

AGENDA

Ordinary Meeting of Council

6.00pm Wednesday 20 May 2020

Livestreaming at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/councilmeeting

*** Broadcast live on Phoenix FM 106.7 ***

VENUE:

www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/councilmeeting

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 17 June 2020

Livestream

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can be obtained online at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au

This Council Meeting is conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 as amended by the COVID19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020 and Local Law Process of Municipal Government 2020

Council Vision

Greater Bendigo - creating the world's most liveable community.

Council Values

Six values inform everything we as Council do in working together to be the best we can for all of our community.

Seeking to achieve the best value for our use of the community's public funds and resources, by:

- We Lead;
- We Learn;
- We Contribute;
- We Care;
- We Respond;
- We Respect.

Goals

- Presentation and Managing Growth
- Wellbeing and Fairness
- Strengthening the Economy
- Environmental Sustainability
- Embracing our Culture and Heritage
- Lead and Govern for All

ORDINARY MEETING

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2020

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CRAIG NIEMANN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

PRAYER

PRESENT

OPENING MOTION

That Council:

- a) Notes this meeting is being conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 as temporarily amended by the COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020.
- b) Notes this meeting is being recorded and live streamed via the Council website and via live broadcast on radio Phoenix FM
- c) Agrees the method of voting on any matter during this meeting will be by show of hands in accordance with Section 21 of Greater Bendigo City Council Local Law - Process of Municipal Government (2020).

APOLOGIES

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

That Standing Orders be suspended to allow the conduct of the Community Recognition Section and Public Question Time.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION SECTION

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public Question Time – Purpose

Council has provided the opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of broad interest to Council and the community. Matters relating to routine Council works should be taken up with Council's Customer Service Officers through its Customer Request System.

By the time planning matters have reached the council agenda, they have been through an extensive process as required by the Planning and Environment Act. In addition, in most instances mediation has been held between the parties involved. Throughout the process there are many opportunities for the people to ask questions. Therefore, no questions relating to planning matters on the Agenda will be accepted.

Public Question Time

The public question time is held at every Ordinary Meeting of Greater Bendigo City Council.

The public question time is held at the start of the meeting as close as practical to 6:00pm. A maximum of 30 minutes has been provided for registered questions.

Due to the COVID19 restrictions, only written questions, lodged by 5.00pm on the day prior to the meeting can be accommodated at this time.

Questions lodged in writing by the deadline will be read out and answered by the Mayor or CEO or where appropriate, Councillors or Council Officers.

Acceptance of Questions

Each person lodging a question of Council is required to include their name, and address. Public Question Time is not an opportunity for making of statements or other comments. Council's Meeting Procedure Local Law does not allow for comments as part of the question.

1. An individual may only ask one question per meeting.
2. In the event that the same or similar question is raised by more than one person, an answer may be given as a combined response.
3. In the event that time does not permit all questions registered to be answered, questions will be answered in writing or referred to the next meeting if appropriate.
4. The Mayor and or CEO have the right to decline registration on basis of:
 - Legal proceedings;
 - More appropriately addressed by other means;
 - Vague or lacking in substance, irrelevant, frivolous, insulting offensive, improper, defamatory or demeaning;
 - Answer likely to compromise his / her position;
 - Confidential, commercial-in-confidence.
5. Each individual whose registration form has been accepted or declined will be advised by the day of the scheduled meeting.
6. In the event of a registration form being declined the registration form will be circulated to the Mayor or Councillors for information.

RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

That Standing Orders be resumed.

CR EMOND'S REPORT

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Pursuant to Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the Local Government Act 1989 (as amended) direct and indirect conflict of interest must be declared prior to debate on specific items within the agenda; or in writing to the Chief Executive Officer before the meeting. Declaration of indirect interests must also include the classification of the interest (in circumstances where a Councillor has made a Declaration in writing, the classification of the interest must still be declared at the meeting), i.e.

- (a) direct financial interest
- (b) indirect interest by close association
- (c) indirect interest that is an indirect financial interest
- (d) indirect interest because of conflicting duties
- (e) indirect interest because of receipt of an applicable gift
- (f) indirect interest as a consequence of becoming an interested party
- (g) indirect interest as a result of impact on residential amenity
- (h) conflicting personal interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Wednesday 6 May 2020.

The following items were considered at the Ordinary Council meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2020 at 6:00pm.

NO.	TITLE	RECOMMENDATION
1.1	City of Greater Bendigo - COVID19 Immediate Support Initiatives	That Council: 1. Ratify the initial list of initiatives to provide immediate support for our local community and business impacted by COVID-19. 2. Ratify the decision to delay the release of the draft budget for 2020/21 to enable further assessment to be undertaken of the impact of COVID-19 and develop initiatives to provide further support for our community and businesses.
2.1	Response to Petition: Request for Footpath from Domain Country Club	That Council: 1. Advocate to the Department of Transport (DoT) to consider these projects in its ongoing McIvor Highway Corridor Study; and 2. Investigate further if these projects can be funded by multiple parties including CoGB, Department of Transport and the Owners of the Bendigo Domain Country Club.
3.1	88-90 Forest Street, Bendigo - Demolition of Existing Dwelling, 3 Lot Subdivision and Development of 3 Dwellings and Associated Works	Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council resolve to issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for demolition of existing dwelling, 3 lot subdivision and development of 3 dwellings and associated works at 88-90 Forest Street, BENDIGO 3550 on the following grounds: 1. The development will adversely impact the significance and appearance of the heritage place, contrary to Clauses 15.03-1S, 21.08, 22.06 and 43.01 of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. 2. The proposal does not comply with ResCode (Clauses 55.02-1, 55.03-1, 55.03-2, 55.03-8, 55.05-4, 55.05-5, 55.06-1, 56.03-5 and 56.04-2 of the

		Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme). 3. The proposal does not comply with Clause 22.11 (Central Bendigo Residential Character Policy) and is inconsistent with the purposes of Clause 32.08 (General Residential Zone) which calls for new development to respect neighbourhood character.
3.2	Authorisation of Planning Scheme Amendment C256 - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme Review Implementation	That Council: 1. Endorse the Planning Scheme Strategies and Amendments Work Program. 2. Request the Minister for Planning to authorise Council to prepare Amendment C256 to the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. 3. When Authorised by the Minister, exhibit Amendment C256 to the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme giving notification as required for the minimum statutory exhibition period of one month. 4. Request the Minister to provide an exemption to notify all landowners and occupiers individually that may be affected by the Amendment.
3.3	Bendigo City Centre Plan for Adoption	That Council: 1. Adopt the Bendigo City Centre Plan, as amended; 2. Adopt the Parking Futures Action Plan as amended; 3. Commence the drafting of a planning scheme amendment to implement the Bendigo City Centre Plan.
3.4	Bendigo City Centre Heritage Study - Stage 1	That Council: 1. Adopt the Bendigo City Centre Heritage Study – Stage 1, 2020. 2. Request the Minister for Planning to authorise Amendment C235 to the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme and when authorised, exhibit the Amendment.
3.5	Golden Square Heritage Study Stage 1 - Adoption	That Council adopt the <i>Golden Square Heritage Study Stage 1</i> June 2019.
8.1	Record of Assemblies	That Council note the record of assemblies of Councillors as outlined in this report.

11.1	Section 66 Confidential Report	That Council close the meeting to members of the public pursuant to Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider a report relating to Council business information.
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The unconfirmed minutes have also been posted on the City of Greater Bendigo website pending confirmation at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Wednesday 6 May 2020, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed.

1. BUDGET 2020/2021

1.1 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2021

(Final Budget Report embargoed until 6:00pm Wednesday 20 May 2020)

2. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Nil.

3. PRESENTATION AND MANAGING GROWTH

3.1 56 BEILHARZ ROAD, RAVENSWOOD 3453 - 3 LOT SUBDIVISION AND CREATION OF AN EASEMENT

Document Information

Author Adele Hayes, Statutory Planner

Responsible Director Bernie O'Sullivan, Director Strategy and Growth

Summary/Purpose

Application details: 3 lot subdivision and creation of an easement

Application No: DS/616/2019

Applicant: Shaw Land Surveys Pty Ltd

Land: 56 Beilharz Road, RAVENSWOOD 3453

Zoning: Farming Zone

Overlays: Bushfire Management Overlay
Design and Development Overlay 3
Environmental Significance Overlay 1

No. of objections: 1

Consultation meeting: No formal consultation meeting was held (at the request of the applicant).

Key considerations:

- Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to the purposes of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural subdivision and the protection of agricultural land.
- Whether appropriate justification has been provided in support of the proposal.
- Objector concerns.

Conclusion: The application is not in accordance with the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

It is recommended that Council refuse to grant a permit as the proposal does not present an acceptable planning outcome with regards to the purposes of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural subdivisions, rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land. Insufficient justification has been provided in support of the application.

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issues a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for 3 lot subdivision at 56 Beilharz Road, RAVENSWOOD 3453 on the following grounds:

1. The proposal is inconsistent with planning policy regarding rural subdivisions and agricultural land.
2. The proposal is inconsistent with the purposes of the Farming Zone.
3. The proposal presents an unacceptable outcome with regards to the fragmentation of agricultural land and does not support or enhance agricultural production.

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## **Policy Context**

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017 – 2021

Goal 4: Presentation and managing growth

- Planning, developments and infrastructure that increase our liveability and pride in where we live.

Goal 6: Embracing our culture and heritage

- Recognise and celebrate our unique history and diverse cultures.

## **Background Information**

Preliminary concerns were raised with the applicant in relation to the proposal not being in accordance with Council's Rural Dwelling policy at Clause 22.02, which has the objective to discourage the fragmentation of rural land. Concerns were raised that the proposal would ultimately result in two additional 'as of right' dwellings in the Farming Zone.

The applicant provided additional justification in support of the application, in response to the concerns raised. This justification is considered to be insufficient, as discussed below.

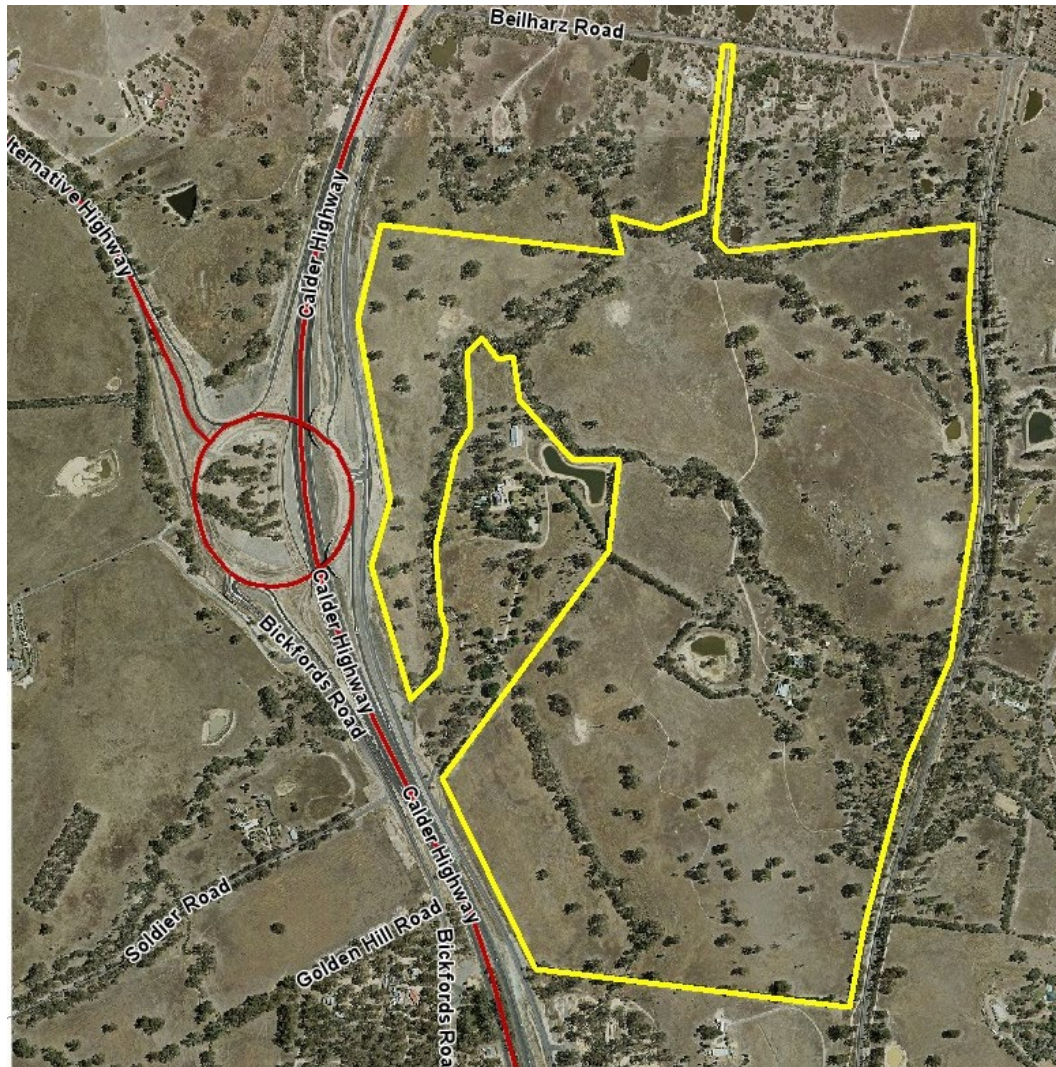
## **Report**

### **Subject Site and Surrounds**

The site is formally referred to as Lot 2 on PS738307h and is otherwise known as 56 Beilharz Road, Ravenswood. The site is irregular in shape with an area of 124 hectares and is undulating.

The site currently contains a dwelling and associated outbuildings which are located centrally within the site. Bullock Creek traverses through the site. The site contains scattered trees and patches of remnant vegetation. Access to/from the site is via existing crossovers on Beilharz Road and Ravenswood Street.

The site is located to the east of the Calder Highway Interchange. The surrounding area is located within the Farming Zone and is characterised by a mix of farming activities and rural lifestyle blocks. Most of the surrounding lots contain dwellings. Surrounding lot sizes range from approximately 7.5 hectares to 124 hectares. A Restructure Overlay has been applied to the precinct to the south of the subject site to address historical land fragmentation issues.



**Figure 1: Aerial map showing subject site**

### Proposal

The application proposes to subdivide the land into 3 lots.

Lot 1 would have an area of 40.13 hectares. Access would be via the Calder Highway.

Lot 2 would have an area of 43.75 hectares and contain the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings. Access would be via Beilharz Road.

Lot 3 would have an area of 40.03 hectares. Access would be via the Calder Highway.

A shared carriageway easement is proposed to allow both Lot 1 and Lot 2 to use the substantial bridge that currently crosses the creek.



It is noted that the building envelopes shown on the plan in Figure 2 (below) are indicative only.



**Figure 2: Plan of Subdivision**

## Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

The following clauses are relevant in the consideration of this proposal:

### State Planning Policy Framework

- Clause 11 Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1S Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee South
- Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire planning
- Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land
- Clause 16.01-5S Rural residential development

### Municipal Strategic Statement

- Clause 21.02 Key Issues and Influences
- Clause 21.07 Economic Development

### Local Planning Policies

- Clause 22.02 Rural Dwellings Policy
- Clause 22.03 Rural Subdivision Policy

### Other Provisions

- Clause 35.07 Farming Zone
- Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay
- Clause 43.02 Design and Development Overlay
- Clause 52.02 Easements, Restrictions and Reserves
- Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1, or a Public Acquisition Overlay for a Category 1 Road

## Consultation/Communication

### Referrals

The following authorities and internal departments have been consulted on the proposal:

| Referral                                            | Comment                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Powercor                                            | No objection subject to conditions.           |
| Coliban Water                                       | No objection, did not request any conditions. |
| Downer                                              | No objection, did not request any conditions. |
| Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning | No objection, did not request any conditions. |

| Referral                                     | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| North Central Catchment Management Authority | No objection subject to the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to certification a suitable restriction must be placed on title stipulating that all buildings must be setback a minimum of 30 metres from the top of the bank of all waterways.</li> <li>• Prior to certification a suitable restriction is to be placed on the title which specifies the minimum floor level of any new dwelling(s) on each new allotment. The minimum floor level must be no lower than 300mm above the applicable 1% AEP flood level(s).</li> </ul> |
| VicRoads                                     | No objection, did not request any conditions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Traffic & Design                             | No objection subject to standard conditions relating to the construction of all-weather gravel driveway to each building envelope.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

### Public Notification

The application was advertised by way of notice on the site and letters to adjoining and nearby owners and occupiers.

As a result of advertising, 2 objections were received, with the grounds of objection being:

- Detrimental fragmentation of productive agricultural land
- Two additional 'as of right' dwellings
- Ability of land to be used productively will be prejudiced
- Loss of good farmland and potential threats to existing farming operations
- Insufficient justification
- Does not represent orderly planning
- Will increase the risk to human life from bushfire attack
- Positioning of building envelopes

It is noted that 1 of the objections was withdrawn.

The applicant did not wish to participate in a formal consultation meeting and provided a written response to the standing objection, stating the following:

- The proposal meets the minimum lot size of the Farming Zone and will not alter the capacity of the site to sustain agricultural uses
- The creation of two additional lots will not change the agricultural qualities of the land
- The proposal complies with the Planning Scheme and as such cannot be considered to be improper planning

- The vast majority of the site is not affected by a Bushfire Management Overlay and the risks are therefore no greater than any other land within the municipality.

The objection is further discussed below.

## Planning Assessment

Will the proposal result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to the purposes of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural subdivision and the protection of agricultural land?

The purposes of the Farming Zone encompass the following relevant matters:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.*
- *To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To provide for the use and development of land for the specific purposes identified in a schedule to this zone.*

There are certain requirements in this zone which allow the consideration of subdivision of the land, with the minimum lot size provision being 40 hectares.

In addition to the minimum lot size provision, the provisions of the Farming Zone direct that consideration must also be given to a number of decision guidelines under the Farming Zone which consider the question of how rural subdivisions fit within these purposes. The decision guidelines provide a means by which to assess such applications. The decision guidelines include the following matters that are relevant to this application:

- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.*
- *Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production.*
- *Whether the use or development will adversely affect soil quality or permanently remove land from agricultural production.*
- *The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure.*
- *Any integrated land management plan prepared for the site.*
- *The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.*

There is often an assumption that subdivision of land in the Farming Zone into lots equal to or larger than the specified minimum is a 'given', however this misconception has been dispelled by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) on many occasions. In *Tarenidis & Anor v Greater Bendigo CC [2011] VCAT 2357 (20 December 2011)* VCAT states the following:

*“In my view, the fact that the Farming Zone allows lots of at least 40 hectares in size must be read in the context that the policy framework places a strong emphasis on protecting productive agricultural land and preventing subdivision which will lead to a concentration of lots not consistent with zone purposes or which are likely to change the general use and character of the rural area.”*

Common to the purposes of the Farming Zone and the decision guidelines is the question of whether the proposal is consistent with the planning policy framework.

At a State-wide planning level, Clause 14.01-1S relating to the Protection of agricultural land has the objective to *protect the State’s agricultural base by preserving productive farmland*. Some of the main strategies in response to this objective seek to ensure the State’s agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of productive land, prevent inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas and to limit new housing in rural areas.

At a local planning level, Clause 22.03 relating to Council’s Rural Subdivision Policy has the following relevant objectives:

- *To discourage the fragmentation of rural land, or land with significant environmental values.*
- *To limit the subdivision, use or development of land to that which is compatible with the utilisation of the land as a sustainable agricultural resource.*

This clause has the following relevant policies on rural subdivision:

- *Discourage subdivision that is likely to lead to such a concentration of lots as to change the general use and character of the rural area and which is not consistent with the purposes of the zones.*
- *Discourage subdivision of high quality agricultural land.*

It is evident from the relevant policy framework that there is strong policy support to ensure that agricultural land is carefully managed in order to prevent adverse impacts on agricultural production, prevent the fragmentation of rural land and to ensure orderly residential development in rural areas so that agricultural production of these areas are not disadvantaged or prejudiced by ad hoc and unplanned residential development.

Given that the policy seeks to protect productive agricultural land, consideration must be given to the agricultural productive capacity of the land and land capability.

The application material states that the land is currently leased to a neighbouring farmer, with the property located within a viticulture and grazing district. The applicant’s argument is that a 3 lot subdivision would not reduce the agricultural production of the land or change the potential for the way in which the land is used.



Clause 21.07-8 relating to *Agriculture* acknowledges that whilst *much of the municipality does not contain highly productive agricultural land...Despite these limitations rural Bendigo produces a rural product worth about \$183.5 million, mainly through cropping, grazing, viticulture and through more intensive rural industry such as poultry and pigs. The protection of assets including land, water and transport infrastructure is vital in ensuring continued production and development.* This clause specifies a number of relevant objectives including identifying and protecting productive agricultural land from competing, inappropriate land uses, protecting rural industry from residential encroachment, maintaining potential for agricultural production, and minimising the fragmentation of productive agricultural land units.

In *Russell Smith Town Planning Services v Mount Alexander SC [2018] VCAT 58 (11 January 2018)* VCAT determined that *agricultural land is identified through the application of the Farming Zone...and all land zoned for farming is considered to have potential for agricultural use.* The planning scheme makes it clear that land zoned for farming designates it as suitable for agricultural purposes. The purposes of the zone, the decision guidelines and the relevant planning policy all seek to protect this land for such a use.

This area of Ravenswood is characterised by granite soils and as such is most likely suited to grazing as a form of agriculture. It is evident from a review of the site and surrounding area that agriculture can and is practised in this area. Whilst this is primarily in the form of grazing and viticulture, these are valid forms of agricultural enterprise and ones which, alongside more traditional broad acre farming, the scheme intends to support and protect. Contradictory to the applicant's argument, the *Rural Areas Strategy, September 2009* states that *as the primary trend in broad acre agriculture (cropping and grazing) is expansion and growth, very few new dwellings are legitimately required for such properties.* The subdivision of the land could impact on the ability to run a viable agricultural land use. No land capability report has been provided by the applicant to suggest that the land is not suitable for agriculture. Indeed, even if the land's capability for agriculture was found to be low, the argument is reinforced to maintain the land in a more meaningful parcel (ie. the less productive the land per unit area, the more land needed for an agricultural enterprise).

The applicant argues that the property is located between Rural Living lots on the north and east of the Township of Ravenswood and to the south. They further argue that the potential for two additional dwellings to disrupt any remaining agricultural activities is insignificant compared to the numerous other existing residences. In *Russell Smith Town Planning Services v Mount Alexander SC [2018] VCAT 58 (11 January 2018)* VCAT concluded that the more intensely settled nature of an area and the presence of smaller lot sizes around the subject land does not mean it has become a de-facto rural living area with no agricultural production capacity or potential.

As outlined above, from a policy perspective, the application of the Farming Zone to the subject land and its surrounds indicates its suitability for agriculture and a proposal which would ultimately result in a non-agricultural land use runs counter to these policies. It is unclear as to how the subdivision would support or enhance agricultural production and would not result in undesirable fragmentation of productive agricultural land.

### Rural residential considerations

When considering the protection of agricultural land, consideration must also be given to the oversupply of rural living land which currently exists within Greater Bendigo. The *Rural Areas Strategy, September 2009* recognises the over-supply of land for rural living, noting that the supply of rural living land far exceeds the minimum threshold of 10 years. It goes on to note that previous studies suggest that there is up to 80 years supply of land already zoned for rural living. By any measure, the conclusion is that there is a gross over supply of land for rural living purposes within the municipality, which far exceeds the 10-year benchmark set by State policy. Rural residential development should be directed to existing planned areas for this purpose.

If the subdivision was to proceed it would result in two additional 'as of right' dwellings in the Farming Zone. As such, Clauses 22.02 (Rural Dwellings) and 22.03 (Rural Subdivision) are interrelated and cannot be considered in isolation. Appropriate consideration must be given to the suitability and impact of future dwellings.

The decision guidelines of the Farming Zone include the following matters that are relevant to this application:

- *Whether the dwelling will result in the loss of fragmentation of productive agricultural land.*
- *Whether the dwelling will be adversely affected by agricultural activities on adjacent and nearby land due to dust, noise, odour, use of chemicals and farm machinery, traffic and hours of operation.*
- *Whether the dwelling will adversely affect the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.*
- *The potential for the proposal to lead to a concentration or proliferation of dwellings in the area and the impact of this on the use of the land for agriculture.*

Clause 22.02 relating to Council's Rural Dwellings Policy has the following relevant objectives:

- *To discourage the fragmentation of rural land, or land with significant environmental values.*
- *To ensure that existing agricultural enterprises in the Farming Zone are not placed under pressure from the encroachment of residential activities.*
- *To limit the subdivision, use or development of land to that which is compatible with the utilisation of the land as a sustainable agricultural resource.*

This clause has the following relevant policies on rural dwellings:

- *Protect existing land zoned Farming Zone from fragmentation by the use of land for residential purposes.*

Whilst it is acknowledged that dwellings are present within the surrounding area, in *Bennett v Greater Bendigo CC [2018] VCAT 1486 (24 September 2018)* VCAT concluded the following:

*While the site's location nearby to developed urban areas might suggest the land is suitable for rural residential development, it is important to note that this type of ad hoc subdivision and development is problematic. The greater the fragmentation of land now, the more difficult it will become to realise future urban structure and planning policy. To this end, policies such as 'Compact Greater Bendigo' have been developed to ensure that urban land growth is channelled into designated growth areas, and inappropriate sprawl prevented. The site is currently located outside the Urban Growth Boundary.*

The *Rural Areas Strategy, September 2009* notes that the use of discretion to allow new dwellings in rural areas, primarily the Farming Zone, has been and continues to be generously applied, despite an over supply of zoned Rural Living land to cater for such demand. Such decision making poses a significant threat to the viability of the local agricultural sector as it progressively compromises the ability of local businesses to grow and operate relatively unhindered.

Current planning scheme policy seeks to ensure that new dwellings in the Farming Zone are only approved in instances where they support agriculture. In making such a determination, consideration should be given to why there is a need to live on site and how that would enhance agricultural use, whether agriculture would remain the primary land use, whether it is likely that the land would remain in agricultural use into the future following development of the dwelling, and so on. It is cause for concern that as a result of the subdivision, Council would have no control as to whether these dwellings would be required in order to support an agricultural land use, or rather, would result in a dwelling that supports rural living opportunities.

The applicant has not produced a compelling planning argument that this application is acceptable in terms of planning policies and the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone. The applicant has primarily relied upon the minimum lot size specified for the zone, which (as previously mentioned) VCAT has previously dismissed as an argument.

## **Conclusion**

The application proposes a subdivision which runs contrary to planning policies relating to the Farming Zone. It would likely result in a reduction in agricultural land area and contribute to the incremental shift towards rural living. Such rural living opportunities could result in a net loss to agriculture due to permanent land use changes. Rural-residential land uses should be directed to the Rural Living Zone, of which the City of Greater Bendigo already has an oversupply.

Insufficient justification has been provided to support the proposal with respect to the relevant planning policy that deals with rural subdivisions, rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land.

It is recommended that a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit be issued.

**Options**

Council, acting as the responsible authority for administering the Planning Scheme, may resolve to: grant a permit, grant a permit with conditions, or refuse to grant a permit.

**Attachments**

- Objection

## **4. WELLBEING AND FAIRNESS**

### **4.1 GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY**

#### **Document Information**

**Author** Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing

**Responsible Director** Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing

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#### **Purpose**

To present the Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Strategy 2020 – 2025 for Council endorsement.

#### **Summary**

The Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity (Coalition) is a collective of diverse community organisations that joined together in 2018 to work toward gender equality.

The Coalition represents a diverse cross-section of the community with thirty organisations in the private, public and community sector working together to advance gender equity.

The Coalition has developed a Gender Equity Strategy (Strategy) to help guide its collective work over the next five years in order to help achieve and sustain gender equality in Greater Bendigo.

The draft Strategy was presented to Council on 2 March 2020 and following a six-week period of community and stakeholder feedback, has developed the final Strategy. The Coalition now seeks endorsement from all members, including Council.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council acknowledge and endorse the Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Strategy 2020 – 2025.

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Policy Context

Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017 – 2021

Goal 2: Wellbeing and Fairness

Objective 2.1.3: Create a much healthier Greater Bendigo – Plan for fairer health outcomes.

Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021

Objective: Safe and secure

Priority: Prevent violence against women and children

Free From Violence 2019

Objective: Growing Gender Equity in Greater Bendigo

Priority: To promote gender equity and the prevention of violence against women in Greater Bendigo.

Background Information

In 2017 the Council passed a motion to support the development of a Gender Equity Strategy for Greater Bendigo.

In November 2018 the City was successful in receiving a Free from Violence grant from the Victorian Office for Women. Whilst the workplan for the funding included development of the strategy, several other actions were included.

Some of these were:

- Two International Women's Day Forums – 2018 / 2019
- Formation of the Coalition for Gender Equity – currently 30 members
- Publication of a Coalition for Gender Equity Leadership Statement
- Receipt of funding from the Free from Violence program
- Social media campaigns for the 2018 & 2019 16 Days of Activism
- Community Attitudinal Survey – 532 responses
- Co-design workshop – 55 participants

The community engagement plan for the strategy identified the engagement of early adopters across the City. This commenced with a forum on International Women's Day in 2018 where a number of organisations and community groups shared their work. This forum then led to the establishment of the Coalition.

The Coalition currently has thirty organisations representing a diverse cross-section of the community. Members include State government departments such as DET, DHHS & DELWP, NCCMA, La Trobe University, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, Centre for Non-violence, Centre against sexual assault Central Victoria, Sports Focus, CFA, Belgravia and the YMCA, Bendigo & Adelaide Bank and a variety of reference groups (disability, youth and interfaith). The formation of the Coalition brought together existing primary prevention efforts and allowed for the strengthening of these efforts and extended reach through the sharing of ideas, contacts, resources and in-kind support.

The Coalition formalised their joint commitment through the development of a Coalition Leadership Statement which outlined the purpose, vision, principles and desired outcomes of their collective impact approach. This was released on International Women's Day in 2019.

Building on the Leadership statement, the Coalition recognised that the development of a Gender Equity Strategy would serve to further align the efforts of members and provide a collective framework for achieving their vision and objectives.

The Free from Violence funding enabled the City to engage a consultant to provide the expertise and skills to facilitate this initiative. The consultant facilitated a workshop at which fifty-five current and prospective Coalition members co-designed a Strategy to guide their collective work for the next five years.

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s):

Report

The Coalition is a collective of diverse community organisations that joined together in 2018 to work toward gender equality.

It represents a diverse cross-section of the community with thirty organisations in the private, public and community sector working together to advance gender equity and prevent violence against women.

It has a broad and extensive reach in Greater Bendigo with member organisations employing over 8,000 staff with direct and regular contact with the community through the delivery of core services and facilities. These organisations, from the local library to the corporate bank, are working together towards a fair and equitable community for us all.

The Coalition has developed this strategy to help guide its collective work over the next five years in order to help achieve and sustain gender equality in Greater Bendigo.

The strategy identifies structural change, relational change and attitudinal change as key objectives and will focus their work across six priority settings;

- Workplaces,
- Education,
- Community,
- Health,
- Sport and recreation and
- Emergency management.

The Coalition will work in Communities of Practice alongside community members to enact social change. As a collective unit rather than in isolation, the Coalition will strengthen existing efforts and help bring about the societal change required to achieve and sustain gender equality. Through this collective impact approach, the Coalition is working towards seeing gender equality become the new norm in Greater Bendigo.

The Coalition believes the following outcomes will indicate Greater Bendigo is a gender equitable community:

- Women and children live in safety, free from violence.
- Images and language used in the public domain will not stereotype women, men or people who are gender diverse.
- Women, men and people who are gender diverse will participate equally in sport and the arts and will enjoy equal access to the same facilities and opportunities.
- The built environment will be welcoming and safe for all genders.
- Our workplaces and community governance structures will reflect the gender diversity of our community at all levels.
- There will be equal pay for equal roles and responsibilities.
- Career development and promotion opportunities will be offered equally to all genders.
- Flexible working arrangements will be equally available and taken up regardless of gender.
- There will be no traditional gendered job or study stereotypes.
- Career expectations will be gender neutral.
- Caring responsibilities and unpaid domestic work will be shared equally.
- People of all ages will support gender equality.

Consultation/Communication

Along with the co-design workshop held in December 2019, in November 2019 the City and Coalition members disseminated a community Gender Equity Survey to assess community attitudes towards gender equity and violence against women. The survey, drawn from the National Community Attitudes Survey had 532 responses, providing valuable insights which informed priority areas in the draft strategy. It provides a baseline to measure changes in community attitudes over time.

The draft Strategy was launched at the Women's Health Loddon Mallee International Women's Day breakfast on Wednesday 4 March 2020.

Since then, the Strategy has been reviewed and workshopped further by Coalition members and a period of six weeks has been provided for general community feedback on the draft Strategy.

The engagement period resulted in 29 submissions being made.

A summary of feedback included:

- Suggestion to include an introductory letter.
- Wording needs to be re-written to be more accessible to public – adopt more plain English.
- Paint a more inviting, aspirational picture of gender equity and why it is good for everyone.
- Include business case for gender equity.
- Demonstrate scale and critical mass of Coalition.
- Include list of Coalition members.
- Introduce and explain intersectionality and intersectional discrimination with examples.
- Include key findings of Community Gender Equity Survey and how it links to strategy.
- Remove faith organisations and media from priority settings.
- Separate community and health in priority settings.
- Include recreation organisations and groups when mentioning sport.
- Further explanation required around Strategy implementation and evaluation.
- Coalition meeting schedule and CoP activities seem too onerous.
- Include more information on how CoPs will operate.
- Include CALD community explicitly in document.
- Location of CALD, LGBTIQ+ and youth are not explicit in priority settings.
- Expand evaluation section.
- Include more information on role of Coordination Group.
- Include statistics for women and gender diverse.
- Incorporate impacts of gender roles on men's health and wellbeing.
- Include Outcomes from Leadership Statement.
- Include more detail on how other Coalition members have been active in the local landscape.

Internally, the City's gender equity work is being coordinated by a Working Group with representatives from the following:

- Council – Cr's O'Rourke & Alden
- Health & Wellbeing
- Corporate Performance
- Strategy & Growth
- Community Partnerships
- People & Culture
- Active & Healthy Lifestyles
- Community Wellbeing
- Business Transformation
- Works

- Bendigo Art Gallery
- Goldfields Library Corporation
- Bendigo Theatre & Events

This group has provided input over the course of developing the Strategy.

Resource Implications

Work on gender equity is being funded by a Free from Violence grant provided by the Victorian Office for Women. These funds expire in June 2020.

An operating business case has been prepared for the 2020-2021 budget to cover ongoing support for the Coalition and the City's implementation costs.

Attachments

1. Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Strategy 2020 – 2025



Greater Bendigo Coalition Gender Equity Strategy

A shared gender equity framework
2020–2025





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Acknowledgement of Country

The Coalition for Gender Equity acknowledges that Greater Bendigo is located on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. It acknowledges and extends its appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the people of Greater Bendigo reside.

The Coalition pays its respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People. The Coalition expresses gratitude in the sharing of this land, sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and hope that together we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



INTRODUCTORY LETTER

On behalf of the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity, it is our pleasure to introduce the first Gender Equity Strategy for Greater Bendigo. This is a significant community achievement and one that we are very proud to support as the strategy builds momentum and the Coalition's engagement continues to grow in our community.

Gender equity is the process of being fair to everyone, whether they identify as male, female or gender diverse and leads to gender equality. By working together, we ensure that we can all participate in our community with equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. With gender equity, the community will be healthier, all people's needs will be considered in decision making, policy development and in leadership, and violence against women and children will be reduced. We all benefit.

The Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity was formed in 2018. The Coalition represents a diverse cross-section of the community with 37 organisations and groups (as at May 2020) in the private, public and community sector working together to advance gender equity and prevent violence against women. The Coalition has a broad and extensive reach in Greater Bendigo with member organisations employing over 8,000 staff with direct and regular contact with the community through the delivery of core programs, services and facilities. These organisations, from the local library to the corporate bank, are working together towards a fair and equitable community for us all.

The Coalition has developed this strategy to help guide its collective work over the next five years. The strategy identifies structural change, relational change and attitudinal change as key objectives and will focus the Coalition's work across six priority settings:

- workplaces,
- education,
- community,
- health,
- sport and recreation and
- emergency management.

The Coalition will work in action groups alongside community members to enact social change. As a collective unit rather than in isolation, the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity will strengthen our existing efforts and help bring about the social change required to achieve and sustain gender equity.

We are all in this together. We are all responsible.

Please join us in this vital work.

Margaret O'Rourke
Margaret O'Rourke
Mayor, City of Greater Bendigo

Tricia Currie
Tricia Currie
CEO, Women's Health Loddon Mallee

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Gender Equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to everyone, whether they identify as male, female or gender diverse. Gender equity recognises that within all communities, people of different genders have varying benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. To ensure fairness, strategies are required to respond to historical and existing social structures and create an equal playing field.

Gender equity leads to gender equality, where there are equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all.

While gender equality is a fundamental human right, it also carries enormous benefits for organisations, economies and improves overall living standards globally. The World Economic Forum recognises that "people and their talents are among the core drivers of sustainable, long-term economic growth. If half of these talents are underdeveloped or underutilised, growth and sustainability will be compromised."

From an economic viewpoint, gender equality in Australia has been directly linked to increased national productivity, economic growth, organisational performance and reputation, and an improved ability of workplaces to attract and retain talent.¹ The rise of female participation in the labour force since the 1970s has boosted Australian economic activity by 22% and it is projected that if the current labour force participation gap were halved, Australia's annual GDP would rise by AUD\$60 billion in twenty years.¹

Gender inequality and its impacts also pose a significant burden to the Australian economy. The impact of violence against women and children to the Australian economy in 2015-2016 was an estimated \$2 billion.²

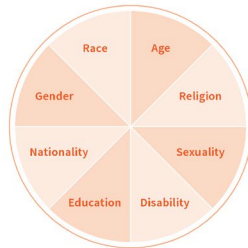
Achieving gender equality is core to preventing violence against women and children. OurWatch³, Australia's leading primary prevention agency, produced a landmark report which identified four characteristics of gender inequality that drive violence against women:

- Rigid gender roles and identities
- Condoning, trivialising, minimising or excusing violence against women
- Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- Disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression

While gender inequality and violence against women and children exist within our community, we are all responsible in addressing this social issue so that everyone can live in safety, free to participate in all aspects of community life.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the understanding that gender is one component of our identity and intersects with other factors such as age, race, ability and sexuality to form an overall sense of identity. Intersectional discrimination is when people experience discrimination in multiple areas simultaneously, leading to a heightened sense of exclusion and disadvantage. For example, women and girls with disabilities are twice as likely as women and girls without disabilities to experience violence throughout their lives.⁴



1.2 Gender Equity and Greater Bendigo

Gender inequality is a pervasive social issue across Australia and the rest of the world. People from all walks of life are affected irrespective of their socio-economic status, level of education, age bracket, employment status, ethnicity or religious affiliation. Greater Bendigo is not immune to this social issue and research has found that quality of life is experienced differently according to gender even within our local context.

In Greater Bendigo, women contribute more significantly to unpaid domestic work than men with a quarter of women spending 15+ hours a week on these activities compared to a tenth of men. Women are more than twice as likely to work part time to juggle unpaid domestic and caring responsibilities and consequently almost half (45%) of employed women earn below

the weekly 'minimum wage'. Women are twice as likely to feel unsafe walking alone at night⁵ and abandon their walking or cycling journey for safety concerns⁶, impacting their participation in sport and recreational activities and use of public spaces. Women in Greater Bendigo experience family violence at three times the rate of males and sexual violence at eight times the rate of males, putting them at higher risk of inequality and violence than many of their female counterparts across the State.⁷ These statistics align with a report by the Australian Human Rights Commission which found that women in rural and regional areas are more likely to experience disadvantage and discrimination in the workplace and society more broadly than women who are located in urban areas.⁸

Gender inequality affects men too, in different ways. Rigid gender norms and perceptions of what it means to be a 'real man' are social pressures affecting men's overall health and wellbeing. An Australian study has shown that young men who comply with social pressures to act like a 'real man' report poorer mental health, are twice as likely to consider suicide and are more likely to be subject to and engage in bullying and violence.⁹ The Federal National Men's Health Strategy acknowledges the influence of gender on men's health and prioritises reducing the stigma among males associated with health care, ill health and help-seeking.¹⁰ A recent report estimates that 72% of males do not seek help for mental ill health.¹¹ This stigma associated with accessing health care and support for physical and mental illness is a contributing factor to higher rates of premature mortality, substance abuse and suicide among men.¹² The National Men's Health Strategy recognises that one of the barriers to improving men's health is the lack of research into the gender inequality issues facing men and boys.¹³

The way gender inequality affects gender diverse people is an emerging area of research. Although there is more understanding to be gained, gender diverse people often experience social isolation, discrimination and exclusion from their family due to ignorance around gender diversity. As a result of this discrimination, gender diverse people experience high levels of anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide.¹⁴



1.3 The Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity

The Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity was established in 2018 and is a diverse collective of 32 organisations and groups (as at May 2020) in the public, private and community sector dedicated to advancing gender equity and the prevention of violence against women in Greater Bendigo. The Coalition has a broad and extensive reach in Greater Bendigo with member organisations employing over 8,000 staff with direct and regular contact with the community through the delivery of core programs, services and facilities. The Coalition has a diverse membership including Victoria Police, Goldfields Library Corporation, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, ATE Central Victoria, La Trobe University, Bendigo Health, City of Greater Bendigo, Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Clans Corporation, Department of Health and Human Services, Belgrave Leisure, Women's Health Loddon Mallee and Centre for Non-Violence. These organisations recognise that by working together as a collective unit rather than in isolation, they are able to strengthen their existing efforts and help bring about the societal change required to achieve and sustain gender equality. Their commitment to this aim was demonstrated in a Coalition Leadership Statement released to the public in March 2019, outlining the purpose, vision and desired outcomes of their collective impact approach.

Coalition vision statement:

"A community where all people are respected, safe to participate in all aspects of community life and have equitable access to the resources they need to succeed in achieving their aspirations, whilst living in a community that is free from violence against women."

Through this collective impact approach, the Coalition is working towards seeing gender equality become the new norm in Greater Bendigo. The Coalition believes these outcomes will indicate Greater Bendigo is a gender equitable community:

- Women and children live in safety, free from violence
- Images and language used in the public domain will not stereotype women, men or people who are gender diverse
- Women, men and people who are gender diverse will participate equally in sport and the arts and will enjoy equal access to the same facilities and opportunities
- The built environment will be welcoming and safe for all genders
- Our workplaces and community governance structures will reflect the gender diversity of our community at all levels
- There will be equal pay for equal roles and responsibilities
- Career development and promotion opportunities will be offered equally to all genders
- Flexible working arrangements will be equally available and taken up regardless of gender
- There will be no traditional gendered job or study stereotypes
- Career expectations will be gender neutral
- Caring responsibilities and unpaid domestic work will be shared equally
- People of all ages will support gender equality



1.4 The Case for a Gender Equity Strategy



A Gender Equity Strategy provides a framework to guide the work of current and prospective Coalition members and build the structures and processes to support and coordinate alignment of effort. A collective strategy allows the Coalition to measure and monitor progress towards a more gender equitable Greater Bendigo whilst remaining accountable for this progress to the broader community.

The development of a strategy also aligns the work of the Coalition with current state and national strategies and initiatives, allowing the Coalition to benefit from this coordinated approach while delivering initiatives suited to its unique local context.

1.5 Current Australian Policy Context

How this strategy sits within the federal, state, regional and local landscape

This strategy builds on a series of measures to address gender inequality within Australian social systems and structures that have gradually been introduced since the 1970s.¹⁵ It sits within an existing framework of federal and state strategies to achieve gender equality and the prevention of violence against women within the local context of Greater Bendigo.

At the federal level, there is specific legislation aimed at promoting gender equality for women and men in the workplace. The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 requires all organisations in the private sector with over 100 employees to publish annual reports on their organisation's performance against a suite of gender equality indicators. The Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Fair Work Act 2009 and Sex Discrimination Act 1984 are also current acts of legislation that together form the legislative framework promoting gender equality in Australian workplaces.

The Council of Australian Governments endorsed a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children¹⁶ to see a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and children. Under the National Plan, the Commonwealth Government funded five national initiatives to drive long-term societal change, OurWatch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), 1800 RESPECT, DV-Alert and Stop it at the Start.

At the state level, Victoria has invested unprecedented resources to tackle family violence and introduced legislation to achieve gender equality within public sector workplaces, the first of its kind in Australia. The Gender Equality Act 2020 complements the Workplace Gender Equality Act in requiring the public sector with fifty or more employees to take positive action toward gender equality and publish regular reports on their progress to a Gender Equality Commissioner.

The Government also conducted Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence which consequently led to the investment of \$2.7 billion to resource the implementation of all 227 recommendations made by the Commission. The Government's Safe and Strong Strategy and Free From Violence Action Plan help guide the implementation of this work.

At the regional level, Loddon Mallee has the second highest regional incidence of reported family violence in Victoria.¹⁷ A Loddon Mallee Action Plan was developed to coordinate efforts across the region to reduce levels of family violence. Regional Family Violence Forums, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups and Primary Care Partnerships are all examples of organisations and groups working in collaboration to promote gender equity and prevent violence against women in Loddon Mallee.

At the local level, the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity formalised existing relationships between 32 organisations and groups (as at May 2020) within the public, private and community sector already dedicated to advancing gender equity. The Greater Bendigo against Family Violence Committee is a member of the Coalition, and is comprised of government, community and school representatives working together to raise awareness of family violence and how to prevent it. Women's Health Loddon Mallee plays a lead role in many gender equity initiatives in partnership with many other Coalition members including the Rural Challenge Gender Equity Leadership Program for local sporting clubs and CFA brigades and the Enabling Women Leadership Program for women with disabilities. The City of Greater Bendigo has been instrumental in the formation of the Coalition for Gender Equity and is a proud signatory to the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter, which promotes increasing women's participation in public life and greater diversity in key decision-making forums. The Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021, Greater Bendigo Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 and the Human Rights Charter are overarching frameworks guiding local government priorities for Greater Bendigo which promote gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.



1.6 Inputs

What information did we use to develop the strategy?

In the development of the Gender Equity Strategy, the Coalition reviewed existing gender equality strategies and frameworks at the federal, state, regional and local level to help guide its priority objectives and settings. It also engaged the local community through hosting a Gender Equity workshop, consulting a variety of reference and advisory committees and conducting an online community survey to canvas community attitudes to gender equity and violence against women.

Gender Equity Community Survey

In November 2019, the Coalition disseminated a Community Gender Equity Survey to assess community attitudes towards gender equity and violence against women. The survey, drawn from the National Community Attitudes Survey, attracted 532 responses and provided valuable insight informing strategic objectives and a baseline to measure changes in community attitudes over time. The community was quite unanimous in identifying and condemning behaviours that constituted domestic violence however appeared to be more divided in attitudes concerning gender roles in the workplace and in intimate relationships. 10% of people held what is considered

to be rigid ideas of gender roles by agreeing that men make better political leaders and more capable bosses in the workplace and that women like men being in charge of intimate relationships. A quarter of people agreed that many women exaggerate how unequally they are treated in Australia and mistakenly interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist. 1 in 4 also indicated that they would not know how to seek advice or know how to support someone in a domestic violence relationship. The strategy focuses on attitudinal change as a priority objective with specific actions related to these findings.

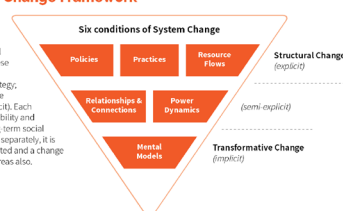
Gender Equity Workshop

In December 2019, a consultative workshop was facilitated with 55 current and prospective Coalition members and community representatives to discuss the proposed framework of the Gender Equity Strategy. This workshop represented a diverse cross-section of the community including local and state government, Traditional Owner Groups, health services, sporting bodies, large corporations, educational and religious institutions, specialist services and a variety of reference groups (disability, youth and interfaith).

2.0 GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY

2.1 Adopting a Systems Change Framework

The Coalition Gender Equity Strategy has adopted a systems change framework² which identifies six conditions that play a significant role in holding a social issue such as gender inequality in place. These six conditions fit into three main categories which inform the three objectives of the strategy: structural change (explicit); relational change (semi-explicit) and attitudinal change (implicit). Each of the objectives have varying degrees of visibility and require different approaches to achieve long term social change. While each objective will be tackled separately, it is recognised that they are intrinsically connected and a change in one will likely affect change in the other areas also.



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2.2 Strategic Objectives

1 Structural Change: The Explicit

To see policies, practices and allocated resources which demonstrate commitment to the promotion of gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

Outputs

- 1.1 To see workplaces, as required by legislation or voluntarily, develop gender equality action plans and report on their performance against workplace gender equality indicators outlined in the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 or Gender Equality Act 2020, including:
 - Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
 - Gender composition of governing bodies
 - Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce
 - Sexual harassment in the workplace
 - Recruitment and promotion practices in the workplace
 - Family Violence Leave
 - Flexible Working Arrangements
 - Supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
 - Gendered segregation in the workplace

- 1.2 To see workplaces utilise the resources of reputable gender equality agencies in the development of gender equality action plans, policies and practices such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency or OutRight.
- 1.3 To see community and health organisations develop and implement programs and services with a gender lens, ensuring staff are adequately trained in gender sensitivity and intersectionality.
- 1.4 To see urban planning and design consider gender-inclusivity and intersectional discrimination to promote an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all people.
- 1.5 To see the impacts of gender roles and intersectional discrimination considered in the planning and implementation of emergency management and disaster recovery.
- 1.6 To see educational institutions and sport and recreational organisations and clubs develop targeted strategies to increase male, female and gender diverse participation in non-traditional areas of study, sport and recreational activities.
- 1.7 To develop a mechanism for Coalition members to report and evaluate progress in achieving Gender Equity Strategy objectives.

2 Relational Change: The Semi Explicit

To see transformed relationships between people within a diverse community through better connectedness and communication.

Outputs

- 2.1 To ensure the Coalition for Gender Equity is inclusive and representative of its diverse community in its membership.
- 2.2 To promote increased gender diversity in elected representative roles in the community.
- 2.3 To see increased gender diversity in senior management and governance in workplaces and community organisations.

- 2.4 To see young people consistently exposed to gender equity principles in their formal and informal educational and learning environments.
- 2.5 To see an increase in the availability of and participation in programs which challenge rigid gender stereotypes and promote respectful relationships and healthy masculinities.
- 2.6 To see Coalition members develop an action group for each priority setting and work alongside the community to implement actions according to its strategic objectives.
- 2.7 To see Coalition members strengthen their capacity and commitment to gender equity.

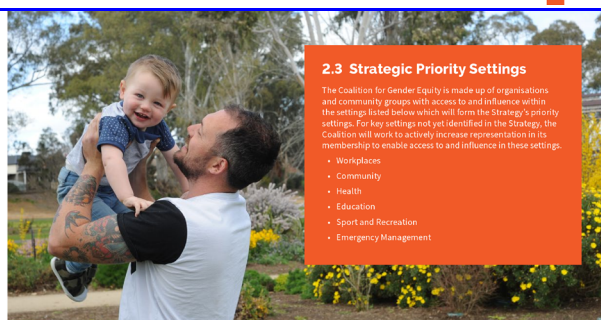
3 Attitudinal Change: The Implicit

To see evidence of change in individual attitudes and behaviours towards a personal commitment to gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

Outputs

- 3.1 To see positive changes in community attitudes towards gender and the prevention of violence against women over time.
- 3.2 To facilitate safe and inclusive community dialogue about gender equity and violence against women and children.
- 3.3 To raise awareness of gender equity, violence against women and children, and available support services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, with particular focus on newly arrived migrant and refugee communities.

- 3.4 To raise community understanding and awareness of intersectionality, acknowledging the complex interplay of factors including gender, age, disability, sexuality and migration status.
- 3.5 To see Coalition members facilitate a safe and welcoming platform for people facing intersectional discrimination to share their experiences to inform more effective practices.
- 3.6 To see organisations and the community better equipped to overcome resistance and respond to backlash to gender equity.
- 3.7 To see community members understand their vital role as an active bystander and have the confidence to safely act if they witness discriminatory speech or behaviour.



2.3 Strategic Priority Settings

The Coalition for Gender Equity is made up of organisations and community groups with access to and influence within the settings listed below which will form the Strategy's priority settings. For key settings not yet identified in the Strategy, the Coalition will work to actively increase representation in its membership to enable access to and influence in these settings.

- Workplaces
- Community
- Health
- Education
- Sport and Recreation
- Emergency Management

2.4 Strategy Implementation and Evaluation



Coalition Implementation Model

The Coalition

Coalition members are jointly responsible for the resourcing required to implement the Gender Equity Strategy. Coalition members will nominate a setting in which to invest their resources and form an action group with other Coalition members within their nominated setting.

Action Groups

An action group will be established for each priority setting outlined in the strategy. Each group will develop an annual action plan to help achieve the three objectives of the Gender Equity Strategy. Each group will identify a lead Coalition member and can be open to any community groups or individuals who wish to help develop and implement the action plan for that setting. Action groups will provide progress updates on their action plan at Coalition meetings.

Coordination Group

A Coordination group will provide backbone administrative support to Coalition members including the coordination of progress updates and production of annual reports against the strategy. The Coordination group will also provide the administrative mechanisms for collective campaigns and initiatives involving the whole Coalition.

Evaluation and Reporting

The Coalition will evaluate its progress in implementing the Gender Equity Strategy through the Results Based Accountability evaluation method. This method will evaluate the quantity, quality and effectiveness of the Coalition's efforts in achieving its strategic objectives. A process evaluation will be undertaken three times per year ahead of Coalition meetings to provide an on going progress report on the status of each active action. The Coordination group will support the Coalition to produce an annual report to provide to the community. At the end of each annual reporting cycle, the Coalition will meet to evaluate progress, determine any changes required to the strategy and meet with their action groups to develop an action plan for the year ahead.

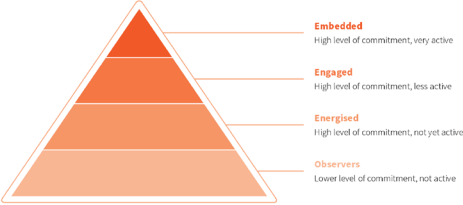
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2.5 Communication and Meeting Model

Coalition	Meets three times a year to build connection, communication and capacity across the Coalition and to report action plan progress against the strategy.
Action Groups	Meets once every two months to monitor progress in implementing action plans and share best practice and professional development.
Coordination Group	Meets three times per year (after initial establishment phase) to discuss progress updates of action groups and prepare Annual report for community and Council.

2.6 Evaluation of Coalition



Coalition Engagement Model

In addition to evaluating progress towards achieving the Strategy's objectives, it is critical to measure the commitment and capacity of individual Coalition members to advancing gender equity and the effectiveness of the Coalition in equipping Coalition members with what they need to develop in their growth and commitment to gender equity. The Coalition will utilise the *Principles Focused Evaluation Method* to assist in its evaluation of these important elements.

One of the key measures of success for the Strategy will be assessing whether partners continue to progress up the partnership pyramid. The aim of Coalition activity is to encourage increased commitment and collaboration in advancing gender equity and to provide opportunities for embedded or engaged organisations to mentor and build the capacity of those who identify as lesser engaged or experienced. Coalition members will be encouraged to annually self-assess their level of engagement against an agreed capability framework.

APPENDIX

1. World Economic Forum, 2015
2. Workplace Gender Equality Agency, The Business Case: <https://bit.ly/2wY9HTS>
3. KPMG 2018, Ending Workplace Discrimination Against Women: <https://bit.ly/2RWgwrR>
4. KPMG 2016, The cost of violence against women and children in Australia: <https://bit.ly/3cAUG2u>
5. Our Watch, About Us: <https://bit.ly/2IpcTD9>
6. WDI, Violence against women with disabilities: <https://bit.ly/3cAQME9>
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12. The Man Box: A Study on being a young man in Australia, 2018: <https://bit.ly/34T3Gul>
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19. Department of Social Services, The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children: <https://bit.ly/2V3Vqht>
20. The Loddon Mallee Action Plan for the primary prevention of violence against women (2016-2019) pg 11: <https://bit.ly/38UPk0k>
21. FSG 2018, Water of Systems Change: <https://bit.ly/2V258cM>
View current members of the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity on the City of Greater Bendigo website www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/coalition-gender-equity





5. STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY

5.1 BENDIGO GOVHUB COMMERCIALISATION

Document Information

Author Jenn Spelling, GovHub Project Manager

Responsible Director Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request Council to:

1. Approve to sell Council-owned land located at 189 – 229 Lyttleton Terrace, Bendigo to Development Victoria to enable the construction of the Bendigo GovHub.
2. Approve Council's share of the Bendigo GovHub fitout costs and make an allocation in a future budget.
3. Approve the key commercial terms that will form the basis of a lease agreement with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) for the City to become a tenant of the Bendigo GovHub.
4. Note the advice received from the Victorian State Government confirming the State's contribution to the City of Greater Bendigo's costs.
5. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to execute the documents on behalf of the City in line with the commercial terms approved by Council.

Summary

This report outlines the key decisions, commercial arrangements and documents that require approval to continue to implement the Council decision from February 2019 for Council to sell the land at 189 – 229 Lyttleton Terrace, Bendigo and become a tenant of the Bendigo GovHub.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. In accordance with section 191 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic), approve to enter into a contract of sale with Development Victoria to sell the land located at 189 – 229 Lyttleton Terrace, Bendigo with the following key commercial terms:
 - a. Sale price of \$5,500,000 excluding GST, as determined by the Valuer General of Victoria
 - b. 10% deposit payable
 - c. Settlement, subject to conditions within the contract of sale
 - d. Subject to agreement to the terms of the proposed building lease (referred to in recommendation 3).
2. Approve the City's share of the Bendigo GovHub fitout costs of \$10,028,498 and for these costs to be allocated in future budgets. The fitout costs will be offset from the proceeds of the sale of land and State Government funding.
3. Approve for the City to enter into a lease agreement with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) to become a tenant of the Bendigo GovHub with:
 - a. An initial lease term of 20 years; and
 - b. Two options for further terms of 10 years each
4. Note that the:
 - a. Commercial aspects of the transaction are within the upper limits prescribed by Council at the February 2019 Council meeting
 - b. Total cost for the City is estimated at \$35.6M over 40 years
5. Authorise for the CEO, on behalf of Council, to execute the documents required to finalise the sale of land and building lease transactions
6. Note the confirmation of funding from the Victorian Government as contribution to the City's temporary office accommodation and fitout costs.

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## **Policy Context**

### Community Plan Reference:

*City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:*

### Goal #1 Lead and Govern for all

1.3 Be innovative and financially responsible

### Goal #3 Strengthening the economy

3.1 Support our local businesses and industry to be strong, vibrant and to grow and develop

3.3 Ensure Greater Bendigo is a welcoming place for new businesses and industries and supports creativity and innovation and visitor attraction.

#### Goal #5 Environmental sustainability

5.1 Drawing on the One Planet Living framework work to connect the health of the natural environment to the health and prosperity of the community

#### Council Policy Reference (include weblink as applicable):

|           |                                |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 2018/2019 | City of Greater Bendigo Budget |
| 2005      | Bendigo CBD plan               |
| 2018      | Transforming the City Centre   |
| 2020      | City Centre plan               |

#### **Background Information**

The City of Greater Bendigo operates across seven offices located in the northern end of central Bendigo. Four of these offices are owned by Council, including the site of the main office on Lyttleton Terrace, and the remaining three are leased.

The 2013 Independent Review of the City of Greater Bendigo recommended consolidating these offices. Recommendation 11 – Consolidation of Council offices was included as one of Council's top 10 priorities from the Independent Review.

In May 2015 Council responded to Recommendation 8 and approved to expand the brief of the then City Futures Directorate to investigate accommodating greater decentralisation of government services in Bendigo, and progress Recommendation 11 relating to the consolidation of City offices.

In June 2016 Council considered the final progress report on the implementation of the Independent Review and acknowledged completion of the last five of the 69 recommendations, including Recommendation 11. In accepting this report, Council agreed to advocate and plan for the consolidation of City offices and bring together all administrative staff located in central Bendigo into the same building.

In May 2017, the Victorian Government allocated \$1M to investigate the feasibility of developing a Bendigo GovHub in Bendigo. In May 2018 a further \$16M was allocated to the project, and a commitment was provided for 100 new local public sector jobs as part of the project.

The proposed model includes bringing together 600 Victorian Government public service employees from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Department of Transport (DOT), Parks Victoria and 100 new public sector jobs into the one facility. The proposed development also includes the provision of space for 400 City staff.

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s):

Following analysis of the options against a range of criteria, including the guiding principles for the project, Councils decisions at its February 2019 meeting were:

Council:

- a. Noted that following a detailed analysis of the various options available, the most feasible option was for the City of Greater Bendigo to be a tenant in the proposed Bendigo GovHub development (Option1)
- b. Committed to becoming a tenant in the Bendigo GovHub with the exact terms and conditions of the agreement to be governed by a head lease agreement with the Department of Treasury and Finance
- c. Noted the proposed upper limit for costs for the project that were considered commercial in confidence and provided to Councillors in a separate and confidential paper in the February 2019 agenda
- d. Agreed in-principle to the sale of Council-owned land located at 189 - 229 Lyttleton Terrace Bendigo to enable the development of the site, subject to the appropriate sale process and consultation with the Valuer General of Victoria
- e. Requested the Minister for Planning to authorise and approve any required planning scheme amendments or planning permits and any consequential changes to those approvals for the Bendigo GovHub development.

To inform its decision in February 2019, Council considered seven different development options, including upgrades to the current offices.

Advice received from the external consultants as part of this analysis, confirmed Bendigo GovHub will deliver a range of economic and efficiency outcomes, including:

- 100 new local public sector jobs, which would contribute an additional 25 new jobs (due to supply chain and consumption effects) bringing the total to 125 new jobs and injecting \$28.8M per annum into the Greater Bendigo economy
- 90 construction jobs, contributing \$131M to the Greater Bendigo economy
- Wage savings for the City from productivity increases, forecast at \$16.1M
- An additional 600 workers in the city centre, enhancing the economy and vibrancy of central Bendigo
- Single point of customer service for Victorian Government and Local Government enquiries
- Enhanced service and improved accessibility for our customers
- Freeing up buildings currently rented by Council, making them available for other businesses or services to use
- Improved, quality workplace to increase the attraction and retention of staff

In October 2019, Council agreed to enter a lease for temporary accommodation in the Fountain Court complex to enable staff to relocate from the Lyttleton Terrace offices.

## Report

Following Council's decisions in February 2019 relating to the Bendigo GovHub project, work on the project has continued to progress, with regular updates provided to Councillors.

During 2019 and 2020, presentations, reports and updates were provided on:

- Proposed sale of land process
- Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the parties
- Initial concept designs for the building
- Feedback from stakeholder engagement sessions
- Detailed concept plans for the exterior of the building and its internal layout
- Planning for the City's temporary customer service centre
- Options for the City's temporary office accommodation
- Leasing arrangements and tour of temporary office accommodation in Fountain Court
- Upcoming Council decision process
- Valuation process and understanding of parties involved
- Status updates on progress with Development Victoria, Victorian Government and commercial negotiations
- Status updates on architectural, sustainability and heritage details

In addition to this work, several other key stages have continued to be progressed by Development Victoria (the Developer) including:

- Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders
- Site testing
- Community consultation
- Preparation and lodgement of an application for planning approval to the Minister for Planning
- Preparation of instructions, jointly with the City, to request the Valuer General of Victoria (VGV) to provide a valuation of the site
- Consultation with the project's key advisor, Arup to achieve a design with significant sustainability and efficiency characteristics within the available budget

The next stage of this work is to progress the key commercial agreements to enable the land to be sold and authorise the project's key commercial terms that will form part of a lease to be executed with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

## Sale of land

As part of the decisions made by Council in the February 2019 meeting, Council agreed in principle to sell the land in accordance with its obligations set out in the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) with the valuation process for the site to be conducted by Valuer General Victoria (VGV).

All aspects of the sale process so far have complied with Council's obligations under section 191 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic).

The Valuer General of Victoria, Victoria's independent valuation authority, has set a certified valuation for the site at \$5.5M, exclusive of GST. This value is consistent with an independent valuation obtained by Council. The valuation is based on an 'as-is' value, with all site preparation works and associated risks to be the responsibility of the Developer.

### **Sustainable design**

Sustainability is a key priority for the Bendigo GovHub project. The building has been designed in accordance with the National Construction Code (2019) and to achieve a 'Nabers' rating of 5.5 and a Greenstar rating of at least 5. The Developer believes this will make the Bendigo GovHub the most sustainable government building in Australia.

In addition to decreasing emissions, the design features will result in reduced power costs of an estimated 63% compared to standard building costs, and an even greater saving when compared to the City's current buildings. To take full advantage of the sustainable design, the City and other tenants are also committed to changing the way we operate to decrease our emissions even further.

This has already led to significant reductions in the City's paper use of 30% compared to the same time in previous years. Work is also underway to promote alternative methods of travel to and from work and around the City Centre with Regional Roads Victoria.

The intent of a high quality and sustainable outcome for the development extends also to the proposed demolition and works on the site. These works will impose conditions for at least 90% of waste generated from demolition be diverted from landfill.

### **Key financial information**

The project has also been designed within a funding envelope and budget. Council set upper limits in February 2019 that had to be achieved for the City to agree to become a tenant. The upper limits covered the rent and fitout costs and the space allocated per person. These have all been achieved. The risk of any costs above the upper limits are the responsibility of the developer.

The construction element of this project is still subject to tender, and as such, to ensure value for money can be achieved, not all specific terms of the lease are disclosed publicly. That noted, the all-inclusive project cost, including the City's decant costs and contribution to fit out costs is projected to be \$35.6M over 40 years. As the initial lease term will be 20 years, a 20 year total project cost has also been calculated and is projected to be \$24.47M.

Whilst Council is committing to long term rental costs greater than it is currently paying in today's dollars, it is expected that a portion of this increase will be offset by the operating costs of a more sustainable building, productivity gains through centralising offices, changes to work practises and technology improvements. These costs and the associated benefits, including development risk being transferred to the developer, have been taken into account as part of deliberations.

The Victorian Government has indicated the following contributions toward the City's temporary accommodation and fitout costs:

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| City's temporary accommodation | \$1.5M |
| GovHub fitout costs            | \$4.5M |

The classification and use of the current site does not enable rates to be generated. Given the change of classification, use and ownership proposed with the project, it is estimated that development of this site could generate in excess of \$600,000 of rate revenue per annum for the City of Greater Bendigo.

### **Transition to Bendigo GovHub**

The Bendigo GovHub will provide new ways of working for our staff and a greater range of options and flexibility for our customers to choose how they would like to access the City's services. The potential move to a new building creates the drive and momentum to enable these changes to occur. However, regardless of a potential move to a new office, investment in modernising the City's systems of work is necessary.

The investment and preparation in these new ways of working have commenced and have enabled the City to transition to the lockdown provisions associated with COVID-19 in a seamless way that has resulted in minimal interruption for our customers.

It is estimated that transition and temporary accommodation costs will total around \$6.145M; with around \$3M attributed to investing in technology to support new ways of working and enabling our customers additional options and flexibility to choose how they would like to access City's services. These include additional remote payment options, online bookings and online applications.

The Victorian State Government is providing \$1.5M funding toward these costs. Additional funding will continue to be sought.

### **Jobs and economic activity**

It is expected that the Developer's construction program and demolition of the buildings on the site will commence in mid-2020. Regular updates are being sought from and provided by the developer on this timeframe, particularly any impact that may arise from the COVID-19 situation. At the time of preparing the report, there are no indications that this program may be impacted, however, this will continue to be monitored.

Given the challenges facing our local economy from the shutdowns associated with COVID-19, infrastructure projects such as the Bendigo GovHub, Bendigo TAFE re-development and the construction of the new Bendigo Law Courts will provide employment and support the economic recovery of businesses within the local Bendigo economy.

It is estimated that the construction of the Bendigo GovHub will create 90 jobs and contribute \$131M to the Bendigo economy during the construction period.

## Governance

To provide sufficient time for Councillors to receive information, be engaged in the process and make informed decision, regular updates have been provided during 2019 and then weekly from 7 February 2020. These briefings have provided Council with updates on the key terms, costs, Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD), income and risks of each of the key decisions.

## Options

At its February 2019 meeting, Council resolved to become a tenant in the Bendigo GovHub, and the in-principle decision to the sell the Lyttleton Terrace site provided the authority for Council officers to commence the valuation and sale process.

Council could choose not to approve the sale of land to Development Victoria or to not approve to enter a lease with the Department of Treasury and Finance. Either of these decisions would impact the ability of the project to meet its intended deadline and could potentially lead to the project no longer progressing.

In this instance, it is likely that Council staff currently working from temporary accommodation would need to return to the current offices in Lyttleton Terrace.

## Risk Analysis

As previously outlined, Council considered seven options prior to resolving to join the Bendigo GovHub as a tenant. A key benefit of this option is that the construction risks transferred to the Developer.

This desired risk profile has continued with the model of valuation and land sale recommended to Council. The land will be valued to be sold 'as is,' and risks associated with demolition of the buildings, heritage and site preparation will be the responsibility of the Developer.

## Consultation

### Internal Consultation:

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4 &amp; 13 March 2019</b> | Officers presented at Council briefing on the Process for Land Sale of the site 189- 229 Lyttleton Terrace Bendigo.                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>27 June 2019</b>          | Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and Development Victoria (DV) provided an update to Councillors on the progress and timing of the Bendigo GovHub project, including the processes for community engagement, projects and an early design concept of the building. |
| <b>8 July 2019</b>           | Officers provided an overview of the key documents that will govern the commercial transactions, including the presentation of a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding.                                                                                            |



- 14 November 2019** Councillors received a briefing from Development Victoria and the project Architect of the final concept plans for the building ahead of the staff and public release of this information.
- 7 February 2020** Weekly updates to Councillors from February to May 2020

#### External Consultation:

- 2013** The City commenced consultation with residents in 2013 with the independent review where recommendation 11 recommended the City advocate and plan for consolidating its offices as a high priority to enable a high-performance culture, increase organisational efficiencies and improve the customer experience.
- The community was extensively consulted during the Independent Review process and the Council adopted in-principle all 69 recommendations. The City interviewed 120 people and reviewed 129 submissions.
- September 2018** City engaged PWC to conduct a full financial economic and social analysis on 5 potential models within the framework of a GovHub
- November 2018** City engaged Urbis to conduct a feasibility assessment on two options relating to the refurbishment/expansion of the existing Lyttleton Terrace Building and an alternative option of demolition and new build
- July 2019** Council officers participated in a contractor forum with ICN (Industry Contractor Network) and attended by more than 200 contractors, showcasing the pipeline of upcoming projects, including the Bendigo GovHub.
- July 2019** Regional Development Victoria (RDV) and Development Victoria (DV) hosted consultation and feedback sessions with several community groups, businesses and other stakeholder groups regarding GovHub.
- July 2019** RDV and DV conducted an online survey open to all Bendigo residents requesting feedback on the design of the Bendigo GovHub
- 27 July 2019** Regional Development Victoria (RDV), Development Victoria (DV) and Lyons Architects conducted a Community Engagement session in the Bendigo Town Hall for community input and feedback on the Bendigo GovHub
- Ongoing** Regular consultation between co tenants

Regular consultation with precinct developments –  
TAFE, Law Court, CFA  
Regular consultation with Dja Dja Wurrung  
Councillors consultation with Community at listening posts,  
ward tours and community engagements  
Response to around 50 requests received from community  
members seeking clarity and further information on the  
Bendigo GovHub project

#### External Funding Sources:

The Victorian Government has committed \$16M to this project. It is expected further allocations will be made in future State Budgets.

#### **Attachment**

1. February 20, 2019 Agenda:

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/20190220%20Ordinary%20Agenda%2020%20February%202019.pdf>

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Nil.

## **7. EMBRACING OUR CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

### **7.1 RECONCILIATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT YEAR THREE**

#### **Document Information**

**Author**            **Fiona Machin, Inclusive Communities Officer**

**Responsible**   **Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing**  
**Director**

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#### **Purpose**

To provide a final progress report on the implementation of the City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan (2016-2019), and to note the direction to not seek endorsement from Reconciliation Australia for the City's updated RP to be approved as a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

#### **Summary**

The Reconciliation Plan (2016-2019) (the RP) articulates Council's commitment to supporting the reconciliation process and to closing the gap of disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. The RP adopts a 'whole of Council' action planning framework and builds on previous initiatives delivered by the City as part of its early reconciliation journey.

Leading the Reconciliation Plan within the organisation is the Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee which comprises of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives and City staff from a broad range of City Services Units.

The RP follows a strategic framework which focuses on three themes of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. Under each theme are a series of practical actions (93 actions in total) that drives the organisation's contribution to reconciliation both internally and within the Greater Bendigo community.

The RP is concluding in 2019-2020. The majority of actions have been completed with several initiatives now being delivered annually and becoming part of everyday business for the organisation. Of the 93 actions, 71 actions were achieved, 8 are still in progress, and 4 were not delivered. Following internal and external consultation in early 2018 and again in 2019, it was decided not to progress ten actions due to changing community need and the consolidation of other actions.

This Annual Progress Report focuses on the key achievements in relation to the Action Plan for the January 2019 to January 2020 period.

Since November 2019, City staff have been working in partnership with the Traditional Owners, the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the RP Steering Committee on the evaluation and update of the RP. The City is currently

overseeing an extensive community engagement process to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the RP over the past 3 years, and to ensure the new RP responds to local government priorities and to the needs and priorities of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Based on advice from the Aboriginal community consultations thus far, it is recommended that the City does not commence discussions with Reconciliation Australia to seek RAP endorsement. There is strong community preference for the City to develop its own unique reconciliation strategy that does not follow Reconciliation Australia's RAP model. This would enable the City's new RP to be more suited to the Greater Bendigo context and our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and to allow greater flexibility to meet changing community needs and future state-wide initiatives.

A draft of the City's updated RP will be presented to Council for consideration in mid-2020.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Acknowledge the final Annual Progress Report for the City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019; and
2. Note the direction to not seek endorsement from Reconciliation Australia for the City's updated RP to be approved as a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

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Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 6.5 Advancing Reconciliation

Objective 6.5.1 Strengthen the relationship between Council and Indigenous Communities

Continue to encourage Indigenous groups and enterprises to tender for Council contracts through engagement with relevant groups and review of contract documentation where needed

Incorporate Indigenous knowledge into native vegetation management

Objective 6.5.2 Implement the adopted Reconciliation Action Plan

Explore opportunities that enable wider understanding of our Indigenous Australian culture

City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan (2016-2019)City of Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021

Principle Connected to Culture and Community

Objective Support inclusive communities by valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Rural Communities Strategy

Principle 3 Realising the unique values and the social and economic potential of our rural communities

Objective 3.6: That Council continue to work with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung communities to ensure that the City's indigenous heritage is appropriately protected, recognised and celebrated

Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy 2016-2021

Principle 8: Culture and Communities

Action 8.1. Acknowledge and raise awareness of Indigenous culture, including support for Traditional Owner country plans – Dhelkunya Dja

Background Information

The City of Greater Bendigo continues to develop and enhance positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The City's Reconciliation Plan (2016-2019) (the RP) articulates Council's commitment to supporting the reconciliation process and to closing the gap of disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

The RP follows a strategic framework with the three themes of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities. Under these themes, the RP identifies 22 objectives and 93 actions using a 'whole-of-Council' action planning framework.

Championing the RP is the Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee (see **Attachment 1** for the 2019 membership list). The Steering Committee oversees and monitors the implementation of the RP and supports the 'whole-of-Council' approach to delivery.

The RP is concluding in 2019-2020. Since November 2019, the City has been working in partnership with the Traditional Owners, the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

community and the RP Steering Committee to evaluate the outcomes of the RP and to commence planning on a new plan.

The RP responds to the City's legislative responsibilities under the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*; the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2016*; and the Dja Dja Wurrung – Victorian Government Recognition and Settlement Agreement as part of the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*.

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s):

Council endorsed the Reconciliation Plan (2016 – 2019) on June 29, 2016.

Report

The RP provides Council, the local Aboriginal community and the broader community with a clear understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo's commitment to reconciliation and the local Aboriginal community. In November 2019, the City and the Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee reviewed the annual implementation of the RP, and this report highlights key achievements over the previous 12 months.

Since its launch, City staff have delivered the majority of RP actions with several initiatives now being delivered annually and becoming part of everyday business for the organisation. Of the 93 actions, 71 actions were achieved, 8 are still in progress, and 4 were not delivered. Following internal and external consultation in early 2018 and again in 2019, it was decided not to progress ten actions due to changing community need and the consolidation of other actions (see **Attachment 2**).

Over the past 12 months, the City has continued to achieve positive outcomes especially in relation to: improving City support for Aboriginal procurement and business engagement; closer engagement and relationship building with Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLWC); and expanding the Aboriginal arts and culture programming offered by the City.

Key achievements of the RP in 2019 include:

- Delivering on recommendations from the regional Aboriginal procurement project, coordinated by the City in partnership with Loddon and Mount Alexander Shire Councils, including changes to the City's Procurement Policy and its internal procurement processes and systems.
- Increased partnership and co-design work with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) on key City projects including Reimagining Bendigo Creek, the UNESCO City of Gastronomy bid, and the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Master Plan.
- In partnership with Bendigo Reconciliation Group, delivered Self-Reflections sessions to Councillors and senior managers and trained six City staff to facilitate further sessions across the organisation from mid-2020.

- Expanded the City's annual NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week activities, including over 400 people attending the 2019 NAIDOC Week flag raising and civic reception.
- In 2019, the Bendigo Art Gallery hosted three Aboriginal art exhibitions, *Desert Lines: Batik from Central Australia*, *Body Politics*, and *Josh Muir: What's On Your Mind*, and offered an expanded public arts program featuring local Aboriginal artists and workshops.
- Three-year partnership agreement signed between Bendigo Venues and Events and the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance company, Bangarra, for annual performances and community workshops.

The RP Summary Progress Report (January 2019 – January 2020) at **Attachment 3** presents all the major achievements for 2019.

Review and Update of the City's Reconciliation Plan

City staff are working in close partnership with the Traditional Owners, the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the RP Steering Committee to evaluate the outcomes of the RP and to commence a process to update the Plan.

Since November 2019, the following evaluation and community engagement activities have been completed:

- Recruitment of Dja Dja Wurrung woman, Racquel Kerr (Wartakan Consultancy) as the Aboriginal consultant to oversee the community engagement process and to provide advice to City staff in developing and drafting the new Plan.
- Establishment of the City's RP Working Group to guide and assist the evaluation and update of the RP. The Working Group meets monthly and includes representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and staff from a broad range of City services.
- Completed an evaluation of the RP 2016-2019 with data collected via surveys (to both staff and community) and stakeholder feedback.
- Commenced an extensive community engagement process with Aboriginal community workshops, targeted workshop with Aboriginal young people, and meetings with Raylene Harradine, CEO of Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC).
- Commenced engagement with key staff and units from across the organisation, including a staff planning workshop in March 2020.

Community engagement on the City's new RP has been very positive to date with significant input and interest from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Several key themes and priorities have arisen from the community consultations, including: supporting Aboriginal self-determination; improving organisational cultural safety across the organisation; focusing on Aboriginal young people; improving Aboriginal employment and economic outcomes; and increasing Aboriginal cultural heritage, storytelling, and place naming in our public spaces.

However, a strong proposal from the consultations thus far concerns Reconciliation Australia's RAP program. It is recommended that the City does not commence discussions with Reconciliation Australia to seek RAP endorsement of our updated RP. Instead, there is strong community preference for the City to develop its own unique reconciliation strategy that does not follow the Reconciliation Australia process or the strict conditions of the RAP model.

This would enable the City's updated RP to be more suited to the Greater Bendigo context and our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It would also allow greater flexibility to meet changing community needs and to adapt to state-wide policy initiatives such as the Victorian Treaty process, the updated Victorian Aboriginal & Local Government Action Plan, and the future Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement. Without the RAP framework, City staff can also work with Traditional Owners to seek a Dja Dja Wurrung or Taungurung language name for the new Plan.

Several local governments in Victoria, including those with significant Aboriginal populations, have chosen not to pursue RAP endorsement and have developed their own Aboriginal-specific plans and strategies. This includes Darebin City Council, Glenelg Shire, and Swan Hill Rural City. In December 2019, Mount Alexander Shire Council also decided to cease its RAP endorsement process given the advice of their Aboriginal advisory group, and the difficulties in trying to adapt the RAP model to suit their local context and gain Reconciliation Australia approval.

It is planned to present an Evaluation Report and draft updated RP for consideration by Council in mid-2020.

Priority/Importance:

The implementation and review of the RP is of high importance as it demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and delivers on actions identified within the Community Plan.

Timelines:

The RP has been implemented since June 2016. The evaluation and update of the RP commenced in November 2019.

Risk Analysis:

The RP reflects the City of Greater Bendigo's commitment to reconciliation. It has been developed to enable the City to support the reconciliation process and to help close the gap of disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Key risks identified include:

- Insufficient engagement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in City decision making and processes, and in ensuring reconciliation initiatives are community-led and informed.
- Not working in a 'whole-of-Council' approach to deliver the RP and its actions, or managing reconciliation being progressed at 'two speeds' across different business units.
- Poor cultural safety and cultural responsiveness across the organisation which prevents the City from being seen as an inclusive and welcoming space for Aboriginal clients, customers or potential employees.
- Lack of sufficient organisational change to ensure the principles underpinning the RP and the City's reconciliation journey are fully embedded across all levels and understood by staff.

City staff continue to work to mitigate these risks in the following ways:

- Offering cultural awareness training, Self Reflections sessions and additional targeted learning opportunities, and increased promotion of staff attendance at events and national days of significance for the Aboriginal community.
- Continued roll out of cultural safety measures across the organisation, such as cultural awareness and education, good news stories, improved visibility of Aboriginal culture and protocols, and promoting staff engagement through the internal Reconciliation Champions Network.
- Continued focus on community engagement and partnerships with key stakeholders and networks including: DDWCAC, BDAC, NAIDOC Week Committee, Bendigo Local Aboriginal Network and the Bendigo Reconciliation Group.

Consultation/Communication

Internal Consultation:

Regular consultation is undertaken through the City's Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee and a summary of the RP's progress over the past 12 months was reviewed and discussed at the November 2019 Steering Committee meeting.

Extensive internal consultation has also occurred with 15 City Service Units, these being: Community Wellbeing, Regional Sustainable Development, Bendigo Art Gallery, Community Wellbeing, Engineering, Tourism and Major Events, Governance, Active and Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Greater Bendigo, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo Venues and Events, Safe and Healthy Environments, People and Culture, Property Services and Parks & Open Space.

External Consultation:

The City worked directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the planning and development of the RP. Throughout its implementation, regular consultation has occurred with the Traditional Owners, local Aboriginal community organisations, and key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

As part of the review and update of the RP, the City is engaging with the following agencies and representatives: DDWCAC, TLWC, BDAC, BLAN, Weethunga Health Network, Bendigo Reconciliation Group, members of the Central Victorian Local Government Reconciliation Network, Goldfields Libraries Corporation, Reconciliation Victoria, and Aboriginal staff from Victorian departments and agencies (including Department of Education's Koorie Engagement Support Officers, Department of Health & Human Services, Centrelink, Department of Justice, and Aboriginal Victoria).

Resource Implications

The RP is being implemented within existing resources as part of allocations totalling \$126,000 in the 2019/20 Operational Budget which includes \$102,000 for labour costs and \$24,080 for Reconciliation Plan projects. Additional Operational Budget of \$7,131 is allocated for NAIDOC Week.

Attachments

1. Membership List for Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee
2. List of Actions Not Progressed
3. Reconciliation Plan (2016-2019) – Summary Report on Actions Achieved (January 2019 to January 2020)

**ATTACHMENT 1: Membership list for Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee
(List current as at March 2020)**

Name	Position	Organisation
Vicky Mason	Director, Health & Wellbeing (Chair)	City of Greater Bendigo (Chair)
Krystal Henderson	Aboriginal Community Development Broker	Aboriginal Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet
Baydon Widdicombe	Deputy CEO and HR Manager	Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporation
Gabby Gamble	Aboriginal community member	Bendigo Health
Steven Abbott	Manager, Community Partnerships	City of Greater Bendigo
David Williamson	Coordinator, Inclusive Communities	City of Greater Bendigo
Fiona Machin	Inclusive Communities Officer	City of Greater Bendigo
Paul Sherwood	Procurement Coordinator, Governance	City of Greater Bendigo
Brett Martini	Manager, Engineering	City of Greater Bendigo
Andie West	Manager, Community Wellbeing	City of Greater Bendigo
Paul Gangell	Team Leader, Parks and Open Space	City of Greater Bendigo
Bruce Duncan	Manager, People and Culture	City of Greater Bendigo
Bridget Maplestone	Regional Sustainable Development	City of Greater Bendigo
Ros Manning	Media and Communications	City of Greater Bendigo
David Lloyd	Manager, Bendigo Venues and Events	City of Greater Bendigo
Emma Busowsky Cox	Curatorial Manager - Bendigo Art Gallery	City of Greater Bendigo
Orrin Hogan	Natural and Passive Reserves	City of Greater Bendigo

ATTACHMENT 2: City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019

List of actions not being progressed (10 actions) or delivered (4 actions)

Focus Area One: RESPECT			
Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Rationale and Response:
4. Publicly promote Aboriginal culture and increase public recognition of the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Australian / Bendigo society.	d. Develop a proposal for a memorial to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander war veterans	Regional Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action will not be progressed given the cultural sensitivities and difficulties progressing this action without the guidance and oversight of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee or other Aboriginal-led group.
	f. Develop an acquisition policy for the City of Greater Bendigo to purchase local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Traditional Owner Art and identify opportunities to display in City owned and managed buildings.	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A separate acquisition policy for the Bendigo Art Gallery is not being developed as acquisitions come under the purview of the Board and the current acquisition guidelines follow the best practice guidelines as developed by the Art Gallery of NSW. However, this action is being revisited by the First Nations Art Curator and internal discussions are ongoing on reviewing the Gallery's internal policies regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Work to continue in 2019 and 2020.
5. Increase participation and influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City's decision making processes.	d. If appropriate, consult with and/or engage an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the recruitment process for identified committees / reference groups of interest.	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action was consolidated under Action 12.c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on City committees is discussed with community members as required.
6. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant days / weeks	d. Participate in Close the Gap events	Active and Healthy Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action not progressed. Active and Healthy Lifestyles will look to develop actions as part of the new Reconciliation Plan, following consultation and engagement with the local Aboriginal community.
12. Engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to increase opportunities for	c. Investigate and provide a recommendation to Council regarding the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory	Community Partnerships	Staff commenced discussions with the Aboriginal community as part of community engagement of the City's new Reconciliation Plan. Following feedback from the community, establishing an Aboriginal Advisory Committee will be the first priority action for

representation in decision making, civic participation and understanding about the responsibilities of Local Government.	Committee.		the City's new RP in 2021.
	d. The City to host annual gatherings between Council and the boards of: Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative, Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and The City to host annual gathering with the board of Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action not progressed given the burden on Traditional Owners and BDAC and the regular meetings held between City staff and senior management of these organisations. City staff have continued to investigate other opportunities for engagement and relationship building with Traditional Owners. In 2019, relationship building with Taungurung Land & Waters Council (TLWC) was strengthened through participation in TLWC's Local Government Forum in June 2019; attendance at the Aboriginal Place Naming Workshop on Taungurung Country in November 2019; and engaging TLWC as part of consultation on the City's Gender Equity Strategy and the updated Reconciliation Plan.
	e. Organise a gathering between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and the Mayor	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action is not being progressed following discussions with BDAC staff and Aboriginal community members over the purpose and intent of this action, and the limited interest of Aboriginal young people for this gathering. City staff will ensure that all future actions relating to Aboriginal young people are to be led by young people.
13. Increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in City Youth initiatives	d. Increase awareness of Career Horizons and other work experience opportunities to KESO's and schools,	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action originally held over in 2017 due to software development, website relaunch, and internal procedures. Internal discussions were held in 2017/2018, however there were difficulties in progressing this action due to: lack of tertiary opportunities, resourcing required to promote and develop placement opportunities, and limited internal uptake. Staff continue to investigate Indigenous-identified Career Horizons placements, however other models of mentoring and student placements are being discussed internally. This work is being led by the Work Placement and Volunteer Management Support Officer. The City is also focusing heavily on traineeships and adequately supporting trainees.

Focus Area Two: OPPORTUNITIES			
Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Rationale and Response:
15. Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with an aim of working towards a participation rate that reflects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Greater Bendigo	a. Develop an ongoing employment working group that meets quarterly comprised of People and Performance, recruiting Manager/Coordinator representatives and external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisational representatives to develop strategies to increase employment and work experience.	People and Culture	<p>A separate employment working group was not established as the Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee continues to drive discussions and initiatives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment. The Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee includes representatives from different Service Units across the organisation, including the People and Culture Unit.</p> <p>The City's new Work Placement and Volunteer Support Officer commenced in mid-2018. This role includes providing mentoring support for existing Aboriginal employees, and strengthening employment and volunteer opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.</p>
19. Provide opportunities to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, art and history to the wider community	a. Explore opportunities in partnership with La Trobe Visual Arts Centre for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander component.	Bendigo Art Gallery	<p>The Bendigo Art Gallery is not in a position to direct La Trobe University in this regards. However, the following activities have been progressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work commenced in 2017 on sourcing background information on 350 ethnographic objects from the Institute's collection. • In March 2018, a La Trobe Visual Arts Centre staff member undertook a research visit to the Northern Territory to obtain further background information and research on the ethnographic objects. • LaTrobe Arts Institute continued to be frequently used for community events and activities in 2019, including the Central Victorian Indigenous Film Festival and <i>Interwoven: cross-cultural weaving collaboration</i>.
	b. Explore opportunities to hold an exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the Post Office Gallery.	Bendigo Art Gallery	This action is not being progressed, however there are ongoing discussions regarding a social history exhibition of the local Bendigo region.
	g. Develop a list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local and Traditional Owner artists.	Capital Theatre and Events	This action will not be progressed due to the advice from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Local artists do not wish to be labelled or categorised as 'Indigenous' artists.

Additional Focus Area: Quality Assurance, Governance and Reporting			
Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Rationale and Response:
21. Report RAP achievements, challenges and learnings to Reconciliation Australia	a. Complete and submit the RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia annually.	Community Partnerships	This action is not required as the Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 was not formally endorsed as a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by Reconciliation Australia.
	b. If approached, participate in the Reconciliation Australia RAP barometer.	Community Partnerships	This action is not required as the Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 was not been formally endorsed as a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) by Reconciliation Australia.

ATTACHMENT 3: CoGB Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 Summary Progress Report (January 2019 to January 2020)

Focus Area: RESPECT			
Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Progress to date:
1. Increase the recognition of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the municipality.	a. Integrate consideration of increased recognition of Traditional Owners in municipal signage, including Welcome to Country signage at key municipal entry points, in the review of relevant policies, budget and other processes.	Community Partnerships, Parks & Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Womin-dji-ka</i> welcome signage installed on nine customer service-facing City buildings, including the Bendigo Art Gallery, Ulumbarra Theatre, The Capital, Visitor Information Centre, the Early Years Centres, and City offices (Hopetoun Mill, Mundy Street and Lyttleton Terrace). Artwork designed by Dja Dja Wurrung artist, Drew Berick.
	b. Develop and implement protocols to accompany the City's Place Naming Policy (8/10/2012), i.e. Section 3.2 Procedure for Naming	Regional Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO and the Mayor attended a place-naming workshop and training with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, Office of Geographic Names and Taungurung Land & Waters Council (TLWC) in November 2019. • Following Council's Notice of Motion to promote Aboriginal place naming of public spaces across the municipality in June 2019, Council endorsed the commencement of an Aboriginal Place Naming and Interpretation Pilot Project with additional staffing and funding provided to progress naming activities. Early discussions have been held with DDWCAC and project to be progressed in 2020.
	d. Identify additional appropriate site options for flying the Australian Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag within the municipality and if necessary develop a budget bid to install flag poles to fly the flags.	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were flown at the Bendigo Football Netball League (BFNL) Grand Final in September 2019 for the first time. Healthy and Active Living have purchased additional temporary flag poles to enable flags to be flown at future sporting and major events on City-owned sporting grounds.
	e. Develop and implement guidelines and communication channels between the Bendigo Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the City regarding flying flag(s) at half-mast when an Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flags were flown at half-mast for one week in June 2019 to mark the passing of Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, Uncle Brien Nelson. • In November 2019, the City's Governance Unit developed a Flag Protocol governing the lowering to half-mast and including guidelines and communication

	Elder or person of significance dies and respond to Department of Premier and Cabinet notifications		protocols for lowering flags for all prominent community members such as Elders and other key Aboriginal leaders.
	<p>f. Consistent provision of a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integration into the events guide • identification of at least 10 events annually that require a Welcome to Country and communicate such events to the registered Aboriginal Parties • include as a condition for identified major events managed externally; and • negotiate Welcome to Country rates with Registered Aboriginal Parties 	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural ceremonies continue to be performed at multiple City events and forums, and in 2019 included the NAIDOC Week flag raising, Bendigo Writer's Festival, Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network (VLGMIN) Forum, and at key performance and exhibition openings at The Capital, Ulumbarra Theatre and the Bendigo Art Gallery. • For the first time, a Dja Dja Wurrung Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony was incorporated into the ceremony to confirm the election of the new Mayor (November 2019).
2. Increase City staff, volunteers and Councillors, understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements	c / d. Implement a Cultural Awareness program for employees, including budget and implementation schedule	People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This action is ongoing with training offered annually. In 2019, the following outcomes were achieved: • Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training program continues to be delivered to City staff with a session offered quarterly (66 attendees in 2019). • Commenced the roll out of Self-Reflections Sessions for staff in partnerships with Bendigo Reconciliation Group. Sessions delivered to Councillors, the Organisational Leadership Team and the Reconciliation Champions Network (36 attendees). • The Department of Education's Koorie Engagement Support Officer delivered targeted training to Early Years staff, and key staff also attended 'Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives in Early Childhood Curriculums' with Koori Curriculum. • 15 members of the Rural Communities Committee and the Greater Bendigo Farming Advisory Committee attended a DDWCAC On-Country Cultural Awareness Tour in April 2019. • Additional learning opportunities offered to staff included: activities for members of the Reconciliation Champions Network, and City participation in two

			regional Conversation Circles held as part of the North Central Catchment Partners Forum.
	e. Incorporate Cultural awareness training into the councillor induction programme.	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors attended a Self Reflection session with John Bonnice (Bendigo Reconciliation Group) as part of increasing cultural awareness and cultural safety of the organisation.
3. Increase cultural safety of community service provision.	a. HACC staff to receive cultural sensitivity training relating to assessments and service delivery	Community Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action completed with training continuing to be reviewed and additional opportunities offered to staff. 15 staff attended Aboriginal Cultural Competency training with the Koori Heritage Trust ('Working appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in My Aged Care').
4. Publicly promote Aboriginal culture and increase public recognition of the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Australian / Bendigo society.	c. Integrate Aboriginal Culture into the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Masterplan, including consideration of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request a Dja Dja Wurrung name for a road / path; Development and implementation of cultural education programs; and In addition to scientific and common names, including Aboriginal names for plants. 	Parks & Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased consultation between the City and DDWCAC on the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Master Plan, including: Dja Dja Wurrung Focus Group held in October 2019 on co-design for the Central Hub precinct with consultation continuing on the Central Hub Visioning Report. Consultation occurring with DDWCAC on Dja Dja Wurrung language names for Australian native plants in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens.
	e. Integrate into the City's communication platforms and opportunities awareness about Aboriginal culture and social contributions including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GB magazine; Increasing prominence of information on the City's website; Recognition in Australia Day speeches and communication; and Acknowledgement of Participation in ANZAC day speeches and communications 	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an ongoing action. City staff continue to work on increasing the presence of Aboriginal culture and the local Aboriginal community in City media (both print and online). Information currently included in external and internal platforms, including: inclusion in Australia Day address; social media posts on key events (NAIDOC Week, Central Victorian Indigenous Film Festival); and internal staff newsletters and bulletins. GB Magazine featured two articles on the local Aboriginal community in 2019 – e.g. installation of <i>Womin-dji-ka</i> Welcome Signage and the appointment of an Aboriginal Intercultural Ambassador (December 2019).
	h. Explore opportunities for community	Regional Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action to be progressed as part of Aboriginal Place

	education about Aboriginal Culture in public spaces, e.g., the Open Space Strategy, Shared Paths control group	Development	<p>Naming and Interpretation pilot project which aims to promote Aboriginal place naming and dual naming of public landmarks across Greater Bendigo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to also be progressed in 2020-2021 as part of the Reimagining Bendigo Creek project, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreement (ACHLMA) at Crusoe Reservoir, Botanic Gardens Master Plan, UNESCO City of Gastronomy, and the Arts & Creative Industries Strategy. • City commenced discussions with DDWCAC on the Dja Dja Wurrung language naming for Australian native plants in the Bendigo Botanic Gardens.
6. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander significant days / weeks	<p>a. Contribute and provide support to NAIDOC events in Bendigo by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hosting the Flag Raising Ceremony the first Monday of NAIDOC week; • promoting events internally • where possible, providing in kind or financial support to NAIDOC events; • being a distribution point for the Bendigo NAIDOC brochure, providing a media release and adding information to our website; • providing financial sponsorship to the Koorie childrens initiative; and • undertaking activities in kindergartens, positive ageing groups and childrens early learning centres 	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City supports the delivery and planning of NAIDOC Week events in close partnership with the local Aboriginal community and the Bendigo NAIDOC Week Committee. • The primary City event is the annual NAIDOC Week flag-raising and civic reception (with over 400 attendees for the 2019 event). A Community Report on the annual achievements of the CoGB Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 was also released to the public at this event. • Other NAIDOC Week activities delivered in 2019 included: • Partnering with Bendigo & Aboriginal District Co-operative (BDAC) and Dja Dja Wurrung artist, Racquel Kerr, to develop NAIDOC Week flags that were flown on six sites across the city. • City sponsorship for Koori Kids NAIDOC Week Initiative. • City support for the Knuldoorong Art Exhibition at Dudley House. • Community Wellbeing Unit provided staffing and funding support to the annual BDAC Children's Day event.
	b. The City hosts an annual Reconciliation Week event or works in	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff worked in partnership with local agencies and the Aboriginal community to deliver the third Central

	partnership with the Bendigo Reconciliation Committee for a collaborative event.		Victorian Indigenous Film Festival. The 2019 Festival saw an expanded regional program with film screenings held in Castlemaine and Maldon for the first time, and approximately 630 people attended.
9. Partner with Registered Aboriginal Parties to explore opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture	a. Consultation with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to support the aspirations as identified in their Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan	Community Partnerships	<p>Action is ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing consultation occurring with DDWCAC on issues relating to cultural heritage, water management and land management - such as Bendigo Creek, Crusoe Reservoir, Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Water Sensitive Bendigo, Ironbark Gully Trail, and revegetation and land management plans for the Bendigo Airport site and surrounding parkland. Notable projects progressed include: ongoing consultation with DDWCAC on the Reimagining Bendigo Creek project; the City's Senior Water Strategy Officer participated in the Dja Dja Wurrung's Healthy Country Planning process in January 2019 to identify cultural values and future actions for water related sites; DDWCAC support for the City's UNESCO City of Gastronomy bid with discussions continuing on future projects on food systems and a six seasons calendar. <p>The City is continuing to improve outcomes under the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering on the recommendations of a regional collaborative project on Aboriginal business procurement (with Loddon and Mount Alexander Shire Councils). Discussions with DDWCAC on revegetation and land management plans at Bendigo Airport site – e.g. MOU discussions commenced and will be continuing in 2020. Policy planning workshop held between the City and DDWCAC / Djandak Enterprises for future landscaping and design of the Bendigo Botanical Gardens (White Hills). CoGB has engaged Djandak on the following projects:

			Restoration of Sheep Wash Creek in Strathfieldsaye which includes woody weed removal and revegetation; revegetation and weed control for the Knight Street Frog Ponds restoration; and creek side vegetation management at Caviar Court Huntly on Back Creek.
	c. Work with Registered Aboriginal Parties to identify and explore opportunities for the renewal of cultural practices	Community Partnerships	<p>Action ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff continue to progress the ACHLMA pilot project at Crusoe Reservoir & No. 7 Park Bendigo, in partnership with Aboriginal Victoria and DDWCAC. DDWCAC completed Phase 2 (on-site survey) and agreement to be completed in 2020. • City remains a supporting partner on the Wanyarram Dhehk project, working with DDWCAC and North Central Catchment Management Authority to deliver land management and restoration works on three local sites. • Cultural practises to be a core component of future work as part of Reimagining Bendigo Creek project.

Focus Area: RELATIONSHIPS

Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Progress to date:
11. Increase engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in community services	a. Review partnership protocol and continue to strengthen relationships with Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative to foster: joint service provision, joint training opportunities and coordinated services, e.g., joint home visits.	Community Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing collaboration with DHHS & BDAC through monthly assessment team meetings to improve working relationships and provide improved outcomes for clients (such as joint home visits by BDAC and Maternal Child Health staff). The City offers MCH consultations and appointments at BDAC if preferred by families.
12. Engage effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to increase opportunities for representation in decision making, civic participation and understanding about	b. Partner with Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative to run quarterly community meetings to provide information and hear from community members, information may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming opportunities such as; community grant and grant writing 	Community Partnerships	<p>Action is ongoing. City engagement with BDAC in 2019 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDAC representation on Reconciliation Plan Steering Committee. • City support for BDAC summer youth event in 2019 (Gurri Wanyarra visit). • A City Community Grant was awarded to BDAC in January 2019 to support the purchase of equipment for their Food

the responsibilities of Local Government.	workshops, youth programs, community art forums, business development events, citizenship awards; • Feedback on strategies, plans and projects; and • Functions/ roles of local government and assisting to access the organisation		Share program. • Increased staff engagement at BDAC community events including BDAC's NAIDOC Children's Day and BDAC Christmas Family Day.
	c. Investigate and provide a recommendation to Council regarding the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee.	Community Partnerships	Discussions have commenced with the Aboriginal community as part of the community engagement process for the evaluation and update of the draft Reconciliation Plan. Community feedback has shown a strong preference for establishing an Aboriginal Advisory Committee to be the first priority action for the City's draft updated RP.
	d. The City to host annual gatherings between Council and the boards of: Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative, Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and The City to host annual gathering with the board of Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	Community Partnerships	Whilst all the actions have not been progressed, the City continues to investigate opportunities for engagement and relationship building with Traditional Owners. Relationship building with TLWC was strengthened throughout 2019 through the following: • The Mayor and CEO attended both the TLWC's Local Government Forum (June 2019) as part of awareness raising of the future Taungurung RSA as well as the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council's Aboriginal Place Naming Workshop on Taungurung Country (November 2019). • TLWC representatives participated in the City's Community RP Planning Workshop in November 2019. • City staff will consider additional engagement options with TLWC in 2020 following formalisation of the Taungurung RSA.

Focus Area: OPPORTUNITIES

Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Progress to date:
14. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	a. Undertake internal promotion of the social procurement schedule and ensure	Community Partnerships	• The Social Procurement Schedule is in place and is being used in service-related tenders across the organisation.

businesses and enterprises	it is applied to all service contracts		However, as part of the regional Aboriginal procurement project, the City has implemented further changes to internal procurement processes and systems such as a new Schedule 3 Sustainable Procurement including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. <i>See Action 14.c.</i>
	c. Explore the issues and challenges that face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise and business and address identified issues through reviewing processes and structures, and supporting capacity building opportunities.	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support provided to Aboriginal businesses in 2019, included: NAIDOC Koori Kids initiative; Murnong Mummas; Djandak Enterprises; Wartakan Consulting; and a number of Aboriginal sole traders and consultants (including local artists and facilitators). <p>In June 2019, the City completed the regional project, 'Improving Aboriginal business procurement within local government,' in collaboration with Loddon Shire and Mount Alexander Shire Councils. The project has produced the following outcomes to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the Procurement Policy, including a new Schedule 3 Sustainable Procurement. Adding an exemption for obtaining quotes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses up to the value of \$25,000. Adding direct engagement with DDWCAC and TLWC for advisory activities to the sole supplier exemption. Procurement staff have attended Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training and are rolling out internal awareness raising of changes to procurement schedules and policies. City staff are currently seeking funding for a regional Aboriginal Procurement Lead as a project manager for the Loddon Mallee region to further deliver on project recommendations, and regular discussions with Djandak Enterprises are continuing on City contracting and tendering opportunities.
	d. Explore benefits and costs of implementing Federal policy regarding procurement through Supply Nation	Community Partnerships	<p>Action completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A partnership was agreed in September 2019 between the City and the Victorian Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, Kinaway, to further assist the City's engagement with Aboriginal businesses.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City is now receiving an in-kind Platinum Corporate Membership Package which provides access to a list of Kinaway certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, ongoing advice and staff support, and Kinaway attendance at CoGB information sessions and training workshops.
15. Increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with an aim of working towards a participation rate that reflects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Greater Bendigo	c. Develop a business case and explore resource options for designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions.	People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being progressed by individual business units, with Organisational Development and Community Partnerships having completed an Inclusive Employment project in 2018. Employment outcomes for 2019 included: 1 Indigenous trainee in the Customer Service Unit completed a 12-month traineeship (Certificate in Business Administration), and the First Nations Curator position at the Bendigo Art Gallery became an ongoing permanent position in late 2019. Local Dja Dja Wurrung artist, Tash Carter, completed a short-term work placement with the Bendigo Art Gallery in October 2019.
19. Provide opportunities to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, art and history to the wider community	c. Promote the Integration of local and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and programs into the exhibitions of the Bendigo Art Gallery. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing to the Bendigo Art Gallery Board Developing and implementing an acquisition policy for the permanent collection; Exploration of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander temporary exhibition; and Community Education Program during NAIDOC and Reconciliation week. 	Bendigo Art Gallery	<p>Exhibitions and activities held at the Bendigo Art Gallery in 2019 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three exhibitions: <i>Desert Lines: Batik from Central Australia</i>, <i>Body Politics</i>, and <i>Josh Muir: What's On Your Mind</i>. Reconciliation Week activities featuring talks by local Aboriginal artist, Janet Bromley and weaving workshops with Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, Aunty Marilynne Nicholls. A Dja Dja Wurrung Acknowledgement of Country was installed at the entrance to the Tudors to Windsors exhibition. Aboriginal retail products were made available in the Bendigo Art Gallery shop. Activities offered under the Community Education Program in 2019 included: silk dying workshops for both the public and Aboriginal community; BDAC community workshops focused on mental health as part of the <i>Josh Muir</i> exhibition

			<p>(funded by Creative Victoria); and Curator Talks delivered to schools as part of the <i>Body Politics</i> exhibition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bendigo Art Gallery commenced an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training program: Local Aboriginal artist, Tashara Roberts, delivered training to Gallery guides and volunteers; and an Aboriginal Cultural Audit program and associated staff planning sessions are being delivered to all Gallery staff as part of the Diversity Arts Victoria's Fair Play Program.
	f. Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists into the annual programming for the Capital, Venues and Events	Capital Venues and Events	<p>Action is ongoing and continues to exceed targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual NAIDOC Week exhibition curated by Janet Bromley at Dudley House on behalf of the Bendigo NAIDOC Week Committee. Events and productions held in 2019 included: Bangarra's <i>Benneelong</i>; The Sapphires performance at Ulumbarra Theatre, <i>My Urrwai</i>, Kimberley Echoes, and the Mission Songs Projects. In February 2019, Bendigo Venues and Events secured a four year partnership agreement with the Bangarra Dance Theatre which will include annual performances, education programs, and community activities. Bendigo Venues and Events continues to provide special community-priced ticketing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and complimentary tickets also provided to Elders and the DDWCAC Board.
	h. Support the capacity building of Aboriginal artists and groups and access to opportunities. Capacity building may involve assistance with: grant applications, budgets, access to information.	Capital Venues and Events	<p>Action is ongoing and is exceeding expectations. Actions delivered in 2019 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bendigo Venues and Events Unit provides annual support for Tanderrum cultural ceremony rehearsals (through the use of City facilities) and access to Dudley House for art exhibitions including NAIDOC Week. Delivered a number of events as part of the 'Emerge in Bendigo' partnership between CoGB and Multicultural Arts Victoria with key activities including EMERGE Cultural Gatherings and the <i>Interwoven: cross-cultural weaving collaboration</i> held over September - October 2019. City support for a temporary art mural featured on the Old

			<p>Fire Station in View Street and involved both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists (August 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An artwork by local Aboriginal artist, Tashara Roberts, is now on permanent display at Ulumbarra Theatre.
	j. Explore opportunities to include local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the programming for the Living Arts Space.	Tourism and Major Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action is being progressed in 2020 with local Aboriginal artist, Janet Bromley, curating an exhibition as part of NAIDOC Week 2019. However this event is likely to be postponed due to COVID-19.

Focus Area: REPORTING			
Objective:	Action:	Responsible Unit:	Progress to date:
20. Ensure program quality by monitoring, reviewing and problem solving implementation issues.	a. Form a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group that is operational to support the development of the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and decision-making staff from across our organisation	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RP Steering Committee meetings are held quarterly and include members from a broad range of City Services Units, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Partnerships Community Wellbeing Regional Sustainable Development People and Culture Parks and Open Space Governance Engineering Media and Communications Bendigo Venues and Events Bendigo Art Gallery Natural and Passive Reserves The RP Steering Committee also includes the following representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community: Baydon Widdicombe (BDAC), Gaby Gamble, and Krystal Henderson (Bendigo Local Aboriginal Network).
	b. Develop a business case for increased staff resources to support the implementation of actions and support	Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action completed and new Inclusive Communities Officer (with focus on Aboriginal reconciliation) commenced in the

	proposed governance structures		<p>role in November 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Community Partnerships Unit, Governance and Bendigo Venues and Events are currently seeking funding to support the development of designated Aboriginal positions which will progress actions relating to Aboriginal Place Naming, Aboriginal procurement and the Arts & Creative Industries Strategy.
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8. LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL

8.1 FINANCE REPORT AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

Document Information

Author Nathan Morsillo, Manager Financial Strategy

Responsible Director Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Summary/Purpose

To provide Council with a report on the financial position of the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) to 31 March 2020 for the 2019/2020 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Finance Report comparing Budgeted and Actual Revenues and Expenses to 31 March 2020, in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Background Information

In accordance with Section 138 of the *Local Government Act 1989*:

“At least every 3 months, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a statement comparing the budgeted revenue and expenditure for the financial year with the actual revenue and expenditure to date is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.”

A review of the financials for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 March 2020 was undertaken by Council's Finance Committee on 11 May 2020.

Policy Context

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

Objective 1.3 Be innovative and financially responsible

Objective 1.4 Be accountable and efficient in its use of the community's money

Report

This report provides an update on the financial performance in comparison to the budget for the 2019/2020 financial year for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The 2019/2020 financial year continues to be challenging, given the impact of COVID-19 on our community and businesses, alongside the need for the City of Greater Bendigo to support the community's recovery while continuing to deliver essential services. The lockdown measures implemented by Government resulted in the closure of a number of Council's facilities. In addition, Council made a number of early decisions to provide immediate support including deferral of rates, interest waivers and additional cleaning.

The combination of reduced revenue attributed to the lockdown and the increased and unbudgeted expenses incurred to support our community and businesses will result in a forecast cash deficit of \$5.17M up to 30 June 2020.

Whilst difficult to predict the exact impacts due to the rapidly changing circumstances, the financial impacts are forecast to continue into 2020/2021.

Council sought to provide immediate relief to those suffering financially by halting debt collection and extending payment terms across the business for fees and charges. This reflects other levels of government's approach to hibernating and providing cash flow relief (via deferral) where possible.

Further relief and recovery details are discussed in the proposed budget 2020/2021. Importantly, the updated COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy offers relief from rates and charges for those doing it suffering financial hardship. This relief includes the removal of any penalty interest or charges.

Council strongly encourages anyone needing assistance to make early contact by calling our customer service desk on 5434 6000 or by emailing our rates team: ratesenquiries@bendigo.vic.gov.au.

1. Actual Financial Performance

Operating Results - YTD Actual vs YTD Budget

Council's operating result as at 31 March 2020 is \$10.66M favourable to budget. The result is predominantly due to the receipt of unbudgeted operational grants, higher than anticipated user fees and underspend compared to timing in the budget for materials and general expenses. It is expected that the financial implications of the pandemic will begin to impact more over coming months.

Operating Result is a measure for accounting for an organisation's profit or loss for a given period. An Operating Result recognises all revenue and operating expenditure; it includes non-cash expenditure such as depreciation and non-cash revenue of donated assets.

YTD Budget 31 March 2020 Surplus/(Deficit)	YTD Actual 31 March 2020 Surplus/(Deficit)	Variance
\$23.8M	\$34.4M	\$10.6M Favourable

The Income Statement for the period 1 July 2019 – 31 March 2020 is included on the following page:

The report continues on the following page

	YEAR TO DATE				FORECAST			
	YTD	YTD	YTD Variance		Annual	Full Year	Forecast	
	Budget	Actual			Budget	Forecast	Variance	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%
REVENUE								
Rates & Charges	121,810	121,560	(249)	0%	121,851	122,070	219	(0%)
Stat Fees & Fines	4,347	4,217	(129)	(3%)	5,581	5,623	42	1%
User Fees	19,399	20,509	1,110	6%	26,897	23,019	(3,878)	(14%)
Operating Grants	12,237	14,505	2,269	19%	24,746	27,169	2,423	10%
Capital Grants	8,135	7,178	(1,042)	(17%)	8,181	7,976	(205)	(3%)
Contributions - Cash	3,218	2,511	(707)	(22%)	4,116	4,937	821	20%
Contributions - Assets*	-	-	-	-	12,307	12,307	-	0%
Interest & Other	1,068	1,056	(12)	(1%)	1,424	1,288	(136)	(10%)
Internal Revenue	21,155	19,748	(1,407)	(7%)	28,207	25,888	(2,319)	(8%)
Share of NCGRLC	69	0	(69)	(100%)	92	92	-	0%
Total Revenue	189,437	191,284	1,847	1%	233,401	230,368	(3,033)	(1%)
EXPENSES								
Employee Benefits	52,657	50,789	1,868	4%	70,661	69,332	1,329	2%
Materials & Services	57,024	50,177	6,848	12%	75,269	70,604	4,665	6%
Equipment Expenses	5,285	4,802	482	9%	6,941	7,038	(97)	(1%)
Depreciation	29,430	30,159	(728)	(2%)	39,240	40,333	(1,093)	(3%)
Borrowing Costs	1,590	1,513	77	5%	2,120	2,020	100	5%
Loss on PPEI	(532)	(87)	(445)	(84%)	4,326	4,585	(259)	(6%)
Bad Debts	168	122	46	27%	226	233	(7)	(3%)
Internal Expenses	20,023	19,357	666	3%	26,657	26,626	30	0%
Total Expenses	165,646	156,832	8,813	5%	225,439	220,771	4,668	2%
Operating Result	23,792	34,452	10,660	45%	7,962	9,597	1,635	21%

*In prior quarterly reports the budgeted non cash infrastructure contributions from developers has been included in the budgeted operating result. To improve reporting this has been removed this quarter. Although handover of the infrastructure occurs throughout the year, financial recognition occurs at the end of financial year.

Major variances that contribute to the result include:

Area	Fav / Unfav	Main Contributing Factors	Variance
User Fees	Favourable	There has been a larger quantity of commercial waste received YTD than was budgeted. Additionally, there has been increased activity at the Bendigo Livestock Exchange.	\$1.1M
Government Grants – Operating	Favourable	The favourable result is due to additional grants including Community Partnerships (inclusive communities and champions for change programs); and various Regional Sustainability and Development and Active & Healthy grants. This income is expected to be matched by expenditure this financial year and next.	\$2.27M
Materials & Services	Favourable	Key items within variances have been a lower year to date Landfill Levy expense; and a change to the timing of expenditure for plant and equipment expenses associated with unsealed road maintenance due to dry conditions, including expenditure on crushed rock and plant operations.	\$6.85M
Government Grants – Capital	Favourable	Capital grants are favourable due to the receipt of unbudgeted grants in relation to Black Spot funding and Healthy Heart of Victoria.	\$1M

2. Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet for 31 March 2020 is included below:

	Annual Budget 2020 \$'000	YTD Previous Actual 2019 \$'000	YTD Actual 2020 \$'000	Year on Year Variance \$'000 %	
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	45,832	81,233	80,077	(1,156)	(1%)
Trade and Other Receivables	12,270	30,780	33,810	2,829	9%
Inventory	-	385	450	65	17%
Other Assets/Prepayments	1,520	1,677	809	(868)	(52%)
Total Current Assets	59,622	114,075	114,946	871	1%
Non-Current Assets					
Investments in Associates	3,949	3,245	3,272	27	1%
Trade and Other Receivables	80	101	59	(42)	(41%)
Forestry Plantations	0	83	83	-	0%
Intangible Assets	0	216	216	-	0%
Plant, Equipment and Infrastructure	1,538,802	1,487,354	1,601,965	114,612	8%
Total Non-Current Assets	1,542,831	1,490,998	1,605,595	114,597	8%
TOTAL ASSETS	1,602,453	1,605,073	1,720,541	115,468	7%
Current Liabilities					
Trade and Other Payables	15,828	9,342	9,895	(553)	(6%)
Provisions	16,675	17,937	16,176	1,761	10%
Interest Bearing Liabilities and Borrowings	5,397	1,057	516	541	51%
Trust Funds	3,025	3,167	3,100	68	2%
Total Current Liabilities	40,925	31,504	29,687	1,817	6%
Non-Current Liabilities					
Provisions	9,875	10,391	10,721	(330)	(3%)
Interest Bearing Liabilities and Borrowings	40,643	45,684	41,725	3,960	9%
Total Non-Current Liabilities	50,518	56,075	52,445	3,630	6%
TOTAL LIABILITIES	91,443	87,579	82,132	5,447	6%
NET ASSETS	1,511,010	1,517,494	1,638,409	120,916	8%
Equity					
Accumulated Surplus	616,862	741,447	794,939	53,492	7%
Reserves	871,565	752,124	817,156	65,031	9%
Other Reserves	22,583	23,923	26,314	2,392	10%
TOTAL EQUITY	1,511,010	1,517,494	1,638,409	120,916	8%

3. Forecast Performance

Council regularly updates its forecasts, which estimates the financial year position as at 30 June 2020.

Forecasts are more difficult to accurately plan for than in previous years. The full effects of refunds, waivers, support to community and other costs and savings related to the pandemic are still being recognised in April 2020.

An estimated \$4.2M (unfavourable) variation is expected over the last quarter. This is reflected in forecasts to year end within this report – noting that at the time of forecasts, the impact of the lockdowns and the timing of any reductions are estimates only and continue to change.

Operating Result - Forecast v Annual Budget

Annual Budget 30/06/2020 Operational Surplus	Forecast 30/06/2020 Operational Surplus	Variance
\$7.9M	\$9.5M	\$1.6M Favourable

Major variances that contribute to the forecast favourable operating result include the following:

Area	Fav / Unfav	Main Contributing Factors	Variance
User Fees	Unfavourable	Council is anticipating a significant unfavourable impact on income associated with parking, childcare, animal services, Art Gallery, Bendigo Venues & events and Tourism & Major Events. These forecast changes are related to the impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions.	\$3.9M
Operating Grants	Favourable	Council has been successful in gaining a number of operating grants that were not included in the adopted budget. These programs are mainly across Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Regional Sustainable Development and Community Partnerships. These will have corresponding expenditure in the current and subsequent year.	\$2.4M
Materials & Services	Favourable	There are a large number of savings and delays in expenditure making up an overall favourable variance. In part this is also due to the slowdown of certain anticipated expenditures in the final quarter (including cancelled events) due to restrictions.	\$4.7M

2019/2020 Cash Result

The cash result is managed on an ongoing basis rather than annually, as the impact of previous year's results will affect the following year's budget.

	Forecast Result Surplus/(Deficit)
Accumulated Cash Surplus as at 30/06/19	\$24,478,822
2019/20 financial year forecast cash result (including & unspent grants and other movements)	(\$5,172,854)
Forecasted capital projects at 31/03/2020 as requiring carry forward to 2020/2021	(\$15,172,616)
Forecast of grants in 2019/2020 relating to 2020/2021	N/A**
2019/2020 forecast accumulated surplus/(deficit)	\$4,133,352

** - these will be identified in the June quarter report.

Conclusion

The Finance Committee has reviewed the statement comparing Budgeted and Actual Revenues and Expenses to 31 March 2020, and the financial forecast for 2019/2020.

8.2 RECORD OF ASSEMBLIES

Document Information

Author Jessica Clarke-Hong, Manager Governance

Responsible Director Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the record of any assembly of Councillors, which has been held since the last Council Meeting, so that it can be recorded in the Minutes of the formal Council Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the record of assemblies of Councillors as outlined in this report.

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### Policy Context

*City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:*

Goal 1 Effective community engagement will guide well informed, responsive decision-making and financially responsible resource allocations, which are transparent and accountable.

### Background Information

A meeting will be an assembly of Councillors if it considers matters that are likely to be the subject of a Council decision, or, the exercise of a Council delegation and the meeting is:

1. A planned or scheduled meeting that includes at least half the Councillors (5) and a member of Council staff; or
2. An advisory committee of the Council where one or more Councillors are present.

The requirement for reporting provides increased transparency and the opportunity for Councillors to check the record, particularly the declarations of conflict of interest.

**Report**

| Meeting Information              |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Meeting Name/Type                | 'Virtual" Councillors' Briefing                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
| Meeting Date                     | 6 April 2020                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |
| Matters Discussed                | 1. COVID19 update<br>2. Planning reports<br>3. Planning Scheme Review<br>4. Forward Agenda planning<br>5. April Council Meeting<br>6. GovHub update                                                        |                                 |
|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
| Attendees/Apologies              |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
| Councillors                      | Cr Margaret O'Rourke<br>Cr Jennifer Alden<br>Cr Matt Emond<br>Cr Rod Fyffe OAM<br>Cr Susie Hawke<br>Cr Andrea Metcalf<br>Cr Mal Pethybridge<br>Cr James Williams<br><b>Apology:</b><br>Cr George Flack OAM |                                 |
| Staff/Community Representatives  | Mr Craig Niemann<br>Ms Debbie Wood<br>Mr Andrew Cooney<br>Ms Vicky Mason<br>Mr Bernie O'Sullivan<br>Mr Peter Hargreaves                                                                                    |                                 |
|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
| Conflict of Interest Disclosures |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                 |
| Matter No.                       | Councillor/officer making disclosure                                                                                                                                                                       | Councillor/officer left meeting |
|                                  | Nil                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |

| <b>Meeting Information</b>              |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Meeting Name/Type</b>                | 'Virtual' Councillors' Briefing                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
| <b>Meeting Date</b>                     | 20 April 2020                                                                                                                                                                           |                                        |
| <b>Matters Discussed</b>                | 1. Bendigo Botanic Gardens Central Hub<br>2. COVID19 - Proposed Budget 2020/2021<br>3. ANZAC Day                                                                                        |                                        |
|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
| <b>Attendees/Apologies</b>              |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
| <b>Councillors</b>                      | Cr Margaret O'Rourke<br>Cr Jennifer Alden<br>Cr Matt Emond<br>Cr George Flack OAM<br>Cr Rod Fyffe OAM<br>Cr Susie Hawke<br>Cr Andrea Metcalf<br>Cr Mal Pethybridge<br>Cr James Williams |                                        |
| <b>Staff/Community Representatives</b>  | Mr Craig Niemann<br>Ms Debbie Wood<br>Mr Andrew Cooney<br>Ms Vicky Mason<br>Mr Bernie O'Sullivan<br>Mr Peter Hargreaves                                                                 |                                        |
|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
| <b>Conflict of Interest Disclosures</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                        |
| <b>Matter No.</b>                       | <b>Councillor/officer making disclosure</b>                                                                                                                                             | <b>Councillor/officer left meeting</b> |
|                                         | Nil                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                        |

**9. URGENT BUSINESS**

Nil.

**10. NOTICES OF MOTION**

Nil.

**11. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS**

**11.1 Confidential Section 66 Report in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 relating to Council business information**

**11.2 Confidential Section 66 Report in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 relating to Council business information**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council close the meeting to members of the public pursuant to Section 66(2)(a) of the **Local Government Act 2020** to consider reports relating to Council business information.