

MINUTES

Council Meeting

Monday, 15 March 2021 commencing at 6:00 PM

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

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

VENUE:

www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/councilmeeting

NEXT MEETING:

Monday 19 April 2021

Livestream

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

Council Vision

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

Council Values

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

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

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

Goals

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

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2. TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE STATEMENT

3. OPENING STATEMENT

4. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

5. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Cr Jennifer Alden
Cr Matthew Evans
Cr David Fagg
Cr Rod Fyffe OAM
Cr Andrea Metcalf
Cr Margaret O'Rourke
Cr Greg Penna
Cr Julie Sloan
Cr Vaughan Williams
Craig Niemann, Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance
Bernie O'Sullivan, Director Strategy and Growth
Vicky Mason, Director, Health and Wellbeing
Brian Westley, Director Presentation and Assets
Jessica Clarke-Hong Manager Governance

APOLOGIES

Nil

6. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

MOTION

Moved: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

Seconded: Cr Rod Fyffe

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

CARRIED

7. COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

"Welcome to the community section of tonight's meeting, where we reflect on local events and achievements that have occurred since we last met.

Tonight, our community section is dedicated to the great John Forbes, who passed away on Sunday at his Mitiamo property.

Although not a resident of Greater Bendigo he was well-known and much loved across central Victoria and was a legend of local and national sport.

In 2013 the City was pleased to coordinate a special salute to John and his significant achievements. A weekend-long exhibition featuring sporting memorabilia from his private collection was displayed in the Bendigo Town Hall.

Some of the items related to Australia's greatest sporting triumphs, particularly in cricket, and it was a privilege to honour him in this way. Of course, this collection can now be seen in Rochester, which will continue to be a great way to remember John's immense contribution and lasting legacy.

How fortunate that he was able to see his items placed in a museum in his lifetime. John's philosophy was to always put friendship before financial gain, which was a belief that paid rich personal dividends.

John's collection was amassed over his career as the National Promotions Manager for Puma. At the time of preparing the display in the Town Hall, John said many athletes never forgot Puma's support early in their careers and stuck by the brand. I suspect they were also loyal to him and his commitment to them, appreciating the care he showed as they rose up the ranks.

This week he was remembered as a great friend to many and a legend of sport. He still went to training and Mitiamo Football Netball Club Thursday night dinners to enjoy the company of the players and his community, and he was there on game day to cheer them on.

John went out of his way to help people, people who were sick or appreciating the service and sacrifice of Victoria Police, later helping establish the Blue Ribbon Foundation. He was remembered as someone who had time for everyone.

Our thoughts are with John's wife Faye and their sons and extended family. For anyone that met John, it was a privilege.

And that ends tonight's community section".

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

9. RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

That Standing Orders be resumed.

MOTION

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Rod Fyffe

That Standing Orders be resumed.

CARRIED

10. CR METCALF'S REPORT

Cr Metcalf reported as follows:

"Most people would be surprised about the amount of work a councillor does. When I was running for Council in 2016 the estimate was 10 hours per week I was told and that was wrong.

With the 2020 Council election it was estimated to be 20 hours per week. Mayor Alden and myself are both currently involved in a mentoring program for new councillors and I've heard the new councillors who are part of this program, already saying that the 20 hours of work a week is an underestimation of the workload involved.

I find it's somewhere between 30 and 50 hours. I know I've had 56 meetings/commitments since the last Council meeting with all the reading attached to these.

On top of that is the contact via email, Facebook, phone, text and messenger so as you can see it's a very busy role.

I will highlight some of these meetings.

My recent visit to St Liborius school Grade 6 class who are learning about democracy and the different levels of Government. Their room was set up like Parliament. We covered topics like what happens when the current landfill is full, illegal dumping in the bush, how the Council gets money, services to our rural communities, the request for more green spaces, and what they'd like to see at PKLC. There was mention of a wave pool which I've passed on to Lincoln.

I will come back to you too Kaylene with my answers to the questions but I know I wasn't thinking of these things when I was in Grade 6.

It is a reminder though of the many areas in people's lives that Council is involved in. One of the questions did however cause me to pause and rethink a Budget submission, which was linked to services Council provides to our rural areas. This is really important to me.

"Our first meeting of the Farming and Agribusiness Advisory committee (FAAC) was last Thursday night where the people who have been selected for this committee shared what their involvement is in the farming and agribusiness space. I said at the last meeting that I was very excited about the level of skill and experience involved in this committee. I was a little embarrassed to say at the meeting that my level of experience was reading Country Style, reading the Weekly Times and watching Landline.

I did however enjoy a visit to the Livestock Exchange this morning watching the kelpies doing what they do best, rounding up sheep. Lucky I'm just at the FAAC meetings to facilitate them.

I have also taken on the role of the Chair of the LMWRRG forum in the last month which I did put my hand up for. Waste is still such an interesting space and will continue to be during this term.

Councillors are full on with Budget workshops at the moment as the process is somewhat delayed when there is a Council election. You will no doubt hear more about this at the next month's Council meeting.

So for me it's a busy role but one I really enjoy doing".

11. 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.

Nil

12. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

12.1. Confirmation of Minutes

Purpose

The following items were considered at the Council Meeting held on Monday 15 February 2021 at the amended commencement time of 6:25pm:

Summary

Monday 15 February 2021

Report No.	Item	Recommendation
13.1	Petition: Kentucky Fried Chicken Establishment at the Corner of Howard Street and Midland Highway, Epsom - Traffic Issues	That Council: 1. Receive the petition and advise the lead petitioner of the response as outlined in the report; 2. Forward a copy of this report to the Department of Transport.
13.2	Petition: Request for the Bendigo Livestock Exchange to Provide Shelter Over Pens for Livestock	That Council receive the petition and a response be prepared within two (2) meetings.
14.1	603 Midland Highway Huntly - Display Major Promotion Sign	Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council resolve to issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for Display of Major Promotion Sign at 603 Midland Highway, Huntly 3551 subject to the conditions at the end of the report / on the following grounds: • The proposal will result in an unacceptable outcome for the streetscape and surrounding context and the Highway Entrances and Boulevards Policy. • The proposal fails to meet the provisions of Clause 22.29 Advertising and Signage Policy and Clause 52.05 Signs of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.
14.2	5718 Calder Highway, Kangaroo Flat - Construction of 32 Dwellings, Removal of	Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit

Report No.	Item	Recommendation
	Native Vegetation and Alterations to an Access to a Road in a Road Zone - Category 1	<p>for construction of 32 dwellings, removal of native vegetation and alterations to alter an access to a road in a Road Zone (Category 1) at 5718 Calder Highway, KANGAROO FLAT 3555, on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal results in the removal of an excessive amount of native vegetation and has not reasonably sought to avoid or minimize its impact on native vegetation. 2. The proposal does not adequately recognise, support, or protect the neighbourhood character as a peri-urban interface. 3. The proposal fails to support the Highway Entrances and Boulevards Policy, pursuant to Clause 22.08. 4. The proposal does not provide convenient parking for visitors to all dwellings within the subject land. 5. The proposal does not provide an adequate diversity of dwellings. 6. The proposed development's layout and form is not responsive to the site and local context and constitutes an overdevelopment of the land.
16.1	Bendigo Airport Lease of Lot IX23 and O7	<p>That Council, having complied with sections 190 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) by having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given public notice in the Bendigo Advertiser on December 19, 2020; and • That no submissions were received, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grants a lease to Community Two Way Radio Systems Pty Ltd for 440 square metres of land, being part of the land in certificate of Title Part Lot 3 PS 422204F, Volume 10557, Folio 954, known as Lot IX23 at the Bendigo Airport situated on 35 Victa Road, East Bendigo, (Land) for the purposes of an airport hangar, a space to operate his recreational aviation school, and storage of related equipment and consumables (Lease Proposal), for a term of seven years (with one seven-year option), with a commencing rent of

Report No.	Item	Recommendation
		<p>\$2,400 per annum plus GST.</p> <p>2. Grants a lease to Phoenix Aviation Pty Ltd for 216 square metres of land, being part of the land in certificate of Title Part Lot 3 PS 422204F, Volume 10557, Folio 954, known as Lot O7 at the Bendigo Airport situated on 35 Victa Road, East Bendigo, (Land) for the purposes of an airport hangar (Lease Proposal), for a term of 25 years (with no further options), with a commencing rent of \$1,680 per annum plus GST.</p>
16.2	Appointment of New Members for the Farming and Agribusiness Advisory Committee	That Council adopt the new committee members listed for the Farming and Agribusiness Advisory Committee.
17.1	Wolstencroft Reserve - Request for Transfer of Funds from Resource Recovery Reserve for Site Rehabilitation	<p>That Council, in order to enable the completion of the rehabilitation works at the Wolstencroft Reserve in accordance with the Environmental Protection Authority's Pollution Abatement Notice:</p> <p>1. approve the commitment of \$1.05M of funding from the Resource Recovery Reserve for the rehabilitation of the site in the 2020/2021 financial year</p> <p>2. Approve \$150k to complete the after-care monitoring and final reporting 2021/2022 financial year</p> <p>3. As with all reserve funded projects, any unspent funds would remain in the Resource Recovery Reserve at the completion of the project.</p>
19.1	Councillor Code of Conduct	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <p>1. Council adopt the Code of Conduct; and</p> <p>2. Each Councillor promptly signs and dates the Councillor acknowledgement section of the Code of Conduct.</p>
19.2	Contracts Awarded Under Delegation	That the contracts awarded under delegation, as outlined in this report, be acknowledged by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 15 February 2021, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rod Fyffe

Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

13. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Nil

14. PRESENTATION AND MANAGING GROWTH

14.1. City of Greater Bendigo Submission on Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy

Author	Chris Duckett, Acting Manager Regional Sustainable Development
Responsible Director	Bernie O'Sullivan, Director Strategy Growth

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy for Victoria (the draft strategy) and to seek ratification of the City of Greater Bendigo's (the City's) submission on the strategy which was provided to Infrastructure Victoria on 26 February 2021.

Summary

Infrastructure Victoria released the draft strategy for consultation on 9 December 2020 to inform preparation of the final strategy.

The Regional Sustainable Development Unit coordinated the City's response and prepared a submission which was endorsed by the City's Executive Management Team (the EMT) and the submission is included as an attachment to this report.

The submission is broadly supportive of the draft strategy but makes a number of recommendations where improvements could be made for the benefit of Greater Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the City's submission to Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy for Victoria that was submitted by the consultation deadline of 26 February 2021.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Policy Context

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

The key goals and objectives of particular relevance to the draft strategy include:

Goal 1: Lead and govern for all

1.5 – Take a leadership role in regional planning, advocacy and work in partnership with regional councils

Goal 2: Wellbeing and Fairness

2.2 – Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community outcomes

Goal 3: Strengthening the Economy

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

3.2 – Make it easier for people to transition from education to employment

Goal 4: Presentation and Managing Growth

4.1 – Plan for a Growing Population

4.2 – Plan to meet future housing needs

4.3 – Continue to implement strategies that increase the capacity of transport networks to better move people and goods and encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport

4.4 – Keep Greater Bendigo attractive with good quality public facilities and places

4.5 – Provide and maintain urban and rural infrastructure to support the liveability of our community

Goal 5: Environmental Sustainability

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

Goal 6: Embracing our Culture and Heritage

6.1 – Celebrate our unique heritage

6.3 – Offer and support a diverse range of events that attract and connect people

Background Information

In October 2015, the Victorian Parliament created Infrastructure Victoria as an independent advisory body tasked with developing Victoria's first ever state wide, 30-year infrastructure strategy. The first strategy was released in 2016. This draft strategy is an update and builds on the recommendations and findings from the 2016 strategy.

Further information on the draft strategy can be found at:

<https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/project/30-year-strategy/>

Feedback was sought from all Victorians on the draft strategy to help shape the final strategy before it is tabled in the Victorian Parliament in 2021. The Victorian Government will then have up to 12 months to respond and create its own five-year infrastructure plan for implementation.

Officers would have preferred to seek Council's endorsement of the submission prior to the consultation deadline of 26 February 2021, however due to the timing of the release of the draft strategy prior to the Christmas holiday period and the input required from other units in the organisation this was not practical.

The EMT therefore decided to endorse the submission and refer it to Council for formal ratification.

Report

In preparing the draft strategy, Infrastructure Victoria has reviewed and revised the recommendations from the 2016 strategy rather than starting with a blank slate.

The draft strategy has been developed during the global COVID-19 pandemic which has necessarily challenged the assumptions underlying the 2016 strategy. The impacts of the pandemic have been considered by modelling different scenarios including lower population growth than official forecasts and the effects of behavioural change such as the potential of more working from home. It is stated that further modelling on the potential impacts of the pandemic will be undertaken when further research and evidence becomes available.

In addition to COVID-19, other contemporary issues such as the impacts of the 2019-20 summer bushfires and the new target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in the Climate Change Act 2017 have been taken into account in the revision to the 2016 strategy.

The draft strategy is structured thematically and summarised under the four headings below.

Confront long-term challenges

This theme responds to uncertain and unpredictable events by ensuring that infrastructure is resilient to new climatic conditions, makes use of emerging technologies, assists with mitigating the effects of further pandemics and able to respond to a reshaped global economy, including disruptions to the recycling and resource recovery industries.

Manage urban change

This theme responds to the way that population growth has strained Victoria's infrastructure. It seeks to better integrate land use and infrastructure planning together with managing transport demand to make better use of existing and new transport infrastructure.

Harness infrastructure for productivity and growth

This theme recognises the need to maximise the efficiency of existing infrastructure whilst ensuring that if the State returns to rapid population growth, the required infrastructure can be delivered at the right time to support the productivity of Victoria's economy.

Develop regional Victoria

This theme identifies that infrastructure can support a region's competitive strengths and address the socio-economic disadvantages of some of Victoria's most vulnerable communities. Strengthening wellbeing and connectivity in the regions are also highlighted as areas where infrastructure plays an important role.

The draft strategy reflects a greater emphasis on regional infrastructure and seeks to build a deeper understanding of the infrastructure needs of the regions.

Included in the draft strategy are 95 recommendations for infrastructure policies, reforms and projects which are grouped under the four themes. The City's submission provides general commentary on each of the themes together with a response to most of the recommendations within each section where they are relevant to Greater Bendigo.

A series of discussion questions where it is suggested that further evidence and feedback be provided to better inform the final recommendations also forms part of the draft strategy. Where relevant, the City's submission has also provided a response to the discussion questions.

Please note that in the interests of brevity, where the City has not commented on recommendations or discussion questions, these have not been included in the submission.

Key gaps and suggestions for improving the draft strategy

In addition to responding to the recommendations and discussion questions, Infrastructure Victoria has requested that submissions respond to gaps or areas for improvement in the draft strategy.

Officers have identified the following areas that where it believes the draft strategy could be improved to the benefit of Greater Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region:

- Specific measures for unlocking land for growth (city centre and industrial and Crown land)
- Arts and Cultural Tourism Infrastructure
- Regional Airport Infrastructure
- Livestock Exchange Infrastructure
- Infrastructure for addressing regional food insecurity
- Infrastructure to address high youth unemployment rates and its links to lower educational attainment
- Infrastructure to support gold mining in the region.

Further detail on why the City considers these areas to be important and how the gaps could be addressed are provided in the submission.

Priority/Importance:

This is an important strategy for Greater Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region. It is expected that the Victorian Government will seek to implement the majority of the recommendations given that 89% of the recommendations in the 2016 strategy have either been completed or commenced.

Council should therefore take the opportunity to advocate for beneficial infrastructure and identify where improvements could be made to the draft strategy before it is tabled in the Victorian Parliament.

Options/Alternatives:

Council can choose not to ratify the submission.

Risk Analysis:

Failure to advocate for improvements in infrastructure could have long-term consequences for economic and sustainable viability of the City and wider region.

Consultation/Communication

Internal Consultation:

The EMT were engaged on two separate occasions, firstly on the proposed approach for providing a submission and secondly for feedback and endorsement of the draft submission.

A workshop to discuss the submission and outline responsibilities for providing input was held on 27 January 2021 with representatives from the following units:

- Regional Sustainable Development
- Healthy Greater Bendigo
- Active and Healthy Lifestyles
- Community Partnerships
- Engineering
- Tourism and Major Events
- Resource, Recovery and Education

Input was also sought from Property Services, Business Services and Bendigo Art Gallery.

The submission has been prepared with input from staff from these units.

The draft submission was also circulated to all Councillors for feedback prior to being presented to the EMT.

External Consultation:

The City participated in a Loddon Campaspe Regional Roundtable meeting on the draft strategy hosted by Infrastructure Victoria on 10 February 2021. Other participants included other municipalities in the region, State Government agencies and community and business groups.

Resource Implications

The staff resources required to prepare the submission were taken from within existing operational budgets. It is not expected that there will be further resource implications.

Attachments

1. City of Greater Bendigo Submission to Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Strategy.

Attachment 1 - Infrastructure Victoria Draft 30 year strategy CoGB submission



City of Greater Bendigo Submission to Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy

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1. Executive summary

This submission provides the City of Greater Bendigo's **(the City)** response to Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy **(IV strategy)** and has been informed by staff from across the organisation who have expertise in the topic areas. It should be noted that the timing of the consultation prevented the City from seeking Council endorsement of the submission prior to the deadline but formal ratification of the submission will be sought at the Ordinary Council meeting on March 15 2021.

The City generally supports the topics and directions raised in the IV strategy and commends Infrastructure Victoria for including a dedicated chapter on the infrastructure needs of regional Victoria as it seeks to make the transition out of the COVID pandemic. The City believes that the IV strategy correctly recognises each of the state's regions are unique and should be treated accordingly. Further, due to relative advantages and disadvantages, infrastructure responses in the regions need to be different.

The submission outlines 7 key areas where we believe the IV strategy could be improved.

2. Introduction

In February 2020, the City provided a detailed and holistic snapshot of where Greater Bendigo sits and what our unique needs are in relation to future infrastructure provisions in a submission to Infrastructure Victoria's *draft Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions report*.

The City's submission included the need to:

- Renew and expand core infrastructure: water, sewer, stormwater to support new development and enhance liveability, particularly in the City Centre.
- Revitalise the Bendigo Station Precinct and unlock underutilised land.
- Progress a large-scale greenfield employment precinct.
- Transition into a more distributed and locally owned energy economy.
- Reference food insecurity in terms of regional disadvantage.
- Address the large proportion of youth unemployment and its links to lower educational attainment.
- Grow sustainable jobs and investment
- **Increase access to safe and secure housing.**
- **Provide a more equitable distribution of public/active transport options.**
- **Improve community facilities.**

2



- **Attract and develop a higher skilled workforce and access higher quality digital technology.**

Within the 22 recommendations from the IV strategy that are included in the accompanying *Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions* key findings report (**regions report**), it is pleasing that four of the above key components of the City's submission were reflected (marked with **bold text**).

In section 3 the City's submission to the IV strategy provides general commentary on the themes together with a response to the discussion questions and specific recommendations where they relate to Bendigo. Note that the recommendations and discussion questions where we have not commented have been deleted from the table in the interests of brevity.

In section 4 we provide commentary on what we believe are the key gaps in the IV strategy with suggestions as to how they could be addressed.

3. Commentary and response to themes

3.1 Confront long-term challenges

The City agrees that the IV strategy must be resilient and able to adapt to a changing climate and be responsive to contemporary threats and issues such as pandemics and the disruption to the recycling and resource recovery industries. The use of emerging technologies to manage infrastructure is also supported.

The City has just released its *A Stronger Greater Bendigo 2030* Economic Development Strategy (**EDS**) 2020-2030 which outlines actions which aim to minimise the impact of job losses. The vision for *A stronger Greater Bendigo 2030* is to 'shape an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community where all people can thrive'. The EDS seeks to ensure that everyone living in Greater Bendigo will have the opportunity to thrive and participate in a great and liveable community. To realise this ambition, we need a people-centric approach to the implementation of the IV strategy.

The ambition includes actively and collaboratively working towards a city and community where our economy is contributing to a fairer and more prosperous place; people are much healthier and have greater levels of wellbeing; young people have more opportunities and relevant pathways to achieve at school and transition to better jobs, and our environment is looked after and better protected.

The EDS incorporates four strategic directions and fourteen broad initiatives, many of which align to the IV strategy.

Strategic Directions	Initiatives
Grow sustainable jobs and investment	1. Transform and revitalise our city centre
	2. Capitalise on the opportunities presented by our new gold rush
	3. Unlock land and build new key infrastructure particularly transport, to support major jobs growth and investment
	4. Invest in and support business innovation



	5. Strengthen our brand and connections to the world
Increase liveability for all	6. Support and enable a much healthier community
	7. Target investment in services, facilities and programs to communities most in need
	8. Support all our communities and people to reach their full potential
Better link jobs, education, skills and training offerings to the city and region's needs	9. Invest in building our higher education and skills training offerings and the transition pathways between them
	10. Build on current local and regional procurement programs
	11. Grow our unique leading-edge work experience and industry engagement programs
Be widely envied as a leader in innovative environmental and climate change initiatives	12. Plan and develop Bendigo and region as low carbon and circular economy leaders
	13. Transition to a regionally owned new energy economy
	14. Strengthen the city and region's long-term water services plan

3.1.1 Response to recommendations and discussion questions of Confront long-term challenges

1.1 Navigate the energy transition Recommendations	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
1 Accelerate the uptake of zero emissions vehicles	✓✓	Acceleration of the uptake of zero emissions vehicles will further enable the city to move towards renewable sources of energy, reducing costs and achieving our city's goal of zero net emissions of greenhouse gas by 2036, including adoption for public transport or a 'green fleet'.
2 Augment electricity transmission for renewable energy and resilience	✓✓	A key role that Cities can play is to lead in looking at placed base augmentation or Renewable energy generation – this recommendation is strongly supported by the City as we are currently developing a Citywide model with RMIT to initiate Community Gentialler models based on the existing "poles and wires" with Distributed Virtual Energy Network (grand scale micro grid).
3 Identify and coordinate priority Renewable Energy Zones	✓✓	This is critical to enable growth in the renewable energy distribution especially in Northern Victoria Bendigo would like to play a key role in supporting these initiatives.
4 Require 7-star energy-rated new homes in 2022, increasing towards 8 stars by 2025	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation, and it aligns well with the state government's proposed Environmentally Sustainable Development roadmap recently released. The roadmap to net zero building (CoAG agreement) should also be considered. Notwithstanding our support, the City asks that consideration be given to the potential impact on short term housing affordability given that this could be a significant change occurring in a short time frame.



5	Mandate a home energy rating disclosure scheme	✓✓	This is critical and strongly supported (not only energy disclosure but also thinking about equity and cost issues and possible CO2 emissions profiling as a future add on)
6	Make Victorian Government buildings more energy efficient	✓✓	The City would like to see Victorian Government buildings investigate the pursuit of zero carbon buildings if this is realistic and does not come at the expense of transforming a greater volume of building. In 2021, best practice in energy efficiency should not be business as usual and it should be transitioning to combining energy efficiency with onsite and offsite renewable energy and not connected to gas. Preferably this would also combine with measuring carbon emissions associated with building construction.
7	Reduce peak electricity use with demand management pricing	✓✓	Digital disruption to the energy market will continue to drive improvements to energy demand management systems. This recommendation is strongly supportive for larger industries especially in peak pricing – more demand management flexibility needs to be built into the system
8	Allow new gas-free housing estates and review current gas policies	✓✓	This recommendation is very strongly supported however there is the potential for this to go further to also include provisions or discussion about longer term transition off gas in current housing and city settings.
Discussion questions		Response	
How should the Government support Victorians to move away from using diesel and petrol to power their vehicles?		A clear and mandated incentive program for uptake of EV similar to programs in Europe (Norway) inclusive of incentivising charging stations and associated infrastructure. Intervene in the market to accelerate EV uptake and ICE engine decline.	
What other actions should be taken to improve energy efficiency in existing buildings?		A suite of support programs aligned to the EUA legislation for retrofitting homes. Another key element is to look at public building's asset life and a key decommissioning process for old low use high energy buildings and strategic precinct scale replacement in regional and rural areas with modern efficient high multi community use energy efficient buildings.	
What other action should the Victorian Government take to coordinate priority Renewable Energy Zones		Additional strategic consideration of policy for REZ is required to analyse how to generate renewable cheap energy where it is used and not to create multiple "renewable Latrobe Valley's" or mini centralised systems. For Greater Bendigo this means within our boundaries we can meet all our own needs and augment the system where required, building in both resilience to impacts and lowering line losses and needs from other areas (likely also reducing costs).	
How can households be better supported to transition to demand management electricity pricing?		Information is critical – make better use of Smart meters and digital technology. The market for demand management will mature in the forthcoming years as new digital methods of moving energy in real-time are realised. Key input from Smart meter data could be enhanced at household level (realising the full potential of them) this will be required to be done in a simple way as demand pricing is complex. Ensuring sound regulation on retailers and product selection (education and policy levers) will be critical. In addition, set a carbon price, continue to build on the great work the Victorian Government are doing in energy and provide incentives to transition (starting from more vulnerable).	



1.2 Respond to a changing climate Recommendations	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
9 Specify climate scenarios and carbon value in assessing infrastructure	✓✓	There is strong support to have consistency across state and local government when using climate scenarios for long term decision making. The focus, however, should be on integrating existing data into decision making rather than pursuing more/better data and delaying decisions. The CSIRO and DELWP Victorian Climate Projections , are updated yearly and focus on the 10 regions of Victoria and provide a potential starting point.
10 Strategically review climate consequences for infrastructure	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation. The scope could be expanded to include how projected climate impacts are translated into long term decision making. Two key questions should be considered, at what point of the decision-making process are projected climate impacts considered and what bearing will they have on decision making, i.e. How severe do projected climate impacts need to be before they heavily alter a project or even make a project unviable? The cost of this needs to be built into full asset life of the infrastructure so better comparison on alternatives can be made.
11 Consider all water supply sources	✓✓	There is strong support for exploring alternative water supply options such as stormwater and recycled water. Removing or reducing the policy and regulatory barriers is a key action to advance this.
12 Progress integrated water cycle management	✓✓	There is strong support to clarify responsibilities for integrated water management outcomes. Importantly, it would be worthwhile exploring future governance arrangements, as Victoria's complex arrangement of water related institutes makes IWM difficult and costly to implement. See Productivity's Commission report of IWM for further information (click here). Reviewing the current funding arrangements for stormwater management is an urgent priority as there are a significant number of stormwater assets across Victoria's regional councils that are deteriorating due to unclear and/or constrained funding mechanism (e.g. council rates are capped and heavily competing for other community needs). Developing a levy similar to Melbourne Water's Waterways and Drainage Charge (set rate per property) that could be applied to regional Council areas would be a worthwhile option to explore.
13 Improve decision-making for urban water investment	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation. However, the scope should be increased to also include the governance of urban waterways and groundwater management. Limiting the scope to just water supply will further entrench the siloed approach to water management. (see response to recommendation 12). The governance of urban waterways and groundwater management in Greater Bendigo is complicated by the legacy of gold mining. This has left a host of issues to deal with including rising contaminated groundwater, and highly modified urban waterways (e.g. concrete drains) that are nearing the end of asset life. Holistic governance would assist in addressing these issues.



14 Strengthen agricultural water security by modernising irrigation	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation, however the timeframe should be brought forward to the next five years. The reason being, the current 30-year timeframe delays the recommendation's urgency, which could result in it being idle during the IV strategy's lifetime. There is additional need to accelerate this recommendation due to the water sharing challenges in the Murray-Darling Basin. Future droughts will exacerbate the urgency for this.
15 Upgrade Victoria's emergency water network	✓✓	Strong support for this practical and important recommendation.
Discussion questions	Response	
How should the Victorian Government build community understanding of alternative water sources, such as recycled water for drinking?	There are many global cases studies to learn about this topic. A notable example is Perth's groundwater replenishment project (click here for link), whereby the WA's Water Corporation did a series of community engagement initiatives to build community confidence. This included (amongst others): a pilot plant that the community could tour, focus groups and community surveys to test perceptions, and a public awareness campaign. The important thing is it was done proactively, transparently and inclusively which lead to the successful community engagement. Additionally, the community engagement was done with plenty of lead time (e.g. before water shortages occurred), which allowed the community to build an understanding and deliberate on their options without pressure of water shortages.	
What would improve demand management of agricultural water?	Assist farmers and supporting communities to transition away from low-value yet high-water consumptive irrigated agricultural products (e.g., straw, lucerne, dairy, etc). This could include transitioning some farmers to dryland farming and/or irrigate a smaller area for high value crops (e.g., intensive horticulture, nut and fruit trees). Such transitions could reduce water demand from agricultural regions whilst building economic resilience and improve aquatic ecosystems. It is critical that this transition is proactive, as climate change risks stranding communities and infrastructure in drying landscapes. The City has a number of rural communities in our region who provide food. We need to be conscious that we are supportive of our farmers and the communities they operate in. Extensive investment from the Federal and State Governments have delivered modernised irrigation networks that improve water efficiency. We should continue to support the optimisation of this network and our farming communities to transition.	
What should be done to make infrastructure more resilient to climate change?	This is a very broad question and will vary greatly between different types of infrastructure and climate impacts. Scenario planning and integrating climate projections into decision making is the best way to understand the unique circumstances of a particular project and the impact of climate change. Following on from recommendation 10, it also needs to be considered that there will be situations where infrastructure cannot be made resilient to climate change and may have to be abandoned. Having robust climate projections and considering the impacts of climate change early in the decision-making process can help guard against this.	
1.3 Embrace technological opportunities	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
17 Prepare for increasingly automated vehicle fleets	✓✓	Strongly support preparing for a future form EV's next wave to AV's (critical and enabling infrastructure will be required to realise this potential especially using local government assets



		within the road /public space (5G and 'real time' machine to machine communication will be critical)
18 Facilitate integration of public transport with new mobility services	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation however consideration of community capacity building is also recommended (especially with respect to digital literacy) to support accessibility of new mobility services. Consideration of public device and internet access will also be important for community members who do not personally own smart devices. Community Hubs, Libraries, Neighbourhood Houses and Schools could play important roles in these regards. The City also recommends integration of school bus services into public transport services. There are many examples in regional, rural and remote communities where school buses currently run at less than full capacity yet other community members are unable to access them due to various government provisos.
20 Transform road network operations for all current and future modes	✓✓	The city is supportive of providing transportation options for all residents. That includes a reduction in the level of private car use and adoption and expansion of other transport modes including car share and active transportation. Investment from all levels of government is required to ensure this transformation meets the demands and timing of the community.
21 Use innovation to deliver better models of health care	✓✓	There is strong support for this recommendation, particularly given people living in regional, rural and remote communities generally experience poorer health outcomes and access to health care services than people living in metropolitan areas (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).
22 Modernise courts through digitisation and contemporary shared facilities	✓✓	It is assumed that Bendigo's new law courts will align with this recommendation. Greater Bendigo can leverage off the creation of a circular digital economy and a super high speed digital City with the 100GB Bendigo initiative – through the existing infrastructure assets of a local telco, the Bendigo City Centre can deliver speeds of 100GB/second to customers and the community.
23 Improve technology and infrastructure for a responsive police service	✓✓	Greater Bendigo can leverage off the creation of a circular digital economy and a super high speed digital City with the 100GB Bendigo initiative. Through the existing infrastructure assets of a local telco, the Bendigo city centre can deliver speeds of 100GB/second to customers and the community. This has enormous opportunity for digital interaction and the collection of data required by police services. In addition, real time monitoring and other Smart City initiatives can support active and passive public safety outcomes working between the Police other regulatory agencies. An example of this is utilisation of CCTV across Bendigo city centre to support policing and the partnerships that support this joined up service delivery.
Discussion questions		Response
What funds or policy frameworks have been used successfully to promote systematic innovation in infrastructure?		In 2017 the federal Government released the Smart City funding, and framework, which the City participated in. This didn't go far enough. A critical path for future cities will be understanding the Cities "health and performance" especially related to its assets (or infrastructure) as such key policies and alignment from the Commonwealth and state governments is required to drive alignment and investment into supporting cities understanding this asset base and utilisation in real time. This is especially important as costs continue to rise and budgets get tighter, and infrastructure ages. The Victorian Government has a digital twin function which needs to provide policy direction and support to Local Governments (where appropriate) with the need to consider national state and local policies



	for "Smart Cities" (or Sustainable and resilient Communities). The City has investigated frameworks outside of Australia as they do not exist well here such as ISO Standard 37106, models like Forum Virium in Helsinki.
What are the risks of adopting these new technologies?	There are inherent and standard digital security risks involved in digitalising infrastructure that need to be managed direction on this again should be provided at a national and then state level.
What changes can assist people to keep using telehealth services?	<p>Network coverage and speed improvements, community capacity building (especially with respect to digital literacy) and public device and internet access will be important enablers for future delivery and use of telehealth services.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of telecommunication and digital access in supporting community resilience and economic, health and social outcomes.</p> <p>Greater Bendigo has significantly higher proportion of households cannot access internet at home. Victoria wide, 19% of households do not have access, while in Heathcote and California Gully-Eaglehawk, 26% of households have no internet at home^{*1}</p> <p>Recent social research by the Bendigo Lod² highlighted the increased burden placed on rural residents during COVID-19, when the only way to participate in many aspects of everyday life was through digital access. Interviewees who tried to work from home during the period, expressed great frustration about trying to connect with clients and colleagues. A number expressed concerns about the quality of telehealth appointments. This research also highlighted that this presented barriers to Social connection and support through a time of crisis with internet and mobile phones being the main option³</p>
How should the Victorian Government assist adoption of these new technologies?	From a local government perspective the Victorian Government should establish an office for Digital transformation in government (similar to NSW) and link to three tiers of local government (Metro, regional Cities and rural communities). Ideally the centre for researching all this could be housed in Greater Bendigo at the newly developed Gov Hub where three tiers of government will work from the same building in a single jurisdiction location. This hub or centre would act as an innovator educator and exemplar working on real world problems in real time. A specific Smart City fund could also be deployed similar to NSW noting a key role would be knowledge transfer.
What other regulatory or policy changes can enable the operation of new infrastructure-related technologies?	<p>For regional areas, adoption of new infrastructure related technology is often limited by capability and skill retention in regional areas. Incentive-based Policy and Programs that support and/or fund tech-investment (both people and infrastructure) would be worthwhile to support capability growth.</p> <p>In relations to assets (infrastructure management) a possible option would be to ensure corporate systems can be better integrated and operated across local government (the same services are offered and needed but everyone has a different model). Regulating the minimum standards and providing incentives for decommissioning of</p>

¹ Infrastructure Victoria- [regional disadvantage fact sheet: Loddon Campaspe](#)

³ [Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership: Mobile Phone and Internet Access Issues in Loddon Shire and Rural Areas Of Greater Bendigo: 'Stories from the Bush' A snapshot of experiences](#)



	redundant system and subsequent adoption of more modern digital systems is critical for local government to manage community expectations (CX) and user interface (our staff or UX) into the future.	
1.5 Build a circular economy	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
28 Facilitate improved recycling infrastructure for priority materials	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
29 Strengthen end markets for recycled materials	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
30 Address barriers to recycling and reducing waste	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
31 Minimise waste and improve residual waste infrastructure planning	✓✓	This is supported by the City.

3.2 Manage urban change

Greater Bendigo has experienced sustained population growth with an increase of nearly 50,000 people in the last 30 years. This is predicted to continue and projected population growth rates in the order of 1.7% will see a total population of 200,000 by around 2050, with the region's population approaching 400,000. Anecdotally the City is hearing that in the short term COVID has increased the number of 'tree changers' to Greater Bendigo which is creating challenges in the housing market. The City looks forward to the release of the latest ABS population update to better understand this change. However, while this may present a shorter-term population boost, the longer-term impacts of COVID on population growth in regional cities are harder to predict. Should more flexible working arrangements continue, this may mean regional cities become even more attractive destinations to more individuals and families due to their liveability and affordability. This may lead to population and housing growth occurring at a faster pace and makes ensuring land use planning and infrastructure are better integrated even more important.

The smaller population of Greater Bendigo compared with Melbourne has enabled the City to be highly proactive in planning for the delivery of housing to align with the delivery of infrastructure. This includes the development of the Connecting Greater Bendigo: Integrated Land Use and Transport Strategy, Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan, Greening Greater Bendigo and Plan Greater Bendigo which identifies 18 high priority infrastructure projects across Greater Bendigo. The City welcomes any opportunity to further the implementation of these strategic documents through the IV strategy.

To better manage the needs of a growing population the City has recently commenced the preparation of a Managed Growth Strategy (MGS). The MGS will build upon past strategic planning work and will provide a framework for how Greater Bendigo can sustainably grow into the future to enhance the municipality's long-term liveability and prosperity. The MGS will plan for the coordinated delivery of residential and commercial land, infrastructure, and transport to meet the needs of the future population. It is expected that significant state government support will be required to ensure that key infrastructure is delivered to keep pace with expected the urban change.



3.1.2 Response to recommendations and discussion questions of Manage urban change

2.1 Integrate land use and infrastructure planning	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
32 Produce public plans for priority infrastructure sectors	✓✓	The City strongly supports this recommendation. Recently, the need for this type of plan emerged from the result of growth area planning in Maiden Gully and Marong. The VPA facilitated the <i>Bendigo West Infrastructure Action Plan</i> in effort to coordinate state-level infrastructure providers in an area encompassing more than two separate structure plans. The intention of this action plan was good; however, the actions included in the plan were worded weakly, in that service/infrastructure providers were only required to <i>monitor, consider, or investigate</i> future infrastructure shortfalls, rather than act on issues and provide the infrastructure or services when needed by the community. The City strongly recommends that Infrastructure Victoria specify that while these plans are to be published prior to decisions being made, the plans should expect a more reasonable level of commitment from providers so that the essential infrastructure/services, including social infrastructure, are provided in a timely manner.
33 Publish Victoria's transport plan	✓✓	The City is supportive of this.
34 Review Victoria's infrastructure contribution system to cover gaps	✓✓	The City is supportive of the continued review and implementation of the new ICP system across Victoria. However, recommends caution around the desire to develop a ridged / structured system when regional Victoria has such a wide variety of development settings and local contexts. The City is actively working with other regional Councils on an DCP / ICP toolkit, software and policies around development contributions, including assistance from the VPA.
Discussion questions	Response	
How can the Victorian Government make the proposed contributions schemes consistent and efficient?	This is a highly complex area that cannot be easily answered in this submission and is more appropriately considered in the review and reform of the contributions system that it is understood the Minister for Planning will be conducting in response to the VAGO report on Managing Development Contributions, March 2020.	



2.2 Create thriving urban places	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
35 Support more homes in priority established places	✓✓	This should include regional activity centres, such as Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, that are experiencing high population growth and demand for housing, but as regional Councils, find it difficult to resource structure planning. Priority established places in regional centres should be around transport and commercial hubs where it is appropriate to have higher density residential developments.
36 Deliver very low-income housing with inclusionary zoning	✓✓	Inclusionary zoning sets clear expectations for all stakeholders, removing the uncertainty, time and resource impost associated with negotiations, and can deliver targeted outcomes for communities. The voluntary mechanisms introduced in the planning system have proven difficult to implement. As with vegetation removal and infrastructure provision, without mandatory requirements within the planning system it is unlikely that these issues will be appropriately addressed.
37 Develop an interconnected open space network	✓	This recommendation includes the need to reform the developer open space contribution scheme to create an interconnected open space network and extend Melbourne's urban tree canopy. This recommendation should not just be limited to the Melbourne urban area. The City has recently adopted two major strategies that support this recommendation in Bendigo's context. These are the <i>Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019</i> , which has a major emphasis on developing an interconnected open space network, and <i>Greening Greater Bendigo 2020</i> , the City's first urban forest strategy. There is also a need to create spaces for water quality and green refuges and upgrade the drainage network to prevent flooding in growth areas due to limited capacity.
38 Partner with local governments to fund pedestrian infrastructure	✓✓	The City is supportive of this recommendation, and its application to regional Victoria. The development of dedicated walking/cycling trails supports active transport and multi-modal travel, as well as the activation of open space networks. The Healthy Heart of Victoria Program, a state government funded initiative, has also complemented local walking / cycling trails with free outdoor exercise equipment and monitoring data indicates the equipment is being well utilised. Currently there are limited funding streams to assist with the cost of developing such infrastructure, so ongoing funding of this nature would be welcomed.
39 Transform cycling in Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong	✓✓	This recommendation explains the importance of separated cycle ways and connecting cycling with public transport hubs. The City supports this recommendation and has adopted strategies providing relevant guidance and further actions (<i>Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo 2019</i> , <i>Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019</i> , <i>Connected Greater Bendigo: Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2015</i>). Further detail about Bendigo's priority areas would be helpful on page 118, where this recommendation is explained in further detail. These key priorities can be summarised as:

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safely connect existing cycling corridors to the City Centre (University to City Centre, Back Creek Trail, Bendigo Creek Trail) and provide separated cycle ways through the City Centre along agreed Strategic Cycling Corridors. 2. Provide a safe Bendigo to Eaglehawk cycling route. 3. Extend the Bendigo Creek Trail to Huntly to service the major growth area. 4. Fill the major missing link in the Bendigo Creek Trail by delivering the 'Low Line' project – a unique opportunity to use the bed of the concrete and stone sections of the Creek to provide a safe cycling and walking connection.
40 Improve walking and cycling data to better estimate travel impacts and benefits	✓✓	There is a wide array of commercially available movement data that can assist in informing active transport investment. Data needs to ensure capture of broad demographics / community inputs (e.g. novice to experienced) this is also supported in the context of "smart Cities" infrastructure to gain better insights.
41 Reallocate road space towards priority transport modes	✓✓	<p>This is strongly encouraged across all road categories and can be achieved with less CAPEX and OPEX investment. Priority should be given to integrating active transport networks that maximise usage / take-up. This must also include the riding / walking environment for these users and ensure allocation for large trees for shade.</p> <p>Engagement and advocacy are required across all utility providers to avoid the continued creep in allocation widths and offset requirements from their assets. As part of this debate the other public realm assets (especially trees) need to be given equal weighting in the discussion about road allocation spaces.</p>
Discussion questions		Response
What types of locations should be prioritised for building more homes?		<p>Future residential growth should be predominantly directed towards areas that have existing services that can support a higher population. In Victoria's regional cities, these areas are common but often overlooked due to easier to develop options of large-scale greenfield development. As many cities, and the state government as a whole, has experienced, the true cost of sprawling settlements is revealed in later years as the infrastructure plays catch-up to the development. This is despite the important role of Development and Infrastructure Contribution Plans where local governments can fund certain pieces of essential infrastructure, but projects like schools, public transport, arterial roads and health care services are consistently delivered late in the process, and their funding is subject to a competitive state-wide budget or political will.</p> <p>Greenfield residential development should continue to play a role in how Victoria accommodates a growing population; however, the infrastructure response needs to be stronger, and a greater level of certainty of how essential infrastructure will be provided is needed.</p>
How can the Victorian Government encourage more short trips to be taken by walking or cycling?		<p>The Victorian Government can encourage more short walking and cycling trips by ensuring that more housing, jobs and services are within a short trip.</p> <p>The State Government requires councils to maintain a 15-year land supply for new residential areas. This naturally relies heavily on greenfield growth areas to provide the vast majority of this supply as there is a greater level of certainty about their delivery. While this ticks one box of providing enough land for future growth, the result is sprawling cities that discourage trips taken by walking and cycling.</p>



	<p>The state government needs to do more to support local governments' efforts in making the most of established semi-established areas so that we have an urban fabric that is fit for purpose and encourages walking and cycling activity.</p> <p>The development of dedicated walking/cycling trails supports multi-modal travel and active transport modes, as well as the activation of open space networks. The Healthy Heart of Victoria Program has also complemented local walking/cycling trails with free outdoor exercise equipment and monitoring data indicates the equipment is being well utilised. Currently there are limited funding streams to assist with the cost of developing such infrastructure. There are also limited funding streams to assist with retrofitting for accessibility across other social infrastructure.</p>	
Where should more rental housing for very low-income Victorians be created?	<p>Rental housing for low-income Victorians should be created where there is adequate access to jobs, public transport and community services (including retail services such as supermarkets).</p> <p>This new housing stock should not be focussed in particular areas, as the type of housing needs to be diverse, so does their location. Regional areas should not be relied on heavily for the creation of low-income rental housing because of the lack of low-skill jobs available; the supply needs to split equitably across the state, including in metropolitan areas.</p>	
How can we meet the growing public transport needs of our ageing population?	<p>Public transport planning needs to align with other planning activities, and not rely so heavily on budget and election cycles.</p> <p>Acknowledging that a high-quality public transport network can be costly, the role of community transport solutions should not be overlooked. Several successful trials have now been run in regional Victoria. Community transport often results in a higher quality service for the user at a cheaper cost for government to provide/support.</p>	
2.4 Adapt infrastructure for modern needs	CoGB Level of support	Additional comments (input required from)
	Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	
54 Price parking at major public transport hubs, all train stations and park-and-rides.	✓	Encouraging public and active transport for connecting trips is a positive initiative; however, these options are rarely feasible in a regional context and this recommendation should only be applied in metropolitan areas. The capacity of car parking facilities at most regional stations is reached less often compared to metropolitan stations. Upgrade of active transport infrastructure should be undertaken in preference to price parking or at least in conjunction with price parking.
56 Require accessible buildings for public services	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
57 Rapidly renew old public housing	✓✓	The City agrees that there is a need for re-builds and repairs in public housing stock and there are a number of dwellings in Greater Bendigo that are currently unoccupied that need re-building or repairs. This must include mandatory minimum ESD standards. The existing DHHS design guidelines are only for new builds and dwellings can be exempted from the guidelines. Renewal should not just be about building a dwelling for current conditions that will once again age poorly, rather it should be designed for the future and be flexible, adaptable and resilient so that it can respond to both predicted and unexpected change.
58 Upgrade and rebuild public hospital infrastructure	✓✓	This is supported by the City.



59 Build back better after emergencies	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
60 Expand critical infrastructure definition and improve information flow	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
61 Incorporate lessons of emergency reviews	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
Discussion questions	Response	
How should the Victorian Government better incentivise good asset management?	<p>The Asset Plan now legislated in the Local Government Act 2020 is acknowledged as a good step forward. But Councils are grappling with increasing infrastructure maintenance and renewal gaps. There is growing recognition that some consolidation / rationalisation of existing infrastructure assets will need to occur if councils are to be financially sustainable. Conversations such as these are challenging from community and political contexts though. Funding streams should be linked to robust Asset Management practice.</p> <p>The City is endeavouring to develop a Greater Bendigo Community Buildings Policy and Community Hubs Strategy in consultation with DELWP and neighbouring councils, to assist Council's strategic planning in this regard. Additional insight and understanding of asset condition could be supported with adoption of better technologies in asset management.</p> <p>Work undertaken on Policy development indicates the principles of equity, accessibility, promoting wellbeing, partnering and sustainability should guide Council's future decision making. These principles were recommended following a deliberative engagement process.</p> <p>One of the challenges the City has identified in Policy and Strategy development is core service level hierarchies for regional, rural and remote community contexts e.g. how far is it reasonable to expect community members to have to travel to access different service levels?</p> <p>Discussion with staff from other regional and rural councils suggests they are also facing the same challenge. Having a statewide guideline for core service level hierarchies for regional, rural and remote community contexts would build Councillor and community confidence in the transparency and equity of future asset retention or divestment decisions.</p> <p>Another challenge the City has identified in Policy and Strategy development is the treatment of non-Council owned and managed community facilities e.g. community buildings on Crown land reserves, or Crown land reserves with Committees of Management (CoMs) reporting to the Minister via DELWP.</p> <p>The series of VAGO reports into Crown land reserves / CoMs highlights there is considerable scope for improvement in the current level of support provided, resulting in significant risk exposures. DELWP staff have indicated it has very limited capacity to respond to VAGO's recommendations. The CoM members (volunteers) strive to provide community facilities that are fit for purpose and ensure activities undertaken in them have appropriate insurance coverage. When DELWP is unable to provide the support they need, the City's experience is they look to councils for it.</p> <p>Whilst the City is committed to working collaboratively to achieve sustainable and people-centred future management models for Crown land reserves and associated community buildings, the Malone Park, Marong case study presented to Minister D'Ambrosio in January 2017 demonstrates the short and long term impacts that any change in Crown land or community building management responsibilities can have on the City's financial resources. These impacts have been brought into even sharper focus following the introduction of rate capping across all of Victoria's 79 councils from 1 July 2016, as part of the Victorian Government's 'Fair Go Rates System'.</p>	

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	<p>If there were to be a shift towards councils taking on increased Crown land or community building management responsibilities, this would need to be contingent upon appropriate, ongoing resourcing levels.</p> <p>The Victoria Government should also shift the focus of funding to include good asset management principles of maintenance and replacement of existing asset as a priority. State Government is generally confined to new or upgraded infrastructure which only adds to the maintenance and operating burden that is borne solely by Local Government.</p>
How can the private sector contribute its expertise to improve management of state assets?	<p>Patterns of volunteering are changing and this is impacting the sustainability of traditional CoM approaches to asset management.</p> <p>Many community members have indicated to the City they want to 'have a voice' in asset management but not bear the operational or risk management responsibilities. Many are also rich in 'good intentions' but poor in 'governance knowledge / skill', contributing to capability challenges. The majority are time poor. Can the private sector support the development of disruptive models or technologies that could assist in re-shaping volunteer involvement in asset management?</p>
How might resilience be better considered in managing assets?	<p>The true cost of resilient asset development / renewal and life cycles needs to be acknowledged and resourced so that resilience elements do not get 'traded off' as part of project delivery value management decisions. Measuring and monitoring programs to establish impacts could be considered (digital twins) as could improved digital asset monitoring tools.</p>



3.3 Harness infrastructure for productivity and growth

Making fiscally responsible, efficient and productive use of existing infrastructure will be critical in helping to drive the state's economic recovery and the City supports the emphasis that the IV strategy places on improving transport and social infrastructure to increase connectivity across the state. The recognition of the important role that green infrastructure has in making urban areas more liveable is also welcomed.

3.3.1 Response to recommendations and discussion questions of Harness infrastructure for productivity and growth

3.1 Shape the transport network for better access	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
63 Connect suburban jobs through premium buses and road upgrades	✓✓	The City supports this recommendation and encourages action to be made in regional settings as well. Premium buses with higher frequencies, shorter travel times and longer operating hours can support the major consolidation of jobs occurring in many regional city centres (Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong), as well as providing solutions to other major employment areas, like hospital and university precincts. Consideration, and potential facilitation roles, could also be given to the evolution of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and the potential for private sector initiatives that align to major employment nodes, sporadic usages, etc. Especially where levels of disadvantage are higher and for remote located large businesses.
Discussion questions	Response	
How does the quality of public transport services affect where people choose to live and work?	In terms of public transport in Greater Bendigo, the primary consideration for peoples' choice in housing is rail services – in that people choose to live in Bendigo in general because of regular train services to Melbourne and nearby towns. Minimal consideration seems to be placed at a finer-grain level. This is evident by how well land in growth areas sells without any reasonable public transport service at all. Research indicates that without fixed infrastructure (rail, rapid bus infrastructure), public transport won't be considered as a reliable long-term option given the lack of certainty associated with the network. For example, a bus stop may be available close by, but the network is subject to significant changes that could compromise a quality service over a longer period.	
What would make buses more attractive to use?	Greater Bendigo's urban bus network could be described as more of a social service, rather than a transport service. While the services are predominantly reliable, clean and safe, it cannot compete with car trips, and to a certain extent bicycle trips, in terms of speed and up-front cost (including costs of car parking). Bendigo's bus passengers are overwhelmingly concession card holders. It is estimated that 90% of passengers are eligible for a concession card. More accurate data for this claim cannot be provided, as the majority of passengers are also fare evaders (based on anecdotal estimates). As a result, the State Government cannot collect accurate patronage data and recovers a small percentage of the overall cost of the network from fares. For these reasons, the City encourages Infrastructure Victoria to recommend a trial for free bus travel in Bendigo for at least a one-year period.	

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	Further improvements could be made if bus services were more direct when servicing areas on a city's periphery and activity centres and more suitable frequencies are provided during peak times. Finally, consideration should be given to new "green fleet" buses that use electric power and not diesel. Trials across Australia have demonstrated the benefit of a quieter, cleaner and green fleets.	
3.2 Plan for growth areas	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
68 Prioritise and oversee infrastructure delivery in growing communities	✓✓	The suggestion of a dedicated government body to oversee infrastructure delivery is supported and an extension of the Victorian Planning Authority's reach would be the most efficient way of facilitating this given their work and expertise in growth areas. The recommendation suggests that this would be limited to Melbourne which does not reflect the growth area infrastructure needs of an increasing number of regional Councils that are planning for new and expanded suburbs. The recent migration trends from Melbourne to regional centres has highlighted the desire for regional lifestyle if the employment arrangements can accommodate. This means that any sustained trend in this migration will require accelerated investment in urban growth planning and infrastructure
71 Target 30% tree canopy coverage in new growth areas	✓✓	This recommendation has strong alignment with the <i>Greening Greater Bendigo</i> tree canopy cover targets from 20.4% in 2020 to 25% by 2030; 35% by 2050; and 45% by 2070. The greatest threat to achieving these targets is the clearing of land for new development and the incremental impacts on existing trees and landscapes from works, services and land use change. Greater emphasis should be placed on the retention of existing vegetation within growth areas, where possible, with the expertise to do so effectively incorporated into early planning stages. The avoid>minimise>offset framework is loosely applied as it is common practice to assume all vegetation in subdivisions lost and offset off site. Greater room needs to be afforded to allowing for canopy trees to be planted in new areas, both above and below-ground, with minimum soil volume requirements and widths of nature strips and medians. More could be done to mandate the consolidation of utilities and services in the public realm as the planting of trees and development of canopies is severely compromised by clearance requirements such as those under the Electricity Safety Regulations. Trees are not considered essential infrastructure and environmental considerations frequently get outweighed by consideration for roads, telecommunications and utilities, each with their own acts and regulations. The City supports the proposed changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions for the protection and provision of urban trees and urban cooling applied through the PPF and particular provisions.
Discussion questions	Response	



What else can the Victorian Government do to ensure the right infrastructure arrives at the right time in areas experiencing rapid growth?	As discussed above the VAGO report has recommended a complete overhaul of the DCP and ICP system and the review being undertaken by the Minister for Planning is expected to address what needs to be done. Alternative infrastructure investment models should also be considered that encourage early investment from Local Government and / or the private sector. These might include zero interest loads, etc. Develop a detailed live mapping base of all the State's urban growth areas, including employment, as well as all DCP and / or required infrastructure projects. This tracking will ensure a more proactive approach to planning, design, funding and delivery of these projects.	
How should the Victorian Government encourage more trees to be planted on private land in new growth areas?	Support for tools such as Green Factor to be incorporated into the Planning Scheme which measure and set targets for green infrastructure in developments. Address tensions between vegetation clearance exemptions within the bushfire management overlay and the expansions of the urban forest at the urban interface. Blanket planning policies and overlays such as the 10/30 and 10/50 exemptions for the clearing of all trees and vegetation in proximity to human settlements fail to address the complexities and traits of the vegetation itself and the role that vegetation plays in positively manipulating fire behaviour but also in making urban areas more liveable. Mandate that residential slabs and footings be constructed to a standard that allows for trees to be planted nearby. Many new slabs are laid when blocks are empty and street trees have not been planted. On planting, Councils are frequently pressured to remove new street trees from new owners whose insurance premiums go up accordingly. It is likely that insurers are also advising homeowners not to plant trees on their property for the same reason. Education to dispel misinformation about trees and their impact on adjacent infrastructure and provide design advice for infrastructure construction that has been co-prepared with input from arborists. Consider trees essential urban infrastructure and promote their multiple benefits.	
3.3 Align social infrastructure with better service delivery	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
72 Co-design an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Infrastructure Plan	✓✓	This is strongly supported by the City and would be supported through the actioning of the City's second Reconciliation Action Plan and would support self determination.
73 Set targets to grow social housing	✓✓	The City acknowledges and support state government's Big Build housing investment but more needs to be done and setting targets is a positive initiative. Victoria has a history of spending less on social housing than all other states in Australia, therefore setting a target will be vital to ensure supply can meet demand. While a target of 4.5 is certainly higher than current levels, targets should be aligned with supply and demand rather than a comparative average. The need for social housing in many Victorian LGA's is on average closer to 10 per cent, and the basis of any target in Council's strategies and policies is around need. If the Victorian target is aligned with LGA's then it will also reflect supply and demand in our communities.
75 Deliver infrastructure for a better mental health system	✓✓	This is supported by the City. There is a need to recognise the link between social inclusion and cohesion and mental ill health, thereby reinforcing the need for Community Hubs that facilitate community connectedness and provide places for outreach services (making services more accessible).

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Discussion questions	Response
What is a reasonable target for social housing growth in Victoria?	See: https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Draft%20Affordable%20Housing%20Action%20Plan.pdf
What other opportunities are there to better align social infrastructure with service delivery?	The City suggests a greater focus on schools as community hubs, particularly in rural and remote communities, and especially for kindergarten (3- and 4-year old) services.

3.4 Develop regional Victoria

As previously discussed, the City fully supports the inclusion of a chapter in the IV strategy dedicated to the infrastructure needs of regional Victoria as it seeks to recover from the major disruptions of last summer's bushfires and the ongoing pandemic.

In recent years Greater Bendigo has benefited from significant equity and fairness of investment such as through the Bendigo Hospital and GovHub projects. As we seek to move to a post-COVID economy there has perhaps never been a better time to advance regionalisation in Victoria as the trend of people moving from big cities to regional areas becomes more entrenched.

Greater Bendigo is particularly well placed to take advantage of the trend with its vision of creating the world's most liveable community and as we move towards a 100gig city which will enable the region to better compete in the global economy and strengthen our reputation as an innovative place to do business.

To assist Greater Bendigo achieve its potential, continued investment in rail infrastructure is critical. We agree that Very Fast Rail is not the panacea for improving employment and education connections or addressing Melbourne's growth challenges but the City strongly believes that significant investment is required to improve not just services and capacity but journey times between metropolitan and regional areas and intra rail services between major regional cities should also be considered as long term projects.

3.4.1 Response to recommendations and discussion questions of Develop regional Victoria

4.1 Enhance market access and productivity	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
77 Deliver funding certainty for regional road maintenance and upgrades	✓✓	Apart from the federal government's Roads To Recovery program funding for maintenance works is left to local government to manage. Similarly, with funding to replace existing assets. Federal and state government funding needs to reflect established responsible asset management practices and support the maintenance and renewal of existing assets instead of focussing largely on new infrastructure which only adds to the maintenance funding requirements of local governments
80 Continue to address regional Victoria's digital connectivity gaps	✓✓	There is strong evidence to substantiate that digital disadvantage aligns with other forms of disadvantage such as social and economic and the benefits of the digital economy cannot be shared when some members of the community are still facing real barriers to online participation.



	<p>Digital inclusion is based on the premise that everyone should be able to make full use of digital technologies – to manage their health and wellbeing, access education and services, organise their finances and connect with friends, family and the world beyond.</p> <p>The Australian Digital Inclusion Index measures three vital dimensions of digital inclusion: Access, Affordability and Digital Ability. Higher scores mean greater digital inclusion. In 2019 the score for Australia was 61.9, for Victoria it was 63.3 whilst for Rural Victoria it was 56.3. These figures present an opportunity to support initiatives for improving digital literacy and access to digital services, including but not limited to the expansion of services from public libraries.</p> <p>Victoria should lead the country in Digital Connectivity and inclusion, literacy and moreover utilise Digital as a base for new jobs and investment, research and development. Building out the regional digital capacity and capability will have long lasting impacts across all parts of the economic, social and environmental landscapes. A significant investment needs to be made to connect everyone to a standard to participate in the new economy (a digital economy) this is especially evident during the Covid pandemic</p>
Discussion questions	Response
Are there other cost-effective ways to enhance the market access and productivity of regional businesses and industry?	<p>Economic growth requires continued local and regional investment to drive productivity and innovation and to deliver more and better jobs and higher wages. Ensuring our local businesses are strong and vibrant is the key to growth. We want a region that not only encourages aspiration, ambition, hard work and endeavour but also fosters innovation, imagination and invention.</p> <p>A thriving ecosystem comprises entrepreneurial hubs and co-working spaces; connections between entrepreneurs and mentors; access to angel investment and venture capital; access to entrepreneurial education; and events and activities that activate participation within the startup community. The expansion of educational programs for retailers and small businesses in understanding digital disruption, export and the impact of working in a globally competitive market is also required. Further investment in our libraries recognises the major role they play as smart city hubs.</p> <p>The implementation of a locally based capital raising fund to support local startups and scaleups, creatives and entrepreneurs will attract new investment, create new jobs and retain existing jobs in the region. It will support businesses to improve their productivity and competitiveness, driving knowledge and innovation.</p>
Are there specific locations where improving physical or digital connections would have a significant impact on regional economies?	<p>In short, everywhere, noting future proofing the digital connectivity is only one element (enabling infrastructure) in particular the needs could be considered based on a comparative economic advantage as well. The City has been exploring the need to create a "innovation economic corridor" and the backbone of this is existing and new digital infrastructure required. Building out the recent Gig State announcement and filling in the blackspots is critical for Victoria to be a globally leading player in the new economy. Existing infrastructure (such as for example VicTrack fibre assets) needs to be better mobilised for the benefit of the entire regional economy (multipliers). The current 100 Gig Bendigo pre-feasibility project highlighted the underutilised fibre assets due to the complex public and private fibre arrangements, better enabling the use of these will unlock significant potential for the regions along the rail corridors where this fibre exists. The Victorian Government should look closely at a partnership model to unlock the potential rather than market forces (recent EOI). The specific locations for digital connection include Bendigo as a Hub - (Bendigo is the only city in regional Australia to have two tier three data centres and 100gig symmetric connection in its city centre) the rail corridor and major towns along the route (Gisborne, Kyneton,</p>



	<p>Castlemaine, Echuca and then satellite to Maryborough and other outlying areas of the Loddon Campaspe region – similar regional models could be tested elsewhere utilising the same approach and leveraging the existing infrastructure in the short term. Additional pressure needs to be put on NBN roll out and the integration of a range of private providers and the role of Federal and State governments in deploying programs for digital infrastructure. This is critically important as 5G is rolled out.</p> <p>You can't just provide the connections – the example provided is coupled with enabling institutions to create many opportunities for new jobs. The example Kaiserslautern in Germany and the creation of 15,000 high tech jobs by placing the Fraunhofer in Kaiserslautern (IESE) Institute of Experimental Software Engineering in the City (same size as Bendigo) building a bridge between research and practise utilising digital technology.</p>	
4.2 Unlock regional economic growth opportunities	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
81 Upgrade power supply for agriculture and regional manufacturing	✓✓	<p>This initiative is strongly supported.</p> <p>The challenge with these types of infrastructure industries is the upfront costs of commencing these projects and / or precincts. The state is seeing its largest ever investment in regional based renewal energy and there needs to be a better alignment between regional energy needs and the needs of the grid and locations of industry.</p> <p>In Greater Bendigo we have many situations where power infrastructure is under capacity and this limits industrial investment, however the cost to upgrade is too large for any individual tenant/site.</p> <p>There is no doubt that regional Victoria would benefit from a “build it and they will come” strategy. This would remove significant upfront costs and facilitate a reliable stream of industrial and/or intensive agriculture investment. Planning larger scale investments and precinct planning requiring self-contained utilities should be considered especially for new site such as new industrial land.</p>
82 Plan for future investments in regional nature-based tourism infrastructure	✓✓	<p>There is considerable economic benefit in nature-based tourism and the Loddon Campaspe Regional Economic Growth Strategy, 2019 identified a need to improve the perceived value of the region's natural landscapes, ensuring management of forests achieves the dual aim of improving their condition and increasing usage by both visitors and tourist.</p> <p>The Bendigo Regional Destination Management Plan also makes extensive reference to the value of further development of nature based tourism product/infrastructure within the Bendigo Regional Tourism boundaries. Consumer sentiment reports from state government consistently offers feedback that people are increasingly looking to experience nature based offerings around the state.</p>
83 Develop a Victorian Aboriginal tourism strategy	✓✓	<p>A significant gap in tourism not only in Victoria but across Australia is the lack of a meaningful and credible Aboriginal tourism strategy that has the potential to build such an enormous point of</p>



		difference for our state and nation. This should be a high priority moving forward and well within the 30-year timeframe.
84 Boost tourism infrastructure by allowing more national parks to grant long leases	✓✓	Agree with this recommendation. Australia has an abundance of natural resources, possibly more than any other country in the world and as such with careful allocation, growing the number and length of leases in national parks would make a critical difference to tourism.
Discussion questions	Response	
Are there other cost-effective infrastructure solutions that can unlock regional growth in industries of competitive strength?		Consideration should be given to the Essential Service Commission and utility agencies to adopt a similar model to DCPs / ICPs. Whereby the development industry only pays a pro-rata share, or series of staged payments, of large upfront utility costs. These "lumpy" utility challenges are significantly imbedding regional development, including both residential and employment land.
Are there specific locations where implementing these recommendations would have a greater impact on regional economies?		The City is currently planning for a potential new Industrial Business Park at Marong. The preliminary assessment of up-front costs for this precinct are significant and reflect an inherent capacity issue with the Marong township and the City's western growth corridor, especially for water, sewer and power.
4.3 Connect the regions to help strengthen wellbeing	CoGB Level of support Strong (✓✓) Partial (✓) None (✗)	Additional comments (input required from)
85 Reform regional public transport to meet local needs	✓✓	The City recommends integration of school bus services into public transport services. There are many examples in regional, rural and remote communities where school buses currently run at less than full capacity yet other community members are unable to access them due to various government provisos. Given public transport in regional areas is primarily bus services, these services need to ensure that they are efficient to encourage movement away from private vehicle use. Metro drivers of changes such as traffic congestion and parking fees are not drivers in regional areas and the bus services need to be efficient to encourage use
86 Improve resilience of regional telecommunications infrastructure	✓✓	Strongly supported especially in considering emergency response requirements
87 Fund regional libraries to provide better internet access	✓✓	The City strongly supports this recommendation. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of telecommunication and digital access in supporting community resilience and economic, health and social outcomes. Libraries with good public internet access offer important social infrastructure / services however operational funding for libraries is highly constrained and the costs of providing good public internet access is typically beyond their reach.
88 Use rural schools for children's specialist and allied telehealth services	✓✓	The City strongly supports this recommendation and also suggests schools in rural and remote communities could be a focus for community hubs and where kindergarten (3- and 4-year old) services are delivered.



89 Deliver multipurpose shared social service facilities in the regions	✓✓	<p>The City strongly supports this recommendation: multi-purpose / shared infrastructure and co-located services make good economic, environmental and social sense, and there is now an international body of evidence that indicates this approach contributes to improved community health and wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Recent projects across Melbourne's growth areas also highlight the benefit of the early establishment of these facilities, creating a community hub / node that facilitates strong community integration and support.</p> <p>One challenge with these facilities is the facilitation and / or funding of quality governance arrangements that benefit all areas of the community. As these facilities get larger and are required to "work harder", the need for place / centre managers becomes essential to their success. Local Government on its own does not have the resources and funding to make these facilities successful.</p>
90 Support regional councils to update, repurpose or retire outdated community infrastructure	✓✓	<p>The City strongly supports this recommendation however the true cost of resilient asset development / renewal and asset life cycles needs to be acknowledged so that resilience elements do not get 'traded off' as part of project delivery value management decisions. Councils are grappling with increasing infrastructure maintenance and renewal gaps. There is growing recognition that some consolidation / rationalisation of existing infrastructure assets will need to occur if councils are to be financially sustainable. Conversations such as these are challenging from community and political contexts though. The City is endeavouring to develop a Greater Bendigo Community Buildings Policy and Community Hubs Strategy in consultation with DELWP and neighbouring councils, to assist Council's strategic planning in this regard. One of the challenges the City has identified in Policy and Strategy development is core service level hierarchies for regional, rural and remote community contexts e.g. how far is it reasonable to expect community members to have to travel to access different service levels? Discussion with staff from other regional and rural councils suggests they are also facing the same challenge. Having a statewide guideline for core service level hierarchies for regional, rural and remote community contexts would build Council and community confidence in the transparency and equity of future asset retention or divestment decisions.</p>
91 Create climate-adapted facilities for rural communities	✓✓	Community hubs play an important role as places of cold and heat respite for community members, meaning they should be as energy efficient as possible to offset operating costs.
92 Build regional residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities	✓✓	This is supported by the City.
93 Fund more Youth Foyers in regional Victoria	✓✓	This is supported by the City as a primary pathways out of intergenerational poverty is through education and employment. Youth Foyers have a high success rate for young people staying engaged with education and gaining employment.
94 Expand social housing in regional centres, in locations with good access	✓✓	<p>Although housing prices are affordable in comparison to metropolitan areas, many are struggling to secure and maintain appropriate housing in regional centres.</p> <p>Greater Bendigo currently has approximately 2,400 occupied social housing dwellings, yet there are still more than 2,500 people waiting to be housed. Further households are at risk of a housing crisis, with almost 26% experiencing housing stress in 2016. There is also growing</p>



		pressure on the housing market, with a rental vacancy rate of 1.1.% (August 2020) and very few properties coming onto the market for sale. This current situation means the most vulnerable people in our community either live in housing they cannot afford, remain living in family violence situations, or become homeless. It is imperative that there is further investment from state government to deliver more social housing in regional centres.
95 Make social housing suitable for changing local climates	✓✓	Housing that meets ESD standards allows tenants to have reduced energy bills and an improved quality of life. Paying less for energy means that tenants do not have to sacrifice food, clothing or other basic needs. Tenants can feel more empowered to improve their health and wellbeing and see a pathway out of social housing. It is important that housing built now is built for the future. Housing needs to be flexible, adaptable and resilient so that it can respond to both predicted and unexpected change. All social housing should meet a minimum NatHERS rating of 7 stars – both new and existing housing. There should be no exception for new housing to meet this minimum rating, regardless of whether it is public or community housing. Programs designed to retrofit existing social housing stock to improve energy efficiency should continue.
Discussion questions		Response
Are there other cost-effective infrastructure solutions that build health, wellbeing and inclusion in regional Victoria?		The City has outlined in section 4 how the IV strategy needs to address regional food insecurity.
Are there specific locations where implementing these recommendations would have a greater impact on regional communities' health, safety and inclusion?		The Healthy Heart of Victoria – Active Living Census 2019 provides great fine-grained data to support the food security lens and other important local data that can help to identify priorities for health, safety and inclusion for the whole Loddon Campaspe region.

4. Key gaps in the strategy and suggestions for improving the strategy

Whilst the regions report which informed the IV strategy picks up on some of the key issues raised in the City's submission from February 2020, there are a number of components that have not been addressed which we believe should be considered together some other key infrastructure requirements. More detail is provided under the following headings as areas where the City respectfully requests that the IV strategy should be amended.

Specific measures for unlocking land for growth (city centre and industrial and Crown land)

In Section 2.4 of the regions report (Stakeholder Submissions), enabling infrastructure was listed as a common theme found in the submissions. "*Stakeholders across Victoria's regions highlighted the need for basic infrastructure to support future investment and industry development*". The report noted that submissions explained that there were opportunities to enable more tourism and address constraints on development in the mining and energy sectors.

Greater Bendigo's submission noted that the City needs a renewed/upgraded core infrastructure network to support more affordable commercial and residential development in the city centre. The need for this infrastructure shouldn't be understated. A particularly significant constraint is that the potable water network



doesn't have enough pressure to serve new buildings over 4 storeys high resulting in this type of development being unviable as developers have to install a pump/booster which can escalate costs and make these types of developments unviable.

Facilitating development in Bendigo's city centre and station precinct is important for the city's long-term economic viability and sustainability and failing to do so puts at risk, the strategic goal in the Loddon Mallee South Growth Plan, of promoting Bendigo for higher density residential development. In attracting more business, activity and a higher population, the city centre can become a more thriving vibrant, safer, healthier and attractive urban activity centre. This is supported across all of Council's relevant policies and strategies, but particularly in the *Bendigo City Centre Plan 2020*, which included renewing and upgrading this core infrastructure network as a high priority action.

In addition to the infrastructure requirements for the city centre, ensuring adequate industrial zoned land is critical to attracting and maintaining manufacturing businesses and industry in the region. This was a key direction of the Loddon Mallee South Growth Plan in 2014. At that time the preferred site was the Marong Business Park but as compulsory acquisition of the land was not supported by the Planning Minister, the City is yet to secure land to facilitate the greenfield employment precinct.

Whilst unlocking industry growth opportunities with power supply upgrades as outlined in the IV strategy is welcomed, the immediate priority for Bendigo and the surrounding region is securing and servicing land for industrial purposes. We think the IV strategy needs to recognise that this is a priority for the Loddon Campaspe region.

There is also significant potential in a regional City like Greater Bendigo to better utilise state government and Crown land much of which is very well located for services and infrastructure. This would help in responding to the state government policy direction for delivering more housing in established areas. A recommendation around the implementation of this would be welcomed.

Arts and Cultural Tourism Infrastructure

In section 4.2 Unlock regional economic growth opportunities, the IV strategy correctly identifies that, tourism will be a critical component of regional Victoria's economic recovery and support for the industry to further develop the range and quality of tourist experiences available at this time will be vital to encourage future growth.

Whilst the nature and aboriginal based tourism recommendations in the IV strategy are fully supported, it is stated in the Loddon Campaspe summary of the regions report, that, '*Tourists are attracted by the region's cultural institutions and events, such as Bendigo Art Gallery, Castlemaine State Festival and the Riverboats Music Festival...*'. Despite the acknowledgement of the role of the cultural tourism the IV strategy is silent on the evident need to build on this success and respond to the infrastructure needs of these institutions.



An example where an upgrade to Arts and Cultural Tourism infrastructure could have significant regional benefits, is at the Bendigo Art Gallery which is planning for a major building expansion that will create new community learning facilities and expand its visitor capacity.

As Australia's largest Regional Gallery and second most visited Gallery in Victoria, the success of Bendigo Art Gallery has caused it to outgrow its current facilities. The Gallery is currently unable to meet the needs of visitors due to its limited public spaces (particularly evident during a blockbuster exhibition) The Gallery struggles to service education groups in the region, it does not have the facilities to provide engagement for families, new and diverse communities and has limited public and commercial offerings.

The proposed development will remodel and add to the existing buildings offering the following features:

- A world class Learning Centre
- A Dedicated Place of Keeping for the Dja Dja Wurrung collection
- A new façade with placemaking architecture, flat and accessible forecourt and civic square to View Street
- The civic square includes a Dja Dja Wurrung landscape and ceremony space.
- A dedicated and flexible first floor housing blockbuster exhibitions
- Enhanced ground floor gallery spaces dedicated to more display of the Bendigo Art Gallery's collections and free exhibitions.

Prior to the impacts of COVID-19, the visitor and events' economy has become an important economic pillar with over three million visitors to the Bendigo region, including 1.3 million overnight visitors, a 19.5 per cent growth on the previous year and a 92 per cent growth over the past 10 years. In addition to the imperative of advancing the Bendigo Art Gallery redevelopment, a number of other Bendigo tourism infrastructure projects, listed below, are in need of support to ensure that the City is well placed to respond to the need of the increasing number of visitors to Bendigo.

- Progress the Golden Dragon Museum Redevelopment
- Engage with and help with developments needed at the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion - e.g. new access road to the site
- Revitalise the Central Deborah Gold Mine ground floor experience
- Support and fast track the Bendigo Showgrounds Masterplan and ultimately the redevelopment of that facility

Regional Airport Infrastructure

The IV strategy does not make any reference to the important role that regional airports could have in driving the post COVID-19 economic recovery. The 2017 upgrade to Bendigo Airport's runway enabled air transport services including QantasLink's inaugural direct flight from Bendigo to Sydney marking the first commercial flights to the region in over 30 years. This has created opportunities for people to come to the region to work, live and visit.



To take full advantage of these and future opportunities, Bendigo Airport should have an aerodrome capable of landing small to medium passenger aircraft, i.e. Boeing 717, Embraer E190 etc. These are possible under the existing footprint without further environmental impacts; however, the upgrade requires significant pavement strengthening which should be delivered in the next 10 years in order to keep pace with the rapidly changing domestic travel climate. This upgrade would also give greater capacity to Large Air Tankers and Defence aircraft which will increase the resilience of the region in being able to respond to future bushfire threats.

Bendigo also needs to consider further development opportunities for a burgeoning aviation training industry, with infrastructure to meet these growing demands. Existing infrastructure at Bendigo aerodrome should be further protected under planning law to reduce red tape and growing costs, particularly in the area of offsetting future native vegetation removal.

Livestock Exchange Infrastructure

Whilst the IV strategy acknowledges the transportation and future water supply needs for livestock, there is no reference to livestock exchange infrastructure needs. Around a quarter of all sheep and lambs sold through saleyards throughout Victoria are undertaken at the Bendigo Livestock Exchange which represents some 1.2 million animal sales valued at around \$160 million to the economy. These sales (sheep, cattle and pigs) at the Bendigo facility support the business operation of around \$1 million in revenue per year which is managed by the City of Greater Bendigo.

In a warming climate, increased shelter requirements are becoming necessary at saleyards in order to meet community expectations. Bendigo's saleyard with a sheep yard in excess of 44,000 square metres makes such a shelter a significant piece of infrastructure to be delivered. The shelter would allow for further cost and environmental benefits, such as a solar farm, water harvesting and sale operation efficiencies.

Improved Heavy Vehicle access and freight corridors for are also important infrastructure requirements for the Livestock. At present access to the Livestock for a number of Heavy Vehicles includes using small single lane roads with heavy traffic, tight intersections and school traffic in order to navigate around Bendigo city centre. The development of a bypass road linking Huntly and Marong is a key piece of infrastructure that would greatly benefit Bendigo Livestock Exchange and surrounding areas.

Another infrastructure requirement for livestock exchanges is further development of Electronic Identification (EID) data opportunities in saleyards, including infrastructure to determine weight, quantity and quality being linked to EID and feedback provided to producers.

Infrastructure to address regional food insecurity

As highlighted in our submission to Infrastructure Victoria's draft Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions report, a focus on food insecurity is critical when it comes to the role of infrastructure in addressing regional disadvantage.



The 2019 Healthy Heart of Victoria Active Living Census⁴ provides fine-grained local data that could be incorporated into the Addressing Regional Disadvantage – Infrastructure Assessment Framework for the Loddon Campaspe region to leverage infrastructure to address food insecurity and build health, wellbeing and inclusion in regional Victoria.

For example the 2019 Active Living Census highlights that one in 10 households in Greater Bendigo ran out of food and could not afford to buy more in 2019. This is much higher than the Victorian average (6.2 per cent). Food insecurity is also particularly high among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of Greater Bendigo, people who are not currently employed and those with low household incomes.

Rates of food insecurity vary considerably across the LGA, from as low as 2.2 per cent of households in the Junortoun-Longlea to nearly one in five households in Long Gully-West Bendigo and Ironbark (prior to COVID-19). Those who experience food insecurity report significantly poorer overall physical and mental health. People who experience food insecurity, unsurprisingly, identified cost as a significant barrier to meeting guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption. Bendigo FoodShare report that demand for food relief has increased by 40% during the pandemic.⁵ Bendigo FoodShare report that demand for food relief has increased by 40% during the pandemic.^[i] A recent survey conducted by Bendigo Foodshare of 18-24 year olds, responded to by 286 (including 70 from Greater Bendigo), found that 76% had experienced some form of food insecurity in the past 2 years. A large portion of this hardship had been experienced since the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest cohort who were experiencing food security for the first time were 21-24 year olds.^[ii]

The City have been working since 2014 to address the high levels of food insecurity in Greater Bendigo (9.6% compared to the state average of 6.2%, Active Living Census 2019), which has included investigations into a sustainable Greater Bendigo Community Food Hub. Works completed on this have included a feasibility study and business case and concept plans for Stage 1 of the proposal. Initially, Stage 1 would see site hosting Bendigo Foodshare (who distribute food to those in need), the Bendigo Community Farmers Market, and a commercial kitchen for classes or cooking demonstrations. Over time it is expected that the Greater Bendigo Community Food Hub will grow to include a food garden, food box schemes, a café, and to foster collaboration and partnerships between local businesses, residents and other organisations. The food hub will provide the following benefits:

- Improved health and community resilience
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by reducing food waste
- Reduced use of landfill

⁴ First delivered in the City of Greater Bendigo in 2014, the [2019 Active Living Census](#) was rolled out across six Local Government areas in central Victoria as part of the State government funded initiative, Healthy Heart of Victoria and project managed by Healthy Greater Bendigo. Over 25,000 people across the region responded, which provides us with relevant, reliable and valid local and regional level data on community's health behaviours, activity levels, preferences and needs.

⁵ Bendigo Advertiser, [Bendigo FoodShare calls for donations as demand spikes](#) (November 13, 2020).

^[i] [Bendigo FoodShare calls for donations as demand spikes](#)

^[ii] [Bendigo FoodShare Youfoods insights report](#)



- Increased employment in the local food production and supply chain.

In aiming to address food insecurity as a component of the draft Community Buildings Policy, the City has identified cost-effective examples from other jurisdictions where community and social infrastructure sites are leveraged for community food production, seed-growing, and distribution of free healthy and nutritious food.

Given the expected negative impacts of climate change on food security, incorporating a food insecurity lens to addressing regional disadvantage would align, for example, with existing recommendations to 'Create climate-adapted facilities for rural communities.'

A further opportunity to address food security through may align with the recommendation to 'Make social housing suitable for changing local climates.' For example, the South Australian Government identified the opportunity to include infrastructure for home food production and gardening (e.g. fitting rainwater tanks to properties for public tenants, landscaping home and community gardens for fruit and vegetable growing) within SA Housing's Environmentally Sustainable Design Strategy for social housing.⁶

The City would be happy to provide further information in support of a focus on food insecurity to address regional disadvantage.

Investment in education and skills infrastructure to address high youth unemployment rates and its links to lower educational attainment

This is an important issue in seeking to address regional disadvantage and promoting health and wellbeing. In Greater Bendigo, 81.1 per cent of 20-24 year olds have completed Year 12 or equivalent compared with 86.5 across Victoria. 51.9 per cent of school leavers went on to further education or training compared to 53.7 per cent in Victoria. In Greater Bendigo, students classified as lower socio-economic status (SES) are around 10 per cent less likely to be studying a university degree immediately following school than those in the highest SES cohort (32.6 per cent compared with 43.8 per cent). The Greater Bendigo Relief and Recovery Plan highlights that the percentage of women in their teens, 20s and early 30s engaged in the workforce in central Victoria has dropped dramatically, the steepest falls of any group.

Even though Greater Bendigo has one of the highest rates of regional employment growth in Australia, it also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates, including long term youth unemployment, in the country, and the numbers are increasing. Our youth unemployment rate sits at 13 per cent (last five-year average). This is higher relative to other areas in regional Victoria. Significantly the number of persons under 25 years unemployed for five years or more in the Bendigo region (City of Greater Bendigo, Loddon and Mount Alexander Shires and the northern part of Macedon Ranges Shire) now totals over 1,300. Without a serious concerted program to tackle this, there is likely to be a large cohort of young people in Greater Bendigo and the immediate region who face continuing

⁶ Lareen Newman, Isobel Ludford, Carmel Williams, Michele Herriot, Applying Health in All Policies to obesity in South Australia, Health Promotion International, Volume 31, Issue 1, March 2016, Pages 44–58, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dau064>



poverty, disengagement, limited prospects of long-term employment and being able to lift themselves out of disadvantage - a cycle which can become intergenerational and increasingly difficult to break out of. This will also have detrimental effects on health and wellbeing.

Research identifies that more occupations in the future will require better complex problem-solving skills, enhanced critical thinking and greater creativity. Future workplaces will require better digital literacy skills and the ability to use digital platforms and programs to communicate, market, transact and find information. Digital literacy is a basic workforce requirement. The future of many occupations is uncertain, but many jobs will require workers to rely more on creative thinking rather than on physical labour or other traditional skill-sets.

Education and employability are also the fuel for further growth and prosperity, not only for people but also for the success and prosperity of places. The youth of Greater Bendigo have identified that meaningful and recognised work experience through local businesses is an essential element of strengthening their prospects. Our education and training systems must provide the required skills for our current and future workforce. If these critical elements are neglected, a growing proportion of our community will be further marginalised and disadvantage will be entrenched and will span generations.

Education and prosperity go hand in hand. As we move into a fast changing and globalised world, the relationship between the two becomes interdependent. Educational attainment is an important predictor of future health, employment and welfare needs and improves the ability of people to participate socially and economically in our community. Students' educational outcomes are influenced by many factors including their social and economic background, their family situation, their engagement with education, and personal qualities such as resilience and self-confidence. Completion of a Year 12 Certificate or equivalent has become a marker and widely used indicator of likely future prospects and opportunities. When young people do not complete a Year 12 certificate or its equivalent, they significantly increase their risk of serious lifetime social and economic disadvantages. There is a positive correlation between increased individual learning and a reduction in the risk of future unemployment and long-term social and economic disadvantage.

Early Years

Growing importance is being placed on the 'first thousand days' of a child's life which is now recognised as a period of maximum developmental plasticity, when the foundations of optimum health, growth, and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established. A child's home and community environment during the 'first thousand days' impacts the lifelong health, wellbeing and opportunity for the child.

The science suggests that education starts at birth. The Australian Early Childhood Development Census is a national measure of vulnerability across six domains undertaken in the first year of schooling. In 2018 in Greater Bendigo 22.5 per cent of children surveyed were vulnerable in one domain and 12.5 per cent were vulnerable in two. This is compared with the Victorian averages of 19.9 per cent and 10.1 per cent. Economists have also highlighted the economic benefit that high quality childhood programs can deliver with research uncovering a return between \$4 and \$9 for every dollar invested in early learning programs for low-income children. Program participants were followed into adulthood with increased earnings being sought in reduced special education costs, welfare and crime costs, and increased tax revenues later in life.

In addition to the "first thousand days" it is recognised that an investment in the 0 – 8 age group provides additional benefits for children.



To optimise outcomes for children in the early years we need to ensure that families have equitable access to support services, and that these services are accessible when families need them. A whole-of-community, whole-of-system approach to building community strength and addressing the underlying causes of inequity and vulnerability of children and families is required.

Gender Equity

Gender is another important focus for equal opportunity. Women in Greater Bendigo are more likely to have a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate or Post Graduate Degree than their male counterparts. This is consistent with Australia's shared number one global ranking in educational attainment for women but stands in contrast to the persistent national gender pay gap of 14.1 per cent.

Harnessing the knowledge and skill of women, by uplifting their participation in the workforce, is one of the principal economic levers we can pull that will drive greater productivity and build economic prosperity.

Longer term it is essential that Bendigo and region works with education and skill training providers to grow its own workforce with the skills that are relevant to the needs of businesses and industries. This will require investment in education and training but with a greater focus on the structure and needs of the current workforce and more particularly on the future shape of skills, occupations and businesses.

The following actions are needed to meet the needs of our future city:

- Deliver a major increase in the provision of quality higher education programs and research that are: -
 - Accessible, developed locally and engage with the community and business
 - Linked to the city and region's future economy and liveability
 - Built on the city and region's creativity, innovation and advanced manufacturing strengths
 - Able to strengthen the workplace and the workforce
 - Providing young people with locally delivered quality education options
- Boost the number of STEM subjects and improve digital proficiency with a strong focus on developing the skills that employers need now and in the future
- University campuses with a total of at least 10,000 students by 2030 and 20,000 students by 2050 and a national – international profile in at least three to five program areas
- Address high levels of youth unemployment, support students to stay in school longer, create local education, training and employment pathways for school-leavers and unskilled workers, and develop further social support programs to aid workplace participation
- Attract skilled workers and build the skill base of our existing workforce.



Infrastructure to support gold mining in the region

Kirkland Gold's Fosterville mine east of Bendigo has revived gold mining in the region, together with Mandalay Resources gold and antimony mine at Costerfield near Heathcote. With workforces of over 800 and 200 respectively they have again put Bendigo and region on the gold map.

The Fosterville mine has achieved an international profile with identified gold resources valued at \$4B. Minerals Development Victoria has identified that the gold resources to the east and north east of Bendigo could be in the order of 80 million ounces, valued at around \$220B on today's prices.

In order to support large scale exploration and ultimately mining, a large area of 1,500 square kilometres has been earmarked for exploration based on large scale operations. Allocation of exploration licences is expected shortly. The jobs and investment potential of what could be Bendigo's second gold boom is emerging as perhaps Bendigo and the region's most significant economic development opportunity.

While mining itself generates jobs, the support industries and services are very substantial. A labour force for mining can be imported and can be fly in fly out, or it can be grown and developed in the region. The support industries and services can be contracted in or developed locally.

There is sufficient lead time to plan and ensure that the economic development and workforce implications and potential of the new gold rush directly benefits the already strong manufacturing sector in the Bendigo region. There are substantial implications for education, training and skills development in a whole range of occupations that will be needed to support a major expansion in mining.

In order to ensure that the benefits are maximised it is now timely to consider and plan for a population increase in towns and communities that will develop to support mining. Along with this change will come the need for services and facilities, infrastructure upgrades, environmental management, protection of natural resources and the cultural heritage of areas.

At this stage it can be anticipated that a comprehensive exploration program will create economic opportunities, jobs, investment and potentially may impact on some local infrastructure. Exploration though is a program that will have modest impact, it is preparatory to mining, which will require lengthy processes before relevant approvals are given and before it can commence.

While these processes provide for a full scale assessment of social, economic and environmental impacts in relation to the proposed mining, it is highly likely that the ultimate scale of mining and development will be substantial and have potential impacts in relation to matters such as; housing, community services and facilities, education and training for a greatly expanded workforce, communications and logistics, key infrastructure, services and facilities, transport, and the development of local industries and service suppliers.

While the timing and potential scale of the full development of the mining operations is some years off, the experience of major, new large-scale mining has often been that the full implications and transformative effects are not realised until operations commence. Greater Bendigo and the region have sufficient lead time to plan and prepare for the infrastructure that will be required for this eventuality.

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4. Conclusion

In general, the City is supportive of the majority of the recommendations outlined in this draft strategy. Many of these recommendations have been based on clear evidence and research and are accompanied by ambitious, yet appropriate timeframes.

As outlined above we consider that are areas of the strategy which could be reviewed to the benefit of the Loddon Campaspe region. We would welcome the opportunity for further discussion or clarification on the points raised should it be required.

^[1] [Bendigo FoodShare calls for donations as demand spikes](#)

15. WELLBEING AND FAIRNESS

Nil

16. STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY

16.1. Bendigo Airport Lease of Lot M6

Author	Vicki Bayliss, Senior Business Services Officer
Responsible Director	Bernie O'Sullivan, Director Strategy and Growth

Purpose

Council officers are seeking approval to commence the statutory procedures under section 190 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 for the proposed grant of a lease of Lot M6, of Lot 3 on Plan PS 422204F, being land at Bendigo Airport (premises) to Reidie Pty Ltd (lease proposal).

Summary

Reidie Pty Ltd is a current tenant who would like to take out another lease on Lot M6 at the Bendigo Airport. They would like a lease term of five (5) years with four (4) five (5) year options to renew the lease. The site is approximately 216 square meters of land. The Council lease policy has assessed the annual market rental for the site at \$1,680.00 per annum, plus GST.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Acting under section 190 and section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act):
 - a) resolves that the statutory procedures be commenced to consider a proposal to lease the land comprising approximately 216 square metres of land, being part of the land in certificate of Title Part Lot 3 PS 422204F, Volume 10557, Folio 954, known as Lot M6 at the Bendigo Airport situated on 35 Victa Road, East Bendigo, (Land) for the purposes of an airport hangar (Lease Proposal);
 - b) directs that under section 223 of the Act public notice of the Lease Proposal be given in the Bendigo Advertiser and on Council's website;
 - c) authorises the Manager Business Services to undertake the administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under section 223 of the Act in relation to the Lease Proposal;
 - d) directs that any submissions received under section 223 of the Act about the Lease Proposal will be considered by the Council at its April ordinary meeting to be held at the Bendigo Town Hall.
2. Directs that a further report to Council in respect of the Lease Proposal include an assessment of all submissions received and of any submissions heard pursuant to section 223 of the Act.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Greg Penna

Seconded: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 3: Strengthening the economy

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

Strategy Reference (include weblink as applicable):

[Bendigo Airport Strategic Plan](#)

Strategic Direction 2: Effectively Manage and Maintain Bendigo Airport Assets

Council Policy Reference (include weblink as applicable):

Background Information

Reidie Pty Ltd is a current tenant at the Bendigo Airport and is looking for a long-term lease to construct another hangar on.

Two new long-term leases were advertised in January for leases at the Bendigo Airport. These leases are now in the process of being executed.

Report

The Bendigo Airport is located at 35 Victa Road, East Bendigo (being part of the land in certificate of Title Part Lot 3 PS 422204F, Volume 10557, Folio 954 (Land).

The Bendigo Airport has six (6) vacant hangar sites available to lease. The uptake has been very strong over the last few years with 15 leases commencing in the last two years.

Reidie Pty Ltd is seeking another lease on a part of the Land at the airport which is known as Lot M6 at the airport. Lot M6 is approximately 216 square metres and based on the current market rental will be leased for \$1,680.00 per annum plus GST.

Reidie Pty Ltd proposes to use the Premises for the purposes of an airport hangar over a lease term of five (5) years with four (4) five (5) year options.

Timelines:

If Council intends to consider the lease proposal, then Council officers will place a public notice in a local newspaper (and on Council's website) in accordance with section 190 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 calling for submissions from the public about the lease proposal and allow at least 28 days for submissions to be received. Council must then consider any submissions received and conduct hearings for anyone that wishes to be heard in support of their decision, before Council can consider and then make a final decision about whether to grant the lease proposal. Once submissions have closed, Council officers will provide another report in January to Council outlining the submissions received (if any) and making a recommendation about whether to approve the lease proposal, for Council's consideration.

Consultation/Communication

Resource Implications

The costs associated with the negotiation and development of the lease documentation can be absorbed in the Business Services operation budget. There will not be an increase in ongoing maintenance or operational expenses as a result of this lease.

If Reidie Pty Ltd's lease is approved an additional \$1,680.00 per annum, plus GST revenue will be made.

The revenue will increase annually as per the Bendigo Airport Lease Policy.

Attachments

1. Bendigo Airport Site Locations

Attachment 1 - Bendigo Airport Site Locations

[Map: Bendigo Airport Sites O-G.](#)



17. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Nil

18. EMBRACING OUR CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Nil

19. LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL

19.1. Q2 - Finance and Capital Management Report

Author	Nathan Morsillo, Manager Financial Strategy
Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a report on the financial position of the City of Greater Bendigo to 31 December 2020 for the 2020/2021 financial year.

Summary

The Finance and Capital Management Report to 31 December 2020 provides an update on actual financial performance against the 2020/2021 adopted budget. The report also provides a summary of rate debtors; cash and investments; borrowings and grants.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive the report comparing budgeted and actual revenues and expenses to 31 December 2020, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.
2. Approve the loan borrowings of \$3M in line with Council's 2020/2021 Adopted Budget and authorise the CEO, Director Corporate Performance and Manager Financial Strategy to:
 - a. negotiate the loan
 - b. approve the successful tender; and
 - c. execute the loan documentation.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Rod Fyffe

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

Background Information

In accordance with Section 97 of the Local Government Act 2020: "As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public."

Report

This report provides an update on the financial performance in comparison to the budget for the 2020/2021 financial year for the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Council approved an amended budget in July 2020, which resulted in a reduction in estimates for revenue. Council services continue to be impacted by COVID-19 with revenues in particular affected. Additional grant funds have been received, and rates receipts overall are tracking similar to previous years, however various user pays revenue streams continue to experience reductions. COVID-19 has also delayed some expenditures significantly across Council.

The unfavourable impacts are partially offset by a combination of savings and delayed expenditure. There are also specific additional costs such as increased cleaning. The majority of these have, to date, been offset by lower salary and other expenditure.

Being definitive about the financial impacts of COVID-19 across Council's 69 different services is not straight forward as the impacts are varied. As with other businesses, some staff have changed work patterns and processes, including working from home, or following other State Government directions for specific services.

The 2020/2021 draft budget was adjusted in light of COVID-19 prior to adoption. The adjustments made across the organisation for the budget totalled a net (reduced revenue and higher expenses) movement of \$6.4M. In addition to this, Council is forecasting to receive \$5M less revenue for the financial year and expenditure is forecast to be \$2M less for direct impacts (net \$3M). Overall the impact of COVID on Council's finances is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$9.4M.

Impacts year to date can be found in Council's YTD profit and loss statement discussed below. Currently Council maintains a net surplus compared to the revised COVID budget adopted in 2020, however adjusting for additional grant income and one-off revenue items reduces this surplus.

Significant impacts continue to be monitored for revenue and expenditure for Rates; Leisure Centres; Parking; Bendigo Venue and Events; Tourism and Major Events; Bendigo Art Gallery; & certain Council supported entities. Council continues to provide relief to those experiencing financial hardship by halting debt collection and significantly extending payment terms across the business for fees and charges, in many cases to 30 June 2021 where requested for affected businesses. This provides cash flow relief (via deferral) where possible. Council strongly encourages anyone needing assistance to make early contact by calling our customer service desk on 5434 6000 or by emailing our rates team ratesenquiries@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Actual Financial Performance Operating Results – YTD Actual vs YTD Budget

	YEAR TO DATE				FORECAST			
	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Actual \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	%	Annual Budget \$'000	Full Year Forecast \$'000	Forecast Variance \$'000	%
REVENUE								
Rates and Charges	126,592	125,969	(624)	(0%)	126,592	126,096	(496)	(0%)
Statutory Fees and Fines	2,070	1,765	(305)	(15%)	4,479	4,252	(227)	(5%)
User Fees	10,782	9,135	(1,647)	(15%)	24,655	21,342	(3,313)	(13%)
Government Grants - Operating	13,698	15,277	1,579	12%	31,705	37,950	6,245	20%
Government Grants - Capital	3,806	6,252	2,446	73%	7,212	17,226	10,014	139%
Contributions - Monetary	1,839	1,547	(292)	(16%)	3,363	2,323	(1,040)	(31%)
Contributions - Non Monetary	-	-	-	-	15,000	15,000	-	-
Interest on Investments	587	189	(398)	(68%)	1,174	394	(780)	(66%)
Other Revenue (Internal)	13,361	14,708	1,347	10%	26,737	28,093	1,356	5%
Share of NCGRLC	47	-	(47)	(100%)	94	94	-	-
Total Revenue	172,582	174,842	2,260	1%	241,011	252,771	11,759	5%
EXPENSES								
Employee Benefits	38,863	36,903	1,960	5%	75,951	75,908	43	0%
Contract Payments, Materials and Services	37,397	30,341	7,055	19%	72,706	71,456	1,250	2%
Plant and Equipment Operating Expenses	4,062	3,335	727	18%	7,619	7,511	108	1%
Depreciation and Amortisation	20,565	19,265	1,300	6%	41,131	41,135	(4)	(0%)
Borrowing Costs	925	935	(10)	(1%)	1,849	1,849	-	-
Net (Profit) / Loss on Disposal of Property, Plant, Infrastructure and Assets Held for Sale	-	(5,717)	5,717	100%	4,857	6,217	(1,360)	(26%)
Bad Debts	133	34	99	75%	268	268	-	-
Other Expenses (Internal)	13,370	14,300	(930)	(7%)	26,628	26,140	(1,312)	(5%)
Total Expenses	115,334	99,396	15,938	14%	231,209	232,483	(1,274)	(1%)
Operating Result	57,248	75,446	18,198	32%	9,803	20,288	10,485	107%
Other Comprehensive Income								
Net asset revaluation increments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comprehensive Result	57,248	75,446	18,198	32%	9,803	20,288	10,485	107%

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

Council's operating result as at 31 December 2020 is \$18.2M favourable to budget. The variance is due to the receipt of unbudgeted operational and capital grants; lower than anticipated employee benefits; and some underspends in the budget for materials and general expenses. These are predominantly as a result of changes to services impacted by COVID-19.

YTD Budget 31 December 2020 Surplus/(Deficit)	YTD Actual 31 December 2020 Surplus/(Deficit)	Variance
\$57.2M	\$75.4M	\$18.2M Favourable

Major variances which contribute to the result include:

Area	Favourable/ Unfavourable	Main Contributing Factors	Variance
User Fees	Unfavourable	User Fees and Charges are unfavourable due to COVID-19 restrictions and forced closure of the Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo Venue and Events and Bendigo & Heathcote Visitors centres. Business Services is experiencing lower than expected sheep/cattle sales and Safe & Healthy Environments have received lower parking and health registration income due to waivers and relief initiated in response to COVID-19.	\$1.6M
Government Grants – Operating	Favourable	Operating Grants is currently favourable due to grants being brought forward from 2019/2020 financial year and certain State Government support grants.	\$1.6M
Materials & Services	Favourable	The current favourable result is predominantly due to the forced closure of Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo Venue and Events and Bendigo & Heathcote Visitors centres in line with COVID-19 restrictions. Tourism and Major Events has also been unable to run several larger events such as White Night and is planning more events in the latter half of the financial year where possible. Other units such as Parks and Works are underspent due to timing of invoices being received from external suppliers. This favourable result offsets, the unfavourable result in User Fees and Charges.	\$7M
Government Grants – Capital	Favourable	The favourable result is due to additional funding, higher than what was budgeted earlier this year, having been received for road safety projects such as Blackspot and STILS.	\$2.6M
Net (Profit)/Loss on disposal of property	Favourable	The favourable result is due to the sale of Lyttleton Terrace falling into this financial year, and other minor disposals.	\$5.5M

Balance Sheet - YTD December 2019 vs YTD December 2020

	Annual Budget \$'000	YTD PREV Actual \$'000	YTD Actual \$'000	Year on Year Variance \$'000 %	
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	46,761	64,656	77,051	12,394	19%
Trade and Other Receivables	22,488	78,150	78,089	(61)	(0%)
Inventory	-	442	418	(24)	(5%)
Other Assets/Prepayments	199	1,588	772	(816)	(51%)
Total Current Assets	69,448	144,836	156,330	11,494	8%
Non-Current Assets					
Investments in Associates	3,339	3,272	3,392	120	4%
Trade and Other Receivables	142	59	44	(15)	(26%)
Forestry Plantations	-	83	105	22	27%
Intangible Assets	2,482	216	244	28	13%
Plant, Equipment and Infrastructure	1,711,935	1,611,376	1,622,732	11,356	1%
Total Non-Current Assets	1,717,898	1,615,006	1,626,517	11,512	1%
TOTAL ASSETS	1,787,346	1,759,842	1,782,848	23,006	1%
Current Liabilities					
Trade and Other Payables	15,856	12,644	11,094	1,550	12%
Provisions	16,311	16,521	18,854	(2,333)	(14%)
Interest Bearing Liabilities and Borrowings	4,552	4,518	4,719	(202)	(4%)
Trust Funds	3,372	2,560	3,022	(462)	(18%)
Total Current Liabilities	40,091	36,242	37,690	(1,447)	(4%)
Non-Current Liabilities					
Provisions	10,745	10,804	12,705	(1,901)	(18%)
Interest Bearing Liabilities and Borrowings	35,939	50,798	44,348	6,450	13%
Total Non-Current Liabilities	46,684	61,602	57,053	4,549	7%
TOTAL LIABILITIES	86,775	97,844	94,742	3,102	3%
NET ASSETS	1,700,571	1,661,997	1,688,105	26,108	2%
Equity					
Accumulated Surplus	736,349	819,420	846,448	27,028	3%
Reserves	941,639	817,156	816,384	(772)	(0%)
Other Reserves	22,583	25,421	25,273	(148)	(1%)
TOTAL EQUITY	1,700,571	1,661,997	1,688,105	26,108	2%

Cash and Cash Equivalents are \$12.3M higher than the previous year due to the receipt of sale of land income (including Lyttleton Terrace) and grants in advance received (including support the State Government's Working for Victoria program).

The City committed to several initiatives to support residents and local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an impact on cash in earlier quarters. Examples include waiving rent and various fees and charges, expediting payments to suppliers, relaxing debt collection and offering several payment plan options for Rates. Rates receipts in the current financial year have been at a similar level year to date as in previous years, however more will be known as at full payment date in February about the overall collection impacts of this year.

It is forecast that borrowings will increase in coming years to support future Development Contribution Plans (new developments and Capital commitments). Cash holdings overall currently remain above minimum levels deemed necessary. As at December, rates collections overall are similar to prior years. There continue to be a small number of rate deferrals in place in response to COVID-19 related financial hardship. The City has paused the majority of debt collection activities.

For ratepayers experiencing ongoing financial hardship, a further review was undertaken of hardship options. Arrangements currently enable deferral of all rate payments through to 30 June 2021, including waiving all late payment fees and interest payable.

The City continues to review other specific options around providing more support to those impacted by the pandemic trading conditions - particularly in the business sector. This has included assessing the support that other Victorian Councils has provided. Commercial/Industrial ratepayers make up \$22M of the City's annual rates income, and a significant number of these businesses were affected within 2020/2021.

For business, farming and residential customers (primary place of residence) who are experiencing genuine financial hardship, the City's intention is to extend these interest free periods for the 2021/22 financial year. Details of this and other support initiatives will be included in Council's 2021/2022 draft budget, which is currently forecast to be released at the March 2021 Council meeting.

Forecast Results

Overall, adjusting for grants and rate deferrals, the City continues to forecast a cash deficit for the year, and a small net deficit to budget after adjusting for one of grants and income. The City's operating forecast to year end is included in the profit and loss table earlier in this report.

Overall the City remains low risk for the majority of the key VAGO financial sustainability indicators, with the exclusion of the adjusted underlying result ratio. Long term financial sustainability to resource current service delivery will require efficiencies, which will be worked through as part of future budgets.

Consultation/Communication

Internal Consultation:

A review of the City's financial performance for the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020 was undertaken by Council's Finance Committee, which is made up of all Councillors, on 25 February 2021.

Resource Implications

N/A

Attachments

N/A

19.2. Q2 - Community Plan 2017 - 2021 Highlights

Author	Melissa Mazzarino, EA to Director Corporate Performance
Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

To report to Council progress on the implementation of Annual Plan initiatives for the second quarter 2020/2021.

Summary

The Greater Bendigo Community Plan contains Council's vision, values and direction for 2017-2021, which underpin the way the City manages and conducts its operations. The Annual Action Plan 2020/2021 supports this and details initiatives for the financial year. This document provides the highlights from the second quarter.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council acknowledge the progress of implementing Annual Plan initiatives for 2020/2021 and receive the Annual Plan quarterly summary report.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 1 - Lead and Govern for all

Background Information

Greater Bendigo - creating the world's most liveable community is the vision to guide the work of the Greater Bendigo City Council over four years. How Council will achieve this is outlined in the Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021 which was adopted by Council on June 21, 2017.

Report

The Community Plan is a key strategic Council document to inform the community and council officers of Council priorities and commitment to six key goals. The six Community Plan goals are:

1. Lead and govern for all
2. Wellbeing and fairness
3. Strengthening the economy
4. Presentation and managing growth
5. Environmental sustainability
6. Embracing our culture and heritage

The Community Plan is supported by the Annual Plan developed each year and the Annual Plan is reported on quarterly. This report is the second quarterly update for the Annual Plan 2020/2021.

Consultation/Communication

Council used a range of information to help decide on key directions, priorities and budget allocations. These include:

- Feedback from community members
- Councillor priorities
- Evidence about our population and their needs
- What was previously undertaken as part of adopted plans and strategies
- State and Federal Government priorities and directives
- The size of the available budget Community input into the Community Plan.

This council has a very strong commitment to

- Talking with and listening to community members
- Using community priorities to guide their decision-making
- Being transparent in their decision-making and documenting what the community has said and providing feedback to them.

Community consultation that has been used in developing this plan has also included:

- An online survey (also available via Facebook and in hard copy)
- Postcards with a short survey delivered at a range of community venues and events
- Face-to-face meetings with groups with special knowledge of an area
- Community engagement results received during community engagement for other recent plans and strategies
- Personal communication given to Councillors and staff members in person and via email
- Two public discussion sessions where the first draft statements were 'tested' with community members.

A full report of the processes and findings from the community engagement activities has been published on the City of Greater Bendigo website.

Resource Implications

Nil

Attachments

1. Annual Plan Summary Report - Q2 - Second Quarter

Attachment 1 - Community Plan 2017-2021 - December 2020 highlights

December 2020 update

*Greater Bendigo – creating the
world's most liveable community.*

COMMUNITY PLAN / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / POPULATION GROWTH / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / 2017-2021 / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A liveable community is one that enables people to live healthy, safe, harmonious lives in attractive and affordable settings. Liveable places have an excellent range of services for children and adults of all ages and facilities that are accessible to all. They don't make unsustainable demands on the environment.

Council has set the following six goals to guide its decisions and actions over the next four years:

Goal 1

Lead and govern for all

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

Goal 2

Wellbeing and fairness

Inclusive policies, partnerships and projects that increase access, improve health and learning opportunities, by building better connections and quality of life for all.

Goal 3

Strengthening the economy

Advocacy, innovation and support to grow jobs, attract visitors and diversify the local and regional economy.

Goal 4

Presentation and managing growth

Planning, development and infrastructure that increases our liveability and pride in where we live.

Goal 5

Environmental sustainability

Protect and enhance our environment, conserve our resources and increase resilience to a changing climate.

Goal 6

Embracing our culture and heritage

Recognise and celebrate our unique history and diverse cultures.

Goal 1: Council will lead and govern for all

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

Objectives

- Engage with all communities
- Explain the reason for its decisions
- Be innovative and financially responsible
- Be accountable and efficient in its use of the community's money
- Take a leadership role in regional planning and advocacy and work in partnership with regional councils

December 2020 update

- A grant application has been successful for the Golden Dragon Museum project as part of the Living Regions Living Suburbs fund
- The new Councillors were engaged following the Council election with Induction training, election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in November and the first Council meeting of the new Council was held in December



Goal 2: Wellbeing and fairness

Inclusive policies, partnerships and projects that increase access, improve health and learning opportunities, by building better connections and quality of life for all.

Objectives

- Create a much healthier Greater Bendigo
- Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community
- Promote community connection
- Support participation and development for residents of all ages and abilities
- Create safe and resilient communities

December 2020 update

- Building investigation and design have commenced for the White Hills Recreation Reserve Club Room renewal
- Two concepts have been developed for the Peter Krenz Leisure Centre redevelopment and the Community Reference group has been engaged
- The master plan has been completed for the joint use facilities at Catherine McAuley College
- Community and stakeholder engagement and communications plans are currently being finalised to review the Community Granting Policy
- A progress report on the Healthy Greater Bendigo project was presented to Council in October 2020



Goal 3: Strengthening the economy

Advocacy, innovation and support to grow jobs, attract visitors and diversify the local and regional economy.

Objectives

- Support local businesses and industry to be strong, vibrant, and to grow and develop
- Make it easier for people to transition from education to employment
- Ensure Greater Bendigo is a welcoming place for new businesses and industries and supports creativity and innovation and visitor attraction

December 2020 update

- Priority action items in relation to COVID-19 are being implemented through the Creative Recovery Activation Fund as part of the Creative Industries Strategy
- Detailed design work for the terminal and apron at the Bendigo Airport has been awarded to a local architectural firm, E Architecture
- The draft International Relations Strategy was exhibited for public comment



Goal 4: Presentation and managing growth

Planning, development and infrastructure that increases our liveability and pride in where we live.

Objectives

- Plan for a growing population
- Plan to meet future housing needs
- Continue to implement strategies that increase the capacity of transport networks to better move people and goods and encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport
- Keep Greater Bendigo attractive with good quality public facilities and places
- Provide and maintain urban and rural infrastructure to support the liveability of our community

December 2020 update

- Stage 2 of the Burns Street drainage project has been completed
- Belle Vue and Sullivan Street reconstruction has been completed



Goal 5: Environmental sustainability

Protect and enhance our environment, conserve our resources and increase resilience to a changing climate.

Objectives

- Drawing on the One Planet Living framework to connect the health of the natural environment to the health and prosperity of our community
- Demonstrate leadership in sustaining the rich biological diversity of the Greater Bendigo region that sustains healthy ecosystems

December 2020 update

- A transition plan has been completed for the City to meet all kerbside reform requirements from the Recycling Victoria Policy, which was released in March 2020
- Transition from contract to in-house tree planting operations is underway for the 2021 Greening Greater Bendigo tree planting program, which will deliver better outcomes and value



Goal 6: Embracing our culture and heritage

Recognise and celebrate our unique history and diverse cultures.

Objectives

- Celebrate our unique heritage
- Build pride in and shared responsibility for our public spaces
- Offer and support a diverse range of events that attract and connect people
- Embrace diversity
- Advance reconciliation

December 2020 update

- A Living Heritage Grant has been secured from the Victorian Government to fund the restoration of the Gasworks Purifier Shed
- Summer in the Parks Program has been developed that will provide safe, free and low cost events for our communities in February 2021
- The detailed design for the redevelopment of the Municipal Baths adjoining Rosalind Park was adopted by Council in December 2020





Council has continued to endorse a vision for improved liveability for the whole population. Knowing where we are making progress towards this vision requires us to set some measures or benchmarks where Greater Bendigo can be compared with other locations.

Twenty four liveability indicators have been chosen that relate to the following areas:

- A much healthier Greater Bendigo
- A fairer and more inclusive Greater Bendigo
- A more resilient Greater Bendigo
- A planned Greater Bendigo
- A proud and safe Greater Bendigo
- A sustainable Greater Bendigo
- A more creative, productive, innovative, adaptive and engaged Greater Bendigo

Councillors

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19.3. Contracts Awarded Under Delegation Report - March 2021

Author	Lee Taig, Contract & Procurement Officer, Governance
Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the contracts that have been awarded under delegation for the period as outlined in this report.

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rod Fyffe

Seconded: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

Attachments

1. Contracts Awarded

Attachment 1 - Contracts Awarded Under Delegation

Capital Contracts							
Contract No	Project	Successful Contractor	Delegated Officer	Date Signed	Price	Practical Completion	Budget
CT000541	Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club – Design & Construction of Synthetic Bowling Green	Bioscapes Group Pty Ltd	Vicky Mason	27/01/2021	\$430,223.12	31/03/2021	83035 Capex \$333,000.00, Funding from Club \$45,000.00, the City \$100,000.00 The project has additional works to be completed under the remaining budget - lighting & fencing.
CT000550	Bendigo Botanical Gardens Visitor Hub - Stormwater Early Works	S&R Engineering and Construction Pty Ltd	Brian Westley	10/02/2021	\$193,150.68	7/04/2021	82569 Capex DELWP Greening Bendigo Funding
Service Contracts							
Contract No	Project	Successful Contractor	Delegated Officer	Date Signed	Price	Contract Term & Options	Budget
CT000535	Provision of Plant & Equipment Servicing, Maintenance & Repair Services	Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellevue Panels • Bendigo Air & Hydraulics • Bendigo Auto Electrical and Mechanical • Bendigo Specialist Brake and Clutch • Bendigo Truck Centre • CARS Auto Elec • Bucher Municipal Pty Ltd • Goldsta • JCB Ballarat • Neumann Mechanical Services • Moro & Dooly Accident Repair Centre • Poyser Motor Group • Pro Fleet Services • Thackers Trucks and Engineering • TTW Truck and Bus 	Brian Westley	1/01/2021	Schedule of Rates	Initial term - 3 year Extension Options 2 X (1 + 1)	Current annual Council Budget for the goods/services contracted via this schedule of rates is \$400,000.00
CT000484	Provision of Banking and Bill Payment Service	Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bendigo and Adelaide Bank • Commonwealth Bank of Australia 	Craig Niemann	8/01/2021	Schedule of Rates	Initial term - 4 year Extension Options 2 X (1 + 1)	Current annual Council Budget for the goods/services contracted via this schedule of rates is \$200,000.00

Service Contracts							
Contract No	Project	Successful Contractor	Delegated Officer	Date Signed	Price	Contract Term & Options	Budget
CT000538	Corporate Reporting Software	Pulse Software	Andrew Cooney	20/01/2021	\$236,500.00	Initial term - 3 year Extension options 2 X (1 + 1)	Capex 83199 - \$100,000.00 and Operational Budget
CT000536	Provision of Various Plastic or Similar Pipe and Polycarbonate Sections	Panel * Circle P Pty Ltd * SPEL Stormwater * CV Plastics Pty Ltd * Reece Australia Pty Ltd * Vinindex Pty Ltd	Brian Westley	20/01/2021	Schedule of Rates	Initial term - 3 year Extension Options 2 X (1 + 1)	Current annual Council Budget for the goods/services contracted via this schedule of rates is \$480,000.00
CT000540	Hire of Audio Visual Services	Panel • Power AV • Resolution X • Outlook Communication	Bernie O'Sullivan	19/01/2021	Schedule of Rates	Initial term - 3 year Extension Options 2 X (1 + 1)	Current annual Council Budget for the goods/services contracted via this schedule of rates is \$250,000.00

20. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

21. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

22. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cr Evans reported on a busy month of events, activities and meetings:

- *Highlighted his attendance at the Zonta Club of Bendigo's 30th International Women's Day Dinner and appreciated the opportunity to meet with many of the region's influential women and extended congratulations to award recipient, Colleen Condliffe on her many achievements; the motto for the Dinner was #choosetochallenge which was very apt with the progressive work of the organisation*
- *Attended the launch by Youth Mayor, Jack Smith, of the Outer Dimension Exhibition at the Williamson Street bridge by five aspiring young artists - it has completely transformed the space!*
- *Encouraged all to participate in the revamped Easter Festival this year - Eggs-plore Bendigo with all events being ticketed to comply with COVID safe restrictions and would like to take the opportunity to thank the hardworking City staff and members of the BEF to still bring Easter alive in Bendigo.*

Cr Fagg reported on his attendance at the following meetings and events:

- *Chaired Municipal Fire Management Committee - great opportunity to meet with the wealth and talent and knowledge around the table to ensure the City is kept safe, particularly during bushfire season*
- *Attended a number of sessions working towards the 2021/2022 Budget, highlighting they are not just financial documents, but moral documents with the outcome of what will be the essential high priorities for the City*
- *Tour of a large number of the City's swimming pools, with Council requiring to make decisions in relation to the Aquatic Strategy on the number of pools in the municipality together with ongoing maintenance*
- *Attended today's Bendigo Women's March for Justice to support ending violence, harassment and sexual harassment against women.*

Cr Fyffe reiterated Cr Evans' excitement regarding the Eggs-plore Bendigo Easter events and encouraged all to book their tickets.

Cr Fyffe also reported on the launch of the Bendigo Writers' Festival at the Bendigo Library as it was encouraging that this is a sign of events coming back to some sort of normality for the region, even though some of the Festival will still be held virtually.

Cr O'Rourke reported on her attendance at the following meetings and events:

- *Heathcote Community Festival which was well-run COVID-safe event*
- *Budget workshops - a very important process for the new Council*
- *Mentoring program with other first-time Mayors and Councillors in the region*
- *Attended with fellow Ward Crs Evans and Penna, a meeting with Strathfieldsaye Community Enterprise*
- *Extended congratulations to Zonta Award winner, Colleen Condliffe*
- *Bendigo Manufacturing Group briefed Councillors last week and it highlighted the importance of industrial land for Bendigo, particularly with a vision of 200,000 population by 2050, need to keep progressing forward*

Cr Penna reported on his attendance at the following meetings and events:

- *Attendance at MND Fundraiser at Heathcote - very close to Cr Penna as his brother succumbed to MND some years ago*
- *Attendance at the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee Meeting*
- *Lodging a number of customer requests*
- *Meeting with Strathfieldsaye Community Enterprise*
- *Budget Briefings*
- *Attendance at Phoenix-FM Annual General Meeting*
- *Opening of the Kangaroo Flat Library*
- *Tour of the landfill*
- *Eppalock Ward Listening Posts*

Cr Sloan reported on her attendance at a number of meetings and events, as follows:

"I am enjoying being out and about meeting and talking with residents and, most importantly, listening, understanding, advocating and working together with communities to address local needs. Monthly Whipstick Ward Listening Posts and local area Ward Meetings are well underway to provide residents an opportunity to talk with councillors about needs, concerns and ideas. Issues include economic recovery, business support, roads, footpaths, planning and drainage, while advocacy for wildlife, animal shade and shelter and habitat is ongoing.

I attended and participated in the following events and activities -

- Weekly Whipstick Ward Cr Meetings to discuss ward events and share information
- Calendar of monthly community engagement events completed with Ward Cr's
- The first Whipstick Ward Meeting held at Epsom Huntly Rec Reserve on Feb 10
- Met with community groups including Huntly Equine Recreation Reserve committee and Melbourne Sheep Save to discuss a range of issues related to group members
- Participated in committees including the Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee, Gender Equity Coalition meeting, Cultural Diversity Inclusion Plan Committee and met with DELWP to discuss kangaroo welfare.
- Participating in a timetable of Cr Budget workshops and weekly briefings
- Met with CEO and Director Corporate Performance
- Attended site inspections and met with residents to discuss concerns and requests
- Attended Imagine Greater Bendigo sessions in Raywood, Huntly and Eaglehawk
- All activities aim to provide a welcoming and inclusive community with accessible programs and services enabling everyone to feel safe, healthy and happy and able to participate in and contribute to their local community.
- Getting to know the local community by participating in community events, activities and committees is inspirational. It reaffirms to me the amazing resilience and capacity of local communities to identify and meet their own unique needs when supported with equitable access to resources, information sharing, skills, knowledge and kindness".

Cr Williams reported on his attendance at the following meetings and events (another busy month):

- *Lockwood Ward Listening Post at Malone Park Marong*
- *Huntly Family Fun Day - what a terrific event!*
- *Attended the Election of the Youth Mayor and Deputy Mayor - congratulations to Jack Smith and Victoria Tangey respectively*
- *Opening of the Kangaroo Flat Library*
- *Tour of the Eaglehawk landfill - work that is being undertaken at this site is exceptional*
- *La Trobe University City Studio Hubbub*
- *Community presentations to Council*
- *Underground art exhibition at Williamson Street bridge*
- *Kirkland Lake Gold Community Partnerships Program - \$10m over three years!*
- *Launch of the Bendigo Writers' Festival*
- *Tour of the Central Business District*
- *Attended the sheep sale at this morning's Bendigo Livestock Exchange*

23. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor, Cr Jennifer Alden, reported on her attendance at the following meetings and events:

- Attended Regional Councils Victoria meeting
- Chaired the Loddon Campaspe Councils Group Meeting
- Attended Imagine Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Session at Marong
- Attended the Huntly Family Fun Day
- Spoke at the Lunch of the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra 2021 Program
- Attended City of Gastronomy committee meetings
- Attended Creative Cities Presentation
- Met with the Youth Council and Youth Mayor
- Spoke at the Official Opening of the Kangaroo Flat Library
- Tour of the Eaglehawk Landfill with Councillors and City Staff
- Attended the Announcement by Minister Mary-Anne Thomas MP of Completion of the Community Connections Project
- Met with Minister Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Agriculture
- Attended the Imagine Greater Bendigo Coordination Group Meeting
- Attended the Imagine Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Session at the Old Church on the Hill
- Spoke at La Trobe University's City Studio Hubbub presentation of student projects
- Attended the Opening Ceremony of the 2021 Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program
- Spoke at the Season 2021 Launch – Bendigo Venues and Events
- Attended the Choral Evenson for the 2nd Sunday in Lent & in thanksgiving for the completion of work on the Cathedral bell tower at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Bendigo
- Spoke at the Information Session at Bendigo Health - Vaccine Rollout with the Multicultural Community
- Attended the Swimming Pool Tour with Councillors and City Staff
- Attended the Heathcote Integrated Civic Precinct Project meeting
- Attended the Zonta Club of Bendigo Annual International Women's Day Dinner
- Spoke at the Sisterworks International Women's Day Event
- Attended the City of Greater Bendigo / VicHealth re Health is Everybody's Business-Leadership Activation Program meeting
- Spoke at the Celebration Lunch of the Bendigo Open Studios
- Attended the Heathcote Community Festival
- Attended the Launch of Yo Arts Underground open air exhibition
- Laid a wreath on behalf of the City at the Sandakan Commemorative Service
- Attended Pandemic Relief and Recovery Committee meeting
- Met with Wendy Lovell MP, Bridget Vallance Shadow Minister for Youth Affairs and Hon. Ryan Smith Shadow Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation
- Launched the Bendigo Writer's Festival
- Attended the Australian Local Government Women's Association Mentoring Program Launch

- Attended the Bendigo Safe Community Forum meeting
- Met with Jacinta Allan MP regarding the Golden Dragon Museum
- Attended a CBD Walking tour with Councillors and City Staff
- Spoke at the National Municipal Works and Engineering Conference Breakfast
- Spoke at March4Justice Rally
- Spoken with residents, businesses and community groups regarding a wide range of issues.
- Participated in numerous radio, newspaper, television media interviews and photo opportunities.

24. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Craig Niemann, reported as follows:

"We have launched the family-friendly and fun-packed program for Easter 2021. The four day 'Eggs-plore Bendigo at Easter' program has replaced the traditional festival celebrations to keep the community safe and within the COVID-19 guidelines. The alternative program offers plenty of family favourites and attractions. Unfortunately, the program does not include parades with the dragons or an Easter egg hunt.

Attended the announcement by Minister Mary-Anne Thomas, of the completion of the Heathcote component of the Community Connections Project – a footpath from Heathcote Hospital to the township. Minister Thomas was appointed as Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Agriculture in December 2020 and this was her first official visit to City of Greater Bendigo. Following the announcement, the Mayor and I met with the Minister and provided an update on the Greater Bendigo growth; industrial land; development proposals for the Bendigo City Centre and the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

Councillors have participated in a number of workshops to assist with discussions and decision making for the 2021/2022 Budget.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Executive staff from Bass Coast Shire Council recently visited Bendigo to participate in a walking tour of CBD laneways, Bendigo Mining Exchange, Ulumbarra and the Art Gallery. The objective of the tour was to see and discuss what has been done well, lessons learnt as we went through the process and how to go about shaping 'a place'".

25. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS

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

MOTION

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

RESOLUTION

Moved: Cr Rod Fyffe

Seconded: Cr Margaret O'Rourke

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

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:48 pm.

Confirmed:

19 April 2021

Chair