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MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY

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Draft MPS - Phase 3 Engagement Version

02.01 CONTEXT

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Located on the north-eastern urban-rural fringe of Melbourne, the Shire of Nillumbik (Nillumbik) is approximately 25 kilometres from Melbourne's Central Business District and is generally bounded by the Yarra and Plenty Rivers and the Kinglake Ranges, which are of national and state environmental significance. A large proportion of the shire experiences high bushfire risk.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located. The significance of their history and connection with the landscape are essential elements of shire's unique character.

Approximately 91 per cent of Nillumbik is rural land that lies outside the Urban Growth Boundary and forms part of a metropolitan green wedge, providing a non-urban break between the Whittlesea urban growth corridor and the Lilydale urban area. The green wedge is an area of environmental, landscape and agricultural importance to both Nillumbik and the wider metropolitan region. It contains the Sugarloaf Reservoir, a principal catchment in Melbourne's water supply.

Nillumbik has an estimated population of 65,369 people (Nillumbik Shire Council, 2021). This is not expected to increase substantially; however, an overall ageing of the population is expected.

Much of Nillumbik is rural and is used for a combination of agriculture, rural living and conservation purposes. Within the rural areas are several townships and smaller rural communities. The population, however, is concentrated in the established urban areas of Diamond Creek, Eltham, Plenty, Research, Wattle Glen, Hurstbridge and parts of Greensborough. Low-density residential development forms a buffer between urban and rural areas. Each settlement area comprises their own identity and heritage.

Nillumbik's natural beauty, diverse landscapes and biodiversity are highly valued both locally and regionally. Much of Nillumbik remains heavily vegetated, particularly in the non-urban undulating regions and along the major rivers and creeks. Nillumbik's strategic habitat links extend into surrounding municipalities and connect extensive areas of native vegetation. The green wedge supports a diverse range of species and their habitats, including several indigenous, rare and endangered species. Nillumbik also contains several regional and national parks, valued both for their environmental and recreational functions.

Nillumbik's economy is made up of four key industry areas: knowledge based, creative and culture, primary industry and trade, and retail and hospitality. The majority of businesses employ less than five people. A large proportion of businesses are home-based, which is a growing trend in Nillumbik, along with other emerging sectors including arts and culture, food and beverage, visitor attraction and sustainable agri-business. [\[Nillumbik economic development strategy 2020-2030\]](#)