & better prepare for prolonged drought periods, intense rainfall periods and heatwave conditions.
- is committed to encouraging and facilitating **more sustainable environmental outcomes**.

63. 'Month after month, there is research showing that climate change is happening faster than we thought ... that we're ... hurtling towards the edge of a cliff. We're on track for a global warming of three to four degrees'.²²

Council's Draft Plan is a massive failure in anticipating what's ahead and a duty of care. The Plan needs to affirm practising the precautionary principle - as defined in the current 2010-2025 GWMP.

64. (Climate Change and Regenerative Farming).

RE: p. 29, the Draft GWMP states that "*As a result, localised sustainable land management and biodiversity successes are occurring and should be celebrated and built upon ...*".

- Programs exist and new initiatives are underway to support farmers to use more energy efficient equipment, incorporate land-use changes such as revegetation, and adopt new farming practices. However, while an increasing proportion of Australian farmers are adopting practices which integrate soil, water and vegetation management, **incremental changes alone will not provide the sector-wide resilience needed to function sustainably within a changed natural system.**
The need for a cohesive strategy to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and facilitate improved resilience (environmentally and in agriculture), underpinned by research into the practices that are working in this scenario, and to identify the gaps within relevant local and global frameworks, need to be recognised.
- **Adaptation to a changing climate could potentially provide alternative financial opportunities for farmers (via ecosystem services payments or transition to renewable energy sources) while promoting natural capital protection and**

²² https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jun/29/no-flights-four-day-week-climate-scientists-home-save-planet?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0dyZWVuTGlnaHQMTkwNzA1&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GreenLight&CMP=greenlight_email

regeneration. For example, recent modelling reported a net economic benefit for the agriculture sector in transitioning to a low carbon economy.²³

65. Water

- **Urgently remake the plan so the current trend of our waterways heading towards collapse is reset** so they and the dependent species and communities are truly put on a path towards long term health and resilience.
- **Water management improvements need to be accelerated** and further extended. (eg. set specific ecological targets; up-to-date & comprehensive ecological data (including of water quality, levels & flows); implement measures to protect low flows; review the rules concerning water extractions in low flows).
- **A comprehensive review of climate change impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems, other ecological impacts and water availability** across the entire catchments and ecological regions is needed.
- **The uncertainties of climate change and the devastating effects of climate change need to be fully factored into the GWMP.**
- Start activating policies such as: Nillumbik's Sustainable Water Management Plan 2008; Stormwater Management Plan 2001; Integrated Water Management Study; Nillumbik's & Victoria's State of Environment Reports; Nillumbik Environment Charter; C101 Abzeco reports; Vic Biodiversity Strategy 2037!!

66. Biodiversity - commit concerted actions to:

- i. Help **reverse the trend of Australia highest rate of mammal extinction in the world.**
- ii. **Strengthen all wildlife habitat protection.** BAU is not good enough; and the problem cannot be addressed in isolation, as all is interdependent, and pressures all around continue to exacerbate - to be effective, it needs to be done **holistically, based on ecosystems and regional/ecological landscapes**
- iii. **Advocate for mechanisms to properly protect biodiversity, threatened species (and their habitat), or threatened ecosystems; to properly maintain key ecosystem processes on which threatened species depend; and based on up-to-date information and characterised by good governance; including adequate plans for offsets where habitat loss does go ahead, to be focused on ecological outcomes that support species recovery.**²⁴

²³ http://farminstitute.org.au/publications/research_report/change-in-the-air

²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/20/no-clue-environment-department-doesnt-know-if-threatened-species-plans->

67. As well as a landscape perspective, there's a need for an ecological, regional and catchment perspectives; for stronger protection of lower and medium storey indigenous vegetation; for property management plans; for the urgent application of updated C101 planning scheme amendment; for the urgent reinstatement of small lot controls.

68. The actions need to include the setting of **targets, monitoring and reporting schedules, and accountability measures** (in relation to actions on the environment and Indigenous people).²⁵

OBJECTIVES:

69. **Objective 3.1 (the needs of wildlife - biodiversity & habitat) becomes inappropriately subverted to bushfires via climate change in Objective 3.3. This subversion needs to be negated.**

70. Objective 3.1 needs to acknowledge the following:

- The importance of “less valuable” or, more accurately, “less intact or disturbed” habitats that make up the entire biodiversity map for the shire;
- the importance of vital faunal corridors, which may or may not be currently vegetated, or that may support less “valuable habitats;
- that our natural environment is already highly fragmented, so these important corridors may exist across landscapes that does not contain so-called “valuable” biodiversity and habitats.

71. Objective 3.2 'Education campaign' is limited to bushfires & resilience and feral animal and pest plant reduction; but a **massive public education campaign needs to be undertaken about biodiversity, the value of ecosystems & ecosystem services, care for natural landscapes, bushfire risk reduction through understanding the ancient role of fire in the landscape, the significance of the Green Wedge, the global biodiversity extinction & climate crises (holistic - their interdependence); and so that the community understands that a lot of climate change issues are due to broad scale vegetation clearing, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.**

implemented?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMTkwMzIx&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&CMP=GTAU_email

²⁵ Canada has set targets – a 20% **reduction in poverty** by 2020 (it is ahead of that goal), and a 50% drop by 2030, relative to 2015 levels. It **set up the independent National Advisory Council on Poverty** to advise the government on its strategy, and track efforts through an annual report tabled in parliament; which says "targets can work to signal a national priority and to keep governments accountable. ... It's the persistent constant monitoring of some of those basic metrics for First Nation communities and we need that as a country."; that **big changes rarely happen without utopian thinking.**

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jul/01/it-is-not-a-pipe-dream-five-things-australia-could-do-now-to-end-poverty?utm_term=RWRpdG9yaWFsX0d1YXJkaWFuVG9kYXIBVVMtMTkwNzAx&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&CMP=GTAU_email

72. Objective 3.5 needs to be reworded to say: *“Identify, document and protect the character of the diverse landscapes of the Nillumbik Green Wedge.”*

73. Objective 3.6 should be reworded as follows to reflect the role of landowners located on waterways and Landcare in achieving this objective:

Support Melbourne Water, ~~and~~ the Catchment Management Authority, landowners and Landcare to improve stream condition, water flows, water quality and catchment quality.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES:

74. (If this goal is to stay in this combined function format; and) to assist our “healthy environment”, the following objectives should be included within this Goal:

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen protection of, and enhance lower and medium storey indigenous vegetation.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation.

OBJECTIVE: Protect and enhance REMNANT vegetation.

OBJECTIVE: Achieve sustainable land management.

OBJECTIVE: Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure land use and development is addressed in the context of its potential effect on the wider catchment.

OBJECTIVE: Conserve biodiversity through implementing sustainable land use planning and encouraging sustainable land management, ensuring land is suitable for the proposed land use.

OBJECTIVE: Minimise the impacts of pest plants and animals.

OBJECTIVE: Discourage further rural residential development of undersized allotments, or on heavily vegetation bush allotments in the Green Wedge, or in areas that are defined as high bushfire risk.

OBJECTIVE: Manage biodiversity at landscape scale for conservation.

KEY ACTIONS:

75. A3.1: Specifically, what Objective does this relate to? While stocktaking of assets may possibly be valuable, where is the clear environmental benefit within this Action; and for hobby farms or even broad scale agricultural pursuits?

76. If the “stocktakes” are to be used in A3.2 to inform the review of the ESO, then it should include the most recent assessments of the environmental significance of the vegetation and habitats of the Shire and incorporate the biosites identified by DELWP.
77. A3.2: What are the criteria on which the “stocktakes” of environmental assets are to be based? The document seems heavily focussed on “valuable” biodiversity assets and less so on “big picture” or ecosystem-level criteria. This is also dangerous, insofar as this stocktake appears to place equal importance on hobby farms and other agricultural land uses, yet hasn’t defined what might occur should the desired hobby farm or agricultural pursuits conflict with protection of environmental values/assets on the land.
78. A3.3: This action is a mish-mash. What is the real intention here? What is the desired outcome of “robust conversations”? This action can mean anything to anybody, and is therefore insufficiently precise.
79. A3.4: *“Forge partnerships with agencies such as Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria to achieve a multi-agency, broad landscape approach to pest control.”* needs to be added. Also consider a policy to restrict planting of environmental weeds within bushland environments.
80. A3.9: Current policies and overlays are unlikely to adequately protect landscapes within Nillumbik. Perhaps it would be prudent to apply Significant Landscape Overlays, for example, to the landscapes we wish to protect PRIOR to any potential review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.
81. A3.12: Strongly disagree with this Action. Amenity has no place when considering waterway health. This is not an area in which “balance” is appropriate. For example, appropriate wording for this Action might be: *“Review current water extraction and diversion practices, including use of dams and bores, in light of inadequate environmental flows due to reduced rain fall and climate change impacts”*.
A thorough investigation of the depleted waterways, of what the solutions are to this, and ongoing research to address this issue, are needed. Melbourne Water's Diamond Creek Catchment Local Management Plan 2015, should be referenced.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

ACTION: Identify actual and potential wildlife corridors and valuable habitat, and then ensure planning controls and incentives reflect the need to protect these areas. (relate to Objective 3.1)

ACTION: Ensure that the state government Biosites register is up to date with regard to Nillumbik’s sites of biodiversity and faunal habitat importance.

ACTION: Seek and involve neighbouring municipalities and agencies in land and biodiversity management.

ACTION: Continue to investigate ambiguities in the current planning controls that inadequately protect biodiversity assets i.e. grazing animals within bushland, and lobby for strengthening controls to prevent these degrading environmental impacts.

ACTION: In priority areas for biodiversity, investigate permit conditions that require land management plans. This concept is already a requirement under Green Wedge zoning, and some municipalities ask for this under other land use zones.

ACTION: Investigate the effectiveness of enforcement with regard to breaches in planning controls.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

DO NOT SUPPORT [because there is a worrying lack of detail]

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

Do you

have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

82. Economic activities must be assessed and altered in response to **the latest science**, and conform to **the urgent need for environmental sustainability and protections**²⁶. This must be reflected in the title of the Goal - eg. **'A sustainable, eco-friendly Green Wedge economy'**, the Actions, and throughout the plan.

83. The Plan should ask: *'How can we maintain and reinvigorate the environment?'* rather than *'What can we get out of the land?'*

84. **The obvious link between sustainable agricultural practices, climate change mitigation and a healthy Green Wedge, must be central to the GWMP**; Nillumbik's strategic conservation role must not be compromised; and **mitigation against climate change and biodiversity extinction should be our overriding priority**.

85. Support for local agriculture must always provide for the continuing health of the environment. **Regenerative farming, as well as water conservation, Indigenous knowledge, and indigenous flora and fauna must be encouraged**.

86. As per the State Government's Planning Practice Note 31 'Preparing a Green Wedge Management Plan', **sustainable land management practices** need to be encouraged.

87. Again, there seem attempts at **inappropriately redefining of planning terms**: "*The principal [agricultural] products are beef cattle, orchard fruit, grapes, horses and hay, although there are also a wide range of other farm products including sheep, pigs, goats, alpacas, horses (primarily for recreation), egg production, flowers, honey, citrus and mushrooms.*"

²⁶ If environmental values are not uppermost, agricultural, leisure, and economic activities will suffer in the long term.

Horses do not get eaten, and are mostly used for recreational purposes, they therefore **should not be classified as an 'agricultural product'**.

88. Horse ownership has been significantly proliferating in the GW over the last 10-15 years.

- The *2019 Victorian State of the Environment Report's* findings that **recreational horses and grazing have a negative impact on biodiversity**, need to be recognised. Due to being hard-hoofed and their tendency to cause much erosion and land and water degradation and to spread weeds, **their land-use needs to be restricted, especially near water courses, on steep slopes and on bush blocks.**
- A **property management plan and a land capability study** are needed when a planning application concerns the ***Environmental Significance Overlay or hoofed grazing domestic animals*** to protect eg. water courses, bush blocks, and steep slopes against inappropriate land use and erosion, **and to encourage indigenous vegetation and habitat for wildlife.**
- When/if an **equestrian strategy** gets considered it **should be conditional on the above requirements**, and should be accompanied by **education of the equine sector and other graziers** to promote greater environmental care and understanding and responsible ownership of animals.

89. Equestrian needs are covered in the Recreational Trails Strategy with other recreational pursuits. They've received extensive trails and environment funding in recent times. It is not a priority. Keep our Council rates low. Any 'equestrian development' should be undertaken by private enterprise, not Council. Council's **Equestrian Strategy and Key action A4.9 should be deleted.**

90. The **intent of the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) must be upheld** for all the above-mentioned reasons and to **ensure any agricultural activities respect the land.**

Permits should be required to begin farming in the Rural Conservation Zone even on previously cleared land as the proposed use may not be appropriate to the area. The Draft's suggestion **to allow, without permit requirements, the use of previously cleared land for farming is open to abuse and potential environmental degradation.** For instance, if Council persists in defining 'horses' as an agricultural product, then their wide-spread land-use without any permit requirements could seriously degrade the GW environment. The suggestion needs to be deleted.

91. To decrease the likelihood of inappropriate development, this Draft must mention that **tourism developments in the Green Wedge need to be "in conjunction" with agricultural uses**, as stated in clause 55 of the planning scheme.

92. **Action A4.13** "*Encourage home based business by analyzing the needs and addressing where possible the barriers to growth.*" should be reworded with a purpose; eg. **"Consistent with affirming Green Wedge conservation values, home based businesses**

should be encouraged by analyzing the needs and addressing where possible the barriers to growth."

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

STRONGLY DO NOT SUPPORT

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

93. We all have a duty of care to the environment, to our children and to future generations (who do not have a voice). It is Council's responsibility to lead, to do what it can to turn around the environmental decline, and to judiciously apply the 'precautionary' and 'intergenerational equity' principles; and to adopt perspectives in the interest of the larger, common good²⁷ rather than self-interests.

94. Responsible Leadership should have a section dealing with mitigation of climate change and biodiversity extinction in accordance with the precautionary principle.

95. **Guardian or stewardship** of the land must be better defined in Goal 5 "Responsible Leadership", explaining that for our entire tenure, our obligation is to care for the land, not to degrade it - that land, its diverse ecosystems and waterways, are passed on in an improved state. **Council must educate residents** about these matters, and **encourage indigenous re-vegetation throughout the Shire.**

96. Council ought to provide **community education about: 'avoid - reduce - reuse - recycle'; reducing meat-consumption; buying local produce and growing your own; responsible waste disposal; reduced car-dependence; benefits of native vegetation; biodiversity; environmental sustainability; ecological footprint; environmentally-sustainable bushfire reduction strategies, climate change and their interdependence; etc.**

97. The GWMP needs to recognise the **leading role that Nillumbik can play**; that we can be **part of the solution, acting locally to address global problems.** We're a relatively affluent population. Nillumbik is the perfect place to start turning things around. If not here and now, where and when?

98. [Regarding *Nillumbik's State of Environment Report's* finding of ongoing loss of native vegetation, the problem of inadequate enforcement, and as per the 1st (Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) item, Appendix 1, Draft GWMP], Goal 5 must **place much greater emphasis on the need to 'Maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna habitats and species and achieve a net gain in the quantity and quality of native vegetation.'** It is Council's responsibility to make significant contributions to the **education of residents for the protection and care of biodiversity**; and that **appropriate resources** are allocated to the **enforcement of policy standards.**

²⁷ eg. "Think global. Act local"

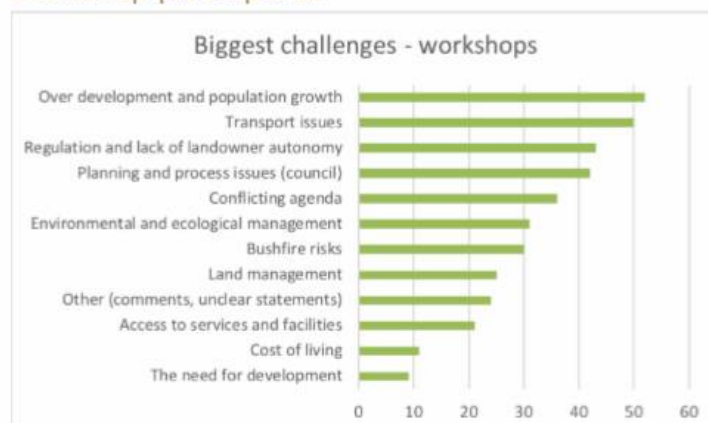
99. The Draft's summation²⁸ RE: "the issue of regulation" or "the *state regulatory and planning framework*", that: "*The extensive community engagement conducted in 2018 to inform this plan revealed that in many cases, a major issue of concern to the community is whether this framework is being properly implemented and how.*" seems a misrepresentation, and needs to be questioned and put into perspective.

[From GWMP - Community_Engagement_Report_-_Appendix_3_-_Verbatim_responses].

It must be noted:

- That the statistics are highly skewed (eg. over-representation of green bars in below graphs); that their representativeness needs to be questioned; that **this so-called 'major community concern' is actually seriously overstated**, casting doubt over the issue's relative status; that **in fact the community's counter concern about "over/inappropriate development and population growth" is far greater**; and given that the highest community response regarding "regulatory opportunities was for "environment protection"; consideration of **the issue needs to be** (considered at least in an entirely different context, if not) **deleted from the Draft Plan**.
- At the **workshops - organised retrospectively at the behest of PALs and equine lobby**, "regulation and lack of landowner autonomy" was the third "biggest challenge" (43 responses); **"over development and population growth" was the first "biggest challenge"** (52 responses).

Workshop participants

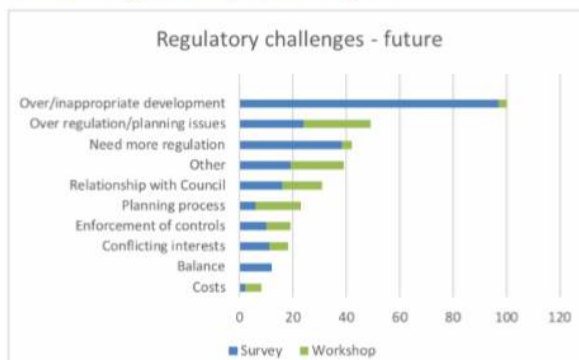


Responses: 385

²⁸ RE: "*Those who were concerned with over-regulation and enforcement were concerned with unreasonable intrusion into everyday life and disempowerment. ... [or] ... want certainty about their future in a challenging natural environment.*" (p. 40) - must not be allowed to serve as a euphemism for the self-interested wish to: 'get rid of green or red tape = get rid off GW controls = so I can do with land as I want and enhance my chances for land subdivisions'.

- But the “over regulation/planning issues” response certainly did not have the same significance amongst all the 'survey' responses; and **not only did community concern about "over/inappropriate development" more than outweigh (twice as much) that about "over regulation/planning issues", the “over regulation/planning issues” responses are highly likely to be misrepresentative, entailing double counting of the same participants responding to both the "survey" (25) and to the "workshop" (25);** and apparently some people attended more than one workshop, so there will even be double counting in the graph below - note the heavily skewed green bar which is the dodgy workshop data:

Future regulatory challenges



Responses:342

- One graph in the survey data indicates **78** people out of total 688 responders cited **overregulation/planning issues**. The report summarises the graph as follows: *“The most commonly cited regulatory challenge related to over regulation (as defined by respondent) and planning issues. This included the time and cost of obtaining permits and the volume of regulation related to living and running businesses in the Green Wedge.”*
- The **counter community concerns for the environment is reflected in the sum of 77 responses** to "more regulatory protection to save GW" (31) + "over/inappropriate development" (28) + "enforcement of controls" (18).

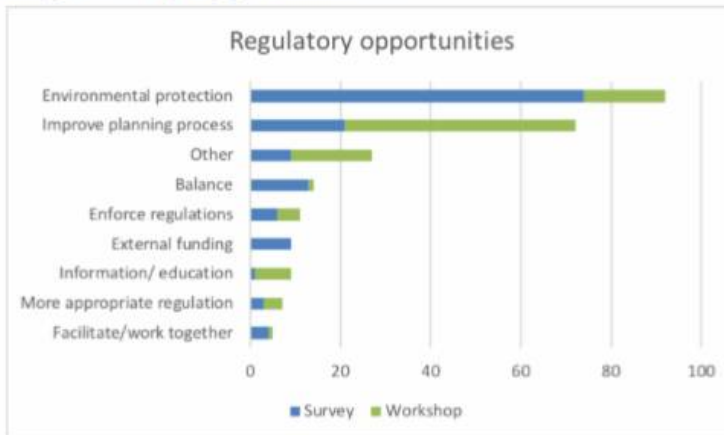
Regulatory challenges



Responses: 225

- The dominant community concern about "over/inappropriate development" seems corroborated by the highest "environment protection' community response (92 total - survey:72; workshop: 20) in the below regulatory opportunities" graph:

Regulatory opportunities



Responses: 246

- So it seems exceedingly more appropriate to conclude from the data: that concerning the planning framework, far more people are more worried about 'over development and lack of protection' than about "over regulation/planning issues" - as appears to be confirmed by the key findings, where planning issues came last:

What are the challenges of living, working and visiting the Green Wedge?

The challenges cited by respondents included:

- Over development and over population – this was a consistent theme with concerns that the population will be increased and the area developed further. While the term “over development” was used by respondents, the meaning of this term is not definitive and may not be consistently used by respondents.
- Transport issues – particularly poor quality and congested roads and lack of good public transport options. Lack of safe cycling and horse riding options were also mentioned.
- Bushfire – the risk of bushfires and the need to manage land to reduce its impacts.
- Environmental degradation – a reduction in the quality of the land through poor land management, development and neglect.
- Costs – for individuals living in the Green Wedge and the importance of finding funding options from other levels of governments, to reduce the financial pressure on local residents of maintaining the Green Wedge.
- Balance – finding the balance between people and the environment and between different groups, such as farmers, conservationists, recreational users who live, work and spend leisure time in the Green Wedge.
- Planning – difficult, costly and time intensive and unfair planning processes were considered a challenge by some respondents.

Deletion of this 'framework' discussion from the Draft Plan should impinge on Key actions A5.6, A5.7 & A5.8.

100. The Draft's summation **that "regulation" lies at one extreme end of the spectrum, too seems a mischaracterisation**, when in fact it is a very normal means. There are many experts who advocate stronger regulations - eg. environmental laws (refer paragraph 36 above); and as has been found in many recent royal commissions or enquiries into sectors such as banking & financial services, aged care, disability services, health insurance, energy generation, telecommunications, road transport, defence manufacturing, mining industries, the media: **self-regulation does not work.**

The plan's negligent opting for the "empowering" end of the spectrum and reliance on 'landowners' voluntary efforts' (the 'do nothing' / 'Business As Usual' option) is inadequate, ineffective and a failure of duty of care to stop the continued environmental degradation; and the plan needs to investigate much more effective measures, including updated regulations, to turn around this trajectory.

101. The **Draft Plan's suggestion that the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) is too restrictive of farming practices**, that it only be applied to land with higher conservation values, **puts at serious risk flora and fauna across much of the Shire**, whether as single trees in paddocks or scattered pockets of remnant bush. These are all vital, and need greater care and protection, not less.

There is no contention about the right to farm on RCZ land, but if that use has lapsed for an extended period, then a permit requirement is appropriate. There is **no indication of the number of landowners for whom this is a real issue**, but it is likely to be very few. If this is the only issue, then **pursuing a change to the zoning would seem unnecessary, divisive and costly.**

102. **Key Actions A5.6 and A5.7** proposing changes to how Green Wedge land can be used, **should be deleted**, as they will encourage the spread of residential and commercial development outside the Urban Growth Boundary, and are highly likely to fragment and degrade the values of the Green Wedge. The **UGB** must be treated as a **hard-edge boundary.**

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

103. There is a worrying lack of detail and environmental expertise throughout the document regarding the protection and enhancement of the Shire's biodiversity in all its forms and varying quality. Clearly defined actions need to be included which will address this problem to ensure the long term health of the Green Wedge.

104. Declines in biodiversity are at critical levels, and there is urgent need for action by all levels of government and society. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) states that: *"The health of ecosystems on*

which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. It is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global”.

105. The Draft speaks of polarised and diverse views and how conversations must be respectful and robust. It is vital that this is the case, and that they are supported by the most up-to-date science.

106. Because Council's Draft GWMP totally downplays the environmental protection and actions of the last GWMP, and advocates the undermining of the current Rural Conservation Zone, it is not acceptable in its present form, and must be re-written. The Draft GWMP's approach, framing and priorities need a fundamental rethink. Proposed actions that attack core foundations of the Green Wedge should be removed. Specific detail is needed on actions that **support the community's overwhelming desire to protect the Green Wedge and to turn around the continuing environmental decline**. As it stands, and were it to be implemented, it would endanger the survival of our unique biodiversity. For "The Green Wedge Shire", that is unacceptable.

107. Consistent with the shire's strategic "conservation" objective, we need a Green Wedge Management Plan that is **framed in the interest of the larger, common good rather, not in terms of individual or self-interests**; and places the Green Wedge environment (biodiversity, ecosystem services) and its restoration as the main priority in a way that fits the 21st century challenges facing us - for our children and our children's children. In terms of the 21st century challenges, it needs to recognise the very important and leading role that Nillumbik could play.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

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A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

RESPONSE TO GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019.pdf

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

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<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

RESPONSE TO GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-08-11

Liz Parsons

I have been a resident in the Shire of Nillumbik since 1983.

Firstly on 2.5 acres in North Warrandyte, then on 20 acres in Flat Rock Road, and currently on 30 acres in Kangaroo Ground.

I support all comments and all that has been noted in the submission by PALs to the draft GWMP.

I would further like to add:

I believe it is grossly unfair to rural residents to not honour the planning decisions made by previous Councils in relation to the building and siting of rural residents' homes with regards to rebuilding after bushfire and the destruction of the rural residents' homes.

Since the late 1980s to late 1990s, when much of the land held by the MMBW for the Sugarloaf Reservoir was released for sale by that Government authority, there have been many new homes built in the rural districts of the Shire, all of which required Planning Permits, and the granting of such Permits means that the plans and details of the proposed new dwellings all complied with current regulations at the time – health regulations, materials regulations, and siting regulations. Many of these Permit applications would be archived by the Council and easily verified. Many residents would still be in possession of stamped, approved plans and permits.

It is totally wrong and unjust to make retrospective, any subsequent Council planning change to building siting regulations should a rural resident lose their dwelling due to bushfire. This would not be even contemplated as fair treatment of a suburban living resident should their dwelling burn down, and many live in high bushfire locations in local towns. The treatment of rural residents is grossly biased.

Burned out rural residents should be permitted to rebuild on the same house footprint, same architectural elevation, as if this was acceptable to Council 15 or so years ago, that is sufficient. To burden already distraught rural residents with extra worry is inhumane.

To use the excuse 'we think there is a safer location on your block for your dwelling' is subjective, as unless Planners have a crystal ball, no-one can determine the behaviour of any future bushfire.

Relocating to a different site on your block can create greater access difficulties for residents as they would have already built on the location of their block which satisfied their requirements for ease of access, and also involves great landscape expense in drainage, retaining high cuts, and retaining fill, and future difficulty in maintaining such high cuts and fill embankments. Difficult for people on low incomes, or restricted mobility, but still long time rate paying residents and community members of Nillumbik who deserve respect and assistance.

Currently in Nillumbik if someone purchases a vacant rural block and wants to build a dwelling, they have to undertake all manner of environmental studies – frog surveys, orchid surveys, flora surveys, etc.

This requirement would make a burned out resident endure the time and expense of these surveys, which should also not be required – and is ridiculous anyway, as they have been living there for years, with the frogs in the dams the resident put in (with permits!), with the fenced off gully lines, and with any other vegetation. So what is the situation of all of a sudden I have some rare frog in the dam I put in near the house – am I not able to rebuild as it might threaten the frog? do I get

charged some huge offset amount because the frog is present? Or the orchid in the back paddock is still there? Or do I have to relocate my house because some frog/fauna lives around the dam I put in now, whereas years ago before I was resident and no dam was present, the frogs and fauna were not present. Where is that covered in the proposed GWMP?

There is no surety at all for rural residents after bushfire, and planners' whims and personal philosophy are not sufficient to guarantee any surety, this all needs to be documented, and not left to some future benevolence or otherwise of a Nillumbik planner. Wording needs to be explicit.

Once a property is larger than 5 acres, it falls into a different insurance category, even if the use is just a domestic dwelling, and not a commercial farm, because of the acreage the property is classified as a 'farm'. Many insurance companies only offer replacing 'like with like', with no cash payout for a destroyed home.

So unless a resident can rebuild 'like with like' on the same footprint, they do not receive any insurance benefit, so are doubly disadvantaged financially if they are told they have to rebuild somewhere else on their block.

If there is nowhere else suitable for a dwelling on their block, they are left with an asset which the Council was happy to reap rates from for decades, but all of a sudden can't be built on so of no market value, coupled with no payout from any insurance policy. I doubt if any Nillumbik planner would like to be treated thus, so why is it ok to treat law abiding Nillumbik residents thus?

Much of the bushfire danger in Nillumbik is due to topography and vegetation types, however the indigenous people managed this danger with cool burns every 7 years or so, in a patchwork. However, for decades now there has been no forest maintenance, no maintenance of Council of reserves, and no maintenance of road sides to allow safe egress in wildfire with regards to bushfire mitigation and prevention – this was highlighted in the 2009 Royal Commission into the Black Saturday fires where Nillumbik Shire was greatly criticised for its tardy approach to bushfire prevention and mitigation works, and overly restrictive by-laws for residents with regards to residential bushfire mitigation works.

The resultant deaths of many at Kinglake were due to road side verges not being maintained due to 'green' philosophy - which in itself is just one big experiment as it never refers back to indigenous land management cool burn maintenance.

You would think Nillumbik planners and councillors would learn.

As well as take advice from local CFA personnel familiar with bushfire mitigation.

All of which would make Nillumbik residents' dwellings safer overall in the event of bushfire, and would lessen the rural community anxiety each Summer. Suburban residents who dictate how rural residents will live, never face the prospect of losing everything each Summer, and one was heard at the recent GWMP community panel to say 'well if you live out there, and get burned out, you deserve it, so suck it up.'

Unforgiveable attitude, and totally contemptuous of rural residents.

In the light of all of the above, my concern is that the draft GWMP does not specify rural residents' ability to conduct bushfire mitigation works on their properties as of right, and therefore does not specify where the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy lies with respect to the priority that the BMS has in relation to the GWMP.

Page 3

Also in the light of the above, why has not Nillumbik Shire got some official Committee, formed of rural landowners and farmers – only – who have just as much importance as any Environment Committee?

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Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Please refer to my attached WORD submission

Five Key Moves

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1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.

4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 2 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 3 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 4 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 5 - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Please refer to my attached WORD submission

Principles

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- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage

- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Aboriginal voice - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

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To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

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To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Please refer to my attached WORD submission

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Please refer to my attached WORD submission

You can upload your file here.

[Submission on Green Wedge Management Plan Rex Niven.docx](#)

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Yes

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Submission on Green Wedge Management Plan Aug 2019 Rex Niven

The current draft is very disappointing. It appears to be a wish-list for benefitting land-owners in the green wedge, not the Green Wedge land itself or even the population of Nillumbik shire. This is not what we signed up for.

I reject the five-point system for structuring my response, but :

I want the plan to propose achievable, measurable outcomes with appropriate targets and time-frames. The current draft is wishy-washy with no KPIs or defined-goals, only vague aspirations.

In contrast the document C101 was a “recipe book” of specific measures still valid today.

I want the environmental biodiversity in the Green Wedge protected, increased and enhanced.

This was a clear outcome of the Community Panel process, and a requirement of ‘*Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* : Desired planning outcomes for green wedges and peri-urban areas’.

I do not want zoning to be weakened from RCZ or the use of “buffer zones” introduced around townships, or “right to farm” without permits. Further, farming should be actively discouraged as it usually involves hooved animals causing soil damage, erosion and vegetation loss. Most farming in the GW is not “real” i.e. for produce, being of hobby-farm scale or horse-agistment nature, neither of which are economically sound or productive of food.

The Local Government Review Board declared in 1994 that the new Shire of Nillumbik was to be a conservation Shire with the Green Wedge as its strategic focus. Residents of the Green Wedge should feel a sense of privilege rather than outrage that more green-tape is cramping their freedom. Economic activity within the green wedge is certainly not a priority. Most of the residents are already very comfortably off so economic activity is just filling in spare time.

Original expectations of the green wedge were improved quality of air and water. To this we should add a role in reducing greenhouse gases, by uptake in wood and soil carbon for example.

I support an aboriginal voice in managing the area. However I counsel against recommending fire-stick burning as a panacea, remembering that climate change and foreign weed species have changed the ways fire behaves.

In an ideal world the Green Wedge would be a kind of park, along the lines of the Peak District or Lake District in UK, where farming co-exists with human needs like housing, landscapes and recreation, subservient to biodiversity management.

A council officer told me privately that in her opinion the council’s process (from the start of the community panel) would result in no change at all – this draft certainly supports that view.

I hope you will think again.

Rex Niven



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Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

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4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.

5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Neutral

Key Move 2 - Neutral

Key Move 3 - Neutral

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

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- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the

implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Neutral

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Neutral

Manage change for future benefit - Neutral

Collaboration and connectedness - Neutral

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Neutral

Social equity - Neutral

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Neutral

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Neutral

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

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Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Please see attached

You can upload your file here.

[A B Ozimek - Green Wedge Management Plan 2019.pdf](#)

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As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

No

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**Nillumbik Shire Council
Green Wedge Management Plan**

8 August 2019

SUBMISSION TO GREEN WEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN – NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL

Our property is located on the hard face boundary between residential and rural which is currently zoned rural conservation with a minimum allotment size of 8ha. We are one of only 3 properties within Area C which falls into this 8ha minimum size.

Diamond Creek township, which is nominated as a major activity centre, is located (see Attachment 'A'):

- 700m from our property.
- Our property is situated 900mm from the train station; and
- 400m of a primary and secondary school

Our property has town water, electricity, telephone and sewerage connected.

Currently, the draft Green Wedge Management Plan places all properties zoned rural conservation under the one framework. We believe that the draft GWMP should adopt an alternative approach to our property given it sits on the boundary between peri urban and suburbia.

We believe a fanning approach should be adopted in relation to minimum size allotments. This would enable a smoother transition from suburbia to peri urban. An example of this successful application is the fanning approach within Plenty and Yarrambat. By adopting this approach, it would encourage individuals to own smaller allotments (as in Plenty ie 1-2 acres) and thereby creating a more aesthetically pleasing view of the land by way of landscaped properties, manageability etc.

Our property is not suitable for the intended descriptions under the proposed GWMP due to the following

- poor quality soil

- management of the land
- unsuitable for livestock
- suburban boundary neighbours using our property for dumping of weeds, cut branches, dog faeces, lawn clippings etc.
- complaints from suburban boundary properties in relation to noise and apparent visual pollution
- Fire risk
- Rubbish dumping
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Control of livestock straying onto suburban roads

The local ranger has been called to our property on numerous occasions due to livestock escaping from paddocks and straying onto Bishop Avenue.

We are also faced with an environmental issue of dust for 8 months of the year due to the unsealed Bishop Avenue and surrounding roads. Vehicles use these roads as a means to 'cut through' to Wattle Glen, Research and Kangaroo Ground – thus avoiding the major roads and traffic. The build up of dust which literally blankets the area and should be viewed as a health hazard.

Given the above, our land is certainly not rural conservation nor quintessentially Nillumbik Green Wedge in character. It should not be described as rural or rural conversation and would be more appropriately nominated as urban fringe.

We would urge the Nillumbik Shire Council to consider that our property is located within 1klm of the Diamond Creek major activity centre and therefore should not be regulated in the same manner as rural land which can be sustainably farmed and managed. It is unfair to suggest that our property would have the same regulations as properties on the outskirts of the green wedge which are also RCZ.

Given the above, we request Council carefully consider the ability of introducing a fanning effect not only on minimum lot sizes but also regulations and constraints currently proposed by the draft GWMP which directly affects our property.

Kind Regards
Amanda & Brett Ozimek

[Redacted signature]

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

Submission to draft Green Wedge Management Plan.docx

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.


No

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

11 August 2019



Submission to Council in relation to Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

Some areas of the draft crystallise Nillumbik's Green Wedge community, aesthetic and challenges very well and I agree with some of the vision statements:

“... decision making that reflects its roles as a place for agriculture, recreation, nature conservation, tourism and rural living. This will ensure the rural character, values, landscapes, townships, natural environments and lifestyles that are so cherished, are identified, preserved and enhanced.”

“Supporting healthy and active lifestyles through increased opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors will continue to be a key focus for enhancing our wellbeing.”

I strongly agree with statements in the Key Inputs document, from the Community Engagement Report:

“... there are opportunities to use the natural assets of the green wedge to educate residents and the wider community around a number of topics including the environment and sustainability. The green wedge was seen as a place where people could experience or be educated on practical environmental sustainability.... Respondents indicated the opportunity for Nillumbik and the green wedge to promote itself as a leader in sustainability with the potential to educate communities and other organisations in sustainability. Some respondents suggested that Nillumbik should be a leader in sustainability and environmental protection. “

“Require environmental sustainable design and construction techniques in new developments to work in harmony with nature and fit the character of the town in green wedge townships (Panton Hill, Hurstbridge and St. Andrews)”

“Support and promote supplementary rural business activities such as farm gate sales, farm stays, and other low environmental and amenity impact enterprise which are consistent with green wedge values.”

It wouldn't be difficult for local businesses to co-ordinate some great green wedge experience packages for visitors. Packages can be tailored for day visits or longer stays; for driving, walking, cycling or horse riding; and for specific interests (environment; land management; craft; art; food and wine; sustainable living; leisure etc). They should include only local produce and services (food/wine hampers and/or vouchers for use at local producers' outlets; B n B offers; leisure centre passes; yoga class etc) and provide maps for trails that take in all of the above and farm gates, massage/relaxation venues, Edendale, local markets, etc etc.

Imagine a guided horse trail or bike path package that took you from your accommodation to a number of farm gate or suppliers of food and wine, to a great picnic/lunch spot to enjoy your produce, and also provided vouchers for discounted massage or use of the spa at the leisure centre.

“... welcoming people into the area and done in conjunction with real estate agents. “

I have often thought there is a great opportunity to manage some of the local community conflict by providing real estate agents with information for prospective buyers that clearly

describes the unique values of Nillumbik. New residents should have a clear understanding of what to expect when choosing to live in a high fire risk area, that promotes diversity of wildlife and native vegetation, is connected by narrow winding roads and supports agricultural activities etc (highlighting the difference from other suburban areas of Melbourne).

I am concerned that some of the draft does not adequately reflect the issues raised by the community engagement and/or community panel. The clearly stated vision by these groups appears to be diluted into some vague ideas, and some are not translated into actions and some statements or concepts in the draft are not clear. For example:

- Key Inputs document - Objectives: Protect and enhance remnant vegetation. Protect and enhance sites of faunal and habitat significance and strategic habitat links. Strategies: Identify and manage biodiversity at a landscape scale for conservation. Support the participation of rural landholders and communities in conserving biodiversity. Pursue the protection and restoration of significant sites and wildlife corridors.
 - ⇒ This objective and strategies have been diluted in the draft document.

- Five key Moves
 - In general these ideas appear to be disconnected from the rest of the plan.

 - 1. “Create a comprehensive landowners’ information and support service for land use and management, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek on-going government funding to support the service.”
 - ⇒ what are the objectives of this activity?

 - 3. “A Green Wedge Conversations program”.
 - “Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a forum to discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding assistance to support the program.”
 - ⇒ what are the objectives of this program?
 - ⇒ There is mention of shared responsibility for the future of the Green Wedge, and the draft document also identifies people involved in the above interests as having polarised opinions. How are these conversations to be facilitated without being inflammatory and creating greater divisions within the community?

- “The content of the RCZ can only be changed by the state government so the options available to Council to effect change are either advocacy for change to the zone or to consider publicly exhibiting a planning scheme amendment to re-zone those parts of the RCZ that are used for agriculture.”
 - ⇒ It isn’t clear how these two options differ. It sounds like the outcome is the same.

- Values and principles are not clearly defined.

The term “green wedge values” is used through the key inputs and draft document as something to aim for but is not defined anywhere - without a definition, how do you know what you target is or if you are targeting the right areas?? Are they shared values?

The 8 values listed in the key inputs document appear to be a statement of council’s values.

In the key inputs document “The principles (see below) include the Shire of Nillumbik’s values.” However “Conservation of high-value biodiversity is a priority on public and private lands across the green wedge.” is included among the principles under Recommendations of a Minority Report but not included or well represented among the principles.

Actions and/or objectives are not clear

- “Recognise and support landowners’ maintaining land in the green wedge with up-to-date information.”
 - ⇒ what information?
- “Assisting our private landowners in best-practice land management, acknowledging that they own the majority of land and vegetation in the green wedge”
 - ⇒ What are the objectives of best practice land management in the context of this draft? For agricultural/economic gain? To manage pests/invasive species? Aesthetics? Wildlife corridors?
- “Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming, that need to be protected for the future and the pests that need to be managed by sourcing information from formal research bodies and landowners. Seek government funding assistance to establish and maintain this data base into the future for landowner information, program prioritisation and policy development.”
 - ⇒ Creating a stocktake and maintaining a database and reviewing the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme is an administrative response.

The objective associated with this action says “Identify, protect and enhance valuable biodiversity and habitats”; the actions appear to be in the hands of Landcare, Trust for Nature and other entities outside of council’s control. As custodian of Nillumbik’s Green Wedge biodiversity the council needs to take the lead role in promoting, supporting and enhancing local biodiversity and functional, connected habitats. The draft document also recognises the challenges of climate change impacts on the natural environment (“broader processes contributing to incremental decline in biodiversity”), so enhancing biodiversity and extending habitat should be included as mitigating strategies against anticipated losses through climate change.

Can we do a little better on these areas of the management plan?

There is a sense throughout the draft that some concepts that intertwine with the stated vision are no longer an important objective of Green Wedge management. For example:

- “Investigate renewable energy...” is an administrative response. Is the council not able to *provide and promote* opportunities to support community based renewable energy?
- The discussion of managing catchments doesn’t recognise the need to protect and enhance local aquatic and riparian habitats.
- Sustainable transport is only mentioned on the last page of the draft, like an afterthought.

There are areas of the draft which I feel are not given sufficient attention. For example, maps of EVCs and Bushfire are provided although there is not direct reference to them in the text. What are these intending to illustrate?

“Adapting to climate change and our bushfire prone environment”

- The sense of this section appears to be fatalistic and reactive. Discussions around climate change impacts should include council’s actions to minimise local emissions and reduce carbon footprints within the shire as well as managing impact of climate change.

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

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A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Yes

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.

5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Agree

Key Move 2 - Agree

Key Move 3 - Agree

Key Move 4 - Agree

Key Move 5 - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

It is not clear what some of these actually mean. I ask this particularly in relation to Key move 5.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

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- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Agree

Aboriginal voice - Strongly agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Neutral

Collaboration and connectedness - Agree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Strongly agree

Social equity - Strongly agree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Strongly agree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Strongly agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

"Manage change for future benefit" is open to interpretation because it depends on who will benefit, whether for example it is some people who benefit at the cost of the environment. It would be good to see the Principle made more specific: for example 'Manage change for the future benefit of the community and the environment.'

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

[Goal 1: Engaged connected communities](#)

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Please see attached document for a more detailed response.

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Please see attached document for a more detailed response.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Please see attached document for a more detailed response.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

This response is submitted on behalf of St Andrews Landcare Inc. I have uploaded a document which is our full response to the draft plan.

You can upload your file here.

[St Andrews Landcare comments on the GWMP.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

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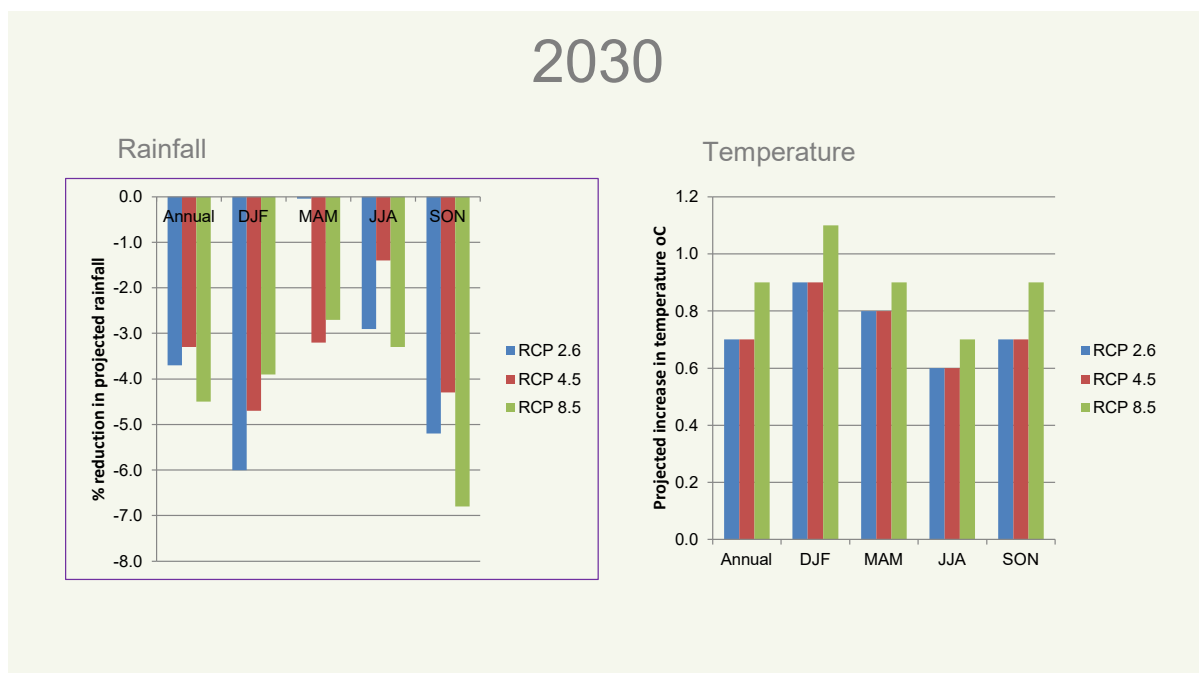
St Andrews Landcare thanks the Shire Council for the opportunity to comment on the draft Green Wedge Management Plan.

We have a number of over-arching comments and then specific recommendations for parts of the text.

Key point 1: Managing for Climate Change

Adapting to the impacts of Climate Change and developing a climate change strategy have been referenced a number of times within the GWMP. We strongly support the recognition that the impacts of climate change will require changes in how we plan, manage the land and respond to disasters. However, there are many assumptions throughout the Plan, particularly in Section 4 ‘A prosperous economy’ which appear predicated on a business-as-usual approach to climate. Current agricultural activities within the Green Wedge are unlikely to be viable within 10 years if our carbon emissions continue tracking as they are currently. Temperatures are increasing, rainfall is decreasing, stream flow has declined by 50%, soil moisture will continue to decrease, and extreme events will become more common. A radical rethink of agricultural production, and water security for the environment, biodiversity protection and food production will be needed. The GWMP needs to be much bolder and more innovative in responding to this existential threat.

Pasted below are the rainfall and temperature projections expected for this region by 2030. The planet is currently tracking at the highest emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) and there is no sign that this will change in the near future. <https://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/en/>



The review of the GWMP provides a crucial opportunity for the Council to show real leadership in inspiring and supporting the community to reduce carbon emissions, move away from relying on fossil fuels for electricity and transport, move to regenerative agriculture, increase soil carbon, prevent further loss of native vegetation and incentivise protection and revegetation of degraded land. The Shire should be moving towards initiatives such as ‘Cities Power Partnership’ <https://citiespowerpartnership.org.au/> which more than 100 shire councils have already joined, yet Shire of Nillumbik has not.

CSIRO Division of Land and Water has made a number of recommendations for building resilience at a landscape scale in the face of climate change. <https://adaptnrm.csiro.au/home/resources/>.

- *Optimise ecological processes: Encourage or actively manage genetic diversity, landscape connectivity, and hydrological processes to maintain the services we most value and help nature take its course*
- *Maintain the evolutionary character of Australian Biota: Prevent establishment or dominance of non-Australian species and maintain evolutionary processes.*
- *Maintain the regional character of our biodiversity: Draw on regional species pools for conservation management actions and maintain regionally unique evolutionary environments*
- *Minimise species loss (nationally): Some species will be lost to a region but actions should promote their protection elsewhere in the future.*
- *Build a reserve network targeting Comprehensive, Adequate, Representative principles, to accommodate the widest possible range of Australian species and ecosystems.*
- *Promote cross-sectoral adaptation planning: This includes working with other sectors such as agriculture and urban development*

Many of these recommendations are highly relevant to managing the Nillumbik environment and some have been recognised within the GWMP, such as the need to control pest animal and invasive plant species, and ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity – which is still continuing. But more can and should be done, and environmental overlays need to be strengthened to protect native vegetation. We strongly recommend that the Council reconsiders the GWMP and incorporates a strong, proactive approach to adapting to, and mitigating the impacts of, climate change, and inspiring and incentivising the community to become truly sustainable.

Key Point 2. Incremental habitat losses add up

Small land clearing activities, whether under permit or illegal, are still, bit by bit, eating away at the connectivity and extent of native vegetation within Nillumbik. Individual small losses are often seen as unimportant but the compounding effect of all the losses over numbers of years has had a significant impact on biodiversity and habitat pathways. Such incremental losses are not compensated for by offsets. They are still losses and we have come to accept small-scale clearing on the misunderstanding that ‘buying’ an offset means no net loss for biodiversity. This is a misconception and offsets should not be a mechanism to legitimise further land clearing. The GWMP needs to state this clearly and commit to achieving real ‘no net loss’.

Key point 3. Community engagement

St Andrews Landcare commends the GWMP for its focus on community engagement and wellbeing and believes that the Green Wedge and its beautiful natural environment is a critical factor in maintaining community health and wellbeing. The natural environment of the shire and its agricultural landscape is important not only for local residents but also for wider metropolitan Melbourne.

Key Point 4. Support for local community groups

St Andrews Landcare commends the GWMP for its recognition of the importance and value of local community organisations such as Landcare and Friends group that assist landowners to manage weeds, erosion, restore and revegetate degraded land and monitor native species populations. We believe that these groups have a very important role to play in facilitating environmental protection, education, community engagement and building community cohesion.

Key Point 5. We need to move from being exploiters to custodians

There is a strong emphasis in the GWMP on ‘using’ the land – a very human-centric approach. We are requesting that the emphasis shift to one that champions the importance of protecting the land and its myriad species, both threatened and common, for their intrinsic values and right to exist. We are privileged to live in this wonderful area and we need to help shift our community’s approach to being one of custodianship and stewardship of the land, rather than being satisfied with being resource-takers and depleters.

Text specific comments

The page numbering jumps from page 1 to page 4

Page 5

There is no reference to the significant and threatened species that live in the Shire that require habitat protection and enhancement to enable them to continue to exist. There is a heavy concentration in the GWMP on human activity, that underrates our role and responsibility as caretakers of the land and its resident species.

The vision seems to be a reiteration of the Council Plan with little acknowledgement that it is dealing with the highly conservation-significant Green Wedge and its host of indigenous species. The reference to natural environment is minimal and that term hardly covers the individual significance of species or vegetation communities.

To enable the community to appreciate the extent and value of the Shire’s biodiversity, it is essential to insert something like the following on page 29 after para 2 under “Environmental conservation”. The Shire or DELWP may have more up-to-date figures that should be used where possible. It would also be good to add the numbers of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians to the text to give a greater understanding of the richness of the fauna.

“The following summary of the extent and value of the Shire’s biodiversity is substantially extracted from the Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2012 or Nillumbik State of Environment Report 2014, which should be referred to for further detail.

- Nillumbik is a Shire with extensive areas of native vegetation that are the home to significant species and habitats. The area has 1,031 indigenous flora species, 64 of which are listed as significant species. There are also 350 indigenous fauna species, 70 of which are listed as rare or threatened, including the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Common Dunnart, Lace Monitor, Eltham

Copper Butterfly, Swift Parrot, Masked Owl, Powerful Owl and the Australian Grayling. There are also a large but unknown number of indigenous invertebrates, fungi, bacteria, and the like.

- The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has identified 84 sites of biodiversity significance in the Shire. Twelve are of national significance, 33 of state significance, 38 of regional significance and one of local significance. There are 23 Ecological Vegetation Classes identified within the Shire.
- There are 19 nationally threatened species and one threatened ecological community listed for protection under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. There are also 52 species listed under the state Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998 and 132 listed by DELWP as rare or threatened in Victoria.
- Of the intact native vegetation in Nillumbik, 39% is on public land, but the remaining 61% is on private land. Council works steadily with the landowners concerned to maintain conservation values in the face of threats from invasive plant and animal species and inappropriate land management. The protection and enhancement of native vegetation (and of the indigenous plants and animals that inhabit it) is a major focus of the community with some 14 Landcare groups and over 30 Friends, school and community environment groups active in the Shire.
- There are also 609 introduced flora species and 37 introduced fauna species which compete with or prey upon indigenous species.”

Page 7: The acknowledgement of the Wurundjeri people is commended.

Pages 7-9: provide a solid background for the plan

Page 10: The area indicated as peri-urban seems to extend much further beyond Melbourne than previous conceptions. (This is a State government plan though.)

Para 1

Once again the references to indigenous species are restricted to the word biodiversity, which gives no indication of the numbers and diversity of species and habitats we are talking about. It would be good to lift some of the figures from the Biodiversity Strategy and list them here, so that readers have some appreciation of what we need to care for.

For example: “*Our people value the rural lifestyle that the landscape offers them as a tranquil place to live, the productive ability of the green wedge and its overall contribution to health and well-being.*” This comment would be improved by adding something like “...and its value as home for a great variety of significant species and habitats.”

Para 3

In reference to the statement ... *and the services that support sustainability*, it is not clear what this statement means. Once again there is no clear statement that Climate Change will impact significantly on indigenous species and habitats. We suggest that there is a clear explanation of what ‘sustainability’ means, otherwise it is meaningless and requires little or no action.

Page 11:

Para 3 dot points

We are pleased to see that the second dot point does reference plants and animals.

Para 4 - 5th dot points

Greater clarity on what is meant by 'environmental protection' would move this from being very high level and obscure to more useful and precise.

Page 13

Para 2

1. *'Create a comprehensive landowners' information and support service for sustainable land use and management, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek on-going government funding to support the service.'*

This needs the word "sustainable" inserted before "land use" to give this move some direction and intent.

Moves 2, 3, 4 and 5 are good, but most of this is about discussion and information and not much about action. There should be a key move to undertake works that protect and enhance farmland, bushland, waterways and indigenous species, especially those that are threatened.

Page 14: Principles are missing "Indigenous species and habitat conservation". This is not adequately covered by 'sustainability and the precautionary principle'. Nor does it clearly cover sustainable land and water management. The expansion of this on page 19 still lacks sufficient detail, though we support the reference to *'We need to anticipate and avoid any actions that may cause serious or irreversible harm to the environment and the people who live within it.'*

Page 21: Goal 1

Para 2

Once again the reference to environment is very obscure. There is no identification that people are working to protect our fellow creatures and living plants, which they value highly in their own right.

Page 23

Para 3

'Localised concerns were also raised expressing frustrations with living and managing rural lands on the border of the urban growth boundary, particularly around Diamond Creek. Difficulties with trespass, rubbish dumping and dust from heavily used unsealed roads were all raised as symptoms of being abruptly adjacent to fully urbanised land. These conditions are, by contrast, improved on the edge of Eltham where a buffer zone is built into the urban area itself.'

Action A1.7 refers to the resolution of this problem but only vaguely. It needs to be better quantified before any significant zoning changes are considered.

Page 24: With regard to all Goals and Actions, they are supported unless otherwise stated.

Page 29: Goal 3

Once again, there is a totally inadequate identification of indigenous species and habitats and their value in their own right, outside of their benefits to humans. This is eventually acknowledged in para 9, but in reference to the state Biodiversity Strategy 2037 not the Shire's own perspective. The recommended insertion on page 1 of these comments should go in here also.

Otherwise the commentary is generally good. The third dot point should include a reference to water quality (i.e. "...protect indigenous plants and animals, water quality and flows and groundwater...").

Page 30

Para1

We recommend that the word 'weather' be removed from the phrase 'bushfire is an extreme weather event'. It is an extreme event certainly but not part of the weather.

Page 31: *Water supply catchments*

Council has its own Integrated Water Management Strategy, which should be referred to after para 2 or 3.

Page 32: *Objectives*

O3.6 should be reworded as follows to reflect the role of landowners located on waterways and the work of Landcare groups in achieving this objective.

Support Melbourne Water, ~~and~~ the Catchment Management Authority, landowners and Landcare to improve stream condition, water flows, water quality and catchment quality.

Key actions

A3.1

It is not quite clear what these stocktakes would involve. If to be used in A3.2 to inform the review of the ESO, then it should include the most recent assessments of the environmental significance of the vegetation and habitats of the Shire and incorporate the biosites identified by DELWP.

A3.2

This is a critical action that should be informed by the latest information referred to above, to ensure protection of significant sites, species and habitats within the Shire in the most cost effective and efficient way possible. It would be good if the latter was the stated intention of the review as follows.

A3.2 Subject to the findings of the data base described by A3.1, review the Environmental Significance Overlay in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme to ensure protection of significant sites, species and habitats within the Shire in the most cost effective and efficient way possible.

We strongly support the Key Actions A3.4, A3.5, A3.6

A3.9

As part of a future review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme consider identified landscape character and quality through the current policies and overlays that apply. This sentence needs to be rewritten so its meaning is clear. Currently it appears as a bit of obfuscation.

A3.12

The statement: '*Streamflow has reduced by approximately fifty per cent over the last two decades*' (see page 32), demands a more thorough investigation to determine the causes and possible solutions. There is a level above which further extraction cannot go, so discussions of balance may be irrelevant. Melbourne Water has produced a Diamond Creek Catchment Local Management Plan 2015, (used to be a Streamflow Management Plan) which should be referenced here and there needs to be an explicit statement that Council will undertake research to determine the causes of reduced flows and implement strategies to address this issue.

Page 39

A4.8

The first dot point is only supported where a permit is required to assess the current status of the land and its potential conservation values. Areas that once supported agriculture, have been allowed to regenerate with native vegetation, and this vegetation now provides significant habitat for wildlife, has re-established connectivity in the landscape and has conservation value. In addition, we must minimize any re-clearing of land, as this will increase carbon emissions, reduce soil carbon, increase erosion and silting of the creeks. There are currently exemptions to the requirement for an assessment, which are adequate to allow re-establishment of agriculture after a short break in use.

A4.10

Add to the fifth dot point as follows.

... 'build on the arts and cultural product through development of curated content and packaging and through support of local artists, potters and theatrical production.'

A4.13

The following statement needs rewording to make the purpose clear.

A4.13 Encourage home based business by analyzing the needs and addressing where possible the barriers to growth.

Page 40: Land use planning

Para 6

This is a very contentious paragraph and appears to be in support of some of the plan's objectives while disregarding others, thus does not provide a logical or balanced explanation. Please see the comments on action A4.8 above. There is no contention about the right to farm on land currently in use, but if that use has lapsed for an extended period then it is appropriate that a permit for what would be a new enterprise is required. There is no indication of the number of landowners for whom this is a real issue, but it is likely to be very few. If this is the only issue, then pursuing a change to the zoning would seem an unnecessary, divisive and costly exercise.

This statement also makes the assumption that agriculture and conservation are not compatible. This is clearly not the case and there is a national proposal to encourage all farmers and graziers to set aside at least 30% of their land for conservation, to encourage native species to eat pests, increase pollination and human wellbeing.

We hope that the comments above will assist in completing the final version of this document, and will ensure that the unique environmental values of this area and its agricultural lands can be protected, enhanced and valued for generations to come.

St Andrews Landcare Inc committee

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan

feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Developing strategies to support the regeneration of the GWZ in particular is critical if the ongoing land degradation in the shire is to be turned around, and the vision needs to address this. Unfortunately in its current form the vision statement appears lacks vision with respect to unprecedented challenges we are facing with to climate change, land degradation and population pressures. The plan explicitly recognises that 'Victoria is becoming hotter and drier, facing more periods of extreme heat and drought, reductions in annual rainfall and increases in intense rainfall.' The green wedge is often touted as the lungs of Melbourne and indeed its significance is going to radically increase as Melbourne expands to a predicted 8 million people. The vision must embrace the reality that much of the green wedge is degraded and the degradation is getting worse as the effect of climate change and hotter summers and less rainfall take effect. The vision needs to reflect this challenge and position

Nillumbik as innovators in addressing these challenges with respect to the rural environments. More specifically, the vision mentions 'a rural character' and 'enhancing and maintaining the green wedge' but does but not really address how we are going to ensure its ongoing viability, especially in areas covered by the GWZ, in the context of its very degraded state of the land after decades of set stocking farming practices (primarily cattle). Arguably it is more appropriately called the 'weed wedge' given it's current state, and if we continue to have severe high temperatures over summer with little rain it may become the 'dust wedge', especially in the contexts of the climate challenges facing Victoria. Regeneration will also play a key role in carbon sequestration with the goal to make properties in the GWZ carbon neutral a key outcome given the vision pledge re 'adapting to climate change priorities'. Further, the vision does not really address the issue that much of the GWZ is immediately adjacent to one of the main growth corridors in Melbourne. The adjacent growth corridor(s) house a large population of people, many of whom are either elderly or families with children. The green wedge exists in part to provide amenity to these populations so they can escape suburbia and engage with their rural neighbours, as the plan notes in its 'role as one of Melbourne's rural, recreational leisure areas'. The vision needs to address the issue of accessibility and how Nillumbik Shire as custodians of the green wedge will support the engagement of this neighbouring population reflecting the vision of 'meaningful engagement and collaboration'. This is particularly important given the vision 'to grow agriculture, tourism, recreation and local jobs and services'.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.

4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Neutral

Key Move 2 - Neutral

Key Move 3 - Neutral

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

While the five key moves can be supported in principle, they fail to address a key issue facing the shire that is the historical and ongoing land degradation, especially in the GWZ. If we do not address this issue then concerns stated in the plan re 'global warming', 'environmental assets', 'bio-diversity', 'land use' etc can be considered little more than rhetorical. Regeneration of the green (weed) wedge is THE critical issue facing Nillumbik in the face of ongoing challenges related to climate change and rising temperatures that will exacerbate the already advanced degradation of rural areas within the shire. Further, the Key Moves need to address how we are going to fund the massive investment that will be needed redress this great environmental challenge! While there is a recognition in the Plan re 'avoiding a reduction in land quality', this is hard to reconcile when this has already occurred. We need address this decline and drive innovations to rebuild the landscape. Similarly, while the plan addresses the issues associated with 'costs for individuals living in the green wedge ... and the pressure on residents to maintain it', little is said in the 5 key moves on how this might be facilitated, given the urgent need not only 'maintain the green wedge' but to regenerate it! Surely there needs to be an environmental impact study undertaken and a cost analysis developed re what it will take to drive

regeneration. While this is alluded to in Goal 3 Key actions this is more far reaching than a 'stocktake'.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Neutral

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne - Neutral

Manage change for future benefit - Neutral

Collaboration and connectedness - Neutral

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Neutral

Social equity - Neutral

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Neutral

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Neutral

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Leadership Through discussions with residents it appears that the council has a very poor reputation with respect to being a place in which to do business.

Since arriving in early 2019 I have been shocked at the negative sentiment that rate holders hold with respect to the council's capacity to support innovation and development. The key message I have received is avoid at all costs!

Moreover, in the entire document there appears to be a void on how the council will show leadership apart from supporting ground up initiatives. Nothing is said on how the council will engage with the State Govt to redefine how the Green Wedge statutory framework is configured to better support activity to drive land regeneration and the investment required to mitigate historical land degradation that I suspect faces all such GW areas in the State. Currently there appears to be a taken for granted proposition that the green wedge is a great asset in good shape. This is highly problematic and in some ways reflects the approach to leadership proffered in the plan. A Whole of Shire Approach We need to address the specific needs of individual areas, in particular the GWZ. It is problematic that the plan says 'that residents are valued for their management off rural land that benefits metropolitan Melbourne', when in many areas this is clearly not the case. Much of the land is managed in ways that have resulted in vast areas of degradation that in the context of climate change is now in danger of further deterioration and becoming the 'dust bowl' of metropolitan Melbourne, all with the oversight of the Nillumbik council. We have a desperate need to educate our farming community on regenerative farming techniques and to support demonstration projects in these methodologies to demonstrate to positive impacts that can accrue. Manage Change Again, to have a principle 'to conserve its values' when many of these represent decades of degradation and poor land use is to miss the point of the challenge at hand – it is not to conserve what we have but to stop the decline, and to regenerate what we have as a key principle of 'long term stewardship'. Further, with a significantly older population overall, and with lower population growth than the

rest of Melbourne, this begs the question about who in Nillumbik is going to lead and drive change. The suggestion is Volunteer groups, so are we really asking ageing volunteers to lead what will inevitably be a large scale and laborious change to address the issues associated with wide spread land degradation. Collaboration & Connectedness It is the focus of this partnership that is missing – what is it's intent? To my mind addressing the environmental degradation within the shire must be a key partnership focus, otherwise if risks being little more than rhetorical. This is also a concern for the state govt and indeed to entire population of Melbourne lest the 'lungs of the city' produce little more than dust! Safety Well Being and resilience See above comments Conserve and enhance our heritage My above comments reflect a view that we should not congratulate ourselves on our efforts at conservation when in fact in many areas our heritage speaks to degradation and poor farming practice, reflective of much of contemporary agriculture. Our heritage is more associated with land degradation that we need to remedy and enhancing this is must involve taking action to address decades of neglect! Sustainability This is the key concept that we need to embrace. How can we leave something that is better than we found it – how can our interventions to address the past neglect, often driven by well-meaning ignorance and adherence to the ideology of conventional agriculture, to drive a different future and leave a footprint that reflects our efforts to sustainably improve the Green Wedge. Here demonstration projects in regenerative agriculture that must pass the sustainability test can provide a window into the future that others can follow. In this sense innovation is a key principle with respect to sustainability and our attempts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and aim for at a minimum a carbon neutral shire.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

This might also include a process to bring together individuals who have a commitment to regenerative agriculture to drive a critical mass of innovation that might underpin the creation of demonstration projects that combine regenerative farming, tourism, economic development and community engagement, which collectively might provide the capital (social & material) to drive this process. It is concerning that this goal cites 'the protection of agriculture' as an aim when as it is currently configured, this is part of the problem – this reflects my earlier point re a taken for granted proposition that the green wedge is a great asset in its current state, when in fact it is an asset under threat. We don't need to protect agriculture but to innovate agriculture in ways that will drive a sustainable future. Similarly, the comment re 'ensuring no net loss of bio-diversity' does not reflect the fact that this is happening everyday under the current management practices. Where is the vision re reforestation to improve bio-diversity in ways that mitigate bushfire risk and concurrently support both economic activity and regeneration? While the 'prioritisation of conserving and enhancing the landscape' is laudable the lack of recognition of the challenges facing the landscape in the plan and potential opportunities innovation to address these, mean this is in many respects an empty statement. Arguably the plan lacks substance in addressing the challenges we face in conserving and enhancing the landscape.

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Little more to say here except that an investment of \$1.2 million in bio-diversity conservation projects since 2012 (ie. Approx. \$130K/yr) seems extremely limited in the context of the great environmental challenge the green wedge faces as the lungs of Melbourne! Tokenism??? Also, such investment does not reflect the subsequent statement that the Green Wedge is a 'cherished resource'!!! How can we really state this when our investment in its regeneration is radically limited. Further, the statement that re 'assisting private landowners in best-practice land management' has little meaning in the context of the overall plan given the issues I have articulated re the urgent need to regenerative innovation! Finally, is hard to make sense the comment 'develop a best-practice approach' to the councils response to climate change when there is a best a limited engagement with the climate change issue and associated land degradation and associated opportunities for carbon sequestration in the plan.

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

The current statutory framework, whereby economic opportunities are virtually non-existent in holdings in the GWZ under 40 hectares, greatly limits opportunities to build a prosperous economy that will support land regeneration, developing a carbon neutral future and drive community engagement and tourism. For example, within the current GW regulations it is virtually impossible

to develop economic enterprises that involve anything other than conventional agriculture. Yet given the small land holdings of

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

The proposition that 'small scale agriculture' and 'farmers markets' can play an important role in food production and building a prosperous economy in and of itself is, I believe, far-fetched. The environmental challenges we face within Nillumbik mean we need to have a systemic approach to the change agenda rather an agenda defined by than an ad hoc piecemeal activity. Similarly, the plans suggestion that there is an 'opportunity to supply Melbourne's growing demand for food' is hard to realise in the context of unproductive and compacted soils bequeathed by decades of set stock farming practices. I challenge the viability of this assertion in the context of widespread land degradation. Other comments such as 'land available for soil-based agriculture needs to be protected for the future' fails to recognise the current dire straits of that soil-based agriculture. What are we protecting, compacted soils where weeds predominate and which turn into dust bowls in summer? This suggests that the plan has a greater focus on rhetoric of what we believe rather than the reality of the situation. While I applaud the statement that 'sustainable tourism is a significant opportunity and will be an ongoing objective of the green wedge' it is hard to understand this sentiment when the GW regulations explicitly undermine enterprises that might promote this objective in land holdings

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Neutral

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Here I call on the Council to take leadership in working with the State government to review the regulations that define what can and what can't take place in the GW in the context of the pressing environmental challenges, and climate change that threatens the entire enterprise. Further the statement within that plan that the 'GWZ promotes agriculture and tourism and appears to work well in its current location' is very hard understand and suggests a misreading of the current situation with the Nillumbik shire. I believe we need to reassess the situation and identify the key drivers that will support a sustainable regeneration of the green wedge and the leadership role that council can play in this process.

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[Comments re Management Plan.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Comments re Green Wedge Management : A Robinson

Vision

Developing strategies to support the regeneration of the GWZ in particular is critical if the ongoing land degradation in the shire is to be turned around, and the vision needs to address this. Unfortunately in its current form the vision statement appears lacks vision with respect to unprecedented challenges we are facing with to climate change, land degradation and population pressures. The plan explicitly recognises that *'Victoria is becoming hotter and drier, facing more period of extreme heat and drought, reductions in annual rainfall and increases in intense rainfall.'* The green wedge is often touted as the lungs of Melbourne and indeed its significance is going to radically increase as Melbourne expands to a predicted 8 million people. The vision must embrace the reality that much of the green wedge is degraded and the degradation is getting worse as the effect of climate change and hotter summers and less rainfall take effect. The vision needs to reflect this challenge and position Nillumbik as innovators in addressing these challenges with respect to the rural environments.

More specifically, the vision mentions *'a rural character'* and *'enhancing and maintaining the green wedge'* but does but not really address how we are going to ensure its ongoing viability, especially in areas covered by the GWZ, in the context of its very degraded state of the land after decades of set stocking farming practices (primarily cattle). It is more appropriately called the *'weed wedge'* given it's current state, and if we continue to have severe high temperatures over summer with little rain it may become the *'dust wedge'*, especially in the contexts of the climate challenges facing Victoria. Regeneration will also play a key role in carbon sequestration with the goal to make properties in the GWZ carbon neutral a key outcome given the vision pledge re *'adapting to climate change priorities'*.

Further, the vision does not really address the issue that much of the GWZ is immediately adjacent to one of the main growth corridors in Melbourne. The adjacent growth corridor(s) house a large population of people, many of whom are either elderly or families with children. The green wedge exists in part to provide amenity to these populations so they can escape suburbia and engage with their rural neighbours, as the plan notes in its *'role as one of Melbourne's rural, recreational leisure areas'*. The vision needs to address the issue of accessibility and how Nillumbik Shire as custodians of the green wedge will support the engagement of this neighbouring population reflecting the vision of *'meaningful engagement and collaboration'*. This is particularly important given the vision *'to grow agriculture, tourism, recreation and local jobs and services'*.

Five Key Moves

While the five key moves can be supported in principle, they fail to address a key issue facing the shire that is the historical and ongoing land degradation, especially in the GWZ. If we do not address this issue then concerns stated in the plan re *'global warming'*, *'environmental assets'*, *'bio-diversity'*, *'land use'* etc can be considered little more than rhetorical. Regeneration of the green (weed) wedge is THE critical issue facing Nillumbik in the face of ongoing challenges related to climate change and rising temperatures that will

exacerbate the already advanced degradation of rural areas within the shire. Further, the Key Moves need to address how we are going to fund the massive investment that will be needed redress this great environmental challenge! While there is a recognition in the Plan re *'avoiding a reduction in land quality'*, this is hard to reconcile when this has already

occurred. We need address this decline and drive innovations to rebuild the landscape. Similarly, while the plan addresses the issues associated with *'costs for individuals living in the green wedge ... and the pressure on residents to maintain it'*, little is said in the 5 key moves on how this might be facilitated, given the urgent need not only *'maintain the green wedge'* but to regenerate it! Surely there needs to be an environmental impact study undertaken and a cost analysis developed re what it will take to drive regeneration. While this is alluded to in Goal 3 Key actions this is more far reaching than a 'stocktake'.

Principles

Leadership

Through discussions with residents it appears that the council has a very poor reputation with respect to being a place in which to do business. Since arriving in early 2019 I have been shocked at the negative sentiment that rate holders hold with respect to the council's capacity to support innovation and development. The key message I have received is avoid at all costs!

Moreover, in the entire document there appears to be a void on how the council will show leadership apart from supporting ground up initiatives. Nothing is said on how the council will engage with the State Govt to redefine how the Green Wedge statutory framework is configured to better support activity to drive land regeneration and the investment required to mitigate historical land degradation that I suspect faces all such GW areas in the State. Currently there appears to be a taken for granted proposition that the green wedge is a great asset in good shape. This is highly problematic and in some ways reflects the approach to leadership proffered in the plan.

A Whole of Shire Approach

We need to address the specific needs of individual areas, in particular the GWZ. It is problematic that the plan says *'that residents are valued for their management off rural land that benefits metropolitan Melbourne'*, when in many areas this is clearly not the case. Much of the land is managed in ways that have resulted in vast areas of degradation that in the context of climate change is now in danger of further deterioration and becoming the 'dust bowl' of metropolitan Melbourne, all with the oversight of the Nillumbik council. We have a desperate need to educate our farming community on regenerative farming techniques and to support demonstration projects in these methodologies to demonstrate to positive impacts that can accrue.

Manage Change

Again, to have a principle *'to conserve it values'* when many of these represent decades of degradation and poor land use is to miss the point of the challenge at hand – it is not to conserve what we have but to stop the decline, and to regenerate what we have as a key principle of *'long term stewardship'*. Further, with a significantly older population overall, and with lower population growth than the rest of Melbourne, this begs the question about

who in Nillumbik is going to lead and drive change. The suggestion is *Volunteer groups* so are we really asking ageing volunteers to lead what will inevitably be a large scale and laborious change to address the issues associated with wide spread land degradation.

Collaboration & Connectedness

It is the focus of this partnership that is missing – what is its intent? To my mind addressing the environmental degradation within the shire must be a key partnership focus, otherwise it risks being little more than rhetorical. This is also a concern for the state govt and indeed to entire population of Melbourne lest the ‘lungs of the city’ produce little more than dust!

Safety Well Being and resilience

See above comments

Conserve and enhance our heritage

My above comments reflect a view that we should not congratulate ourselves on our efforts at conservation when in fact in many areas our heritage speaks to degradation and poor farming practice, reflective of much of contemporary agriculture. Our heritage is more associated with land degradation that we need to remedy and enhancing this is must involve taking action to address decades of neglect!

Sustainability

This is the key concept that we need to embrace. How can we leave something that is better than we found it – how can our interventions to address the past neglect, often driven by well-meaning ignorance and adherence to the ideology of conventional agriculture, to drive a different future and leave a footprint that reflects our efforts to sustainably improve the Green Wedge. Here demonstration projects in regenerative agriculture that must pass the sustainability test can provide a window into the future that others can follow. In this sense innovation is a key principle with respect to sustainability and our attempts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and aim for at a minimum a carbon neutral shire.

Goals

1. Engaged Connected Communities

This might also include a process to bring together individuals who have a commitment to regenerative agriculture to drive a critical mass of innovation that might underpin the creation of demonstration projects that combine regenerative farming, tourism, economic development and community engagement, which collectively might provide the capital (social & material) to drive this process. It is concerning that this goal cites *‘the protection of agriculture’* as an aim when as it is currently configured, this is part of the problem – this reflects my earlier point re a taken for granted proposition that the green wedge is a great asset in its current state, when in fact it is an asset under threat.

We don’t need to protect agriculture but to innovate agriculture in ways that will drive a sustainable future. Similarly, the comment re *‘ensuring no net loss of bio-diversity’* does not reflect the fact that this is happening everyday under the current management practices. Where is the vision re reforestation to improve bio-diversity

in ways that mitigate bushfire risk and concurrently support both economic activity and regeneration? While the *‘prioritisation of conserving and enhancing the landscape’* is laudable the lack of recognition of the challenges facing the landscape in the plan and potential opportunities innovation to address these, mean this is in many respects an empty statement. The plan lacks substance in addressing the challenges we face in conserving and enhancing the landscape.

- Active and Creative People

Little more to say here except that an investment of \$1.2 million in bio-diversity conservation projects since 2012 (ie. Approx. \$130K/yr) seems extremely limited in the context of the great environmental challenge the green wedge faces as the lungs of Melbourne! Tokenism??? Also, such investment does not reflect the subsequent statement that the Green Wedge is a '*cherished resource*'!!! How can we really state this when our investment in its regeneration is radically limited. Further, the statement that re '*assisting private landowners in best-practice land management*' has little meaning in the context of the overall plan given the issues I have articulated re the urgent need to regenerative innovation! Finally, it is hard to make sense of the comment '*develop a best-practice approach*' to the council's response to climate change when there is at best a limited engagement with the climate change issue and associated land degradation and associated opportunities for carbon sequestration in the plan.

- Safe and healthy Environments

The current statutory framework, whereby economic opportunities are virtually non-existent in holdings in the GWZ under 40 hectares, greatly limits opportunities to build a prosperous economy that will support land regeneration, developing a carbon neutral future and drive community engagement and tourism. For example, within the current GW regulations it is virtually impossible to develop economic enterprises that involve anything other than conventional agriculture. Yet given the small land holdings of <40 hectares and the poor status of the land itself after a decade of set stock farming practices, this will be at best a very difficult enterprise that will necessarily mean it will be a struggle to generate the income to support the significant costs associated with land regeneration. This is a major problem if we are to face the challenges of climate change and the associated and escalating land degeneration, as well as fund interventions that will make a meaningful difference. I would argue that the council needs to show leadership in driving this agenda at a State level. Again demonstration projects that highlight the combination of innovative but not too intrusive commercial enterprises that are strongly related to agricultural outputs, such as wineries utilising grapes grown on site, sour beer breweries that utilise fruit and berries in the fermentation process, or restaurants that feature plate to table dining arrangements, may demonstrate the possibilities. Such activities could actually demonstrate the emerging paradigms of '*best-practice land management*' as this would be integral to the success of such business enterprises. Here we have a virtuous circle where economic activity supports the process of land regeneration through both providing the means of capital investment to drive regeneration and a business model centred around food production, which in turn supports the enterprise itself.

- A prosperous economy

The proposition that '*small scale agriculture*' and '*farmers markets*' can play an important role in food production and building a prosperous economy in and of itself is, I believe, far-fetched. The challenges we face within Nillumbik mean we need to have a systemic approach to the change agenda rather than an agenda defined by ad hoc piecemeal activity. Similarly, the plan's suggestion that there is an '*opportunity to supply Melbourne's growing demand for food*' is hard to realise in the context of unproductive and compacted soils bequeathed by decades of set stock farming practices. I challenge the viability of this assertion in the context of widespread land

degradation. Other comments such as *'land available for soil-based agriculture needs to be protected for the future'* fails to recognise the current dire straits of that soil-based agriculture. What are we protecting, compacted soils where weeds predominate and which turn into dust bowls in summer? Here it becomes explicit that the plan has a greater focus on rhetoric of what we believe rather than the reality of the situation.

While I applaud the statement that *'sustainable tourism is a significant opportunity and will be an ongoing objective of the green wedge'* it is hard to believe that this sentiment is anything other than rhetorical when the GW regulations explicitly undermine enterprises that might promote this objective in land holdings <40 hectares. Moreover will *'visitor experiences'* be enhanced in the context of progressive deterioration of the landscape, the proliferation of weeds, the denuded paddocks lacking environmental integrity and bio-diversity, and the dust bowls of hotter, drier summers. We must indeed *'Recognise the contribution ... for small scale farming in the green wedge with supportive policy in place'*. The question is, how will policy be configured in response to the challenges I have outlined.

The key action *'To ensure land remains available for agriculture'* begs the question re what do we mean by agriculture? This lacks definition within the plan and needs to offer more than rhetorical statements to suggest what we have done in the past will suffice (*our heritage*), despite overwhelming evidence that this has led us to our current perilous position. Similarly, an aim to consolidate *'smaller agricultural lots into a common ownership and discourage further fragmentation of agricultural lands'* is hard to understand when those larger allotments are more likely to pursue traditional farming practices that drive land degradation. It also stands in contradiction to the earlier propositions to *'support small scale agriculture'*.

Arguably, small scale agriculture with an intensive focus on regenerative activity is a more viable alternative to drive land regeneration rather than larger holdings where there is insufficient capital to address the pressing environmental challenges. In this respect the council might also be better to develop policies and incentives that support the proliferation micro agricultural business within one larger landholding.

- Responsible Leadership

Here I call on the Council to take leadership in working with the State government to review the regulations that define what can and what can't take place in the GW in the context of the pressing environmental challenges and climate change that

threatens the entire enterprise. Further the statement within that plan that the '*GWZ promotes agriculture and tourism and appears to work well in its current location*' is very hard understand and suggests a radical misreading of the current situation with the Nillumbik shire. I believe we need to reassess the situation and identify the key drivers that will support a sustainable regeneration of the green wedge and the leadership role that council can play in this process.

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Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

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1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

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- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
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- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[my_gwmp_submission_pdf.pdf](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the online form by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Nillumbik Draft Green Wedge Management Plan
Sue McKinnon

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11/8/19

Dear Nillumbik GWMP Team,

Please accept my submission to the Draft GWMP

I **do not** support the draft GWMP as it is now written and suggest the following changes:

Agriculture

References to Agriculture as a protected occupation need to be removed. Protecting one industry over another is discriminatory and can lead to discouragement to adapt to the changing environment during this time of climate change.

For example, on p 5;

“Opportunities to grow agriculture, tourism, recreation and local jobs and services will be actively sought in a sensitive manner to create greater economic vitality and jobs for our community, foster new skills and build local capability.”

Growing agriculture is often at the expense of environmental values and water availability to third parties and the environment. Agriculture is a market driven commercial enterprise and should not be given advantage over other commercial enterprises.

In addition, the growth of agriculture may directly adversely impact on other commercial enterprises such as eco-tourism, and any commercial venture which requires access to water. As such, prioritising agriculture may not be allowed in this document.

Promoting the growth of agriculture may impact on water and clean air to third parties and protection of this industry may result in discouragement of community and market adaption to climate change.

Other references to positive discrimination of the agriculture industry need to be removed. These are made on pages: 9,11,13,14,22,23,24,29,30,31,32,36,37,38,39,40,41,45.

Managing what is valuable to us

P 11

“Improving infrastructure to encourage people to visit the green wedge and to assist the local community in day to day activities.”

This must be modified - to ensure we do not destroy the values of this area and end up with another version of more inner city areas. - An addition must be made to this clause:

“...to ensure that infrastructure proposals are assessed in regard to the Nillumbik Climate Policy and Environment Policy. Also that infrastructure demands are not addressed anecdotally. Neighbourhood character and Township Strategies must be adhered to firstly to ensure the desires of the residents are respected. It should be added

that all townships and residential areas which don't yet have Neighbourhood character and Township Strategies will develop them in consultation with residents before any new infrastructure is planned."

Yan Yean Rd

The case of Yan Yean Rd needs to be specifically referenced in the section "What is Valuable to us"

Over development of Yan Yean Rd between Kurrack Rd and Bridge Inn Rd will have the most significant impact on the Shire of any currently proposed State Government Actions.

The Nillumbik Local Policy Framework Statement, clause 21.05 in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme demands attention to the State Government's Yan Yean Rd proposal.

Such attention needs to be in Council advocacy for clause 21.05 to be adhered to. Diversion of traffic from the north into Yan Yean Rd by overdevelopment of both Bridge Inn Rd and Yan Yean Rd be cancelled.

Clause 21.05 Nillumbik Planning Scheme states:

"Objective 2

Strategies :

Encourage vehicular traffic generated by the Whittlesea growth corridor in the City of Whittlesea, to access Melbourne via Plenty Road, and not via Yan Yean Road"

The State proposals for the duplication of Bridge Inn rd between Plenty Rd and Yan Yean Rd and the duplication of Yan Yean Rd between Bridge Inn Rd and Kurrack Rd are in contradiction with clause 21.05 of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as they are clearly designed to re-direct traffic from the north from using Plenty Rd to using Yan Yean Rd.

The State planned development of Yan Yean Rd is an overdevelopment considering the current traffic volumes and any future volumes expected due to currently planned residential growth in Doreen. The State plan to duplicate Bridge Inn Rd shows that the planned over-development of Yan Yean Rd is designed to re-direct traffic from Plenty Rd.

Traffic Volumes on Yan Yean Rd in Doreen and Plenty have a sharp peak in morning peak hour, but the road carries only around 4000 vehicles per day according to VicRoads latest estimate. This is a vastly different situation to other local roads which carry 19,000 vehicles per day such as Yan Yean Rd Kurrak Rd to Diamond Creek Rd section in Plenty, Diamond Creek Rd- 'Windy Mile' in Diamond Creek, Bolton St in Eltham, and Wattletree Rd in Eltham. The current and foreseen local traffic volumes on this section of Yan Yean Rd do not justify a 4 lane rd.

The planned duplication is an unexplained overdevelopment on a low volume road which is bordered on one side by Rural Conservation Zoned land in a Green Wedge.

Nillumbik Council needs to advocate for a road that facilitates local traffic and to advocate against the plan of the State Government to direct traffic from the north to use Yan Yean Rd as a thoroughfare.

Council needs to advocate for the Bridge Inn Rd project to be designed to cater only for current traffic volumes and volumes expected by future local residential growth.

Council needs to advocate for the Yan Yean Rd project to be designed to cater only for the current traffic volumes and planned local residential volumes, not for additional traffic to be directed onto Yan Yean Rd from the north via Bridge Inn Rd.

Council needs to make it clear to the State Government that the proximity of the road beside Rural Conservation Zoned Land in a Green Wedge Zone cannot in future be used to justify a change in Zone of Rural Conservation Zoned land.

Different treatments for Yan Yean Rd can address crowded morning peak hour traffic, including the addition of improved intersections, turning lanes, or the duplication of southbound carriageway only.

Council needs to advocate to the State Government to hold up planning on Yan Yean Rd and Bridge Inn Rd until the result of other road projects are evident – projects such as the duplication of Plenty Rd. This would be directly in keeping with Nillumbik Local Planning Policy Framework statement clause 21.05

In addition to the non-compliance with the Nillumbik Local Planning Policy Statement, the road project will directly impact what is valuable to us in regards to biodiversity and important habitat for threatened species

As recognised by the Commonwealth Government, the project will potentially cause significant effects on biodiversity, social and cultural values as a result of the proposed clearance of a very large number of trees and habitat, including potential cumulative effects on the *Lathamus discolor* (Swift Parrot). Such is the concern an Environmental Effects Statement has been mandated.

The Council must advocate for protection of the current environmental values of the roadside trees, and against:

- Reduced foraging available for Swift Parrots in general as climate change impacts trees in Victoria.
- Cumulative impacts of tree removal in this important foraging corridor.
- Cultural and community impacts of the tree removals.
- Failure by the State to apply the Precautionary Principle in regards to the impact on Swift Parrot

In keeping with Councils engagement policy; the Council must advocate for effective consultation with community on this project. Such consultation must be facilitated by availability of data during the Environmental Effects Statement Stage and at the initial release of any project proposals or alternative proposals. Such data to include biodiversity reports, wildlife surveys, cultural impacts, and traffic volume data.

The Nillumbik and Whittlesea Planning Schemes.

Key Moves

This section must include sustainability, transparency, engagement this section needs more specific reference to environmental protection and actions. It needs to refer to the fact that our unique assets in this shire are the huge range of biodiversity it accommodates. Biodiversity that needs our protection. We need to halt the rate our native flora and fauna are sliding towards extinction and this needs to happen at a local level. This aim should be explicitly stated.

Specific changes recommended include but are not limited to :

Five key moves for the shire

Change to Ten key moves for the shire

“1. Create a comprehensive landowners’ information and support service for land use and management, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek on-going government funding to support the service”

Add:

Such a pack be provided in a sustainable manner such as option to receive online.

We recommend that the information pack include description of Nillumbik Planning Scheme Native Vegetation Regulations clause 52.17 This is a critical document that new landholders are often not aware of.

Wildlife carers information and information about Nillumbik wildlife euthanasia service and any other after hour services.

“2. Implement a whole of organisation approach to community resilience addressing climate change, emergency management and a range of matters in an integrated manner. This will include robust conversations on the natural environment and biodiversity values, bushfire risk reduction, economic development, agriculture, economic and community rebuilding post events, human health, well-being and safety and water catchment planning”.

Delete agriculture – this is a subset of economic development

Include conversations will be facilitated by online processes as well as online availability of targets, and relevant information and evaluation processes – “robust conversations” are not possible for all without information, and given that not everyone can attend face to face meetings with Council set times, then such material and conversations must be possible online.

“3. Create a Green Wedge Conversations program to provide local communities with a forum to discuss resilience, leadership, knowledge-transfer and cooperation between people involved with land management, agriculture, nature conservation, public land

management and bushfire mitigation and management. Seek on-going government funding assistance to support the program.”

Include reference to an inclusive process facilitated by online availability of documentation and online process for conversations

A significant portion of the community cannot attend meetings. Targets, information required for meaningful ‘conversations’ and evaluation processes need to be made available online. And such “conversations” must be possible online.

Online material to facilitate inclusive engagement, conversations and transparency of Council management needs to include but not be limited to:

Other documentation which needs to be available online in a timely manner to facilitate such “conversations” in any meaningful and inclusive way includes

- All new infrastructure plans including footpaths and trails
- Nillumbik Council tree register for trees removed along roadsides as described in the Tree Management Guidelines 2015
- Documentation of roadside maintenance plans to show that roadsides are treated in accord with their environmental significance as described in the Nillumbik Roadside Management Plan 2012.
- Roadside Tree removal plans with arborist assessments. And all roadside tree removals and significant pruning works have documented Level 3 arborist assessment reports available online.
- Environmental effects report on maintenance procedures with regard to the precautionary principle to ensure against serious and irreversible environmental damage may not result from such procedures. For example widespread herbicide applications be assessed with assessments available online.

It is not sufficient for Council to rely on community raising the alarm for regulation to occur

Add 6.

Council must ensure that its Planning Schedule regulations, its Policies, Guides and Plans are pro-actively managed and regulated.

For example the Native Vegetation Removal regulations need to be proactively regulated on public land for works carried out by authorities including Council itself as well on private land.

Illustrations of the impact of lack of proactive regulation include but are not limited to For example the recent Mains Water pipe works in Hurstbridge which had major encroachment into the tree root zone of a remnant tree. Such work should have required a permit. The tree is now dead.

Another illustration is the infrastructure works for footpaths which regularly encroach in the tree root zones of remnant trees in Hurstbridge and regularly kill these trees. Council must proactively regulate before damage is done.

Add 7. Yan Yean Rd and Bridge Inn Rd

- **Nillumbik Council advocacy for NO RE-DIRECTION of traffic from the north onto Yan Yean Rd.**

8. Nillumbik Council advocacy for compliance with Nillumbik Local Planning Framework Clause 21.05

8. Fire threat

Nillumbik Council advocacy for cessation of logging in Murrundindi and Mitchell Shire area to reduce the threat of fire on the Nillumbik area.

All bushfire reduction processes to be evidence based.

9. Sustainability

Council to be a role model in sustainability by having all projects assessed under the Sustainability Rating for infrastructure Projects and all consumption materials such as paper to be recycled where available. All paper use to be re- assessed for transition to electronic communication and storage.

Sustainability Rating for infrastructure Projects: The ISCA Rating Scheme

Council can purchase this tool from ISCA – I think it’s not cheap – an alternative is to develop one in house. Check with Municipal Councils Association – it is likely to be already developed – we need to include sustainability in all of our decisions for the future of our planet and for the Council to restore social licence in the community. Community no longer tolerates lack of consideration of climate change in infrastructure decisions.

ISCA can be found here

https://www.isca.org.au/is_ratings

There is no reason to purchase virgin paper. 100 % post-consumer recycled paper needs to be mandated for any Council paper purchases. Paper use can often be replaced by electronic files – for example at Council meetings. A transition is possible by installing a large screen in the Council chamber or anywhere there is a meeting.

The documents being discussed can be shown on the screen rather than each person in the audience receiving a copy. This technique is being used now in the Federal Court.

10. Renewable energy

Council should advocate and assist with the transition to renewable energy

Principles

More description needs to be included to ensure adherence of the precautionary Principle implied in the words *“we need to anticipate and avoid any actions that may cause serious or irreversible harm to the environment and the people who live within it”*.

Add here that anticipation referred to here requires proactive assessments against this principle of any proposed changes to procedures or any new procedures or works.

For example, widespread herbicide applications and the impact on frogs, be assessed with assessments available online.

Engaged Connected Communities

It is essential that environment and wildlife have priority in the Green Wedge. Economic concerns will encourage increased speed and wider and more damaging roads. Such concerns need to be given lower priority in a Shire that is promoted and funded as a Green Wedge Shire. It is often anecdotal needs and the loudest voice which are catered for.

For this reason, the statement ; “ensuring community infrastructure responds to community needs “ needs to be changed to **“ensuring community infrastructure responds to evidence based community needs without damage to the environment. Decisions made in a transparent process of evaluation and engagement with reference to Council policies and Guides”**

I would like to see reference in this section **to tangible assistance to volunteers, and Council commitment to transparency and inclusivity in changes to Council processes – from the initial proposal stage.**

For example, the recent proposal to consider removing euthanasia services without consultation should be avoided by this statement.

For example, tangible assistance includes provision of meeting rooms at no charge for at least a limited number of times. Having such rooms empty is a waste, and this seems a little cost to provide to those giving their labor and time for free.

For example online availability of data, engagement process reports, more inclusivity in engagement processes enables real respect of volunteers.

Other examples of tangible and process assistance includes assistance to wildlife carers such as

8. IT system that all users can access, that allows the public to easily log accidents. A centralised system accessible to Council and registered volunteers to allow people to easily call in and/or log accidents.
9. This can also be used to log hot spots and even ‘stocktake’ wildlife.
10. Reduced speed limits where wildlife is active or where roads have been built across their paths and habitat links.
11. Education and communication program for community about wildlife behaviour and the importance of respecting it.
12. Council to set an example of that respect. This could be helped, in part, by recognising the wildlife volunteers.

13. Funding allocated in the budget for the items above that require it.

Active and Creative People

Re- defining the well accepted term” ageing in place” must not be allowed anywhere in this document. Ageing in Place refers to ageing in your own home – not ageing in the local area. The following references need to be removed – including but not limited to :

p23

Delete:

“This includes how we house our ageing population and better enable people to age in the community where they have lived for many years – the ability to move into appropriate accommodation within the local area to remain close to family, friends and established community networks.”

“Ageing in place” should not be converted to “ageing in the community”, this is a vastly different concept and such misuse of a well-accepted health and wellbeing phrase is misleading.

Council should not use it’s **Positive ageing Strategy** to justify such misuse of the phrase “ageing in place” The credibility of the Positive Ageing Strategy is compromised by the low number of participants, low number of survey returns and unspecified participant number in the final forums.

Evidence based data needs to inform policies, not anecdotal wishes for cheap housing. Close to 100% of Hurstbridge and Nillumbik over 65’s own their own homes and have incomes higher than the aged pension.

The plan to interfere with the housing market by Council to accommodate “ageing in the community” is not justified by credible research.

There is no identified need in terms of population, housing shortage, land shortage, or economic activity.

Other specific changes to the clauses in the Draft Plan include but are not limited to :

p 24

O1.4 Where possible, encourage housing diversity to enable ageing in place.

‘Where possible ..’ be replaced with ‘where new houses are being built and current zoning and overlays allow....’

p 24

O1.6 Better support the ageing population of the green wedge to age in place with its benefits to retaining local knowledge, community cohesiveness, engagement and involvement in local groups.

Add ‘Ageing in place’ refers to ageing in your own home. It often requires facilitation by service provision.

p24

“O1.4 Align future development with environmentally sensitive design principles and ensure that future development emphasises each town’s unique characteristics.”

Change to

Align future development with Australian standard assessments of sustainability including sustainability of location of development. Ensure that future development emphasises each town’s unique characteristics as described in the existing Neighbourhood character statements and Township Strategies which have been developed in consultation with the community and referenced in the Planning Scheme. New neighbourhood character statements and Township Strategies for those towns and areas that don’t currently have them need to be developed in consultation with the community and referenced in the Planning Scheme.

The wording leaves “characteristics” open to interpretation by Council officers or individuals. This clause needs to be changed to ensure that the community’s assessment of each town’s unique characteristics is emphasised.

Delete:

“A1.5 Create a comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships to strengthen their identities and attractiveness as service, population, tourism, community and cultural centres.”

– covered by my suggested clause above. A service to encourage infrastructure and change is encouraging overdevelopment and trends which soon become outdated wastes on money.

“A1.6 Consider government purchase of such lots where they are adjacent to public land.”

Add: Conditional on the rezoning of the entire area into public park and recreation zone and permanent public ownership.

“A1.7 Review the impacts of proximity to urban communities on rural land adjoining the urban area and investigate options to maintain the amenity and productivity of those areas”

Delete “Productivity”

Productivity is only relevant if the land is zoned agricultural or industrial – in environmental zones, “productivity” in the economic sense is irrelevant. The inclusion of this clause is confusing and possibly directing a change of purpose which is not consistent with the what we value in the Green Wedge.

“A1.8 Encourage the location of aged care services within the townships and programs to facilitate people ageing in the community where they have lived for many years”

This clause needs to be modified to **Encourage services to allow aging in place. Ageing in place means ageing in your own home**

Ageing in the community is not an accepted term. Research has shown a desire to ‘age in place’ meaning in the home. Requirements for ageing in place are very different to this new and unexplained emphasis about ageing in the general area.

This statement oversimplifies a complex situation and is not justified by research that aged care services are required in the community above other demands such as access to hospitals, transport. Aged care facilities have significant commercial demands which necessitate size, and numbers to be viable. Our current zoning restraints should not be compromised to facilitate aged care facilities that are not allowed in these zones or township strategies.

“A1.11. Undertake seasonal review of road conditions to improve management and review the road sealing program to ensure high use roads are prioritised.”

More important considerations are ignored here, and need to be added. **The following needs to be added to this clause:**

Undertake road speed review to ensure speeds are appropriate and are not causing wildlife road toll and possible related human road toll. Undertake regular assessment of traffic volume to ascertain if areas are becoming routes for through traffic for residents coming from other shires through Nillumbik. As a Green Wedge council we need to protect the wildlife by controlling through traffic (suggest by speed) we also need to

protect roadside vegetation from pressures to widen road – again it is speed control that will reduce this pressure.

Advocate to VicRoads to allow lower speeds within shire roads in order to protect our flora and fauna and our residents. Default rural speed limits on rural roads need to be reviewed as the urban fringe location means that the roads here which have some rural characteristics which define them as ‘rural roads’ are not the same as rural roads in the country areas. Unlike country areas, our roads have significant commuter traffic and traffic from neighbouring densely populated areas travelling and commuting on these roads.

P26

What is ponyland ?? do you mean **ponyclubs / horse riding clubs**

P26

“Open space” – is not an appropriate term for community space in a green wedge. It includes wooded areas and bushland reserves. Change “Open space” to **“Publicly owned space”**

P27

“Mud bricks” – One material should not be enshrined in a planning document over another as this may cause problems with future adjustments to sustainable design.

Mud bricks may be included in a township strategy or neighbourhood character if the character of the town and the community agrees in a township strategy an neighbourhood character development process.

change the wording to include mud brick buildings only if they are seen as part of the community derived neighbourhood character and are compatible with other Council plans and Policies including Austalian Standard sustainability assessments

P 27

Add a new clause here:

2.7 All trees that are over 100 years old in public land be assessed as of significant historic value and list them as significant trees with protection under the planning scheme. Trees over 100 years old on private land should be listed as significant trees only if the owner of that land so desires.

“2.5 art gallery...” – **Delete** – there is no business case for a new art gallery, and has been no community engagement process for this. This is a commercial activity that can be addressed by market forces. A new gallery will impact on existing galleries and private sales areas. Council have their own art collection and processes such as awards which can be used to promote the arts.

P 33

A3.12

“Promote water sensitive design, balance amenity uses of our waterways with environmental considerations and balance demand for private use of water flows through extraction and diversion with broader community and environmental considerations.”

Remove “balance”

Remove “Promote”

Replace with

All new infrastructure to comply with Melbourne Water Water Sensitive Urban design. All new infrastructure affecting water flow or quality to be registered and measured. No net loss for environmental flows or quality of water to be allowed. No impact on neighbouring property flow or quality to be allowed.

P 37

“Equine-related employment and business activities currently in the green wedge include agistment, breeding, horse float repairs, riding schools, stock and feed sales, pasture management, and equine health services”

Add significant industry components - Riding clubs, riding instruction, farriering , equine training, equine care, equine property management, arena building and maintenance, competition judging and administration

P 38

4.2

“Encourage sustainable, diversified and productive agriculture, access to markets and the right to farm”

Delete – as mentioned at the top of this submission – positive discrimination should not be included in the plan

4.3

“Recognise the contribution of hobby (or small-scale) farming in the green wedge with supportive policy put in place”

Delete – as mentioned at the top of this submission – positive discrimination should not be included in the plan

As above – there should be no support required if people run their hobbies as allowed under the regulations. Non compliance with the regulations is and will not be allowed anyway, so this clause is superfluous unless there is some intent to change the regulations – such intent should be declared

P 39

“manage and avoid detrimental impacts on sensitive environmental areas”

change to manage and avoid detrimental impacts on the environment

p38

“develop tourism through trail investment” add in keeping with the 2011 trail strategy. The Australian Standards 4970—2009 Protection of trees on development sites and Planning Schedule clause 52.17 to be adhered to for all trails without exemption by amendments.

p 39

“Investment attraction plan and investigate innovative land use solutions to attract professional services to locate within the townships of the green wedge”

Delete - Council is not a banker or a wealth creator it is not skilled to do so and this is not Council’s role

P 39

“Consider policy and land use options to allow agricultural enterprises to diversify income sources by supporting complementary activities such as farm gate sales, events, education and accommodation”

Delete – current zoning does not allow such use and there has been no evidence of a community consultation to provide evidence that such a significant change in Zone allowance / or change in Zoning should be considered

P 39

- **“Undertake stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming, that need to be protected for the future and the pests that need to be managed by sourcing information from formal research bodies and landowners. Seek government funding assistance to establish and maintain this data base into the future for landowner information, program prioritisation and policy development.”**

Delete We do not need to lock in an amount of agriculture or hobby farming – this is a function of zoning and owners desire for their land. If a person owning cleared farmland want to revegetate, this should be allowed. As we move into climate change and the viability of cattle and sheep farming reduces, locking in a volume of cleared agricultural farm area is counter intuitive and not sustainable.

A4.8

“Advocate to the Victorian Government that:... planning and other controls be altered to allow landholders a right to farm on pre-existing cleared agricultural land and be able to adapt to changing agricultural practice”

Delete -Victorian government regulations are the minimal required to keep our environment at the level of health that it is. Any erosion of native vegetation removal laws or water or animal restrictions will damage the environment. This council was not voted in under such extreme platform it does not have a mandate to advocate changes in State laws. No community consultation has shown that this is desired.

“The role of hobby farms be defined, recognised and policy and program be developed to support sustainable land management and agriculture at their scale.”

Delete – Superfluous. All owners of land need to comply with existing regulations and zoning. No community consultation has shown otherwise so should not be included here.

Safe and Healthy Environment

- Include addressing high speed limits on minor roads for protection of people and wildlife
- It should include what Council are prepared to take action on to protect wildlife and how that may be funded.

Goal 5

“Collaborative and consultative leadership that builds trust and makes the best use of available resources to the benefit of all in the pursuit of excellence”.

Delete **“best use of available resources to benefit”** It is not up to Council to encourage resource use. Council should encourage the preservation of our resources.

P 40

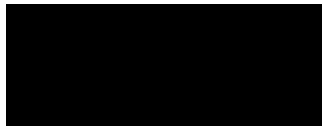
“Nonetheless, regulation and enforcement is sometimes required and is one way of achieving objectives, but is not necessarily the most sustainable way. As techniques they lie at one end of a spectrum. At other end are education, awareness, facilitation and ultimately empowerment. All techniques have their place but this plan envisages putting more emphasis towards the empowering end of the spectrum.”

Delete – this encourages the Council to not regulate. We already have a significant failure to abide by the regulations. Suggesting that council regulate less with a suggestin that non-compliance be tolerated is unfair, absurd and possibly not allowed.

Comments

- The decline in our biodiversity is at critical levels – this should be explicitly addressed with explicit actions – NO TRADE OFFS.
- The plan should address the Shires conservation role for all Melbournians.
- The Council should be a role model in sustainability and in encouragement of renewable energy. Regulations should be enforced
- Council needs to improve transparency and facilitate engagement by improving availability of documents online

Signed



Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

There has been a submission of the form Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback through your Participate Nillumbik website.

A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

Partially

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A "Green Wedge Conversations" program.

4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.
5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Neutral

Key Move 2 - Neutral

Key Move 3 - Agree

Key Move 4 - Neutral

Key Move 5 - Neutral

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice
- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage

- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Leadership - Strongly disagree

Aboriginal voice - Strongly agree

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Agree

Manage change for future benefit - Agree

Collaboration and connectedness - Neutral

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Agree

Social equity - Neutral

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Neutral

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Agree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Agree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Support 1.6 Oppose 1.7

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do not Support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Strongly do not support

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Refer attachment

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

You can upload your file here.

[GWMP MPK Submission.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

Nillumbik Green Wedge Management Plan Draft for Consultation

Submitted by Michael Krause



11-Aug-2019

Response: Generally Opposed

It appears that the primary objective of the new GWMP is to advocate for a significant rezoning of the existing RCZ (refer A1.7, A4.8, A5.6, A5.7) in order to satisfy commercial farming and tourism interests (via an undefined "right to farm"), promote potential environmental degradation (via an unrestricted new right to use "pre-existing cleared land" for agricultural purposes) and a possible attempt to subvert the UGB via vague goals to examine the "consolidation of population around townships" & promote "better management on the UGB".

The "right to farm" is repeatedly asserted but not defined anywhere in GWMP. Does the "right to farm" apply to existing operations & practices or does it include new and expanded operations & practices? Does it include highly intensive factory farming e.g. piggeries, feedlots, greenhouses, chook sheds? Does it mean relaxed or unrestricted rights to build new infrastructure regardless of sustainability, visual amenity, increased traffic & road wear, noise, dust, odours, erosion, insects etc? Does the "right to farm" apply to "traditional" farming practices regardless of sustainability or changing standards? It should be noted that elsewhere "traditional rights" have been used to justify the continuation of unsustainable activities such as whaling & logging.

The "consolidation of population around townships" and land uses to "better manage land abutting the UGB" are described without any detail or examples. Does this mean support for sub-divisions? What other land uses are being proposed? Problems are raised (e.g. property trespassing & rubbish dumping around Diamond Creek) but no solutions offered beyond vague references to improved "buffer" zones & more consultation.

The GWMP describes "pre-existing cleared agricultural land" without providing a map or a clear definition. Is there a map of pre-existing cleared agricultural land in the GW? Does "pre-existing cleared land" mean currently cleared land or does it include land containing native revegetation and/or regrowth? If so, what restrictions if any are proposed to protect native revegetation and regrowth? Or does the GWMP support the unrestricted removal of native revegetation and regrowth on land previously cleared for farming? If the answer is no, why doesn't the GWMP say so?

The GWMP proposes regular stocktakes of environmental assets (A3.1, A5.5) however the commitment appears equivocal as it is subject to external funding. Has the state government and/or any other external funding source been approached? What, if any, ongoing funding is Nillumbik prepared to commit? How will environment assets included in the stocktake be identified, and will they be identified on a scientific basis and by people with scientific expertise?

Action Items Summary

Strongly Support:	1.6, 3.4, 3.5
Support:	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 5.4, 5.9
Neutral/Undecided:	1.11, 2.4, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 3.12, 3.13 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 4.10, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5
Do Not Support:	2.5, 2.7, 4.6, 5.8
Strongly do Not Support:	1.7, 4.8, 5.6, 5.7

Draft Green Wedge Management Plan feedback Form Submission

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A Vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge

'Management of the Nillumbik green wedge will lead the way in supporting a vibrant, resilient, connected and diverse community; living in the landscape to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire.'

Do you agree with the vision for Nillumbik's Green Wedge?

No

Do you have any comments about the Vision?

This Vision is non-committal and wishy-washy. I was part of the randomly-selected community panel who generated this version of the GWMP vision...however, the entire panel process was terribly rushed, and we were given virtually NO time to think through a FRACTION of the items that were placed before us for consideration. The Vision is no exception. In the closing moments of our final panel meeting, we were asked to consider the Vision statement in the CURRENT Green Wedge Management Plan. We were led to believe that it was too long-winded. We were given very little time to thoroughly consider what would be an appropriate vision for a new GWMP, especially since we were still being led to believe that we were only REVIEWING the current plan not REWRITING it. If we were rewriting, then we should have been given a LOT more time to ensure we had covered all issues to the BREADTH,

DEPTH and CLARITY that we were being “taught” (by Mosaic Labs) to do. We were NOT given this time. From what I can see, there has been little to NO expertise included in the writing of this Green Wedge Management Plan draft because there was insufficient time for detailed discussion about all issues pertaining to the Green Wedge. If it were not for the handful of experienced people that were fortunately among those randomly selected to the panel, then the actual panel recommendations would have been one hell of a lot more farcical than they were! It was fortunate that we did have a room full of intelligent people, most (but not all) without their own selfish agendas, who were fast learners. Thus, the community panel generated a Panel Report containing some valid recommendations, albeit far from thorough in its coverage of the issues, threats to the Green Wedge, and possible mitigations against those threats. This is in stark contrast to the years we worked together on the CURRENT Green Wedge Management Plan, of which I was also part. I represented Trust for Nature on the Green Wedge Management Plan Advisory Group that was made up of local expertise, relevant authorities and stakeholders, and council staff. We met regularly, we discussed every aspect of the municipality, we reviewed all we could review, and we came up with a protection and management plan that our community could be proud of. This current process has been farcical in the way it was managed.

Five Key Moves

The five Key Moves below outline organisational changes for the long-term to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan.

You can see more details about the [five key moves here](#).

1. A comprehensive landowners' information and support service.
2. A whole of organisation approach to community resilience.
3. A “Green Wedge Conversations” program.
4. A comprehensive planning and place management service for the townships.

5. Stocktakes of environmental assets and agricultural practices.

To what extent do you agree with the Five Key Moves to support delivery of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Key Move 1 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 2 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 3 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 4 - Strongly disagree

Key Move 5 - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Five Key Moves?

This process lacks the thoroughness and scrutiny of experts in the fields of environment, tourism, agriculture, waterway protection, climate change, etc etc etc etc. The community panel did the best they could under pressure, but were never going to be given adequate time to thoroughly review all relevant documentation and strategies to formulate a comprehensive and meaningful Green Wedge Management Plan. As it was, the Draft Plan has all but ignored the majority of the community as well as the majority of the community panel. The result does NOT reflect what the community want, and it does little to nothing to truly provide direction for the long term protection, enhancement and management of our precious Green Wedge.

Principles

The following principles informed the creation of the Green Wedge Management Plan and will inform how the goals, objectives and key actions are to be implemented.

You can see more details about each of the [Principles here](#).

- Leadership
- Aboriginal voice

- A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to Metropolitan Melbourne
- Manage change for future benefit
- Collaboration and connectedness
- Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape
- Social equity
- Safety, wellbeing and resilience
- Conserve and enhance our heritage
- Sustainability and the precautionary principle

To what extent do you agree with the Principles to guide the implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan?

Aboriginal voice - Neutral

A whole of shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to

Metropolitan Melbourne - Neutral

Manage change for future benefit - Strongly disagree

Collaboration and connectedness - Strongly disagree

Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape - Strongly disagree

Social equity - Strongly disagree

Safety, wellbeing and resilience - Strongly disagree

Conserve and enhance our heritage - Disagree

Sustainability and the precautionary principle - Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about the Principles?

all of these Principles sound good...in principle...but fail to be clear, direct, and offer true direction for our shire.

Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

The Plan includes five goals which describe the desired overall outcomes for the community.

Click on each goal to see the list of Objectives that describe what is to be achieved in support of the goals, as well as a list of Key Actions which will work towards achieving the objectives.

Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 1?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 1?

Goal 2: Active and creative people

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 2?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 2?

Goal 3: Safe and healthy environments

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 3?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 3?

Goal 4: A prosperous economy

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 4?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 4?

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

To what extent do you support the objectives and key actions for Goal 5?

Do you have any comments about the objectives or key actions for Goal 5?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments about the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan?

Check out my document on How to Write A Management Plan...this draft GWMP fails on all levels

You can upload your file here.

[HOW TO WRITE A MANAGEMENT PLAN.docx](#)

If you would you like to receive a confirmation email with a copy of your contribution, please provide your email address.

[REDACTED]

As an indication for meeting arrangements, at this stage are you intending to speak to your submission at the Future Nillumbik Committee meeting on Tuesday 10 September 2019.

Yes

NB: To register to speak, you will need to complete the [online form](#) by 5pm on Tuesday 3 September.

To view all of this form's submissions, visit

<https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/index.php/dashboard/reports/forms/viewDetail/125>

HOW TO WRITE A MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Step 1:

What is it you are trying to protect and/or manage?

A: The Nillumbik Green Wedge.

Step 2:

What are the VALUES that you are trying to protect and/or manage?

Example Answer: eg. environmental integrity, biodiversity values, habitat corridors, remnant vegetation, landscapes and vistas, ecosystem services, passive recreational opportunities, eco-tourism and low-impact tourism opportunities, agricultural pursuits (fit for purpose), beautiful environment and area in which to live, community markets and town fairs, etc etc

Step 3:

What are the impacts that threaten these values?

Example Answer:

Threats to vegetation and biodiversity: weeds and pest animals; vegetation clearing (permitted and non-permitted); incremental losses to biodiversity due to edge effects and other degrading activities such as mowing or grazing or uncontrolled use of vehicles (recreational and non-recreational); land subdivisions, new dwellings in bushland areas requiring substantial defendable spaces; excessive firewood collection; vegetation fragmentation leading to reduced habitat areas without adequate connectivity; inappropriate fence constructions that impede safe wildlife movement; issues that relate to land uses next door (eg. effluent runoff, excessive noise, habitat destruction, uncontrolled weeds and pests, roaming pets, excessive light spill, etc); high number of wildlife roadkills; etc etc

Threats to landscapes and vistas: houses and sheds built on ridgelines; tall solid fences that may block views; poor building designs and/or colour schemes and/or choice of building materials and/or excessive heights that do not lie well within landscape (ie. not in keeping with neighbourhood character); etc etc

Threats to agriculture: reduction in property sizes making land less sustainable for agricultural purposes; drying climate and less predictable rainfall events; changing demographic with new neighbours taking issue with noise/dust/chemical uses that may be associated with agriculture; land degradation due to prior poor/unsustainable land use practices; weeds and pest animals; overstocking of land; land not fit for chosen agricultural purpose; high rates on agricultural lands outweighing the value of the farming income; encroaching urbanisation; etc etc

Threats to passive recreational activities: safe places to ride; enough suitable venues to fulfil recreational needs of the community; etc etc

Threats to liveability of the area: insufficient opportunity for ‘aging in place’; number of free-roaming pets (cats and dogs); poor public transport; narrow winding roads and drivers who are not respectful of other road users; high rates for pensioners and low income earners; bushfire and threat to life; etc etc

Threats to tourism: insufficient support for tourism industries; difficulty attracting tourists to the area; need for drive-and-camp parks perhaps?;

And so on.

Step 4:

How to mitigate against those threats?

Example Answer:

Mitigate threats to vistas and landscapes:

Create and support Neighbourhood Character documentation to identify the preferred character of areas, and use these to guide any future developments in the area; support the review of the Significant Landscape Overlay and ensure this will adequately protect the landscapes and vistas of the Green Wedge; create/support local policy that discourages building on visible hilltops and ridgelines; etc etc

Mitigate threats to environment and biodiversity:

Increase compliance for non-permitted vegetation removal; discourage using bushland properties as makeshift grazing land – consider a Local Law (like Manningham Council have) that limits or restricts the placement of grazing domestic animals into bushland properties; provide support for landholders to undertake pest plant and animal control through grants, incentives, education and so on; avoid placing new recreational trails through native bushland especially areas of high quality or high habitat importance; etc, etc

Mitigate threats to liveability in the area:

Encourage suitable developments in townships that will allow for housing for an aging demographic so that people no longer are required to move from the area when they can no longer care for rural properties and can, instead, live within a well-serviced township in their local area; discourage the building of more homes in fire-prone/high risk areas in the Green wedge – ensure new dwellings are built on lands that already have adequate clearing for a dwelling (not within bushland) and have safe access and egress to avoid being caught on winding narrow treed roads along with hundreds of other residents in the event of a wildfire; continue support for local CFA’s in the form of things like Municipal Fire Prevention Committees, and so on; Encourage and enforce responsible pet ownership; etc, etc.

And so on, and so on.

And where there are various activities that may be seen as conflicting, then those should be identified and reviews IN DETAIL to determine win-win scenarios where possible.

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Do you have any comments about the Principles?

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Other comments

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[Nillumbik_letter.docx](#)

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11 August 2019

A Boyd

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To: Nillumbik Shire Council

VIA Participate Nillumbik

My name is Aidan Boyd and I am a resident of Nillumbik at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I have reviewed both the draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) and the submission prepared by Nillumbik Pro Active Landowners (PALS)

It is very pleasing to see that the council has taken quite a bit of landowner feedback on board in preparing the draft GWMP

In my opinion there is a lot more to be done to get a final version, which will suit Landowners, like us, especially in relation to lot size removal in the planning scheme and the reduction in red tape.

I confirm that I endorse the submission made by PALs and add this submission of mine to council consideration and action

Yours faithfully

Aidan Boyd