

Draft Youth Strategy 2022-2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located, and we value the significance of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people's history as essential to the unique character of the shire. We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik, give respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge the ongoing impacts of past trauma and injustices from European invasion, massacres and genocide committed against First Nations People. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people hold a deep and ongoing connection to this place. We value the distinctive place of our First Nations people in both Nillumbik's and Australia's identity; from their cultural heritage and care of the land and waterways, to their ongoing contributions in many fields including academia, agriculture, art, economics, law, sport and politics.



Image description: Djirri Djirri Aboriginal Women's Dance Group performing at the launch of Nillumbik Shire Council's Arts and Cultural Plan at Eltham Library in 2018

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Our Youth Council

Nillumbik's Youth Council is a formal advisory committee of Council that consists of 15 young people aged 15-25 years old who live, work, study or play within Nillumbik. The Youth Council is responsible for the co-development and review of the Youth Strategy and annual implementation plan, which will also set out the priorities and actions for the Youth Council to lead with the support of Council across their two-year term.



Youth Council Members 2021-22:

Back left to right: Cavan Cartwright, Katie O'Brien, Imogen Jaques, Jack Linehan, Joseph Bowman, Bailey Cumming, and Maverick Knight

Front left to right: Brianne Keogh, Fieke van der Kamp, Indiana Sandwell, Kirra Imbriano, Orianna Edmonds, Maali Kerta-Rice, Taj Andreetta, and Lachlan Wadsworth.

2021 Youth Council Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Youth Mayor: Fieke van der Kamp

Youth Deputy Mayor: Jack Linehan

Introduction

This strategy sets out a four-year strategic commitment to how Council will support and respond to the needs of young people aged 12-25 years of age who live, work, study, volunteer or play in the Nillumbik Shire.

In the development of this strategy, the Nillumbik Youth Council have played a lead role in engaging and consulting with the young people in Nillumbik to gain a diverse perspective on matters impacting their lives within community. This process has ensured young people have a stronger voice and sense of importance in community.

The establishment of the Youth Council has also enhanced young people's understanding of Council and the Nillumbik community. The Youth Council have been provided opportunities to learn about the functions and role of Council and the local demographics and needs. Using this knowledge, they have been supported to co-design the development of Nillumbik's first youth led, youth strategy and implementation plan.

Nillumbik Shire Council's Youth Strategy 2022-26 provides an integrated approach to ensuring that we continue to value and incorporate young people into Council by providing meaningful opportunities for young people, valuing their contributions and empowering them to help shape our community. This strategy has been informed by extensive community consultation with almost 900 young people and key internal and external stakeholders and sets out the strategic priorities and focus areas for Council's next four years' of planning and delivery.

Vision

Young people in Nillumbik feel heard, empowered and equipped to thrive in a community where they are healthy, safe and welcomed.

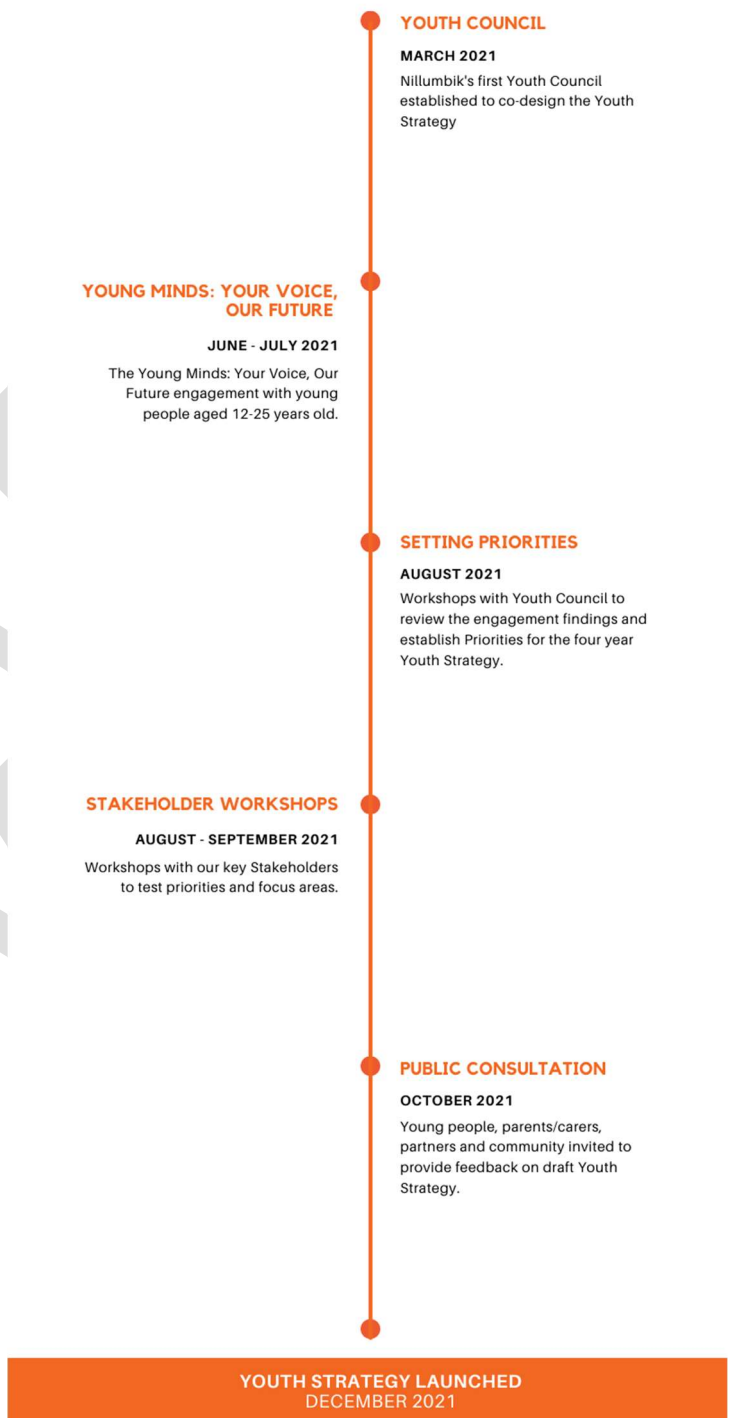


Development of the Youth Strategy

In December 2020, Council endorsed the establishment of the Nillumbik Youth Council, to act as an Advisory Committee of Council. A key role of the Youth Council was to lead the co-development and delivery of a four-year youth strategy and annual implementation plan.

The *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth engagement program was developed by the Youth Council, aimed at engaging young people of Nillumbik through a range of activities supported by a youth survey. Up to 900 young people between 12 and 25 years of age, who live, work, study or play in Nillumbik participated in the engagement which ran from 14 June to 20 July 2021.

The draft Youth Strategy 2022-2026 has been informed by the research and feedback gathered through the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* engagement program, along with a series of stakeholder workshops with staff and external organisations. The broader community are also invited to provide feedback on the draft Youth Strategy via a public consultation period. Following the consideration of the submissions received, the youth strategy will then be presented for adoption at the Council meeting in December 2021.



Our young people

Demographics

In 2016, there were **12,000** young people aged 12 - 25 years old living in Nillumbik. This equates to **20%** of the overall population (*Source: 2016 Census*).

This number is expected to remain consistent over the next 20 years with a forecast of 12,735 by 2036 (*Source: Forecast.id*).

The following table provides a breakdown of 12 - 25 year olds by township across Nillumbik Shire:

Nillumbik Rural East	221	Kangaroo Ground	250
Nillumbik Rural North West	234	North Warrandyte	579
Diamond Creek	2,459	Panton Hill	228
Doreen	84	Plenty	563
Eltham	3,302	Research	540
Eltham North	957	St Andrews	243
Greensborough	895	Wattle Glen	433
Hurstbridge	653	Yarrambat	372

Diversity

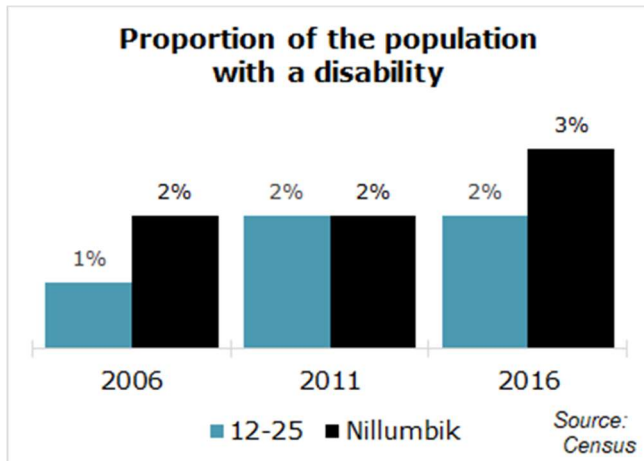
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

According to the 2016 Census, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people make up 0.4% of the overall population in Nillumbik (236 people).

Of the 644 survey respondents who completed the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth survey, **1.59%** (ten young people) identified as First Nations people.

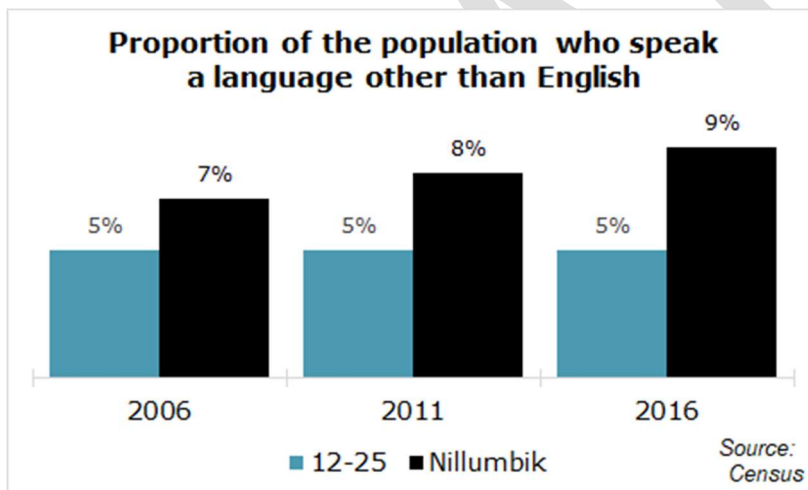
People with a disability

Of the 644 survey respondents who completed the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth survey, **5.6%** identified as having a disability. This is slightly higher than what was recorded in the 2016 Census:



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

8.4% young people completing the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth survey spoke a language other than English, which is again slightly higher than what was recorded in the 2016 Census:



Common languages spoken at home included Italian and Dutch.

LGBTQIA+

Out of 644 young people who completed our *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* Youth Survey 2021, almost **1 in 4** (22%) identified as LGBTQIA+.

Employment and Education

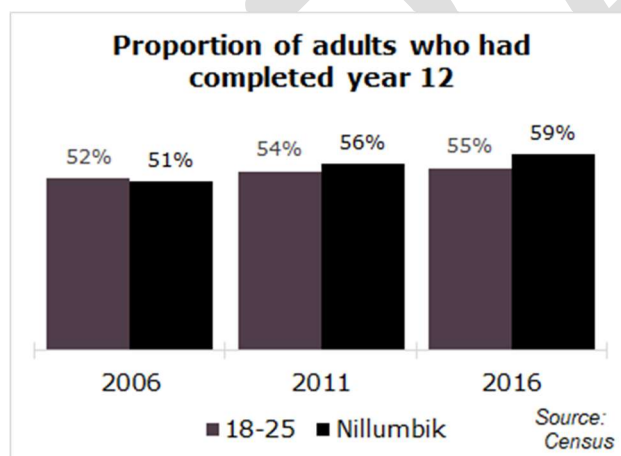
Unemployment

In 2016, **11.5%** of Nillumbik Shire's labour force aged 15 to 24 years were classed as unemployed compared to 15.9% in Greater Melbourne.

While Nillumbik Shire had a lower rate of unemployment in the 15 to 24 year age group, it is important to note that this varied across the Municipality. Proportions ranged from a low of 2.0% in Wattle Glen to a high of 13.1% in Eltham - East. The five areas with the highest unemployment rates were: Eltham - East (13.1%); Eltham - Edendale (12.3%); North Warrandyte (12.0%); Eltham (11.9%); and Eltham - Central (11.6%).

Of survey respondents aged 15-25 completing the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth survey, **44%** told us they were unemployed. This is higher than what was recorded in the 2016 census, which may reflect the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on youth unemployment or reflect the higher proportion of respondents to the survey who were aged 15-18 years old compared to 19-25. More importantly, **38%** of respondents who were employed told us they were unsatisfied with the hours they work each week.

Education



Disengagement

In 2016, **5.4%** of 15 to 24 year olds in Nillumbik Shire were disengaged from employment and education, compared to 7.5% in Greater Melbourne.

- **6.5%** of males were disengaged
- **4.1%** of females were disengaged

COVID-19 and young people

Since COVID-19 emerged as a major health threat in early 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has affected young people across several life domains, many of which are interrelated. While some of the effects of COVID-19 on young people are emerging, it is highlighted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare that the full impact is complex and not yet fully understood. It should be noted that the effect of COVID-19 on young people is dynamic as outcomes change quickly when conditions change, for example social connectedness and the easing of, or introducing of, restrictions. Many of the effects of COVID-19 on young people will be connected and could take some time to become apparent.

While COVID-19 affects everyone in a different way, the social and economic impact on young people have been substantial; young people have experienced high rates of psychological distress, loneliness, educational disruption, unemployment, housing stress and domestic violence.

The possible longer-term outcomes of COVID-19 for young people may include:

- Adverse effects from temporary disruption to education
- Potential consequences of unemployment on their long-term employment prospects and finances
- Limited access to secure housing
- Decline in mental health

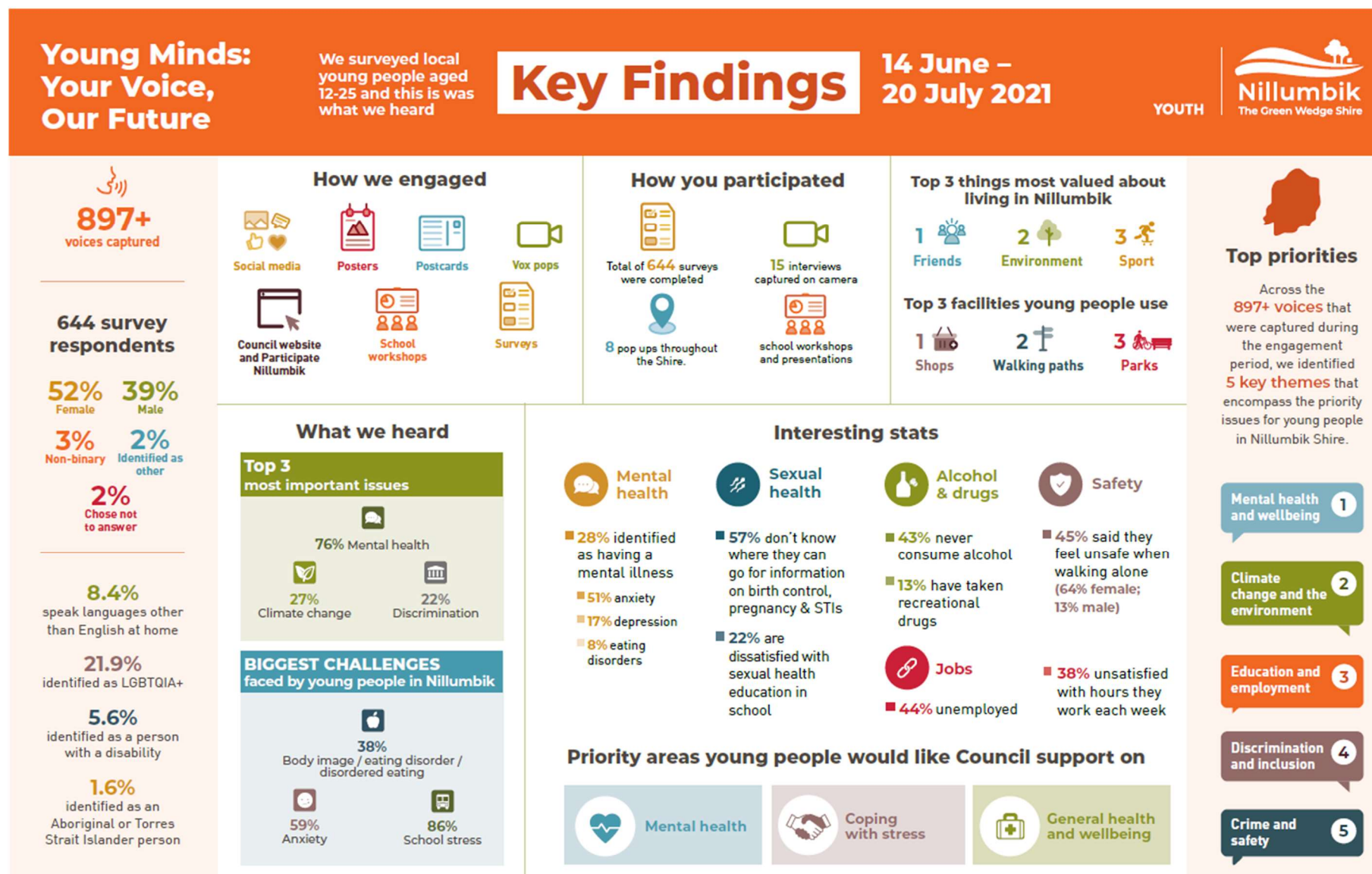
Of respondents aged 15-25 completing the *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* youth survey, **27%** identified COVID-19 as factor impacting their ability to work or study.

Further to this, of the survey respondents that answered a question on the biggest challenges they have personally faced as a young person in Nillumbik, **35.7%** told us loneliness/social isolation was one of their biggest challenges.

Over **20%** of survey respondents also listed COVID-19 as one the 3 most important issues for young people in Nillumbik today, with **6%** of respondents having ranking COVID-19 as the top issue. The issue of COVID-19 was selected by more survey respondents than school and education, crime and safety, and physical health.

What our young people told us

Below is a snapshot of the key things we heard from the 2021 *Young Minds: Your Voice, Our Future* engagement program. For a full copy of the report please visit <https://www.nillumbikyouth.vic.gov.au/>.



Council's role

- ✓ **Engage:** We will directly engage and listen to our young people and community
- ✓ **Empower:** We will facilitate opportunities for young people to lead the way
- ✓ **Advocate:** We will advocate on behalf of the needs of young people
- ✓ **Partner:** We will connect and collaborate with young people and key stakeholders
- ✓ **Provide:** We will deliver youth-focused programs, services, spaces and grants

Strategic alignment

The Local Government Act 2020 promotes an integrated approach to strategic planning and reporting. Integrated strategic planning and reporting seeks to ensure strong alignment between key strategic documents and policies that direct and influence initiatives, activities and projects undertaken by Council.

The following symbols will be used throughout each priority to indicate the direct alignment to strategies included within the Nillumbik's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 and Council Plan 2021-25.

Symbols

- ♥ Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25
- © Council Plan 2021-25

More broadly, the Youth Strategy plays a role in supporting Council to achieving objectives under each of the four themes for a Community Vision - Nillumbik 2040 which are *Our People, Our Place, Our Future and Our Council*.

Priorities

Nillumbik Youth Council, young people and stakeholders have identified five key priorities which will set the strategic direction over the next four years 2022-2026. This includes:

1. **Healthy and Well**
2. **Empowered and Engaged**
3. **Access to Safe Spaces and Places**
4. **Equipped and Employed**
5. **Welcomed and Connected**

Priority 1: Healthy and Well

Objective: Young people have good physical and mental health, and are empowered to take action on their own education.



Focus Area 1.1: Mental Wellbeing

- Enhance opportunities for young people to have access to local, affordable, and inclusive mental health services
- Deliver early intervention and primary prevention initiatives to promote positive mental health and wellbeing ♥
- Work with and support partners to provide targeted programs and initiatives that aim to address the mental health disparities amongst young people who identify as LGBTQIA+, living with a disability, First Nations or Culturally and Linguistically diverse

Focus Area 1.2: Physical Health

- Connect young people with physical activity opportunities through community settings including Living & Learning centres, leisure centres, recreational trails and sports clubs ♥

- Promote healthy food choices in young people through improved access to nutritious foods, policy and education ♥
- Deliver a range of accessible, inclusive, unstructured recreational opportunities
- Remove barriers for participation in sport and active recreation for young people who identify as female, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, are living with a disability, First Nations, or are Culturally and Linguistically diverse ♥

Focus Area 1.3: Sexual Health

- Advocate for Nillumbik secondary schools to provide inclusive sexual health education that empowers young people to make positive choices
- Deliver programs and initiatives that promote healthy and respectful relationships amongst young people
- Increase awareness and access to information on where to go to access support on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs), pregnancy and birth control

Focus Area 1.4: Alcohol and Other Drugs, Tobacco and Gambling

- Advocate for young people in Nillumbik to have access to youth alcohol and drug support and homelessness and crisis support services
- Work with and support our partners to reduce and minimise gambling harm ♥
- Investigate alcohol and other drug harm in the community to better understand the impact on young people and design and deliver initiatives to respond to the issues ♥
- Work with and support sporting clubs to challenge unhealthy alcohol cultures and create safe spaces for young people ♥

“The biggest issue for young people is mental health, even though it is more present now than it was 20 years ago, it’s still being over looked and some people aren’t speaking out as much and that’s a big issue for people our age.” **16 year old, Eltham**

“There was only really heterosexual sex education at school and it doesn’t include conversations on consent or what a respectful relationship looks like” **15 year old, Eltham North**

Priority 2: Empowered and Engaged

Objective: Young people feel as if they have many ways to get involved, have their say, and make a positive change.



Focus Area 2.1: Climate Action

- Provide opportunities to amplify young people's voice in addressing the climate emergency
- Provide young people the skills and tools to take action on addressing the climate emergency
- Address impact of climate change on young people's mental health by increasing education and awareness on climate issues and fostering dialogue between Council and young people on climate action

Focus Area 2.2: Youth Leadership and Participation

- Continue developing the profile and influence of the Nillumbik Youth Council
- Actively consult, engage and consider young people in Council's decision-making
- Provide training and development to support leadership skills and increase confidence in young people

- Support opportunities for young people to engage, co-design, plan and lead community activities, programs and events

Focus Area 2.3: LGBTQIA+ Advocacy

- Empower LGBTQIA+ young people and provide opportunities to advocate for their rights
- Promote positive gender and sexual diversity through advocacy, awareness and celebration initiatives

Focus Area 2.4: Gender Equity

- In partnership with local organisations, businesses, sporting clubs and community members, raise awareness of gender equity and respectful relationships with young people ♥
- Increase the promotion of gender equitable and non-violence messages through communications and social marketing ♥
- Raise awareness of family violence support services available for young people and support referral pathways

Focus Area 2.5: Environment and Sustainability

- Work with our community, Traditional Owners, partners and government agencies to promote sustainability and the environment to young people ©
- Promote Nillumbik's natural environment as a place for young people to explore
- Provide volunteering opportunities and other programs that enable young people to learn about and get involved with the environment and sustainability

"Nillumbik need to pay attention to this generation and enable them in as many ways as they can to be a generation of people who are willing to change the world for the better, and to better themselves" 18 year old Hurstbridge

"Talk to young people in the area and find out what they want" 21 year old, Eltham

"More support groups focused on the LGBTQ+ community and events surrounding climate change" 12 year old, Bundoora

"Our leaders are not doing enough to stop climate change and its effects and that is going to be the biggest hurdle for our generation" 18 year old, Research

Priority 3: Access to Safe Spaces and Places

Objective: Young people live in an inclusive community in which everyone feels safe and included to live, work, study, volunteer or play across Nillumbik.



Focus Area 3.1: Youth Friendly Community Spaces

- Explore opportunities for a Youth Hub in Nillumbik that can provide a range of services, supports and programs for young people
- Ensure young people have access to safe, inclusive and welcoming youth friendly community spaces
- Provide opportunities for youth-led placemaking across Nillumbik

Focus Area 3.2: Safer Communities

- Provide safe and welcoming environments for young people by improving public places and spaces young people access such as skate parks, parks and walking paths

- Partner with organisations to deliver programs to young people that increase awareness and perceptions of safety
- Provide support and resources for parents to assist young people to be safe and respectful in all settings

Focus Area 3.3: Inclusive Spaces and Places

- Provide training and information around access and inclusion to Council staff and youth workers in the community

Focus Area 3.4: Bullying

- Adopt a shire-wide approach to anti-bullying in both school and community settings and support young people to respond to bullying behaviour
- Work with the local community and schools to promote the inclusion of young people who identify as LGBTQIA+, living with a disability, First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse.

*“Places teens can go to get support or just a place away from home to have a break”
13 year old, Eltham*

*“Making communities come together and unite, treat everyone fairly and equally, love, no discrimination and racism, being there for each other” **14 year old, Hurstbridge***

*“Many youth don't have a much money so focusing on spaces that feels both safe, welcoming and accessible for teenagers through active public space” **24 year old, Plenty***

Priority 4: Equipped and Employed

Objective: Young people have access to and are able to maintain meaningful employment and education.



Focus Area 4.1: Employment and Education Pathways

- Help young people recover from the impacts of COVID-19 by providing opportunities for young people to gain volunteering, work experience, internships and employment through Council and other local industries
- Partner with schools and organisations to provide career pathway advice and access to information about employment opportunities
- Provide a range of vocational learning opportunities to connect young people to meaningful pathways to employment

Focus Area 4.2: Job Ready

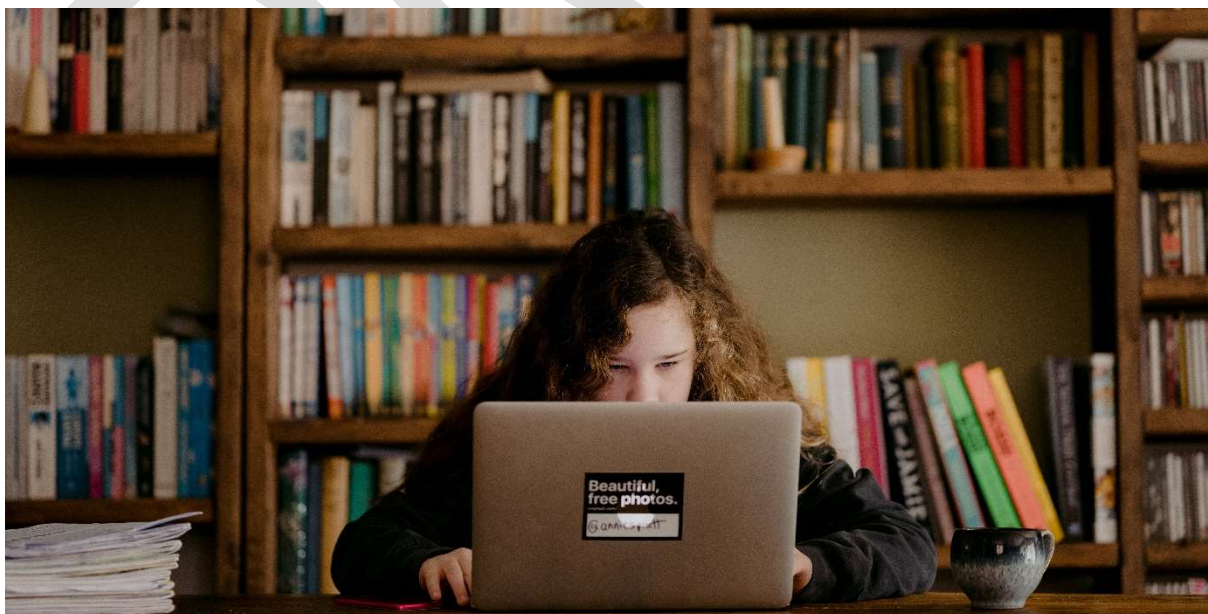
- Partner with our stakeholders to deliver a range of events and programs that aim to enhance young people's job readiness, employability and life skills
- Connect young people to available services that provide individual support with training and employment.

Focus Area 4.3: Financial Wellbeing

- Ensure young people in Nillumbik have access to information and resources to support them to feel financially well
- Provide paid opportunities for young people at Council in areas such as consultation, music, arts, photography/videography, and delivery of events/programs
- Deliver initiatives that enhance young people's education and skills to support financial wellbeing

"A cafe that lets youth volunteer their time for work experience to help with future jobs." **14 year old, Eltham North**

"It would be awesome to have information on university, info on full time jobs, understanding things like super and other money matters" **16 year old, Eltham**



Priority 5: Welcomed and Connected

Objective: Young people have access to a range of programs and opportunities that enhance social inclusion and connection.



Focus Area 5.1: Creative Community

- Work with young people to plan and deliver youth focused arts and culture-based programs and events
- Deliver a range of arts and culture programs with a focus on art, dance, music and theatre

Focus Area 5.2: Access and Inclusion

- Ensure all youth programs and services are accessible and inclusive ©
- Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, and through building trust, education and celebration, respect for all First Nations people ©
- Young people have access to support programs to receive their driving licence, who may not otherwise have access to driving practice

Focus Area 5.3: Social Connection

- Provide a regular program of youth activities through Nillumbik Youth that encourage young people to learn new skills, try new things and get to know new people
- Provide other opportunities for social connection through arts, wellbeing and leadership programs at Living & Learning Centres, Neighbourhood Houses and other community spaces ♥

*“More events run by young people in collaboration with the community of young people eg. BMX training, live music, small scale festivals/carnivals, picnics in the park.”***22 year old, Eltham North**

“I would like to see more live music festivals and things to go to get connected with the community and support the community.” **14 year old, Eltham**

“Live music, youth festival, workshops over the holidays - performing arts and art. Role playing games like Dungeons & Dragons **13 year old, Hurstbridge**



Implementation and evaluation

Every 12 months, an annual implementation plan will be prepared, which will provide the detail of how Council (with support of the Youth Council and other partners) will implement the strategic objectives in this youth strategy and how we measure progress. An evaluation on the current year annual implementation plan will also be completed prior to a new annual implementation plan being prepared.

Annual implementation plans will include:

- ✓ Actions related to each strategic objective in the strategy
- ✓ Timeframe each action will be delivered
- ✓ Who is responsible within Council to deliver the action
- ✓ Partners involved in delivering the action

Annual reviews

Annual reviews will be conducted each year in December.

They will evaluate the progress made within each of the priority areas. A traffic light rating system will be used to identify action within the annual implementation plan that are **complete**, **on track** or **delayed**.

Case studies from key initiatives will also be included in each annual review.

The reports will also monitor trends, identify opportunities for improvements and inform the development of the next annual implementation plan to ensure actions remain relevant for continued investment by Council over the life of the strategy.

Council will share an annual summary report of the review with key stakeholders including Councillors, Council officers, service providers, community and young people.

Youth Council

As a formal advisory committee of Council, the Nillumbik Youth Council is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of this strategy within their two-year term and will support the annual review process.

Acknowledgements of contributions

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following contributors from Nillumbik who supported the development of this Youth Strategy:

Nillumbik Youth Council
Young people
Parents and carers
Schools
Principals and Teachers
Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic)
Foundation of Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR)
Councillors
Council Staff
Advisory Committees
Community
Banyule Nillumbik Youth Services Network
Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning Employment Network
Hearspace Greensborough
HealthAbility
Victoria Police

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