

Green Wedge Management Plan

November 2019





Acknowledgement of traditional owners
Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people who are the Traditional Custodians of Land known today as Nillumbik. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Nillumbik's Green Wedge



Source: Nillumbik Shire Council

Introduction



The values of the rural landscape - our green wedge - as a place to live, work or visit have grown in importance over the past few decades. The inherent values and management of the landscape, however, date back thousands of years, under the stewardship of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people and territory. The Wurundjeri people lived in the landscape, managing and cultivating grazing land for food, and harvesting materials.

Today, Nillumbik is one of 12 green wedges around metropolitan Melbourne. Green wedges are established, planned and protected by the Victorian Government's legislative and policy framework. Because there is substantial variation between green wedges, the government asks each council to prepare and regularly review a local Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP).

This is the Shire's second GWMP and replaces the plan adopted in 2010. It is high-level and brings together new actions and Council's ongoing strategies to guide funding, resourcing and service delivery for the green wedge. It will be supported by annual action plans, including regular monitoring and evaluation.

This plan focuses on the green wedge area of the Shire of Nillumbik outside the legislated Urban Growth Boundary. It also refers to the townships of Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Pantom Hill, which are not part of the green wedge but are important service and gateway centres for the green wedge community. The green wedge covers approximately 39,600 hectares or 91 per cent of the Shire and including the townships, is home to 12,639 residents (2017) and a number of land uses, including agriculture, conservation, tourism and rural living.

Managing the landscape to mitigate bushfire risk, protect and enhance biodiversity, mitigate and adapt to climate change, promote agriculture and tourism and support rural living requires finding common objectives. Our communities also point to and recognise the continued influences on our rural areas such as proximity to urban Melbourne, population growth and an ageing population, land pricing, the ability to provide services and infrastructure, rural land management, the difficulty of managing rural land close to the urban growth boundary, transport and the regulatory framework.

The GWMP is consistent with the Victorian Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and adopts the goals of the Shire's *Council Plan 2017-2021*. It covers all the management techniques available to Council but does not seek substantial change to the separate Nillumbik Planning Scheme, which governs and guides land use and development.

The plan has been produced as a result of a major public review conducted by Council in 2018-19 (see appendix 5), involving engagement with more than 1000 people, the deliberations and advice of a community panel and 746 submissions in response to an exhibited draft. All background material can be sourced at <https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/gwmp>.

The community engagement revealed reasonable consensus on what needs to be managed, the capability of the community and a desire to bring people together around action.

The community is not unanimous about how the green wedge should be managed. Some believe that protection and enhancement of the natural environment must be the highest priority. Others believe that it is more important to balance the interests of people, agriculture and the environment. Some believe that regulation and enforcement are the best methods of management, others believe that cooperation and empowerment are more appropriate and effective.

This plan proposes to emphasise leadership and empowerment to achieve its objectives. Essential characteristics include sharing of vision, education, motivating and serving people, empathy, creativity and team building. Key to implementing this plan will be Council supporting the ability of people to cooperate and share knowledge.

The GWMP will provide direction over the next decade, with priorities determined every four years through the preparation of the *Council Plan*.



Vision and Principles



Vision

‘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 Nillumbik’s green wedge.’

Nillumbik’s green wedge biodiversity and rural character contribute to the Shire being one of Australia’s most attractive and liveable places.

Council will ensure that the natural environment of the green wedge is preserved and nurtured for current and future generations.

Harnessing the shared values of our community and supporting their commitment to managing the green wedge will be the key objective over the 10-year lifetime of this plan.

Human activity has shaped our landscapes and the green wedge will continue to support a range of existing and future uses. It will continue to thrive and evolve.

Nillumbik’s green wedge will be protected and enhanced through continued application of the urban growth boundary. Decision making will reflect the green wedge as a place for environment and biodiversity conservation, agriculture, recreation, tourism and rural living. This will also ensure that the rural character, values, landscapes, townships, natural environments and lifestyles that are so cherished, are identified, preserved and enhanced. The management of risk from bushfire and responding to climate change are also priorities.

Our rural townships of Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Pantong Hill will be the primary focus for local economic activity in the green wedge. Environment, agriculture, tourism, recreation or nature-based opportunities will also be encouraged throughout the green wedge where they demonstrate environmental, social and economic benefits.

Social and community challenges will be addressed through meaningful collaboration and engagement. Building community resilience, sharing knowledge and resources, planning for emergency management, supporting ageing in place, and increasing rural transport and accessibility will be achieved through positive relationships. We will embrace relevant new technologies to improve people’s lives and achieve enhanced social equity by promoting greater connectivity, learning, sharing of ideas and helping people to come together. Our reputation in arts and culture will continue to grow by supporting our passionate community who draw inspiration from our rural landscapes. 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.

All of this will be achieved in a collaborative way. This will ensure that the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Shire achieves a positive future for our people, place and community.

Principles

Implementation of the vision, goals, objectives and key actions of this plan will be guided by the following 10 principles:

1. Leadership

Council’s leadership will demonstrate its values of:

- **Respect:** we actively listen and encourage all views, respecting our peers, our community and the environment.
- **Collaboration:** we are one team working effectively, we willingly share our knowledge and time to achieve successful outcomes.
- **Integrity:** we are accountable, genuine and transparent in our actions and decisions.
- **Adaptability:** we are responsive, agile and creative.
- **Community:** we build strong relationships that benefit our community and customers.

2. Aboriginal voice

We have much to learn from our first peoples, particularly about caring for country.

The area of the current Shire of Nillumbik is land of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people.

3. A whole-of-Shire approach and recognition of Nillumbik's relationship to metropolitan Melbourne

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.

4. Manage change for future benefit

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 stewardship.

5. Collaboration and connectedness

Partnership between Council, community, landowners and stakeholders is critical to the management of the green wedge, recognising the interests of Nillumbik's various communities, communities in metropolitan Melbourne and other levels of government.

6. Celebrate, appreciate and enjoy local identity and the landscape

The special nature of the green wedge's biodiversity and landscape and the diverse identities of its communities are to be embraced.

7. Social equity

We will recognise diverse social and employment needs, differing personal needs, intergenerational equity and variable access to services.

8. Safety, wellbeing and resilience

A commitment to build collective capability to plan for, respond to and better manage and adapt to climate change, bushfire, an ageing population and transport restrictions.

9. Conserve and enhance our heritage

The green wedge's biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage are irreplaceable resources for the local and metropolitan community that need to be conserved and enhanced.

10. Sustainability and the precautionary principle

Solutions to problems need to be tailored to meet Nillumbik's unique social, economic and environmental needs now and into the future. 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.



Values



Nillumbik green wedge values

The Nillumbik green wedge is highly valued locally and regionally because of its biodiversity, natural beauty, rolling hills, landscapes, visitor experiences, steep escarpments, water courses, agriculture, rural living, and open space.

The community engagement revealed, in summary:

What people liked about the green wedge:

- Space, peace, wellbeing – particularly how the green wedge made people feel, with appreciation of views and fresh air and the less stressful environment
- Environment, biodiversity, plants and animals – the importance of the natural environment for plants and animals as well as humans
- Community
- Recreation and leisure activities
- Lifestyle
- Rural living.

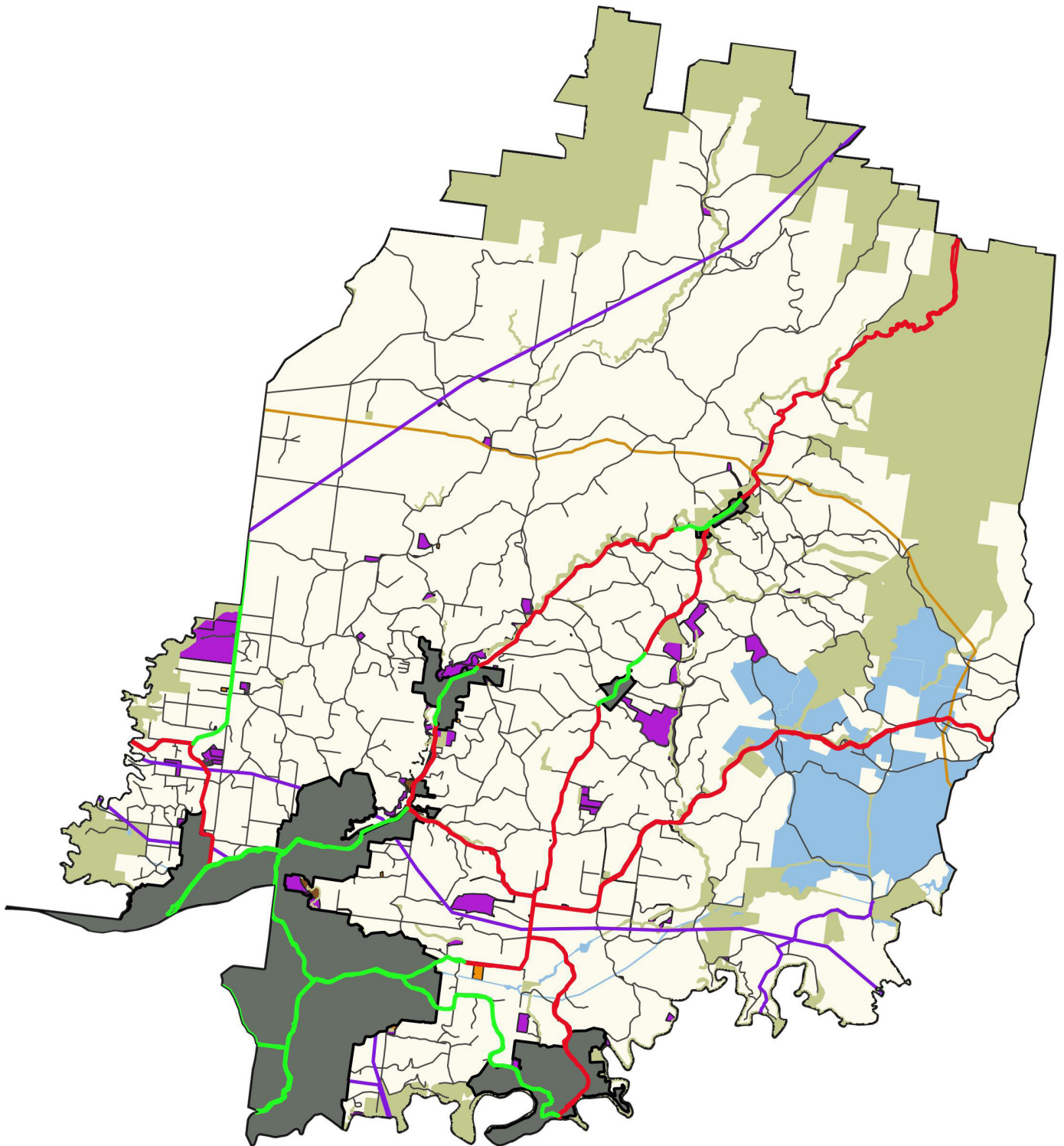
What people thought the opportunities were:

- Utilising the green wedge for health and wellbeing services and industries and the opportunities provided by the environment to improve human health and wellbeing.
- Improving infrastructure to encourage people to visit the green wedge and to assist the local community in day-to-day activities.
- Community building to leverage the community strengths and work with existing groups to develop a shared understanding of living in the green wedge.
- Sustainable tourism opportunities to encourage people into the green wedge and local towns.
- Environmental protection to protect the green wedge for future generations.

And what people thought the challenges might be:

- Concerns that the population will be increased and the area over developed.
- Transport issues, particularly poor quality and congested roads and lack of good public transport, safe cycling and horseriding options.
- The risk of bushfires and the need to manage land to reduce its impacts.
- Avoiding a reduction in the quality of the land through poor management, development or neglect.
- Costs for individuals living in the green wedge and the importance of finding funding options from other levels of government, to reduce the financial pressure on local residents of maintaining the green wedge.
- Finding the balance between people and the environment and between different groups, such as farmers, conservationists and recreational users.
- Difficult, costly, time-intensive and unfair planning processes were considered a challenge by some respondents.

Ownership of the Green Wedge



- VicRoads responsible for maintaining entire road
- VicRoads maintains pavement, (Nillumbik Shire Council maintains roadside)
- Nillumbik Shire Council maintains entire road
- Gas pipeline
- Electricity: Transmission Lines

- Crown Land
- VicTrack Land
- Nillumbik Shire Council Land
- Melbourne Water Land
- Yarra Valley Water Land
- Private Land
- Urban

Goals, objectives and key actions



Goal 1: Engaged connected communities

A place where communities and ideas thrive, underpinned by trust, confidence and continuous learning.

People are the lifeblood of our community and play the most important role of all in caring and looking after our green wedge. They own the majority of the land and manage our beautiful landscapes. It is the community who volunteer, participate and engage in public life.

Emergency Management Victoria's *Community Resilience Framework* captures the importance of people in community life.

Volunteers and volunteering are integral to Victorian community life. "Ordinary" people have long been willing to come together during tough times to pitch in and help affected communities.

The community engagement process that supported the preparation of this plan revealed a range of common values among our people. At the highest level, all value the space, peace and healthy feel, the natural environment and the sense of community that defines much of Nillumbik's green wedge.

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. Where very different views remain, it is important that we continue to respect and understand these differences, listen to everyone and facilitate conversations in an attempt to resolve them or, at the very least, have a shared understanding.

To this end, a key action of this plan is to establish an ongoing forum and program called Green Wedge Conversations, to enable people to discuss and hear about matters relevant to life in the green wedge. This program will be modelled on a combination of the intimate scale of the St Andrews Conversation pilot and the larger-scale Melbourne conversations which include expert speaker contributions.

Critical to the success of this plan will be enabling our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge.

This can come through better education and awareness programs, facilitation, information gathering and sharing, continuing and improving volunteer support programs, more conversations, celebrating and promoting our achievements and brokering opportunities with the State Government and its agencies to leverage change, be it finance, resourcing or strategy, to build greater capacity and capability in our people across the Shire. Council can also, where necessary, apply a regulatory process to ensure compliance.



Population, settlements and local services

Nillumbik is undergoing limited population growth, growing annually by only 0.4 per cent compared with 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 Whittlesea growth corridor, particularly in relation to demands on community infrastructure and the transport network.

It is also an ageing population with a median age of 44 years for people in the rural areas compared with 40 years in the urban areas of Nillumbik and 36 years across metropolitan Melbourne. Across the shire, the number of people aged over 50 years is expected to increase from one in five in 2016 to one in three by 2036.

The engagement revealed a growing need to find ways to support ageing people to continue to live on and manage their land. Council's *Ageing Well Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2020* sets out its priorities, actions and activities to strengthen, benefit and resource older people, their carers and families.

The State Government has set clear boundaries between urban Melbourne and the green wedges. Unlike all other planning controls in Victoria, the urban growth boundary and minimum subdivision sizes in the green wedge cannot change without the approval of the Victorian Parliament, so any change will not occur without the strong direction of the government. Outside of the major townships, housing is limited to one dwelling per allotment (plus a dependent person's unit). However, this is not always possible because the size and location of many vacant allotments will not allow compliance with state planning requirements to manage bushfire risk, retain vegetation, manage effluent or

protect agricultural uses. Consolidation of lots by landowners is likely to become increasingly necessary as a means to satisfy all of the planning scheme requirements for a new dwelling.

It is likely that much of the Shire's population growth will be concentrated in Eltham and Diamond Creek. Within the green wedge, only small incremental changes in population are anticipated.

A hierarchy of gathering places act as focal points for our rural communities and provide different levels of local service provision. Diamond Creek and Eltham, the townships of Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill, the smaller centres at Yarrambat and Kangaroo Ground and district-based public facilities such as schools, halls and stores all support the rural communities.

New housing in the green wedge should be concentrated within the three rural townships to support their roles as social, employment and service centres for the rural community.

A key action of this plan is to provide a place-making service for each township, recognising that:

- the formal township boundaries are established by the urban growth boundary and State Government planning policy
- development within them is limited until sewerage services become available.

Place-making is a comprehensive approach to the planning, urban design and management of public spaces, based on the identity of that place and the community's aspirations for it.

State Government planning policy expects each municipality to prepare well-considered strategies to implement government growth policy. 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.

Living in the green wedge

In 2017, 12,639 people lived in the green wedge. Another 3026 people lived in its townships.

Our people use rural land in different ways. These include *amenity lifestylers* and *green lifestylers*; The former where activities are undertaken for enjoyment (eg hobby farms) and the latter because of a passion for nature conservation (often both). There are also *part-time farmers*, for whom the scale of farming falls between the lifestylers, and *commercial farmers*, for whom farming and associated activities provide the major income for the household.¹

There are responsibilities and costs that come with rural life; including property and land management, often doing without the utility services enjoyed by urban residents, and bushfire mitigation and preparedness. Our residents have high regard for the natural environment and the rural lifestyle that the landscape provides, and invest in its management.

There is a strong state planning policy framework that applies to rural living, including:

- Protection of human life from bushfire being the top priority.
- Protection of agriculture and prevention of the loss of agricultural land to other land uses.
- Residential development to be in existing urban settlements which can better service people's needs.
- Ensuring no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.
- Protection of waterway corridors as areas of environmental significance and open natural space.
- Giving priority to conserving and enhancing the landscape ahead of residential development in the Rural Conservation Zone.

Council will help the community to navigate through the complex regulatory and planning approvals system.

A particular issue of concern for rural residents is having the ability to rebuild their home if it has been lost to fire or other disasters. The planning scheme requires a planning permit for development unless the loss was a result of the 2009 fires. Council supports the premise that people should be able to rebuild, but the design and siting of replacement buildings needs to reduce future risks to the occupants, not repeat them. Council will facilitate and expedite the processing of such planning applications and will advocate to State Government that the exemptions applying to the 2009 fires should be extended to properties affected by future bushfires.²

The broader social considerations relevant to rural living also need to be better addressed. 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. Rural living also provides challenges about how we continue to service and support rural communities, including transport and accessibility and the provision of community facilities, amenity and employment opportunities.

¹ The terms used to describe lifestyles are drawn from Square Pegs in Green Wedges, Department of Primary Industries and Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, 2008.

² Bushfires are defined by the Victorian State Bushfire Plan 2014 as “unplanned fires primarily in vegetation such as grass, forest and scrub”.

Transport and accessibility

The rural community experiences challenges of access and mobility, particularly for isolated children, young and elderly people. Accessibility can have a range of health and wellbeing impacts, including access to employment or how socially connected people are. Surveys that supported the development of Council's *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* and the community engagement that informed this plan both revealed relatively low resident satisfaction with public transport in the green wedge.

Council will continue to advocate strongly for improved public transport, including growing the range of community bus services. Opportunities may emerge through technology platforms to provide more choice and accessibility to transport solutions. The sharing economy continues to grow and the ability to reach more people with innovative solutions might enable transport to be delivered more efficiently by on-demand booking systems integrated into the broader transport network.

The bicycle and shared trail networks, footpaths and bus stops, are also important for mobility and accessibility within the green wedge.

Council implements a municipal road management plan. High-use and higher-maintenance roads are prioritised for sealing, which is considered to be of environmental benefit to reduce dust, silt and debris run-off into waterways. This can be a significant problem in the peri-urban area where rural unsealed roads are heavily used as if they are suburban roads. Council will look at ways to extend engagement with user communities about its road program, noting that not all roads should or will be sealed. Sometimes it may be beneficial for a road to be unsealed to prevent additional but non-essential vehicle movements, keep speeds low or provide for horse riding. Routine management of roadsides must continuously strike a balance between safety and environmental considerations.



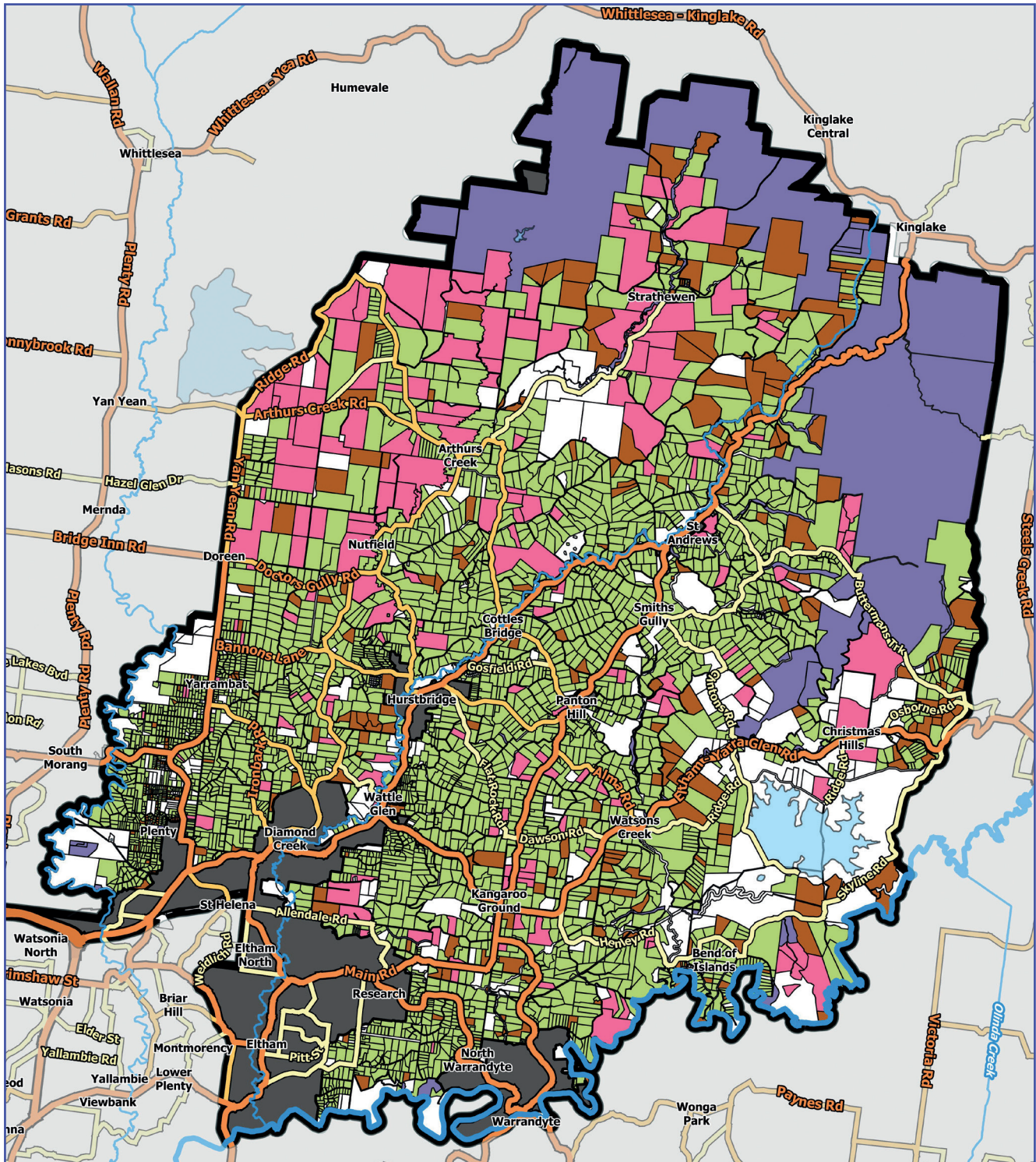
Objectives

- 01.1 Enable our people to take greater shared responsibility for the future of our green wedge.
- 01.2 A strengthened community through sharing its knowledge and capabilities.
- 01.3 Encourage, support, promote and celebrate the roles that landowners and volunteers play in the management of the green wedge.
- 01.4 Support community facilities and services in the green wedge.
- 01.5 Strengthen Hurstbridge, St Andrews and Panton Hill as service centres and visitor gateways to the green wedge.
- 01.6 Where possible, encourage housing diversity in the townships to enable ageing in place.
- 01.7 Align future development with environmentally sensitive design principles and ensure that future development emphasises each town's unique characteristics.
- 01.8 Recognise the limits on housing development in the rural areas.
- 01.9 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.
- 01.10 Facilitate linked public, community and shared transport options connected to the existing railway network and destinations within the green wedge.
- A1.4 Better utilise multi-use community spaces to create community hubs in the townships.
- A1.5 Create a place-making service for the townships to strengthen their identities and attractiveness as service, population, tourism, community and cultural centres.
- A1.6 Investigate options for encouraging and facilitating consolidation and amalgamation by landowners of vacant rural lots. Where appropriate and with owner consent, invite government to consider purchase of such lots where they are adjacent to public land.
- A1.7 Facilitate and expedite the processing of planning applications to rebuild after fire and advocate to State Government that the exemptions applying to the 2009 fires should be extended to properties affected by future bushfires.
- 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.
- A1.9 Advocate for improved public transport, traffic management and reduced road congestion.
- 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, as well as for emergency management, education, participation and running home-based businesses.

Key actions

- 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 external funding assistance to support the program.
- A1.2 Implement Council's *Nillumbik Volunteer Development Strategy 2015-2020*.
- 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.
- A1.11 Review the road sealing program to ensure high-use roads are prioritised.

Rural Uses



Valuation Categories

- Rural Resident
- Vacant
- Agricultural
- Conservation and Recreation
- Other Land Uses

Administrative boundaries

- Nillumbik Shire Boundary

Green Wedge Status

- Outside Green Wedge Area

Watercourse

-

Major water bodies

- Reservoirs

Roadways

- Freeway, highway and arterial
- Sub Arterial
- Collector

Goal 2: Safe and healthy environments

Healthy and safe communities enjoy living in our iconic green wedge environment.

Our natural environment and biodiversity

Our natural environment is vitally important to the identity of our Shire and encompasses much of what we value and appreciate about the green wedge. It is richly diverse, unique and precious.

It includes an array of vegetation types including dry forests and woodlands, wet and damp forests, cleared rural land, scattered trees, and waterways; and is home to over 1,000 indigenous flora species, 73 of which are listed threatened species including some plants (and in particular, orchids) that are not found anywhere else in the world.

Supporting and relying on this habitat are more than 340 indigenous animal species, 70 of which are listed threatened species. Some of the common species that can be found include the Swamp Wallaby, Echidna, Wombat, Blue-tongue lizard and woodland birds. Rarer species such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale, Spot-tailed Quoll, Common and White-footed Dunnart, Barking and Powerful Owl, Speckled Warbler, Tree Goanna, Spotted Quail-thrush, Platypus, Superb Lyrebird, Swift Parrot and Southern Toadlet may also be found.

Our natural environment also underpins the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors. It provides access to nature, recreation, open spaces, healthy soils, clean air and water. It also sustains many of our rural businesses including agriculture, agribusiness, viticulture and tourism ventures – which all rely on a healthy ecosystem to thrive.

Our people are passionate, informed and engaged with maintaining and enhancing our natural environment. Many are making daily choices to help create a sustainable world, emerging citizen science opportunities are harnessing community-driven action, and we have committed landowners, Friends groups and Landcare groups.

Council encourages biodiversity conservation and responsible land management on public and private land by, for example:

- supporting Landcare and Friends groups
- providing an advisory service for sustainable land management
- delivering Council's Land Management Incentive Program
- caring for Council-owned environment reserves across the Shire
- providing rebates for Trust for Nature covenanted land and for properties that demonstrate sustainable agriculture practices
- administering state planning policies that apply to native vegetation
- providing an array of environment, land management and sustainability education opportunities and experiences
- delivering a range of partnership biodiversity conservation protection projects across different land tenures.

Since 2012, Council has implemented \$1.2 million worth of grant-funded investment into biodiversity conservation projects in partnership with Landcare Victoria, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, State Government departments, the Royal Botanic Gardens and neighbouring councils. This has brought Council, private landowners and other agencies together to work collaboratively on landscape-scale biodiversity conservation.

As a result, localised sustainable land management and biodiversity successes are occurring.

The vision of Council's *Biodiversity Strategy 2012*, which provides strategic direction for biodiversity management across Nillumbik, is that "Nillumbik's ecosystems are healthy, resilient, productive and connected at a landscape scale for the future". Yet a range of processes are contributing to an incremental decline of biodiversity and functionality of ecosystems here and across Victoria – including climate change, clearing, altered fire regimes, the presence and spread of pest plants, animals and pathogens, soil compaction, erosion, and altered water quality and flows.

The introduction and spread of invasive plants, animals and pathogens, for example, is a very significant threat to biodiversity, and also to primary production and amenity. They compete with indigenous plants, animals and other desirable species for resources, prey on them for food, spread disease and many cause property damage. Management requires a strategic and collaborative approach.

At both state and federal government levels, recognition of the importance of protecting, conserving and enhancing biodiversity and natural values is captured by a strong integrated framework of legislation and strategy.

For example, the *State Planning Policy Framework* requires that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

The Victorian Government's draft *Deer Management Strategy* is providing a new way of thinking to guide how this pest species can be managed.

Highly relevant is the Victorian Government's *Biodiversity Strategy 2037* which sets out the roadmap to stop the decline of our biodiversity and achieve overall biodiversity improvement over the next 20 years.

It recognises the central role that people play in protecting Victoria's natural environment for current and future generations and sets targets for valuing nature.

There are many challenges that face Nillumbik's natural environment. It is a cherished but threatened resource. Common objectives include the conservation of our native plants and animals and productivity, tourism, liveability and health and wellbeing.

Looking forward, effective management and sufficient resourcing is required to give us the best chance of having a healthy environment to benefit this generation and future generations.

Central to this will be promoting and supporting environmental care and stewardship by:

- helping all residents of Nillumbik connect with nature and to value it — helping them to understand how to conserve and enhance our natural environment

- assisting our private landowners in best-practice land management, acknowledging that they own the majority of land and vegetation in the green wedge
- enhancing our decision support data, tools and advocacy to deliver strategically planned and cost-effective programs that help our ecosystems continue to function at a landscape scale, protect indigenous plants and animals, water flows and groundwater, mitigate and adapt to challenges such as bushfire, salinity, erosion, flooding and climate change, improve local land productivity, adopt practices that continue to reduce Council's own environmental footprint and conserve cultural heritage values.

Climate change and our bushfire-prone environment

Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing the world today and into the future.

In 1994, the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* came into force and has been ratified by 197 countries, including Australia. The objective of the Convention is to stabilise the amount of greenhouse gases arising from human activity in the atmosphere to levels that would not interfere with the climate system. The most recent elaboration of the Convention is the *Paris Agreement*, which came into force on 4 November 2016.

The *Paris Agreement's* aim is to keep global temperature rise in this century to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and ideally, below 1.5°C. This agreement means:

- Greater efforts are expected around the world to transform national economies and societies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Cities and businesses will be expected to keep up with this change to remain competitive.
- A certain amount of climate change will happen despite all of these efforts and countries, cities and communities will have to adapt to the consequences.



Aside from its environmental value, Nillumbik’s green wedge forest is also a significant asset for our community towards both of these objectives. Vegetation consumes carbon dioxide and sequesters carbon. Its maintenance is therefore important to restrain net emissions. It also assists cooling as we adapt to rising temperatures. Ensuring that our forest retains sufficient water to sustain its life and adapt to the extent necessary for its long-term existence in a changed climate needs to be better understood and managed at a landscape scale.

Council estimates that there are nearly ten million trees in Nillumbik and nearly 500,000 of these are managed by Council.³

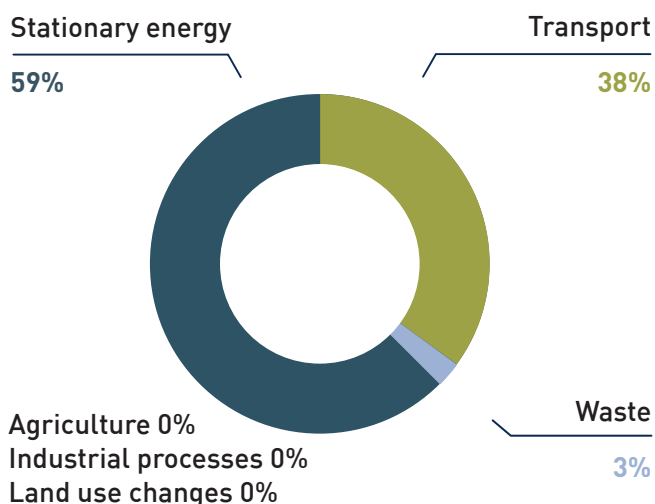
In a similar vein, soil conservation and rehabilitation is also important. Farming and land management practices that protect and regenerate soil capacity are important and need to be supported.

Land and climate are interdependent. Climate change exacerbates land degradation and diminishes the carbon uptake from the land. Land degradation also reduces the resilience of human and natural systems to cope with climate change.

The opportunity for the green wedge is that controlling land degradation and enhancing land resources can deliver multiple benefits. By planting trees and increasing soil organic matter we take carbon out of the atmosphere and store it in the land.

Crop rotations and mixed cropping or grazing systems that use livestock to return nutrients and organic matter to the ground can reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. Land holders may be able to earn carbon credits for storing carbon in vegetation and soil.

Nillumbik Shire Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2012



³ Shire of Nillumbik *Tree Management Guidelines*, September 2018

Council’s *Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020* identifies that the majority of greenhouse gas emissions generated in Nillumbik come from stationary energy consumption (59 per cent) and transport (38 per cent). Industry, agriculture and land use contribute only small quantities to the total. Council operations generate approximately 1.5 per cent, with the community generating the remaining 98.5 per cent of the total emissions for the Shire.

In line with these measures, short-term objectives are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced from Council operations by 17 per cent and from community activities by 6 per cent from 2012 levels by 2020. The plan focuses on energy savings and renewable energy generation, community education and facilitation to achieve these goals. Actions in line with these objectives will need to be ongoing.

Victoria is becoming hotter and drier, facing more periods of extreme heat and drought, reductions in annual rainfall and increases in intense rainfall events. Extreme weather events such as bushfire and flooding are becoming more frequent and severe.

The impacts of climate change that run throughout our ecosystem are broad and include biodiversity, the water cycle, agricultural productivity and human health, safety and wellbeing. It also impacts upon economic performance, tourism and emergency management strategies. The Nillumbik community is acutely sensitive to the impacts of climate change and mindful of the need to work collaboratively both locally and broadly to harness best practice for change.

The Victorian Government has put in place a new *Climate Change Act 2017*, established the *Victorian Climate Change Framework* and released *Victoria’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020*. It will lead and broker regional and local response to climate change, including research and new partnership agreements with local government. It will include help to build community capacity and encourage adaptation actions across all policy areas including health and human services, emergency management, the natural environment, water, the built environment and our economy. From 2020 the Victorian Government will produce adaptation actions plans for ‘core systems’, including the natural environment and water cycles.

Council will take advantage of the state-led emphasis in this policy and implementation area to leverage opportunities for response to climate change and build an integrated community resilience strategy.

A vital part of this strategic framework for Nillumbik relates to community resilience and our preparedness and response, on many fronts, to natural events. Natural threats include bushfire and water security.

The *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management* prepared by Emergency Management Victoria puts community at the centre of all emergency management and highlights the need and importance of planning for resilience, not just planning for disaster. It sets out seven resilience characteristics that emergency managers should aim to strengthen and encourage in communities:

- safe and well
- connected, inclusive and empowered
- dynamic and diverse local economy
- sustainable built and natural environment
- culturally rich and vibrant
- democratic and engaged
- reflective and aware.

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.

Enabling our people and our communities to fully understand, engage with and take ownership of strategies that help to create resilient communities will be a key objective for much of Council's future policy and implementation work in the green wedge. The St Andrews Conversation pilot, focusing on community resilience, was a good example of the type of engagement, listening and learning that will help to broker positive change where it matters most.

The Victorian Government continues to reform its strategies to reduce the risk of bushfire under its Safer Together approach. This has focussed on risk reduction on public land and is intended to extend to fuel management on private land. This is likely to see the community presented with options for a private land vegetation management strategy for the metropolitan region. It is unclear what this might mean from a future implementation perspective, which illustrates the need for Council to maintain an agile strategy.

Council's *Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-2023* covers private and public land bushfire mitigation, building stronger and more resilient communities and working to strengthen the ability of agencies to deliver coordinated bushfire mitigation programs. The strategy is underpinned by community-centric outcomes, including shared responsibility, shared obligation and building strong relationships with agencies.

Water

Access to water and the protection of waterways is controlled by state legislation. In recent years, full coordination of governance and planning of the Yarra River corridor by the Victorian Government has been enabled by the passage of the *Yarra River Protection (Willip-gin Birrarung Murrone) Act 2017*.

Water for Victoria, the State Government's water plan provides a framework to strengthen water security for communities, protect jobs and agriculture, recognise Aboriginal water values and improve environmental health with a vision that water is fundamental to our communities. Management of water is required to support a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and thriving communities, now and into the future.



It is supported by *Victoria's Integrated Water Management Framework* which states that the best approach to integrated water cycle management is a collaborative approach to planning that brings together organisations that influence all elements of the water cycle, including waterways and bays, wastewater management, alternative and potable water supply, stormwater management and water treatment.

At the local level, Council's *Integrated Water Management Strategy* sets targets for a diverse water supply and for stormwater quality and flow patterns discharged to the feeders in the Yarra River, Plenty River, Diamond Creek, Arthurs Creek and Watsons Creek catchments.

An important role of Nillumbik's green wedge is to manage and protect these catchments for:

- Local users of water for agriculture, environmental conservation, rural living and firefighting.
- Sugarloaf Reservoir, a key state asset nestled in Christmas Hills that has been supplying water to metropolitan Melbourne since 1981.
- The Yarra River and coastal ecosystems of Port Phillip.

Reduced rainfall means that streamflow has also reduced by approximately 50 per cent over the past two decades making critical the task of managing and protecting groundwater and surface waterways. Alternatives to dams, such as well-located storage of water collected from mains supplies, roof tops or sources of recycled water to support agriculture, firefighting and rural living will become more important in the future.

A key issue to protect water quality is the management of domestic wastewater. With the exception of parts of Hurstbridge and Doreen, the green wedge does not have reticulated sewerage and relies upon onsite treatment of effluent. Council's *Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2019* sets out how this situation will be managed and the prospects for extension of the sewerage system.

A collaborative approach is required across a number of key policy areas to ensure we remain liveable, safe, resilient, economically viable and capable of meeting the challenges of climate change. Our ecosystem and the liveability of the green wedge depends upon maintaining water supply to support every aspect of our natural environment.

Landscape and open space

The landscape and open space character of Nillumbik's green wedge carry cultural and environmental values which are regarded as some of its most valuable features.

Our community has also told us that it values the visibility of the night sky and that lighting needs to be controlled to minimise its spill into the night time amenity of the landscape.

The Victorian Government's *Biodiversity Strategy 2037* states: 'the natural environment is Victoria's biggest tourist attraction, contributing billions of dollars to the economy each year.'

It also recognises the need to manage uses such as tourism 'to ensure that sensitive areas do not receive too many visitors and that such areas are well managed and resilient'.

State green wedge policies contained in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and the *Victorian Planning Provisions* recognise the benefits of protecting areas of landscape value and that new uses and developments need to contribute positively to the vision, principles and values of the green wedge.

Objectives

- O2.1 Protect and enhance biodiversity, habitats and habitat links.
- O2.2 Enhance climate change resilience, mitigation and adaptability.
- O2.3 Reduce the number and impact of bushfire incidents.
- O2.4 Improve stream condition, water flows, water quality, catchment quality and people's connection to their waterways.
- O2.5 Conserve remnant vegetation and rural landscapes to maintain the character and natural beauty of the green wedge.

Key actions

- A2.1 Implement Council's *Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019 – 2023*.
- A2.2 Implement, and review and update Council's:
 - *Biodiversity Strategy 2012*
 - *Invasive Species Action Plan 2015*
 - *Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013*
 - *Climate Change Action Plan 2016*.
- A2.3 Implement Council's *Domestic Waste Water Management Plan 2019*.
- A2.4 Advocate to government to provide access to data, recognition and resources for the protection of threatened species and vegetation communities and the control of threats.
- A2.5 Increase the collection of targeted biodiversity and invasive species data for evidence-based decision making. Fill critical knowledge gaps by seeking collaborative approaches for research and monitoring programs.
- A2.6 Utilise the "decision-support tools" of *Biodiversity Strategy 2037* to prioritise actions that will protect and enhance remnant vegetation, water resources, indigenous fauna and flora and habitat corridors within the green wedge.
- A2.7 Forge partnerships with government agencies and adjoining councils to achieve a multi-agency approach to pest control at the landscape scale.
- A2.8 Manage Council's environment reserves to achieve biodiversity objectives.
- A2.9 Enable opportunities for our community to have regular connections with nature.
- A2.10 Assist our community in acting to protect biodiversity and the natural environment, and promote community and landholder stewardship values by:
 - Providing incentives for private landholders to implement sustainable land management practices and conserve biodiversity via our Land Management Incentive Scheme, Sustainable Agriculture Rebate and Trust for Nature covenanted land rebate.
 - Implementing initiatives that increase awareness and activate care for priority local species.
 - Providing an advisory service for land management.
 - Supporting Landcare, Friends and other community groups to protect biodiversity on private and public land, including assistance in applying for grants.
 - Delivering targeted environment and sustainability education opportunities and experiences.
 - Assisting landowners to identify properties that may be used as vegetation off-set sites.
 - Assisting landowners to identify properties that may be eligible for carbon credits.
- A2.11 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build community knowledge, capacity and resilience to adapt to the expected impacts of a changing climate.
- A2.12 Better understand the likely impacts of climate change on key species and ecosystems using the best available climate science, and explore opportunities to trial management actions that will maximise their adaptive capacity.
- A2.13 Support Melbourne Water and the Catchment Management Authority to improve stream condition, water flows, water quality and catchment quality. Promote water-sensitive design, balance amenity uses of our waterways with environmental considerations and balance demand for public and private use of water flows through extraction and diversion with broader community and environmental considerations.
- A2.14 Investigate opportunities to support community-based renewable energy solutions.
- A2.15 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.

A2.16 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.

A2.17 Consider impacts on the landscape when determining rural development applications under the planning scheme.



Goal 3: Active and creative people

Active lifestyles and artistic expression are fostered through participation and innovation.

Health and wellbeing is linked strongly to the natural attributes of our environment. Green space is an important determinant of health, not just because it enables physical activity but also because it has been shown to promote higher levels of mental wellbeing and social connectedness. Our community places significant value on open space and recreation.

Council's *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021* emphasises the importance of encouraging active living and enhancing mental wellbeing as two of its seven priorities. It also specifies strategies to advance these priorities, particularly in relation to participation, physical exercise and accessibility.

Recreation

Bushwalking, horse riding, cycling, land care as well as visitation of public reserves and national parks are key activities. The primary use of public land in the green wedge is for community recreation, public infrastructure (eg Sugarloaf Reservoir) and nature conservation.

Recreation opportunities within green space are an important factor in strengthening and maintaining healthy communities. Sport and active recreation brings people together and builds community cohesion. The green wedge is home to certain recreation facilities that are not found elsewhere in Nillumbik or the northern region of Melbourne. These contribute to tourism and include the Rob Roy Hill Climb, sailing at Sugarloaf Reservoir, the Yarrambat Park Golf Course, Ponyland and mountain biking. People in the green wedge also benefit from the major sports and recreation facilities in Diamond Creek, Eltham and Greensborough.

The rural shared trails in Nillumbik enable people to be physically active and enjoy a variety of recreation opportunities in natural and cultural landscapes. Implementing Council's *Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011* has and will continue to be important for delivering many of the social, health, environmental and economic objectives of this plan.

Nillumbik's trails are also part of an integrated Regional Trail Network across Melbourne's northern suburbs that showcases the region's diverse natural and cultural heritage, provides for a range of recreation interests, connects people to places and contributes to community wellbeing.

There are, however, broken links in the network. There is significant potential to further improve the connectivity, attractiveness, safety and the local, regional and national visitor numbers to the area by extending the network across the Shire, with improved connections to neighbouring municipalities and beyond to the Melbourne CBD.

A current signature project is the long-standing extension to the Diamond Creek Trail from Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge. The extension will be through scenic green wedge land and will make Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge destinations reachable by Melbourne's metropolitan bicycle network. Planning is also underway for an extension of the Aqueduct Trail into the Yarra Ranges Shire, which will then connect the Northern and Eastern Metropolitan Melbourne regions and, potentially, into the Bicentennial National Trail northward.

Council's *Open Space Strategy* guides the provision of open space, particularly active recreation reserves for local communities. It provides an inventory of open space, an analysis of community open space requirements and recommendations for acquisition of land to provide open space, development of existing open space and the types of facilities required.



Conserving and celebrating our cultural heritage

The landscapes and townships in our green wedge contain a rich and diverse cultural heritage. This heritage helps us to understand the social, economic and environmental forces, people and events that have shaped our community and contributed to a sense of identity. For the Aboriginal community especially, it is a living connection to culture and country.

In the past, cultural heritage places mostly referred to historic buildings or structures. Today, what we think of as heritage has expanded to include places with spiritual or social value, scientific, industrial, architectural or technological importance, public art, parks, gardens, trees and so forth. It also includes elements such as stories, traditions and memories that are associated with places, events or people.

There are various regulatory frameworks at local, state, national and international levels for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage protection. Heritage places receive statutory protection at the local level through the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* or at the state level through the *Heritage Act 2017* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2016*. Council works closely with the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, especially in relation to managing culturally sensitive landscapes.

Council has a heritage strategy and the ongoing support and involvement from within the community is vital. Nillumbik is fortunate to have a network of historical societies, friendship groups, and passionate individuals that help look after our heritage.

Places in Nillumbik that have been found to be of local heritage significance are covered by a heritage overlay in the planning scheme. This serves as a tool for guiding, rather than preventing, change and can provide access to practical support and recognition of their owners' role in safeguarding heritage for future generations.

Special aspects of Nillumbik's living heritage are its deep and long-standing connections to the arts and its tradition of mud brick and rammed earth buildings throughout the green wedge. Council's *Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022* prioritises public participation in the arts and the growth of cultural industries. Unfortunately the tradition of mud brick building has fallen away in recent years. Its value lies not only in its aesthetics, sustainability and connection to the land but it is also something that owner-builders can do. Revival and promotion of the techniques is one way to accentuate Nillumbik's uniqueness.

Objectives

- 03.1 Encourage active living and enhanced mental wellbeing.
- 03.2 Provide a diversity of open spaces with a range of high-quality regional, district and neighbourhood parks linked by a network of trails.
- 03.3 Complete the trail network for walking, cycling and horse riding in Nillumbik, connecting to the regional trails network covering neighbouring municipalities.
- 03.4 Support, celebrate and enable public access to Nillumbik's rich tradition of local artists and makers.
- 03.5 Work with Heritage Victoria, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and other government agencies to support local heritage protection.
- 03.6 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.

Key actions

- A3.1 Implement the *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*
- A3.2 Review and update the *Nillumbik Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy*.
- A3.3 Implement the *Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011*.
- A3.4 Implement the *Nillumbik Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022*.
- A3.5 Investigate the establishment of a regional art gallery.
- A3.6 Develop and implement a heritage interpretation plan.
- A3.7 Encourage heritage conservation and management, including support of adaptive reuse of heritage places, trees and hedgerows in line with planning policy objectives.

Nillumbik's trails network



Goal 4: A prosperous economy

A strong local economy that supports business, growth, jobs and community wealth consistent with our green wedge vision.

Three of the 11 priority sectors for the Victorian Government have potential to fit in with the values, environment and circumstances of Nillumbik's green wedge and its broader region:

- food and fibre
- professional services
- the visitor economy.

Given the presence of agriculture and horticulture in the green wedge, there is an opportunity to contribute to the growing demand for food across domestic and international markets through improved economic productivity and supply chain efficiencies and to create job opportunities for residents.

In support of these opportunities Council and its partners will focus on providing businesses with access to the policy framework and required infrastructure and services to enable them to operate effectively and productively, as well as to capitalise on technological opportunities.

The Victorian Government rates Victoria as well positioned for sustained growth over the medium-term because of its diverse strengths: world-class education institutions, a culturally diverse population, strong technological capability, a positive business environment, quality infrastructure, transport services, productive land, significant natural resources and environmental heritage, as well as its proximity to emerging markets.

Agriculture

Approximately one-fifth of the Shire is used for agriculture. The principal 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. Supply to metropolitan markets is augmented by local farmers' markets and trading in hay to support livestock.

There is an opportunity to more productively utilise land in Nillumbik's green wedge to supply Melbourne's growing demand for food. With the establishment of stronger local supply chains, use of technology and motivated landowners, growing produce for Melbourne will ensure farming in the green wedge is protected and enhanced.

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.

The close proximity of the Melbourne Market in Epping presents opportunities for our current and future producers, particularly given the growing importance placed on fresh and sustainable production.

Agriculture benefits from and needs to co-exist comfortably with the conservation of nearby biodiversity and natural systems.

Sustainable land management and enhancement of natural systems benefits agriculture. Because soil fertility is limited within the Nillumbik green wedge, soil-based agriculture will benefit from farming practices that restore and maintain organic matter and moisture in the soil.

Local agriculture is valuable to the functioning of the green wedge, which is a mosaic of farming, nature conservation, townships and rural living. This value should be protected for its contribution not only to the overall agricultural objective for green wedges, but also metropolitan objectives for tourism, landscape and cultural heritage.

Hobby, small-scale agricultural production and the keeping of animals are important community activities in the green wedge. They are supported by local farmers markets and activities that encourage 'food exchanges'.

These kinds of enterprises are an important part of the future for our green wedge for community connectedness, the wellbeing of residents and to ensure a method of sustainable living and low food miles, reducing the impact of transport and large-scale growing on the environment.

The land available for soil-based agriculture needs to be protected for the future, so that farming is able to take place without unnecessary interference. The possibility of diversification into related activities, such as tourism and the emergence of non-soil-based sustainable agriculture also need to be considered.

Equine

By definition, the keeping or breeding of horses is considered an agricultural use in the planning scheme. In the Nillumbik green wedge it is primarily for recreation, which in turn, contributes to the local economy by supporting specialist local businesses and farms.

Responsible keeping and riding of horses in a manner consistent with environmental protection is important and will be encouraged.

Equine-related employment and business activities in the green wedge include agistment, breeding, horse float repairs, riding schools, stock and feed sales, pasture management, and equine health services.

In terms of recreation, equestrian activities have long been part of the history and culture of the shire. Those activities include competition, events and trail riding, one of the top 10 most-popular recreational activities in Nillumbik.⁴

Council is developing a document to recognise the existence of equine within Nillumbik, including its clubs and businesses.

The visitor economy

The *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy 2016* is the Victorian Government's long-term tourism plan. It provides an overarching framework that defines tourism's importance to many parts of our local economies and is supported by a broad state policy framework, including green wedge policy.

The shire's close proximity to Melbourne, its place within the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region and its tourism strengths in nature, shared trails, agriculture/horticulture and arts/culture provide opportunity to attract an increase in visitors.

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 contribute to our green wedge values.

Council's *Nillumbik Destination Management Plan 2015*, identifies a number of tourism opportunities:

- nature-based tourism
- arts, heritage and cultural tourism
- agribusiness and wineries
- outdoor recreation
- family product
- accommodation and
- events.

Council has aligned its tourism work with Yarra Ranges Tourism as a mechanism for cooperation, efficiency and recognition by State Government.

Professional services

There is a shortfall in suitable local jobs for the highly skilled and qualified professional workforce that lives in Nillumbik. Encouraging growth in these sectors in the townships will provide much-needed employment opportunities for residents wanting to work closer to home and ensure that the economic health of the community is on a positive trajectory.

⁴ Nillumbik Shire Council, *Recreation Strategy Market Research and Consultation summary Vol 3.*, Oct. 2010, pg 19.

Home-based business

Given the ability to work remotely, with the right level of support and infrastructure, the number of home-based businesses in the green wedge is expected to increase in the future.

Melbourne is known as the start-up capital of Australia as it is home to more than 170 co-working spaces across the metropolitan area. Co-working spaces provide the critical support infrastructure and services often required for businesses in their infancy to grow and mature and to support collaboration, openness, knowledge sharing, innovation, and the user experience.

Internet and mobile access

Local businesses have highlighted that existing internet speed and connections and mobile phone access are issues in the green wedge. For businesses to operate effectively, they must have reliable access to these enabling services and infrastructure. They are also necessary to ensure safety within a fire-prone environment (see also goal three).

Objectives

- 04.1 Encourage investment that fits in with the values of the green wedge to improve the economy and create local employment.
- 04.2 Encourage sustainable, diversified and productive agriculture, access to markets and the right to farm.
- 04.3 Encourage sustainable and regenerative agriculture.
- 04.4 Recognise the contribution of hobby (or small-scale) farming in the green wedge with supportive policy put in place.
- 04.5 Recognise and support the sustainable management of the equine community in the green wedge.
- 04.6 Encourage growth in the visitor economy through regional promotion and facilitation of new visitor experiences that contribute to the values of the green wedge.
- 04.7 Encourage growth in professional services and home-based business.
- 04.8 Encourage government to make reliable mobile phone and internet access available across the Shire.
- 04.9 Facilitate connectivity in the Shire's regional trail network to link with adjoining municipalities.



Key actions

- A4.1 Finalise and implement a new *Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy*.
- A4.2 Engage with and support the existing business base across the green wedge to promote local economic growth.
- A4.3 To inform future policy development, conduct research into the types of agriculture that are likely to be successful in the green wedge and compatible with its environmental and lifestyle values.
- A4.4 With land owner support and appropriate privacy protections in place, compile a database of agricultural activity and practices, including hobby farming and pests that need to be managed. Maintain this database into the future for program development.
- A4.5 To ensure that land remains available for agriculture, encourage and facilitate consolidation by landowners of agricultural lots in common ownership and discourage the further fragmentation of agricultural lands.
- A4.6 Continue to apply the sustainable agricultural rate rebate and the primary producer rate rebate.
- A4.7 Consider policy and land use options (that comply with the planning scheme) to allow agricultural enterprises to diversify income sources by supporting complementary activities such as farm gate sales, events, education and accommodation.
- A4.8 Continue to support sustainable land and animal management and access to markets by providing education programs, promotion, events and innovative partnership solutions.
- A4.9 Support farming and land management practices that protect and regenerate soil capacity and fertility.
- A4.10 Advocate to the Victorian Government that it alters planning and other controls to:
- allow landholders a right to farm in the Rural Conservation Zone on pre-existing cleared agricultural land with decision guidelines to avoid damage to surrounding properties or environment
 - support supplementary rural business activities, such as farm gate sales, farm stays and other low environmental amenity impact enterprises, that are consistent with green wedge values
 - to support small-scale and productive hobby farming.
- A4.11 Prepare Equine in Nillumbik.
- A4.12 Review and update Council's *Destination Management Plan* to:
- improve awareness of the benefits of cycle tourism and mapping information
 - invest in digital interpretation of heritage, cultural and natural assets
 - develop tourism through shared trail investment
 - develop festivals and an events attractions plan
 - build on the arts and cultural product through development of curated content and packaging
 - add to the food and wine offerings by facilitating diversity of product and infrastructure
 - support visitor accommodation
 - manage and avoid detrimental impacts on sensitive environmental areas
 - increase strategic marketing and promotion
 - improve and develop products suited to family experiences.
- A4.13 Create an investment attraction plan and investigate innovative land use solutions to attract professional services to locate within the townships of the green wedge.
- A4.14 Identify and document areas of low mobile and internet connectivity and black spots. Identify opportunities to rectify areas affected.
- A4.15 Analyse the needs of home-based businesses and identify the barriers to growth.
- A4.16 Understand the demand for co-working spaces in the townships and facilitate the needs of home-based business.

Goal 5: Responsible leadership

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.

Governance and engagement

Management of the green wedge is a shared responsibility. Much of what we do and how we do it sits within a state regulatory and planning framework. Council administers issues associated with the use of land and land management on a day-to-day basis. The Victorian Government coordinates broader policy reform across multiple departments and agencies. Landowners, including state agencies, live within this policy framework and business must engage with it.

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.

The engagement revealed strongly held and polarised views about the value of regulation and enforcement as a way of achieving management objectives. Many who argued for more regulation and enforcement wanted to be reassured that the rural areas would not be urbanised or over-developed. Those who were concerned with over-regulation and enforcement were concerned with unreasonable intrusion into everyday life and disempowerment. Some want certainty about their future in a challenging natural environment. Many respondents also raised concerns about community disharmony and conflict, often over this issue of regulation.

The reality is that nearly the entire legislative and regulatory framework is established by the Victorian Government and is not likely to change significantly or quickly.

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 the 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.

The review set out to try and find consensus on the best way to manage the green wedge, recognising that most of it is in private ownership. What has been revealed is reasonable consensus on what needs to be managed, the capability of the

community and a desire for more inclusive approaches to bring people together around action.

Our greatest opportunity for better management and governance of the green wedge appears to rest in better humanising our approach. Places are created by people and are strengthened when people regard themselves as belonging to their local neighbourhood and enjoying their environment and amenity. Providing people with knowledge, skills and an understanding of roles and responsibilities will require collaborative leadership from Council. We need to provide encouragement and motivation and facilitate a better shared understanding of the complex and often disputed issues.

Land use planning

Zoning of land through the planning scheme is one way of implementing the goals and objectives of this plan.

The Urban Growth Boundary, which defines the boundary between urban areas and the green wedge is set by legislation and can only be changed with the support of the Victorian Government and Parliament. Council supports the current boundary.

Outside the Urban Growth Boundary, the Victorian Government provides a range of zones for private land to be applied in green wedges:

- Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) which prioritises conservation and protection of the natural environment.
- Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) which promotes agriculture along with the conservation and protection of the natural environment.
- Green Wedge A Zone (GWAZ) which aims to protect existing residential amenity.

The majority of the privately-owned land in the Nillumbik green wedge is zoned RCZ. A smaller area in the north-west corner of the Shire is zoned GWZ and a Special Use Zone applies to the Bend of Islands (see appendix 3). Public Land Zones apply to relevant public land.

Further examination is warranted to determine whether the current application of the zones to private land within the green wedge hinders any of the objectives of this plan, particularly in relation to the promotion of agriculture and tourism.

The GWZ promotes agriculture and tourism and appears to work well in its current location. Similarly, the Special Use Zone that applies to the Bend of Islands is long-established and works well for its community.

The RCZ prioritises 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 the land dotted throughout the RCZ that is already cleared for agriculture cannot be used for that purpose without a planning permit.

Research into the future of farming in the green wedge is needed to enable policy development that supports the right to farm and the tourism allowed in conjunction with farming, in a manner that will fit with green wedge values.

The Victorian Government is currently reviewing the impact of planning controls on strategic agriculture in Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas. Council will support changes that improve the right to farm but will not support forms of agriculture or animal production that may damage surrounding properties or the environment.

Advocacy

As a small shire we need to be pragmatic and conscious of our own resources in how we prioritise and make best use of them in response to genuine needs. Increased Victorian Government activity and frameworks also provide opportunities we should pursue for increased education, support, funding and local capacity building.

Council and its administration have a vital role ahead of it in terms of working with the Victorian Government, its departments and agencies and other key stakeholders to deliver collaborative local leadership and outcomes for our green wedge and its people. Partnerships and an integrated approach to developing and delivering key Council strategies will be required to better enable our community to manage and enjoy the green wedge.

Funding and resourcing

Resourcing at both state and local level for green wedge management remains a challenge. Much is implied in many of the key state frameworks and strategies in terms of resourcing, education and partnerships with local councils and communities. Nillumbik, as a relatively small population in a metropolitan context and with limited resources, welcomes state funding support and wants to take greater advantage of government funding programs. Council also recognises that it needs to work smarter with existing resources. It can do this by ensuring key priorities are identified in areas where there is the greatest consensus to support outcomes or change. Resources can then be matched accordingly.

As Nillumbik Shire Council is considered an interface local government area, it is eligible for Growing Suburbs funding but is not eligible for many funding opportunities realised by other areas of the state that are classified as rural.

On the other hand, while the State Government recognises the value that the green wedge brings to the metropolitan area, the community of Nillumbik has to manage the external demands of a rapidly growing population in the adjacent northern growth area and its role as one of Melbourne's rural recreational and leisure areas.

It is therefore essential that funding options be sourced from other levels of government, to support the efforts of local ratepayers to maintain the green wedge.

Implementation plans will be considered as part of Council's annual budget. They will need to be pragmatic and acknowledge the range of financial constraints that apply to Council across its entire servicing and operational budgets.



Objectives

- 05.1 Recognise and support landowners maintaining land in the green wedge with up-to-date information.
- 05.2 Work with the Victorian Government to ensure that the Nillumbik planning scheme supports the principles, goals and objectives of this plan.
- 05.3 Enhance and update Council's knowledge base to support informed management of critical issues in our green wedge.
- 05.4 Keep the community apprised of and represent its interests in government policy reforms affecting our green wedge.
- 05.5 Attract external funding for green wedge management.

Key actions

- A5.1 Create a comprehensive landowners information and support service for land use and management, including annual reporting on trends and outcomes. Seek external funding to support the service.
- A5.2 Advocate Council's position on all government policy reform affecting the Shire, including reform of green wedge policy and planning provisions.
- A5.3 Identify and pursue all funding opportunities from government, philanthropy and corporations to support implementation of this plan.
- A5.4 Implement an executive governance framework to ensure that appropriate priority is given to the implementation of this plan over the life of its term.
- A5.5 Develop and report on performance measures against achievement of this plan's goals, objectives and key actions over the life of its term.



Monitoring and evaluation



This plan is intended to be one of the most important in Council’s strategic planning hierarchy and will be intrinsic to its way of doing business rather than stand-alone as yet another plan competing for resources.

It is intended that it provide direction over the next decade, with priorities determined every four years through the preparation of the Council Plan and prior to the four-yearly review of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

Council’s standing advisory committees are an important conduit of information between Council and the community and will have the plan built into their charters.

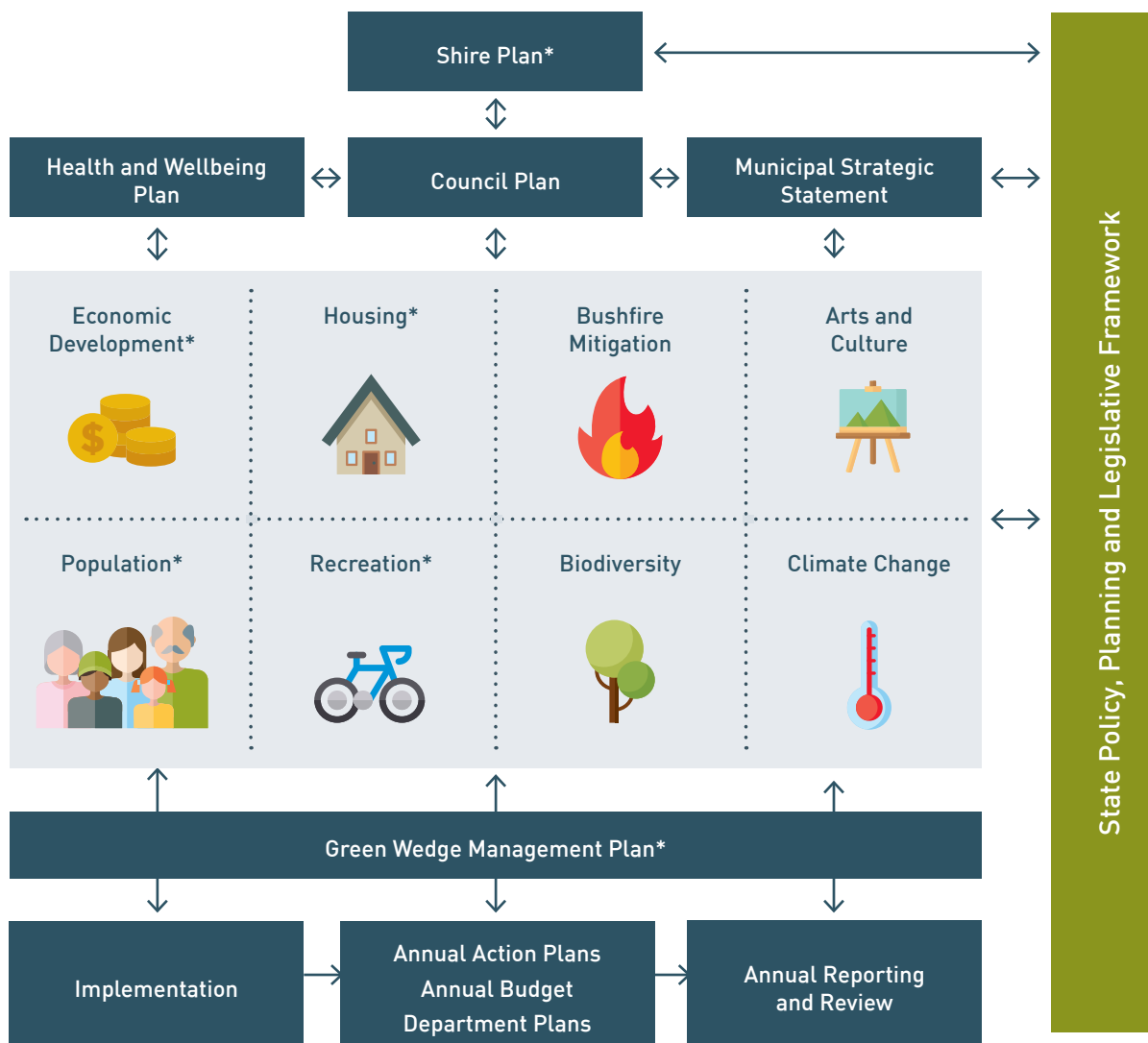
Annual implementation plans will be prepared and reported on through Council’s annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes. Expenditure and activity associated with this plan will be tagged in Council’s public budget and performance statements to inform the community on its progress.

The Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) will inform future versions of the *Council Plan*, *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan* and *Municipal Strategic Statement*.

An executive governance framework and performance measures will be developed to ensure that that the plan remains central to the overall work of the Shire.

For Council administration, it will inform its service and business planning and become a strong influencer in the work it does and how it does it.

It will also inform key Shire-wide strategies such as those relating to advocacy, economic development, housing, positive ageing, bushfire mitigation, arts and culture, biodiversity, climate change and recreation.



*Under development or review





Appendix

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Appendix 1: Referenced Council Policies

All policies except where noted are available at:

<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation>

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 1	
<p><i>Nillumbik Volunteering Development Strategy 2015-2020</i></p> <p>Note: The <i>Nillumbik Volunteering Development Strategy 2015-2020</i> is an internal operational policy and is not available on Council's external website.</p>	<p>The purpose of the <i>Nillumbik Volunteering Development Strategy 2015-2020</i> is to provide a best-practice framework for Council to support, promote, recognise and celebrate volunteering.</p> <p>Its key goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote volunteering • Increase volunteer participation • Recognise, value and celebrate volunteering • Strengthen volunteer management. <p>This document will be due for review upon expiring in 2020.</p>
<p><i>Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022</i></p>	<p>The <i>Ageing Well in Nillumbik Action Plan 2019-2022</i> has been developed as a part of an integrated set of Council plans that aims to strengthen, benefit and resource older people, their carers and families across Nillumbik.</p> <p>The Action Plan has been developed in partnership with the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee who informed the plan's priorities and supported the development of relevant and meaningful actions for implementation over the next four years. Their vision for the plan is that Nillumbik residents will live and age well in healthy and safe communities that are inclusive and respectful.</p> <p>Seven priority areas were identified for Council action in response to the National Aged Care Reform and to ensure that all residents are supported to live and age well in Nillumbik. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services • Information and advocacy • Community connection, resilience and engagement • Transport and mobility • Safe and healthy communities • Housing • Civic Participation. <p>The four-year action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and community to ensure actions remain relevant and are responding to community need.</p>

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 2	
<p><i>Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2012</i></p>	<p>The <i>Nillumbik Biodiversity Strategy 2012</i> provides the strategic direction for biodiversity management across Nillumbik to inform programs, standards and targets for the Shire. The strategy also seeks to further develop a coordinated approach to ensuring that ecosystems are healthy, resilient, and productive and connected across the landscape for future generations. It identifies threats to conserving ecosystem function and opportunities to enhance and protect these functions.</p> <p>Its vision is that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Nillumbik’s ecosystems are healthy, resilient, productive and connected at a landscape scale for the future.</p> <p>Its objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve monitoring, knowledge and information relating to significant species, communities and ecological processes. • Conserve maintain and enhance ecosystem services and processes. • Improve decision making and target investments to conserve biodiversity. • Create a consistent and practical response to fire management and biodiversity recovery after bushfire. • Support the community to take action to protect and enhance biodiversity. <p>This document will be reviewed in the next 12 months as part of a consolidation of several strategies.</p>
<p><i>Nillumbik Shire Council Roadside Management Plan 2012</i></p>	<p>The <i>Nillumbik Shire Council Roadside Management Plan 2012</i> guides maintenance and construction techniques and planning decisions which may impact roadsides to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the safe and effective function of roadways. • Protect service assets located on roadsides. • Minimise the risk and impact of fire. • Protect, maintain and enhance the diversity of indigenous vegetation, particularly significant species and habitat corridors for wildlife. • Prevent further land degradation and erosion on roadsides and improve water quality. • Prevent the further spread of weeds and soil-borne disease organisms. • Maintain and enhance the visual amenity and landscape quality of the roadside. • Recognise the importance of roadside trails for recreational opportunities. • Protect the cultural and heritage values of the roadside.

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 2	
<p><i>Invasive Species Action Plan 2015</i></p>	<p>The <i>Nillumbik Invasive Species Action Plan 2015</i> aims to prevent new incursions of invasive plants, animals and pathogens, contain existing populations and adaptively manage widespread species. The Plan seeks to foster a cooperative culture where all relevant stakeholders contribute with the aim of minimising the impacts of invasive species in Nillumbik.</p> <p>Its vision is that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We are working together to minimise the negative impacts of invasive species.</p> <p>Its goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving agricultural assets on private land through control of invasive species. • Improving biodiversity assets on private land through control of invasive species. • Minimising the impacts of invasive species on roadsides. • Managing invasive species in Council’s bushland and wetland reserves. • Managing invasive species information. <p>This document will be reviewed in the next 12 months as part of a consolidation of several strategies.</p>
<p><i>Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020</i></p>	<p>The <i>Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020</i> aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the forecast changes to our local climate. • Identify how these changes might impact upon Council operations and the Nillumbik community. • Develop strategies and actions to reduce the severity of those impacts on our community, including those most vulnerable to extreme weather events and their consequences. • Prioritise actions that will lead to achieving Council and community emissions targets. <p>The plan’s mitigation goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced from Council operations by 17 per cent and from community activities by six per cent from 2012 levels by 2020. This will be achieved through a combination of targets for energy savings and renewable energy generation, community education and facilitation.</p> <p>The plan’s adaptation goal is to ensure that Council and the community have identified risks and vulnerabilities related to climate change and have a considered pathway to implement appropriate measures to reduce the potential impacts.</p> <p>This document will be reviewed in the next 12 months as part of a consolidation of several strategies.</p>

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 2	
<p><i>Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-2023</i></p>	<p>The <i>Bushfire Mitigation Strategy 2019-2023</i> identifies four strategic priorities and associated goals aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number and impact of bushfire incidents. • Creating a community focused approach to bushfire. • Creating a coordinated approach between key agencies and the communities of Nillumbik. • Ensuring strong advocacy. <p>It also identifies four operating principles for bushfire mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of human life. • Balancing environmental protection with bushfire risk. • Shared responsibility. • Reducing, managing and modifying fuels.
<p><i>Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013</i></p>	<p>The <i>Integrated Water Management Strategy 2013</i> sets targets to progressively reduce reliance on mains water supply whilst improving the quality of stormwater and flow patterns discharged to receiving waterways in the Diamond Creek, Watsons Creek, Arthurs Creek, Plenty River and Yarra River catchments.</p> <p>This document will be reviewed in the next 12 months as part of a consolidation of several strategies.</p>
<p><i>Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2019-2023</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the <i>Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2019-2023</i> is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify current responsibilities, practices, procedures and obligations for domestic and commercial wastewater management within the Shire of Nillumbik. • Identify and prioritise the main environmental and public health risks posed by wastewater within the Shire. • Improve and enhance the public health and environment protection measures undertaken by Council to address the identified wastewater threats within the Shire. • Assist with long-term planning and development of un-sewered areas in the Shire. <p>Its 14 recommendations address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Data Collation • Education and Awareness • Sewer connection and Community Sewerage Program prioritisation • Regulation and Enforcement • Collaboration and Review.

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 3	
<p><i>Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021</i></p>	<p>The <i>Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021</i> is a legislated Plan under the <i>Public Health Act of 2008</i>. It is a high-level strategic document which provides the overarching framework to guide the development of annual action plans that respond to current and emerging population health challenges. The seven priority areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote healthy eating and sustainable food. • Encourage active living. • Enhance mental wellbeing. • Advance gender equality and respectful relationships. • Prevent harm from alcohol, other drugs and gambling. • Improve sexual and reproductive health. • Support healthy ageing. <p>Internal and external advisory committees support the development of annual action plans which are reported directly back to the Department of Health and Human Services. The next iteration of the Plan will be developed in early 2020 and will follow the State's planning cycle of 2019-2023.</p>
<p><i>Nillumbik Open Space Strategy 2005</i></p>	<p>Council has committed to develop an integrated strategy for open space and parkland as outlined in <i>Council Plan 2017-2021</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Nillumbik Open Space Strategy 2005</i> aims to coordinate actions arising from State, regional and local policies that impact on Council's open space.</p> <p>Its primary focus is on open space used for passive recreation and conservation purposes rather than organised sports.</p> <p>Its vision is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nillumbik will provide a diversity of open space with a range of high-quality regional, district and neighbourhood parks linked by a network of trails. • Nillumbik's open space network will be easily accessible and provide all residents and visitors with a range of passive and active recreation opportunities. • Nillumbik will ensure its open space is developed and managed on a sustainable basis to meet the needs of the community and protect environmental values for present and future generations. <p>Its guiding principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Quality • Access • Sustainability • Partnerships.

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 3	
<p><i>Recreation Strategy 2011-2019</i></p>	<p>Council has committed to review and update this strategy as outlined in the <i>Council Plan 2017-2021</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Recreation Strategy 2011-2019</i> outlines the strategy that guides Council in its planning and decision making with respect to the provision of recreation services and facilities. It also outlines key priorities for recreation provision and the actions to achieve these priorities.</p> <p>Its key themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nillumbik residents have high recreation participation rates when compared with state and national averages. • Opportunities to increase participation in healthy and active lifestyles should be supported. • Future funding and development should prioritise unstructured activities. • Resource distribution will focus on improving equity across all sectors of the community. • Effective communication is required between Council and recreation clubs and organisations. • Improved management, occupancy arrangements and effective programming will support increased access to facilities. • Enhanced equity and consistency in fees and charges will improve the sustainability of facilities. • Changes to services and programs to assist 'time poor' residents to increase participation levels.
<p><i>Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011</i></p>	<p>The <i>Nillumbik Trails Strategy 2011</i> guides the planning and decision making in the provision of recreation trails. It outlines Council's key priorities for the expansion of the trail network and the proposed actions to achieve these objectives.</p> <p>Its vision is that:</p> <p>The proposed expansion of the trail network will ensure a strong link is maintained with the surrounding landscape. The trails will be created sustainably to fit with the natural environment with the intent of ensuring an exceptional recreation experience.</p> <p>Its recommendations for investment in the regional trail network include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Creek Trail – extend this trail from Diamond Creek to Hurstbridge. • Aqueduct Trail – determine development options for this trail following the establishment of land owner status, from Eltham to Christmas Hills. • Green Wedge Trail – formalise this trail which extends from Wattle Glen to Kinglake. • Kinglake Way – establish a trail from Hurstbridge to Arthurs Creek.

Council Policy	Summary
Goal 3	
<p><i>Nillumbik Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022</i></p>	<p>The mission of the <i>Nillumbik Arts and Cultural Plan 2018-2022</i> is to:</p> <p>Enable participation in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts by providing diverse and innovative opportunities for active lifestyles and artistic expression.</p> <p>Its vision is that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The community’s values relating to the natural environment, sense of community connectedness and artistic heritage are honoured and celebrated through diverse opportunities of creative participation.</p> <p>Its goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and participatory arts are an everyday experience. • Develop and grow creative and cultural industries. • Support and promote arts and cultural activities that maximise access.
Goal 4	
<p><i>Nillumbik Destination Management Plan 2015</i></p>	<p>The <i>Nillumbik Destination Management Plan 2015</i> aims to provide a strategic framework for the tourism industry in Nillumbik. Its strategic directions are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of nature-based tourism such as nature walks and mountain biking by investing in reserve infrastructure including interpretation. • Improve the cycling experience through improved awareness of the benefits of cycle tourism and mapping and information. • Invest in digital interpretation of heritage, cultural and natural assets to improve the way visitors experience Nillumbik (for example, trail maps online). • Continue to develop equine tourism through trail investment. • Continue to invest in shared-use trails. • Develop festivals and events that leverage from Nillumbik’s uniqueness. • Build on the arts and cultural product through development of curated content and packaging. • Improve the food and wine culture of Nillumbik through promotion of investment opportunities. • Promote the need to invest in accommodation to keep visitors overnight in Nillumbik. • Improve and develop products suited to family experiences. • Investigate the opportunity to establish a regional tourism body to improve the resources and maturity of the region’s tourism industry. • Continue to monitor the visitor economy in Nillumbik to make informed decisions.

Appendix 2: The Victorian Government's planning framework for green wedges

Since 1971, green wedges have become a key State Government tool for managing metropolitan Melbourne's growth. Unlike other rural municipalities across Victoria, green wedges directly interface with Melbourne's urban areas. Typically, they face the greatest pressure for change and growth as a consequence of this immediate proximity.

The establishment of the urban growth boundary responded to these pressures by setting a limit to the metropolitan urban area. In turn, this defined the green wedges. Supporting legislation has also removed the potential for incremental change to occur to the boundary, which has had the effect of providing stronger delineation between urban and rural areas.

Since 2002, the following steps have been put in place by state governments to provide more protection and planning for Melbourne's green wedges and to create more consistent outcomes around Melbourne's edges:

- **Legislation:** regulations requiring ratification by both houses of the Victorian Parliament for planning scheme amendments that alter the urban growth boundary or green wedge subdivision controls.
- **Strategy:** *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* is the Victorian Government's strategy for the development of metropolitan Melbourne and specifies desired planning outcomes for green wedges. (see below)
- **Core planning provisions** for metropolitan green wedge land in every planning scheme. These set out prohibited land uses and subdivision provisions.
- **Green wedge zones**, which primarily include the Green Wedge Zone, the Green Wedge A Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone.

- **Green wedge management plans** – requested of councils by the Victorian Government. They are council-adopted strategies that identify a vision, objectives and actions for the sustainable use and development of each green wedge.

The role of this plan is to direct local management and policy development. It is not a statutory document and does not override the legislative and statutory controls administered under various Acts of Parliament. Key State Government policies referenced in this plan include:

- The *Victorian Planning Provisions* and the *State Planning Policy Framework*.
- *Building Code of Australia*.
- *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* (see Appendix 1).
- *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*.
- *Victoria's Climate Change Framework and Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020*.
- *Water for Victoria, 2016 and Integrated Water Management Framework, 2017*.
- *Victorian Government Priority industries and sectors*, Dept. of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, 2019.
- *Supporting Victoria's Agriculture*, Agriculture Victoria.
- *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy, 2016*.
- *Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management*, Emergency Management Victoria.

Many of these have funding, education and capacity building streams that will require Council to be organised and engaged in strategic partnerships at regional or sectoral level to realise outcomes that benefit our shire and our community.





Melbourne's 12 Green Wedges – Plan Melbourne 2017-2050. As replicated from Plan Melbourne.

Desired planning outcomes for green wedges and peri-urban areas (Plan Melbourne 2017-2050)

These outcomes are expected from all green wedges collectively but are not expected from each one.

Environmental and biodiversity assets

Protect and enhance environmental and biodiversity assets, such as coastal areas, wetlands, rivers and creeks, forests and grasslands. Key features of international and national significance include Ramsar-listed wetlands (Westernport, Edithvale–Seaford wetlands, Port Phillip Bay [Western Shoreline] and Bellarine Peninsula), the Western Grassland Reserve, the UNESCO Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Biosphere Reserve, and a range of national and state parks.

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.

Population, settlements and local infrastructure

Plan and manage sustainable urban growth that is concentrated in and around major towns within Melbourne's peri-urban area so as to provide employment, infrastructure, services and community facilities to new and established urban areas in an equitable manner. Manage the growth and sustainable development of green wedge townships and settlements, having regard for their distinct character and environmental and servicing constraints. Create socially sustainable communities and support an active community working towards reducing greenhouse gases and responding to climate change. Protect and enhance the existing character, presentation and form of towns, including their main road entrances.

Water supply catchments

Manage and protect catchments (including Special Water Supply Catchments), groundwater, water infrastructure and storages, and waterways to improve water quality, protect the environment and provide a reliable and secure water supply. Minimise any negative impacts from sedimentation or water pollution on the Port Phillip and Western Port coastal ecosystems.

Cultural heritage

Provide for the protection and management of sites of Aboriginal and post-European settlement cultural heritage to ensure that links with the past are preserved for present and future generations to appreciate. A wide range of cultural-heritage assets are found in buildings, structures, scattered relics, trees and gardens, landscapes and geological formations, archaeological and fossil sites and areas associated with historical events.

Landscape and open space

Protect significant views, maintain non-urban breaks between urban areas and conserve the cultural significance, tourism appeal and character of scenic rural landscapes.

Mineral, stone and sand resources

Protect designated mineral resource areas such as the coal reserves in central and western Gippsland. Protect sand and stone resources for future extraction to ensure a continuous supply of construction material.

Natural hazards

Avoid development in areas that are subject to high risk from bushfire or flooding and inundation so as to minimise potential risk to life, property and the environment. Recognise, understand and prepare for the projected impacts of climate change and rising sea levels.

Avoid significant land disturbance, reduce the occurrence and impact of soil erosion and salinity and manage potentially contaminated land.

State-significant infrastructure

Protect regionally significant assets such as metropolitan landfills (for example, Clayton South and Wollert), wastewater management facilities (for example, Eastern and Western Treatment Plants), industrial areas and related odour and safety buffers (for example, Dandenong South), airports and flightpaths (Melbourne, Avalon and Moorabbin), and ports (Port of Hastings). Provide opportunities for renewable energy generation.

Agricultural land

Protect agricultural land from incompatible uses, maintain farm size, promote the continuation of farming and provide a secure long term future for productive and sustainable agriculture.

Economy

Maintain a strong, dynamic economy and employment base by building on the comparative advantages in agriculture, timber, transport, tourism, education, manufacturing, the service industry and commerce.

Recreation

Provide land for a range of open space functions to meet community needs for active and passive recreation and for protection of the environment. State and metropolitan parks provide a focus for a range of recreation opportunities.

Tourism

Facilitate sustainable year-round tourism, and new tourism development (including diverse attractions, accommodation and eating establishments) that maintains the integrity of the natural environment, provides social benefits for communities and visitors and contributes to local economies.

Rural living

Manage rural living to prevent negative impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and landscape values.

Transport and Accessibility

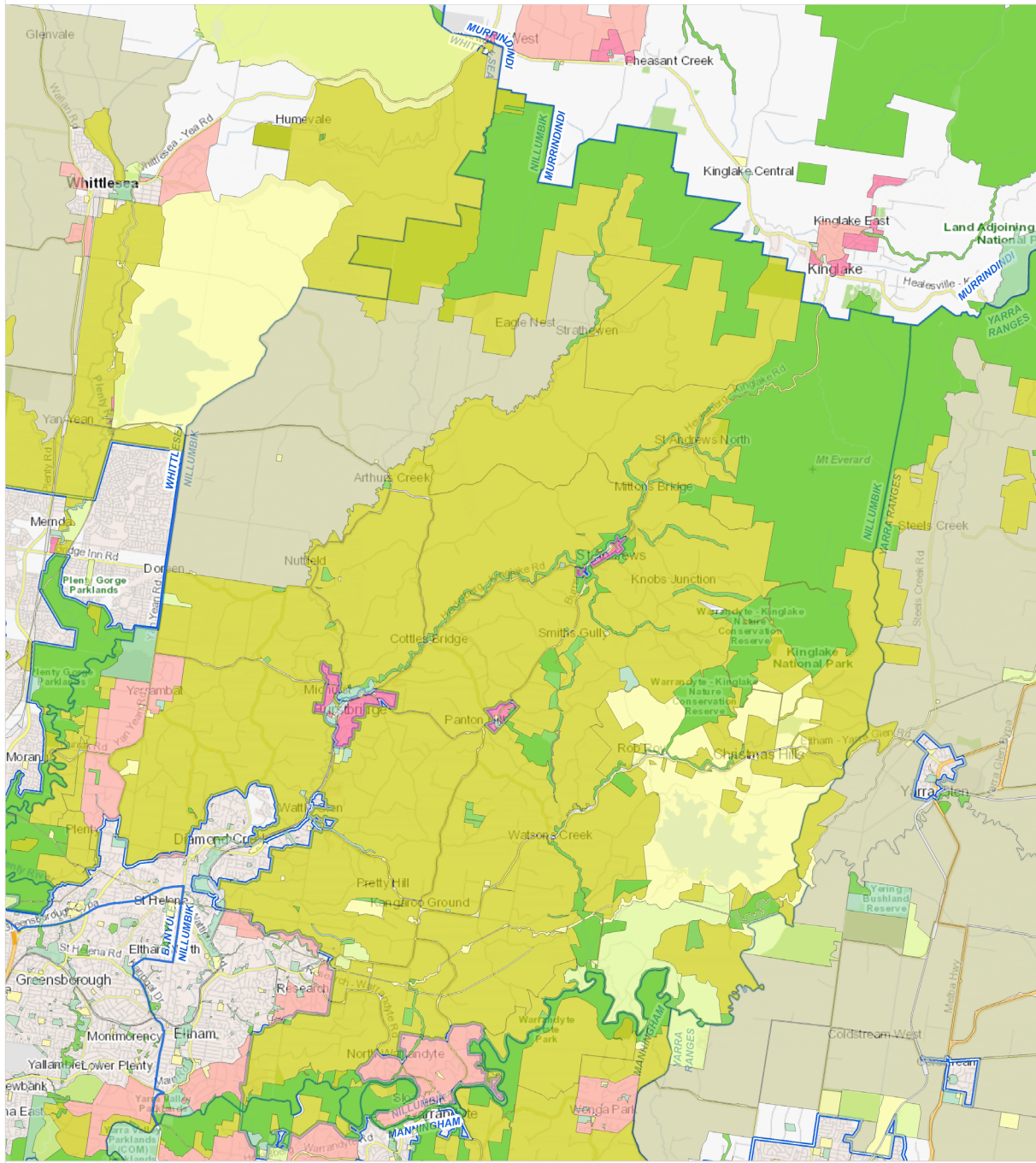
Provide a high-quality road and rail transport network with a range of sustainable, efficient, accessible and affordable transport options that readily connect neighbourhoods, workplaces, community facilities, services and enable people to participate in community life. Facilitate improvements to transport networks and facilities that support tourism, such as airports.

Planning and governance

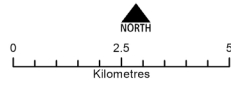
Facilitate integrated and balanced forward planning, involving all agencies, and having regard to the needs and aspirations of current and future generations.

Appendix 3: Relevant Planning zones and overlays (October 2019)

Planning Zones Oct 2019



Planning Scheme Zones	Public Land Zones	Special Purpose Zones	Administrative
Residential Zones	RCZ - Rural Conservation Zone	PUZ6 - Public Use Zone-Local Government	Local Government Areas
LDRZ - Low Density Residential Zone	PUZ1 - Public Use Zone-Service and Utility	PPRZ - Public Park and Recreation Zone	Growth Areas
TZ - Township Zone	PUZ2 - Public Use Zone-Education	PCRZ - Public Conservation and Resource Zone	Urban Growth Boundary
Rural Zones	PUZ4 - Public Use Zone-Transport	SUZ - Special Use Zone	
GWZ - Green Wedge Zone	PUZ5 - Public Use Zone-Cemetery/Crematorium		

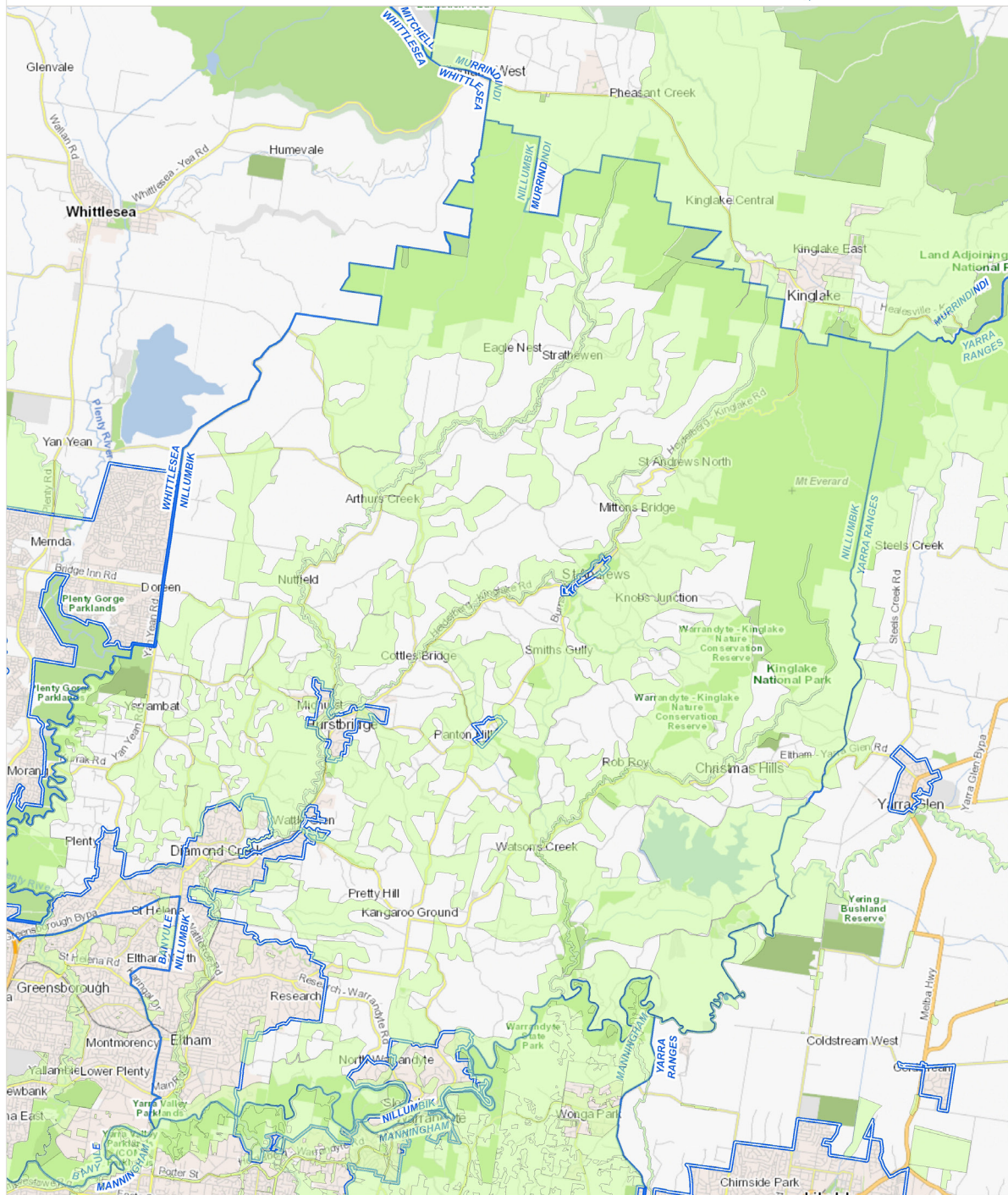


Map Projection: GDA 1994 VICGRID94
Print Date: 1/10/2019



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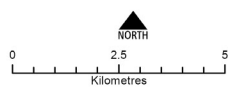
Environmental Significance Overlay Oct 2019



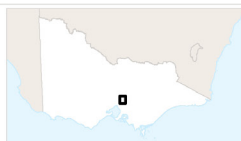
Planning Scheme Overlays
Environment and Landscape
■ ESO - Environmental Significance Overlay

Administrative
■ Local Government Areas

Growth Areas
■ Urban Growth Boundary



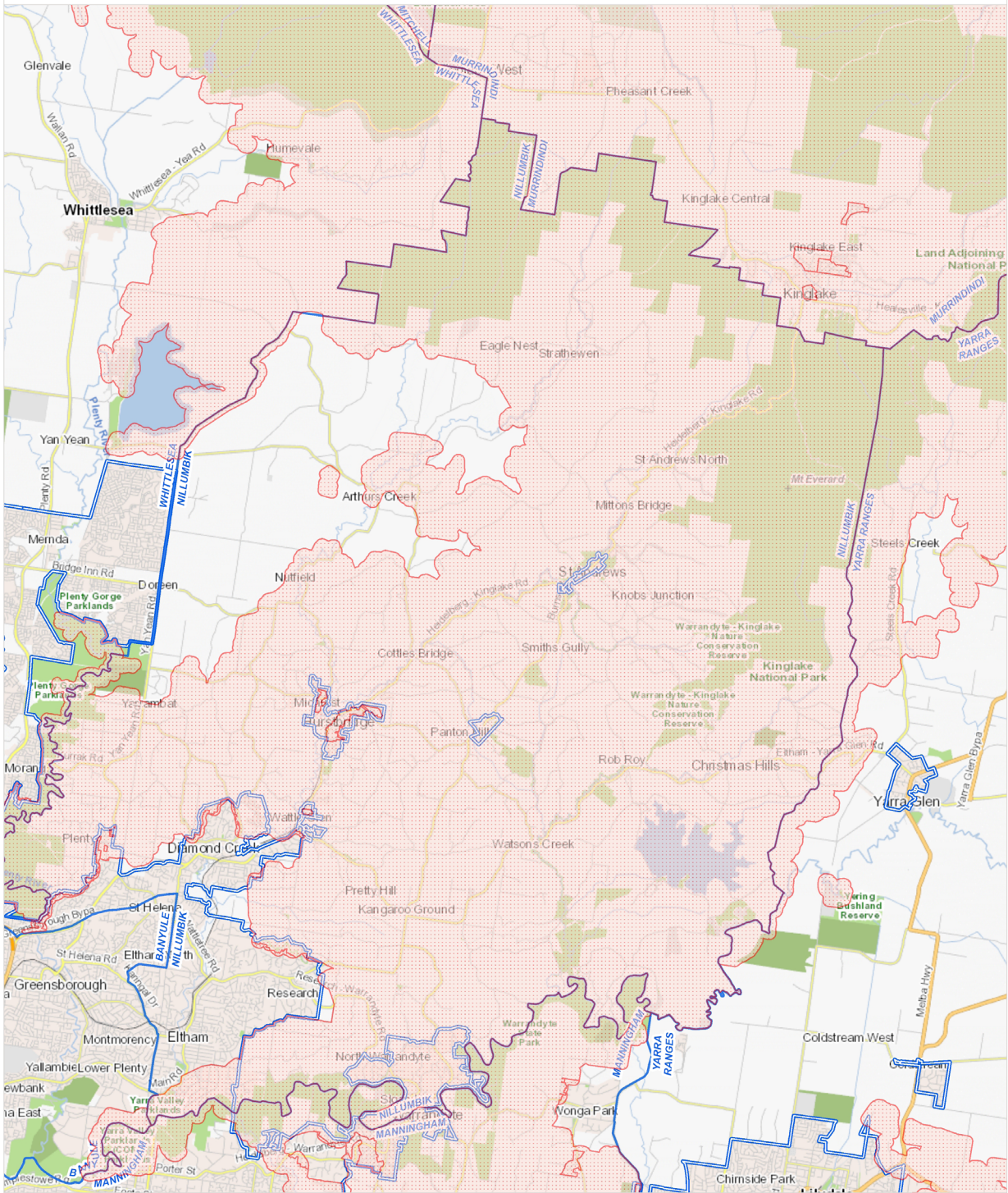
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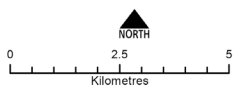
Bushfire Management Overlay Oct 2019



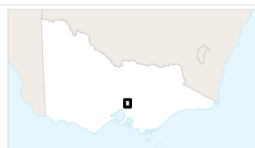
Planning Scheme Overlays
 Land Management
 BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay

Administrative
 Local Government Areas

Growth Areas
 Urban Growth Boundary

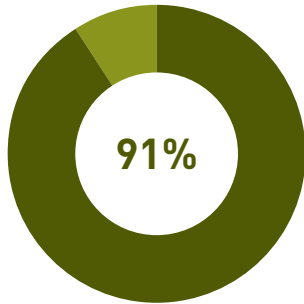


Map Projection: GDA 1994 VICGRID94
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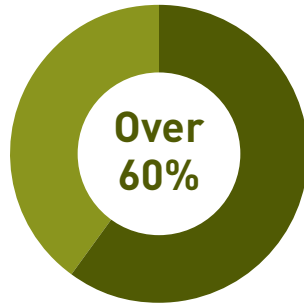


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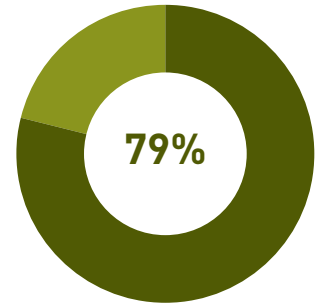
Appendix 4: Key data



of total Shire
(39,600 hectares)



of the green wedge is covered by an environmental significance overlay



private ownership



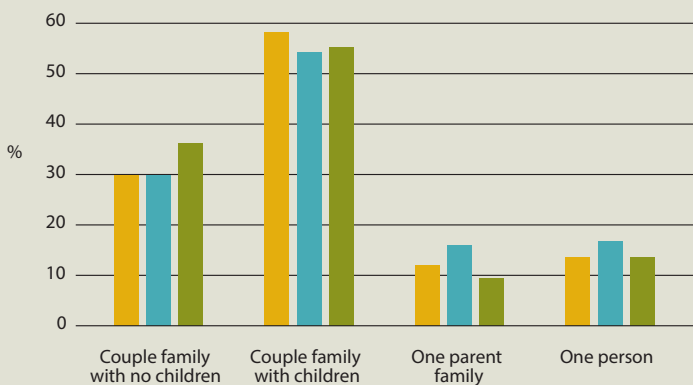
Home to **1/4** of the Shire's population (15,665 people)



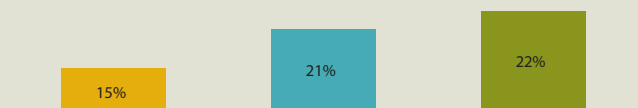
Diverse mix of recreation including golf, sailing, archery, bushwalking, football, cricket, soccer, mountain bike riding, equestrian & motor sports

Source: ID Demographic Profile: //profile.id.com.au/nillumbik (2016 census data) and *Nillumbik Recreation Strategy*

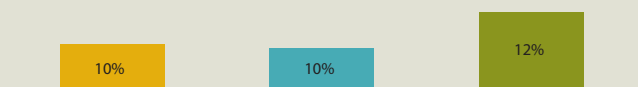
Household composition



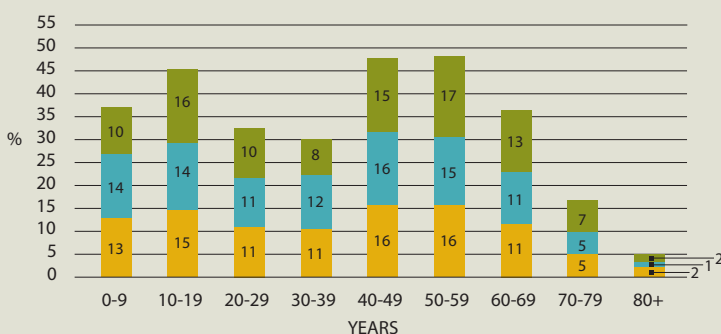
Volunteering



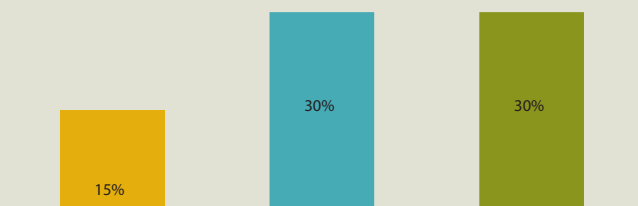
How many provide unpaid assistance



How old are we?



How many residents travel more than 30km to work



LEGEND

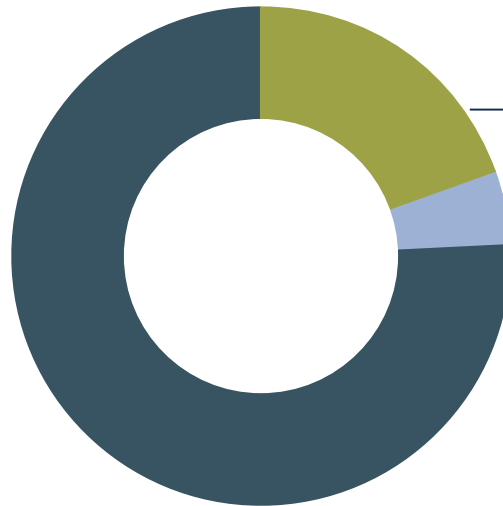
Urban Nillumbik Green Wedge Township Green Wedge Rural

Source: ID Demographic Profile: //profile.id.com.au/nillumbik (2016 census data)

Living in the green wedge

Estimated Residential Population of Nillumbik, by area of residence, 2017

Sources: ABS 3101.0 and ABS 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016-17 (SA1)



Green Wedge Rural

12,639

Green Wedge Townships

3,026

Urban Nillumbik

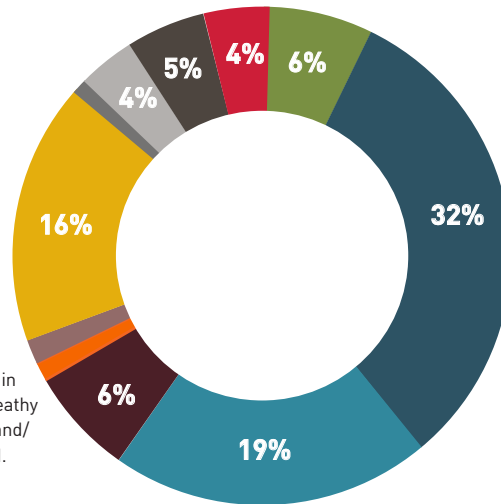
49,056

Vegetation types in Nillumbik (Ecological Vegetation Classes)

% of cover

- Heathy Dry Forest 6%
- Riparian Forest 4%
- Swampy Riparian Woodland 5%
- Box-Ironbark Forest 4%
- Swampy Riparian Complex 2%
- Shrubby Foothill Forest 2%
- Gully Woodland 2%
- Damp Forest 6%

1% or less: Creekline Herb-rich Woodland Wet Forest, Escarpment Shrubland, Plains Grassy Woodland, Damp Sands Herb-rich woodland, Cool Temperate Rainforest, Floodplain Riparian Woodland, Grassy Woodland, Damp Heathy Woodland, Grassy Forest, Damp Heathy Woodland/Grassy Dry Forest Complex, Swampy Woodland.



Valley Grassy Forest

16%

Grassy Dry Forest

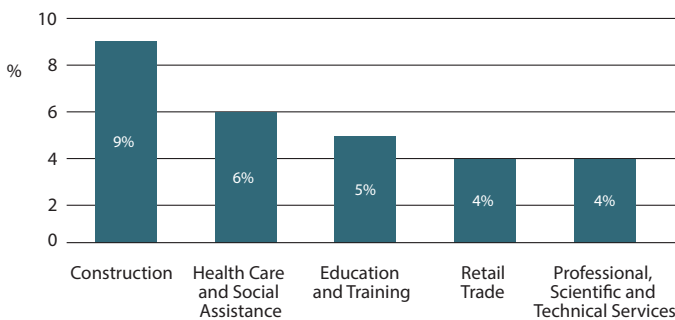
32%

Herb-rich Foothill Forest

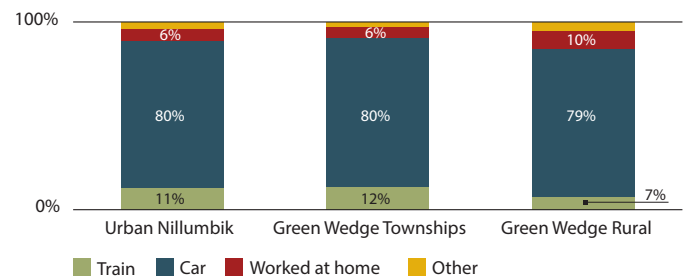
19%

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment

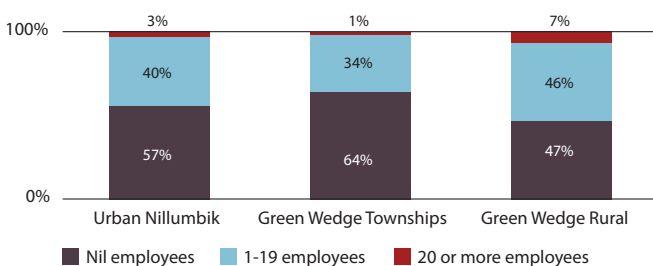
Top industries of employment of green wedge and rural town residents



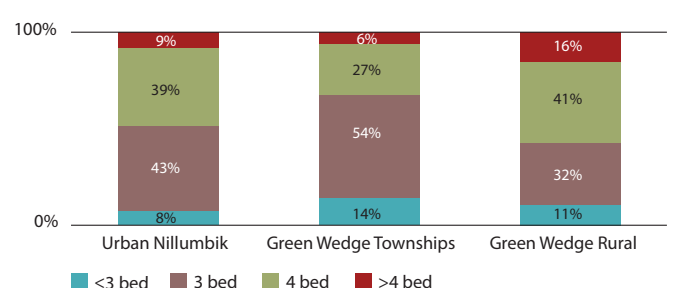
How we travel to work



How many people our businesses employ



How big our homes are



Appendix 5: How this plan was created



Nillumbik Shire Council

Civic Drive (PO Box 476) Greensborough Victoria 3088
03 9433 3111 | nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



nillumbik.vic.gov.au

An overview of key changes made to the Green Wedge Management Plan in response to community feedback

The below table outlines the key themes that emerged from the public submissions on the Draft Green Wedge Management Plan (GWMP) and the key revisions made in response to these submissions

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>1: Planning and regulation</p> <p>533 people raised concerns, for and against, with aspects of planning and regulation. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 147 submitters mentioned the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and an overwhelming majority were in favour of retaining the current alignment. However 14 submitters questioned the challenges of having a 'hard' edge and suggested the concept of buffer zones to be introduced on the edge of the UGB. The issue of anomalies (land parcels some believe should be included in the UGB) was also raised. • 178 submitters mentioned zones, 146 submitters wanted the current zones retained with the conservation element of the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) highlighted in many submissions. A significant number of these submitters also 5 indicated that the RCZ should be retained in favour over the Green Wedge Zone (GWZ). • 32 submitters want the zoning restriction and permit requirements to be removed or reduced. Many of these submitters supported the idea of changing the RCZ to GWZ • 161 submitters did not want more residential development in the Green Wedge, including on the periphery of the townships • A minority want reference to lot size removed from consideration in developing vacant rural lots. • 24 submitters want more residential development, including the option to subdivide • 33 submitters want less regulation • 47 submitters want the right to rebuild their home after bushfire without the need for a planning permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened statements that the UGB is fixed and cannot be changed without the approval of the government and the Parliament. • Added Council support for the current UGB. (Goal 5 - land use planning). <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to buffer zones and the related actions deleted. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township boundaries are established by the UGB. • Council supports the current UGB. • Strengthen the identities of the townships through place making (as defined). <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to small lots removed. • Encourage and facilitate consolidation and amalgamation of vacant lots by landowners. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to prohibited uses in relation to adaptive uses for heritage places deleted. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to a facilitated and expedited processing of fire re-construction applications and advocacy to government to amend the State planning scheme to extend the current exemptions applying to reconstruction after the 2009 bushfires to all future bush fires. • Bushfire defined as per the State Bushfire Plan 2014.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>2: Environment and conservation</p> <p>523 submitters want the draft GWMP to prioritise the protection and enhancement of the environmental aspects of the Green Wedge.</p> <p>In particular a strong emphasis was put on more detail aimed at safeguarding and protecting biodiversity. Also mentioned was the need for education about conserving the environment and the importance of stewardship, protecting water resources and vegetation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and reinforce biodiversity and landscape detail within the vision and principles. • Include statement from Council Plan that “Council will ensure that the natural environment is preserved and nurtured for current and future generations”. • Generally apply an approach to common rather than balanced objectives, except where that is needed for operational reasons. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the order of the goals to put “safe and healthy environments” second. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added text describing the biodiversity of the Shire, its key species and Council’s management actions. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added detail and revised the key actions specifically addressing the safeguarding and protection of biodiversity and the use of off-sets. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added stress on the importance of effectively managing pests in the environment in collaboration with adjoining Councils and agencies at the landscape scale. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of former key move 5 reduced to the creation of a data base over time to support management action. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action changed to “Consider impacts on the landscape when determining rural development applications under the planning scheme.” <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Council’s existing integrated water management strategy, the Victorian Government’s Yarra River strategy and comments from Melbourne Water.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>3: Detail and structure of the draft</p> <p>463 submitters want more detailed actions, particularly in relation to environmental conservation and protection, biodiversity and climate change. Some of these submitters criticised the amount of introductory material and were confused by the purpose and intention of the Five Key Moves. Of this group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49 submitters want strengthened • implementation measures • A number of group submissions provided qualified support for key moves 1, 3 and 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified that this is a high-level document that will be supported by annual implementation plans and other Council strategies. • Added a summary of all existing Council strategies referenced in the draft as an appendix. • Clarified that the focus of the GWMP is the Green wedge but that it also refers to the three townships as service and gateway centres. • Combined the vision and principles and increased the prominence of what the community values. • Clarified the relationship of the GWMP to the planning scheme and added maps showing the existing zones, ESO and BMO as an appendix. • Moved “key data”, “the Victorian Government’s planning framework” and “how this plan was created” to appendices. • Changed the title “Rural Living” to “Living in the Green Wedge”, referenced the lifestyle categories created by the Dept. of Primary Industries as an illustration of the range of rural activities and clarified the source of information for the rural land uses map as being valuations data. • Under the “Responsible Leadership” goal, included new key actions relating to the development of performance measures, accountability and resourcing and executive monitoring of the plan’s implementation. • Reduced introductory material • Deleted reference to “key moves” and retained 1, 3 and 4 as key actions.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>4: Climate change mitigation</p> <p>333 submitters want a strong overall focus on mitigation of climate change in addition to adaptation in the GWMP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded section on climate change to include a rationale for mitigation and the role of vegetation and soils for carbon sequestration. Referenced the current climate action plan. • Included actions to support the management and rejuvenation of soils. • Included cross-reference to water security.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>5: Process for developing the GWMP</p> <p>308 submitters commented on the process for developing the GWMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 184 submitters were critical of the process (in particular: no stakeholder steering committee was created, all community panel recommendations should have been accepted, claimed insufficient recognition of community feedback on the environment, and the minority panel report should not have been recognised) • 18 submitters were supportive of the process of creating the plan • 106 submitters sought clarification on aspects of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised introduction refers to background material stored in the Participate Nillumbik web site. • Emphasis on collaborative leadership.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>6: Agriculture</p> <p>224 submitters generally want agriculture to be consistent with environmental conservation. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89 submitters indicated their support for sustainable and regenerative agriculture • 120 submitters wanted the retention of the conservation focus and the permit requirements for farming activity within the RCZ • 6 submitters indicated that there should be less planning regulation in the RCZ • Concern with changing the RCZ zone to GWZ zone because it may allow agriculture uses that might have an impact on the environment and local amenity • Concern that allowing farming to occur on 'cleared land' within the RCZ without the need for planning permits will lead to poor environmental outcomes • Support for local food production and food security • Some criticism of prioritising agriculture because it was claimed that the soil is of poor quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened references to the interdependence of sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included references to the importance of soil conservation and regeneration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include support for sustainable and regenerative agriculture.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included text to support diversification of non-farm income.
	<p>Emphasise the need for research on the future of agriculture in Nillumbik. Limited actions to advocacy to Government that it alter planning and other controls in support of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a right-to-farm on pre-existing cleared agricultural land in the RCZ with decision guidelines to avoid damage to surrounding properties or environment. • supplementary rural business activities • small-scale and productive hobby farming.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>7: Economic activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91 submitters wanted less economic focus • 36 submitters expressed concern about increased tourism • 35 submitters provided support for sustainable economic growth consistent with green wedge values • 11 submitters supported tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened references to supporting the types of business that “contribute to the values of the green wedge”. • Goal statement expanded to include the qualifier, “consistent with our green wedge vision”. • Reduced introduction.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>8: Bushfire mitigation</p> <p>124 submitters made reference to bushfire mitigation and recognised that it was important to address in the GWMP and through the newly adopted Bush Fire Mitigation Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated reference and commitment to the final bushfire mitigation strategy. • Deleted the Bushfire Occurrence Map as it is repeated in the Bushfire Mitigation Strategy.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>9: Traditional owners</p> <p>114 submitters supported respect for traditional owner knowledge and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation wrote in their submission: “The Elders are happy with the consultation that has occurred with Gail and Julieanne, and have no extra comments to make on the Green Wedge Management Plan. My one note is that the Wurundjeri Corporation name needs to be updated within the document”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the name of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. • Acknowledged in the principles that the area of the current Shire of Nillumbik is land of the Wurundjeri – willam clan of the Woi-wurrung speaking people

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>10: Equine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68 submitters had reservations about the impact of keeping horses or other hard hoofed animals and potential damage to the environment • 23 submitters expressed support for keeping of horses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed action to prepare a Nillumbik Equine Industry and Activity Plan.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included support for responsible keeping and riding of horses in a manner consistent with environmental protection.

Submission Themes	Key revisions made
<p>11: Prioritising people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 submitters want greater recognition of landowners' contributions, responsibilities and rights • 30 submitters want greater social focus (including health and wellbeing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged the differences of opinion within the community in the introduction.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified the Green Wedge Conversations proposal by reference to the St Andrews and Melbourne Conversations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever consolidation of lots is referred to, include the qualification that it will be encouraged and facilitated.