

Caring for our Rural Landscape

Strategic actions for landholders, community groups and agencies caring for Nillumbik's rural landscape

The Purpose of this Guide

Our rural landscapes are a major part of what makes Nillumbik “The Green Wedge Shire”. The primary purposes of the Nillumbik Green Wedge, and therefore our rural landscape, are conservation of our natural environment and agriculture. In fulfilling these purposes, our rural landscape also provides opportunities for rural lifestyles, tourism and recreation that benefit societal health and wellbeing and the local economy.

This document has been written for all those who have management responsibilities for private and public land and water in rural Nillumbik. It is aimed at protecting and enhancing the broad components that make the Nillumbik landscape unique and precious.

It is built on the premise that we are all stewards of our shared landscape, from individual rural landholders to the Landcare groups they form, from Nillumbik Shire Council to agencies such as Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water, there are actions for us all, and if collectively achieved, will make Nillumbik's rural landscape healthier and more resilient into the future.

The intention of the document is to provide a logical and easy-to-read version of the strategies and actions developed through these workshops. It is a guide only and should be considered as a “good start”. If we collaborate on the implementation of this guide, then our rural landscapes will be healthier.



Dry Forests and Woodlands



Wet and Damp Forests



Waterways and Wetlands



Cleared Rural Land



Culture of Community Custodianship of Land

We are on Wurundjeri land

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners of Nillumbik and recognise their continuing connection to Country, waters and culture. We pay our respects to all Wurundjeri elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge their stewardship of the land, which stretches back many thousands of years.

The development of this document has been led by the Nillumbik Landcare Network. Derived from the draft Nillumbik Landcare Network Strategic Plan that was developed through a series of facilitated Conservation Action Planning (CAP) workshops in 2015, it has been shaped by rural landholders representing eight Landcare groups from across Nillumbik, and representatives from Nillumbik Shire Council, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Trust for Nature, Bush Heritage Australia, VicRoads, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Yarra Ranges Landcare Network and Middle Yarra Landcare Network, who all contributed their knowledge and expertise.

Different responsibilities and strengths

This document is a guide only. All people and organisations with responsibility for stewardship of land in Nillumbik are encouraged to use this information to assist their land management planning. When deciding what actions you can take, you will need to determine what your priorities are at the scale you are working at in your land management. This applies to assets, threats and actions and will ensure you are having the impact most important to your area of control and interest.

Every land manager has different responsibilities, strengths and resources:

- Individual land owners are typically aware of the threats impacting their land, have authority to take direct action, and can work with their neighbours to achieve shared outcomes.
- Landcare Groups and Networks have social connections and communication lines to their members, so are

well placed to engage and support landowners and communities. They can coordinate on-ground activities, provide information and education, organise demonstration sites and provide important social connections at a local level.

- Nillumbik Shire Council provides information, expert knowledge, education, and incentives and funding for landowners and community groups to undertake land management activities. Council also has responsibility for strategic planning, on ground works, land-use planning, administration of Local Laws, and other regulatory tasks.
- Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria have statutory responsibilities to care for land in Nillumbik. They undertake regional strategic planning, on-ground works, provide grants for certain activities, and can provide expert knowledge and information to land managers.

A note on Climate change

While climate change is considered a threat to all our landscape assets, it is beyond the scope and intention of this document to address the causes.

Analysis of this region from the Climate Change in Australia website shows that the Nillumbik Shire (and around Melbourne more broadly) will be significantly affected by a warming climate. We can expect to see a rise in annual average temperatures, including an increase in the summer maximums and lower rainfall, with winter and spring rainfall declining disproportionately. These changes threaten the health of all the assets and will impact on the species that make up our ecological communities and further impact our creeks and rivers. The creeks, rivers and wetlands will be of even greater importance in providing refuges for species needing wetter and cooler environments.

We are likely to see long term changes in our ecosystems including local extinction of vulnerable flora and fauna and a shift to ecosystems more adapted to drier environments such as grassy woodlands.

We are also likely to experience more severe and greater frequency natural disasters such as bushfire, storms and floods. The changing climate might also change the range of agricultural and horticultural activities that are viable in Nillumbik.

The most important actions that we can take to maximize the resilience of our natural environment to these climate changes are to:

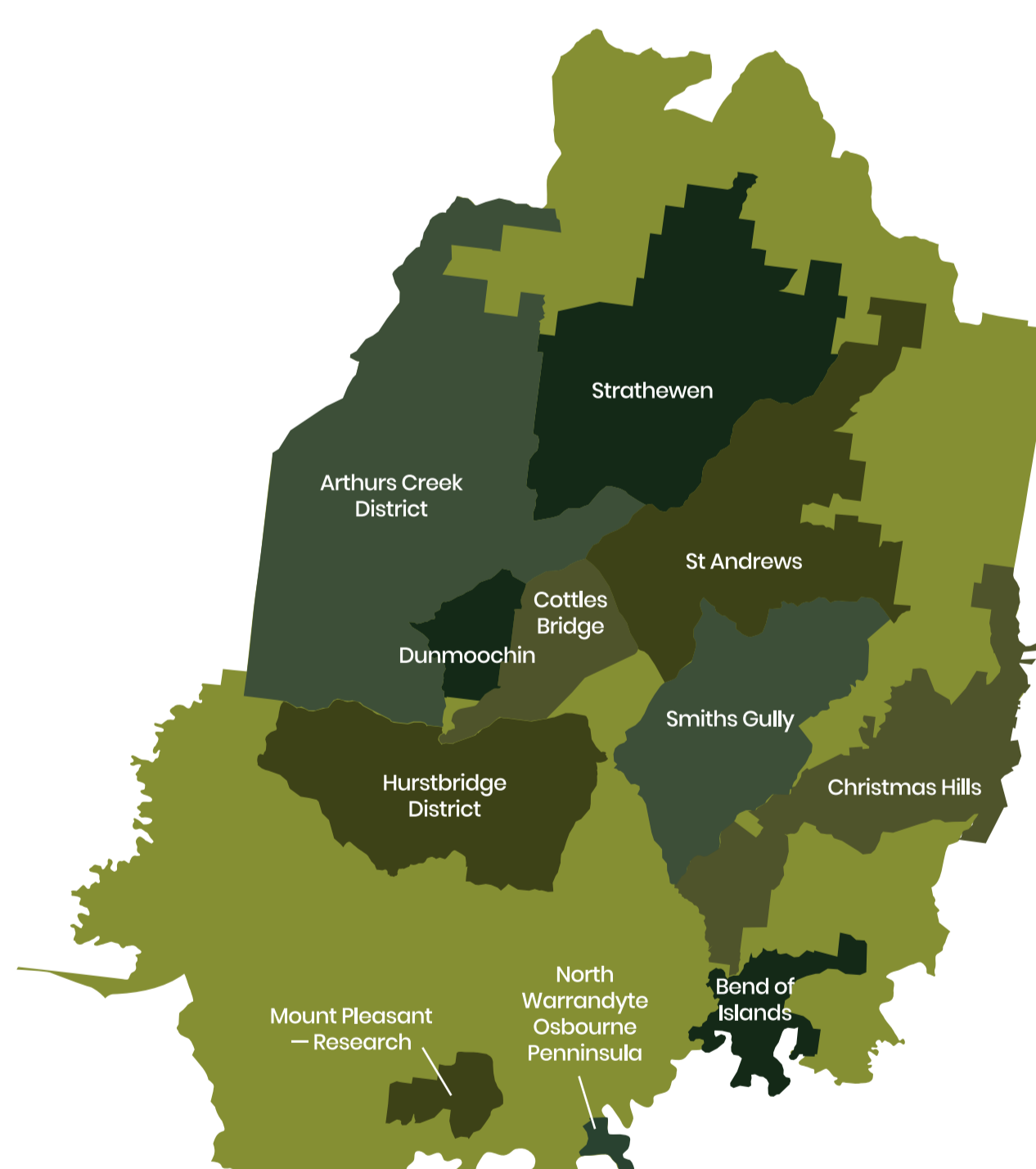
Every land manager has different responsibilities, strengths and resources:

- recognise, understand, and plan for the expected impacts and changes
- protect and enhance existing native habitats,
- reconnect isolated patches of bush by establishing linking corridors,
- reduce the impacts of the other identified threats – weeds, feral pest animals, erosion, habitat loss etc, and
- reduce extraction of water from rivers and creeks and optimise infiltration of water into soils.

About the Nillumbik Landcare Network

The Nillumbik Landcare Network is comprised of 11 Landcare groups operating within the Nillumbik Shire. It pursues the following vision: Private land is managed to protect and improve both the biodiversity and agricultural values of Nillumbik.

It achieves this by supporting its member groups to effectively engage with their respective landholders to promote and support well-informed land management decision-making and cooperative action.



Landcare Groups in Nillumbik