

# Community Engagement Report

## Nillumbik Reconciliation Action Plan



Thank you to all the community members and stakeholders who have taken the time to provide feedback on the development of Nillumbik Shire Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

If you need this information in another format, please call Nillumbik Shire Council on 9433 3111 or email [nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

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Front cover image: Detail from *Family and Future (Past, Present and Future ... Emerging)*, 2021, by artist Fiona Clarke.

## 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. 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.



## Inclusion statement

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to creating a fair, equitable and inclusive community where human rights are respected, participation is facilitated, barriers are addressed and diversity is celebrated. We support the rights of all people regardless of age, gender, ability or background. We value the diverse and changing nature of our community and understand that some groups and individuals experience more barriers than others.





## Project background

Nillumbik Shire Council is embarking on the development of the organisation's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

- This will be a Reflect RAP. A Reflect RAP has a 12 month lifespan and is a starting point for organisations new to reconciliation. Nillumbik Shire Council's Reflect RAP will outline the shared approach Council will take to progress reconciliation and work alongside all First Nations people in all of Council's services.
- The RAP is our formal commitment to support First Nations peoples' rights, culture, heritage, needs and aspirations.
- Community consultation for the Nillumbik Reflect RAP was undertaken from Monday 6 March 2023 – Sunday 23 April 2023.

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Better understand the Nillumbik community's knowledge around reconciliation, including understanding of First Nations history and culture
- Collect feedback on how the community would like to see Council demonstrate respect for, and build relationships with, First Nations people and communities
- Seek feedback and recommendations from Traditional Owners, Council Officers, community members and key stakeholders to inform the development of the draft Nillumbik Reflect RAP.






### **A total of 54 submissions**

were received from the community, Council staff and stakeholders



# How we engaged with the community

The below table outlines the various methods used to engage:

	<b>Participate Nillumbik website</b>	<b>324 visits</b> to Participate Nillumbik <b>470 views</b> of the Participate Nillumbik webpage <b>29 submissions received</b> via Participate Nillumbik
	<b>Posters</b>	<b>45 posters</b> displayed across Council facilities
	<b>Postcards</b>	<b>300 postcards</b> distributed across Council facilities
	<b>Social Media</b>	<b>5 social media posts</b> promoting opportunities for consultation
	<b>In-person workshops</b>	<b>18 workshops including:</b> 1 Traditional Owner workshop facilitated 1 stakeholder workshop facilitated, with 13 stakeholders 3 facilitated community consultation sessions with 7 engaged participants 12 early years services and school consultation sessions facilitated, with 155 children and young people engaged 1 pop-up consultation workshop at Eltham Rotary Town Fair



# How we engaged with Council staff

The below table outlines the various methods used to engage:



## Formal submissions

**25 formal submissions received** via internal consultations with Council Officers



## In-person workshops

5 Council staff sessions facilitated, with **89 Council Officers engaged**  
1 Youth Council workshop facilitated, with **8 Youth Councillors engaged**



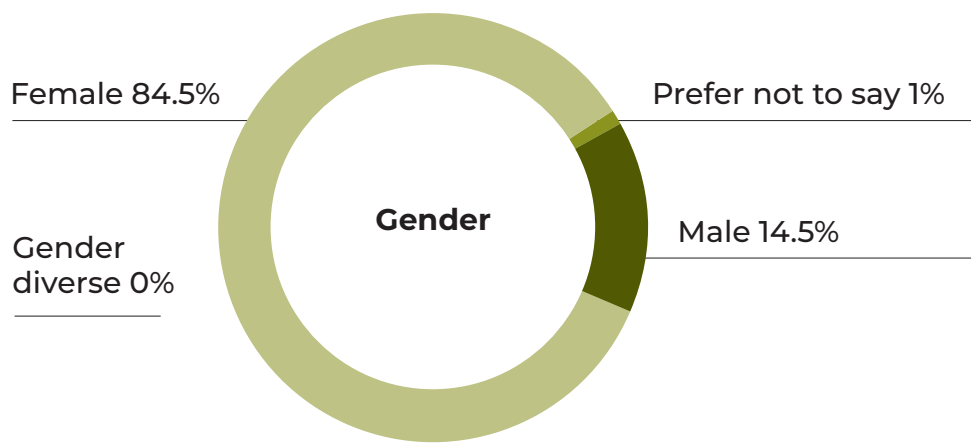
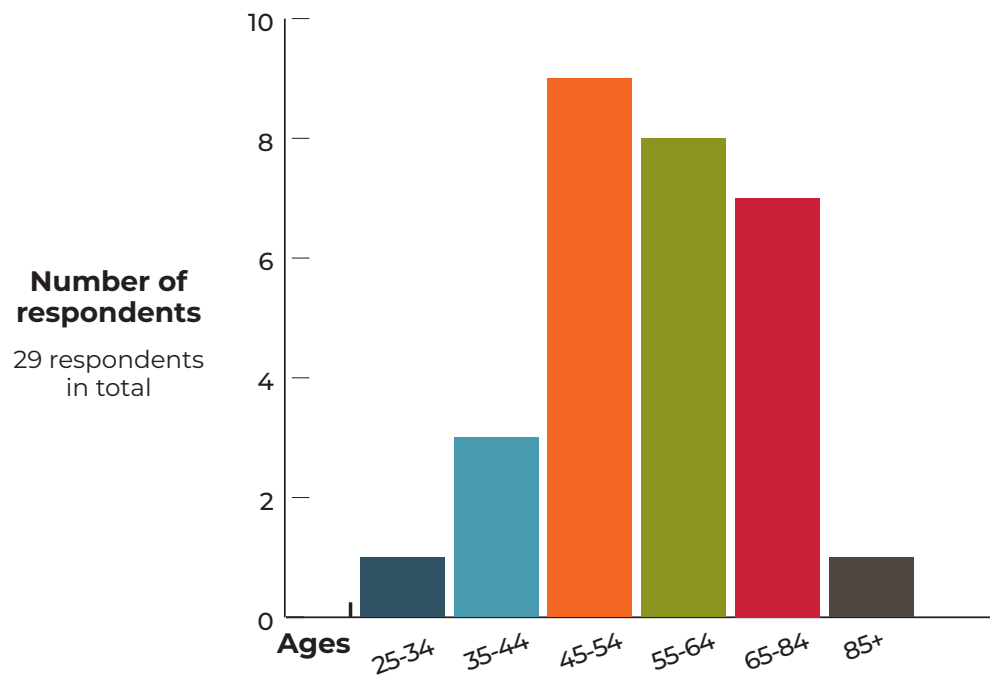
## Recommendations

**140 unique recommendations** put forward by Council Officers and Councillors  
**49 unique recommendations put** forward by stakeholders



# Who we engaged – Participate Nillumbik

## Ages of respondents



## Diverse representation

2 people	A person with a disability, inclusive of mental illness	2 people	A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
1 person	A person identifying as LGBTIQ+	2 people	Speaking a language in addition to English
4 people	Prefer not to say	19 people	None of the above

## Respondent townships



Two respondents did not answer



## Relationship to Nillumbik



**Live**

24 people



**Work**

3 people



**Study**

0 people



**Other**

2 people

# What we heard

## Summary of findings:

- Survey respondents felt more confident in their knowledge of First Nations history in Australia broadly compared, to their knowledge of local (Nillumbik) First Nations history
- The majority of respondents (86%) indicated their support and intent to participate, to varying degrees, in opportunities to improve their knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture. 14% of respondents did not consider themselves likely to participate.
- Of the various examples of actions undertaken in the past 12 months to advance reconciliation, respondents were most likely to:
  1. Talk to others about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (96%)
  2. Educate themselves about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander history, culture or people (86%)
  3. Speak out or advocate in the community or workplace (75%)
- Other ways in which respondents had taken action to advance reconciliation in the past 12 months included:
  - Exploring their own First Nations ancestry
  - Joining and participating in structured community groups or committees (e.g. Reconciliation groups, RAP working groups)
  - Demonstration of support through artistic expression
  - Visiting sites of cultural significance
  - Advocating to politicians through letter writing activities
- The majority of respondents expressed strong support (79%) for Nillumbik Shire Council taking action to promote reconciliation.

**In considering ways that Council can build strong relationships with and demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, the top 7 most mentioned recommendations included:**

1	<b>Increase consultation and engagement with Traditional owners, Elders and First Nations people</b> (e.g. on topics of land care, emergency management, access to Council services etc.) Mentioned 14 times in survey
2	<b>Facilitate community events and activities to increase engagement in reconciliation</b> Mentioned 12 times in survey
3	<b>Increase recognition of Traditional Owners throughout the Shire and improve education around local First Nations history and culture through signage</b> (e.g. Use of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung language in welcome signage, re-naming of streets, memorials for significant First Nations figures and informational signage etc.) Mentioned 10 times in survey
4	<b>Employ First Nations people in Council Officer and Councillor roles</b> (e.g. in areas of event management, land care, public education, libraries, community engagement and the arts) Mentioned 10 times in survey
5	<b>Improve education around local First Nations history and culture through Nillumbik Council's publications and communication channels</b> Mentioned 7 times in survey
6	<b>Incorporate cultural protocol into all Council events and proceedings</b> (e.g. Welcome to and/or Acknowledgement of Country, smoking ceremonies etc.) Mentioned 7 times in survey
7	<b>Build the capacity of and provide support to local schools, businesses and community groups in their reconciliation efforts</b> Mentioned 7 times in survey



### Other recommendations also included:

- Increase awareness of significant cultural sites throughout Nillumbik Shire  
(Mentioned five times)
- Increase procurement of First Nations artwork for display in Council-owned facilities and inclusion in Council publications  
(Mentioned five times)
- Discontinue citizenship ceremonies on January 26 and promote truth-telling  
(Mentioned four times)
- Create culturally safe gathering spaces in Nillumbik Shire for community events and activities (E.g. a First Nations community hub, yarning circles, bush tucker garden etc.)  
(Mentioned four times)
- Increase First Nations representation in Council's publications, communications and media  
(Mentioned four times)
- Engage with and support First Nations businesses  
(Mentioned four times)
- Commit to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and demonstrate support of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament  
(Mentioned two times)
- Highlight, promote and celebrate the reconciliation efforts of local businesses, schools and community groups  
(Mentioned two times)
- Provide cultural awareness education for Council Officers  
(Mentioned two times)
- Increase visibility in Council's day to day operations (E.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, badges, lanyards, email signatures etc.)  
(Mentioned two times)
- Provide funding opportunities to support the community in increasing understanding and awareness of First Nations history and culture  
(Mentioned two times)
- Ensure Council services are culturally safe and equitable to access (E.g. Maternal Child Health Care)  
(Mentioned one time)
- Include engagement with First Nations people as a priority within Council's Community Engagement guidelines  
(Mentioned one time)
- Develop a First Nations employment strategy for Nillumbik Shire Council  
(Mentioned one time)
- Connect with other Councils to collaborate on reconciliation effort  
(Mentioned one time)
- Provide support to community members exploring their Indigenous ancestry  
(Mentioned one time)
- Do more to address climate change  
(Mentioned one time)
- Limit development in Nillumbik Shire (E.g. residential estates)  
(Mentioned one time)

## Next steps

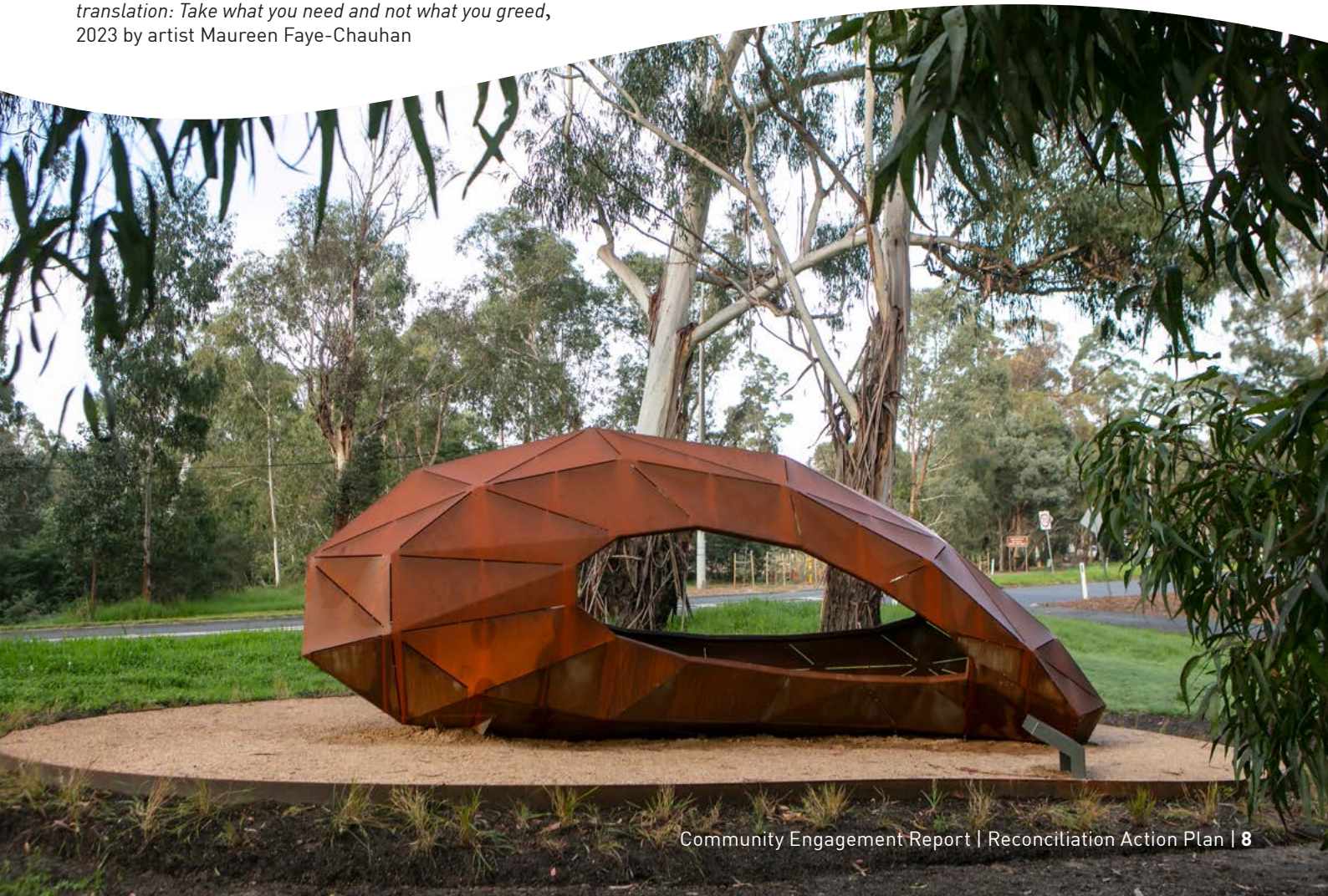
- The next step in developing Nillumbik Shire Council's Reflect RAP is to recruit for and establish the RAP working group.
- The RAP working group members will consist of Traditional Owners, First Nations community members, relevant stakeholders and Council Officers.
- The RAP working group is responsible for the development, implementation and reporting of the RAP. The RAP working group will use the detailed findings and recommendations from this community engagement to inform the development of the RAP.
- A second round of community consultation will take place in 2024 to gather feedback from the community on the draft RAP, before it is submitted to Reconciliation Australia for endorsement.
- Nillumbik Shire Council will continue to work closely with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders throughout this process and beyond RAP endorsement.

### How can participants stay informed?

Register for updates or follow the project on Participate Nillumbik  
[participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au](https://participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

For more information contact us, email [reconciliation@nillumbik.vic.gov.au](mailto:reconciliation@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

**Image:** *Gunga winhanga warr bundha ba winhanga warr djurring*,  
translation: *Take what you need and not what you greed*,  
2023 by artist Maureen Faye-Chauhan





**If you need an interpreter, please call  
TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to  
call Nillumbik Shire Council on 9433 3111.**

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## **Nillumbik Shire Council**

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