

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA



6:00 pm on Monday, July 25 2022

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

Broadcast live on Phoenix FM 106.7 ***

Copies of the City of Greater Bendigo Council's Agendas & Minutes
can be obtained online at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au

** Council Meetings are now open to the public. In order to maintain physical distancing the public gallery is limited to 25 persons. If you would like to attend, please register your interest through gotix online <https://www.bendigoregion.com.au/arts-culture-theatres/event/city-of-greater-bendigo-council-meeting> or call the box office on 5434 6100 no later than 5pm on the day of the meeting.*

COMMUNITY VISION 2021–2031

*Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community.
We are welcoming, sustainable and prosperous.
Walking hand-in-hand with the Traditional Custodians of this land.
Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future.*

The community vision is underpinned by five values – transparency, sustainability, inclusion, innovation and equity.

COUNCIL PLAN (MIR WIMBUL) – OUTCOMES

The [Council Plan](#) (Mir wimbul) is based on seven outcomes, which are the main focus of the Council Plan.

Each outcome has a set of goals, objectives and actions that will help to achieve the community vision, and indicators to measure achievement against each goal:

1. Lead and govern for all
2. Healthy, liveable spaces and places
3. Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy
4. Aboriginal reconciliation
5. A climate-resilient built and natural environment
6. A vibrant, creative community
7. A safe, welcoming and fair community

STAFF VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

The City of Greater Bendigo's [values and behaviours](#) describe how Councillors and staff will work together to be the best we can for our community.

They are aligned to our strategic documents, such as the Council Plan, which ensures they are meaningful for Council and the organisation.

A shared commitment to living our values and behaviours will help us to build the type of culture we need to be able to work together and support each other to deliver the best possible outcomes for our community.



This Council Meeting is conducted in accordance with the

- Local Government Act 2020 as amended by the COVID19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020, and
- [Governance Rules](#)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	5
2. TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE STATEMENT	5
3. OPENING STATEMENT	5
4. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION	5
5. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES	5
6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE	5
7. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS	5
8. COMMUNITY RECOGNITION	5
9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	5
10. RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS	5
11. CR O'ROURKE'S REPORT	5
12. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST	5
13. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES	6
14. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS	7
14.1. Response to Petition from Local Residents regarding dogs off lead - Quarry Hill Golf Course & Recreation Reserve	7
14.2. Petition: Request for Walk In Breastfeeding Clinic Bendigo	12
15. LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL	20
15.1. Draft Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy	20
15.2. Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment	93
15.3. Audit and Risk Committee Minutes	99
15.4. Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework	108
16. HEALTHY, LIVEABLE SPACES AND PLACES	139
16.1. Lot 1 Dalys Road, WOODVALE 3556 - Use and Development of the Land for a Dwelling and Outbuilding (In Association with a Pet Therapy Breeding Enterprise)	139
16.2. CA 9A Parish of Wellsford - 405 Huntly-Fosterville Road, BAGSHOT 3551 - Use and Development of Land for a Dwelling	155
16.3. 55 Williams Road, MYERS FLAT 3556 - Use of land for Licensed Vehicle Tester premises (retrospective)	170
16.4. Advocacy for Water Fluoridation: Heathcote	184
17. STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY	192

18. ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION	192
19. A CLIMATE-RESILIENT BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	192
20. A VIBRANT, CREATIVE COMMUNITY	192
21. A SAFE, WELCOMING AND FAIR COMMUNITY	192
22. URGENT BUSINESS	192
23. NOTICES OF MOTION	192
24. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS	192
25. MAYOR'S REPORT	192
26. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	192
27. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS	192

1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**
2. **TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE STATEMENT**
3. **OPENING STATEMENT**
4. **MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**
5. **ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**
6. **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
7. **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

RECOMMENDED MOTION

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

8. **COMMUNITY RECOGNITION**
9. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
10. **RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS**

RECOMMENDED MOTION

That Standing Orders be resumed.

11. **CR O'ROURKE'S REPORT**
12. **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**the Act**) provides that a relevant person must disclose a conflict of interest in respect of a matter and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee meeting and any action in relation to that matter.

The procedure for declaring a conflict of interest at a Council Meeting is set out at rule 18.2.4 of the Governance Rules.

Section 126 of the Act sets out that a relevant person (Councillor, member of a delegated Committee or member of Council staff) has a conflict of interest if the relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** or a **material conflict of interest**.

A relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** in a matter if an impartial, fair minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A relevant person has a **material conflict of interest** in a matter if an *affected person* would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

13. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES RECOMMENDED MOTION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on June 23, 2022, and June 27, 2022 - as circulated - be taken as read and confirmed.

Previous Minute Locations:

[Minutes - June 23, 2022](#)

[Minutes - June 27, 2022](#)

14. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

14.1. Response to Petition from Local Residents regarding dogs off lead - Quarry Hill Golf Course & Recreation Reserve

Author:	Andrew McHardy, Acting Coordinator Local Laws and Animal Services
Responsible Director:	Stacy Williams, Director Healthy Communities and Environments

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to the petition from 10 Quarry Hill Residents regarding removing the ability of dogs to be off lead on Council owned property including the Quarry Hill Golf Course and Recreation Reserve and Oval.

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Note the petition that has been received.
2. Note that an action is present in the Domestic Animal Management Plan (2021-2025) to assess the feasibility of altering the current off lead requirements with this assessment currently ongoing.
3. Respond to the lead petitioner, Aldo Penbrook, advising the off leash requirements at the Quarry Hill Golf Course and Recreation Reserve and Oval will be reviewed as part of the action stated in the Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Executive Summary

The following petition has been received from 10 Quarry Hill residents that states;

“We the undersigned residents and ratepayers of the Greater Bendigo City council, formally request Council to prohibit owners allowing their dogs to roam unleashed on Council owned property, including Quarry Hill Golf Course and the Quarry Hill Recreation reserve and Oval.”

Background

The City of Greater Bendigo is an off-lead municipality with dog owners permitted to walk their dogs off lead (except in some designated areas) provided the dogs are kept under effective control.

Starting in the year 2000, a number of resolutions were made under Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, which in part, permits Councils to make orders that prohibit

the presence of dogs and cats in public places or impose conditions as to the means of restraint or times of access.

Currently dogs must be on lead at;

- Rosalind Park
- Lake Weeroona
- Kennington Reserve
- White Hill Botanical Gardens
- Strathdale Park
- Kangaroo Flat Botanical Gardens
- Barrack Reserve Heathcote
- Canterbury Gardens Eaglehawk
- Cooina Park Golden Square
- Lake Neangar and Lake Tom Thumb Eaglehawk

Report

Benchmarking against other Victorian Councils, performed during the development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan showed that 60 Victorian LGA's currently have on lead requirements for dogs.

Public submissions received during the development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan showed 76% of respondents supported a requirement for dogs to be on lead at all times unless in areas designated otherwise.

It was also noted that the Local Laws team investigated 428 incidents of Dog at Large, 80 incidents of Dog Rush and 185 Dog Attack incidents in the 2020/2021 financial year

From this data an action was placed in the Domestic Animal Management Plan (sec 7.2 – objective 2) to conduct a feasibility study on the requirement to keep dogs on lead in public areas with the action commencing in 2022.

While this action is currently ongoing, given the data already collected, it is reasonable to predict a draft order requiring dogs to be on lead in public places will be presented for consideration before the end of 2022, however further work is required in identifying appropriate off lead areas other than the existing dog parks, to ensure fair and equitable access to public land for all users.

Communications/Engagement

In developing the Domestic Animal Management Plan extensive public consultation was carried out with a total of 1131 submissions received from the community via an online survey

In addition to this, over 70 stakeholders; mostly organisations and businesses including domestic animal related businesses, land care groups, support for wildlife, and sporting associations were invited to make a submission or provide feedback via the survey.

The Draft Plan was released for public consultation, closing on 11 October 2021 and attracted 40 written submissions in response to its proposals.

Financial Sustainability

The feasibility study on the requirements to keep dogs on lead in public places will be completed by the Safe and Healthy Environments unit with existing resources.

Risk Assessment

Introducing an order requiring dogs to be on lead in public places without providing adequate places for owners to exercise their dogs off leash, may result in an increase in barking nuisance complaints.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Goal 1: Lead and govern for all

A community that works together to achieve our shared vision.

Goal 2: Healthy, liveable spaces and places

A community where all people can live healthy, safe, harmonious lives in accessible and affordable settings.

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021

Outcome 5: Liveable

The Greater Bendigo Community is resilient to a changing climate and has access to the natural environment and quality public space for enhanced health and wellbeing.

Other Reference(s)

Domestic Animal Management Plan (2021-2025)

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Petition from Aldo Penbrook regarding Dogs Off Leash at Quarry Hill Golfcourse and Quarry Hill Recre [14.1.1 - 1 page]

Petition to Council June 2022

Initiated by Aldo Penbrook, Peel St Quarry Hill

DOGS OFF-LEASH Quarry Hill Golfcourse

We, the undersigned residents and ratepayers of Greater Bendigo City Council, formally request Council to prohibit owners allowing their dogs to roam unleashed on council owned property, including the Quarry Hill Golfcourse and the Quarry Hill Recreation Reserve and Oval.

RECEIVED**27 JUN 2022**

Name	Address	Signature
L. Meades	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Liz Kefford	[REDACTED]	Liz Kefford
Sarah Lawrence	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Daniela Arcen	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Virginia Moor	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Marshall Vincent	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Lauren Schultz	[REDACTED]	LSchultz
Matt Dwan	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Kristy Dixon	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
Aldo Penbrook	[REDACTED]	Penbrook

14.2. Petition: Request for Walk In Breastfeeding Clinic Bendigo

Author:	Richie Evans, Manager Community Wellbeing – Community Partnerships
Responsible Director:	Stacy Williams, Director, Healthy Communities and Environments

The following petition had been received from residents and ratepayers as outlined below

“We the undersigned residents and ratepayers of Greater Bendigo City Council formally request Council to please give consideration into opening what we believe to be a very much needed walk in Breastfeeding clinic in Bendigo.

Every parent knows just how important giving your child the best start to life is, but often it is not without its struggles.

Currently Bendigo Health only offers Lactation Consultant appointments up to 6 weeks postpartum, whereas a lot of women Breastfeed for many years and require support, help and advice during this time, not only for Breastfeeding but weaning and other ailments.

A free, quick, easily accessible facility offering face to face consultations could be the make or break of some women’s Breastfeeding journeys and a valuable asset to the City Of Greater Bendigo”.

Names - 82

Recommended Motion

That the petition be received and a response be prepared within two (2) meetings.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Petition July 25 [14.2.1 - 7 pages]

RECEIVED

WALK IN BREASTFEEDING CLINIC 14 JUL 2022**BENDIGO***City of Greater Bendigo*

We the undersigned residents and ratepayers of Greater Bendigo City Council formally request Council to please give great consideration into opening what we believe to be a very much needed walk in Breastfeeding clinic in Bendigo.

Every parent knows just how important giving your child the best start to life is, but often it is not without its struggles.

Currently Bendigo Health only offers Lactation Consultant appointments up to 6 weeks postpartum, whereas a lot of women Breastfeed for many years and require support, help and advice during this time, not only for Breastfeeding but weaning and other ailments.

A free, quick, easily accessible facility offering face to face consultations could be the make or break of some women's Breastfeeding journeys and a valuable asset to the City Of Greater Bendigo.

NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
Rockelle Hyland	3555	
Kelly Thomson	3555	
Nicky Ramm	3551	
Stacy Henman	3550	
Nick Beaud	3550	
Elten Henman	3570	
Steve Henman	3570	
Tarrant Sanders	3556	
Ghent	3556	
Stephen Liddall	3556	
Zambri Mapson	3556	
Demi Hall	3556	
Dianne Ollington	3556	
Log Ollington	3556	
Sosh Hodson	3556	
Stephanie Gillies	3556	
Michelle Wang	3556	
Alana McCallum	3556	

WALK IN BREASTFEEDING CLINIC BENDIGO

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A free, quick, easily accessible facility offering face to face consultations could be the make or break of some women's Breastfeeding journeys and a valuable asset to the City Of Greater Bendigo.

NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
Amanda Senda	VIC 3551	
Djalla Perry	4355	
Erin Barowski	3551	
Kayla Apps	3551	
Penny Williams	3448	
Mel McCarthy	3550	
David Felder	3551	
Sheryl Pydiah	3555	
Jessica Wall	3556	
Emma Barri	3551	
Jessica Aquilino	3556	
Katherine Post	3444	
Tiane Downs	3558	
Ash Egbers.	3537.	
Liarna Randall	3551	
Jacinta Belz	3523	
Zoe Newton	3551	
Tim Connors	3550	

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NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
Grace Dunne	3550	
Tamara Pattison	3551	
Laura Seddon	3551	
KARLA TUCCI	3557	
Laura Barker	3550	
EMMA McDowell	3551	
Caitlin Burns	3550	
Amy Curtain	3558	
Julian Garmey	3551	
Liam Evans	3551	
Kate Broughton	3555	
Emma Mannes	3551	
Shelby Doig	3551	
Sophie Perris	3550	
Andrea Perris	3551	
Zeara Clark	3672	
Kyra Clarke	3450	

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NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
Clare Thomas	3550	
Simone Richardson	3551	
Chimere Robertson	3556	
Cathy Smith	3550	
Jaclyn Franks	3550	
Karen Guthrie	3550	
Mikeeely Butlett	3551	
Melinda Smith	3551	
Lanissa Rayden	3550	
Emily Trickey	3551	
Kim Newman	3551	
Brendan Rowley	3556	
Milly Bush	3556	
Angela Cousins	3556	

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A free, quick, easily accessible facility offering face to face consultations could be the make or break of some women's Breastfeeding journeys and a valuable asset to the City Of Greater Bendigo.

NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
Lori KEEBLE	3556	
Kristy McKimmie	3555	
Bridget Netley	3555	
A. Van Der	3551	
N. Wragg	3551	
T. Franz	3550	
Bene Keen	3551	

WALK IN BREASTFEEDING CLINIC BENDIGO

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NAME	POSTCODE	EMAIL
MEAGAN NICDAO	3556	
JESSICA JOHNSTON	3556	
Kimba H	3551	

15. LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL

15.1. Draft Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy

Author:	Deb Simpson, Coordinator Strong Communities
Responsible Director:	Stacy Williams, Director Healthy Communities and Environments

Purpose

To seek Council adoption of the draft Greater Bendigo Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy (2022).

Recommended Motion

That Council adopt the draft Greater Bendigo Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy (2022) to guide future planning and development of library services and supporting infrastructure.

Executive Summary

Libraries are vibrant community hubs and public spaces that promote a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment. This is reinforced through Goldfields Library Corporation's (GLC) five ways to physical and mental wellbeing framework of:

- Connect;
- Learn;
- Take notice;
- Be active; and
- Give.

This framework underpins GLC's vision and mission.

The State Library Victoria (SLV) and Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) have jointly coined the term *libraries change lives*. Libraries support community members to be:

- connected with other community members, culture and services;
- engaged in civic life;
- literate - including digital literacy, and;
- creative and productive - including lifelong learning opportunities.

According to SLV and PLV data, Victorian libraries receive over 30 million visits annually (compared with Victoria's June 2021 population of approximately 6.65 million people), and there is a \$4.30 return on investment for every dollar invested into libraries.

The relationship between GLC and the City could be described as symbiotic: both our organisations benefit by working collaboratively and, most importantly, so does our community.

The Strategy identifies:

- How Greater Bendigo's libraries can contribute to our community's vision and values and Council's strategic objectives;
- How Greater Bendigo's libraries can be well positioned to respond to changes in demographics and community needs;
- Appropriate Greater Bendigo library service levels and current and projected service level gaps, and;
- Collective impact, co-location and service integration opportunities.

The Strategy helps to focus investment priorities.

Background

Strategy development aligns with the Local Government Act 2020 (Act) principles of:

- Community engagement
- Strategic planning
- Financial management
- Public transparency
- Service performance

as well as with our community's values of:

- Transparency
- Sustainability
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Equity

Collective impact, co-location and integration models are imperatives to enable our organisations to continue to deliver inclusive and high-quality services for our diverse and growing community within an increasingly resource-constrained environment. The Strategy espouses these models.

Some current opportunities to demonstrate commitment to these models include:

- Community Grants Policy review;
- Community Buildings Policy and linked Community Hubs Strategy development;
- Early Years Infrastructure Strategy development;
- Managed Growth Strategy development; and
- Heathcote Civic Precinct and Peter Krenz Centre (Eaglehawk) community hub projects.

The Heathcote Civic Precinct and Peter Krenz Centre (Eaglehawk) community hub projects would address the identified service level gaps for Heathcote and Eaglehawk libraries. These two projects would respond to draft Strategy recommendations 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10.

The recent relocation and redevelopment of the Kangaroo Flat Library formed Stage One of a Kangaroo Flat community hub project. The intent is to allocate staff resources to planning for future stages of this project. This project would respond to draft Strategy recommendations 8.2, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10.

The Axedale and Epsom-Huntly communities have recently requested support from the City for future services and infrastructure planning for their growing communities. These two projects would respond to draft Strategy recommendations 8.6 and 8.7.

Report

The purpose of the draft strategy is to:

1. Articulate the role of libraries in supporting Council's strategic goals.
2. Quantify demographic changes expected in Greater Bendigo and match this to library infrastructure and service need projections.
3. Determine an appropriate service hierarchy for library services.
4. Identify potential service gaps.
5. Identify and recommend supporting infrastructure needs and potential library co-location opportunities.

Priority/Importance

The Strategy will guide future planning and development of library services and supporting infrastructure.

Options considered

Not adopting the Strategy could also be considered inconsistent with Act principles and our community's vision and values.

Communications/Engagement

GLC has led a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process that has informed the Strategy's development. Over 1,000 stakeholders added their voices through survey responses, focus groups and community listening posts.

Financial Sustainability

Council's Financial Plan identifies significant financial challenges in maintaining / renewing existing infrastructure assets. This asset maintenance / renewal 'gap' is expected to increase as Greater Bendigo's existing infrastructure assets continue to age, and as standards change. Community hubs offer cost-effective solutions to service and infrastructure provision. Library co-location and service integration as part of community hub planning and development could help to ease this 'gap'.

Risk Assessment

SLV and PLV data indicates visitation to libraries continues to outpace population growth. Without ongoing investment in libraries, they will not be well positioned to respond to changes in demographics and community needs. The Strategy helps to focus investment priorities.

An effective Strategy governance model will be important in supporting role and responsibility clarity and in monitoring Strategy progression. For instance, it would be impractical to expect GLC to lead a community hub planning and development project as this is not their area of expertise or their core business.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 1 - Lead and govern for all

Outcome 2 - Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 1 - Accountable, financially responsible, equitable, transparent decision making

Goal 4 - Leadership that sets a standard for good governance and integrity in action, working in partnership with regional Councils

Goal 1 - Strengthened community health and wellbeing

Other Reference(s)

Nil

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Draft Greater Bendigo Library Infrastructure and Services Strategy March 2022 (1)
[**15.1.1** - 30 pages]
2. Library Plan 2021-25 [**15.1.2** - 13 pages]
3. Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Framework [**15.1.3** - 25 pages]



Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy City of Greater Bendigo

March 2022





CONTENTS

1. Introduction and Purpose.....	3
The New Library Plan and Purpose.....	4
2. Libraries and the Council Plan (Mir wimbul)	5
Council's Community Building Policy and Community Hub's Strategy.....	8
3. Developing Libraries to Meet Future Demand.	8
Growth and Change in the Greater Bendigo Community.....	8
Ensuring Libraries Respond to Growth and Change	9
4. Community Consultation – Libraries of the Future	12
5. Stakeholder Consultation	15
6. The Future of Public Libraries- Key Trends and Strategic Directions.....	16
Key International Trends	16
A State-wide Strategy- The Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Framework.....	18
A Local Perspective- The Goldfields Library Plan 2021-2025.....	20
7. Current and Proposed Service Models	21
The Current Service Model.....	21
A Proposed Service Model.....	22
8. Infrastructure and Service Recommendations	23
Infrastructure Priorities	23
Service Priorities.....	24
8. Conclusion.....	25
Appendix One: Library Facilities in Greater Bendigo.....	26
Appendix Two: Library Member Distribution.....	28

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.

We pay our 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* Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

1. Introduction and Purpose

The City of Greater Bendigo invests significantly in library services, funding and collaborating with the Goldfields Library Corporation to deliver strategy and day to day operations.

In 2019, the Victorian Auditor General's Office reported that this investment by the City of Greater Bendigo resulted in the highest level of community usage of core library services and programs compared with all other public libraries across Victoria.¹

Council and the Corporation have successfully collaborated in delivering a contemporary library service that involves a range of spaces, resources and activities aimed at aligning with Council's Health and Wellbeing objectives and have genuinely engaged community in library life.

In the year prior to COVID Bendigo libraries achieved the following activity levels:

- 39,900 members, representing 34 percent of the population.
- 638,535 visits to library spaces.
- 55,387 discreet Wi-Fi logins.
- 621 children's programs with 18,540 attendances.
- 1091 total programs with 35,223 attendances.
- 45,732 booking of public computers.
- 544,402 loans of physical items.
- 278,503 loans or uses of eLibrary resources.
- 209,790 visits to library website.
- 1,408,702 website page views.

Residents of Greater Bendigo value their libraries and the services and collections that are made available through them.

As Bendigo grows and changes, this strategic plan provides an opportunity to consider what is required to continue to engage and meet the needs of community over the next decade.

The purpose of this strategy has five key goals to achieve:

¹ VAGO Council Libraries Independent Assurance Report to Parliament 2019-20, page 79.

1. Articulate the role of libraries in supporting the delivery of Council's strategic goals.
2. Quantify demographic changes expected in Greater Bendigo and match this to library infrastructure and service needs.
3. Determine an appropriate service level hierarchy for library spaces and services in the City.
4. Identify potential service gaps across the community.
5. Identify and recommend infrastructure needs and potential co-location opportunities for libraries.

2. Libraries and the Council Plan (Mirwimbul)

The Council Plan for 2021-2025 is centred on seven outcomes that have a set of goals, objectives and actions to help achieve the community vision.

It's important to understand where libraries can contribute to achieving these seven outcomes and how this may drive investment in library services to achieve the Council Plan. The seven outcomes and relationship to libraries include:

Council Plan Outcome	Relationship to libraries
Lead and Govern for all - Equitable transparent decision making - Commitment to innovation and learning - Active community engagement - Working in partnership with regional Councils	Engaging with community, providing an equitable service that enhances wellbeing. Libraries can be utilised as a source for distributing information to community and as an engagement space and tool. The completion of this plan is noted as an action for this outcome (Council Plan, p.16). Libraries also represent 34,000 signed up and actively engaged members in community and this can provide a conduit for Council to distribute information or engage in conversation. The Regional Library Corporation stands as a successful and practical application of a regional partnership adding scale and benefit to all members.
Healthy, liveable spaces and places - Strengthened Community Health and Wellbeing - People living in 10-minute neighbourhoods - Develop a network of community hubs - Sustainable population growth - Targeted investment in services and facilities	Developing libraries as welcoming public spaces where people can learn, relax, be informed, and socialise are all elements to achieve this outcome. There is also a very practical element of creating a warm space in winter and cool space in summer for many residents to access. Council's approach of "10 minute neighbourhoods" also links to how libraries can operate as part of community hubs that are connected by trails, public transport and other facilities to local community. Council's approach to community hubs can potentially have libraries as "anchor" tenants, helping activate spaces.

Council Plan Outcome	Relationship to libraries
	Consideration of libraries for a growing community with focus on areas or corridors where growth is focussed (Huntly, Maiden Gully-Marong etc.).
Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy - Inclusive employment - Education and Training pathways - Transformed and revitalised city centre	Support of early years development, lifelong learning and connection between libraries and other education institutions, such as TAFE or university. Libraries can also provide a space for business to be conducted with benchmarked business standard Wi Fi and quiet workspaces/meeting spaces available. Bendigo library is a crucial community hub centrally located and available for all as a comfortable public space.
Aboriginal reconciliation - Strengthening trust relationships and partnerships with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community - Enhanced wellbeing of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	An opportunity to work with Traditional Owners to celebrate First Nations Culture and tell story through programs and collection. This is also an opportunity to create library spaces that are culturally welcoming and showcase local First Nations culture through symbols and messages.
A climate resilient built and natural environment - Zero carbon - Circular economy - Thriving landscapes and ecosystems - Water Sensitive Bendigo	Libraries can showcase local initiatives, present programs and collection that access a wide audience and incorporate environmental messages particularly in early childhood programs. Libraries can partner with Council on environmental projects and help develop a more informed community.

Council Plan Outcome	Relationship to libraries
	All libraries should be considered for solar panels and batteries as showcase zero carbon facilities. Continue to make connections to Bendigo Creek environment.
A vibrant and creative community - A culture of creativity - More activated spaces - Recognise and celebrate our significant national and international heritage	Support the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in partnership with the Writers Festival, support creative programs that build grass roots creative outlets for community as well as providing collection focussed on creativity.
A safe welcoming and fair community - A community that values gender equity and is free from violence against women - A welcoming community that understands and respects cultural and religious differences and supports multiculturalism - Young people are supported to explore, engage and be empowered - A community that values and engages with people of all ages, abilities, genders and sexualities - A community that feels safe - A community that promotes equity and addresses poverty and disadvantage - Emergencies are prevented or mitigated	Libraries represent equity of access in a safe and welcoming environment. The Mission Statements for the Goldfields Library Corporation are: You belong as you are. We want you to belong, just as you are, and to know your story is heard. We start where you are. Whatever your age or background we aim to have a positive, healthy influence and help you realise your potential. Whether you have big goals or little steps, it's all important and you can start with us. These statements represent an important approach in removing labels, providing equity and supporting each person toward their next step or achievement. Libraries, as part of important community hubs can provide a practical place to provide some shelter and information during emergencies.

Council's Community Building Policy and Community Hub's Strategy

Worth noting here is Council's current work on developing both a Community Building's Policy and a Community Hubs Strategy, both of which aim to:

1. Increase multi use of existing facilities or new facilities.
2. Create community facilities that provide multiple services and opportunities for community at a single location.
3. Rationalise community space in an effort to improve overall facility standards and provide for targeted investment by Council.
4. Develop a model for co-location of complementary services, improving access and linkages between services and community.

This work is noted in the Council Plan for action in 2021-2022 and has positive implications for the further development of existing library infrastructure or any new facilities.

Libraries as part of shared spaces can lead to collaboration with other services or other community purposes that increase community benefit. Libraries being key tenants of community hubs can lead to better activation of spaces and greater opportunity to inform community of other services available.

3. Developing Libraries to Meet Future Demand.

Growth and Change in the Greater Bendigo Community.

Bendigo's population is estimated at around 124,000 in 2022, having grown from 85,000 in the last 20 years. This places Bendigo at the forefront of regional population growth levels with an estimate of reaching a population of 200,000 prior to 2050.

Council has a focus for development that provides for urban infill (85 % of development) with residential growth corridor/locations being further developed in:

1. Jackass Flat-Epsom-Huntly,
2. Kangaroo Flat,
3. Maiden Gully-Marong,
4. Strathfieldsaye, and
5. Further residential development of Elmore, Axedale and Heathcote (15% of development).

Who we are.

- Our population is growing and ageing
- Median age is 38, about the state average.
- More than 50 percent of households are comprised of only one or two people, and this situation is expected to grow.
- 5.5 percent of our population need assistance with core tasks and 12.7 percent of people provide care to a person with a disability, both slightly higher than state averages.
- Single parent families are 18.3 percent, higher than the state average.
- Year 12 completion 67 percent, much lower than state averages.
(Males 60%, Females 73%)
- 14 percent of the population have a Bachelor degree or higher
- Median weekly income is \$989.00, but 40% of the population have an income of less than \$400 per week.
- Although mortgage stress levels are not high, 27.3 percent of households experience rental stress.
- Registered mental health clients per 1000 people is 19, seven people higher than state average.
- Bendigo has areas of vulnerability for childhood development, some areas are two to three times higher than state averages for vulnerability in communication and language development- a key area of impact for library services.
- Bendigo currently has five distinct library facilities located at Bendigo, Kangaroo Flat, Heathcote, Eaglehawk and Elmore. Further detail on these sites is provided in Appendix 1.

Ensuring Libraries Respond to Growth and Change.

Based on the information above, estimations of the amount of infrastructure that is required for future library service, and the location of that service can begin to be considered.

Library floorspace benchmarks allow for approximately 34 square metres of space per 1000 of population with an included allowance of 20 percent for administration and storage.²

Minimum floor space for a public library is recommended at 190 square metres. A public library building calculator has been developed as a simple online tool to broadly guide development.³

Population Based Calculator	
Resident population of Library catchment	124,000
Do you want to consider the non-resident workforce catchment?	Yes
Non-resident workforce	1000
Local catchment population	125,000 persons
Is this a central library with significant workroom requirements?	Yes
Number of libraries undertaking central library activities	1
Whole LGA population	124,000 persons
Non-resident workforce for whole LGA	1,000 persons
Whole LGA population (including non-resident workforce if considering)	125,000 persons
Library floor area required	4,945 sqm

Based on a population of 124,000 this would equate to around **4,945 square metres of combined public and administration space.**

Current floorspace of libraries in Greater Bendigo:

Library	Area (sq. m)
Bendigo	4,000
Kangaroo Flat	475
Eaglehawk	80
Heathcote	85
Elmore	40

² People Places: A Guide for Public Libraries in NSW

³ <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/people-places/library-building-calculator>

Total	4,644
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In summary, City of Greater Bendigo is:

1. experiencing rapid growth for a regional city,
2. developing a number of growth corridors or locations where further community facilities are required,
3. falling slightly below the recommended standard for floor space for current and future population levels,
4. operating smaller library spaces that do not meet recommended minimum floor space requirements,
5. positioned to develop libraries as part of community hubs with shared use spaces.

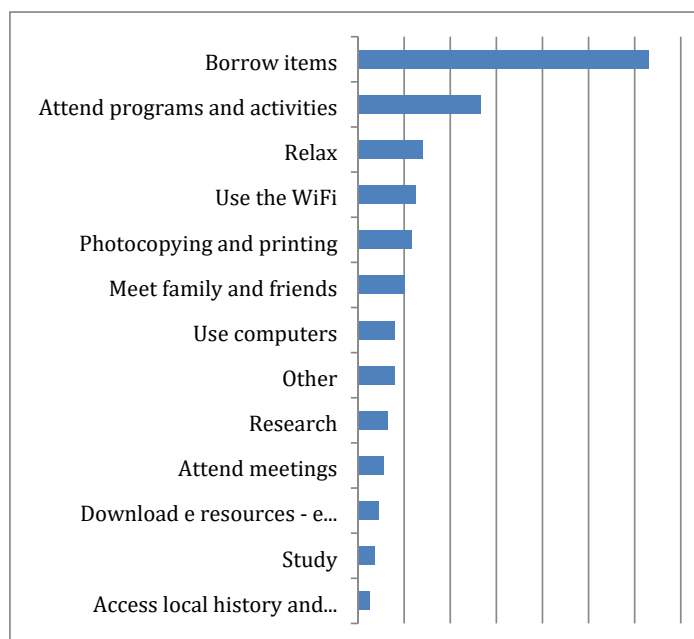
4. Community Consultation – Libraries of the Future

City of Greater Bendigo and Goldfields Library have consulted widely with community and stakeholders as part of the planning process for this project.

Over 1000 responses were received through survey responses, focus groups and community listening posts.

Key themes from this consultation are interpreted below

1. Most commonly, respondents were either between 36-65 years old and 70 percent were female. This generally reflects the ratio of men and women who are library members.
2. Use of library services indicate that borrowing collection remains the foundation for library activity.
3. Simply “relaxing” rates very highly and, if we link that with using Wi-Fi and meeting family and friends, we see that there are key activities that are mainly linked to social and personal wellbeing that rate very highly.
4. “Other” included browse magazines, read newspapers, read, read to my children, use the café and run my business. Importantly, when designed as a contemporary library space, community begins to view and use a library as a destination rather than a place purely for transaction.
5. Most respondents visit the library once a week or a couple of times per month.
6. People enjoy the variety of spaces- some noisy, some quiet, some public, others more private. They appreciated comfortable areas to read and read to their children. There was also appreciation for interactive elements such as the “curiosity table” for children at Bendigo library and the fact that there is no pressure to keep children absolutely quiet.



7. The most liked aspects of the library service were (overwhelmingly) staff, location and atmosphere, presentation of space and the range of books and resources.
8. Respondents also indicated the need for more delineations between noisy and quiet space noting that some libraries were too small to achieve this adequately.
9. One of the most disliked aspects of the library are the screens in the children's area. The resistance to this was simply overwhelming. Those responding indicated a desire for a "break from technology".
10. More opening hours was also a common theme, particularly after work hours and weekends.
11. People wanted to see more craft areas (maker spaces in contemporary libraries), more seating, better presentation of children's picture books to enable children to explore the collection on their own.
12. More furniture/seating, more child friendly spaces that are designed for play and exploration. Cleanliness at Bendigo Library was specifically noted.
13. Parking was raised as a key issue with many people indicating the challenge in finding parking within a reasonable walking distance. A significant number of people with mobility issues do utilise the library service.
14. Food and drink facilities were highly valued in libraries allowing people to see the library as a destination.
15. When asked what a modern library would have to meet their needs, respondents used terms like spacious, modern, clean, light, sustainable, separate study/ work and play/social areas, comfortable.
16. Respondents requested facilities in specific locations namely Epsom/Huntly, Strathfieldsaye, Eaglehawk (bigger) and Maiden Gully.

"Happy and smiling staff are always willing to help you in any way they can."

"A safe and friendly space for the whole family"

"Everything is a brilliant community resources and so well executed from the beautiful facilities through to the lively staff"

"The computers are a big issue. No need for screens in the children's space."

"The computers on the wall. I really hate them- my kids just want to play there rather than reading or choosing books. It means I often come choose the books without them which is really sad. Please get rid of them!"

"It closes too early, the library is a wonderful asset that should be accessible when peoples work day ends."

To small not enough space for quiet places/study spaces/talking spaces.

"Couches and spaces where the stains don't stick to everything. Right now, I don't sit anywhere near there because the stains are gross."

"More comfy seats."

"Some built in seating with back support for breastfeeding mothers would be fantastic"

"We desperately need a Library at Epsom / Huntly, we have the demographical numbers."

"New Eaglehawk library, new libraries at Epsom, Strath and Maiden Gully."

5. Stakeholder Consultation

A series of workshops and interviews have taken place with key stakeholders including Council teams that work with the library on a regular basis. The framework for these discussions focussed on the key opportunities and challenges for libraries and partners in the future.

Key challenges for libraries and partners?

1. Library assets are not fit for contemporary community purpose- stand alone, too small, minimal shared space.
2. Balancing infrastructure and service sites with resourcing- how do we add more spaces whilst being realistic about operational costs, including staff.
3. A need to raise profile and branding – tell stories of change and what is happening now in libraries.
4. Funding and governance- widening gap with state government funding and rate capping.
5. Space constrained and big gap in quality of infrastructure between Bendigo library and others.
6. Clarity on asset maintenance and investment in the future.
7. Breaking out of “library think” to consider services within a space.
8. Continuing to shift staff as library services shift from traditional book collection to online collections, less borrowing and more public use.
9. Accommodating growth in population
10. Access to facilities

Key opportunities for libraries and partners?

1. Co-location opportunities- how do libraries work with and facilitate other service delivery areas such as early years, health, neighbourhood houses.
2. The library has a broader role in health and wellbeing outcomes.
3. Social connection and inclusion tool for Council and other services through library space and service.
4. One of the busiest public spaces in the City- great access to inform public with 600,000 visits per year.
5. Ensuring the library is an effective tool to achieve local government outcomes.
6. The online environment is also crucial as is the concept of libraries as well-connected digital activity centres for communities.

6. The Future of Public Libraries- Trends and Strategic Directions

International Trends

Libraries are an ever-evolving institution that, at their best, strike a balance between serving community and leading community in a lifelong journey of learning and community connection.

The 21st Century library landscape has changed rapidly and there is growing recognition that rapid change in how and what libraries provide for community is less an anomaly and more business as usual.

The internationally recognised Centre for the Future of Libraries has developed an ongoing list of social trends and areas of library innovation that are regularly added to.

In considering how best to plan for library development in Greater Bendigo, it is important to consider some of these areas that are influencing how libraries work as spaces and services.

Libraries are learning spaces

The ethos of learning and access to information for everyone will always be a cornerstone for libraries.

How this learning occurs however, will continue to change and new avenues and approaches to learning will continue to be introduced.

Collections will continue to be important and space for access to both physical and digital collection will remain an important aspect of libraries into the foreseeable future.

Learning also requires areas for quiet study, work or reflection and these need to be considered in library development.

Libraries have spaces where people can sit and read, study (in groups or alone), meet, discuss, work quietly or access computers and the internet to gather information.

Libraries are social spaces

Libraries have become a community living room. They have become an important social connection point and destination for people that often has very little to do with access to information or learning but, just as crucially, supports social connection and personal health and wellbeing.

Large areas given over to quality seating, lounges, areas for groups or one or two people to sit and be together or as a place for personal reflection or relaxation are now very common in contemporary library design.

A mix of communal and more discreet areas allows people to choose their environment based on their needs and activity.

Libraries are safe and inclusive

Libraries do not discriminate—they celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives that everyone brings to our society. The design of libraries should reflect the community they exist in and the aim is to surprise visitors with vibrant, high quality furnishings and fittings that continue to reflect an investment in community and the sense that every visitor is valued.

Libraries are a trusted and safe space and reflect those values of equality for all and safety for all. Library spaces aim to decrease isolation and create a hub of community activity that potentially provides something for everyone.

Libraries are activity and performance spaces

Space is provided for activities that are both organised (story times, author talks, presentation, art, writing) as well as areas for unorganised activity (play space, investigation, informal meetings).

Opportunities also exist to provide space for performances by local artists, musicians and performers. Space for performances and activities can be flexible and changed over time to suit activity and audience requirements.

Libraries guide community with technology

Libraries play an important role in providing access to and support in using computers and the internet. In particular, based on usage and Digital Inclusion evidence, libraries play a key role for a group of people who otherwise have limited or no access or limited ability to use computers and the internet.

Libraries also play a role in introducing people to new technologies and develop learning opportunities focussed on AI, VR or AR, coding and robotics as key areas of new technology.

Libraries play a key role in ensuring that as people enter a digital world they are able to manage the risks that come with that in regard to personal security.

Libraries encourage ideas, creativity and enquiry

Libraries are places where big or small ideas and taking a “try it and see” approach is encouraged. Experimenting, failing and developing through observation and feedback are all important methods of learning that should be promoted in the library setting.

Libraries provide accessible and safe pathways to knowledge, understanding and creating and provide opportunity for learning through doing.

Makerspaces, hackspaces or engineered creative collision spaces are all terms that have been used to define a new wave of spaces linked to libraries and creativity

Access to technology and tools that were previously the domain of manufacturing companies has opened up opportunities for individuals to create and invent in new ways.

The makerspace concept is the creation of a space where open ended or outcome specific, creative making and experimentation can occur.

Spaces can include simple opportunities for activities that might involve craft, Lego or art but many innovative case studies exist that include activities such as:

- computer aided design
- film and photography editing
- biohacking and open science

Libraries support economic activity

The State Library of Victoria is currently investing in “StartSpace”, an opportunity for creative microbusiness to work and learn together within the State Library environment.

Bendigo libraries require excellent internet connection and spaces for people to be comfortable working in.

Anecdotally, Bendigo libraries are used by microbusiness operators on a regular basis as a place for work. Libraries provide an opportunity as an incubator providing free internet access and physical space to test and launch a microbusiness idea with minimal risk and reduced cost.



“It will be an early incubator and a launch pad to set people up for success and, in turn, will make an important contribution to Victoria’s burgeoning creative and innovation economies.”

Kate Torney- CEO, SLV

A State-wide Strategy- The Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Framework

The Libraries for Health and Wellbeing Framework outlines the role and priorities of Victoria’s public libraries in supporting community health and wellbeing. The framework specifies how libraries can contribute to better health and wellbeing outcomes, describes what libraries are already doing in this regard, and offers ambitious ideas and initiatives for the future.



As well as setting strategy at a state level, the framework maps out how libraries will contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and how the library sector will track and evaluate health and wellbeing activities and impact. It also includes a roadmap with key health and wellbeing projects for individual public libraries across Victoria.

This Framework has guided new strategic partnership opportunities with specialist Health Promotion agencies such as VicHealth and Healthy Heart of Victoria.

This is an innovative and focussed approach to defining the role libraries play in enabling people to support their health and fulfill their potential.

The Framework identifies a series of health and wellbeing related actions and activities that are supported through public libraries.

Strategy on a page

Our strategy on a page outlines the key focus areas, which will guide library choices and actions in health and wellbeing over the years ahead.

Our Purpose

We empower, support and connect our communities and partners for a healthy, thriving Victoria.

Our Role



We **support** our partners.



We **build** skills.



We **provide** resources.

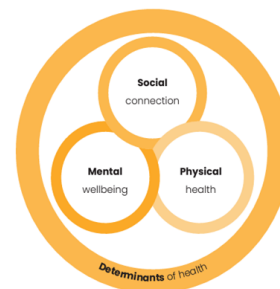


We make **connections**.



We **amplify** voices.

Our Impact Areas



These included:

- Developing life skills connected to literacy
- Supporting digital access and literacy.
- Providing safe spaces for people experiencing a range of challenges.
- Hosting specialist health and wellbeing services such as counsellors, nurses or maternal and child health specialists.
- Offering physical activity programs and services such as Tai Chi, Yoga, walking groups, body movement groups.
- Running programs that connect people such as book clubs, craft groups and recreational activities through programs such as Libraries After Dark.
- Providing a broad range of health and wellbeing information through physical and online collections.
- Supporting community to access and navigate credible information about their health and wellbeing.
- Raising awareness of key community social needs and challenges including family violence, mental health and drug and alcohol abuse.

"You, in the library sector, have been doing health promotion for decades, in fact, I think libraries are one of the original health promotion platforms. You're often doing it by stealth but it's such an important contribution to people's health and wellbeing because we know that good health is more than the absence of disease. It's social, economic, cultural wellbeing across so many domains that libraries provide insight, support, connection to. We need to acknowledge the health promoting work of our 277 libraries and help them to build their skills even further, to provide a strategic overlay to things like capacity development but also make sure they have the tools and resources from health promotion agencies like ours."

(Dr Sandro Demaio, CEO, VicHealth at the launch of the Framework, 2022)

A Local Perspective- The Goldfields Library Plan 2021-2025

The Goldfields Library Plan provides strategic direction for the existing Goldfields Library Corporation, working across the four member Council areas of Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Mount Alexander and Macedon Ranges.

Strategic priorities have been developed based on community outcomes that are reflected in State level regional partnership priorities and Council Plan priorities.



The basis for this plan has been to link community-based outcomes to the five ways to wellbeing framework, giving focus to library actions that have people's wellbeing at the centre.

Library priorities identified in the plan are:

Children and Young People- supporting child and adolescent development.

Lifelong Learning- encouraging learning at any age or stage.

Safety and Inclusion- a safe, welcoming and accessible service.

A Sustainable Future- playing our part in action against climate change.

An Informed Community- an engaged, creative and informed community.

Connecting People- providing opportunity for connection both physical and digital.

Respecting First Nations Peoples and Culture- celebrating the Nation's First Cultures.

A Learning Organisation- learning and growing with our community.

Based on these priorities, actions such as developing dedicated child friendly spaces, removing fines, working in partnership with other agencies that can progress learning opportunities or specialist advice and developing staff skills in area of social importance have all been created.

These directions help inform where investment and allocation of resources should be focussed over the next four years.

7. Current and Proposed Service Models

In considering future library services, it is important to understand the current service model and consider the development of future service model guidelines for Greater Bendigo.

The Current Service Model

The current service model has developed organically and has not necessarily been based on a comprehensive strategic or evidence-based approach. In part, current libraries reflect the service provision that existed based on pre-amalgamation of Councils, with the Library Corporation coming into existence at a time of Compulsory Competitive Tendering in 1995-96. The current model is broadly summarised below, however not all library services fit neatly within this.

Municipal Level Library: Bendigo Library

This library provides a scale of service that provides for most areas of the municipality and is located in a strategically important and highly accessible location close to, or in, the urban centre of Bendigo.

This library provides floor space equivalent to standards for 80-90 percent of the population, catering for most of the population.

Scale and breadth of services are unique in offering at this site. Hours of opening should be a minimum 6 days per week, and no less than 45 hours per week.

Suburb Level Library: Kangaroo Flat, Eaglehawk

These libraries support the needs of communities within the urban boundary that are a minimum of 10 kilometres from central Bendigo but have identifiable populations of between 4,000-15,000 people.

Current standards indicate that for populations of less than 20,000 people, floor space should be a minimum of 57.5 square metres per 1,000 population **however** this needs to be considered in the context of still being proximal to Bendigo Library.

Hours of opening are between 12 and 40 hours per week.

Rural/Remote Locality Level Library: Elmore Library Agency, Heathcote Library

These services provide libraries that are scaled to the size of more remote rural communities and rely on a mix of paid staff and volunteers.

Heathcote Library operates differently to the two agencies, being run for longer hours and by paid staff, whilst also servicing a population much greater than Elmore or Axedale.

Floor space at all sites is less than minimum national standards and is scaled according to population.

Library Agencies open for a minimum of 5 hours, are not within a 20-kilometre radius of other library services and require volunteer support to open.

Specialist Services: Home Library Service, eLibrary

Specialist services that cater for online users or users who are housebound either permanently or temporarily.

A Proposed Service Model

A proposed model has been developed based on National Library Standards and is broadly outlined below.

This model serves as a guide only in future planning of facilities, with local factors needing to be considered with regard to location, size and services.

Standard addressed	Municipal	Suburb/Rural Town	Remote/Rural community
Population served	80-90 percent of Bendigo (100,000)	4,000-20,000 in location more than 10 km from Bendigo Library, in urban centre or significant rural town.	Less than 1000 more than 20 km from Municipal or Suburb service.
Floor Space	28 sq metres per 1000 population plus 20% for management and circulation	50-60 sq metres of shared space per 1000 of population. Preferably within community hub.	Shared space within community hub.
Staffing	3 EFT per 10,000	3.5 EFT per 10,000, with mix of staff across partner organisations.	Staff and volunteers

Collection size	1.7 collection items per capita	1.7 items per capita	3 items per capita
Opening hours	6 days per week, minimum 45 hours per week	Minimum 4 days per week, 30 hours per week.	Based on capacity of volunteers and staff.
Programs	All program areas- minimum 20 programs per week on average.	Early Years, Digital Literacy programs weekly on average, Minimum 20 other programs throughout year	Early Years, Preferably digital literacy. Minimum 2 other events per year.
Public internet enabled devices	2.5 per 10,000 population	5 per 10,000 population	Access to collection through fixed devices.
Wi-Fi	Fibre to the building, 500 Mb/s service minimum	Fibre to the building, where available, based on feasibility. 250-500 Mb/s service.	Domestic NBN or service provided by third party.
Current service provision and gaps	Bendigo Library provides the Municipal standard service and provides adequate spaces at around 40m ² per 1000 population.	Kangaroo Flat, Eaglehawk and Heathcote currently provide services here. Axedale is an area that may fall into this classification as development progresses. Areas such as Huntly, Epsom, Maiden Gully and Marong should be considered as urban growth corridors expand.	Elmore is the sole service point currently active in this area. Other areas may require library services however, links to community hubs or other agencies to support services should be a consideration.

8. Infrastructure and Service Recommendations

Based on the consultation and data provided in this report, the following recommendations are proposed.

Infrastructure Priorities

1. Undertake feasibility plan to further develop Bendigo Library as a community hub. Consider complementary services in areas such as early years, community health and wellbeing or small business incubator.
2. Continue planning extension of the new Kangaroo Flat library facility that incorporates expanded space for social connection and shared spaces for programs and other partner organisations, as part of a community hub.
3. Continue planning toward redevelopment of the Eaglehawk library service as part of the Lake Neangar precinct and redeveloped Peter Krenz Leisure Centre. Ensure

connections between other health and wellbeing functions and library services. Physical sharing of space and collaborative relationships with the leisure centre should be part of any redevelopment.

4. Redevelop Heathcote Library as part of the proposed community hub development. Provide space (dedicated and shared) to accommodate expected population growth as well as delivering shared community/library program space.
5. Any new library development should aim to meet the following criteria for location:
 - a. Connected to other community service or wellbeing services
 - b. Connected to key village activity centres (retail, hospitality etc.)
 - c. Be physically linked to other related services
 - d. Be linked to public open spaces of high quality
 - e. Be connected by a variety of transport modes (i.e. public transport, walking paths etc.)
6. Based on expected population growth, work with Axedale community on feasibility of a community hub with the library as a core tenant.
7. Consider library facilities as part of community hub planning and development in the Epsom-Huntly area. This should be considered at a scale to support a population of around 4,000 people. Possible locations would include existing recreation and park facilities or centralised areas of activity such as the shopping centre.
8. Test feasibility of creating areas within libraries that foster creative opportunities or microbusiness/remote working opportunity (workstations, creative work areas).
9. Increase areas available for seating, studying and use of personal internet devices.
10. Consider improved parking opportunities and mobility connection around libraries.

Service Priorities

11. Improve internet services at all sites service costs allow. Move toward fibre to the building, commercial class services that provide for high speeds and greater bandwidth, enabling free access to support a range of community needs.
12. Continue to monitor collection mix and provide greater access to a wider physical collection (across the State) and eCollection.
13. Consider investment in staff to support and increase program development and digital engagement.
14. Develop a policy that provides consideration of library services as part of any community facility planning process for Council.
15. Research complementary services that work with library services or are located within a library environment.
16. Enable community to have involvement in guiding library services by;

- a. Enabling feedback on collection content,
 - b. Providing feedback on program suggestions,
 - c. Volunteering in appropriate roles and,
 - d. Providing feedback on appropriate cultural signals or images to welcome all cultures present in our community.
17. Target outreach to areas of low membership where engagement with library services is low or socio-economic vulnerability is high. Specifically focus on areas with under 25% of population base linked to libraries as members.
18. Adopt the proposed Service Model for Greater Bendigo Libraries
19. Develop a framework for library programs that is targeted and meets Council outcomes, specifically including;
- e. Social inclusion and equality,
 - f. Cultural inclusion and equality,
 - g. Early years development and learning outcomes,
 - h. Improvement in health and wellbeing,
 - i. Creativity and enquiry, and
 - j. Development of literacy and lifelong learning skills.
20. Provide culturally safe and welcoming services and spaces for specific cohorts including:
- k. First Nation Peoples
 - l. Culturally diverse communities
 - m. Children aged 0-12
 - n. Adolescents aged 13-18
 - o. Older adults

8. Conclusion

Greater Bendigo has a very successful, well used network of library services and is well positioned to strategically invest in libraries to ensure facilities reflect a growing population, help deliver on a number of urban development and community wellbeing strategies and meet contemporary needs of community. Key service and facility development principles include:

- 1. Considering library facilities as part any major community facility development,
- 2. Utilising service modelling and national standards in library facilities to guide any development,
- 3. Providing library facilities and services to key communities experiencing growth, vulnerability or isolation,
- 4. Ensure facilities are linked to public space, and other activity centres such as leisure or retail centres,
- 5. Ensure library services work collaboratively with Council teams to deliver broader Council outcomes,
- 6. Focus library services on inclusive practices that deliver for key community cohorts currently isolated or experiencing inequity.

7. Build a range of access points for community- physical spaces, virtual spaces and service points that are welcoming and focus on social connection, inclusivity and learning avenues.

This strategy provides an evidence base and broad recommended directions for consideration by Council based on these principles and is supported by consultation undertaken with community and stakeholders.

Appendix One: Library Facilities in Greater Bendigo

Bendigo Library was extended and renovated in 2014, increasing to a total floor area of 4,000 m².

Located in the Bendigo CBD, it has been at that location in some form since for more than 50 years.

The library represents the best example in Bendigo of a major contemporary library facility, with around 35% of floor space taken up with collection and a greater amount of space in seating, café, meeting rooms and activity/performance spaces.



Kangaroo Flat Library has recently moved from its space at a major Kangaroo Flat Shopping Centre, which opened in 1979 and provided around 280 m² in size.

The new Kangaroo Flat Library opened in July 2020 in Lockwood Road, providing a new and active use of an existing underutilised, Council owned facility. The redevelopment has provided around 475 m² of space (including a 60m² outdoor space), with many flexible areas for programs along with quiet study and work areas.

Feedback from community has been very positive and opportunity exists to continue developing a community hub at the site as part of a precinct of health and wellbeing services.



Eaglehawk Library is located in the historical Mechanics Institute building adjacent to the Eaglehawk Town Hall. Floor space available for library use is approximately 80 m².

Although the building is historic and reasonably well presented, the fixed room structure and inability to create flexible spaces or shared spaces renders the building less than fit for purpose as a contemporary library space.

There is little room for seating, access to toilets is limited (another building needs to be accessed) and the facility provides for a more traditional library setting of loan transactions, some computer use and limited programs.

Internet connection is relatively poor.



Heathcote Library is located in part of the Council offices in Heathcote. The space has little exposure to external views or street frontage and is accessed through a solid door located along the side of the building.

Space for programs, study or any socialising is minimal.

Membership and attendances have grown incrementally over the last two years as a result of a concerted effort to promote the library. Many locals who have been contacted were unaware a library existed in Heathcote.

Access to shared programs spaces would be advantageous to service delivery in Heathcote.



Elmore Library Agency operates from the historic Athenaeum Library and has been active for 2 years.

Again, the building is historic and well presented but is also linked to activity spaces and kitchen facilities. The facility is owned by a not for profit, community based, incorporated body.

Ideally the Elmore library should operate as part of any shared community facilities that might include other Council services, health services or community organisations. At present, it operates in isolation from other services, even though relationships have been built and a number of local groups (schools, kindergarten) regularly attend the library for events.

Internet connection is inadequate, and a full suite of digital library services is not currently possible.



Appendix Two: Library Member Distribution

The table below provides a breakdown of the membership database and location of members across the City of Greater Bendigo.

Two key conclusions can be derived from the data presented:

1. Proximity to a permanent facility *generally* results in higher levels of engagement. Areas that are close to permanent library facilities or areas where library and Council have worked at improving engagement in libraries are more likely to have relatively higher levels of membership. Conversely, areas further away or without significant community facilities tend to have lower representation (Maiden Gully, Huntly, Epsom)
2. *Some* areas with vulnerable or relatively higher level of disadvantage have lower engagement through membership (e.g. Long Gully, Cal Gully), however, this is not always the case. Where facilities are close by (Eaglehawk, Kangaroo Flat, Heathcote, Axedale) the presence of a facility tends to override relative disadvantage as a factor in improved engagement.

This would suggest that the capacity of library services to be a presence in a neighbourhood or suburb provides a positive influence on engagement with library services. A library presence can be supported in many ways however a permanent location with a spread of opening hours throughout the week tends to have greater impact than, for example, a pop-up library at single events.

Member distribution and frequency by suburb or township in Greater Bendigo.

	Members	Est. Population	% of popn members
Lockwood	528	756	70%
Mandurang	361	845	43%
Bendigo	6169	15000	41%
Eaglehawk	2253	5691	40%
Axe Creek	100	300	33%
Kangaroo Flat	3209	9942	32%
Big Hill	84	261	32%
Other	4683	15000	31%
Quarry Hill	724	2339	31%
Flora Hill	1177	3955	30%
Heathcote	812	2793	29%
Golden Square	2529	8804	29%
Strathfieldsaye	1572	5495	29%
Axedale	250	874	29%
Goornong	184	654	28%
Sedgwick	148	546	27%
Epsom	1150	4325	27%

Elmore	205	776	26%
Marong	371	1416	26%
Junortoun	832	3200	26%
White Hills	827	3219	26%
Ironbark	274	1095	25%
Kennington	1311	5733	23%
Maiden Gully	1073	4992	21%
Huntly	511	2379	21%
Long Gully	716	3383	21%
Cal Gully	862	4358	20%
North Bendigo	670	3953	17%
Ascot	305	1968	15%
East Bendigo	110	2092	5%
Total	33890	116144	



Goldfields Libraries acknowledge the traditional country of First Nations Peoples. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land.

We pay respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all our First Nations Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Detail of artwork commissioned as part of the new Kangaroo Flat Library and created by local indigenous artist Daikota Nelson.

Goldfields Libraries is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.



OUR VISION:
Your Potential Realised.

OUR MISSION:
You belong as you are.
We want you to belong, just as you are, and to know your story is heard.

We start where you are.
Whatever your age or background we aim to have a positive, healthy influence and help you realise your potential. Whether you have big goals or little steps, it's all important, and you can start with us.

A learning journey with you.
We support a lifetime of learning through connecting you to ideas and stories and fostering your curiosity and creativity.

Let's make it fun.
We want you to enjoy yourself, have some fun, just relax. Libraries aren't all serious.

1

OUR VALUES

Inclusion and Safety
We uphold the principles of a just society, including the fundamental human right to respect, dignity, safety, and equity. We engage our community in open, meaningful dialogue and deepen our understanding of their needs and experience to inform library practice and create an environment that is inclusive and safe.

Curiosity and Inquiry
Our team is high performing and valued because we continue to learn. We stretch our knowledge and do not settle for what we already know. We explore new ideas with our community, consider fresh perspectives, and seek to innovate. We experiment and celebrate curiosity throughout life.

Collaboration and Cooperation
Our decisions are better and our impact greater when we work collaboratively and in cooperation with our colleagues, our community, and our partners. We respect one another, share ideas and look for partnership opportunities that add value for community.

OUR FOCUS IS YOUR WELLBEING

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is an internationally recognised, yet simple approach that supports positive mental and physical health and is backed by extensive research.

Goldfields Libraries embraces this approach and has these five simple actions as a guide to our mission and commitment to you.

CONNECT with the people around you – family and friends, at home, at work, in the local community. THE LIBRARY is a place where you can feel safe, relaxed, and welcomed with a warm smile and a chat. You can catch up with friends and family or with people who have similar interests. Book clubs, knitting groups or just hanging out after school– it’s all good.	LEARN something new or reignite an old interest. Sign up for a course or attend a free seminar. Challenge yourself and don’t worry about failing. THE LIBRARY is all about being curious and learning, with accessible information and no tests at the end!. Learn at your pace, mistakes are welcomed. Read a book, attend a program, ask questions or access information on the internet.	TAKE NOTICE of the world around you. Be curious, remark on the unusual and savour the moment. THE LIBRARY is a place where you can explore the world at your pace in your own way. We want to encourage creativity and curiosity and can help open doors to many worlds and ways of being and seeing.	BE ACTIVE by doing what you can, step outside, find joy in movement. Discover the activity you enjoy, that suits you, and make it a habit. THE LIBRARY will help with information on health – healthy eating, physical activity, how to connect. We also run physical activity classes as part of our programs where you can come and just have a go.	GIVE by contributing to something or helping someone. Create connection with people around you by joining a community group. Thank someone. Smile. THE LIBRARY hosts many community groups that make significant contribution for their communities. We foster creativity, contribution and connection and want to welcome you to the library as a safe and friendly place.
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You can learn more about the five ways to wellbeing at 5waystowellbeing.org.au

WE WORK ALONGSIDE OUR COUNCILS

Our Library Plan is informed by the priorities of our four member councils and of Regional Development Victoria's Loddon Campaspe Regional partnership, as they relate to libraries.

Library Priorities	Regional Partnership Priorities
Children and Young People – supporting childhood and adolescent development Lifelong Learning – encouraging learning at any age or stage Safety and Inclusion – a safe, welcoming and accessible service A Sustainable Future – playing our part in action against climate change An Informed Community – an engaged, creative, informed community Connecting People – providing opportunity for connection both digital and physical Respecting First Nations Peoples and Culture – celebrating our nation's first culture A Learning Organisation – learning and growing with our community	A Growing Economy – A strong, diverse economy that enables people to actively contribute to their community Healthy Heart of Victoria – Active communities, healthy settings and productive lives at all stages Create the Best Start for Every Child – Families and communities that give children the best start in life Youth Our Critical Asset – Safe, supported and engaged young people A Great Environment to Live – Our culture, heritage and environment is protected and enjoyed A Connected Region – All people in the Loddon Campaspe Region benefit from economic activity and access to services

COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES			
MACEDON RANGES Connecting communities: Council will maintain buildings and open spaces in our built environment in a financially, environmentally and socially sustainable way. Healthy environment, healthy people: Council aims to support mental health, prevent violence against women, and improve healthy lifestyles, social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture. Business and tourism: Council will provide an economic environment that promotes information technology and communications, and employment opportunities.	MOUNT ALEXANDER Community is connected to each other. Inclusive community where everybody has access to services. Preserving natural environment means living sustainably and caring for country. A vibrant place that draws upon its creative spirit.	LODDON Liveability: Develop attractive, vibrant and well served communities. Economic Prosperity: Support the development of a prosperous and diverse economy. High Performance Organisation: Frameworks which enable sound decision making. Population: Grow and invigorate Loddon population	GREATER BENDIGO Healthy, liveable spaces and places. Aboriginal reconciliation. A climate resilient built and natural environment. A vibrant, creative community. A safe welcoming and fair community.

OUR PURPOSE

We are committed to:
Supporting literacy and a joy of reading.

Having fun! Libraries aren't all about achieving or personal improvement. They're also about relaxing, playing, laughing, daydreaming or sometimes being a bit noisy.

Learning with and from our community, as we design our services.

Playing our part in supporting an informed and healthy community.

Providing access to information, in all its forms, as a fundamental human right.

Reducing the digital divide by providing great internet access with support to access it.

Celebrating local stories to enhance a sense of place and pride.

6



WHAT WE WANT FOR PEOPLE IN OUR LIBRARIES.

We want people to be healthy, thriving and inquisitive – ready to reach their potential.

We want people to enjoy their libraries – to relax in the simple pleasure of being somewhere safe and welcoming.

We want people to be curious learners but never feel tested, assessed, or judged.

We want people of all walks of life to intersect and gain deeper understanding of each other and empathy for one another.

We want people to find meaning and connection with friends, family and community in libraries.

We want to see children smile as they read or listen to stories. We want to see children who can't wait to find out what happens next!

We want people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to find their place and space.

We want people to visit as often as they like, to be welcomed with a smile and to feel less isolated and more connected.

7

OUR EIGHT PRIORITIES FOR 2021 TO 2025

Children and Young People

Supporting children, their curiosity and their joy of reading. We will support the brain development of babies, support parents as baby's first teacher and invest in best practice services for our youngest citizens. We will welcome and present opportunities for young people to have a voice, as they move toward adulthood.

Lifelong Learning

Engaging with people on their learning journey, at any and every age or ability. We will support those involved in school-based or self-directed learning. We want people use the library at any stage in life- and to have fun doing it! We will encourage different ways to learn and create at any age or ability level. Big dreams or small achievements can all start with us.

Safety and Inclusion

Offering safe spaces and resources that let people know they are important and at the centre of our service. We encourage a sense of library community and facilitate respectful interactions in our shared spaces – people relax in our libraries. We want to keep improving functional access to our libraries for people of all ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds and identities.

An Informed Community

Offering information that enhances literacy beyond reading that includes health, financial, digital, environmental and cultural. We will help connect people with information in a variety of ways – inside our libraries, reaching outside our libraries through other services and places, and through our digitally based resources.

Connecting People

Creating opportunities for people to socialise and share ideas, culture and stories. We will provide avenues for both personal and virtual connection through our programs, spaces and technology. We offer an antidote to isolation and loneliness.

Respecting First Nations Peoples and Culture

Building knowledge of and relationships with First Nations Peoples and culture. We will introduce appropriate signage and cultural references into our spaces as well as deliver programs and collections that celebrate the stories and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A Learning Organisation

Learning from and with our communities to develop skills, innovation and new approaches. Our team are high performing professionals and continue challenging themselves to extend knowledge and experiences. We will focus on being able to change with our community and engage with them in shaping our service

A Sustainable Future

Working toward a positive and sustainable future with our communities. We will provide opportunities to understand the local and global environment, learn about sustainability innovations and empower community to take action to mitigate climate change. And protect our natural environment we commit to sustainable use of resources for our operations.



OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Children and Young People	Create dedicated child friendly and parent/carer welcoming spaces in all libraries. Include features that support curiosity and inquiry based play.	Children feel welcomed and safe, parents and carers feel welcomed and valued. Parents can socially connect and parenting groups meet and feel welcome in the library. Libraries are promoted as breastfeeding friendly areas.	Operations
	Upgrade and promote the parenting collection and selected children's collections such as graded readers, award winning books and themed collections around key issues.	Better informed parents and carers and an easily accessible collection.	Collection
	Remove fines on all picture books, junior collections and young adult collections.	Reduced barriers and more borrowing of collection in our children's and adolescent areas.	Collection
	Develop specialisation opportunities in work plans to support Children and YA engagement.	Organisational drivers and champions for children and youth.	People and Development
	Deliver programming focused on enjoyment of reading, building literacy and the fostering of enquiry and curiosity.	Development of reading habits, literacy, learning and school readiness. Storytime programs continue to engage families across the region.	Engagement

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Children and Young People continued	Develop programs and events for young people with partners in the youth sector.	Engagement of young people that shape library experiences to their needs and wants.	Engagement
	Align professional development opportunities to sector-wide standards reflected in early years development and youth engagement.	Skilled staff supporting best practice.	People and Development
	Develop partnerships with the Early Years sector and position libraries within a continuum of service delivery.	Valued partnerships that impact on school readiness and Australian Early Development Census outcomes.	Engagement
	Assess children's e-resources for gaps within current offerings with the possibility of adjusting to add new or consolidate existing selection.	Improved access to valuable children's e-resources supporting literacy, learning and mental health.	Collection
	Undertake outreach activities that focus on communities with less access to library services.	Informed families that are aware of children's library services and can easily gain access.	Collection, Operations and Engagement



OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Lifelong Learning	Deliver programs that can connect to our online resources and collection.	Community connected with a variety of learning experiences.	Engagement and Collection
	Develop partnerships that link learning opportunities and pathways outside of the library.	Community supported to progress learning via multiple avenues.	Engagement
	Develop online resources to support learning and free access to information.	Facilitated learning pathways both through library programs and resources and other online resources.	Information Technology and Collection
	Review the makeup of our collection to maximise local use.	Improved use and access to local collection.	Collection
	Review access to collections across the state through an interlibrary loan system.	Improved access to a state-wide collection for local patrons.	Collection
	Provide access to collections to those who would otherwise miss out through newspapers, DVD's, streamed content and traditional collection.	Reduced financial and social barriers to accessing learning opportunities. Reduce financial and social barriers to accessing learning opportunities.	Operations
	Work with partners to offer introductory sessions in subjects or topics that lead to further learning pathways in other institutions.	Developed partnerships with TAFE, Universities, training providers.	Programs and Engagement

OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Safety and Inclusion	Engage specific parts of community that may benefit from, but not currently use, library services through targeted outreach activities.	An Outreach Plan that extends library benefits to a broader population.	Engagement and Operations
	Partner with appropriate service providers in the delivery of early years, digital literacy and home library services to isolated community members.	Targeted library services offered in accessible locations and formats.	Engagement and Operations
	Establish protocols to ensure mixed use of spaces with an understanding of mutual respect for user safety.	A safe environment where expected conduct is understood by both patrons and staff.	People and Development and Operations
	Develop staff expertise and knowledge in current social issues and initiatives. (e.g., Gender Equality, Cultural Inclusion, Mental Health)	An informed staff able to respond to current social challenges.	People and Development
	Promote and support human rights of equity and dignity in all its forms.	Puts people at the centre of our libraries and supports a civil and just society.	Engagement
	Represent the diversity of human experience through our collection and program offerings.	Access to stories that reflect the diversity of humanity and our ways of life.	Collection and Engagement

14

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
An Informed Community	Prioritise access to highest business standard free internet and Wi-Fi across all branches.	Nationally benchmarked Wi-Fi access and internet speeds being used by all who require it. Providing access for those that would otherwise miss out.	Information Technology, Operations and Engagement
	Provide digital literacy support through skilled staff, dedicated programs and access to technology.	A more digitally informed and connected community. Helping those who cannot bridge the digital divide on their own.	All
	Develop financial, cultural and health literacies by working with partners in these sectors.	An integrated approach to community health and wellbeing, working with various partners.	Engagement
	Promote use of library spaces for community groups to gather and work.	Volunteers and groups supported to share information and serve their communities.	Operations
	Provide programs that broaden horizons, explain the facts and teach new skills.	Supporting access to a breadth of information from reputable sources.	Engagement
	Provide programs that directly promote exercise and diet as the two key determinants in physical health.	A welcoming environment where people can learn new physical skills.	Engagement

15



OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Connecting People	Undertake feasibility work to consider extension extension or flexibility of opening hours.	Being available when our community needs us.	Operations, People and Development
	Develop our infrastructure to include more incidental meeting spaces, seating and desks.	Flexible spaces offered for study, meeting and work, as habits and modes continue to shift and change.	Operations
	Provide an environment to support micro business and local community economic development.	A comfortable environment for remote working, commuter working and microbusiness.	Operations and Information Technology
	Develop programs that address intergenerational connection, social isolation and loneliness.	Connecting isolated people with new people and new ideas. Facilitated intergenerational connections are delivered.	Engagement
	Create opportunities to integrate sharing food in social settings within libraries.	Tea and coffee or café style service in libraries or planned for library spaces.	Operations
	Redevelop website to enhance accessibility and ease of use.	Deliver an online presence that is inclusive and easily navigated to connect to services.	Engagement

OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
Respecting First Nations Peoples and Culture	Present images and signage that acknowledge and celebrate First Nations Peoples and cultures.	Appropriate First Nations acknowledgment. Provision of culturally safe spaces. Adherence to Child Safe standards.	Operations and Engagement
	Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with regard to opportunities for programs across all age groups.	First Nations stories, perspectives and skills celebrated and shared appropriately.	Engagement
	Continue developing staff awareness and skills in First Nations culture and heritage.	Provision of culturally safe and welcoming spaces and services.	People and Development
	Develop library website with elements of culture and language embedded as part of an overall campaign to highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.	A website that embeds First Nations culture and language across a range of areas.	Communications, Collection and Information Technology
	Work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on program delivery.	Programs that celebrate and highlight First Nations stories and culture.	Engagement
	Ensure collection reflects First Nations story and authorship across a diverse range of areas and subjects.	Awareness of First Nations story and culture embedded in a range of subjects offered in collection.	Collection

18

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
A Learning Organisation	Develop an enquiry based organisational culture that fosters curiosity, questions established approaches and seeks to broaden knowledge.	Staff that are supported and engaged in continual learning and development.	People and Development
	Invest in business and information technology systems that deliver efficient and effective communications.	Provide technology that is seamless and easy to use and build staff competencies and confidence.	Information Technology, People and Development
	Develop our regional strength in scale and strategy whilst maintaining a local culture within each branch.	Localised services and efficiencies of scale.	People and Development and Operations
	Understanding each other and creating a supportive and collaborative work culture.	People performing at their best as a team, sharing ideas safely, with respectful interactions.	People and Development Leadership Team
	Establishing a solution focused culture.	Taking a solutions focus that supports our capacity to openly present problems and constructively develop solutions.	People and Development Leadership Team

19

OUR 2021-2022 PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Priority	Initiative	What does this look like if we are achieving it?	Resource Lead
A Sustainable Future	Work with partner Councils to work toward a carbon neutral operation with a focus on installation of solar panels batteries and efficient lighting wherever practical.	Reduced emissions, reduced running costs and observance of regional Climate Action plans.	Operations
	Make sustainability a consideration in all areas of operations.	Becoming an example to our community and telling our story of improved environmental sustainability.	All
	Build environmental literacy by providing community access to accurate information and inspiration by showcasing local and global environmental initiatives.	Inspire and inform local community and build awareness around local action.	Engagement and Operations
	Move fleet toward hybrid or electric technologies.	Reduced emissions, reduced running costs and observance of regional Climate Action plans.	Operations
	Promote relevant collection focused around environmental awareness initiatives and celebration of local flora/fauna.	Communities informed by science and reputable sources on matters of environment and sustainability.	Collections
	Integrate library services into broader emergency management plans.	Libraries are a community resource for access to information during extreme weather and emergency events. We will provide additional opening hours and access to power and internet where practical.	Operations and People and Development





Goldfields
Library
Corporation

North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation
(trading as Goldfields Library Corporation)

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Libraries for Health and Wellbeing

A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards

2024



STATE LIBRARY
VICTORIA



Public Libraries
Victoria

Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria’s public library network operates from many different locations throughout Victoria. Across these locations, we acknowledge the traditional lands of all the Victorian Aboriginal Clans and celebrate their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Table of Contents

Opening Remarks	5
Executive Summary	6
The need and our impact	7
Strategy on a page	8
Background	10
Victoria’s public library network	11
State Library Victoria	12
The origins of this framework	12
Developing the framework	13
Why Libraries?	14
Our strengths	15
Current health and wellbeing activities	16
External Context	18
Key community considerations	19
Key health system considerations	21
Our Theory of Change	24
Our context	24
Our activities	25
Our outcomes	25
Our impact	25
Strategy in Detail	26
Our purpose	27
Our role	27
Our impact areas	28
Our community priorities	29
Our library priorities	32
Sustainable Development Goals alignment	33
Action Roadmap	34
Evidencing our Work and Impact	40
Other Resources	42
Acknowledgements and Contact Information	46



Opening Remarks

Public libraries occupy a core and trusted position in communities across Victoria. As such, we already contribute to people's mental and physical health and wellbeing in many ways.

Libraries for Health and Wellbeing: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024 outlines the role and priorities of Victoria's public libraries in supporting community health and wellbeing. It speaks to why and how libraries can contribute to better health and wellbeing outcomes, describes what libraries are already doing in this regard, and offers ambitious ideas and initiatives for the future.

As well as looking at the big picture, the framework maps out how libraries will contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and how we will track and evaluate our health and wellbeing activities and impact. It also includes a roadmap with key health and wellbeing projects for individual public libraries across Victoria.

This framework is a resource for library leaders and team members, partners, government and the community. It is a tool to help understand why libraries have a role to play in health and wellbeing, and to guide decision making and action across the Victorian public library network.

We hope you find it useful and inspiring.

Christine Christian AO
President, Library Board of Victoria

Chris Buckingham
President, Public Libraries Victoria



Executive Summary

The need and our impact

Good health and wellbeing, and meaningful social connections enable us to live fulfilling lives as part of strong, flourishing communities. Strengthening the health and wellbeing of our communities is not just the responsibility of healthcare professionals and organisations. It is up to all individuals, organisations and communities.

We believe that public libraries can empower, support and connect our communities and partners for a healthy, thriving Victoria.

Victoria's communities and its people are resilient, yet we face significant health and wellbeing challenges. These challenges are further compounded by discrimination, disadvantage, access barriers, inaccurate information and the inherent complexity of our health and wellbeing system.

Public libraries support and strengthen our communities. We are safe, trusted and accessible. Our teams are caring and committed. There are many avenues for us to benefit community health and wellbeing. Working in partnership is central here.

We run programs that bring people together and build skills and literacy. We offer safe physical spaces and provide digital resources and access. We connect people to one another, healthcare providers and wellbeing supports. Our staff and collections equip our communities with the skills and knowledge to better understand and critique health information. We leverage our voice to advocate for the health and wellbeing needs of our communities.

Ultimately, we aspire for less injury and illness, improved physical and mental health and stronger, more inclusive communities.



Strategy on a page

Our strategy on a page outlines the key focus areas, which will guide library choices and actions in health and wellbeing over the years ahead.

Our Purpose

We empower, support and connect our communities and partners for a healthy, thriving Victoria.

Our Role



We **support** our partners.



We **build** skills.



We **provide** resources.

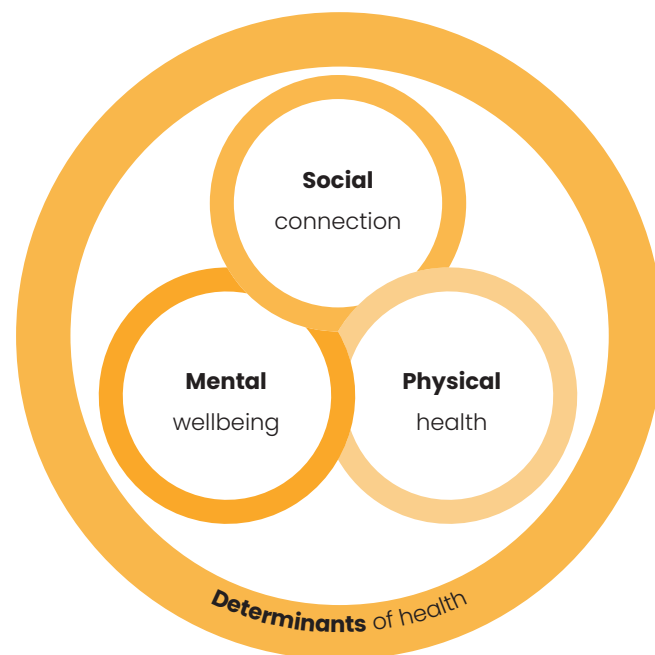


We make **connections**.



We **amplify** voices.

Our Impact Areas



Our Community Priorities



Skills and habits:
Communities are empowered

Resources and information:
Communities are supported

Belonging and participation:
Communities are connected

Our Library Priorities



Collaboration:
Libraries help others

Strong teams:
Library teams are effective

Recognition:
Libraries are valued

Sustainability:
Libraries are resourced

Our Principles

- 1 We **build on the strengths** of our teams, partners and communities.
- 2 We will serve all people with a focus on **equity and access** to support those most in need.
- 3 We will **tailor** to our local communities with a clear statewide approach.
- 4 We will **tell the story** of libraries and our communities and partners.
- 5 We will **complement** and enable the work of others, **aligning** to key policies.
- 6 We will **test and explore** new territory, with clear goals in mind.

Background

Victoria's public library network

Public libraries across Victoria provide our local communities with safe spaces, digital access, information resources and opportunities to connect. There are 50 library services in Victoria, which are primarily operated and funded by local government. Every municipality in the state offers a public library service, which totals 276 library branches and 31 mobile library services.

Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) is the peak body for public libraries in Victoria. PLV represents local libraries across the state and works to make libraries the best they can be. Every community is different, if only slightly, but libraries have many things in common. By sharing resources, combining buying power and showing how libraries change lives, we have more to invest back into the services that library members value so much.



Map: Public library branches across Victoria



12



Reading supports
mental, emotional
and intellectual health
[and] library programs
support learning and
social engagement
– partner organisation

State Library Victoria

State Library Victoria (SLV) is one of Australia's leading collecting and cultural institutions. It was established in 1854 and is an agency of the Victorian Government. Sir Redmond Barry, the founder of SLV, referred to it as 'the people's university' – a place where the world's knowledge and information would be freely available to all, regardless of their social status or financial resources. This ethos continues to guide SLV to this day.

While SLV is separate from the local government network of public libraries, it has a legislated role to play in promoting high standards and co-operation across the public library network.

The origins of this framework

In July 2019, public library, SLV and PLV leaders gathered for a planning summit. This was an opportunity to determine statewide priorities for Victoria's local libraries for the coming years.

Of the 45 proposals that were considered at the summit, one in three related to community health and wellbeing. These topics were diverse, encompassing physical health and fitness, homelessness, social isolation, mental illness, environmental sustainability and the health benefits of reading.

Accordingly, summit participants agreed to undertake a program to demonstrate and enhance how public libraries support community health and wellbeing. This would require a clear and inspiring strategic direction, a compelling evidence base, professional development for library staff, strong partnerships and great community programs.

The *Libraries for health and wellbeing* framework is the first step of this program.



Developing the framework

Libraries for health and wellbeing was developed through wide-ranging consultation and engagement with public library leaders and teams, community members, key library partners, health and wellbeing service providers, and Australian and global thought leaders. Stakeholder engagement activities complemented research into key policies and examples of innovation and best practice, and review of key library, health and wellbeing data and documents.

A workgroup of local library leaders and SLV and PLV representatives oversaw framework development through a series of workshops and project governance meetings.

Spark Strategy was engaged to support the development of the framework through facilitation of conversations, ongoing analysis and synthesis, and writing this document.

13

More than 1250 people informed the creation of this framework through:

- 11 focus groups with some 140 library managers and staff
- a benchmarking survey completed by approximately 40 library leaders
- a future-facing survey with more than 800 community, 410 library staff and 25 partner respondents
- one-on-one discussions with 17 key partners and thought leaders
- six workshops and five steering committee meetings with the project workgroup
- two presentations and Q&A sessions with PLV members.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this process. We look forward to continuing the conversation as we implement the framework with and for you.



We have diverse
offerings, and the library
actions are integrated
into Council's Municipal
Health Plan
– library leader



Why Libraries?

The health and wellbeing of our society is the responsibility of all people, groups, organisations and institutions.

Libraries are already supporting community health and wellbeing. Our strengths mean we can further drive positive impact for and with our communities and partners.

“

I have attended a variety of health-related events at my library, such as talks about diet and health, and yoga classes. The many online events held during lockdown also contributed greatly to my mental wellbeing
– community member

Our strengths



We have locations all over Victoria and great physical and digital resources. Victoria's public libraries have more than two million library members and 30 million visits every year.



We are information experts. People come to libraries seeking knowledge and help to navigate the world of information.



We are free, non-judgemental, trusted and accessible for all. We engage with individuals and communities that experience stigma, disadvantage and discrimination.



We run programs and offer support. As well as providing information and resources, we also bring people together, provide safe spaces and build skills.



We are place-based and care about our communities. We understand our communities and tailor our services to local demographics, needs and preferences.



We build relationships and avoid duplicating the work of others. We prioritise collaboration wherever possible.

16

Current health and wellbeing activities

Some examples of how Victoria's public libraries currently support health and wellbeing include:

Developing key life skills, including reading, writing and English language skills.

Supporting digital literacy by providing free access to technology, internet, IT training and assistance.

Providing safe spaces for people experiencing homelessness, family violence and other crises and challenges.

Offering health and wellbeing services and supports, often in partnership, including meditation, Tai Chi and yoga.

Hosting specialist health and wellbeing services at the library, such as counsellors, nurses and maternal and child health specialists.

Running programs and events that bring people together, such as morning teas, arts and crafts sessions, and social and recreational support for at-risk groups through Libraries After Dark.

Providing a broad range of health and wellbeing information through our in-person and online collections.

Sharing brochures, pamphlets and other information on behalf of healthcare providers.

Supporting community members to access and navigate credible information about their health and wellbeing.

Raising awareness of key community needs and challenges, including family violence, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and gambling addiction.

“

In addition to our collection items, each of our branches has a community noticeboard that contains information about local health and wellbeing providers

– library leader

“

Public libraries are seen as sources of accurate, up-to-date, impartial, trusted and non-judgemental information

– library team member

“

Libraries are a hub in the community. They are so valuable as a free space for all to meet

– community member



External Context

The development of this strategy has been informed by external factors relating to our communities and health system. Highlighted below are the key trends that emerged repeatedly in research and discussions. Please note that this context summary is not exhaustive. Instead, it captures the key external considerations that have been instrumental in shaping this framework.

Key community considerations

A loneliness epidemic

The quality of our social connections and relationships are a critical part of our health and wellbeing. According to research from 2017, being lonely and socially isolated can pose a bigger risk for premature death than smoking.¹ Of note, people over the age of 75 and young people aged 15–25 are at the highest risk of experiencing loneliness.² However, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen rates of loneliness and social isolation grow across Victoria.

Public libraries have long been places where people can meet and interact. This capacity, in combination with worsening loneliness and social isolation, makes social connection a critical impact area for libraries to focus on over the coming years.

Differences in our health outcomes

Our diverse communities and population groups in Victoria experience vastly different health and wellbeing outcomes. There is growing awareness that our health and wellbeing is driven by such factors as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, employment, education, housing, geography and access to technology. These non-medical factors are known as the determinants of health and they significantly impact an individual's health outcomes.

Public libraries play a critical and diverse role in improving the determinants of health. Libraries support people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to strengthen their English language skills; provide education and employment pathways focusing on those with the greatest need; and connect community members with housing and other services.



¹ psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Famp0000103

² www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/letter/articles/vh-letter-47-loneliness#

Chronic disease and mental health challenges

Our communities are facing a number of multi-faceted health and wellbeing challenges. One in six Australians are currently experiencing depression, anxiety or both, with one in eight people experiencing high or very high psychological distress.³ Many Victorians are physically inactive and have a poor diet.⁴ These challenges pose significant risks to our health and wellbeing, increasing the likelihood of type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as well as cancer, chronic diseases and depression.^{5 6}



1 in 20
adults meet the recommended vegetable consumption guidelines.⁴

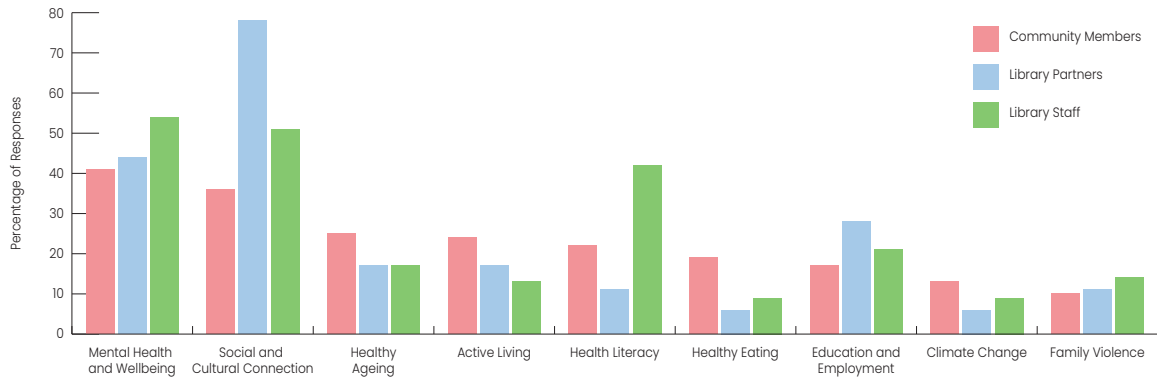


14.8%
of adults were physically inactive over the past week.⁷



1 in 4
people will experience anxiety in their life.³

Different locations and communities are affected by these challenges in varying degrees, and there are markedly different views about which areas of health and wellbeing libraries should focus on (see below). This framework recognises this and provides public libraries with the scope to address the critical health and wellbeing challenges facing our local communities.



Graph: Results from survey of library staff, partners and community members responding to a question about which areas of health and wellbeing public libraries should focus on (n = 1255)

³ www.beyondblue.org.au/media/statistics#:~:text=Message%3A%20One%20in%20seven%20young,in%20the%20last%2012%20months
⁴ Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019-2023 at www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/victorian-public-health-wellbeing-plan-2019-2023
⁵ www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2879283/
⁶ www.health.gov.au/health-topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/about-physical-activity-and-exercise
⁷ www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/national-health-survey-first-results/latest-release

Key health system considerations

A system driven by response

With an ageing population, increasing rates of mental illness and chronic disease, there is growing demand for healthcare services at times of emergency, in response to injury and illness, and for ongoing recovery. This can result in a vicious cycle: as we concentrate resources into response and rehabilitation, prevention and early intervention can be overlooked. In turn, this can mean increased frequency and severity of ill health and injury, resulting in even greater demand for response and recovery.

To break this cycle, there is growing recognition of the need to invest in disease prevention and health promotion. Equipping individuals with the skills, information and confidence to manage their own health and wellbeing is a core component of preventing injury and illness.

Librarians are not and do not want to be trained health professionals. However, our teams and resources can support people to understand and manage their own health, by helping them access services, interpret information and develop healthy habits.

Health 2040: advancing health, access and care presents a clear vision for the health and wellbeing of Victorians and for the Victorian healthcare system. Health 2040 is built on three pillars.

Better health: prevention, early intervention, community engagement and people's self-management to maximise the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

Better access: reducing waiting times and delivering equal access to care via statewide service planning, targeted investment and unlocking innovation.

Better care: people's experience of care, improving quality and safety, ensuring accountability for achieving the best health outcomes and supporting the workforce to deliver the best care.⁸

Victorian Government
Department of Health

⁸ www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/Health-2040-advancing-health-access-and-care



The importance of place-based services and solutions

The burden of disease has significant personal, community and economic costs. The recent Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System emphasised the need for integrated, local health and wellbeing services and supports to alleviate this burden and these costs.⁹ The final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Royal Commission into Family Violence also noted the importance of place-based services in increasing access by providing care close to home.^{10 11}

Libraries know and serve local communities across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria. As place-based organisations, they provide inclusive, unintimidating settings where community members from all walks of life can attend programs, access information and meet people.

50
public libraries

276
public library branches

336
mobile library stops

72
other library outlets

2 million
Victorian library members

30 million
library visitors every year¹²

⁹ rcvmhs.archive.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/

¹⁰ agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/

¹¹ www.vic.gov.au/about-royal-commission-family-violence

¹² www.plv.org.au/

Our Theory of Change

Our theory of change maps the key external factors, how we respond and what this will lead to in the medium and long term.



Our context

- Our communities face significant health and wellbeing challenges, such as mental health, social isolation, sedentary lifestyles and COVID-19. Stigma and inequity compound these challenges.
- Rates of obesity, diabetes, depression, anxiety, chronic disease, loneliness and physical inactivity are all increasing. These challenges lead to worse life outcomes for people, especially when treatment or prevention services are unavailable.
- Despite our health system being world class, it too faces challenges. It is complex to navigate and geared towards responding to disease and illness over preventing it.
- For individuals who seek support, discrimination and disadvantage can make access challenging.
- Increased access to online information has helped our communities become more informed and active in their health. However, when inaccurate, this information can be dangerous and harmful.
- We believe that public libraries can inform, connect and empower our communities to manage their health. We are safe, trusted and accessible. Our people care for and are committed to our communities.



Our activities

- We run and facilitate programs.
- We offer digital resources and physical spaces.
- We connect people with services and supports.
- We provide accurate information.
- We advocate for community and library needs.



Our outcomes

- Increased healthy habits.
- Improved early years, adult and digital literacy.
- Improved knowledge, skills and confidence to manage one's health (health literacy).
- Development of meaningful relationships.
- Increased sense of community belonging.
- Reduced digital exclusion.
- Timely access to health and wellbeing services for more people.



Our impact

- Less illness and injury.
- Increased access with a focus on equity.
- More inclusive and cohesive communities.



Better physical health.

Improved wellbeing and mental health.

Stronger social connections.



In response to the external context and building on our strengths, we have identified our health and wellbeing priorities for the future. This ensures that we focus on areas that will have the greatest impact for our communities and partners. This section of the framework details our key strategic concepts, which will guide the health and wellbeing decisions and efforts of libraries across Victoria.

Through prevention rather than cure, connection instead of isolation, and collaborations that break down silos, we will support the development of healthy minds, healthy bodies and healthy communities.

Our Purpose

We empower, support and connect our communities and partners for a healthy, thriving Victoria.

Our role



We support our partners.

Working collaboratively to drive benefit for communities, libraries and partners.



We build skills.

Strengthening literacy and other skills, with a focus on building core competencies and confidence.



We provide resources.

Offering physical spaces, digital access, information resources and library programs.



We make connections.

Linking our community with one another, library staff and other health, wellbeing and community services.



We amplify voices.

Sharing the health and wellbeing experiences and needs of our communities, team members and partners.

Strategy in Detail

Our impact areas



Determinants of Health

These are the non-medical factors that influence our health and wellbeing. They include our life conditions and experiences, and broader systemic and structural factors. We recognise the critical role libraries play to influence the social determinants of health and will continue to support our communities through the provision of education support, employment support and digital inclusion.

Our community priorities

Skills and habits: Communities are empowered

Our communities are equipped with the capabilities to understand and optimise their health and wellbeing. Making informed decisions and building healthy habits prevent illness and help with recovery. Of note, we have a crucial role to play when it comes to literacy for children and adults alike. Literacy takes many forms, each of which enables people to understand and improve their health and wellbeing.

Our Core

Supporting our communities with the foundational skills to understand, navigate and interpret information.

All libraries focus on:

- Early years and adult literacy – reading and writing
- Digital literacy – finding, assessing and sharing information online, and using technology with confidence



The Stretch

Enabling people to understand health information, and establish and maintain healthy habits.

We aspire to partner and work in:

- Health literacy – obtaining and understanding health information and making good health decisions
- Physical literacy – developing fine motor skills, fitness, coordination and active lifestyles
- Healthy habits – setting up and maintaining the routine for ongoing healthy lifestyles (e.g. diet, exercise)

Resources and information: Communities are supported

As democratic, equitable and trusted institutions, we can leverage our digital and physical infrastructure, contemporary collections and information expertise to directly support community health and wellbeing.

Our Core

Supporting our communities, particularly people experiencing disadvantage and difficulty, with some of life's fundamentals.

All libraries provide:

- Safe and non-judgemental spaces
- Computers and WIFI access
- Vast collections with health and wellbeing information

**The Stretch**

Leveraging our resources in partnership to drive better health and wellbeing outcomes, with a focus on health equity for those most in need.

We aspire to:

- Invite, include and host health and wellbeing partners at libraries
- Share library resources and expertise with our health and wellbeing partners (e.g. library books and technology in waiting rooms)

Belonging and participation: Communities are connected

Our communities are connected: to each other, to library staff and to health and wellbeing supports. Being a core part of our communities means libraries are well placed to build bridges and make connections. We facilitate and enable everything from one-off interactions, fun experiences, meaningful relationships, and referrals to health and wellbeing services.

Our Core

Being sites of connection and belonging where people can meet and get to know one another.

All libraries offer:

- Inclusive programming, physical spaces, volunteer opportunities and shared experiences that bring people together
- Strong links with community groups and services

**The Stretch**

Reducing social isolation and loneliness, and ensuring our communities are well connected.

We aspire to:

- Deliver targeted programs for people experiencing isolation
- Strengthen formal referral pathways
- Explore creative and radical collaborations with health and community partners to boost wellbeing, including co-location, social prescribing, joint memberships and more

Our library priorities

Our library priorities are the areas that we will focus on to strengthen and better enable us to deliver on our community priorities. For each library priority, we have detailed a description of what this priority entails for the community.

Collaboration: Libraries help others

We leverage our strengths and assets to assist and enable the work of others to effectively deliver health and wellbeing services. This is about building more and stronger connections with health, wellbeing and community partners, including helping them to reach and engage with priority population groups.

Recognition: Libraries are valued

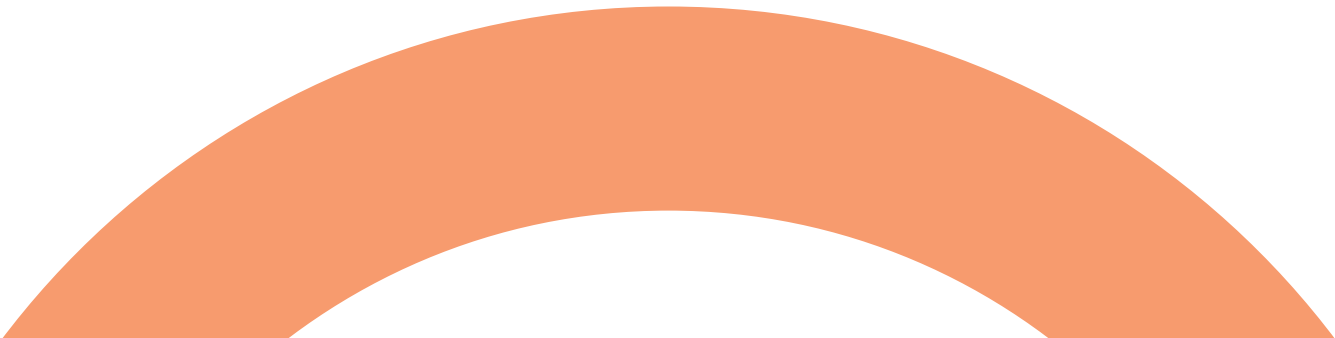
We are recognised for the critical and unique role we play in supporting community health and wellbeing. Communities, government, service providers and funders view libraries as an integral mechanism and partner for delivering health and wellbeing solutions to the community.

Strong teams: Library teams are effective

Our staff are equipped to effectively assist community members with their health and wellbeing. This is about library teams receiving the training, support and guidance we need to be skilled, sustainable and agile. It is important to note that our teams are not healthcare professionals and we will partner and refer where specialist expertise is required.

Sustainable: Libraries are resourced

Libraries have access to the required evidence, tools and resources to support the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve. This includes data, stories, templates and toolkits as well as physical, digital, human and financial resources.



Sustainable Development Goals alignment

In developing this framework, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were repeatedly discussed. The SDGs identify 17 overarching goals for sustainable development across the globe. The goals were launched in 2015, providing a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

The SDGs are an urgent call for action by all countries, developed and developing, in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth, while tackling climate change and preserving our planet.

This framework provides flexibility for local libraries to meet the health and wellbeing needs of our communities. As such, the framework supports and enables public libraries to partner to contribute to the below goals.



Action Roadmap

To support implementation of this framework, we have detailed the key activities and initiatives that individual public libraries, Public Libraries Victoria and State Library Victoria will undertake. The action roadmap contains the core projects and initiatives that we are committing to for the next three years. To support and detail the roadmap, an action toolkit has also been developed. The purpose of the toolkit is to outline optional and specific project ideas which public libraries may decide to undertake over the coming years – many of these initiatives are bold and innovative.



No.	Activities or Initiatives	Horizon 1: 2021–22	Horizon 2: 2022–23	Horizon 3: 2023–24
Statewide				
1.	Key health and wellbeing organisations at the statewide level (e.g. Department of Health, VicHealth, Victorian Healthcare Association) and advisory/strategic committees are mapped, culminating in the development of a partnership strategy.			
2.	Research partnerships are developed to support evaluation efforts. Within this, training will be provided to individual libraries on health and wellbeing evaluation approaches and data collection mechanisms.			
3.	Statewide community health and wellbeing programs are developed and delivered to encourage innovation and partnerships within the public library sector.			
4.	Learning and development sessions are facilitated for public library staff, including health and wellbeing in the context of Victoria’s system, mental health first aid, resilience training and partnership development.			
5.	A statewide advocacy and awareness-raising project is run to build the profile of Libraries for Health and Wellbeing across key stakeholder groups, including community, healthcare providers and professionals, and government.			

No.	Activities or Initiatives	Horizon 1: 2021–22	Horizon 2: 2022–23	Horizon 3: 2023–24
Library service				
1.	Public libraries incorporate a health and wellbeing focus into strategic and operational planning.			
2.	Public libraries actively collect and showcase health and wellbeing data to evidence our work and impact.			
3.	Public libraries offer suitable and accessible spaces and infrastructure to health and wellbeing providers to deliver services in public library settings.			
4.	Public libraries and partners co-design and deliver physical literacy and healthy habits programs for community members in public library settings. Examples include yoga classes, music therapy and cooking classes.			
5.	Public libraries offer programs with a mental health and wellbeing focus. Examples include programs that encourage reading for pleasure, meditation and conversation groups.			
6.	Public libraries continue to develop, encourage, facilitate and deliver programming focused on building and sustaining social connection. Current examples include craft circles, morning tea, Libraries After Dark and Knit and Knatter.			

Evidencing our Work and Impact

Ultimately, we aim to empower, support and connect our communities and partners for a healthy, thriving Victoria. To deliver on this commitment, we will track and evaluate our health and wellbeing work and the positive changes this helps create.

We will monitor, collect and evaluate different data types, including:

- Qualitative insights and quantitative data
- Data from our partners and local government
- Statewide as well as individual library information and experiences.

Between 2021 and 2024 we will commission:

- A statewide survey of Victorian public library users that gathers data and feedback on how their use of the library contributes to their sense of social connection, mental wellbeing and physical health
- A major independent research project on the value of engagement in Victorian public library services in terms of the impact on people's overall quality of life, and the value to society of the health benefits of public libraries.

At the local level, we will provide training to Victorian public library staff in how to evaluate health and wellbeing programs, with a focus on impact measures; and, through the annual statistical survey of Victorian public libraries, we will collect relevant data, such as:

- Number of health and wellbeing programs
- Number of health and wellbeing partnerships
- Number of people using library digital resources, e.g. computers, tablets, internet
- Number of local and statewide advocacy campaigns about health and wellbeing
- Case studies of health and wellbeing programs, campaigns and partnerships

This framework was written during a time of change and challenge for community health and wellbeing in Victoria. The devastating bushfires of 2020 and the outbreak of COVID-19 are two salient and recent examples of this. Looking to the future, we look forward to partnering and supporting better community health and wellbeing outcomes. This framework will strengthen our commitment, coordination and collaboration in health and wellbeing.

Other Resources

The following resources have helped inform the development of the libraries for health and wellbeing strategic framework:

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15.2. Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment

Author:	Jessica Bridgfoot, Director, Bendigo Art Gallery
Responsible Director:	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Purpose

To provide an update on the Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment designs and recommend the project progress through detailed design phase with the release of some of the already committed City funds (currently contingent upon securing external funding) as outlined below.

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Notes the progress of the City's priority project, the Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment project, and its importance to the broader Bendigo region and beyond as a gallery for the people and for its socio-economic contribution.
2. Notes the success of the Elvis exhibition, the Gallery's role as a key economic driver, and the case to expand its facilities so the Gallery can play a dual role and continue its blockbuster exhibition program with new facilities to deliver accessible education and exhibition programs for the Bendigo community.
3. Endorse the release of \$600,000 of the City's existing commitment of \$3M at this time, to be used for the Gallery redevelopment project, to enable the project to progress through detailed design to investment ready.
4. Note: this contribution also secures matched funding from the Bendigo Art Gallery Board, increasing their project commitment.
5. Note that a further briefing and consideration of total project costs will be provided once detailed project costings, based on the redevelopment designs, are received by the City.
6. Receives regular updates on the progress of this project.

Executive Summary

The City has identified the redevelopment of the Bendigo Art Gallery as its major priority project. Over the last twelve months the City has launched a targeted Government advocacy campaign including a funding application to the Federal Government and ongoing advocacy at State Government level. The announcement of the Commonwealth Games has presented the opportunity to invest in the cultural infrastructure of the City and position the Gallery as the cultural hub of the Games.

The City currently has funds secured through the State Government (\$560,000) to appoint architects and subconsultants and take the project to Planning Application stage.

The City was working towards a Victorian State Budget announcement for the required funds for the project, which unfortunately did not eventuate. Officers remain in regular dialogue with State Government Officers and to ensure the best possible chances of achieving State and Federal funding is now to progress the project design development beyond the permit stage so the project is investment ready for the next State budget announcement in May 2023.

Therefore, to complete the design phase the City is requested to release funds of \$600,000 from the existing \$3M commitment, which will be matched by the Bendigo Art Gallery Board, bringing a total cost allocation of \$1.2M.

Background

The Bendigo Art Gallery has a vision to be one of Australia's leading galleries, recognised for its work both domestically and internationally, and to continue to contribute to Greater Bendigo and the Victorian community (creatively, culturally, socially, and economically). Due to the physical constraints of the space in which it operates, the Gallery's redevelopment has been identified by the City of Greater Bendigo and the Bendigo Art Gallery Board as a priority project to be delivered within the next four years.

Historically, the Gallery has developed on an as-needs basis, which has resulted in spaces being added onto existing buildings and designed to minimise cost and adapt best to what has been previously developed. The opportunity that the redevelopment project presents is to facilitate a future and community focussed outcome that will affirm the gallery as one of the leading galleries in Australia. The goals of the Bendigo Art Gallery in the coming years include:

- Continue to build a vibrant contemporary arts hub that is recognised nationally and internationally for its innovative programming; that celebrates art, creativity and culture and engages a diverse audience from the local and regional community and beyond;
- Provide opportunities for families and people of all ages to attend, connect, engage, explore and learn through the arts; support Indigenous recognition, self-determination and reconciliation, and provide opportunities for diverse communities to see and share their identity and stories;
- Consolidate the Gallery's position as an iconic contemporary arts destination and help drive cultural tourism and economic activity; and
- Build an innovative and sustainable organisation that is seen in the arts sector as being an employer of choice.

The redevelopment project will enable the realisation of the above goals.

In 2021 upon endorsement of a Business Case and Masterplan for the redevelopment, Council committed \$3M of funds towards the construction of the project. At the Council meeting of 18 October 2021 the following resolution was passed:

That Council:

- a. Note and endorse the Bendigo Art Gallery Business Case, 2021, highlighting that the project aim is to facilitate a redevelopment which will have significant positive regional socioeconomic outcomes and be a gallery for the people.*
- b. Endorse a Council contribution of maximum \$3 million total cost for the project contingent upon securing external funding for the \$25 million balance for the project, over an estimated 3 year timeline, which is to be allocated into future year budget deliberations.*
- c. Note that officers will prepare an advocacy and communications plan for the project in line with the Business Case and to ensure community engagement on the project is maximised.*

Report

The City has recently appointed award winning architect and museum experts Clare Design and Jackson Clements Burrows to design a world class placemaking building for Bendigo Art Gallery. A team of subconsultants including engineers, landscape architects, Djandak (Traditional Owners), cost surveyors and environmental services have all been engaged to complete the broader design team. Concept designs and stakeholder engagement is underway and a media announcement is scheduled for late July/August 2022.

The announcement of the Commonwealth Games in 2026, which will bring significant economic uplift to the region, has now also provided a hard deadline for the completion of the Bendigo Art Gallery redevelopment. For context, given the timelines that now lead into the Commonwealth Games (March 2026), the importance to continue the momentum on this project (ie. to enable its re-opening in late 2025), requires reconsideration of the timing for the financial model for the project. Officers are confident the redevelopment can be delivered ahead of the Commonwealth Games, however there are now time pressures to have designs finalised and then to market for construction quotes and construction timelines.

A redeveloped Gallery ahead of the Commonwealth Games would provide a world class cultural facility to, not only showcase our Australian and international program on a world stage, but to boost regional tourism and experience offerings within the region for visitors to enjoy. The redevelopment would position the Bendigo Art Gallery as the 'Cultural Hub' of the 2026 Commonwealth Games with a series of international exhibitions, events, film screenings and a major education program in its purpose-built learning centre.

In order to receive a commitment in the 2023/2024 State Government Budget cycle and have a new world class Gallery open for the Commonwealth Games, the project will need to be 'investment ready' to go into construction in mid-2023. A key factor in this status is the progression of detailed design, which requires additional funding at this stage.

Project Timeline:

The below articulates the optimal project timeline for the redevelopment, to enable the completion and re-opening ahead of the Commonwealth Games:

- Permit phase – *Current* – September 2022
- **Detailed design phase – September – June 2023***
- Construction phase – June 2023 – July 2025
- Reopening - September 2025
- Commonwealth Games – March 2026

*Seeking to release funding to complete this phase



The extraordinary success of the exhibition *Elvis Direct from Graceland* has generated substantial revenue for the Gallery and provided a major economic stimulus for the City. The success of Elvis has reinforced the case for a major expansion and positioned the Gallery development project firmly in the focus of State Government. As the State Government have committed \$560,000 to the concept design, the direction is for the City to make a commitment and release already commitment funds to progress the design phase. Drawing down from the \$3M existing commitment secures the cashflow needed for the project in this early stage, which is now at risk of not proceeding to detailed design finalisation.

Priority/Importance

The Bendigo Art Gallery redevelopment is the City's number one priority project.

Options Considered

Options which can be considered include:

1. Delaying the progression of the detailed design phase will equate to no further commitment from the State Government. Note: if the project is not funded in the next budget cycle it is unlikely the project will be funded until after the Commonwealth Games due to the 24 month construction period.

2. If the project is funded to detailed design but construction funding is not secured, then the project is investment ready post Commonwealth Games 2026.

The recommendation is to progress the project through the current timeline milestones, so the project is investment ready for either scenario.

Timelines and Cashflow

This table outlines the stages of design and cashflow to take the project through to investment ready ('shovel ready').

<i>Concept Design Development & Schematic Design</i>	
<i>Commence</i>	June 2022
<i>Complete</i>	August 2022
<i>Accumulative Expenditure</i>	\$465,000
<i>Design Development</i>	
<i>Commence</i>	August 2022
<i>Complete</i>	January 2023
<i>Accumulative Expenditure</i>	\$1,200,000
<i>Tender / Contract Documentation (Construction Documentation complete to 80 – 85% for D&C Tender – Construction can commence)</i>	
<i>Commence</i>	January 2023
<i>Complete</i>	June 2023
<i>Accumulative Expenditure</i>	\$1,950,000

Communications/Engagement

The City's Project Control Group (PCG) has endorsed a Communications and Engagement Plan and community engagement is underway. The Gallery has established a Traditional Owner reference group (Wartaka) led by Rodney Carter and the City is separately engaging Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung), to codesign the landscaping.

The next media announcement is scheduled for late July/August to announce the architects and introduce the concept designs.

Financial Sustainability

To progress the project, the Bendigo Art Gallery Board has also committed the release of 50% of the funds (\$600,000) for the detailed design phase. This funding is contingent on the City matching the contribution of \$600,000. As outlined herein, this report requests the early release of \$600,000 of the already committed \$3M from the City for the project to enable the project to proceed unimpeded.

The designs are currently under review with the City's nominated cost planner. A revised capital budget will be provided to Council in September 2022.

Risk Assessment

The following highlights some risks for the project which can be mitigated / managed:

Risk: The Project does not receive State/Federal funding.

Likelihood: Low

Consequence: If the project does not receive a State/Federal Government commitment in the 22/23 budget the City will pause the project in June 2023. At this stage the City will have expended \$670,000 out of a total project expenditure of \$1,950,000 and the project will be investment ready for advocacy post Commonwealth Games.

Control: Ongoing advocacy and communications with RDV, keeping the project on track with endorsed timeline.

Risk: The project is not taken to detailed design phase/investment ready

Likelihood: Low

Consequence: There will be no further funding from State/Federal government if the project is not investment ready. The project stops.

Control: Recommended funds are released.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 6 - A vibrant, creative community

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 1 - A culture of creativity

Goal 3 - Nurturing and supporting talent and championing inclusion and access for creatives

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Bendigo Art Gallery - Concept Presentation [**15.2.1** - 48 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Bendigo Art Gallery - Redesign Consultation- Session Report [**15.2.2** - 23 pages]
3. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Bendigo Art Gallery - Wartaka Workshop [**15.2.3** - 3 pages]

15.3. Audit and Risk Committee Minutes

Author:	Anna Connolly, Risk and Assurance Advisor
Responsible Director:	Jessica Clarke-Hong, Acting Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) Charter, as per the Public Transparency principles and Governance principles in the Act, states that the unconfirmed minutes of the Committee meetings are provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting for information and approval.

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Approve the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on May 26, 2022;
2. Note that the minutes will be endorsed by the members of the Committee at the next Committee meeting to be held on September 8, 2022, and any substantive changes to the unconfirmed minutes will be reported to the next Council meeting.

Executive Summary

The Committee's Charter requires that the unconfirmed minutes of each Committee meeting will be reported to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting for information and approval.

Background

Council is committed to good governance, public transparency and accountability to the City of Greater Bendigo's community. The Committee has been established to strengthen Council's governance, risk management, financial management and to drive continuous improvement. Pursuant to section 53(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), the Committee is an advisory committee and does not have any delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility. The Committee comprises of seven members (three Councillors and four independent, external members), appointed by Council and is an advisory committee of the Council established to assist the Council to discharge its responsibilities under the Act to:

- monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles

- the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions
 - other relevant laws and regulations
- monitor internal controls
- monitor Council financial and performance reporting
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls
- oversee internal audit function
- oversee external audit functions.

The Committee engage with management in discharging its responsibilities and formulating its advice to the Council. The Committee operates to advise the Council on how best to fulfil its responsibilities and facilitate decision making by providing a forum for improving communication between the Council members and senior management, finance, risk and compliance managers, internal auditors and external auditors. The committee meet at least four times per year. In addition to these meetings, one or more special meetings may be held to review the Council's annual financial statements and performance statement, or to meet other responsibilities of the committee.

Previous Council decision dates:

The minutes of the meeting held on February 26, 2022 were provided for approval to Council at the meeting held on May 23, 2022.

Report

The Committee Chair has reviewed the draft and unconfirmed minutes of the May 26, 2022 Committee meeting and has approved the release. The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting are attached to this report.

Communications/Engagement

As part of its commitment to good governance, Council's Committee acts as an independent advisory committee to Council, established under Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The Committee Charter requires the Committee meet with Council's Internal and External Auditors in reviewing Council's financial and non-financial reporting as well as risk management. The Chairperson also prepares a report to Council on the Committee's activities twice per annum including the Committee's findings and recommendations along with agreed actions. The minutes have been circulated in draft format to the attendees of the Committee.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 1 - Lead and govern for all

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 1 - Accountable, financially responsible, equitable, transparent decision making

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Audit and Risk Committee Meeting 26 May 2022 draft Minutes [**15.3.1** - 6 pages]

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, 26 May 2022 1.30-3.30pm

Location: Bendigo Town Hall

1. Membership

Present:

Members:

Warren Pollock (Chair)

Stephen Brown

Jovana Obradovic-Tantra

Robert Stephenson

Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf

Cr Margaret O'Rourke (online)

Cr Julie Sloan (online)

Officers:

Craig Niemann, Chief Executive Officer

Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth (online for Agenda item 8 only)

Nathan Morsillo, Acting Director Corporate Performance

Kate Fox, Acting Manager Financial Strategy

Vanessa O'Toole, Manager People and Culture (for Agenda item 6 only)

Anthony Petherbridge, Manager Strategic Planning (for Agenda Item 8 only)

Geoff Fallon, Acting Manager Governance

Rob Anderson, Coordinator Development Contributions and Infrastructure Planning (for Agenda item 8 only)

Naomi Hooper, Work Health and Safety Co-ordinator (for Agenda item 6 only)

Mark Eeles, Coordinator Financial Reporting and Operations

Anna Connolly, Risk and Assurance Advisor

Rosemary Broad, Risk and Assurance Officer

Attendees:

Brad Ead, Internal Auditor, AFS and Associates Pty Ltd

Erin Nankivell, Internal Auditor, AFS and Associates Pty Ltd

Kathie Teasdale, External Auditor, RSD and Accountants

Apologies:

Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Jessica Clarke-Hong, Manager Governance

Katie Dempster, Internal Auditor, AFS and Associates

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

2. Welcome

Warren Pollock opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. As this was the first face to face meeting in some time, a brief introduction was given by everyone in attendance.

3. Acknowledgement of Country

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest and Pecuniary Interest

Committee recommendations must be transparent and accountable, to protect the public interest, maintain the integrity of the Committee and Council and enable the public to be confident that the Committee is performing its duties properly. If a conflict of interest exists, it must be declared and managed.

Division 2 of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to Independent Members, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. A member has a **conflict of interest** if they have:

- (a) a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Act
- (b) a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the Act

Members of the Committee will provide declarations in accordance with statutory requirements.

At the beginning of each committee meeting, members are required to declare any conflict of interest that may apply to matters on the meeting agenda and will then be required to leave the room while those items are considered. Declared conflicts will be appropriately recorded in the minutes.

The declarations of conflict of interest outlined below will be considered standing declarations:

- Stephen Brown declared that he is an employee of the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
- Robert Stephenson declared that he is currently Advocacy lead of Be Bendigo
- Craig Niemann declared that his son works at AFS and Associates Pty Ltd
- Cr O'Rourke declared that she is a customer of AFS and Associates Pty Ltd

5. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 24 February 2022 were previously circulated.

Motion: That the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 24 February 2022 be accepted.

Moved: Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Jovana Obradovic-Tantra

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

6. Work Health and Safety Report

An introduction on the Work, Health and Safety Report was given by Vanessa O'Toole. General discussion followed on the preferred audit tool for the audit and which software system would be the most appropriate. It is acknowledged that further work needs to be undertaken to capture changes in legislation for Work, Health and Safety. The Work Health and Safety RoadMap which has been developed and has the recommendations the most recent Work Health and Safety Report incorporated will go through for approval and will be implemented.

Action: Information on proposed OHS Amendment (Psychological Health) Regulations to be forwarded out to the Committee with the minutes.

7. Quarterly Finance Report 31 March 2022

Nathan Morsillo provided an overview of the Q3 results and the report was taken as read.

- The Quarter 3 report reflects an operating surplus against budget.
- The City continues to be low risk for the majority of the key Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) financial sustainability indicators
- Vision Super Defined Benefits Q3 2021/2022 estimate had not been released at the time of this report.

Interim Management Letter

Kathie Teasdale gave an overview of the report and advised that most of the work for the audit has been completed. There were two new findings.

1. Employee Masterfile Audit Trail Report
2. Bank Reconciliations

8. Internal Auditor Update

Council's Internal Auditor from AFS, Brad Ead provided an overview of the reports which were tabled as read.

Internal Audit Program Status Update

The following is a status update on audits:

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Upcoming Audit	Commencement of Fieldwork	Status
Developer Contributions Planning Audit	22 February 2022	Fieldwork has been completed and the report was tabled at Audit and Risk Committee on 26 May 2022
Past issues- Portable and Attractive Assets	31 January 2022	Fieldwork has been completed and the report tabled at Audit and Risk Committee on 26 May 2022
Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Planning/Emergency Management	2 May 2022	Meetings have all been undertaken

AFS will also conduct a Strategic Risk Workshop with Councillors and Audit and Risk Committee Independent Members next week as a refresh to the Strategic Risk Register, which will also assist in the development of future years of the Internal Audit Plan.

Recent Reports and Publications

Recent reports and publications were presented to the Committee.

Development Contributions Planning Internal Audit

Rob Anderson, the Coordinator Development Contributions and Infrastructure Planning presented to the Committee on Developer Contributions to enhance their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Development Contributions allow Council to obtain funds from developers to help deliver local infrastructure. It is revenue-generating mechanism to fund community and transport infrastructure such as roads.

Whilst there is opportunity to improve the framework to effectively support Developer Contributions Planning, there were many strengths identified. The Development Contributions Planning Internal Audit was conducted on 22 February 2022 with five findings to be addressed.

General discussion followed.

Past Issues Portable and Attractive Assets

The review undertaken on this audit revealed two outstanding actions. The City acknowledges the length of time it has taken to close out this audit.

Planning Document Low Value Procurement

This audit is due to commence fieldwork on 11 July 2022 and a pre meeting with key stakeholders has already been undertaken to confirm the scope and objectives.

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

9. Risk and Assurance

Anna Connolly provided an overview of the reports which were tabled as read.

Risk and Assurance Report

An update on Risk and Assurance activities was provided:

- AFS and Associates have been engaged to undertake a thorough review of the City's Strategic Risks.
- Fraud and Corruption face to face training continues to be rolled out. A session was held for the Organisation Leadership Team and Advisory and Development Team on the 18 May 2022 with the IBAC Deputy Commissioner David Wolf presenting.
- A simulated Business Continuity exercise was held on 3 March 2022, with recommendations provided and being implemented.
- Insurance renewals for 2022/23 have been submitted to the broker and MAV to negotiate with insurers. The renewal report will come through in late June 2022 to place the City's insurances.

Other matters reviewed from the Audit and Risk Committee Workplan

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter which was adopted in August 2020 is due for review in August 2022. A copy with the suggested changes has been circulated with a further opportunity for the Committee members to provide feedback during the next couple of weeks.

Internal Overdue Audit Actions

The three overdue actions for the Environment Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy audit were approved to be extended through until the 30 March 2023.

There was also discussion on the Contaminated Land overdue Internal Audit actions and the age of these. It was noted that they are nearing completion, but the ARC would like to see this progressed by the next meeting.

10. Fuel and Purchasing Card Report

The fuel and purchasing card data analytic reports were presented to the ARC for review. It was recommended as part of the report that this level of detail would not be required to be tabled at the ARC moving forward. The ARC accepted this recommendation.

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

11. Bi-Annual Chairperson Report

The report was tabled as read.

12. CEO Report

The report was taken as read.

- The Federal Government funding for the Airport has been recently signed
- The 2022-2023 proposed budget was considered by Council at the meeting on the 20 April 2022
- An announcement was made in early April confirming that the State of Victoria will be one of the hosts of the 2026 Commonwealth Games and a number of events will be held around the City.

13. Workplan

The ARC Workplan was attached to the Agenda and was taken as read.

14. General Business

It was noted that there is an upcoming audit from the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) on regulating private pool and spa safety swimming pools that the City have been nominated to participate in.

Congratulations were offered to the City on the Elvis exhibition that is currently showing at the Bendigo Art Gallery.

Upcoming 2022 meetings

Date	Time	Comments
8 September 2022	2-4pm	Bendigo Town Hall
10 November 2022	2-4pm	Bendigo Town Hall

Meeting closed at 3.30pm

Distribution

A copy of the minutes will be distributed to all attendees and all Councillors

15.4. Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework

Author:	Lara Edwards, Active & Healthy Lifestyles Officer - Planning and Policy
Responsible Director:	Stacy Williams, Director Healthy Communities and Environments

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework to Council for adoption.

Recommended motion

That Council adopts the Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework without further community engagement; noting the engagement already undertaken and limited responses received.

The Council notes the Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework content will be graphically designed post adoption for ongoing use.

Executive Summary

The Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework (the Framework) is being developed to support the work of the Active and Healthy Communities Unit. This decision-making framework will define the City's role in providing sport and active recreation opportunities and give our stakeholders, both internal and external, a clear understanding of what the City will support and invest in.

The Framework includes six key components:

1. Guiding Pillars and Priorities
2. Participation trend analysis
3. Targets for physical activity
4. A requirement for a 4-year strategic resource plan
5. Policy statements for development of key supportive policy
6. An evaluation plan

A number of engagement activities have previously been undertaken in developing the Framework and policy statements including staff and Councillor engagement in 2019. Further internal engagement occurred primarily from January – March 2022. Preliminary external engagement was carried out from March – May 2022 with key stakeholders. 156 stakeholders were advised of the project and there were 109 visitors to the Let's Talk page. While measures were taken to reduce engagement fatigue, only 6 stakeholders

asked questions that required follow-up or minor amendments to the Framework. The relatively low response rate was attributed to the reduction in volunteerism through COVID resulting in volunteer fatigue, and due to the specialised nature of the document.

The draft Framework is now proposed for adoption.

Background

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-2025 articulates how the City will fulfil its responsibilities under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, and the Framework will be a key support mechanism for delivering increased physical activity in the Healthy and Well outcome.

The City of Greater Bendigo is one of several providers of sport and active recreation within the community. It is necessary to recognise the most appropriate role for the City and use of local government resources to avoid duplication and extension beyond capacity. A Council endorsed Framework to guide decision making will provide fairness and clarity for the community and enable fair and consistent allocation of resources. The challenge that operating in a financially constrained environment presents to Council further adds to the need for a Framework that guides prioritisation of resource allocation, is inclusive of our whole community and promotes equity.

Previous Council decision dates: A survey and Councillor workshop were conducted in 2019 to prioritise focusses, obtain feedback and support to progress the Framework and policies.

Report

The Framework will outline changes in the sport and active recreation sector and the role of local government. It will inform strategic investment in projects, programs and activities, including where there are existing strategies for specific matters such as implementation of: Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo, Hard Court Strategy and Public Space Plan; as well as covering any matters that do not have a specific strategy or plan. This framework does not reflect detailed policy, but rather outlines the policies required for fair and transparent allocation of resources.

The Active and Healthy Bendigo Framework includes six key components:

- Guiding Pillars and Priorities - Providing a consistent structure upon which to apply different community needs data and strategic inputs while providing flexibility to adapt to the changing environment.
- Participation trend analysis - Applying local data and trends to the framework to understand local community and participation to determine where and what investment should be undertaken. Data includes both participation data and population change data.
- Targets for physical activity - Established in order to build a business case for investment to accurately reflect the return on investment proposed.

- A requirement for a 4-year strategic resource plan - To determine the City's investment in sport & active recreation. This multi-year action plan of infrastructure and programming support will address complex issues, achieve the desired outcomes and targets identified.
- Policy statements for development of key supportive policy - Consistent and fair policies to impact ongoing population health outcomes and achieve population level change. To ensure that the Council is investing resources where there is demonstrated need and decisions are made in a fair, transparent and equitable way.
- An evaluation plan - To understand if the framework, investment and approach has made an impact, an evaluation plan will be used to evaluate the process, impact and outcome of the work undertaken.

Priority/Importance

The Framework will be a key support mechanism for delivering increased physical activity in the Healthy and Well outcome of Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-2025.

This decision-making framework will support the work of the Active and Healthy Communities Unit by enabling fair and consistent allocation of resources.

Options considered

1. Council adopt the draft Framework without any further community engagement (Recommended)
2. Council endorse the draft Framework being released for a period of public exhibition prior to considering adopting the Framework at a future Council meeting.

Timelines

Following adoption, Active and Healthy Communities officers will implement the Framework with associated policies, resource plan and ongoing evaluation.

Communications/Engagement

- Feedback on the Framework has been predominately positive with a small number of questions or suggestions requiring follow-up or minor amendments to the Framework.
- A number of engagement activities have previously been undertaken in developing the Framework and policy statements. This includes workshops with key staff responsible for or impacted by elements of implementation as well as a workshop with the previous Council. A survey and Councillor workshop were conducted in 2019 to obtain feedback and support to progress the Framework and policies.
- A Project Control Group was formed in January 2022 including representatives from Active and Healthy Communities, Parks and Open Space, Property Services,

Community Partnerships, Finance and Engineering. Further internal engagement on the project occurred from January to March 2022.

- The Public Space Committee were engaged in March 2022.
- A Councillor Bulletin was provided on 25 February 2022 as a project update.
- To try to reduce engagement fatigue of external stakeholder, engagement for this project was grouped with other engagement opportunities organised through the Active and Healthy Communities Unit as much as possible. Joint engagement sessions included partnering with the draft Healthy Facilities Policy, Outdoor Seasonal Swimming Pools Forum and Sporting Club Support Workshops (e.g. applying for community grants).
- [Preliminary engagement](#) with key external stakeholders commenced in March 2022 using online and in person meetings, and a Let's Talk page was open from the 7th of March to 7th of April 2022. Key stakeholders were advised of the project by:
 - the Active and Healthy Communities Newsletter which went to a range of clubs, committees, associations and leagues; and
 - emails sent to 156 clubs, associations, leagues, commercial fitness operators, state bodies and health providers.
- The Let's Talk page had 146 visits, 109 visitors, 0 contributions, 5 followers and 81 document downloads. 9 stakeholders attended meetings where no changes were proposed to the Framework, 6 stakeholders asked questions at a meeting where the questions required follow-up or minor amendments to the Framework, and 2 online meetings had no attendees.
- Noting the engagement already undertaken and limited responses received, adoption of the Framework is proposed without any further engagement.

Financial Sustainability

Development of this framework and policy will be undertaken utilising existing internal resources within the Active & Healthy Communities Unit.

Risk Assessment

The Framework will manage the risk of allocation of resources not being fair or consistent, or public perception of this; it will provide justification for the City's decisions to support resources being used to have the greatest community benefit.

Adopting the Framework without further community engagement will manage the risk of over-engaging, where targeted stakeholder engagement has already resulted in limited feedback.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 2 - Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 1 - Strengthened community health and wellbeing

Goal 2 - A healthy, equitable and sustainable food system.

Goal 3 - Everyday walking and cycling is easier for all ages and abilities.

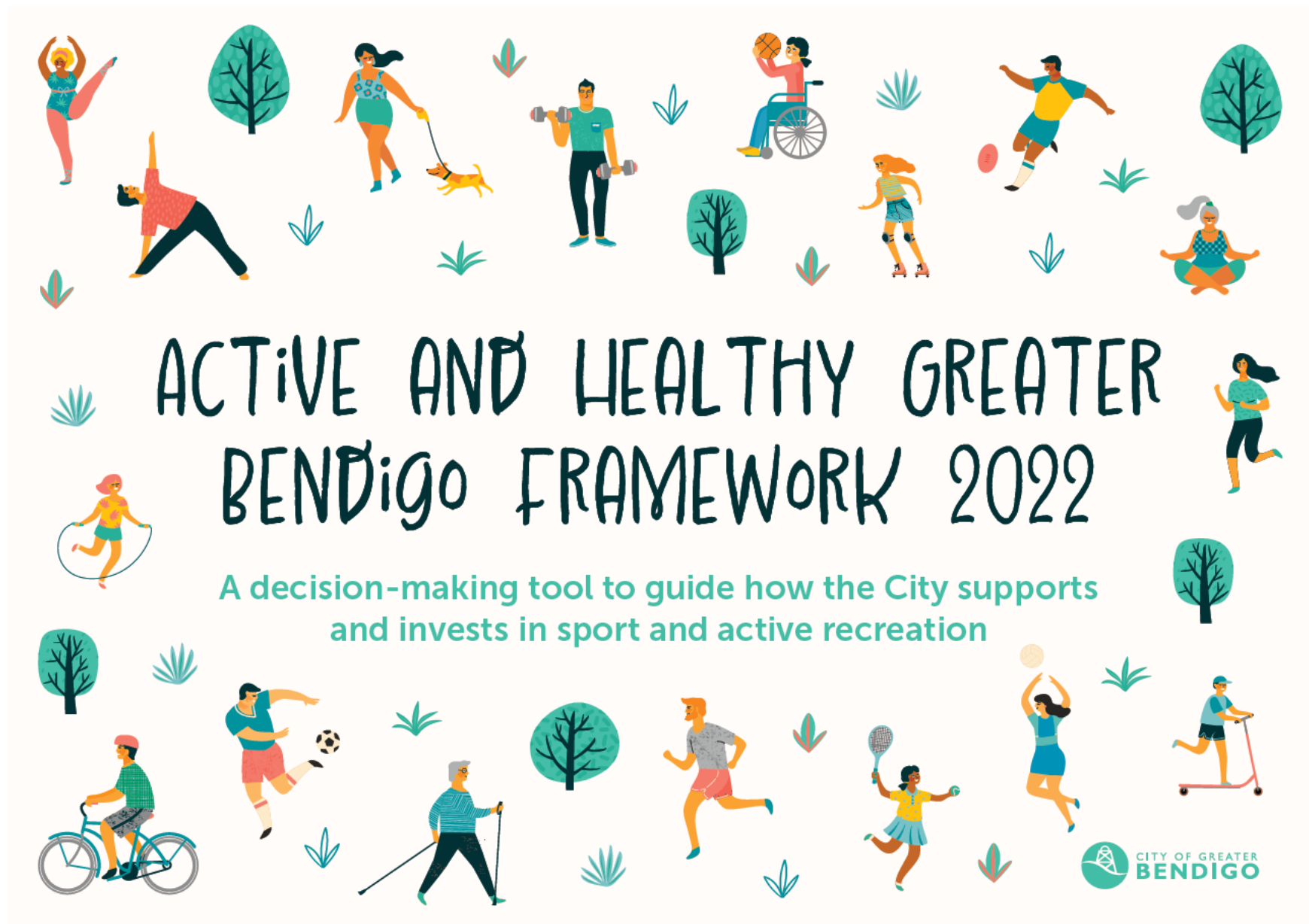
Goal 5 - More sustainable active and public transport services

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework Draft 2022 20220718 [**15.4.1** - 26 pages]



Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our 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 Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

What is the Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework?

The Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework is a decision-making tool to guide how the City supports and invests in sport and active recreation.

This Active Bendigo Framework includes six key components:

1. Guiding Pillars and Priorities;
2. Participation trend analysis;
3. Targets for physical activity;
4. A requirement for a 4-year strategic resource plan
5. Policy statements for development of key supportive policy
6. An evaluation plan

Community Vision 2021-2031

Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community. We are welcoming, sustainable and prosperous. Walking hand-in-hand with the Traditional

Custodians of this land. Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future.

The community vision is underpinned by five values:

- Transparency – honesty and accountability, integrity and clarity of language, to ensure that understandable, clear and concise language is used
- Sustainability – a focus on our environment, being both built and natural, and our health, our economy and our heritage
- Inclusion – capturing our cultural and community diversity
- Innovation – to help with ongoing growth, including creativity, adaption, continuous improvement and efficiency, so as the city and community continues to evolve and prosper
- Equity – provide support and give opportunity to others to be part of this community

Key terms

Sport: 'structured, competitive activity' ¹

Active Recreation: 'leisure time, non-competitive, physical activity' ¹

¹ Active Victoria A strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017 - 2021

Contents

Introduction	3	3. Influencing development, operations and range of activities/facilities.....	24
Strategic Context	4	4. Developing supportive policy	24
Contributing Literature.....	4	5. Providing Leadership	24
The Role of Local Government and Key Partners.....	6		
The Sport & Active Recreation setting	7		
Guiding Pillars and Priorities	8		
Guiding Pillars.....	8		
Priorities	9		
Participation Trend Analysis	11		
Demographic Data.....	11		
Understand the local community and participation	12		
Changing Trends 2014-2019.....	14		
Targets for key areas of health and physical activity	15		
4 Year Strategic Resource Plan	16		
Supportive Policy Statements	17		
Evaluation Plan.....	19		
Appendix A – Role of Local Government and Partners	20		
Appendix B – The Sport and Active Recreation Setting.....	23		
1. Planning, developing and managing place of participation.....	23		
2. Encouraging and promoting opportunities	23		

Introduction

The ability of residents to live healthy lifestyles is a critical pillar to achieve the Greater Bendigo Community Vision. Areas of focus identified by the City to support residents achieving a healthy lifestyle are outlined in the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan which includes the following focus areas:

- Healthy and well
- Safe & secure
- Able to participate
- Connect to culture and community
- Liveable

The mechanisms by which the City influences these focus areas include provision of services which respond to community needs, developing supportive policy and undertaking planning, design, development and management of infrastructure. The focus areas of the Health and Wellbeing Plan are addressed across a range of settings (for example: schools, arts, culture, health services) but the focus of this framework is within the sport and active recreation setting.

The City acknowledges that it is time to reflect on the way we work in the sport and active recreation setting to provide the services and facilities which meet changed community needs and expectations. The sport and active recreation landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is continuing to evolve with newly emerging priorities and trends. It is now widely acknowledged that, not only is sport and active recreation an integral part of our community, it is essential to our health and wellbeing.

The purpose of this document is to articulate the City's role in providing sport and active recreation opportunities and provide a framework to inform strategic investment in projects, programs and activities.

The Active and Healthy Bendigo Framework includes six key components:

1. Guiding Pillars and Priorities - Providing a consistent structure upon which to apply different community needs data and strategic inputs while providing flexibility to adapt to the changing environment.
2. Participation trend analysis - Applying local data and trends to the framework to understand local community and participation to determine where and what investment should be undertaken. Data includes both participation data and population change data.
3. Targets for physical activity - Established in order to build a business case for investment to accurately reflect the return on investment proposed.
4. A requirement for a 4-year strategic resource plan - To determine the City's investment in sport & active recreation. This multi-year action plan of infrastructure and programming support will address complex issues, achieve the desired outcomes and targets identified.
5. Policy statements for development of key supportive policy - Consistent and fair policies to impact ongoing population health outcomes and achieve population level change. To ensure that the City is investing resources where there is demonstrated need and decisions are made in a fair, transparent and equitable way.
6. An evaluation plan - To understand if the framework, investment and approach has made an impact, an evaluation plan will be used to evaluate the process, impact and outcome of the work undertaken.



In order to effectively deliver upon the City's role, an evidence informed approach is required. The approach needs to consider the desired outcome, current situation, targets for change/impact, a planned infrastructure and operational resource intervention and evaluation to determine if we have made a difference.

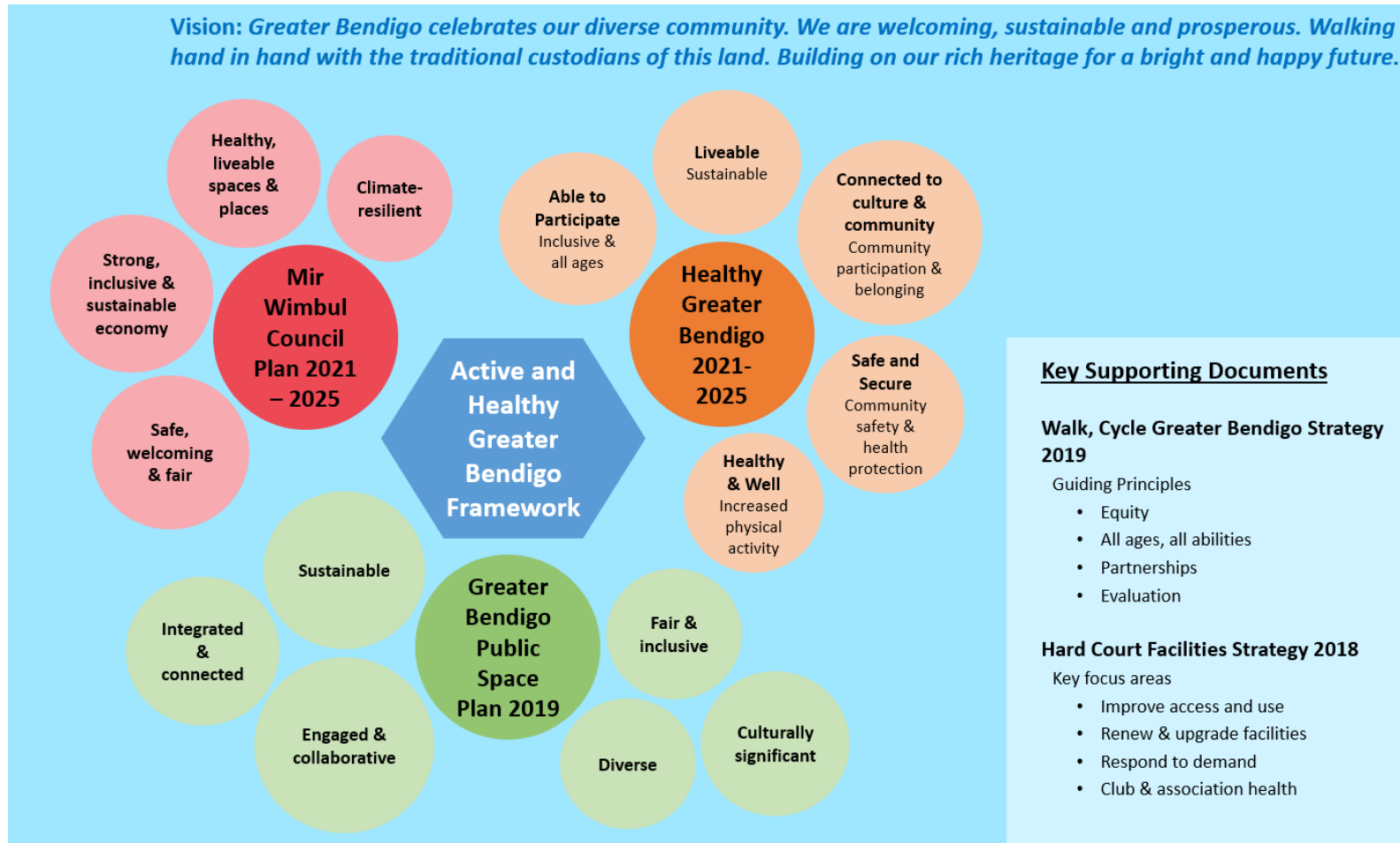
This document outlines changes in the sport and active recreation sector, the role of local government, the role of key partners, and how the City evaluates the impact upon health and wellbeing of investment.

Strategic Context

Contributing Literature

A range of literature contributes toward the direction of this framework within a hierarchy of documents. The following is a list of documents which contribute to the core directions of the work.

- Victorian Health & Wellbeing Outcomes Framework
- Active Victoria A Strategic Framework for Sport and Recreation in Victoria 2017-2021
- Mir Wimbul Council Plan 2021 – 2025
- Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-2025
- All Ages All Abilities Plan 2019
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025
- Youth Strategy 2017 - 2021
- Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021 – 2026
- Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019
- A stronger Greater Bendigo 2030
- Hard Court Facilities Strategy 2018
- City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2021-2025
- Greater Bendigo Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy 2021
- Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy 2019
- Community Buildings Policy 2022
- Obesity Prevention Strategy – draft
- Active Women and Girls – draft

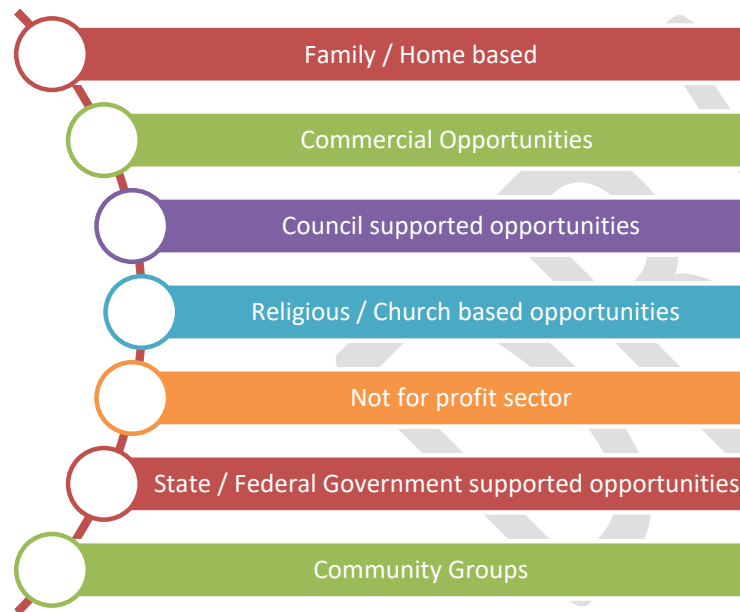


The Role of Local Government and Key Partners

The City of Greater Bendigo is one of the providers of sport and active recreation within the community. It is important to recognise that there are a host of individuals and organisations involved in the planning and delivery of sport and active recreation experiences.

Key Partners and Providers

The following providers all contribute to the mix of sport and active recreation community options available. Further detail on the role of local government and key partners is provided in Appendix A.



The Role of Local Government

Local government is strongly connected to the community. As the most visible and accessible level of government for the community and with a responsibility to address local needs Councillors have the difficult role of balancing the aspirational vision of the community with available resources. The approach of local government is typically aimed at whole of population change by influencing the social and environmental factors which create opportunities for residents to be active. While local government provides some individual behaviour change, medical & health protection services, these are not as common or far reaching.

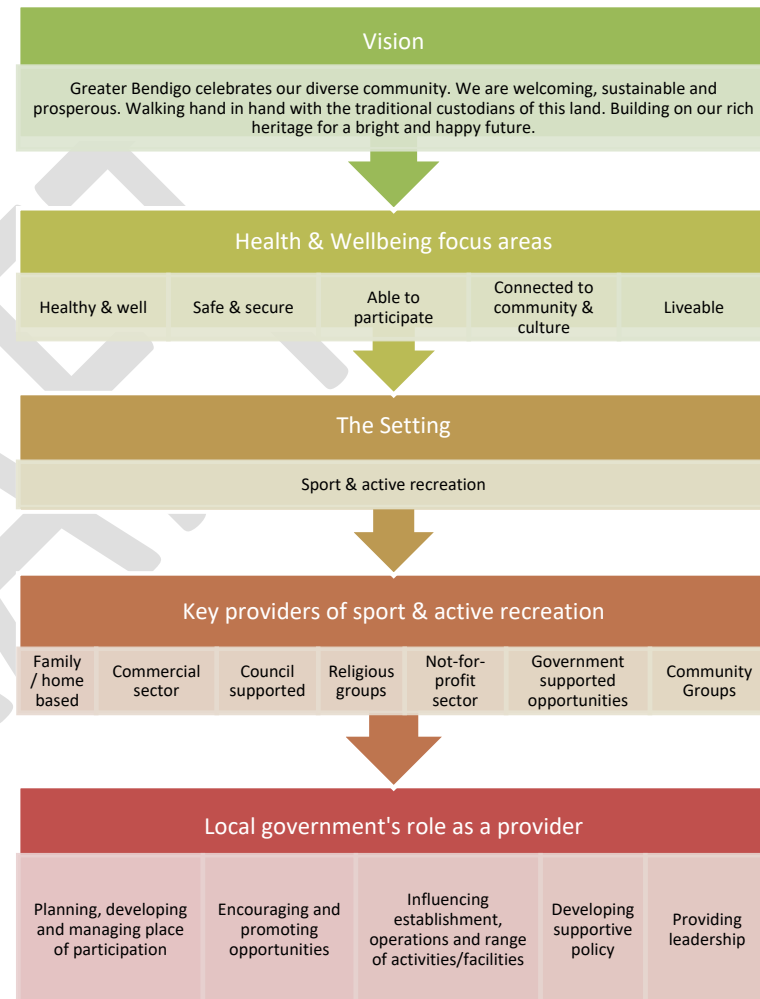
The Sport & Active Recreation setting

In order to maximise the impact of resource allocation, it is important to define the City's investment within the sport and active recreation setting. The industry accepted model includes:

1. planning, developing and managing the place of participation without bias toward any one activity;
2. encouraging and promoting a broad range of sport and active recreation opportunities which reflect community need and capacity;
3. influencing the establishment of equitable and sustainable development, supported by realistic operational guidelines, which create a range, a quality of provision and an ease of access to built and natural facilities – which includes both formal places and informal spaces for recreation;
4. developing relevant and appropriate policy, which recognises differing needs whilst guiding provision of sport and active recreation services;
5. providing leadership to change traditional norms and create a more inclusive and equitable community.

Further detail on these settings is outlined in Appendix B.

Summary of the community vision, strategic objectives, focus area, and the local government role



Guiding Pillars and Priorities

The guiding pillars and priorities provide structure for decision making. The guiding pillars are the values that we will apply in every approach and decision for sport and active recreation, while the priorities are the key actions within particular focus areas.

Guiding Pillars

<i>Value - sport and active recreation</i>	<i>Engage - with all stakeholders</i>	<i>Equity – with industry benchmarked planning principles and process</i>	<i>Participation – by varied opportunities</i>
All levels of both the provider organisation and the community must 'value' and fully understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through participation in sport and active recreation, in contributing to the liveability of Greater Bendigo. This will be fully realised through good planning, policy, resourcing, evaluation and assessment. The focus on infrastructure planning and provision of: • Parks, open space, forests • Sportsgrounds and associated facilities • Playgrounds, pathways, and public places A balanced provision across: • formal and informal opportunities • sport and other recreation activity	Planning, developing and providing for sport and active recreation is not the sole responsibility of CoGB. Rather it is the shared responsibility of a range of community partners. Quality engagement must be integrated; accessible; regular; and responsive. Key stakeholders: • government authorities • community organisations • peak sporting bodies • local sport and active recreation groups impacting on public access sport and active recreation provision	Provision must be equitable across the community and municipality. Planning must be sustainable within the capacity of the CoGB and community and be based on industry methodology and practice in order to provide relevant services. The following components form the prioritisation: • A focus on social/lifestyle activity planning • Service provision across organised and non-organised activity with an equitable balance of natural and built facility • A recognition of needs-based planning referencing quantitative and qualitative measures • A recognition that non-urban, more isolated townships receive planning and recognition of the importance of community facilities • The provision of a range of life-stage planning, from children through to older persons • Addressing inequities across socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged communities	Sport and active recreation services will be provided from a basis of supporting a healthy and vibrant community. This will encourage and support participation across a broad range of sport and active recreation opportunities through 'settings' which service individuals, groups, teams, clubs, and specific activity. The framework will establish participation - measured and monitored - across: • Sporting participation – including organised and non-organised • Social activity through organised gathering events and festivals • Participation and usage of play and parkland settings – parks, lakes, walking tracks and trails

Priorities

1. Equity

- 1.1. Applying a Hierarchy to future Service Level planning.
- 1.2. Advocating for a 'One Community' approach to the achievement/maintenance of core Service Levels.
- 1.3. Investing in facility capacity to be used by people of all ages and abilities and/or for a diversity of purposes.
- 1.4. Only supporting single use of a facility where a sound business case for such can be demonstrated e.g. it is not practical to regularly move billiard tables.

2. Accessibility

- 2.1. Promote strategic alignment in facility location, including consideration of public transport and/or active transport (walking and cycling) links, expansion capability, demographic changes, etc.
- 2.2. Ensure facilities incorporate Universal Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, and are physically safe and accessible, culturally safe and gender equitable, and comply with relevant legislation.
- 2.3. Advocate for a level of public internet access at all facilities.
- 2.4. Promote 24/7 public access to some toilets, change rooms/showers, personal belongings lockers, Wi-Fi and electronic device charging points at 'Municipal' Service Level facilities, to reflect the diversity of Municipal Community lifestyles.
- 2.5. Advocate for a centralised facility data base and booking system that is digitally accessible, easy to navigate and in Easy English.
- 2.6. Advocate for a consistent and tiered approach to usage fees.
- 2.7. Promote information sharing about community volunteering and participation opportunities.

3. Promote wellbeing

- 3.1. Prioritise developments which most strongly deliver upon objectives and enable target groups identified in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- 3.2. Do not invest in facility components which are utilised for activities in contradiction to the objectives of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Policy e.g. gambling or alcohol sales.
- 3.3. Encourage and maximise use, including shared use, of facilities for a diverse range of health and wellbeing promoting activities and programs.
- 3.4. Develop and implement a code of conduct for facility access and use.
- 3.5. Promote alignment with the Healthy Facilities Policy (currently in development).
- 3.6. Ensure drinks and food preparation and serving at all facilities complies with relevant legislation.
- 3.7. Ensure access to free drinking water as part of all built facilities as well as promoting nutritious food.
- 3.8. Recognise the importance of enabling opportunities for community-based food production in public spaces, such as community gardens and planter boxes, as a means to improve community health and wellbeing, improve food security and promote Placemaking.
- 3.9. Invest in regular maintenance and cleaning so facilities remain desirable places for the community to gather.

4. Partnering

- 4.1. Maximise sport and active recreation opportunities through developing partnerships.
- 4.2. Recognise the Traditional Owners of the land.
- 4.3. Protect and celebrate the cultural heritage of First Nations People.
- 4.4. Prioritise facilities where strong partnerships between multiple tenants exist or will be enhanced.
- 4.5. Promote community engagement and partnerships in planning, design, construction, resourcing, management and use of facilities.
- 4.6. Considering Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme opportunities to achieve developer contributions to new facilities.
- 4.7. Invest in needs aligned Community Capacity Building.
- 4.8. Considering Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme and Building Code of Australia opportunities to support utilisation of infrastructure owned and/or managed by government, private and not for profit sectors for Municipal Community use.
- 4.9. Supporting some commercial tenancies within Community Hubs where the commercial tenant's core business could increase access to life-long learning, jobs and enterprise, health and social services and civic infrastructure that helps to build social capital. (The ability to include commercial tenants would be contingent upon Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme and Building Code of Australia permitted use considerations).
- 4.10. Invest in Community Hub provision and operation that has capacity to support cross-cultural, intergenerational and cross-sectoral activities and programs.
- 4.11. Support Community Capacity Building needs assessments, particularly where Community Building management under delegated authority exists.

5. Sustainability

- 5.1. Consider facility provision and operational costs in alignment with the Asset Management Policy, Long-term Financial Plan 2019 and catchment capacities.
- 5.2. Explore Placemaking and adaptive re-use opportunities for existing facilities, particularly in instances where there are heritage considerations.
- 5.3. Apply Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) and the Sustainable Buildings Policy to achieve more Climate Resilient facilities.
- 5.4. Develop and implement processes for monitoring, evaluating and reporting ESD and Climate Resilient facilities linked data and outcomes.
- 5.5. Support procedures and practices to maximise resource recovery, minimise waste generation and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.6. Advocate for the re-investment of any proceeds from a Community Building consolidation or rationalisation process back into the respective catchment.
- 5.7. Investing in Community Building resilience to changing climatic conditions.

Participation Trend Analysis

The City has a range of data available to it in order to understand population level trends in our community. This information is available through Australian Census, Victorian Population Health Survey and many other data sets. This information can be filtered according to demographic groups or general/multi-suburb geographic location utilising the City's subscription to Profile id.

In addition to population level data, the City has undertaken a municipality specific survey of our population on two occasions in 2014 and 2019. This survey provides data on physical activity habits, mental wellbeing and risky health behaviours (for example: smoking) by suburb. These two data sets also allow the City to consider 2014 data compared to 2019 data and reflect upon the impact of resource allocations and changes over that period.

Demographic Data

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 Census data found Greater Bendigo to have a population of 110,477. In 2020 the population was estimated at 119,980 (Estimated Resident Population, ABS 2020) and by 2036 Greater Bendigo's population is expected to reach 155,596 (Forecast ID, 2019).

Table - Greater Bendigo Population Estimates (ABS, 2020)

Description	2020
Estimated resident population (no.)	119 980
Population density (persons/km2)	40
Estimated resident population - males (no.)	58 544
Estimated resident population - females (no.)	61 436
Median age - males (years)	37.3
Median age - females (years)	39.6
Median age - persons (years)	38.5

Table – 2016 Census Data (ABS, 2016)

Description	2016
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (%)	1.7
Total born overseas (%)	8
Speaks a language other than English at home (%)	4.6
Persons who have need for assistance with core activities (%)	5.9
Average household size (no. of persons)	2.4

Understand the local community and participation

The health benefits of regular physical activity include improved physical health, reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases, managing body weight, and helping prevent and manage mental health problems.

Local Community Participation

Overall 57.3% of Greater Bendigo residents meet physical activity guidelines in 2019, which is higher than the Victorian average (51.1%). For both men and women, rates of physical activity drop as people age and a lower proportion of people aged 70 years and over meet the guidelines.

Table – Reasons for using public facilities and open spaces (Active Living Census, 2019)

Exercise / health and fitness	67.5%
Socialising with family / friends	66.1%
For fun / enjoyment	63.9%
Unstructured physical recreation activities (e.g. going for a walk, playing ball games with friends)	55.0%
Exercising the dog	36.7%
For time to myself	33.3%
Organised sport (e.g. cricket or netball for a club)	33.3%
Getting back to nature	28.2%
Commuting (i.e. to get from a to b)	25.2%

Table – Activities with highest rates of participation for all Greater Bendigo residents including children - at least once per year and at least once per week during the previous 12 months (Active Living Census, 2019)

Activity	Total	Weekly
 Walking	21.4%	78.0%
 Swimming	8.5%	44.1%
 Fitness: Gym	6.8%	81.0%
 Active play (at playgrounds / play centre)	6.6%	56.5%
 Cycling: General cycling for recreation or transport	5.8%	48.1%
 Bush walking / Hiking	4.7%	35.3%
 Jogging / Running	4.1%	67.4%
 Australian rules football	3.1%	85.7%
 Fitness: Indoor group activities / Aerobics / Zumba / Yoga / Pilates	2.9%	74.5%
 Netball (indoor/ outdoor)	2.6%	81.7%
 Cycling: Mountain bike riding	2.5%	49.1%
 Fishing	2.3%	5.0%
 Basketball (Indoor/Outdoor)	2.0%	79.7%
 Golf	1.9%	44.3%
 Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	1.5%	60.8%
 Dancing / Ballet / Calisthenics	1.4%	81.5%
 Cycling: Road and sport cycling	1.4%	75.4%
 Soccer (indoor/outdoor)	1.4%	82.6%
 Fitness: Outdoor fitness / Personal training / Group activities	1.4%	80.8%
 Cricket	1.3%	73.4%

Health and Wellbeing Factors Influenced by an Active and Healthy Lifestyle

There is a well-established connection between health risk behaviours and diagnosed chronic diseases. The challenge for local government is how best to support the community in meeting health guidelines and finding ways to reduce the influence of environmental, socio-economic and cultural factors on health risk behaviours.

Improving the settings and spaces that people live and recreate in can influence a range of health factors including:

- Life expectancy
- Avoidable deaths from:
 - Respiratory diseases
 - Cancer
 - Cardiovascular diseases
- Self-reported health:
 - Health status
 - Satisfaction with life
- Obesity rate
- Food insecurity
- Depression and anxiety
- Social isolation
- Family Violence
- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Unintentional injuries treated in hospital
- Babies with low birth weight
- Feeling valued by society
- Believe others can be trusted

The way in which these health factors can be addressed within the Sport and Active Recreation setting include:

- Physical activity and stress reduction/ mental health improvement
- Non-organised active recreation
- Gender equity / female participation
- Social connection for isolated residents
- Physical activity for seniors
- Sports gambling
- Food in facilities / clubs
- Opportunities for physical activity for currently inactive
- Kids physical activity: Establishing healthy habits for life
- Active Travel
- Links between diet and lifestyle related diseases
- Smoking and alcohol
- Food hub with multiple approaches to food security.

Proportion (%) of adults (18+ years) with selected health factors (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017)		
Health Factor	Greater Bendigo	Victoria
Overweight	60	51
Anxiety or depression	36	27
Arthritis	29	21
Asthma	28	20
Cancer	12	8
People reporting type 2 diabetes	5	5
Heart disease	8	7
Two, or more, chronic diseases	33	25

Changing Trends 2014-2019

EXERCISE ... % adults doing enough exercise <i>Definition of 'enough exercise' has changed</i> 2014 – 40.4% 2019 – 57.3%	EXERCISE ... % sedentary adults 2014 – 2.6% *(low confidence in number) 2019 – 4.4%	DIET ... % of adults that eat enough fruit 2014 – 46.8% 2019 – 48%
DIET ... % of adults that eat enough vegetables 2014 – 9.5% 2019 – 12.9%	DIET ... % adults that consume sugary drinks daily <i>Definition of 'sugary drinks' has changed</i> 2014 – 10.4% 2019 – 15.3%	SMOKING ... % current smoking adults 2014 – 12.8% 2019 – 10.7%
ALCOHOL ... % of adults with lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm 2014 – 56.6% 2019 – not available	ALCOHOL ... % of adults at an increased risk of alcohol-related injury (binge drinking) 2014 – 44.1% 2019 – 58.8%	GENDER ... % of participants and board members that are female <i>Data not available for Greater Bendigo²</i>

² Ausplay 2019 Victoria data for persons aged 15 and over www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au – 42% in non-playing roles (such as an official, coach, referee or administrator) were female. 51% of participants in sport or non-sport related activities were female; with 25% of participants in sport-related activities only being female, 66% of participants in non-sport related activities only being female and 50% of participants in both sport and non-sport related activities being female.

Targets for key areas of health and physical activity

Health based targets were chosen to align with data collected in the Victorian Population Health Survey, a survey about the health, lifestyle and wellbeing of Victorian adults (defined as 18 years of age or older). The City's investment in projects, programs and activities will continue to include children, however these targets are based on adults due to data availability to measure our progress and will be used as an indicator for the change that we're looking to achieve across the whole community.

Basis of Target	2026 Targets ³	2032 Targets ³
EXERCISE ... more adults doing enough time & sessions Continue positive trend	3,500 more adults or 5% increase 57.3% - 60.2%	10,000 more adults or 15% increase 57.3% - 65.9%
EXERCISE ... fewer sedentary adults Exceed state average	3,500 fewer adults or 66% decrease 4.4% - 1.5%	4,000 fewer adults or 77% decrease 4.4% - 1%
DIET ... more adults eating enough fruit Continue positive trend	3,000 more adults or 5% increase 48% - 50.4%	9,000 more adults or 15% increase 48% - 55.2%
DIET ... more adults eating enough vegetables Continue positive trend	700 more adults or 5% increase 12.9% - 13.5%	2,300 more adults or 15% increase 12.9% - 14.8%
DIET ... fewer adults drink Sugar Sweetened Beverages daily Establish a positive trend	8,300 fewer adults or 45% decrease 15.3% - 8.4%	11,000 fewer adults or 60% decrease 15.3% - 6.1%
SMOKING ... fewer adults smoke Reach QUIT Victoria's 5% target by 2025	6,800 fewer adults or 53% decrease 10.7% - 5%	8,000 fewer adults or 62% decrease 10.7% - 4%
ALCOHOL ... fewer adults with lifetime risk of harm 10% decrease from 2014 by 2025 in line with World Health Organization 2013 target	6,800 fewer adults or 10% decrease (2014 baseline) 56.6% - 50.9%	13,600 fewer adults or 20% decrease (2014 baseline) 56.6% - 45.3%
ALCOHOL ... fewer adults at risk of injury (binge drinking) 10% decrease from 2014 by 2025 in line with World Health Organization 2013 target	23,000 fewer adults or 32.6% decrease 58.8% - 39.6%	35,000 fewer adults or 50% decrease 58.8% - 29.4%
GENDER ... more participants and board members of sport and active recreation organisations are female.	50% participants and board members	50% participants and board members

³ Unless otherwise stated, targets use the 2019 population statistic as a baseline, and the increase or decrease in number of adults is based on the 2020 estimated residential population (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

4 Year Strategic Resource Plan

In order to invest resources to impact on these key focus and target areas, a 4 year strategic resource plan (plan) is proposed.

The plan will be informed by the demographic profile of residents, strategic drivers, service levels, principles of service provision, Council's Financial Plan (10 years), relevant Asset Plans (10+ years) and the principles of Council's budget (4 years). The plan will apply the guiding pillars and priorities of this document to identify and rank actions to achieve the physical activity targets.

Although the City owns and/or manages most of the land that the City will improve, the City will only be able to achieve many of the necessary and desired improvements by working in partnership with others and this plan is intended to support the identification of partners and seek resource contributions from those directly benefiting and other levels of government.

- State Sporting Association Facility Guidelines
- Strategic documentation and drivers
- Service Levels
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Asset Management Plans / Asset Audits
- Council's budget

- Guiding Pillars & Priorities
- Demographic Profile & Trends
- Physical Activity Targets

- 4 Year Strategic Resource Plan



Supportive Policy Statements

This framework does not reflect detailed policy, but rather outlines the policies required for fair and transparent allocation of resources. The need for these policies has been identified through consultation with clubs/associations, in consultation with City departments and considering feedback by Councillors in 2019.

12 policies were identified for development. Of these policies 6 were identified as priorities for development and the City received funding to support development of a Healthy Facilities Policy.

Priority Policies

1. Shared use of education facilities;
2. Support for rural communities;
3. Hierarchy of facilities;
4. Capital contributions;
5. In-kind contributions;
6. User fees & charges; and
7. Healthy Facilities;

Other Policies

8. Commercial Signage;
9. Female Friendly Sport;
10. Facility hire & allocations;
11. Smoke Free Recreation Reserves; and
12. Loan guarantee and joint funding arrangements policy (complete).

1. Shared use of education facilities

To provide an authorising environment for the City to investigate Joint Development and shared use of facilities between the City and the education providers.

2. Support for rural communities

To demonstrate Council's recognition of the importance sport & active recreation facilities play within small rural communities and formalise a place based planning process to understand and provide core levels of service.

3. Hierarchy of facilities

To complement the City's Lease and Licence Policy and Community Buildings Policy (draft). The purpose of this policy is to articulate facility development and management levels according to the catchment area, types of use and community needs being addressed.

4. Capital contributions

The Capital Contributions Policy has been developed to provide the City with a transparent, consistent and equitable framework to provide clear expectations around community and the City's investment in the development of sport and active recreation facilities to champion social justice, advance equity and support access and inclusion.

5. In-kind contributions

To provide the City and sports clubs with a consistent framework and policy nominating in-kind contributions to fund facility maintenance or renewal at the City's recreation reserves and facilities.

6. User fees & charges

To complement the City's Pricing Policy by providing a fair, transparent and equitable structure to allocate user fees, discounts and waivers at sport and active recreation reserves, including utilities.

7. Healthy Facilities

To provide healthy, safe and sustainable food and drink options in all the City's owned, managed or funded facilities and venues as part of the City's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing for all Greater Bendigo residents. It will apply to the following areas and situations:

- Cafeterias, cafés, canteens, coffee shops and kiosks
- Catering
- Vending machines
- Prizes, gifts and give-aways
- Fundraising
- Sponsorship

- Marketing, advertising and promotion

This policy also aims to ensure waste minimisation and other sustainable practices are fostered when promoting or selling food and drink options within the City's owned or managed facilities and venues.

8. Commercial Signage

To establish guidelines for advertising and sponsorship signage at City owned or managed recreation facilities that ensure:

- Signage installation is of an acceptable and safe standard.
- Ensure a consistent decision/approval making approach to requests for sponsorship signage from sporting clubs/community groups.
- Clubs are not denied the opportunity to derive a reasonable income from signage.
- Facilities continue to be accessible and safe for use by all sectors of the community.
- The visual amenity of sporting reserves and open space is maintained.
- Signage is appropriate for a public reserve and complies with relevant City requirements including the Planning Schemes and Healthy Facilities Policy

9. Female Friendly Sport

The Female Friendly Sport Policy articulates the City's position in relation to advancing gender equity in sport and recreation and to undertake initiatives to change the physical and social environments that support women and girls to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

10. Facility hire and allocations

This policy has been developed to provide a clear position in the way in which the City of Greater Bendigo allocates recreation reserves, sporting fields and associated facilities for hire. The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a responsible, consistent, transparent and equitable process for the use of City recreation reserves and associated facilities.

- Provide agreed principles to prioritise use and management of recreation reserves and associated facilities owned and/or managed by the City.
- To assist the City in the allocation of recreation reserves and facilities when competing requests are received.
- To provide clear direction which is consistent with other City policies, local laws and relevant legislation affecting the use of recreation reserves and facilities.
- To ensure the City is provided with adequate time for maintenance activities to sustain quality sporting facilities for community use.
- To allow the opportunity for the City to host elite sporting events e.g. Big Bash, AFL, AFLW etc.

11. Smoke Free Recreation Reserves

The purpose of this policy is to create smoke free conditions for sporting clubs that have a tenancy agreement at recreation reserves owned or managed by the City, with the aim of:

- Provide community leadership to protect the health and wellbeing of the community
- Reducing harm caused by exposure to tobacco smoke
- Raise community awareness of the issues associated with smoking
- Improve public amenity and maintenance of City property
- Minimising cigarette butt pollution on City recreation reserves and facilities

12. Loan guarantee and joint funding arrangements policy

Approved in 2022, the purpose of this policy is to clarify the rules and methodology which the City will apply when considering:

- whether it should act as bank guarantor for loans taken out by community Organisations;
- whether it should provide Significant support to a community Organisation by way of funding, supply of goods, services, labour and expertise.

Evaluation Plan

This framework has been developed to ensure that the City is fulfilling its role, is accountable and transparent in the use of public funds, is maximising return on investment to the community and is making a positive difference to community life. To ensure that these goals have been fulfilled an evaluation plan has been developed.

Given change to health outcomes can require decades or even generations, monitoring and evaluation should only be considered an indication of progress. To monitor this progress the City will utilise methods that are feasible to support the City's work rather than becoming a substantive and onerous part of the work.

Monitoring and evaluation will be measured utilising data from the Active Living Census 2014 & 2019, Victorian Population Health Survey and other data sets available. Both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive) data will be utilised to provide measures and indicators of progress toward these goals and where possible this will align with the Victorian Health & Wellbeing Outcomes Framework to provide direct comparisons to state wide statistics.

Appendix A – Role of Local Government and Partners

The City of Greater Bendigo is one of the providers of sport and active recreation within the community. It is important to recognise the host of individuals and organisations involved. It is also important to position and recognise the most appropriate role and use of local government resources in order to not duplicate nor extend beyond capacity.

Key Partners and providers

The following providers all contribute to the mix of sport and active recreation community options available:

- Family as provider. More and more of today's community are relying on "household recreation" as the major provider of its core recreation activity. The change in house space, disposable income, time availability, and increase in home-based electronic products for personal recreation activity have seen a huge change in behaviour patterns. The computer; internet; social networks; television / home theatres; web based activities – including virtual sports, games and fitness activity; on site facilities - backyard pools; and other home based leisure functions
- Church as provider. Traditionally, community support networks by church based groups were major providers of recreation opportunity. This included: youth clubs, dance functions; social groups; group/seniors outings; sport groups; social service networks. Recent years has seen some decline in such participation.
- Government as provider. Government instrumentalities are funding and facility providers of community recreation opportunities. However, there are different levels of support provided through Federal; State and Local government authorities. These include funding contribution toward community facilities – parks / waterways / local sport and recreation facilities etc. While the Federal

Government has traditionally restricted itself to national / international elite focussed activity it has in recent times invested in local community facilities; State Government has become a support funder of specific projects and Local Government has been increasingly the provider of community public opportunity. The State Government is a source of funding and industry knowledge (Department of Sport & Recreation), provides land upon which communities develop/provide sport and active recreation facilities (Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning), provide direction and policy advice for health promotion activities (Department of Health & Human Services) and provide physical education for young people (Department of Education).

- Private Sector as provider. The private provision is generally through commercially viable opportunities from: Group Fitness; Gymnasias; Fitness centres; Bowling alleys; Cinema; Skating rinks; Swimming pools; Equestrian and other opportunities which private sector organisations invest in for a commercial return on investment.
- Peak Sporting Association as a provider. State Sporting Associations (SSAs) provide support and coordination for peak/elite athlete development pathways and supported community sport by providing governance assistance, access to affordable and appropriate insurances, etc.
- Not for profit organisations (NFP) as provider. A number of key NFP organisations remain strong within the range of sport and recreation providers. These include: YMCA / YWCA; Life Saving clubs; Scouts/Guides; Service Clubs – Lions / Rotary, Bicycle User Groups, etc., and the significant contribution provided in this area of community sporting clubs – supported by individual volunteer input. Community sport has long recognised the glue which is its strength is the interested volunteer.

The Role of Local Government

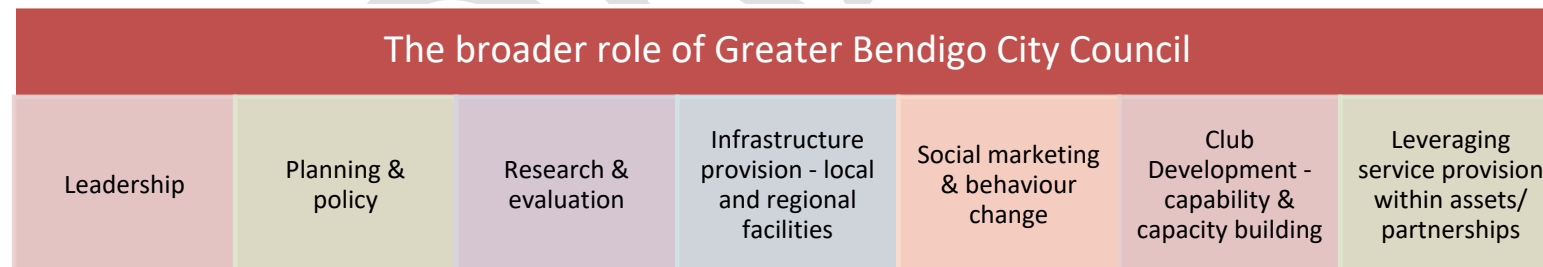
Greater Bendigo is the third largest city in Victoria and critically important to the social and economic health of the region. As a large population base the City has an informal responsibility to provide facilities and services which support the broader region and to advocate on behalf of neighbouring municipalities on key issues concerning the sector. In the sport and active recreation setting Greater Bendigo as a regional City provides regional scale facilities for major events and elite athlete pathways, regional SSA development staff, leadership of regional planning, advocacy for the need to consider rural context where funding programs, services and activities are proposed by other levels of government.

Greater Bendigo City Council has significant reach into the community though a range of settings where attitudes and behaviours can be influenced. This includes accessing services of Council at different ages and stages of life. For example, maternal and child health services, child care facilities, community sport and active recreation, planning/building/environmental health, business/economic

development, community halls, positive aging and home care services. Through these settings the City can address priority health and wellbeing issues. This has already commenced in facilities such as Early Learning Centres and Aquatic Facilities where healthy choices have been introduced as part of the business as usual service.

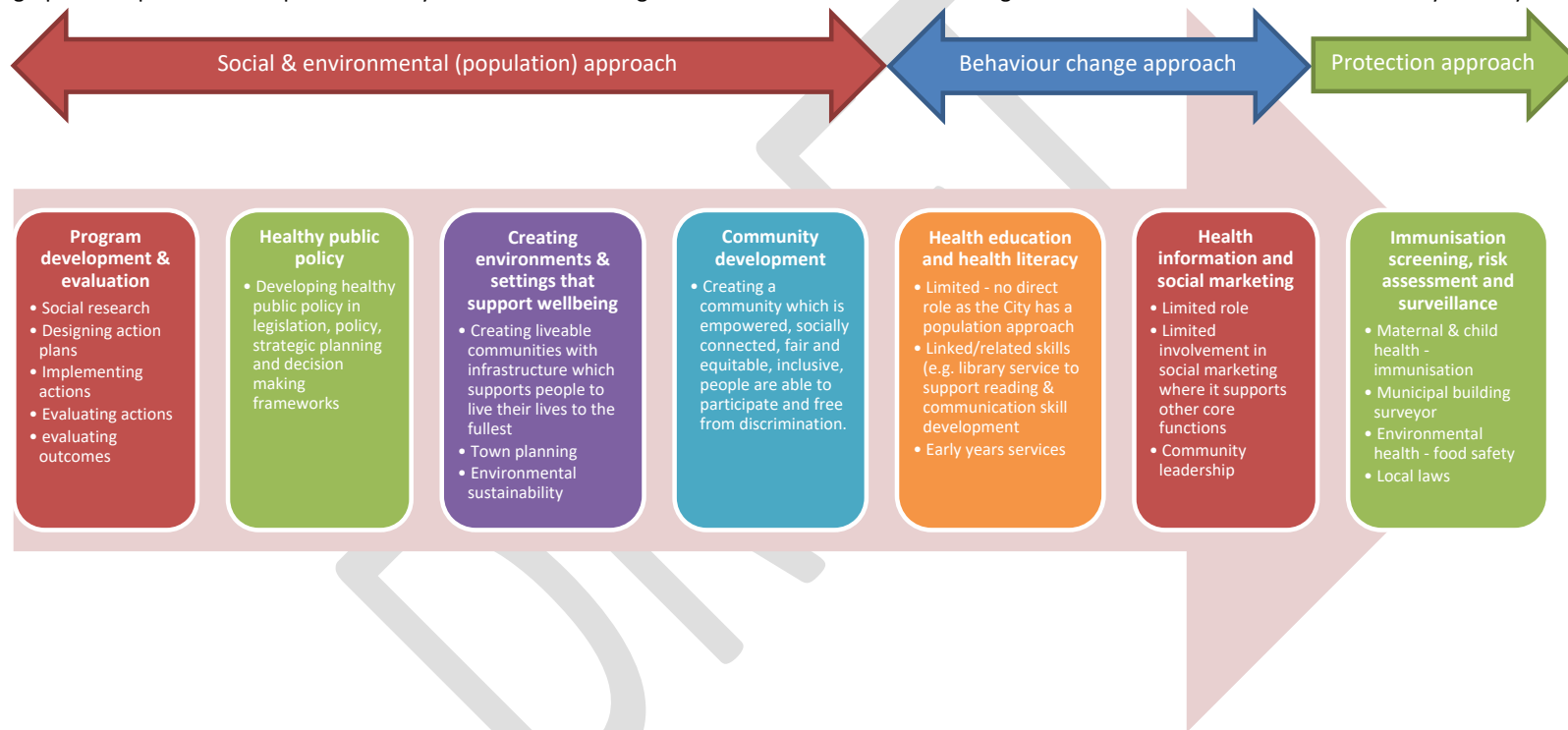
In a revenue constrained environment, with a significant (aging) asset base, increasing expectations, cost shifting and changing trends in participation, it is timely to consider local government's role in providing for sport and active recreation and how resources are best allocated to provide maximum return on investment for the community.

The approach of local government is typically aimed at whole of population change by influencing the social and environmental factors rather than individual behaviour change or medical and health protection influences. This is detailed in the continuum of health promotion outlined on the following page.



Continuum of health promotion practice adapted for the City of Greater Bendigo⁴

The graphic below translates the theory of primary health approaches into examples of the City's work. It demonstrates that local government's greatest role/impact is within the social & environmental (population) approach rather than the behaviour change or medical / health protection approaches. The graphic also provides examples of the City's work in those categories to demonstrate the broad range of health-related activities undertaken by the City.



⁴ Adapted from: Talbot & Verrinder, (2018), Promoting Health, The Primary Health Care Approach

Originally adapted from Labonte, (1992), Heart health inequities in Canada: Models, theory and planning. Healthy Promotion International, 7(2), 119-121).

Appendix B – The Sport and Active Recreation Setting

1. Planning, developing and managing place of participation

This framework recognises the contributions of each provider and positions the City of Greater Bendigo's most appropriate/significant contribution to active and healthy lifestyles.

Planning

- Planning will consider population growth impacts upon infill development areas and new growth corridors;
- Levels of services and facility provision standards will be determined taking into account State Sporting Association guidelines and the City's resource capacity, where State Sporting Association guidelines outline preferred requirements for different levels of facilities and guidance for facility development;
- Demographic make-up and trends of local areas and likely needs;
- Localised participation trends;
- Equitable access and quality;
- Maximise use (e.g. multi-use);
- Desired local health & wellbeing outcomes (including but not limited to physical activity);
- Sustainability and governance;
- Consideration of prior asset management performance.

Developing

- Design will encourage use by all people;
- Environmentally sustainable and operationally efficient design will be implemented;
- Facilities will be designed to support multiple uses;
- Design will enable future expansion and technologies where possible;
- Facilities will be designed to the standard which coincides with the level of use;
- Community will be encouraged to participate in the design and development of facilities.

Managing

- Fair and equitable access will be facilitated;
- History and traditional uses will be recognised in decision making;
- User costs will be consistently and fairly managed /distributed;
- Users will be encouraged to actively contribute to management;
- Tenancy agreements and fees will reflect the level of service returned to the community on behalf of the City.

2. Encouraging and promoting opportunities

Data from the 2014 & 2019 Active Living Census outlined that one of the key barriers to participation identified by residents was their knowledge of opportunities that exist. Given local government is the major provider of community facilities and has linkages with many groups, there is a support role for CoGB to promote and in some cases provide opportunities for residents to access, services, events, programs and activities within their community. This can be achieved by the delivery of grant funded programs, promotion via social media, marketing opportunities, event support, and other health promotion tools.

3. Influencing development, operations and range of activities/facilities

There is a major opportunity for the City to influence the establishment of equitable and sustainable development, supported by realistic operational guidelines, which create a range, a quality of provision and an ease of access to built and natural facilities.

By applying an evidence based approach the City can construct facilities which address the health and equity needs of our community. We can also implement service/tenancy agreements which require those benefiting from reduced cost access to public facilities to provide services to the community which enhance health and wellbeing.

4. Developing supportive policy

Sport and active recreation policy and procedures are integral within this planning process. They ensure:

- compatibility with Council goals and directions;
- fairness in approach to 'like situations';
- equity for individuals, groups and organisations in the access and provision of CoGB services; and
- responsiveness and transparency in liaising with the community

Policy provides the City's position on a range of matters to do with the provision of sports and active recreation opportunities across the municipality. To ensure fairness, equity, and responsiveness in policy development, the following "protocols" have been used to direct policy

1. Identification of policy gaps in recognition of inconsistent community practice
2. Review of the City's existing policy documentation

3. Identification, examination and reflection of 'like policy' within other Local Government Authorities in Victoria
4. Draft development of City of Greater Bendigo specific policy
5. Key stakeholder consultation on proposed policy framework
6. Develop draft policy for Council endorsement

Policy Framework

The City has commenced scoping and developing immediate policy components required. The following areas have been identified as requiring immediate policy framework.

Priority Policies

1. Shared use of education facilities;
2. Support for rural communities;
3. Hierarchy of facilities;
4. Capital contributions;
5. In-kind contributions;
6. User fees & charges; and
7. Healthy Facilities;

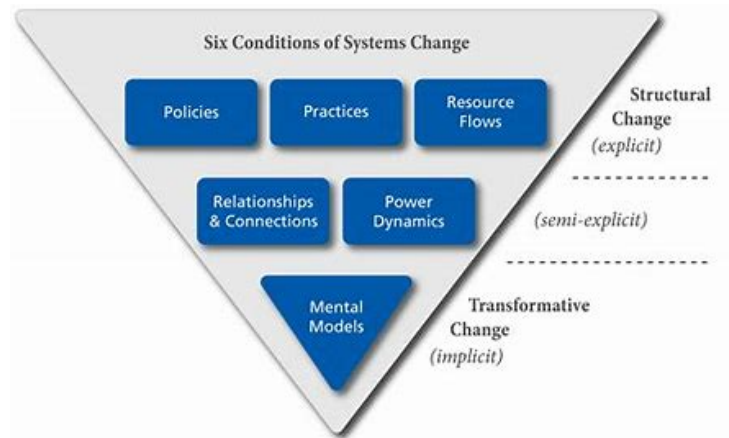
Other Policies

8. Commercial Signage;
9. Female Friendly Sport;
10. Facility hire & allocations;
11. Smoke Free Recreation Reserves; and
12. Loan guarantee and joint funding arrangements policy (complete).

5. Providing Leadership

Greater Bendigo has experienced an accelerating rate of change to living standards, cultural diversity, recreation trends and expectations. Strong leadership from clubs and organisations is necessary to respond to the emerging needs and challenge traditional norms to create an equitable community where people feel safe, valued and connected.

Local government has a role to support this leadership by creating system change.



Policies: Government, institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity's own and others' actions.

Practices: Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise their work.

Resource Flows: How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

Relationships & Connections: Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.

Power Dynamics: The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations.

Mental Models: Habits of thought—deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

(Kania, J., Kramer, M., Senge, P., [The Water of Systems Change. FSG](#))

16. HEALTHY, LIVEABLE SPACES AND PLACES

16.1. Lot 1 Dalys Road, WOODVALE 3556 - Use and Development of the Land for a Dwelling and Outbuilding (In Association with a Pet Therapy Breeding Enterprise)

Author:	Rhiannon Biezen, Statutory Planner
Responsible Director:	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Summary/Purpose

Application No:	DR/905/2021
Application Documents:	https://epathway.bendigo.vic.gov.au/ePathway/Production/Web/GeneralEnquiry/ExternalRequestBroker.aspx?Module=EGELAP&Class=P&Type=PLNADV&Applicationid=1040324
Applicant:	L P Coates and V H Moore
Land:	Lot 1 Dalys Road, WOODVALE 3556
Zoning:	Farming Zone
Overlays:	Bushfire Management Overlay Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1
No. of objections:	0
Consultation meeting:	N/A
Key considerations:	- Rural dwellings and whether proposed use of agricultural land is sufficient. - Environmental impacts – proximity of the land to a contaminated site.
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 policies for rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land.

Recommended Motion

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuilding at Lot 1 Dalys Road, WOODVALE 3556 on the following grounds:

- The proposal is inconsistent with policy for agriculture and rural dwellings at Clause 14.01-1S and the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone, in the following manner:
 - The proposal is not viable or enduring to the extent that a dwelling can be supported by the Planning Scheme.
 - The dwelling would cause the fragmentation of agricultural land by restraining the ability of the parcel to consolidate with adjoining or nearby land.

- (c) The outcome for the land would be rural-residential in nature and potentially stymie genuine agricultural activities on surrounding land.
- (d) The site is proximate to evaporation ponds which pose potential health risks.

Background Information

Preliminary concerns were raised with the applicant with regards to the proposal not being in accordance with planning policy relating to rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land. It was clear from the information provided that a viable and enduring agricultural land use was not proposed.

It was requested that the applicant provide additional details to support the proposal, noting that the application presents as a rural residential living opportunity with limited agricultural productivity proposed and a decrease in its current agricultural capacity.

The applicant did not provide any further substantial planning justification in support of the proposal. The applicant did provide letters of support from local health providers indicating the health benefits of pet therapy, however the health benefits of pet therapy are not in dispute. The question is whether the proposed agricultural use of the land is viable such that a dwelling can be justified. Further particulars on income/costs were also requested, however the information provided was unsubstantiated and at odds with previous information provided with the application.

Report

Subject Site and Surrounds

The subject site is formally referred to as Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 123288 and has a total area of 16.65 hectares. The site is located on the western side of Dalys Road and on the northern side of an unmade government road.

The site is currently vacant, with vegetation scattered throughout the north-eastern corner of the site and the southern and western boundaries. No easements affect the subject site. The site also contains a small dam within the south-western corner of the site. The site is currently and has historically been used for agricultural activities (understood to be grazing, potentially some cropping).

The site is located within the Farming Zone and Bushfire Management Overlay along the eastern boundary and Environmental Significance Overlay along the southern boundary. A map showing the extent of the Overlays is provided at Figure 1.



Figure 1: Map showing the extent of overlays.

Surrounding land is also zoned Farming, although located directly to the south of the site is a series of evaporation ponds which have been historically linked to mining activities within the area.

Surrounding lots are used for various forms of agriculture, primarily cropping and grazing and stock keeping. Whilst there are some dwellings present within the surrounding area, the majority of lots remain free of dwellings. The locality presents as open farming land.

Within the broader surrounding area are similar agricultural activities including stock grazing, stock feed production, cropping and the like.



Figure 2: Location map showing subject site.

Proposal

The application proposes the use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuilding in association with a pet therapy breeding enterprise.

The dwelling is proposed to be located within the northern portion of the site and would be set back a minimum of 25 meters from the northern boundary and a minimum of 188 metres from the eastern (Dalys Road) boundary.

The dwelling is proposed to have a total floor area of 289.01 sqm and would be of single storey design. The dwelling would comprise of three (3) bedrooms – bedroom 1 with en-suite and WIR, theatre, an open plan kitchen/dining/living area, bathroom, toilet, laundry, alfresco and double garage. The dwelling would be constructed of a mix of brick veneer and render with a Colorbond roof.

The applicant has advised that no native vegetation removal would be required in order to facilitate the development.

The outbuilding would be located to the east of the dwelling and would have a total floor area of 144 sqm (9m x 16m). It would be constructed of Colorbond.

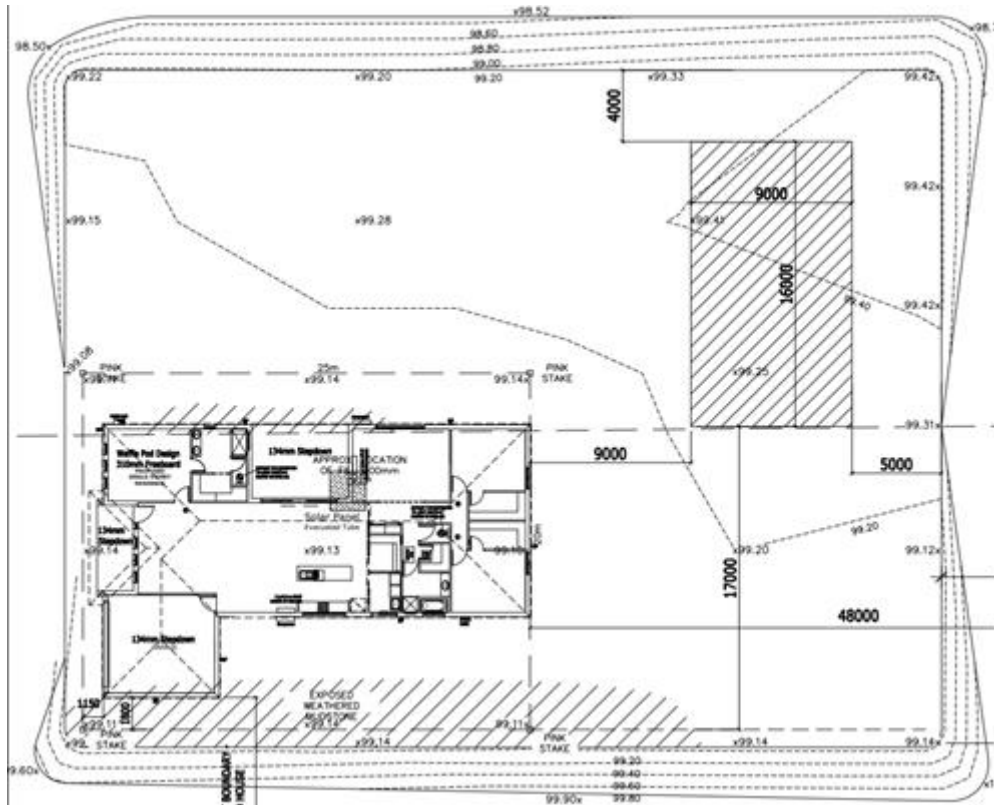


Figure 3: Site layout plan

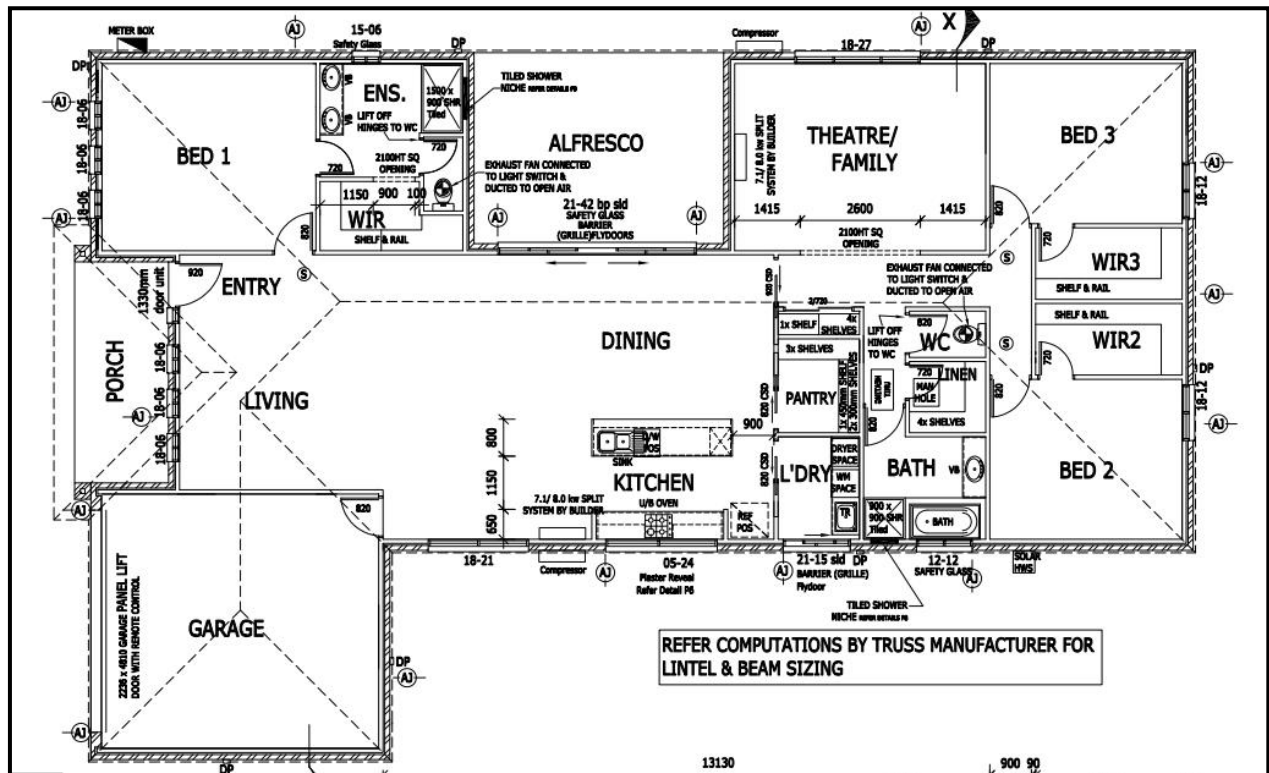


Figure 4: Dwelling floor plan

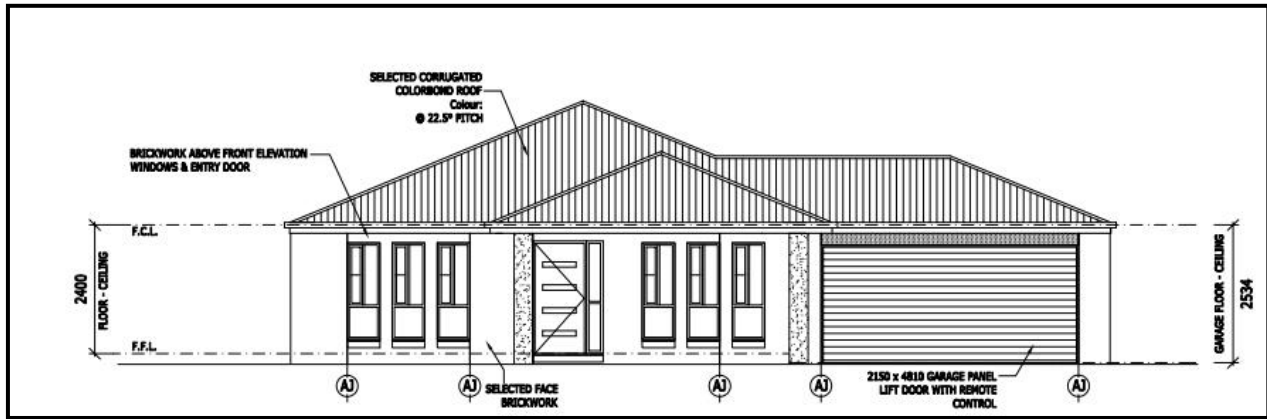


Figure 5: Western (front) elevation of dwelling

The applicant has submitted an Environment and Agricultural Management Plan which outlines the following:

The site will be used for a pet therapy breeding enterprise which will comprise of

- Six (6) breeding chickens.
- Four (4) breeding ducks including a drake.
- Two (2) miniature goats (breeding pair).
- Two (2) baby doll sheep (breeding pair)
- Six (6) poddy calves or small breed cattle.

A total of twenty (20) animals are proposed on the 16.65 hectare site.

A site layout plan has been submitted (see Figure 5.) and will comprise of:

- A poddy calf paddock located in the south-eastern portion of the site which will hold the six (6) poddy calves with a total area of 2.28 hectares. It will also contain a shelter/feeding area but no additional details have been provided.
- A baby doll sheep paddock located along the southern boundary of the site which will hold the two (2) baby doll sheep with a total area of 2.86 hectares. It will also contain a shelter/feeding area but no additional details have been provided.
- A miniature goat paddock in the north-western portion of the site which will hold the two (2) miniature goats with a total area of 1.2 hectares. It will also contain a shelter/feeding area but no additional details have been provided.
- A duck and chicken paddock adjoining the dwelling to the west which will hold the six (6) chickens and four (4) ducks with a total area of 1.2 hectares. It will also contain a shelter/feeding area but no additional details have been provided. The area will also contain the proposed effluent area for the dwelling.
- A holding paddock will adjoin the duck/chicken paddock to the east and have a total area of 2,400 sqm. It will also contain a shearing/shelter area but no additional details have been provided.
- A revegetation area is proposed along the western portion of the site but no additional details such as management objectives, timelines and the like have been provided within the submitted report.

- The applicant has submitted a basic monthly budget (see Figure 6.) which proposes an income of \$20,000 per month from the pet therapy enterprise and \$1,250.00 from the selling of stock. This conflicts with the initial report submitted, which states that “*once established, the animal therapy enterprise will provide revenue [sic] of up to \$15 000 - \$24 000 per year*” [emphasis added]. The assumptions behind the revised estimate of \$20,000 per month have not been provided.

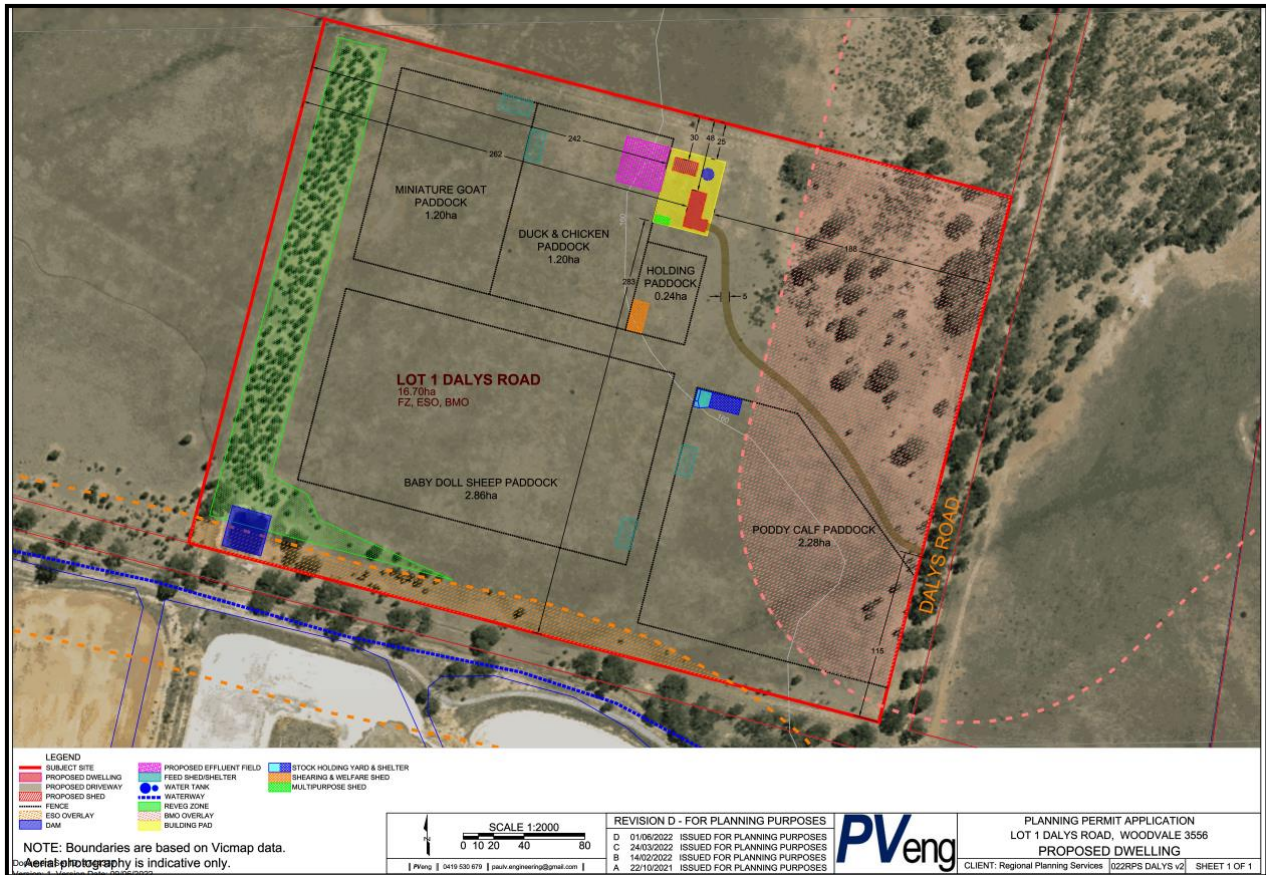


Figure 6: Site layout plan

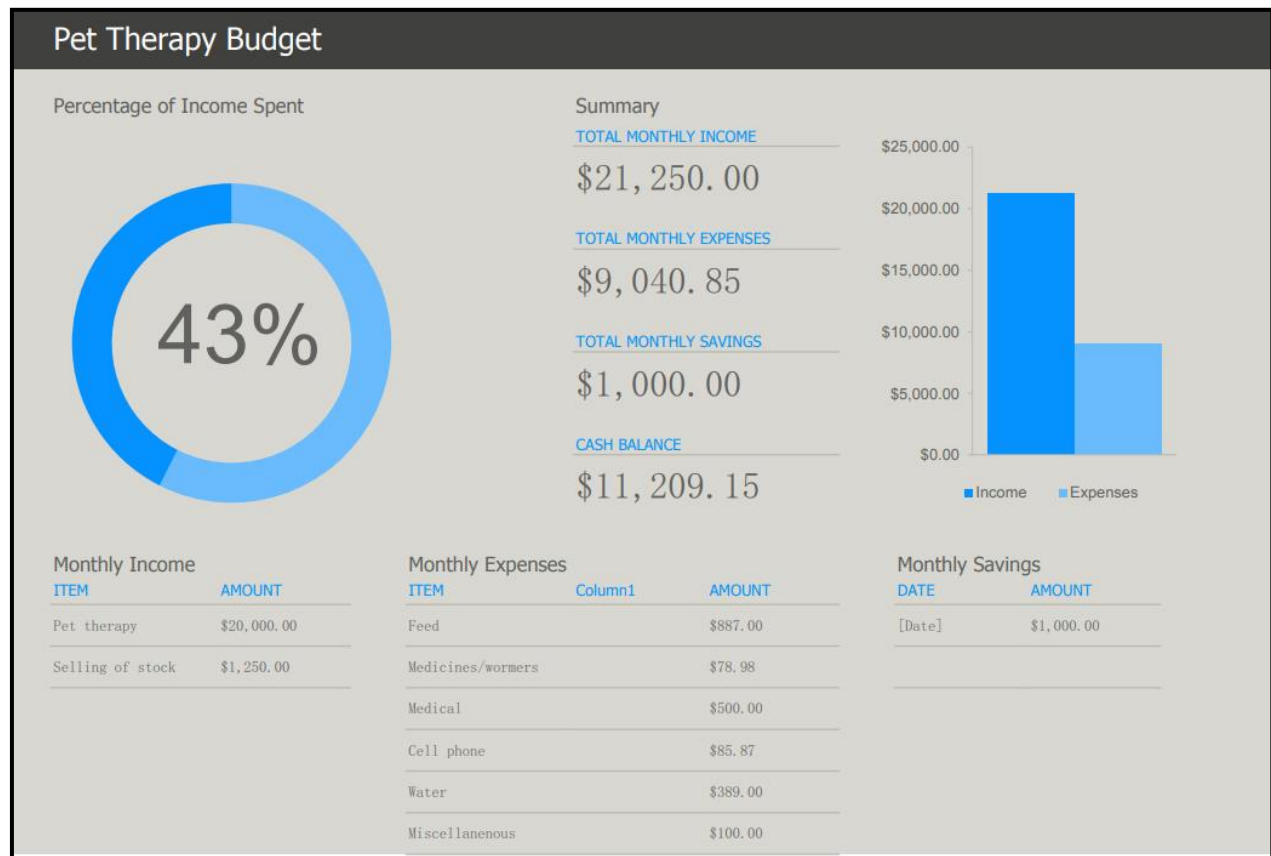


Figure 7: Proposed monthly budget

Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

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

State Planning Policy Framework

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

Municipal Planning Strategy

- Clause 02.03-1 Settlement
- Clause 02.03-4 Natural Resource Management
- Clause 02.03-6 Housing
- Clause 02.03-7 Economic Development

State Planning Policy Framework

- Clause 11 Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee South

- Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility
- Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land
- Clause 14.1-1L Protection of agricultural land – Greater Bendigo
- Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable agricultural land use
- Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas
- Clause 16.01-3S Rural residential development
- Clause 16.01-3L Rural residential development – Greater Bendigo
- Clause 17.01-1S Diversified economy

Other Provisions

- Clause 35.07 Farming Zone
- Clause 52.06 Car parking

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 2 – Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 7 – Sustainable population growth is planned for

Consultation/Communication

Referrals

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

Referral	Comment
EPA	No objection but raised the following concerns: <i>The proposal to develop the site for a single dwelling and animal therapy enterprise does not concern EPA. However, the proximity of the evaporation ponds adjacent to the site may affect human health and amenity of the dwelling use.</i> <i>EPA has received numerous community complaints since 2016 about a strong sulphur odour being released from the evaporation ponds. A majority of the complaints has occurred during summer when evaporation is greatest. The evaporation ponds have been used to evaporate tailings water from local mining activity. The source of odour appears to be the drying residual material in the ponds. EPA is concerned that developing a dwelling on an adjacent parcel of land may increase complaints about the existing evaporation pond facility.</i>
Agribusiness Officer	Does not believe that the proposed enterprise adds value to the area as a farming enterprise. However, if a planning permit is approved, a house and sheds would need to be built as described to support the proposed breeding enterprise. Further information was also requested to clarify how the projected income within the 3 to 5 years was to be made and how the enterprise would be financially viable in the long term. (NB: <i>The further information provided was inadequate and did not lend further clarity.</i>)
Traffic	No objection subject to conditions requiring sight distances; an all-weather driveway; access to be constructed in accordance with the IDM; and the need to obtain a Works Within Road Reserve Permit. It was advised that the accessway location was satisfactory.
Environmental Health	No objection subject to standard notes being included on the permit requiring a permit to install an on-site wastewater management system, prior to a building permit being issued; and restricting earthworks, landscape works and the use of vehicles and machinery to outside the Land Application Area.

Public Notification

The application was advertised by way of notice on the site and letters to adjoining and nearby owners and occupiers and two signs displayed on the site. As a result of advertising, no objections were received.

Planning Assessment

Introduction

Rural lifestyle development poses an ongoing risk to agricultural land. Planning Schemes in rural municipalities will usually seek to address these challenges through directing 'rural lifestyle' development to appropriately zoned land (Rural Living Zone), and through the use of local planning policies to manage the development of dwellings in other rural zones, so as to protect the primacy of agriculture. The Rural Residential Development Policy at Clause 16.01-3S and 16.01-3L of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme has been developed for this purpose of managing the large number of vacant rural parcels that exist across this municipality. This Policy will be further discussed in the sections below alongside the Statewide Farming Zone provisions.

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 oversupply of zoned Rural Living land (estimated to be an 80 year supply) 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. It should also be noted that the Farming Zone has been facing increasing pressures in more recent years for subdivision and residential development, primarily for rural lifestyle opportunities rather than for farming purposes. Rural residential development should be directed to existing planned areas for this purpose.

Whilst the subject site is partially affected by the Bushfire Management Overlay to the east the development is proposed to occur outside this overlay and as such will not form part of this applications considerations.

Policy context

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.*

The use and development of the land for a dwelling and outbuildings requires planning approval in this instance due to the subject site being located within the Farming Zone and on a lot of less than 40 hectares in size. However, Clause 65 of all planning schemes in Victoria states:

“Because a permit can be granted does not imply that a permit should or will be granted. The responsible authority must decide whether the proposal will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the decision guidelines of this clause.”

In addition to the purposes of the Farming Zone outlined above, the provisions of the Farming Zone direct that consideration must also be given to a number of decision guidelines under the Zone which consider the question of how rural dwellings fit within these purposes. The decision guidelines provide a means by which to assess such applications, and require consideration to be given to matters such as:

- *Whether the dwelling will result in the loss or 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.*

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 Statewide 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 14.01-1L relating to Council’s Protection of Agricultural Land Policy draws together these themes to provide a consistent basis for considering the use of rural land for dwellings, and has the following relevant objectives:

- *To avoid the construction of a dwelling unless required to support a genuinely economically viable agricultural use of the land that requires permanent and continuous care, supervision or security.*
- *To ensure that where a dwelling is deemed necessary to support an agricultural use, that the use is viable based on the level of investment required and the estimated return as shown in an integrated land management plan.*

- *To ensure that where a dwelling has been deemed necessary to support an agricultural use, that the agricultural use has been established on the land prior to the construction of a dwelling.*
- *To avoid the construction of a dwelling on existing small lots (lots smaller than the zone schedule minimum) in the Farming Zone.*

It is evident that the overall aim of the relevant policy framework seeks 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 an orderly development of residential development in rural areas so that agricultural production of these areas are not disadvantaged or prejudiced by ad hoc and unplanned residential development.

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 evident from a review of the site and surrounding area that agriculture can and is practiced in this area. The planning scheme makes it clear that land zoned for farming designates it as suitable for agricultural purposes; a position further substantiated by VCAT decisions (such as *Russell Smith Town Planning Services v Mount Alexander SC [2018] VCAT 58 (11 January 2018)*).

Current planning scheme policy seeks to ensure that new dwellings in the Farming Zone are only approved in instances where they are considered to support or enhance agriculture. In making such a determination, consideration should be given to why there is a need to live on site and how that would support or enhance agricultural use/production, 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.

Assessment Findings

In summary, the application is recommended for refusal as it cannot satisfy the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. The concern is that the proposal is akin to a rural-residential land use, with nothing in place to assure its long term future. That is to say, if a dwelling is approved, the land could be sold at any time with no obligation to continue carrying out agriculture. Because of the land size and presence of a dwelling, it would more likely appeal to the lifestyle market rather than a genuine farmer.

It is important to clarify that this assessment is not a judgement on the merits of pet therapy. A number of letters of support have been tendered as part of the application from health providers, indicating the benefits of pet therapy. That pet therapy is a beneficial activity for patients is not being questioned. This is about whether the proposed land use warrants the development of a dwelling based on the scale and nature of the agricultural activity, in particular, whether the proposal is viable and enduring.

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 failed to substantiate that the dwelling is in association with the genuine use of the land for agriculture, and as such it does not appear that the dwelling would support or enhance agriculture which is contrary to the policy framework.

The application material states that it is proposed to undertake small scale animal breeding in association with a pet therapy business servicing the aged care facility, in which the owner will continue to be employed. Although numerous requests for further information have been undertaken, the documents supplied and various versions are contrary to each other. The overwhelming theme of the documentation indicates a rural-lifestyle intention for the land, rather than a viable and enduring agricultural proposition.

The applicant has failed to demonstrate a genuine agricultural proposal via the submitted Farm Management Plan. The site layout plan failed to highlight shelters for the protection of animals, feeding and watering troughs, fencing and simple management and daily activities that would be required to care for the proposed animals. The plan also noted that a maximum number of twenty (20) animals would be housed within the site which represents a low intensity. The financial plan does not explain the assumptions behind the plan – for example, the latest plan indicates an income of \$20,000 per month for the pet therapy enterprise alone, which contradicts the Farm Management Plan where an annual income of \$15,000-\$24,000 per year was estimated. Regardless, none of the figures provided at any point have been substantiated.

The submitted documentation has failed to demonstrate both a genuine need for a dwelling onsite to support the agricultural activity and a viable agricultural use to be carried out within the site. It is noted from the application materials that the owners are seeking rural residential development as the main activity onsite rather than a genuine and viable agricultural purpose. The report fails to demonstrate how the site will be managed both daily and as a long term viable agricultural activity.

The proposed small scale animal breeding enterprise could easily be carried out on a more suitable allotment within the municipality that would more appropriately suit the scale of both the operation and the owner. This includes small properties containing an existing house in the Farming Zone or potentially the Rural Living or Rural Conservation zones. It is unclear why a new dwelling would need to be constructed in support of such a small operation.

It is noted that the land has historically been used for agriculture and the refusal of the application would not in any way hinder the ability for the land to continue to be used for agriculture. In contrast, the approval of a dwelling that does not support or enhance agriculture on the site would result in the fragmentation of agricultural land and could lead to a proliferation of dwellings within the surrounding area.

Evaporation Ponds

Another element of the site is its proximity to evaporation ponds linked to the mining industry, on land directly to the south.

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has observed that "...the proximity of the evaporation ponds adjacent to the site may affect human health and amenity of the dwelling use." They also note that:

"EPA has received numerous community complaints since 2016 about a strong sulphur odour being released from the evaporation ponds. A majority of the complaints have occurred during summer when evaporation is greatest. The evaporation ponds have been used to evaporate tailings water from local mining activity. The source of odour appears to be the drying residual material in the ponds. EPA is concerned that developing a dwelling on an adjacent parcel of land may increase complaints about the existing evaporation pond facility."

Application of the precautionary principle would indicate that the placement of a dwelling close to the evaporation facility is not an acceptable outcome for either the occupants of that dwelling nor the operation of the evaporation ponds.

Conclusion

The application proposes the use and development of the land for a dwelling in associated with a pet therapy and breeding enterprise which runs contrary to planning policies relating to the rural dwellings and the Farming Zone. The applicant has failed to produce a compelling argument that the proposed dwelling would support or enhance agriculture, or that any genuine and viable agricultural land use is intended for the site. If approved, the proposal 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.

Locational issues also exist with the site adjoining mining evaporation ponds. The ponds are identified as having potential human health impacts and placing a dwelling on the subject site may contribute to community complaints.

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.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

Nil

16.2. CA 9A Parish of Wellsford - 405 Huntly-Fosterville Road, BAGSHOT 3551 - Use and Development of Land for a Dwelling

Author:	Laura Gillespie, Statutory Planner
Responsible Director:	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Summary/Purpose

Application No:	DR/690/2021
Application Documents:	https://bendigo.t1cloud.com/T1Default/CiAnywhere/Web/BENDIGO/ECMCore/BulkAction/Get/12b372c8-175f-46da-82c3-2de461e59c1b
Applicant:	Building Issues
Land:	CA 9A Parish of Wellsford - 405 Huntly-Fosterville Road, BAGSHOT 3551
Zoning:	Farming Zone
Overlays:	Bushfire Management Overlay
No. of objections:	0
Consultation meeting:	N/A
Key considerations:	- Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to bushfire risk. - Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land.
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 dwellings and bushfire risk.

Recommended Motion

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for use and development of land for a dwelling at CA 9A Parish of Wellsford - 405 Huntly-Fosterville Road, BAGSHOT 3551 on the following grounds:

1. The proposal is inconsistent with planning policy regarding bushfire risk. Locating a new dwelling in an area of high risk would be contrary to the strategies of the Planning Scheme which seek to locate new development in areas of low risk and to prioritise human life above all other policy considerations.
2. The proposal is inconsistent with the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone by:

- a. Causing the fragmentation of agricultural land; and
- b. Encouraging the proliferation of dwellings in the rural landscape.

Background Information

Preliminary concerns were raised with the application in relation to the proposal not being in accordance with the City's Policy relating to rural dwellings and the purpose of the Farming Zone as it did not illustrate a genuine agricultural land use and planning policy regarding bushfire risk. Of key concern was the proposal's inability to prioritise the protection of human life with regards to bushfire. The applicant was advised that it is unlikely that the proposal would be supported in its current form.

The applicant provided additional information and justification to support the application in the form of an Environmental Management Plan. This additional information is considered insufficient to substantiate the need for a dwelling on the site, as discussed below.

Report

Subject Site and Surrounds

The site is formally referred to as Crown Allotment 9A Parish of Wellsford, which is part of a larger property known as 405 Huntly-Fosterville Road, Bagshot. The site is rectangular in shape with an area of approximately 17 hectares.

The site is vacant and is mostly covered with woodland. There is a section of cleared land to the north-west of the site measuring approximately 1.7 hectares. Access to the site is via an existing gate onto Quinns Road which is a single lane, unformed dry weather road that is not maintained by the City.

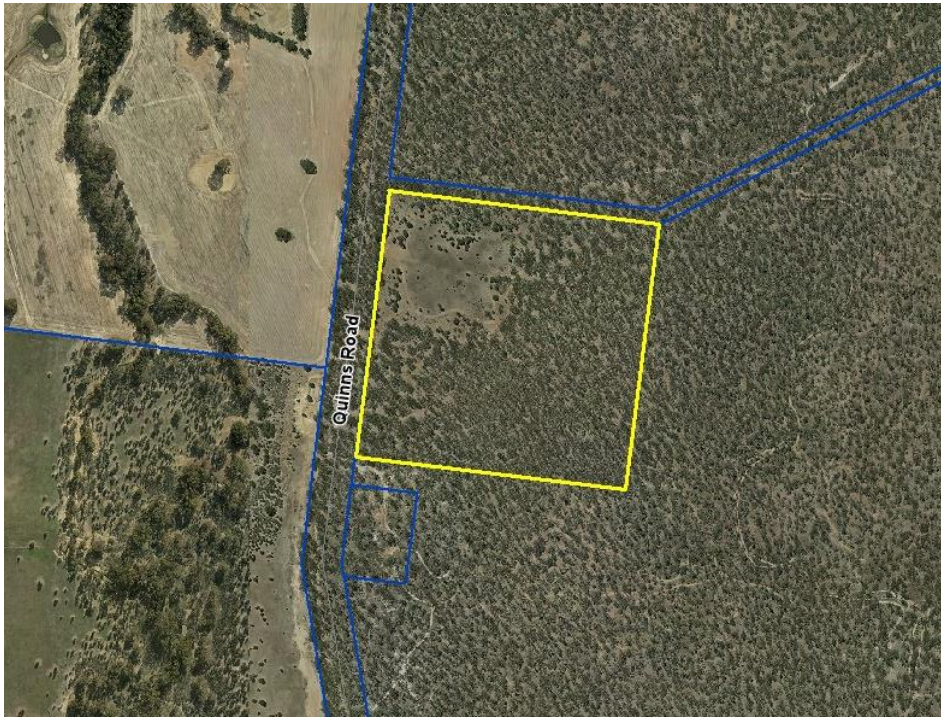


Figure 1: Location map showing subject site.

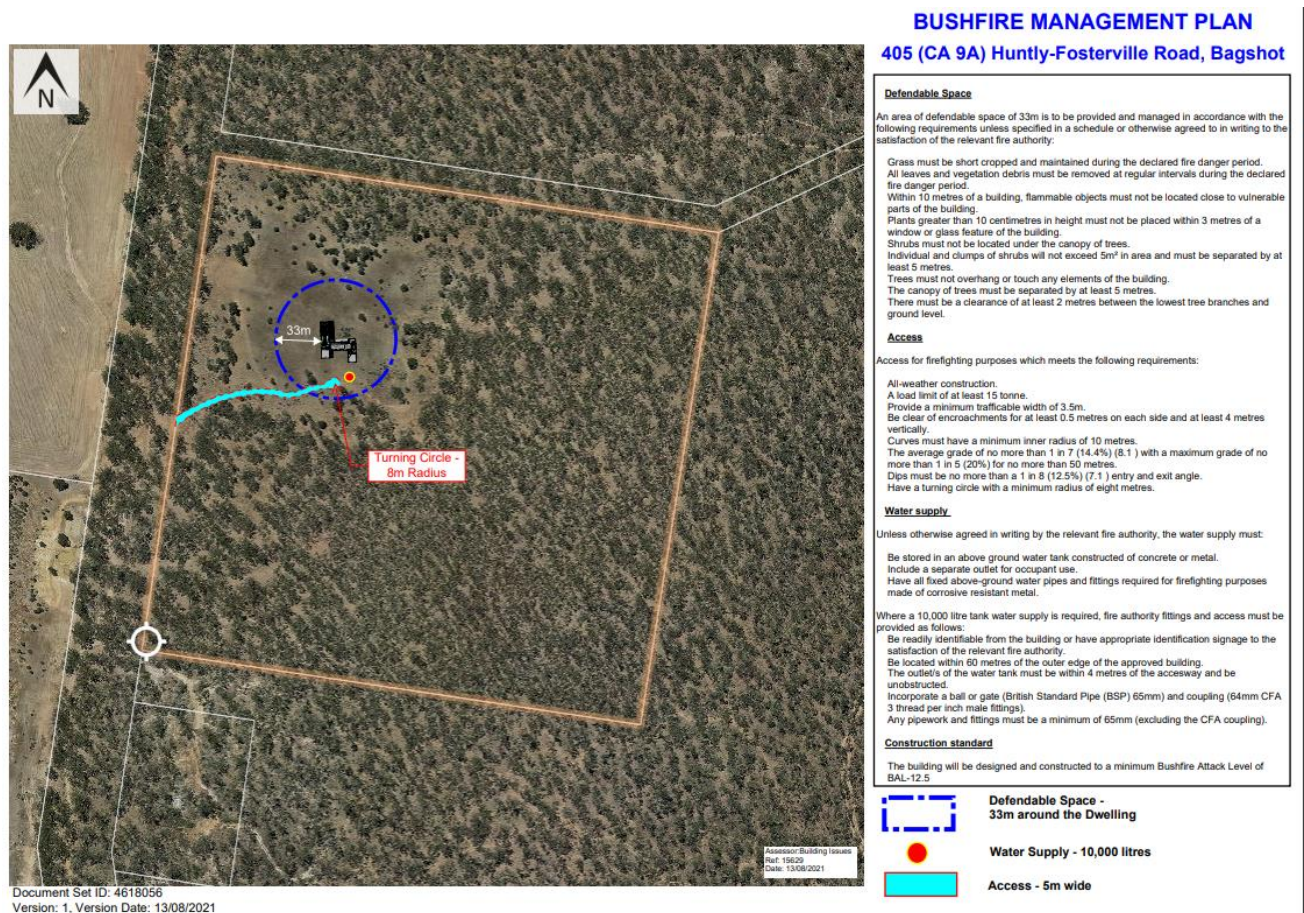
The site is located within the Farming Zone and is affected by the Bushfire Management Overlay, with surrounding land to the north, east and south located within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone and across the road to the west is Farming Zone. Quinns Road reserve is within the Vegetation Protection Overlay. The immediately adjoining and surrounding area is heavily vegetated. The site adjoins the Wellsford State Forest which is Crown Land managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The wider surrounding area is characterised by larger style lots, some of which contain dwellings.

Proposal

The application proposes the use and development the land for a dwelling.

The dwelling would be located 120.35m from the northern boundary and 96m from the western boundary (Quinns Road).

The dwelling would comprise of 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, an open plan kitchen, living and dining area, rumpus, gym/store room, attached double garage, covered outdoor area and a swimming pool. The dwelling would be clad in coarse acrylic render, Colorbond corrugated metal cladding, solid aluminium panels, timber cladding and zincalume roofing.

Figure 3: Elevation Plans**Figure 4: Bushfire Management Plan**

The application material states that the main objective of a new dwelling on the subject site is to better manage and monitor the on-going and potential future agricultural activities. It would provide an opportunity for rural residency supportive of the existing viable agricultural use contained on the subject property. The proposed dwelling would enhance the agricultural capacity of the site and it would not restrict and encroach into the high value productive agricultural land.

An Environmental Management Plan was provided which detailed the following:

- Although the property is in the Farming Zone, the property has nil agricultural productivity potential due to its soil type and scale, and is best suited to non-agricultural uses and nature conservation, as is proposed under this plan.
- The aim of the property owners is to avoid the need for native vegetation removal, protect the property from land degradation, address the erosion and weed issues, eradicate feral animals, revegetate and make a significant improvement to the biodiversity and environmental value of the property.

Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

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

Municipal Planning Strategy

- Clause 2.03-1 Settlement
- Clause 2.03-2 Environment and landscape values
- Clause 2.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity

Planning Policy Framework

- Clause 11.01-1S Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1L-01 Settlement – Greater Bendigo
- Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire planning
- Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land
- Clause 14.01-1L Protection of agricultural land – Greater Bendigo
- Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas
- Clause 16.01-3S Rural residential development
- Clause 16.01-3L Rural residential development – Greater Bendigo

Other Provisions

- Clause 35.07 Farming Zone
- Clause 44.06 Bushfire Management Overlay
- Clause 53.02 Bushfire Planning
- Clause 52.17 Native vegetation

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 6 – Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 7 – Sustainable population growth is planned for

Consultation/Communication

Referrals

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

Referral	Comment
Country Fire Authority	No objection subject to conditions requiring endorsement of the bushfire management plan.
Traffic Engineer	No objection subject to conditions
Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions

Public Notification

The application was not advertised. It was not considered necessary due to the adjacent land being Crown Land and land opposite being owned by the same owner as the proposal site.

Planning Assessment

Introduction

Planning in rural areas can be challenging given the legacy of decisions made in the past. The first Crown subdivisions were undertaken in a time where closer-settlement strategies were often pursued by governments. Further subdivisions then occurred through past decades when the concept of hobby farming or lifestyle lots was not as prevalent and the cumulative impacts of subdivision were not as evident.

Many farms are now comprised of multiple parcels of land, which are only effective in aggregate. Once the lots are separately developed and disposed ('fragmented'), the productive capacity of the land can be diminished. Once individually developed with dwellings (with no agricultural use of land), lots are unlikely to ever be re-aggregated due to the increased costs involved.

A further issue is the visual effect on the rural landscape arising from the cumulative development of dwellings and how this in turn impacts on amenity and local identity.

Planning Schemes in rural municipalities will usually seek to address these challenges through directing 'rural lifestyle' development to appropriately zoned land (Rural Living Zone or Low Density Residential Zone), and through the use of local planning policies to manage the development of dwellings in other rural zones, so as to protect the primacy of agriculture. Local Policy at Clause 14.01-1L of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme has been developed for this purpose of managing the large number of vacant rural parcels that exist across this municipality. This Policy will be further discussed in the sections below alongside the Statewide Farming Zone provisions.

Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to bushfire risk.

By way of background, the Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009 were the catalyst for changes to the bushfire provisions within the Planning Scheme. In particular, it was the loss of life which occurred that resulted in the Royal Commission's findings that bushfire mitigation and planning needed to place a greater emphasis on the protection of human life. It was determined that land use planning which considers natural hazard risks is the single most important mitigation measure in preventing future disaster and losses in areas of new development.

Planning policy through Clause 02.03-1 Settlement outlines a series of strategic directions for settlement in Greater Bendigo including avoiding development in bushfire and flood prone areas, unless risk can be managed. Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity goes on to acknowledge that having a valuable network of public and private forests throughout the municipality also means that most of the municipality is bushfire prone. The extent of rural living uses throughout the rural areas and on the edges of the urban areas increases this vulnerability.

Planning policy through Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire planning has the objective to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life. Such strategies include:

- Give priority to the protection of human life by:
 - Prioritising the protection of human life over all other policy considerations.
 - Directing population growth and development to low risk locations and ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.
 - Reducing the vulnerability of communities to bushfire through the consideration of bushfire risk in decision making at all stages of the planning process.
- Identify bushfire hazard and undertake appropriate risk assessment by:
 - Applying the best available science to identify vegetation, topographic and climatic conditions that create a bushfire hazard.
 - Considering the best available information about bushfire hazard including the map of designated bushfire prone areas prepared under the *Building Act 1993* or regulations made under that Act
 - Applying the Bushfire Management Overlay to areas where the extent of vegetation can create an extreme bushfire hazard.
 - Considering and assessing the bushfire hazard on the basis of landscape conditions, local conditions, neighbourhood conditions and the site for the development.
 - Consulting with emergency management agencies and the relevant fire authority early in the process to receive their recommendations and implement appropriate bushfire protection measures.

- Not approving development where a landowner or proponent has not satisfactorily demonstrated that the relevant policies have been addressed, performance measures satisfied or bushfire protection measures can be adequately implemented.
- Ensure settlement growth and development approvals can implement bushfire protection measures without unacceptable biodiversity impacts by discouraging settlement growth and development in bushfire affected areas that are important areas of biodiversity.

In summary, in determining the appropriateness of a proposal, consideration must be given to risk of bushfire to people, property and community infrastructure; ensuring that appropriate bushfire protection measures can be implemented; and ensuring that new development can implement bushfire protection measures without unacceptable biodiversity impacts.

The entire subject site is affected by a Bushfire Management Overlay. This Overlay has the following purpose:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To ensure that the development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire.
- To identify areas where the bushfire hazard warrants bushfire protection measures to be implemented.
- To ensure development is only permitted where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.

An application for a dwelling under the Bushfire Management Overlay must meet the requirements of Clause 53.02 Bushfire Planning. The policy outlines a series of objectives and design measures in order to achieve the following purposes:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To ensure that the development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire.
- To ensure that the location, design and construction of development appropriately responds to the bushfire hazard.
- To ensure development is only permitted where the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.
- To specify location, design and construction measures for a single dwelling that reduces the bushfire risk to life and property to an acceptable level.

A Bushfire Management Plan was provided as part of the application material and indicates the following:

- The dwelling would be required to be constructed to BAL-12.5.
- An area of defendable space of 33m around the dwelling is to be provided and managed.
- A 10,000L water tank would be provided with Country Fire Authority (CFA) fittings.

- An all-weather accessway requiring specific design and construction requirements in order to provide access to emergency vehicles.
- A turning circle with a minimum radius of eight metres.

It is important to acknowledge that the CFA has not objected to the granting of a permit, subject to standard conditions being included on any permit issued. Whilst it is often assumed for applications of this nature that CFA support should dictate the City's position on the application, the policy set out within the Planning Scheme is what should guide our decision making. Consulting with emergency management agencies (CFA) is to do a technical review of the bushfire management statement and plan which is just one aspect of the relevant considerations as clearly stated in Clause 13.02-1S.

To consider approving the application, the City must be satisfied that the level of risk that they are allowing is acceptable. Whilst it is accepted that the application can demonstrate a bushfire management statement that satisfies the CFA, the application fails to prioritise the protection of human life. Council's role as the Responsible Authority in deciding on applications of this nature must be to consider bushfire risk in a broader sense (at a landscape level) as directed by the abovementioned policy framework. Given the physical characteristics of the site and the area in which it is positioned, the question needs to be raised as to whether directing additional settlement in these areas is appropriate?

Consideration of the context of the site and surrounding area should be the starting point of any proposal of this nature. The landscape, siting and design objectives of Clause 53.02 relating to bushfire protection require the following:

- Development is appropriate having regard to the nature of the bushfire risk arising from the surrounding landscape.
- Development is sited to minimise the risk from bushfire.
- Development is sited to provide safe access for vehicles, including emergency vehicles.
- Building design minimises vulnerability to bushfire attack.

The Wellsford State Forest adjoins the site along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries. This area is defined by large expanses of bushland and presents a significant bushfire risk. The Bushfire Hazard Landscape Assessment provided as part of the application material states that there is a potential fire run of 7km from the north east and a potential fire run of 4.6km from the south east.

Although a BAL-12.5 is not the highest BAL rating it indicates that a dwelling would be primarily at risk of ember attack and the risk of radiant heat is considered low. Whilst it is accepted that direct flame contact could likely be negated through the management of vegetation within the defendable space, it should be acknowledged that a significant number of homes which are lost in the event of a bushfire, are lost as a consequence of ember attack. The creation of defendable space around the proposed dwelling is simply

one element and does not eliminate the risk, nor substantially reduce it. The bushfire risk that the surrounding landscape presents, will remain unaltered. As directed by the relevant policy, consideration must be given to the positioning of this site within dense vegetation, as it affects the likelihood of the property being impacted by bushfire. The application fails to give appropriate consideration to the bushfire risk arising from the surrounding landscape.

Access must also be considered beyond the subject site. Currently Quinns Road is not an all-weather road. This access road is considered vulnerable in the event of a fire and the residents would rely on this access in the event that they wished to leave the site. If the occupants did evacuate during a bushfire, this highly vegetated road reserve could become impassable and is considered a further risk.

If a permit was granted for the proposal the City's Engineering team would require Quinns Road to be upgraded at the owners expense as currently the road would not satisfy the all-weather access which is required for emergency vehicles.

The proposal is contrary to planning policy regarding bushfire risk as the proposal fails to demonstrate how the protection of human life has been prioritised. It has failed to make an assessment of the proposal in the broader context of where the land is located – with minimal weight on the characteristics and scale of the surrounding vegetation, poor access and the high level of risk that this would pose to future residents.

This position is reinforced by the Tribunal's decision in the case of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning v Yarra Ranges SC (Red Dot) [2019] VCAT 323 where the Tribunal refused to grant a permit for the use and development of land for a dwelling on a site in Healesville within the Rural Conservation Zone and the Bushfire Management Overlay, in addition to a number of other overlays. One of the reasons the application was refused was that locating a new dwelling in an area of high risk was contrary to the strategies of the Planning Scheme which seek to locate new development in areas of low risk and to prioritise human life above all other policy considerations, including the need to provide for residential development. In its decision, the Tribunal stated that:

“Similar to biodiversity, planning for bushfire is not a ‘tick a box’ approach. Certainly achieving compliance with the approved measures meets objectives under the clause and is very helpful in decision making, however any proposed use and development must also satisfy the policy framework, which guides decision making.”

Giving consideration to the above, it is evident that the proposal is not in accordance with the policy framework relating to bushfire risk.

Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural dwellings 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.

The use of the land for a dwelling and outbuilding requires planning approval in this instance due to the subject site being located within the Farming Zone and on a lot of less than 40 hectares in size. 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 dwellings fit within these purposes.

However, Clause 65 of all planning schemes in Victoria states:

“Because a permit can be granted does not imply that a permit should or will be granted. The responsible authority must decide whether the proposal will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the decision guidelines of this clause.”

The decision guidelines provide a means by which to assess such applications and require consideration to be given to matters such as *“whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production; whether the use or development will permanently remove land from agricultural production; whether the dwelling will result in the loss or fragmentation of productive agricultural land, and 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.”*

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 Statewide 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 14.01-1L relating to the protection of agricultural land within Greater Bendigo draws together these themes to provide a consistent basis for considering the use of rural land for dwellings and has the following relevant strategies:

- Avoid the construction of a dwelling unless required to support a genuinely economically viable agricultural use of the land that requires permanent and continuous care, supervision or security.
- Ensure that where a dwelling is deemed necessary to support an agricultural use, that the use is viable based on the level of investment required and the estimated return as shown in an integrated land management plan.
- Ensure that where a dwelling has been deemed necessary to support an agricultural use, that the agricultural use has been established on the land prior to the construction of a dwelling.
- Avoid the construction of a dwelling on existing small lots (lots smaller than the zone schedule minimum) in the Farming Zone, except if allowed under a Restructure Overlay.

It is evident that the relevant policy framework seeks 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. It should also be noted that the Farming Zone has been facing increasing pressures in more recent years for subdivision and residential development, primarily for rural lifestyle opportunities rather than for farming purposes. The Rural Areas Strategy, September 2009, highlights that 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 Strategy suggests that there is up to 80 years supply of land already zoned for rural-residential purposes within the Rural Living Zone.

The determinative issue to consider in this application is whether the proposed use and development of the subject land would result in an acceptable planning outcome when having regard to the purposes of the Farming Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with the use and development of rural and agricultural land. In short, is a dwelling required on the land in order to support agriculture?

The application material does not present a proposed agricultural use of the site.

For the following reasons, it is concluded that the proposal would not be acceptable when considered against these matters. The subject site is a Crown allotment and is considered to be an 'undersize lot' within the Farming Zone with an area of 17 hectares. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are some 'undersize' lots in the wider area that already contain dwellings, in cases such as *Bennett v Greater Bendigo CC [2018] VCAT 1486 (24 September 2018)* and *Russell Smith Town Planning Services v Mount Alexander SC [2018] VCAT 58 (11 January 2018)* VCAT determined that the presence of dwellings and

smaller lot sizes within the surrounding area does not mean it has become a 'de-facto' rural living area with no agricultural production capacity or potential.

The site is part of an overall larger agricultural property in common ownership consisting of separate land parcels. If approved, the proposal would essentially break up a larger land tenement of approximately 160 hectares, which already contains a dwelling on CA 4 section 13, Parish of Bagshot, resulting in the fragmentation of rural land. Further, it would invite the fragmentation of the remaining lots within the common ownership in the same manner. 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, and so on.

Approving a dwelling on the site would be contrary to the City's Policy at Clause 14.01-1L which states to avoid the construction of a dwelling unless required to support a genuinely economically viable agricultural use of the land that requires permanent and continuous care, supervision or security. The application has not presented an agricultural use of the site.

As said previously in the report, if a permit was granted for the proposal the City's Engineering team would require Quinns Road to be upgraded at the owners' expense via conditions as currently the road would not satisfy the all-weather access required for emergency vehicles. The potential need for native vegetation removal or lopping to upgrade this access was raised during the assessment process and the applicant had stated that there would be no native vegetation removal required within the road reserve to upgrade Quinns Road or within the property boundary for the creation of the driveway, however this is considered unlikely given the thin width of the road and the 4m vertical vehicle clearance required for emergency vehicle access.

The application has presented an Environmental Management Plan outlining that the property has nil agricultural productivity potential due to its soil type and scale, and is best suited to non-agricultural uses and nature conservation. This does not provide enough justification to warrant the use and construction of a dwelling on site as the current owner could (or even should) be undertaking land management activities to maintain the site from pests and weeds. The fact is that there is no need to have a dwelling on the land to undertake land management activities.

The approval of a dwelling which does not support or enhance agriculture on the site would result in the fragmentation of agricultural land and could lead to a proliferation of dwellings within the surrounding area.

Conclusion

The application proposes the use and development of the land for a dwelling which runs contrary to planning policies relating to rural dwellings and the Farming Zone. The proposal is for a dwelling on an undersize lot within the Farming Zone and has failed to demonstrate a genuine need for a dwelling on the site in order to undertake an agricultural land use. It fails to prioritise the risk to human life and reduce bushfire risk to an acceptable level. If approved, the proposal would likely 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.

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.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

Nil

16.3. 55 Williams Road, MYERS FLAT 3556 - Use of land for Licensed Vehicle Tester premises (retrospective)

Author:	Peter O'Brien, Coordinator Planning
Responsible Director:	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Summary/Purpose

Application No:	DU/1048/2021
Application Documents:	https://epathway.bendigo.vic.gov.au/ePathway/Production/Web/GeneralEnquiry/ExternalRequestBroker.aspx?Module=EGELAP&Class=P&Type=PLNADV&Applicationid=1052524
Applicant:	A C Stratford
Land:	55 Williams Road, MYERS FLAT 3556
Zoning:	Low Density Residential Zone
Overlays:	Bushfire Management Overlay
No. of objections:	Nil – the application was accompanied by two letters of support (one from a neighbor of the former location of the business at Evans Road, Myers Flat, the other from a new neighbour).
Consultation meeting:	N/A as no objections were received.
Key considerations:	• What does the Planning Scheme say? • Is the use prohibited under the Planning Scheme? or • If the use is not prohibited, should a Planning Permit be granted?
Conclusion:	A Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit should be issued.

Recommended Motion

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for the use of land for licensed vehicle tester premises (retrospective) at 55 Williams Road, MYERS FLAT 3556 for the following reasons:

1. The use of land for a Licenced Vehicle Tester premise is best defined as a form of Industry (as defined at clause 73.03 pf the Planning Scheme);
2. The land use is inconsistent with the Planning Policy Framework and Low Density Residential Zone; and
3. The application has failed to address a range of legitimate planning considerations with respect to:
 - a. Noise;
 - b. Provision of car parking;
 - c. Signage;
 - d. Screening of the non-residential building in the landscape; and
 - e. Environmental control.

Report

Subject Site and Surrounds



Figure 1: Location map showing subject site.

The subject site is irregular in shape and has an area of approximately 1.21 hectares. It has a frontage of approximately 100 metres to Williams Road, which is a local – City of Greater Bendigo managed road. The site falls from south to north in the order of 4 metres.

The site contains two dwellings, the older of the two was approved and constructed in 1979, the more recent of which was constructed in 2020/2021. The shed for which this proposal relates to was applied for as being a shed associated with the house only and was constructed in 2020/2021 also.

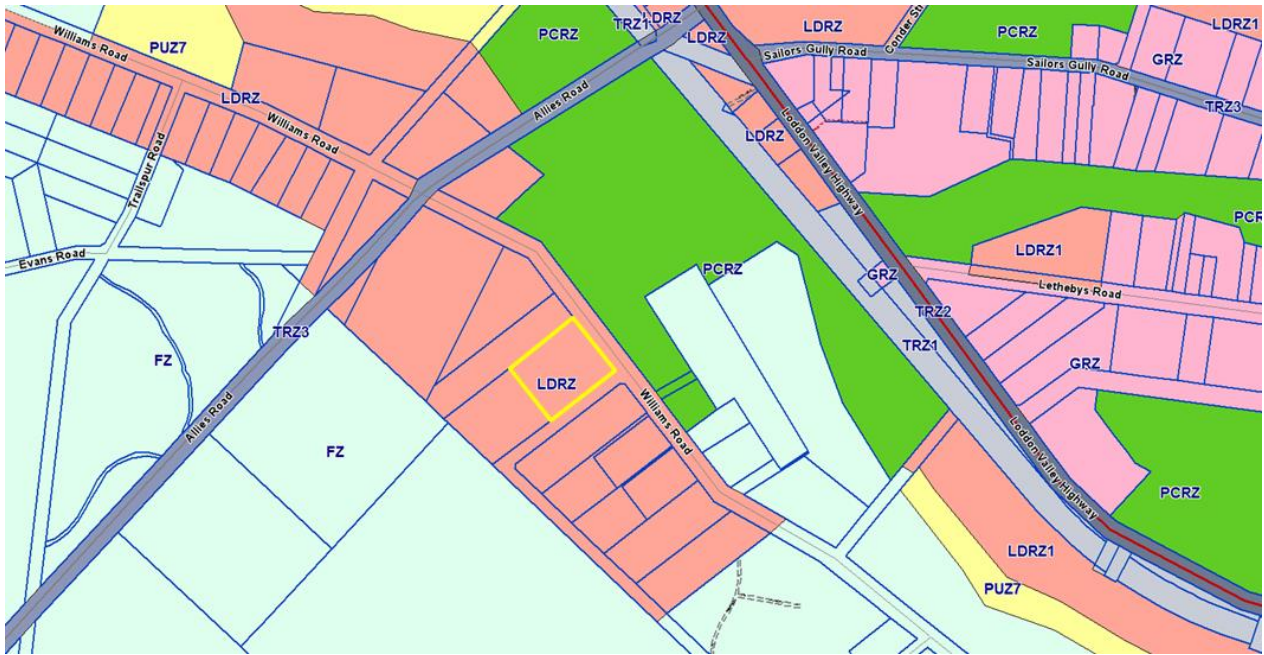


Figure 2: Zoning map showing subject site.

The adjoining and nearby land uses are residential which is reflective of the Low Density Residential Zoning and a fragmented Farming Zoned context. The Bendigo-Swan Hill railway line and Loddon Valley Highway are north of the site.

Proposal

The initial original submission from the consultant planner acting for the property owner stated the building and use was as follows:

“The building is divided into 6.0m “bays”, and would accommodate two mechanical lifts, (bay 2 & 3), with Bay 4 set aside for servicing that does not require under body access. Bay 5 would accommodate storage areas, office and utility room”; and

“The land use is defined as Mechanical Repair: Land used to repair and service motor vehicles and includes fitting of accessories.

This land use is a section 2 permit required, with the LDRZ.

The building is of a similar size the one operated from at 17 Evans Road (20x12m) and the operation of mechanical repairs would remain the same, that is 8.30-5.30 weekdays and no operation on weekends.

The need for a planning permit arises from the fact that the workshop has been built, given that the applicant thought the planning scheme zone for Evans Road and Williams Road were the same.

Further for the applicant to operate from this site also requires planning approval for the RWC testing license to be transferred from Evans Road to this site". (Source – Planning application submission received 9 December 2021)

The submission of the consultant planner that the use a section 2 permit required, with the zone was incorrect, the use instead was section 3 (prohibited).

Opportunity was afforded the applicant to supply additional information that:

- Sets out (with reference to relevant authorities/ supporting evidence) why the use is not prohibited; and to
- Provide relevant supporting information on planning issues such as, compliance with Noise Limit and Assessment Protocol for the Control of Noise from Commercial, Industrial and Trade Premises and Entertainment Venues (Publication 1826.4, Environment Protection Authority, May 2021), provision of car parking, signage, screening the workshop building, environmental control and the like.

The permit applicant's response to the request for further information was:

"Given that the purpose of the application was for the transfer to the RWC licensee, then the repair of vehicles is not a function of a Licensed Vehicle tester (accreditation is issued by VicRoads). The purpose is to identify defects that need to be remedied, to make the vehicle road worthy.

Hence this is a technical assessment with a report generated that requires the defects to be remedied before the issue of a RWC. The owner then usually takes the vehicle to their own vehicle service centre/ mechanic to fix or do it themselves.

In this context the repair of vehicles (Mechanical Repair: Land used to repair and service motor vehicles and includes fitting of accessories) is not required.

The planning permit preamble can be issued for "LVT premises" and you can apply a condition that would "prohibit "repair of vehicles". (Source: Response to further information dated 22 December 2021)

No VCAT authorities, or responses to the request for other supporting information was otherwise forthcoming.

Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

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

Municipal Planning Strategy

- 02.02 – Vision
- 02.03-3 - Environmental risk and amenity

- 02.03-7 – Economic development
- 02.04 – Strategic framework plans

Planning Policies Framework

- 13.05 – Noise
- 13.07-1S – Land use compatibility
- 17.01 – Employment
- 17.03 – Industry

Other Provisions

- 32.03 – Low Density Residential Zone
- 44.06 – Bushfire Management Overlay
- 65.01 – Approval of an application or plan
- 73.03 and 73.04 – Land use terms and Nesting diagrams

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025

Outcome 2 – Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 7 – Sustainable population growth is planned for

Consultation/Communication

Referrals

N/A

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, no objections were received.

Planning Assessment

What does the Planning Scheme say?

Clause 02.02 – Vision

Greater Bendigo City Council seeks to create 'The World's Most Liveable Community'. The Greater Bendigo of the future will:

- *Be centred around the relatively small city of Bendigo, but with a greater population and a more diverse community made up of people from across the globe.*
- *Effectively respond to new and emerging issues including adaptation to climate change.*
- *Be increasingly self-sufficient in energy generation, food and water production, and generally have a lighter impact on the environment.*
- *Have a strong economy that supports job growth, attracts visitors, and is diversified.*
- *Plan and facilitate development and infrastructure projects that increase liveability and pride of place.*
- *Recognise and celebrate Bendigo's unique history and diverse cultures.*
- *Respect the traditions and attachment to the landscape of Indigenous Australians.*

Clause 02.03-3 – Land use compatibility

The interface between urban development and forested areas, waste management facilities and active gold mines in the municipality need to be managed to safeguard community amenity, protect forest values and support key services and industries. There is further work to do in putting in place explicit buffers to manage these interfaces.

The strategic directions for land use compatibility are:

- *Manage the interface between urban development and incompatible uses including waste management facilities, gold mines and other uses with off-site amenity impacts to support land use compatibility.*
- *Minimise land use compatibility issues through separating waste management facilities, gold mines, and other uses with off-site amenity impacts.*
- *Protect critical infrastructure from incompatible adjoining uses.*

Clause 02.03-7 – Economic development

Greater Bendigo has the highest annual growth rate in gross regional product among Victoria's major regional cities, and the city's economy has outperformed the rest of Victoria in several key sectors. Bendigo is the key regional city and economic growth hub for the Loddon Mallee South Region.

As well as its significant retail and industrial base, other important elements of the economy include tourism, education, finance, agriculture, and earth and energy resources

industries (mining). In recent years Bendigo has become a hub for many non-retail anchors including health facilities, tertiary education, regional sporting facilities, and arts and cultural facilities.

Significant demand for commercial floor space is expected until 2035. Where this should be located has been identified on the Urban strategic framework plan, Rural strategic framework plan and Urban area activity centre hierarchy plan in Clause 02.04.

Traditionally industry in Greater Bendigo has been located within the Bendigo urban area and focused on manufacturing and engineering. These sectors remain important to the economy. New industries such as food manufacturing and information technologies have recently experienced growth. The Bendigo Livestock Exchange plays an important role in supporting the agricultural sector regionally. At present there is inadequate industrial land to meet the expected long-term demand.

Many of the areas set aside for industrial use, particularly in the Bendigo urban area, are not suitable to the needs of modern industry due to small lot sizes and adjoining incompatible land uses, as shown on the Urban strategic framework plan in Clause 02.04.

Greater Bendigo is an important visitor destination in the centre of Victoria's Goldfields region, recognised for its significant heritage value, as a City of Gastronomy, its contemporary and cultural offerings and as Victoria's regional events capital. Greater Bendigo's tourism industry is supported by a mild climate, heritage buildings, parks and gardens, impressive streetscapes, well established wineries and national, state and regional parks.

The Bendigo Library, the Bendigo Art Gallery, Ulumbarra Theatre, and the major performing arts venue The Capital Theatre provide Bendigo with non-retail anchors that are driving visitation and contributing to the lifestyle and opportunities that are available to residents and visitors alike.

The strategic directions for economic development are:

- Develop and expand employment generating industries.*
- Make well located affordable employment land available.*
- Direct commercial growth to activity centres.*
- Plan for the future growth of the industrial sector by providing zoned land in appropriate locations and lot configurations.*

02.04 – Strategic framework plans

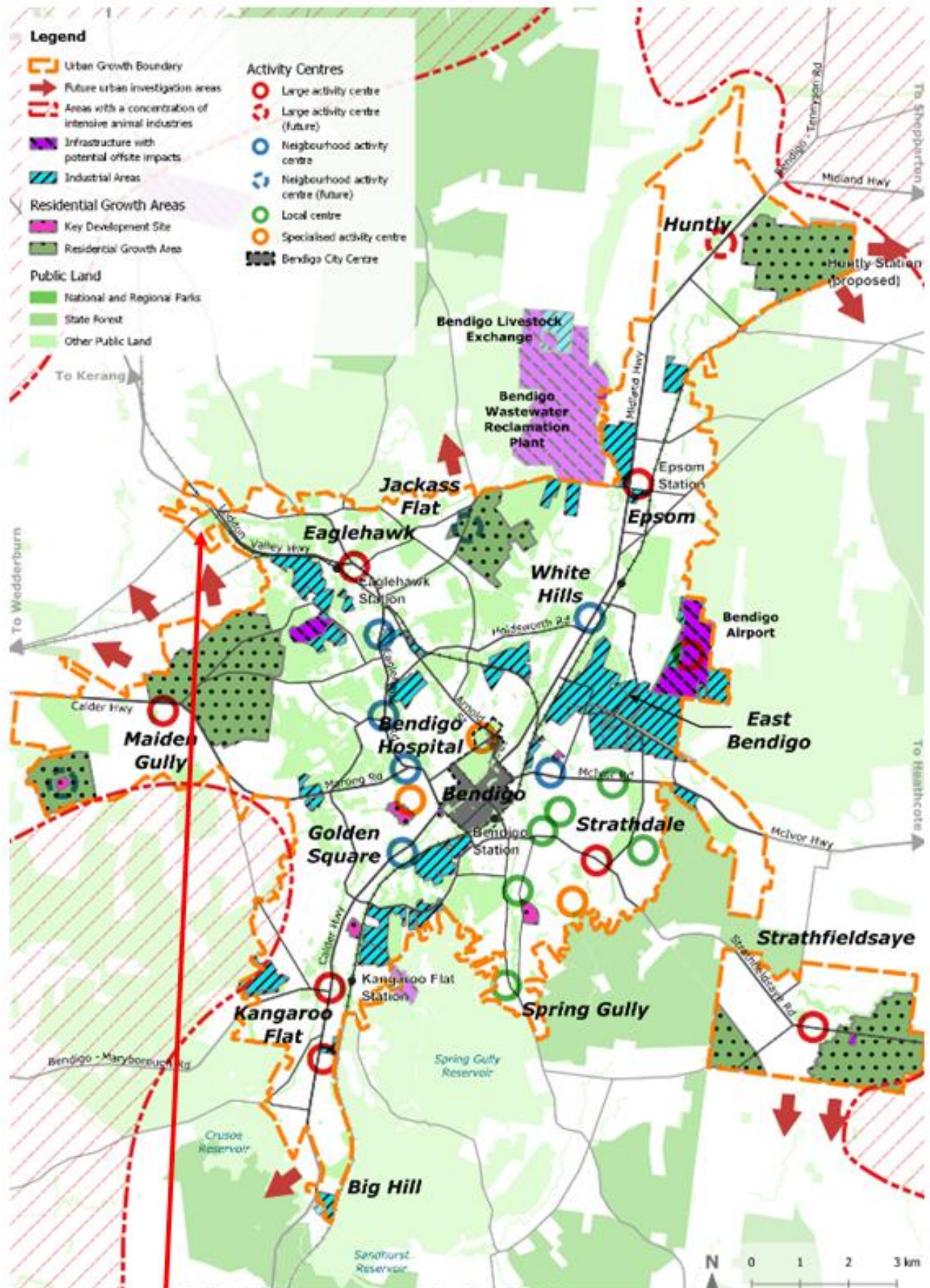


Figure 3: Application site with reference to the *Urban strategic framework plan*.

Clause 13.05 – Noise

Ensure that development is not prejudiced, and community amenity and human health is not adversely impacted by noise emissions.

Minimise the impact on human health from noise exposure to occupants of sensitive land uses (residential use, child care centre, school, education centre, residential aged care centre or hospital) near the transport system and other noise emission sources through suitable building siting and design (including orientation and internal layout), urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area.

Clause 13.07-1S – Land use compatibility

Objective

To protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.

Strategies

- *Ensure that use or development of land is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.*
- *Avoid locating incompatible uses in areas that may be impacted by adverse off-site impacts from commercial, industrial and other uses.*
- *Avoid or otherwise minimise adverse off-site impacts from commercial, industrial and other uses through land use separation, siting, building design and operational measures.*
- *Protect existing commercial, industrial and other uses from encroachment by use or development that would compromise the ability of those uses to function safely and effectively.*

Clause 17.01 – Employment

Objective

To strengthen and diversify the economy.

Strategies

- *Protect and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas.*
- *Facilitate regional, cross-border and inter-regional relationships to harness emerging economic opportunities.*

- *Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism, knowledge industries and professional and technical services based on the emerging and existing strengths of each region.*
- *Improve access to jobs closer to where people live.*
- *Support rural economies to grow and diversify.*

Clause 17.03 – Industry

Objective

To ensure availability of land for industry.

Strategies

- *Provide an adequate supply of industrial land in appropriate locations including sufficient stocks of large sites for strategic investment.*
- *Identify land for industrial development in urban growth areas where:*
 - *Good access for employees, freight and road transport is available.*
 - *Appropriate buffer areas can be provided between the proposed industrial land and nearby sensitive land uses.*
- *Protect and carefully plan existing industrial areas to, where possible, facilitate further industrial development.*
- *Avoid approving non-industrial land uses that will prejudice the availability of land in identified industrial areas for future industrial use.*

Clause 32.03 Low Density Residential Zone

This zone has two purposes:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.*

The zone has no decision guidelines related to non-residential uses.

In summary, the thrust of the Planning Scheme is to direct uses to appropriate zones and locations where environmental risks and amenity can be managed.

Is the use prohibited under the Planning Scheme?

Defined land uses which are not specifically listed in the Low Density Residential Zone as being either under Section 1 (No permit required), Section 2 (Permit Required) or Section 3 (Prohibited) can be applied for under this Zone.

The permit applicant's submission with respect to the use is in effect that what has been proposed is something referred to as being an 'innominate' land use (which is undefined) in the Low Density Residential Zone and discretion thus exists to grant a permit.

Despite being invited to, no elaboration or VCAT authority was cited by the permit applicant to support their view.

The Statutory Planning officer has undertaken a review of VCAT decisions and can also not locate any authority supporting this view.

It is acknowledged that the categorisation of the use is a vexed one, however our assessment is that the initial categorisation by the applicant that the land use for 'motor repairs' which is defined as being: *'Land used to repair or service motor vehicles, and includes the fitting of accessories'* may not have been the correct one, despite how detailed the description of activities was as supplied by the applicant to the contrary.

It appears mechanical repair has been part of the use *at some point* as the business name as it operated at 17 Evans Road, Myers Flat and as registered at ASIC was/is Craig Stratford Mechanical Repair.

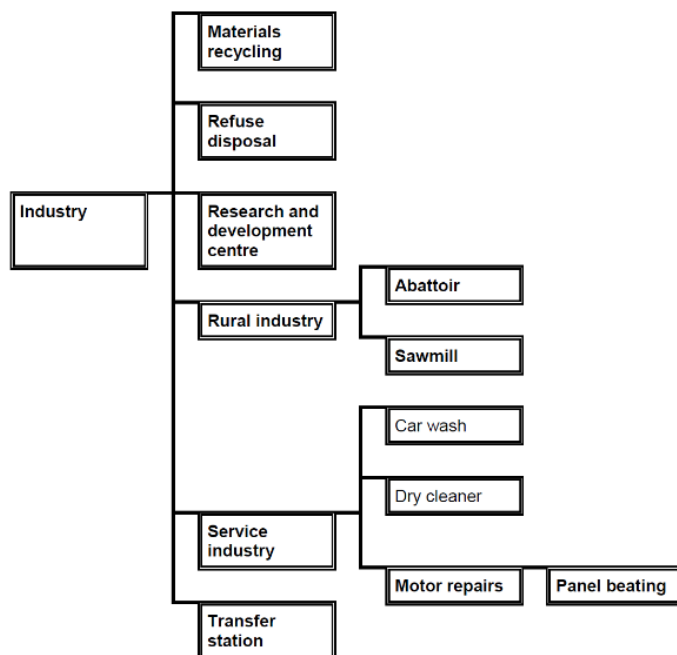


Figure 4: Nesting diagram for the Industry group of uses (clause 73.04-6).

The additional information, assuming no mechanical repair is being undertaken, leads to the same or a similar conclusion that the use is a prohibited. If it is accepted that it is only the Licensed Vehicle Testing operation that occurs on the land, this can still be viewed as being a form of 'Industry' (which is a Section 3, prohibited use in the zone) which is defined as:

Land used for any of the following operations:

- a) *any process of manufacture;*
- b) *dismantling or breaking up of any article; [author emphasis]***
- c) *treating waste materials;*

- d) *winning clay, gravel, rock, sand, soil, stone, or other materials (other than Mineral, stone, or soil extraction);*
- e) *laundering, repairing, servicing or washing any article, machinery, or vehicle, other than on-site work on a building, works, or land; or*
- f) ***any process of testing or analysis. [author emphasis]***

If on the same land as any of these operations, it also includes:

- a) *storing goods used in the operation or resulting from it;*
- b) *providing amenities for people engaged in the operation;*
- c) *selling by wholesale, goods resulting from the operation; and*
- d) *accounting or administration in connection with the operation.*

If materials recycling, goods resulting from the operation may be sold by retail.

The use in question fits two of the elements of the industry definition as the process of undertaking an inspection for the purpose of getting a roadworthy for a car involves some dismantling to check vehicle components – for example brakes and pad wear cannot be checked without removing tyres and the substantive use is clearly a *process of testing and analysis*.

Given the use fits neatly within a defined land use, the applicant's submission that the use is an innominate one is not correct and was not substantiated with reference to any VCAT authority on the question.

Consideration was also given as to whether the use could be viewed as being a Home Based Business under clause 52.11 of the Planning Scheme. A Home Based Business would not need a planning permit under the zone.

The Home Based Business provisions have a number of requirements – the relevant ones are listed as to whether they are met, not met or it is unclear:

- ✓ *The person conducting the home based business must use the dwelling as their principal place of residence.*
- ✓ *No more than two persons who does not live in the dwelling may work in the home based business at any one time.*
- ✗ *The net floor area used in conducting the business including the storage of any materials or goods must not exceed 100 square metres or one-third of the net floor area of the dwelling, whichever is the lesser. The net floor area includes out-buildings and works normal to a dwelling.*
- ? *The business must not impose a load on any utility greater than normally required for domestic use.*
- ? *The business must not adversely affect the amenity of the neighbourhood in any*

way including:

- *The appearance of any building, works or materials used.*
 - *The parking of motor vehicles.*
 - *The transporting of materials or goods to or from the dwelling.*
 - *The hours of operation.*
 - *Electrical interference.*
 - *The storage of chemicals, gasses or other hazardous materials.*
 - *Emissions from the site.*
- ✖ *No motor vehicle may be adjusted, modified, serviced or repaired for gain.*
- ✎ *Only one commercial vehicle (a commercial goods vehicle, commercial passenger vehicle or tow truck within the meaning of the Transport Act 1983), not exceeding 2 tonnes capacity and with or without a trailer registered to a resident of the dwelling may be present at any time. The vehicle must not be fueled or repaired on the site*
- ✖ *Materials used or goods manufactured, serviced or repaired in the home based business must be stored within a building.*
- ✎ *No goods manufactured, serviced or repaired may be displayed so that they are visible from outside the site.*

The conclusion with respect to whether the use is Home Based Business is that the use is not a Home Based Business as several of the requirements are not met and questions remain over a number of others.

If the use is not prohibited, should a Planning Permit be granted?

Reviewing the locations of other like businesses, they are most typically ancillary to motor vehicle repairs and the standalone operators are most commonly located in industrial or commercial zones. This should not be surprising given the use most neatly fits with land uses which are best accommodated by those zones.

The zone in terms of its focuses and purposes is to

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.*

The zone has a wide range of uses which can be applied for which is typical of zones which apply only in rural and regional areas such as the Township Zone for example.

This range of uses is reflective of the fact that settlement patterns are different around rural or regional towns. Unlike other zones which apply around the periphery of townships and settlements, there are no zone purposes which support non-residential use and development nor are there any decision guidelines under the zone to guide the exercise of discretion for non-residential uses.

Whilst the use is of a smaller scale and (according to the applicant's submission) operated without complaint at its former location at Evans Road, this should not lead to a conclusion that it is appropriate in the Low Density Residential Zone.

The policy setting in the balance of the Planning Scheme directs uses to appropriate zones and locations where environmental risks and amenity can be managed. There is a lack of policy support for this use in this location.

The application has failed to address a range of legitimate planning considerations with respect to: potential noise; provision of car parking; signage; screening of the non-residential building in the landscape; and environmental control which weighs against a permit being granted here, even if discretion were available to approve such a use.

Conclusion

A Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit should 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.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

Nil

16.4. Advocacy for Water Fluoridation: Heathcote

Author:	Julian Cleary, Senior Planning & Policy Officer
Responsible Director:	Stacy Williams, Director Healthy Communities and Environments

Purpose

To seek Council support to advocate for fluoridation of the Heathcote town water supply.

Recommended Motion

That Council support the Heathcote community's advocacy for fluoridation of the town water supply by writing to relevant decision makers and local members.

Executive Summary

9 out of 10 Australians have access to fluoridated water. The Heathcote community does not. There is strong evidence that water fluoridation helps to prevent tooth decay and is a safe and effective public health measure that would have considerable health and wellbeing benefits.

Heathcote's Community Plan 2021-2025 includes an action to 'continue to advocate for the fluoridation of the Heathcote town water supply.' Heathcote Community leaders have been advocating to the State Government for water fluoridation for many years, due to concerns about the poor oral health of Heathcote residents.

Heathcote community leaders are seeking the support of the City to advocate for funding to make water fluoridation possible. Such support would be consistent with the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Background

The City's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-25) highlights Oral Health as an area for action due to the relatively poor oral health outcomes in Greater Bendigo. The Plan recognises that some areas in Greater Bendigo do not have fluoridated water. Heathcote is the largest community in Greater Bendigo that does not have fluoridated water.

The recent upgrade to the Heathcote Water Quality Treatment Plant by Coliban Water has enabled fluoridation to occur if funding can be obtained. Coliban Water highlight that funding would need to come from the State Government (or Federal Government). Costs have been estimated at around \$920,000.

The support of the City and other local partners for Heathcote community advocacy in the lead up to the next State election may prove influential and would be welcomed by Heathcote Health and Advance Heathcote as part of their ongoing advocacy on this issue.

Previous Council decision dates: In October 2020, Council adopted Healthy Greater Bendigo, which includes Oral Health as an area for action and highlights gaps in access to fluoridated water in the City.

Report

Fluoride promotes dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'strongly recommends community water fluoridation as a safe, effective and ethical way to help reduce tooth decay across the population [and] supports Australian states and territories fluoridating their drinking water supplies' (see attachment 1).

Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015-24 recognises that community water fluoridation 'is a cost-effective and equitable initiative that is supported by overwhelming scientific evidence.' The National Plan aims to extend access to the preventive effects of fluoride, outlining that communities 'with populations of over 1000 people should have access to reticulated fluoridated water supplies.' Heathcote is the only community with a population of over 1000 in Greater Bendigo that does not have such access. According to the 2021 Census the population of Heathcote is 2,962.

The Victorian Action Plan to Prevent Oral Disease 2020-30 highlights that 43% of children aged 5-10 have signs of tooth decay. The lack of preventive effects of fluoride is cited as one of the main causes. The 2030 goals of the plan include to 'Increase the proportion of rural and regional Victorians accessing fluoridated drinking water to 95%' (From a Baseline of 87%).

The Victorian Plan recognises that 'Oral disease is a key marker of disadvantage.' Heathcote is among the most disadvantaged communities in Greater Bendigo (SEIFA 925, versus Greater Bendigo average of 981) and is in the 15th percentile of most disadvantaged areas in Victoria.

According to Dental Health Services Victoria, the average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth for children in Heathcote was 2.08 among children aged 0-5 (state average: 1.21). 3.00 for children aged 6-8 (state average 2.35) and 2.96 for children aged 9-12 (state average 1.51). Among adults, the average number of missing teeth due to dental decay is also higher. Heathcote community members have limited access to local dental services and need to travel around 50 kilometres to access public dental services at Bendigo Health.

According to the 2019 Active Living Census 26.1% of Heathcote and District residents rated their health and fair or poor. This is significantly higher than the Greater Bendigo average of 19%. There is reliable evidence that Heathcote community access to the preventive effects of fluoride would help to improve oral health outcomes, which would have flow on benefits for overall community health and wellbeing.

Heathcote's Community Plan 2021-2025 includes an action to 'continue to advocate for the fluoridation of the Heathcote town water supply' Heathcote community leaders are seeking the support of the City to advocate for funding to make water fluoridation possible.

The Heathcote Community have previously received a letter of support from their local State MP (Steph Ryan MP) and several local organisations. To date this advocacy has been partially successful, but according to the Department of Health, available funding is the major barrier. The support of the City and other local partners for Heathcote community advocacy in the lead up to the next State election may prove influential and would be welcomed by Heathcote Health and Advance Heathcote.

Priority/Importance

Advocacy in the lead up to this year's State election presents the best opportunity over the next four years to secure funding for water fluoridation.

Options considered

The City could consider directly funding the fluoridation of the Heathcote Water Supply, however at around \$920,000 this would likely be prohibitively expensive and involve taking on a responsibility that rightly sits with the State Government responsibility.

The City could elect not to support Heathcote community advocacy, but this may have reputational risks and would be inconsistent with our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, community vision and values.

Timelines

Subject to endorsement, letters will be drafted by the end of July for the signature of the Mayor and Ward Councillors. Follow up action and advocacy would occur between July and the November election.

Communications/Engagement

The 2021-2025 Heathcote and District Community Plan was prepared by Advance Heathcote Inc., the community group that have led community engagement, the development and implementation of the community plan in Heathcote since 2014. Development of this plan has involved wide consultation with Heathcote community groups

and community members. The plan incorporates the ideas and priorities from a wide range of local people who live in Heathcote and surrounding districts.

Heathcote Health have been consulted about this proposed advocacy by the City and are strongly supportive of the City playing a role.

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-25 was developed through extensive consultation including through the establishment of an External Project Reference Group. This group provided strategic input and leadership for this work. The inclusion of Oral Health as an area for action and the need for a focus on Water Fluoridation specifically, arose from data analysis and the input of members of the External Project Reference group, including the CEO of Heathcote Health and La Trobe University Academic Virginia Dickson-Swift.

Financial Sustainability

Budget implications are negligible as the advocacy can be resourced through existing staff resourcing.

Risk Assessment

While there is overwhelming scientific evidence for Water Fluoridation as a public health measure, there are pockets of opposition in the wider community and it is possible that there will be community members at Heathcote who do not support this advocacy despite inclusion in the Heathcote Community Plan.

Policy Context

Primary Council Plan Reference

City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan *Mir wimbul* 2021-2025
Outcome 2 - Healthy, liveable spaces and places

Secondary Council Plan Reference(s)

Goal 1 - Strengthened community health and wellbeing

Other Reference(s)

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-25, Outcome 'Healthy and Well'. Area for action: Oral Health. Community value: Equity.

Heathcote Community Plan 2021-25: Outcome 2: Healthy, liveable spaces and places.

Objective 'Build a healthier and resilient Heathcote and District community': Continue to advocate for implementation of local oral health programs in Heathcote and the fluoridation of the Heathcote town water supply

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation or approval of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. NHMRC Public Statement-Fluoridation [**16.4.1** - 3 pages]

NHMRC Public Statement 2017

Water Fluoridation and Human Health in Australia

NHMRC statement

NHMRC strongly recommends community water fluoridation as a safe, effective and ethical way to help reduce tooth decay across the population. NHMRC supports Australian states and territories fluoridating their drinking water supplies within the range of 0.6 to 1.1 milligrams per litre (mg/L^a).

This Public Statement is based on the findings presented in the NHMRC Information Paper: [Water fluoridation: dental and other human health outcomes](#), and its underpinning [Evidence Evaluation Report](#). Information is also available in the NHMRC Water fluoridation and human health in Australia: Questions and Answers.

Importance of community water fluoridation

Community water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the amount of fluoride in drinking water.

There is reliable evidence that community water fluoridation helps to prevent tooth decay. The consequences of tooth decay are considerable: dental pain, concern about appearance, costs due to time off school and work, and costs of dental treatment.

There is no reliable evidence of an association between community water fluoridation at current Australian levels and any health problems.

In Australia, community water fluoridation programs are a safe, effective and ethical way of reducing tooth decay across the population. Fluoridated water is the primary source of fluoride exposure and helps reduce tooth decay for all, at all stages of life. This includes those who have less access to dental care and other measures that help protect the teeth from decay.

Fluoridation of drinking water particularly benefits children, and those on a lower income who tend to have higher rates of dental decay and less access to dental treatment and other forms of fluoride. Optimal dental health requires a combination of drinking fluoridated water, a healthy diet that minimises sugar intake, good oral hygiene, appropriate use of fluoridated toothpaste and regular dental check-ups.

Access to fluoridated drinking water in Australia

The majority of Australians, around 89 percent, have access to fluoridated drinking water^b. All Australian states and territories have fluoridated drinking water; however coverage in each jurisdiction varies (Figure 1).

To help protect teeth against tooth decay, only very small amounts of fluoride are needed in drinking water, taking into consideration fluoride in other sources such as foods, drinks and dental products. In some places in Australia there are already sufficient levels of fluoride naturally occurring in groundwater to help reduce tooth decay.

NHMRC supports Australian states and territories fluoridating their drinking water supplies within the range of 0.6 to 1.1 mg/L. This range is aimed at reducing tooth decay, while avoiding any occurrence of dental fluorosis of aesthetic concern.

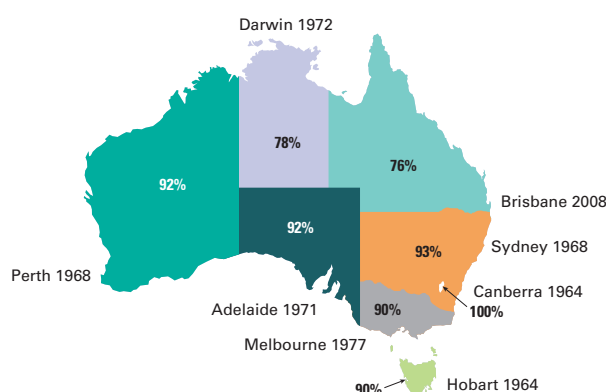
In each Australian state or territory, the government health authority determines the appropriate operational levels within the range of 0.6 to 1.1 mg/L.

For bottled drinking water, the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code allows between 0.6 and 1.0 mg/L of naturally occurring and added fluoride, and any bottled water with fluoride added must be clearly labelled.¹ However, it is important to note that not many bottled waters contain fluoride, so those whose primary drinking water source comes from bottled water are at risk of receiving inadequate supplies of fluoride to prevent tooth decay.

a mg/L are equivalent to parts per million (ppm)

b Sourced from Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) 2017

Figure 1: Percentage of population with access to fluoridated water^c as at February 2017 and dates of introduction of community water fluoridation to Australian capital cities



The scientific evidence supporting water fluoridation

The existing body of evidence consistently shows that community water fluoridation reduces tooth decay.

This evidence comes from NHMRC's thorough review of the latest scientific research on the potential link between water fluoridation and human health relevant to Australia, and is detailed in the [Supporting documents](#). The key findings of this review are as follows.

Tooth decay

NHMRC found that water fluoridation reduces tooth decay by 26% to 44% in children and adolescents, and by 27% in adults. Recent Australian research states that access to fluoridated water from an early age is associated with less tooth decay in adults.

Dental fluorosis

Dental fluorosis can affect the appearance of teeth, most commonly appearing as white lines or areas on tooth surfaces. It is caused by a high intake of fluoride from one or more sources during the time when teeth are developing.

Almost all dental fluorosis in Australia, however, is very mild or mild, does not affect the function of the teeth and is not of aesthetic concern to those who have it. Mild to very mild dental fluorosis has been associated with a protective benefit against tooth decay in adult

teeth.² Moderate dental fluorosis is very uncommon and severe dental fluorosis is rare in Australia^d. The very small amount of moderate and severe dental fluorosis in Australian children aged 8-14 years is not statistically different between fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas, meaning there is no evidence that community water fluoridation at Australian levels gives rise to these forms of dental fluorosis.

In Australia dental fluorosis has declined, over a time when the extent of water fluoridation in Australia has expanded. The decline in dental fluorosis in Australia is linked to reduced exposure to fluoride from other sources such as toothpaste, due to the availability and promotion of low fluoride toothpastes for children and public health messages and guidelines about the appropriate use of these products (e.g. use only a small pea-sized amount; encourage children not to swallow toothpaste).^{3,4,5}

Health outcomes

There is reliable evidence that community water fluoridation at current Australian levels is not associated with cancer, Down syndrome, cognitive dysfunction, lowered intelligence or hip fracture.

There is no reliable evidence of an association between community water fluoridation at current Australian levels and other human health conditions such as chronic kidney disease, kidney stones, hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), high blood pressure, low birth weight, all-cause mortality, musculoskeletal pain, osteoporosis, skeletal fluorosis, thyroid problems or self-reported ailments such as gastric discomfort, headache, and insomnia.

NHMRC's role in community water fluoridation

NHMRC is Australia's leading expert body fostering the development of consistent individual and public health standards between the states and territories. It is responsible for providing the Australian community with health advice based on the best available scientific evidence. The main ethical justification for fluoridating water is that it provides an important dental health benefit - reducing tooth decay - across the population. Additional benefits of water fluoridation include reducing infection, pain, avoidable treatment and other consequences of tooth decay.

NHMRC has publicly supported community water fluoridation as a population health measure since 1952. NHMRC publishes the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* which provide an authoritative reference to

^c In some jurisdictions, the proportion of the population with access to fluoridated water is higher than the represented data. This is because some Australian drinking water supplies, particularly those relying on bore water, contain naturally occurring fluoride at a concentration of around 0.5 mg/L. It is recognised that this concentration offers some protection against tooth decay [WHO (2017): [Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality, Fourth Edition](#). Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO) p372].

^d Refer to the NHMRC *Information Paper - Water fluoridation: dental and other human health outcomes*, 2017 for rates of water fluoridation in Australia and the various grades (severity) of fluorosis.



the Australian community and the water supply industry on what defines safe, good quality drinking water, how it can be achieved and how it can be assured.

Community water fluoridation and infant formula in Australia

Infant formula products sold in Australia are safe to be fed to infants when made up with drinking water fluoridated at the levels used in Australia. All infant formula in Australia must comply with the composition and safety requirements of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.⁶

NHMRC recommends exclusive breast feeding until around six months of age. However, this is not always possible and, for infants who are not breastfed or who are partially breastfed, NHMRC recommends that infant formula be used as an alternative until 12 months of age.

Use of fluoride tablets or supplements in Australia

Fluoride supplements in the form of drops or tablets should only be used on the advice of an oral health professional.⁵ They are no longer readily available in Australia.

Supporting documents

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). *Information Paper - Water Fluoridation: Dental and Other Human Health Outcomes*. Report prepared by the Clinical Trials Centre at University of Sydney. Canberra: NHMRC, 2017. <<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/health-effects-water-fluoridation>>

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Other useful resources

Water Fluoridation and Human Health in Australia: Questions and Answers. Canberra: NHMRC, 2017. <<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-topics/health-effects-water-fluoridation>>

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Some useful references

- 1 Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.6.2 - Non-alcoholic beverages and brewed soft drinks. 2016 [updated 2016]; Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00175>.
- 2 Do LG, Spencer AJ, Ha DH. Association between dental caries and fluorosis among South Australian children. *Caries Research*, 2009; 43:366-73.
- 3 Spencer AJ, Do LG. Changing risk factors for fluorosis among South Australian children. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 2008; 36(3):210-8.
- 4 Do LG, Spencer AJ. Decline in the prevalence of dental fluorosis among South Australian Children. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*. 2007; 35(4):282-91.
- 5 Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health. The use of fluorides in Australia: guidelines. *Australian Dental Journal*. 2006; 51: 195-9. <<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/arcphd/downloads/publications/journal/2006-spencer-aj.pdf>>
- 6 Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code – Standard 2.9.1 – Infant formula products (revised March 2016). Canberra: FSANZ, 13 April 2017 <<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>>

17. STRONG, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Nil

18. ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION

Nil

19. A CLIMATE-RESILIENT BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Nil

20. A VIBRANT, CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Nil

21. A SAFE, WELCOMING AND FAIR COMMUNITY

Nil

22. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

23. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

24. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

25. MAYOR'S REPORT

26. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

**27. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS
RECOMMENDED MOTION**

That Council close the meeting to members of the public pursuant to Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, to consider a report relating to the following confidential information defined as:

(f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs