

# Equine in Nillumbik





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# Executive Summary

Equine in Nillumbik (the “Plan”) is a plan that responds to the Nillumbik Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 that lists the development of an Equine Industry and Activity Plan as a priority action. It outlines the Shire’s long history in equine, and ongoing, strong participation in the sector, discusses the status of the sector, and recognises significant opportunities. These include; increasing support for local clubs, responding to infrastructure needs, and the importance of safe, off-road, shared trails, promoting support for equine economic development and encouraging informed land management and emergency preparedness through education and collaboration.

Horses feature prominently in the history and foundation of Nillumbik. Early settlers used horses for transport in addition to many industries including forestry, gold mining, agriculture and construction of infrastructure such as the railroad. Horse ownership remains a significant part of Nillumbik life today. Horses have transitioned from being part of the local workforce to a sporting and recreational pursuit.

Since this transition, horse riding has grown in popularity to be one of the most popular recreation activities in the Shire.<sup>1</sup>

Nillumbik is home to 12 trail, adult, pony and all-abilities clubs. Founded in 1953, the Eltham District Horse and Pony Club is one of the oldest pony clubs in Victoria. In 1992 The Shire of Eltham Horse Trails Committee was established, suggesting a shared trail from Eltham Lower Park to Kinglake Township, this became known as the Green Wedge Trail and is now part of our Recreational Trails Strategy.

Almost exclusively a rural pursuit, this differentiates horse ownership and riding from most other recreational activities in Nillumbik. Recreational riders share trail infrastructure with other users such as walkers, joggers and bike riders. Horse riding provides a healthy, social activity for residents and visitors who ride local trails, attend riding schools and/or participate at clubs, training events and competitions.

The mix of these equestrian facilities with the natural bush, rural land and trails within Nillumbik continue to make it an attractive region for enthusiasts and some residents have chosen to live in Nillumbik due to the availability of suitable land for the keeping of horses (in close proximity to Melbourne) and the accessibility to local trails and clubs.<sup>2</sup>

Sport and Recreation Victoria estimates there are about 55,000 participants in equestrian sports in Victoria, of which 79 per cent are female (1.4 per cent of the state’s female population). A 2016 study shows that the equestrian sector contributes \$1.143 billion to the Australian economy each year.<sup>3</sup> The equine sector has positive economic and social benefits for Nillumbik with the total economic impact of approximately \$16.9 million per annum.<sup>4</sup>

Equine activities encourage an active outdoor lifestyle, a connection with nature and social connectivity. These activities have been recognised as providing health benefits to all participants including people with mental and physical disabilities.<sup>5</sup> At present, the majority of riders in Nillumbik are female (89 per cent of survey respondents) – women and girls of various ages who are often under-represented in organised sport.

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1 Nillumbik Recreation Strategy 2011 – 2019 [https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/council-publications/strategies-etc/recreation\\_strategy\\_2011-2019.pdf](https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/council/council-publications/strategies-etc/recreation_strategy_2011-2019.pdf)

2 Consultation with Nillumbik Horse Action Group, 2019

3 <https://www.equestrian.org.au/news/equestrian-brings-more-1billion-economy>

4 p. iv AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

5 <https://elcr.org/horsesandhumanhealth/>

This plan is related to other Council plans, policies and strategies in facilitating health and wellbeing, inclusion, recreation, trails, tourism and economic development (see figure 1).

The development of this Plan included consultation undertaken with the equine and broader community. Outcomes from this consultation facilitated the development of a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to determine key focus areas and an Equine Action Plan.

The SWOT identified:

- A strong alignment between the rural characteristics of the Shire, such as open spaces and equine as a sporting and recreational pursuit
- Risk associated with riders sharing public roads with motorists
- An opportunity to investigate the sharing of infrastructure between clubs and the gaps in current facilities
- Opportunity for Council to work with the sector to deliver land, pest and emergency management information and support for the equine community

The Plan seeks to capitalise on opportunities to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes for the community. This will require the equine sector - inclusive of clubs, the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG), recreational riders and equine businesses to collaborate with Council and other stakeholders.

Based on the research, the Plan identifies five key focus areas for the equine sector in Nillumbik:

- Participation and sustainability, including volunteering
- Maximising existing club infrastructure and planning for identified future needs
- Supporting equine economic development
- Providing access to a safe shared trails network
- Informing and supporting land, pest and emergency management.

# Relationship to other Council strategies and plans

The Council Plan Living in the Landscape 2017-2021 lists the development of an Equine Industry and Activity Plan as a priority action. This Plan has been created to deliver this action by outlining the Shire's strong history of equine, status of the sector and opportunities to be explored to increase economic, social and environmental benefits through collaboration.

This Plan supports other actions of the Council Plan<sup>6</sup> in its vision for Nillumbik to become Australia's most livable Shire with:

- Engaged, connected communities
- Active and creative people
- Safe and healthy environments
- A prosperous economy
- Responsible leadership

Outcomes of the actions within this Plan facilitate the aspirations of the Council Plan Living in the Landscape 2017-2021 and existing Council strategies and plans such as the Green Wedge Management Plan, Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, and the Trails Strategy and Recreation Strategy. Working in harmony, these and other strategic initiatives will assist in the community and visitors realising greater benefits.

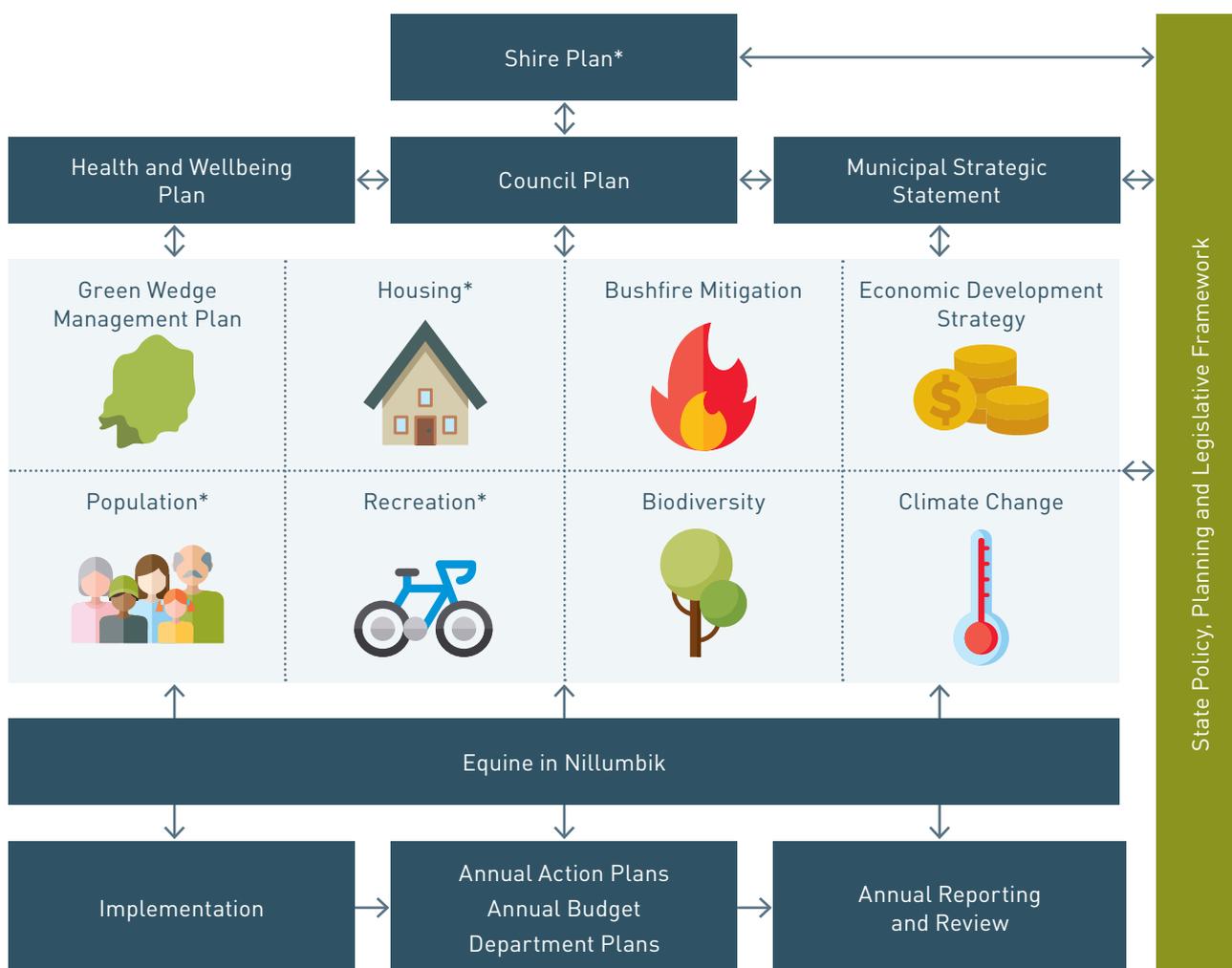


Figure 1. Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-publications/Strategies-policies-and-legislation>

# The equine community in Nillumbik



## Background

The methodology used for development of this Plan includes inputs from:

- A public workshop attended by approximately 70 participants
- Analysis of results stemming from an online survey completed by 426 respondents on behalf of their families, representing 906 horse riders in total.
- Research and analysis conducted by Council with equine industry bodies including Equestrian Australia (EA), Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), Australian Trail Riders Association (ATHRA), Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria (HRCAV) and Pony Clubs Association of Victoria (PCAV)
- A trails consultation session with the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG).

This was supplemented by one-on-one consultation with five local adult riding and pony club managers and the Australian Horse Industry Council.

A public workshop was facilitated to provide an opportunity to outline key findings from the survey results, and to better understand the equine landscape. This highlighted the infrastructure existing and required within the Shire including the potential for an indoor arena as part of a larger shared facility, the condition and capacity of existing arenas, extended trail connectivity and access, car parking and limited length of cross country courses. Safety concerns for horse and rider were also raised in relation to having to ride on roads, lack of driver awareness and poor driver behaviour.

The trails consultation explored the demographics of riders who use the shared trails, the attributes of existing trails, accessibility issues, rider safety and the request for trails to be digitally mapped.

The online survey covered various aspects of the equine community including:

- Participation
- Infrastructure gaps and opportunities
- Equine businesses including their type, income, employment and location
- Consumer expenditure on equine products
- Land, pest and emergency management.

The one-on-one consultation with club committees sought information on the operation and activities conducted by clubs including their infrastructure and current challenges.

An economic impact assessment was developed to understand the size and nature of the contribution of the sector to the Shire's economy.

The above methodology facilitated the collection and analysis of data and information which informed the development of a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT was used to develop focus areas and an Equine Action Plan.



## Summary of the equine consultation process

A summary of the consultation process<sup>7</sup> is outlined below and focuses on:

- Participation
- Club infrastructure, gaps and opportunities
- Economic contribution of equine to the Shire
- Access to safe shared trails network
- Land, pest, emergency management.

“Local riding clubs do not receive any significant funding on a regular basis unlike other sports”

– Survey respondent 2019

## Participation in equine activities

Equestrian Victoria’s State Equestrian Facilities Plan (2017) estimates that there are almost 55,000 participants in equestrian sports in Victoria, of which 79 per cent (about 43,000 people) are female (1.4 per cent of Victoria’s female population). The report highlights that most organisations have experienced growth in participation in recent years, with most growth occurring among women and youth, as well as in inter-school competitions.<sup>8</sup>

Equestrian activities in Nillumbik have more than double the state and national percentages of participation and trail riding, is one of the top five non-organised recreational pursuits and one of the top 10 most popular recreational activities in Nillumbik.<sup>9</sup>

Equine is almost an exclusively rural pursuit, which differentiates it from other recreational activities in Nillumbik. The majority of riders in Nillumbik are women and girls (89 per cent of survey respondents) who are often underrepresented in organised sport.

“Thank you for actually acknowledging that horses are an important part of Nillumbik. Our horses greatly contribute to our family’s health and wellbeing and makes our life enjoyable.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Primary elements of the equine sector in Nillumbik are the clubs, riding schools, recreational riders, events, visitors, shared recreational trails, agistment, equine-specific businesses and breeding. Five local equestrian facilities host at least two clubs each. St Andrews also hosts trail riding and Riding for the Disabled. Nillumbik equine clubs are affiliated with state governing bodies including the Pony Club Association of Victoria,<sup>10</sup> Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria and the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association.<sup>11</sup> Most facilities are leased from Council with Kangaroo Ground Pony Club being the only club that owns its property.

Clubs are of various membership sizes with most holding a mixture of weekend and mid-week rallies. Each club hosts an average of three competitions per year. In 2020, there were 550 horse riders who were regular members of the various riding clubs in Nillumbik.

Survey respondents who are riding club members highlighted a number of challenges for their clubs. The key issues mentioned were facility quality, cost, access, maintenance, infrastructure limitations and safety.

Participants mostly ride on local trails and roads, club grounds and home arenas. Respondents stated that sharing local roads with motorists is becoming increasingly unsafe for horse and rider. In addition to local participation, 33 per cent of survey respondents also train or ride outside of Nillumbik.

7 AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019

8 AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

9 Market Research for the Nillumbik Recreation Strategy 2010-2018

10 <http://www.ponyclubvic.org.au>

11 <https://hrcav.com.au/> and <http://www.athra.com.au/>



“Road safety is a big issue when there are very few areas to trail ride. A driver education program regarding responsibility and safety would help.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Nillumbik has a network of shared trails in some areas, however respondents believed there was real opportunity for improved linkages and connectivity of off-road trails both within the Shire and with neighbouring municipalities. An emphasis was put around road safety and the need for safe off-road trails that decrease the risk of accidents, not just for horse riders, but drivers, pedestrians and bike riders as well. Many riders have reported they feel unsafe riding on roads due to the increase in traffic. Other ideas to enhance the amenity, capacity and safety of trails were the provision of ample parking areas for unloading of horses, shaded areas with hitching rails and more informative signage.

Equine clubs are entirely self-funded and rely totally on volunteers for the management and maintenance of their facilities and grounds, as well as the running of rallies and competitions. Maintenance and upgrades of infrastructure are funded through fundraising and hosting events. Club membership fees generally cover the cost of insurance and instructors, however the upkeep of facilities requires further investment and most clubs are not able to raise the full funds required for improvements and maintenance.

The majority of Nillumbik horse riders are adult females (89 per cent). Riders fall into two age brackets: 31-50 years (39 per cent) and 51+ years (43 per cent). Young riders, aged 16-30, make up only 14 per cent of the overall group. Of the households with horse ownership, 86 per cent have one to three riders and the remaining 14 per cent have four or five family members who ride.<sup>12</sup>

HRCVAV provides for a wide range of riders who enjoy the social aspect of club membership as well instruction and competition. The Pony Club movement is an international voluntary organisation for young people interested in horses and riding, it aims to provide education in rider safety and horse welfare.

“It is a wonderful community to belong to, so supportive. We love our horses and have spent many hours and dollars maintaining our property and keeping it in good condition for our horses. We have planted many trees for the benefit of our property. We love the land and care for it.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Participating in equestrian activities not only provides a positive impact on the physical health of riders, but also on their mental health by providing a fulfilling recreational outlet that can lead to a sense of personal purpose and belonging within the equine and rural communities.

Key equine disciplines practised in Nillumbik include dressage, trail riding, show jumping horsemanship and eventing. The highest forecast increase in demand is for trail riding, horsemanship, dressage and eventing.

Respondents expressed gaps in infrastructure within the Shire, particularly that there is no indoor arena and that Yarrambat is the only facility which contains a suitably sized cross-country course for evening competitions. Riders noted that an indoor arena would assist with participation during hot or wet weather and at night, in addition to attracting equine professionals, and providing all-weather venue for RDA Clubs. Improvements to existing club infrastructure, particularly riding surfaces, arena capacity and car parking were also mentioned.

Yarrambat and Hurstbridge Adult Riding Clubs have membership caps in place due to limitations in the size of their venues and capacity for car parking, this limits the potential for expansion of these clubs. The cost of participation is stated as high due to expenses related to horse maintenance, feed, equipment and transport.

Nillumbik is located within a green wedge with beautiful open rural spaces and natural environment, this compliments the creation of shared trails for riders, walkers and cyclists and makes it an ideal environment for equestrian activity in proximity to significant population.

“Nillumbik Shire needs an equestrian centre that all the nearby clubs can share. And more safe trail riding tracks.”

– Survey respondent 2019



# Equine clubs in Nillumbik



Figure 2. Location and participation of Nillumbik horse riding clubs and groups

## Economic contribution of equine

The Nillumbik equine community contributes significantly to the Shire's economy. Nillumbik's 34 equine businesses are predominantly located in Hurstbridge, Arthurs Creek and Kangaroo Ground, employing at least 74 people in 2017/18. The equine community is supported by a range of goods and services such as health professionals, breeding, farriers, feed, clothing and equipment, transportation, education and property infrastructure and equipment. Most equine businesses in Nillumbik are classified as Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These businesses' revenues vary significantly with 42 per cent earning less than \$20,000 in FY2017-18 and 13 per cent earning more than \$100,000.<sup>13</sup>

The total economic impact of the equine sector in Nillumbik is approximately \$16.9 million per annum, which is comprised of \$5.1 million in expenditure within the sector. A direct impact of that expenditure being \$8.9 million which supports 24 FTE jobs and an indirect impact of \$8 million from flow-on expenditure.<sup>14</sup> The industries that benefited the most from indirect expenditure include health care services, property and maintenance, building and construction and agriculture including feed and supplements.

Business confidence in the equine sector is positive with 47 per cent of survey respondents expecting growth and 40 per cent expecting stable revenues.<sup>15</sup> Equine escape expenditure from Nillumbik for 2019 was approximately \$1 million<sup>16</sup> and therefore an opportunity exists for local businesses to grow by providing in-demand goods and services. The most common items locals bought outside Nillumbik include property infrastructure and vet and health services.

Visitation to Nillumbik to riding schools, equine events and agistment properties contributes revenue to both equine and non-equine businesses.

<sup>13</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

<sup>14</sup> p. iv AECOM Nillumbik Equine Industry & Activity Plan July 2019

<sup>15</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

<sup>16</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

## Types of businesses

### Training / Lessons



### Agistment



### Equipment



### Breeding



### Vet



Figure 2. Types of equine businesses in Nillumbik



## Land, pest and emergency management

The equine community and the local agricultural businesses which supports it are significant land use groups in the Shire. These groups share knowledge and an appetite for learning as demonstrated by attendance at specific equine-focused land management workshops offered by Nillumbik Shire Council, the Nillumbik Horse Action Group (NHAG) and the Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group. Two thirds of respondents were interested in attending workshops in the future.<sup>17</sup>

Two thirds of respondents stated they do not have challenges in managing their property and the majority spend between six and fifteen hours on property maintenance per week and many over 15 hours per week.<sup>18</sup>

“We all love and value our green wedge. Our passion for our sport, our friends and the community keeps us engaged, volunteering for our clubs, and living here.”

– Survey respondent 2019

Respondents that are members of Landcare groups, mostly attend Arthurs Creek, Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare and Strathewen. The key challenges of respondents relate to pests, land and emergency management. These include dealing with:

- Weeds
- Pests (rabbits, deer and foxes)
- Blackberry
- Drought
- Bushfire preparedness.

There is a strong demand for information and support to help guide informed land management practices. The most requested topics are:

- Pasture management and improvement
- Weed control
- Horse health (equine worming)
- Bushfire and emergency planning.

Further to the above, respondents also noted a need for assistance with permits, rates and Council processes.

<sup>17</sup> Q26 AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019

<sup>18</sup> AECOM online survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019, public forum, trails and club consultation 2019



# Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The SWOT analysis below provides a snapshot of the current situation of the sector and acts as an input to the development of focus areas for the equine action plan.

## Strengths

- A strong and long history of equine as part of the Shire.<sup>19</sup>
- Established equine clubs that are linked to their state bodies.<sup>20</sup>
- Equine businesses forecasting stability and growth.<sup>21</sup>
- Existing shared trails network.
- Existing trail and recreation strategies, governed by Council's Recreation and Trails Advisory Committee<sup>22</sup> that support inclusive participation and safety.
- Close proximity to city residents looking to visit or move to the country.
- Proximity to Melbourne Polytechnic's education facility that provides courses in equine disciplines and conducts research and development projects for the sector.
- High female participation.
- Engaged equine sector and participants.
- Existing interest in land management.

## Weaknesses

- Age and limitation of club infrastructure.
- Cost of maintaining arena riding surfaces and cross country courses for clubs.
- Lack of adequate club car parking during peak times and inclement weather.
- Danger associated with a lack of signage regarding horses and riders on public roads and the need for community information and education to improve safety.<sup>23</sup>
- A lack of bushfire planning and communications for the protection of horses.
- Lack of linkage of off-road trails throughout the Shire and into neighbouring municipalities.
- Lack of horse-friendly visitor accommodation which impacts attracting equine visitation.

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19 Consultation with Nillumbik Horse Action Group, 2019

20 <https://hrcav.com.au/>

21 AECOM on-line survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

22 <https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Council/Committees>

23 AECOM on-line survey of Nillumbik business owners, operators and riders 2019

24 <https://www.nhag.org.au/about-us>

25 <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/funding-programs/roadside-weeds-and-pest-management>

26 <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/protecting-victoria/weeds-and-vertebrate-pests>

27 <http://www.athra.com.au/component/k2/item/92-horse-riding-and-road-safety.html>

28 Nillumbik Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

29 <https://djpr.vic.gov.au/what-we-do/small-business>

30 <https://www.melbournepolytechnic.edu.au/study/equine-studies/equine-studies>

31 AECOM Assessment of equine investment opportunities August 2019

## Opportunities

- Opportunity for Council to enhance its relationship with the equine sector and support both the recreational and economic contributions the sector makes to Nillumbik.
- To develop an equine infrastructure masterplan to identify ways to maximise the use of existing club infrastructure and collaborate with neighbouring municipalities.
- Opportunity for the equine sector to investigate and understand club infrastructure sharing opportunities.
- Opportunity to investigate viability of an indoor arena for shared club and RDA use as part of a larger equine facility.
- Work with land managers to access safe, shared trails and continue to progress the Shire's trail network with links to neighbouring municipalities, including to the Yarra Valley Loop Trail and Bicentennial National Trail.
- Opportunity for Council to support NHAG and other equine groups to work closely with the community to increase their visibility and co-ordination as representatives of the equine sector.<sup>24</sup>
- Equine clubs to grow participation to improve club revenues and volunteer workforce.
- Council to provide information and educational materials and explore extension of existing land and pest management programs to include equine specific topics. Additionally, Council may seek assistance through State Government grant programs.<sup>25</sup>
- Council, in collaboration with the State Government<sup>26</sup> and equine sector, to develop a diverse program of land and pest management education workshops.
- Council, in collaboration with the equine sector, to create an awareness campaign to increase the visibility and understanding of road safety issues relating to horse riders and motorists sharing public roads.<sup>27</sup>
- Council to engage with equine businesses to facilitate specific support initiatives.<sup>28</sup>
- The provision of improved service from Council in relation to providing clarity and support for permit applications and land management plans. This can be achieved through implementing the State Government's Better Approvals Project<sup>29</sup> and Council's Customer First Strategy 2019-2022.
- Leverage partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic to participate in research and development projects, address skills gaps and promote the transition between education and local employment.<sup>30</sup>
- Council to collaborate with the equine sector and community to develop emergency management plans, and improve emergency communications for horse owners.

## Threats

- Risk due to lack of clarity relating to infrastructure built by clubs on Council land. Council will need to work with state bodies and clubs to understand and support risk mitigation processes.
- Equine escape expenditure of approximately \$1 million per annum. This may impact on the viability of existing businesses.<sup>31</sup>
- Impact of drought and bushfire.

## Focus areas for equine

There are five focus areas for the equine sector in Nillumbik. These are:

- Participation and sustainability, including volunteering efforts.
- Maximising existing club infrastructure and planning for identified needs.
- Supporting equine economic development.
- Providing access to a safe shared trails network.
- Informing and supporting land, pest and emergency management.

Actions (Appendix A) have been created to respond to challenges and opportunities identified through the SWOT analysis and will address the identified focus areas.

These actions are designed to:

- Grow participation in the equine industry and improve club sustainability
- Explore infrastructure sharing opportunities and future planning
- Support economic development in relation to the equine sector
- Support the community with pest, land management and bushfire information and education opportunities



# Appendix A: Actions

Timeframe key:

- **SHORT** one to two years
- **MEDIUM** two to four years
- **LONG** four years plus

## Enhance participation, club sustainability and volunteer effort

Actions	Timeframe
1. Council to investigate how to support clubs to improve and maintain their facilities	MEDIUM
2. Council to liaise with clubs to ensure lease agreements enhance their long-term viability.	SHORT
3. Council to support the equine sector to enhance communications across the sector such as the promotion of events, seminars and information to assist horse owners and businesses.	SHORT
4. Council to work with the equine sector to promote and respond to relevant Commonwealth and State Government grant programs.	SHORT
5. Council to support the equine sector to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of the equine community and supporting communications plan.	SHORT
6. Council to work with the equine clubs to grow participation and promote the Riders without Horses and Riding Develops Ability programs.	SHORT
7. Council to support volunteers engaged in equine activities.	MEDIUM
8. Council to support Riding Develops Abilities activities in Nillumbik, through specific infrastructure analysis and linkage to client services.	SHORT

## Maximise the use of equine infrastructure

Actions	Timeframe
1. Council to work with the equine community to understand and promote shared infrastructure and resource opportunities between clubs to improve facilities and reduce cost for critical maintenance.	MEDIUM
2. Council, in collaboration with the equine community, to develop an Equine Infrastructure Plan to identify how the current sites can be improved to maximise their potential.	MEDIUM
3. Council to investigate potential of a larger shared equine facility for clubs, and viability of an indoor arena for competitions, training and RDA.	MEDIUM
4. Council to explore opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring municipalities that are planning equine infrastructure.	MEDIUM
5. Council to digitally map tracks and trails.	SHORT
6. Council to facilitate the equine community to collaborate with shared trail users, primarily cyclists and walkers, to understand and document synergies and common needs such as regularity of trail use and road sharing safety.	SHORT
7. Council and the equine community to work with relevant stakeholders and land managers to identify and formalise access to trails for horse riders, including linkages and connections.	SHORT
8. Council will continue to implement the Nillumbik Trails Strategy and Recreation Strategy.	ONGOING
9. Council will conduct its trails audit to ensure that existing and planned trails are fit for purpose.	SHORT
10. Council to develop a Nillumbik Horse Trail Riding Guide highlighting information about riding in Nillumbik, trail user protocol and safety information.	MEDIUM
11. Council to work with clubs and state bodies to understand and action any risks associated with club-built infrastructure on Council land.	SHORT

## Support equine economic development

Strategic actions	Timeframe
1. Council to collaborate with the equine community to understand reasons for escape expenditure and facilitate initiatives to support local businesses.	SHORT
2. Council to design and implement equine-specific business engagement activities to facilitate business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and business-to-government opportunities.	MEDIUM
3. Council to consider economic impact when undertaking improvements to equine infrastructure.	MEDIUM
4. Council to collaborate with the equine community to understand capability and opportunities for visitation through individual businesses and partnerships.	MEDIUM
5. Council to collaborate with the equine sector to consider the development of appropriate horse and rider-friendly accommodation and associated guidelines.	LONG
6. Council to work with the equine sector to develop a plan to promote Nillumbik's equine community and businesses in a regional context.	SHORT
7. The equine sector to understand skill and business gaps and work with Melbourne Polytechnic to address any skills shortages.	SHORT
8. Council to facilitate the equine sector to engage with Melbourne Polytechnic to understand opportunities for local clubs and business sector to understand and close skills gaps and participate in relevant research and development projects.	MEDIUM
9. Council will implement the Nillumbik Customer First Strategy 2019-2022 and the State Government's Better Approvals Project. This will improve Council's interface with customers and the efficiency and effectiveness of administering local regulatory processes.	SHORT

## Land, pest, emergency management and safety

Strategic actions	Timeframe
1. Council to develop emergency management information to assist horse owners during the fire season, including possible options for large animal evacuation.	SHORT
2. The equine sector, in collaboration with Council, to create and implement a horse and rider road safety education program for drivers.	SHORT
3. Council to investigate requirements and costs for improved signage regarding horse and rider safety on roads.	SHORT
4. Council to collaborate with the equine community to develop a responsive and diverse program of land management workshops for equine properties through partnerships and communications.	SHORT
5. Council to investigate extending existing pest management programs to the equine sector around the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weeds</li> <li>• Rabbits</li> <li>• Deer</li> <li>• Foxes</li> <li>• Blackberry</li> </ul>	SHORT
6. Council to support the equine sector to promote land management group membership.	SHORT

# List of figures

*FIGURE 1: Nillumbik policy, plans and strategy framework*

*FIGURE 2: Location and participation of Nillumbik horse riding clubs and groups*

*FIGURE 3: Types of equine businesses in Nillumbik*



**Nillumbik Shire Council**

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



[nillumbik.vic.gov.au](http://nillumbik.vic.gov.au)