

HOUSING STRATEGY



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NILLUMBIK SHIRE COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY	3
2 HOUSING TRENDS AND ISSUES	4
2.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND CONSTRAINTS	4
2.2 POPULATION TRENDS	5
2.3 HOUSING TRENDS	5
2.3.1 TYPE AND LOCATION	5
2.3.2 DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY	6
2.3.3 TENURE AND AFFORDABILITY	6
2.4 HOUSING ISSUES	7
2.5 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS	7
3 THE POLICY CONTEXT	9
3.1 THE WIDER CONTEXT	9
3.2 COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING POLICY	9
3.3 STATE PLANNING POLICY	10
3.4 LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING	10
3.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY AND RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES	12
3.6 COUNCIL PLAN	12
3.7 SUMMARY - POLICY CONTEXT AND INFLUENCES	13
3.8 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS	13
4 HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT	15
4.1 INTRODUCTION	15
4.2 KEY POLICY STATEMENT	15
4.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	16
5 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	17
5.1 OBJECTIVE 1. HOUSING IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS	17
5.2 OBJECTIVE 2. DESIGN EXCELLENCE	19
5.3 OBJECTIVE 3. SUSTAINABLE HOUSING	21
5.4 OBJECTIVE 4: HOUSING DIVERSITY	23
5.5 OBJECTIVE 5. SUPPORTING HOUSING CHOICE.	25
6 IMPLEMENTATION	26

APPENDIX A - STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK – SETTLEMENT
APPENDIX B - GLOSSARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shire of Nillumbik is a 'Green Wedge' Shire on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne. It is a limited growth area and population growth to 2021 is expected to be a moderate 7.7%. Households in the Shire are becoming smaller and the predominant household type is changing from younger couples with children to older couples without children at home and older single households. The housing stock is predominantly single detached dwellings in private ownership. Recent development has seen the introduction of some medium density housing particularly in the more established suburbs.

Nillumbik Shire Council has developed a Housing Policy in response to the following key issues:

- Some residential development is regarded as unsustainable and as having adverse impacts on the environment and neighbourhood character;
- There is limited housing choice particularly for smaller households, those looking for rental accommodation and those on low incomes;
- Current development trends are unlikely to produce the type of housing suited to the range of ages and household types of the future, needed to sustain local services and facilities; and
- There are opportunities to accommodate most of the future household growth in existing residential zoned areas and to consolidate residential development in areas close to public transport, services and facilities.

Nillumbik Shire Council's Housing Strategy outlines the actions through which Council's Housing Policy will be implemented. It includes both strategies to support environmentally responsible and sustainable residential development and strategies responding to the social and economic aspects of housing. The strategy has been developed within the context of existing state and local policies and strategies.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Nillumbik Housing Strategy was developed as part of the “Living in Nillumbik: Designing Our Future” project undertaken during 2000. This project included the preparation of a Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines, thus combining Council’s identified needs to plan for the future housing needs of the Shire and to ensure development is consistent with protecting and sustaining the environment.

The Housing Strategy comprises two parts:

- this section, *The Housing Policy and Strategy*, and
- *The Housing Strategy: Background Report*.

The Background Report which has been developed from an earlier *Issues Discussion Paper (April 2000)*, provides an analysis of population and housing trends in the Shire and outlines the issues arising from the trends. A summary of these trends and issues appears in Chapter 2 of this document. The Housing Policy, developed in response to the issues and having regard to the opportunities and constraints, is detailed in Chapters 3 and 4. The Housing Policy has been prepared in the context of the *Council Plan 2000 – 2003*. It lists six strategic objectives that have been further developed as the Shire’s Housing Strategy and these are outlined in Chapter 5. The strategy implementation program is detailed in Chapter 6.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY

The Housing Strategy provides a framework for Council decisions affecting housing and settlement. The Strategy sets out the Council’s objectives for facilitating the provision of housing to meet current and future needs. It is based on a recognition that housing, its provision, location, type, cost and quality is a significant component of the social and economic well being of the community and the physical character of the Shire.

The Housing Strategy attempts to find ways to manage the transition of the residential areas of the Shire in response to fundamental shifts in the economy and society whilst also protecting environmental values. It is recognised that Council has a role in shaping and managing housing outcomes in the Shire in order to overcome the potentially negative impacts of sporadic and ad hoc development unconnected to any strategic objective.

The Housing Strategy has been prepared in the context of State and National housing policies and seeks to better position the municipality in relation to other levels of government. This includes a potential advocacy role of Council in securing improved housing outcomes for the Shire from State and Commonwealth governments.

The Housing Strategy is a basis for changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and preparing local policies and the selection of zones and overlays. The Strategy will become a referred document in the planning scheme.

2 HOUSING TRENDS AND ISSUES

2.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND CONSTRAINTS

The Shire of Nillumbik is a “green wedge” shire, located on the north eastern fringe of metropolitan Melbourne. Much of the 435 square kilometres of the Shire is zoned ‘environmental rural’ with urban development located primarily in the southern portion in the suburbs of Diamond Creek, Eltham, Greensborough, Plenty and Research and in the townships of Hurstbridge, St. Andrews and Panton Hill towards the centre of the Shire.

The natural environment of the Shire is characterised by extensive indigenous and native vegetation, cleared areas of farmland, river and creek valleys and areas of steep terrain. Access and service provision is generally difficult beyond the more densely settled areas and there is heavy reliance on private transport.

Housing development has spread from the metropolitan fringe along the main road and railway spine that follows the Diamond Creek, through Eltham and North Eltham, meeting growth from Greensborough at Diamond Creek. Expansion has also occurred on the edges of settlement in Diamond Creek, Research and Plenty.

The Nillumbik Planning Scheme allows for future housing development in the undeveloped Residential 1 and Low Density Residential Zones in Diamond Creek, Plenty, Greensborough and Yarrambat. (See map, Fig.1) There is also potential for additional development to occur in existing built up areas on vacant sites or as additional dwellings on existing sites. Small numbers of dwellings could also be constructed in non-urban areas.

Analysis of the residential land supply in Nillumbik, undertaken in February 2000, indicated that there were 1333 vacant lots which could be further subdivided to yield approximately 2000 lots. Lots where a dwelling already exists and where the size of the lot is over 2 hectares could be further subdivided to yield an additional 2200 lots. Realisation of this is dependent on landowners’ willingness to subdivide and different site conditions. It is anticipated that 10 to 20% of developed sites might be subdivided, however, further research is required to determine a more accurate estimate.

Key areas of future development include:

(Insert Map showing following locations).

1. Plenty RZ 1
2. Treetops RZ 1
3. Plenty LDRZ – DPO4
4. Greensborough (Catholic Church land) RZ 1
5. Greensborough – Diamond Ck. Rd.
6. Greensborough – DPO3
7. Diamond Creek A – RZ 1 – DPO1
8. Diamond Creek B – RZ 1 – DPO2

9. Zig Zag Rd/ Wombat Dr – LDRZ
10. Sweeneys Lane/ Culla Hill – LDRZ
11. Yarrambat - LDRZ

Key Points - Settlement Patterns.

- The Shire is predominantly rural or environmental rural.
- The extent of areas of conservation value limit opportunities for residential development.
- Future development will be confined to residential land on the edges of the existing urban areas or within existing settlements.

2.2 POPULATION TRENDS

In 1999 the estimated population of the Shire was 58,166 (DoI). The population growth rate is slightly higher than the metropolitan average (1.48% per annum compared with 1.43%). Growth is concentrated in the urban areas of the Shire with rural areas experiencing a population decline in recent years.

The largest age groups in 1996 were the 5-19 and 35-49 groups which were both high compared with Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD) proportions. The 20-29 age group was significantly under-represented by comparison with the MSD as a whole and is expected to remain low. The 50-74 year old population is expected to double by 2021.

High proportions of households in Nillumbik are couples-with-children (60%). Nevertheless, as the population ages, household sizes are declining. In areas of the Shire, other than Eltham North, Diamond Creek and Greensborough, the predominant type of household in the next ten years will be either couples without children, lone persons or couples with children over 15.

Taking into account current land supply, the age profile of the population and migration patterns, the Department of Infrastructure (*Victoria in Future*), has projected an overall population increase of 7.7% (or a total of 62,628) by 2021 with household size declining from the current average of 3.22 to 2.71. This represents an increase, to 2021, of 4,538 households (24.8%). Two thirds of that growth (2,869) is expected to occur by 2011.

Key Points – Population.

- Population growth to 2021 is expected to be moderate with most growth occurring by 2011.
- Most households are couple-with children
- The population is aging and household sizes are declining.

2.3 HOUSING TRENDS

2.3.1 TYPE AND LOCATION

In 1996, almost all dwellings in the Shire were single, detached houses (96%). Between 1996-1999, a total of 1234 dwellings were approved for development in the Shire (61 of these were for medium density development). Most development

was in Diamond Creek, Eltham North, Greensborough and Eltham with most medium density development occurring in Eltham.

"Family" housing will remain the most sought after housing type in most areas of the Shire. However, shifts in household types make it likely that medium density housing will continue to become a preferred form of housing for singles and older couples without children and increase as a proportion of 'new housing' stock.

2.3.2 DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

The appearance and environmental impact of new housing is a significant issue in the Shire. While examples of high quality, well-designed housing were cited during the public comment period for the 'Living in Nillumbik' projects, there was a general feeling that many developments were not responsive to the local neighbourhood or site characteristics and were not providing the variety of housing needed for a changing population. Extensive site coverage by both medium density and single dwelling developments both damages existing vegetation and prevents revegetation and reduces the opportunity for wildlife corridors linking bushland areas.

While some housing development in the Shire has been designed to achieve high levels of energy efficiency, this is the exception. New housing is generally large. The average floor size of the 451 new dwellings built in the Shire during 1999 was 270m². Housing is usually built according to conventional floor plans and from conventional materials and with little heed to orientation for maximum solar benefit and natural circulation.

2.3.3 TENURE AND AFFORDABILITY

House prices in the Shire have increased from a median of \$161,500 in 1995 to \$220,000 in 1999 and are high compared with other rural/urban fringe municipalities. The area is characterised by high levels of purchasing or home ownership compared with the metropolitan average (83.7% in Nillumbik and 70.3% in Melbourne as a whole) and low levels of renting (9.9% compared with 27.7%). (*Office of Housing, 2000*).

Private rental accommodation is in short supply, with little or no choice, particularly for those on low incomes. The most recent Office of Housing analysis of rental affordability for the three months ending June 2000 shows that a total of 88 properties were leased in Nillumbik in that period. 10 of these were "affordable" (i.e. had a weekly rent within 30% of total weekly income). Of the affordable properties, three were one bedroom properties, six were three bedroom and one was a four bedroom property. There were no two bedroom affordable properties leased in the Shire in that period.

Public and community housing levels in Nillumbik are relatively low. There are 132 public housing units in the Shire, an increase of 21 since 1998. Two services catering for families and youth in housing need have access to 14 community-managed houses in the Shire and 16 in neighbouring municipalities. There is no overnight emergency accommodation.

There is a range of nursing home, hostel and independent living unit accommodation in the Shire and several facilities are currently being expanded.

Those who provide services to elderly and residents with a disability, highlight the need for more of such accommodation.

Key Points – Housing.

- Detached, owner occupied housing predominates. There is very little medium-density or rental housing.
- The appearance and sustainability of housing is an issue.
- House purchase prices are high and there is very little rental accommodation, particularly affordable rental accommodation.

2.4 HOUSING ISSUES

Housing Issues, which the Strategy needs to address, are:

- *Settlement patterns:* The tendency for development to occur on the periphery of the settled areas, thus increasing car use and inefficient use of existing facilities and services;
- *Siting and design:* Development that does not respond to neighbourhood character, is poorly designed and unsustainable;
- *Appropriate housing:* Homogeneity of housing type and tenure which limits the age groups and household types that can be appropriately housed in the Shire; and
- *Sustainable use of infrastructure:* Less efficient use of services and facilities, as the population is concentrated into two main age groups.

2.5 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Strategic implications of the Shire's settlement patterns and siting and design issues are discussed in the following Chapter.

Several groups will find it more difficult to have their housing needs met in the Shire, in the future, unless there is a wider range of dwelling types and tenure options than currently. For older residents, particularly the frail aged and/or single aged, smaller or supported accommodation will be needed. Young single households or single parent families also tend to demand smaller accommodation. In some cases the cost of accommodation will be the key issue, for others, requiring more flexibility, rental accommodation will be more suitable.

To accommodate a wider range of household types and retain those sectors of the population – such as young adults – who are currently under-represented, future housing development should, therefore, include opportunities for smaller and rental housing. Diversity of tenure type and of dwelling types and sizes should be encouraged across the Shire. A range of housing types in an area provides the most flexibility in being able to cater for a range of housing markets as they progress through their housing and lifestyle cycles. Most aged households will generally prefer good access to services and public transport while some younger, more mobile households will be less tied to particular locations. For this reason there is also scope for medium density development in a range of locations throughout the Shire, principally close to commercial centres, public transport and community services.

The Council's role in ensuring that the housing needs of the aged are met, may be best directed at identifying suitable locations for such housing and providing a planning regime by which it can be facilitated. This can even extend to directly promoting the potential for this market with the development industry and facilitating development of clustered independent living units, and flexible housing design in locations close to facilities.

It must also be recognised that the majority of residents will continue to be housed in conventional single detached dwellings and rely on private transport to access facilities and support. As the population ages, there will be increased demand for support services which enable elderly and/ or disabled residents, to remain in their home for as long as possible.

2.2 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The strategic implications of the Shire's retirement patterns and aging and design issues are discussed in the following Chapter.

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3 THE POLICY CONTEXT

The Housing Strategy is one of several strategic plans developed by Council following the adoption of the Municipal Strategic Statement and the Council Plan 2000-2003. It has been developed in the context of State and metropolitan planning policies, State and Commonwealth housing policies and concurrently with the Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines. It also takes into account wider social and economic issues affecting Nillumbik.

3.1 THE BROAD CONTEXT

At the Regional, State and National level, continuing economic restructuring and social change are impacting on the housing system. Household sizes are declining and the number of households is increasing primarily because:

- an aging population results in more couple-without-children and single-person households;
- there are fewer households with children as the birthrate falls; and
- divorce and separation rates mean more, smaller households.

Economic and labour market restructuring have led to:

- relatively high levels of long-term unemployment;
- rising economic inequality;
- diverse workplace location; and
- reduced job security.

These changes have impacted on housing with: a decrease in the proportion of people buying their homes; an increase in long term renting; and increases in those people falling into mortgage arrears. The increased supply of medium density inner-city development, in particular, coupled with decreasing household size has shifted some household growth from the urban fringe. Nevertheless, improved transport, cheaper land and housing, the suburbanisation of employment opportunities and the growing possibility of working-from-home mean that the metropolitan area continues to expand.

Some of the largest population growth rates in Victoria are occurring just outside Melbourne's boundaries. The opportunity to build rather than buy an already established dwelling remains one of the attractions of fringe areas and although average household sizes are declining, houses are becoming larger. In 1985, the average floor area of a new house in Victoria was 169m². This had increased by 32% to 223m² by 1999.

3.2 COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING POLICY

Commonwealth and State Housing Policies have implications for the role of local government in housing policy.

The National Housing Strategy sets a framework in which to examine housing issues and determined the following key areas to guide local studies:

- *Affordability* – the ability of people to access sound housing without having to pay too great a proportion of their income for it;
- *Appropriateness* – refers to whether the housing (type, size, location) matches the needs of the household;
- *Equity* – whether or not the range of housing available gives all households a fair deal; and
- *Ecological sustainability* – protection of the quality and quantity of natural resources and the use of resources that provides for the needs of the current generation without forgoing resources available to future generations.

In the *Commonwealth State Housing (Bilateral) Agreement* and the *State Government's Better Housing Policy*, local government has been identified as a key partner in the expansion of affordable and accessible housing options for low-income people. This includes the supply and management of public and community housing.

At State level, the Social Housing Innovations Project will be funding innovative and sustainable social housing projects at local government level from 2000 to 2004. The State government is also developing strategies to ensure affordable housing in developments and to develop municipal affordable housing targets. The structure of public housing waiting lists and the provision of support to those living in public housing are also being reviewed.

3.3 STATE PLANNING POLICY

In 1971 the area now covered by the Shire of Nillumbik was designated a "Green Wedge" in the metropolitan context of growth corridors separated by non-urban areas. Subsequent state planning policies and current government policy have reinforced this strategic role. The "Green Wedge" is:

a place of significant environmental qualities that need protection; a place with a strong recreational value for the wider metropolitan area; and a place where, as a result of limited transport infrastructure, limited land capability, servicing constraints and environmental and recreational values, urban development will continue to be limited.

(Panel Report on the New Format Nillumbik Planning Scheme, 1999).

The Nillumbik Municipal Strategic Statement embodies this strategy.

The review of planning policies, currently underway at State level including:

- the review of the Metropolitan Plan, including an assessment of housing needs over the next twenty years; and
- the development of ResCode to replace the Good Design Guide and Vic Code;

may result in some adjustments to Council's Housing Policy and implementation strategy.

3.4 LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Nillumbik Municipal Strategic Statement and Planning Scheme have been developed within the State Planning Policy Framework (see Appendix A). The Municipal Strategic Statement has five objectives for settlement and housing:

1. To provide for residential development which meets the projected increase of the number and type of households within the municipality, while respecting local community and environmental values through locality and site responsive consideration and design;
2. To contain urban development and maintain non-urban breaks between existing urban areas and townships, and between townships;
3. To consolidate and sustain existing urban areas and township character;
4. To promote energy and efficiency in the layout of subdivisions and the siting and design of dwellings; and
5. To maintain and enhance the character of urban and township areas.

The Nillumbik Planning Scheme has been developed in accordance with the State Planning Policy Framework requirement that planning authorities must plan for projected population changes and provide sufficient zoned land, having regard to environmental and infrastructure constraints. The planning scheme allows for residential development in Residential, Township, Low Density Residential and Mixed Use Zones and some limited amounts in other zones. As detailed in the report of the Panel assessing the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, any consideration of further rezoning to allow residential uses would be for the purpose of more clearly defining the urban edge. The Planning Scheme includes overlays which establish requirements for design and development in new growth areas and address some of the environmental issues in the Shire, including wildfire risk.

The State Planning Policy Framework also emphasises consolidation of urban development and the improvement of housing choice through encouraging well-designed medium density housing (see Appendix A). This has been supported through the Shire Medium Density Housing Local Policy which is part of the planning scheme. The purpose of the Medium Density Housing Local Policy is to ensure that opportunities for maximising the nexus between suitable housing and the best location are not lost. An example of this is the encouragement of smaller medium density housing near established activity centres, so that those who are most likely to access services on foot, are able to do so.

In developing a strategy to guide the future development of housing in the Shire, the findings and recommendations of the following Council strategies and policies – some of which are currently being developed - were also considered:

- *The Heritage Study*, 1992 and 1996.
- *Diamond Creek Urban Growth Review*, 1998.
- *Diamond Creek Town Centre Strategy*, 1999.
- *Development Contributions Policy*, 1999.
- *Recreation Strategy*, 1999.
- *The Hurstbridge Township Strategy*, 2000.
- *Vegetation Protection*; in *Nillumbik Issues and Options Paper*, 2000.
- *Disability Access Policy*, 2000.
- *Youth Strategy*, 2000.
- *The Cultural Plan*, 2000.
- *Open Space Strategy*, forthcoming.
- *The Environment Strategy*, forthcoming.
- *The Wattle Glen Township Strategy*, forthcoming.

3.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STUDY AND RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

GUIDELINES

Following the completion of the Neighbourhood Character Study, the Council has recommended the inclusion of Neighbourhood Character guidelines as a local provision of the planning scheme.

The guidelines describe the different character precincts of the Shire, include a statement of preferred future character for each and identify threats to the preferred future character. Descriptions of the character areas focus on what makes each area of the Shire different and in most cases relate to varied relationships between built form and the landscape.

The use of neighbourhood character assessment is assisted by the Residential Design Guidelines. The Residential Design Guidelines set out design objectives and suggestions of how to meet these objectives for fourteen (14) design elements. The design elements include: vegetation retention and landscaping; height and building form; and roadway treatments. Each design element is listed, as appropriate, in the different character areas to support the achievement of preferred future character.

Adoption of the Neighbourhood Character guidelines has coincided with the development of the State Government's new code for residential development, ResCode. The draft ResCode document is currently being discussed and Council has supported the proposed greater emphasis on site analysis – for both medium density and detached dwellings - and consideration of neighbourhood character in the assessment of planning applications. It is anticipated that ResCode will be introduced in early 2001.

3.6 COUNCIL PLAN

Development of the Council's Housing Policy paid particular attention to the *Council Plan 2000 – 2003*.

Strategic Directions

The Nillumbik *Council Plan 2000 – 2003* provides strategic direction for the organisation.

Goals set by Council for the next 3 years include the following objectives and commitments. Council will:

- encourage sensitive planning, development and conservation which protects and enhances the natural and built environment;
- implement the outcomes of the Housing Strategy;
- develop local policies for inclusion in the planning scheme, based on Neighbourhood Character statements;
- form partnerships with community groups and agencies to assist Council to achieve the best outcomes for the community;

- achieve long term prosperity for the Nillumbik community by encouraging appropriate and environmentally responsible investment and by supporting existing enterprises; and
- provide and promote human services which respond to the community's needs and enhance the quality of life.

Vision

The Vision of Council as expressed in the *Council Plan 2000 - 2003* is:

- a protected and preserved natural, built and historical environment; and
- a community that is co-operative and self-sustaining, creative, active and secure.

Guiding Values

Council is committed to the following values in working with and for the Nillumbik Community:

- Promotion and protection of the Green Wedge;
- Council leadership and open government;
- Effective communication, advocacy and reconciliation;
- Equity and access; and
- Quality lifestyles.

The Council organisation will be characterised by:

- Transparent processes and ethical and professional behaviour;
- Responsible resource management;
- Loyalty, pride and respect; and
- Creativity and team work.

3.7 SUMMARY - POLICY CONTEXT AND INFLUENCES

The goals set out in the *Council Plan 2000-2003* and the vision and guiding principles it outlines set the context for the Housing Policy and the development of the Housing Strategy. The Housing Policy seeks to guide Council in determining its role in the broader context of:

- State planning policy;
- Economic, social and demographic changes leading to smaller households and changing tenures; and
- Increasing income disparity.

In the metropolitan and regional context, the Shire of Nillumbik has not been identified as an area for major residential growth. This is to be guided into growth corridors such as Whittlesea and Hume.

3.8 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy focus is on managing the housing growth that will occur in the next few years with an emphasis on encouraging the development of a range of

dwelling sizes, configurations and tenure types, in appropriate locations. There are limited 'greenfield' sites available for development and any further significant rezoning of land on the urban fringe to allow residential development is not anticipated. In the short term this may increase pressure on the established areas of the Shire but the use of Neighbourhood Character and Residential Design Guidelines will ensure that development enhances existing neighbourhood character rather than detracting from it and that a range of dwelling types is provided close to existing facilities and services.

The Shire of Nillumbik is a limited growth area. There is sufficient residential land available to accommodate projected population increases to at least 2011. In the medium to long term, however, the current trend which projects 4,538 more households by 2021 is unlikely to continue. As the current residential land is developed and redevelopment and infill opportunities are taken up, it is anticipated that the population will stabilise and then decline as is already occurring in the neighbouring municipality of Yarra Ranges.

4 HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT

The proposed Housing Policy reflects the Shire of Nillumbik's Vision as outlined in the *Council Plan 2000 – 2003*.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Nillumbik Shire Council Housing Policy recognises the importance of housing its community.

Housing development needs to occur within the context of protecting the Green Wedge and maintaining environmental values. The design and location of housing makes a significant contribution to the character of the Shire. The range and flexibility of housing types and costs determines the diversity, security and economic well-being of the community.

The Policy states Council's principles and commitments as they relate to housing in the Shire and provides the framework for the Housing Strategy.

The Policy and Strategy will be integral to Council's strategic, environmental and economic planning and best management practice.

4.2 KEY POLICY STATEMENT

The urban and rural areas of Nillumbik have a significant role as a 'Green Wedge' in metropolitan Melbourne and are regarded as among the most desirable places to live in Melbourne. Council is committed to maintaining the liveability and sustainability of the Shire by managing the impacts of any new development on the natural environment, neighbourhood character, residential amenity and heritage assets.

Council also recognises that secure and appropriate housing underpins the ability to participate in the economic, cultural and social life of the community. Current housing in the Shire is predominantly single dwelling in private tenure. While this will continue to be the most appropriate form of housing for many households, declining household sizes, an aging population and an unmet demand for more affordable housing indicate the need for a greater diversity of housing in the future.

The principles guiding this policy are consistent with Council's responsibility for understanding and recognising community need and ensuring that the social capital of the community is appropriately maintained and strengthened. Council's role as a community leader is to initiate, deliver and promote services that are effective and of high quality.

Council will implement this policy within the context of community-wide priorities and the availability of resources.

4.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Consistent with the policy context and Council Plan, Council is committed to achieving the following housing objectives:

1. ***The provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations.***

In order to protect the Green Wedge and neighbourhood character, Council will encourage the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations and ensure that all development responds to environmental qualities and constraints.

2. ***Design excellence for new residential development.***

Council will ensure new housing is designed and sited to complement the built and natural environment and to provide a high level of amenity for residents.

3. ***Sustainable use of resources and energy.***

Council will ensure that new housing, renovations and additions are designed and sited to ensure sustainable use of resources and energy.

4. ***The provision of a range of housing types to meet a range of needs.***

Council will encourage the development of a range of housing types, including of varied size, tenure and affordability, to meet the needs of current and future households in the Shire.

5. ***Expanding housing choice through support services.***

Council will facilitate and/or provide services that enable residents to live in a range of housing types and locations appropriate to housing needs.

6. ***Effective implementation and evaluation of the Housing Policy.***

Council will ensure the Housing Policy is effectively and efficiently implemented and evaluated.

5 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

5.1 OBJECTIVE 1. HOUSING IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS

In order to protect the Green Wedge and neighbourhood character, Council will encourage the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations and ensure that all development responds to environmental qualities and constraints.

OBJECTIVE 1: HOUSING IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS	
OUTCOME	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus residential development in areas specifically zoned for residential use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oppose future rezoning of land on the Shire's urban fringe, unless part of a comprehensive planning strategy. Support rating policies to encourage residential development of vacant residential land. Support the protection of the 'Green Wedge' and growth corridor concepts in the development of the State Government's new Metropolitan Strategy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and apply guidelines to retain and enhance neighbourhood character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines. Monitor development of the State Government's ResCode and seek adequate provision for local variations to the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. Assess development applications against neighbourhood character requirements and related council policies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure residential development is consistent with the protection of heritage values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Heritage Study review and planning scheme amendments.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage residential development that increases population densities in areas close to public transport, commercial centres and community facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Council's residential approvals database to monitor location, size and type of development. Monitor relationships between dwelling size and type and population density. Continue to implement the Medium Density Housing Local Policy. Identify opportunities for residential intensification in areas close to public transport, commercial centres and community facilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and co-ordinate the timely and equitable provision of physical infrastructure and human services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with residents, developers and infrastructure service authorities to plan and co-ordinate the provision of infrastructure to residential areas. Implement development contributions plans where appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and monitor vacant land within the existing residential zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review lot availability and take-up rates as part of the triennial review of the planning scheme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor infill housing and redevelopment opportunities to maintain sustainable townships and urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and promote mixed developments in Township and Mixed Use zones.

5.2 OBJECTIVE 2. DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Council will ensure new housing is designed and sited to complement the built and natural environment and to provide a high level of amenity for residents.

OBJECTIVE 2: DESIGN EXCELLENCE	
OUTCOME	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote innovative and creative development that displays advanced architectural and landscape design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the potential for innovative design as encouraged by the Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines, possibly through Awards. Investigate links with Council's Cultural Plan and Tourism Development to document and promote "Nillumbik Style". Develop 'walking trails' to highlight landscape, architecture and heritage characteristics of particular localities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure new development contributes to preferred future character in residential areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines: Monitor initial stages of implementation; and Prepare amendments to planning scheme. Publish Neighbourhood Character Study and Residential Design Guidelines, following adoption of ResCode. Apply the guidelines consistently in considering planning applications and for building and works.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure new development protects environmental values and landscape qualities in non-urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the 'Siting and Design Policy for Buildings and Works in Non-Urban Areas' and the 'Nillumbik Siting and Design Guidelines – Environmentally Sensitive Areas'. Develop folios of local examples for display and reference. Investigate provision of a design advisory service for pre-application assistance with site and building design.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the community, designers and developers in understanding design principles and requirements sought in Nillumbik. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake community and industry education based on the Neighbourhood Character Study, Residential Design Guidelines, Siting and Design Policy for Buildings and Works in Non-Urban Area' and the Nillumbik Siting and Design Guidelines – Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Run annual workshops with real estate and design professionals to promote understanding of the guidelines and policies. Publicise and display Neighbourhood Character Guidelines and Residential Design Guidelines brochures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Planning and Building Services staff has appropriate training and support to implement relevant policies and guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate maps, brochures and guidelines to all Planning and Building Services staff and officers dealing with public enquiries. Include training and support on relevant policies and guidelines in induction of new staff.

5.3 OBJECTIVE 3. SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Council will ensure that new housing, renovations and additions are designed and sited to ensure sustainable use of resources and energy.

OBJECTIVE 3. SUSTAINABLE HOUSING	
OUTCOME	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the siting and design of housing minimises energy use and the generation of greenhouse gases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Home Energy Rating Scheme (HERS) software to encourage high energy rating in new housing. Publicise HERS software and the services offered by Nillumbik Environmental Building Surveyors in its application. Assess building applications with HERS software and advise applicants on results. Create incentives for applicants to use HERS software to build 4 star plus dwellings. Publicise the results of Council's Energy and Greenhouse Audits trial.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the siting, design and construction of housing protects soil, water, vegetation and fauna. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all applicants receive a copy of the Residential Design Guidelines. Ensure all applicants receive a copy of Siting and Design Guidelines – Environmentally Sensitive areas. Require protection of vegetation during construction. Require waste and litter minimisation plans on building sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of building materials that are sustainably produced (e.g. plantation timber, recycled material). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue industry forums on environmental building techniques.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote residential design that maximises solar access and provides good cross-flow ventilation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with applicants and developers to encourage energy-efficient subdivision design. Promote use of the Schematic Design Examples from the Residential Design Guidelines. Develop further design examples based on Council's Energy and Greenhouse Audits trial results and building application assessments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote development which minimises energy use and the generation of greenhouse gases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the Medium Density Housing Policy in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme, support consolidation of development in activity centres. Work with applicants and developers to encourage subdivision design which facilitates efficient public transport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support achievement of sustainable development through information and promotion.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble, publicise and update materials related to sustainable development generally. Promote Council's Environment Strategy. Provide updated examples of sustainable design and development in relation to such issues as; water use and use of fossil fuels. Continue community education regarding fire risk management.

5.4 OBJECTIVE 4: HOUSING DIVERSITY

Council will encourage the development of a range of housing types, including of varied size, tenure and affordability, to meet the needs of current and future households in the Shire.

OBJECTIVE 4: HOUSING DIVERSITY	
OUTCOME	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the proportion of small dwellings, in particular one and two bedroom dwellings, as a component of total housing stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and promote locations suitable for the provision of smaller dwelling types to cater for Nillumbik's ageing population and other small sized households. ▪ Investigate sites suitable for infill development, redevelopment and change of use to residential, close to facilities and services. ▪ Identify surplus Government and other public land and, where possible, encourage redevelopment to provide a variety of dwellings and tenures. ▪ Encourage a range of lot sizes and some medium density development in 'greenfields' developments and large redevelopments in accordance with zone provisions. ▪ Maintain scope for medium density housing that is compatible with neighbourhood character in residential areas. ▪ Encourage developments that provide a range of dwelling sizes from one to three bedroom. ▪ Discourage the use of exclusionary covenants that restrict opportunities for smaller housing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the provision of suitable housing for people with special needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage flexible and appropriate housing design. ▪ Conduct further research into disability housing needs. ▪ Advocate for special purpose housing, such as crisis accommodation, to appropriate agencies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the proportion of rental accommodation as a component of total housing stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities to increase the proportion of rental accommodation. ▪ Investigate and promote rental housing management projects. ▪ Investigate making vacant council land available first to local community housing groups. ▪ Investigate and document already –established alternative models of housing provision in the Shire – such as co-operatives and communes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor affordable housing issues and information, including the levels of public, emergency and social housing in the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain ongoing links with service providers. ▪ Establish a regular forum on housing provision and demand for affordable housing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support regional co-ordination of services, planning and information to improve access and advocacy for those requiring emergency, social or public housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish links with neighbouring councils, regional housing offices, Centrelink and housing support services. ▪ Advertise housing services in Council's publications.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate State Government strategies to ensure affordable housing in residential developments and to develop municipal affordable housing targets appropriate for Nillumbik. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss potential roles for Council, including demonstration projects using council land; incentives; site purchase and assembly.

5.5 OBJECTIVE 5. SUPPORTING HOUSING CHOICE.

Council will facilitate and/or provide services that enable residents to live in a range of housing types and locations appropriate to housing needs.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORT RESIDENTS TO LIVE IN A RANGE OF LOCATIONS	
OUTCOME	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate access to housing support and local services that assist residents in gaining affordable housing, and meeting other housing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about Financial Counselling services. Promote current Housing Support Services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and facilitate appropriate aged care services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with council's aged care services to ensure older people can remain in their own homes as long as practicable. Monitor demand for services and ensure council's budget allows for sufficient support. Undertake further investigations into the demand amongst older persons on rural landholdings for smaller dwellings in townships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the expansion and promotion of public transport that supports Council's Housing Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take public transport routes and walking and cycling links into account when planning new subdivisions.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Housing Strategy is a whole of Council enterprise. The Strategy cuts across most of Council's functions, notably, strategic planning, planning and building services, infrastructure development, community services, rating and property services, cultural and economic development and communications.

The Strategy will be implemented through strategic and statutory planning, facilitation and education and data monitoring.

Planning

Strategic approaches may include changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and strategies for specific issues and areas of the Shire. Council also promotes the Shire's perspective at State Government level.

Council as a regulator has the statutory responsibility for implementing the planning controls which achieve state and local strategic objectives. These include:

- Planning scheme revisions such as amendments to include the Neighbourhood Character Guidelines and Heritage Study as Local Policies and include the Housing Strategy as a referred document;
- Permit processes which take into account the strategic context.

Facilitation and Promotion.

Council has a significant role in the co-ordination of proposed development to encourage the provision of a variety of housing types and tenures and to ensure that development is well-designed and sustainable. This includes timely involvement with residents, developers and infrastructure service authorities in new subdivisions and large redevelopments to ensure energy-efficient layout and design, a range of lot sizes and efficient cycling, walking and public transport routes.

Council can provide an advisory function for:

- Innovative and high quality design;
- Sustainable development;
- "Nillumbik Style"; and
- Alternative models of housing provision,
-
- through the development of folios of local examples for display and reference, workshops with local real estate and design professionals, a design advisory service for pre-application assistance with site and building design, the development of walking trails and the documenting of alternative styles of housing provision in the Shire.

Council has a role in promoting a range of housing types and tenures and maintaining scope for medium-density housing that is compatible with neighbourhood character.

■ Council can also promote information and support services run by Council or community groups and which improve accessibility to housing and the design and development of sustainable housing.

Council has a particular role in the identification of potential redevelopment sites, in-fill sites and the use of surplus council and government land which may be suitable for housing development. Council could also investigate the possibilities of providing land or funds, particularly for demonstration projects which provide a variety of dwellings and demonstrate principles of sustainability and good design.

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- Council, through links with neighbouring councils, local community housing organisations, aged and disability housing providers and regional housing offices, has the opportunity to monitor and advocate for improved provision of affordable housing.

Data Collection and Monitoring.

- The Strategy proposes the establishment of data monitoring systems looking at housing and population trends in the Shire. This may require setting up new areas of data collection, such as a regular residents' survey with questions on housing choice, affordability, mobility and housing suitability, better co-ordination of existing data sets and establishing links with housing services and neighbouring councils.

Incentives and disincentives

- Council's rating policy includes a financial disincentive to not develop vacant residential land. There may also be opportunities to consider further financial incentives and disincentives which facilitate the achievement of Council's Housing objectives.

APPENDIX 2.

DEFINITIONS.

Environmental qualities and constraints

Neighbourhood Character

Preferred Future Character

Social Capital